

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES. UNITE!

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A comment on the Swedish comrades' articles: How to approach the study of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union

The economic and political crisis in the Soviet Union is laying bare features of Soviet society that had previously been shielded behind official demagoguery about "advancing socialism." What we see is not socialism at all. We see the ugly features of a bureaucratic, state capitalist system. We see even more clearly what the true Marxist-Leninists have been saying for years: the proletarian revolution of October 1917 has been reversed. The working class no longer rules. A new class of capitalist bureaucrats holds the reins of power in the once socialist Soviet Union.

But how did this come about? How did the socialist revolution in Russia proceed? How was it defeated? What are the features of the revisionist system that replaced working class rule? It is up to the revolutionary Marxist-Leninists to answer these questions.

This analysis can help confront the present-day mudslinging against the very idea of working class socialism. The attack on socialism is growing thicker and dirtier as the capitalist newspapers and politicians, countless professors, and other anti-communist sages gloat over the "free market" reforms of Gorbachev and the other revisionist chieftains from Peking to Warsaw. The revolutionary movement is also facing mounting pressures from reformism and opportunism; and deepening the critique of Soviet revisionism helps confront these pressures.

Most important, deepening the analysis of what happened in the Soviet Union is needed in order to rescue the Marxist-Leninist principles of socialism. These principles need to be restudied, carefully reexamined and reconfirmed so that proletarian socialism can once again become the fighting banner of change and liberation for the working class and oppressed around the world. These principles include not just the criticism of capitalism and the development of the idea of a new society without exploitation, but how to go about obtaining this new society. In this, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 not only aimed at the goal of socialism, but broke new ground in developing tactics for the step-by-step transformation of a country towards socialism. What is right and wrong has to be sorted so that the lessons of this history can continue

to enrich revolutionary theory.

The revolutionary Marxist-Leninists in a number of countries are studying how capitalist restoration took place in the Soviet Union. In Sweden, the comrades of the Communist League of Norrköping are energetically taking part in this work. We have received and studied a translation of two major articles on this subject from numbers 7 and 9, 1988 of their journal *Red Dawn*. (Reprinted elsewhere in this issue of the Supplement.)

We agree with the starting point of these Swedish articles, which is the necessity to undertake a deeper analysis of Soviet history and of the origin, economic roots, and development of the capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union. In the anti-revisionist movement in the 60's, there was a certain amount of discussion about why capitalist restoration took place, including some discussion of events prior to Khrushchov. But over a period of time, for a number of reasons, this discussion withered: some of the methods of approach became discredited; some groups drew conclusions that led them to non-revolutionary practice or simply reiterated bourgeois views; no one achieved a definitive answer; etc.

Thus, from the anti-revisionist movement and elsewhere, a number of answers were proposed for the riddles of Soviet history. But, it seems to us, none of them answered the questions that the revolutionary Marxist-Leninists have come to ask. It is up to the Marxist-Leninists of today to build up a fundamentally deeper analysis.

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Yet nowadays such discussion comes smack up against the objections and prejudices of, for example, a number of parties that declare themselves to be opponents of revisionism. They object to Soviet revisionism, but they stubbornly put a thousand and one obstacles in the way of looking into how this revisionist treachery arose. This is because they want to cling to the opportunist ideas that produced this treachery, including the wrong orientations adopted by the world communist movement at the Seventh Congress of the CI. They use these historic errors as an ideological crutch to prop up their present turn to the right. Such is the case with the Party of Labor of Albania and others that follow their views closely, and with most of the **Theory and Practice** grouping that for a time had some quiet differences with the Party of Labor of Albania.

We welcome the Swedish comrades' efforts as part of the efforts of the revolutionary Marxist-Leninist forces around the world to deal with these questions important for the progress of the movement. The Communist League of Norrkoping may be a small organization, but it has an active spirit. The Swedish comrades have not taken the attitude of waiting for others to do things, but instead have passionately thrown themselves into the struggle to sort these issues out. We have reprinted their articles with the aim of giving a picture of some of their thinking on Soviet history and the roots of capitalist restoration. We think it is important for the Marxist-Leninists of different countries to have an idea of each other's views on key issues.

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With respect to our own views, our work on the theory of socialism in general and on the degeneration of the Soviet Union in particular is far from complete. The discussions at our recent Third Congress stressed this. As the Swedish articles cover a tremendous range of issues and events, on many of them we still only have initial views, or have not finished our research. Nevertheless, we feel that an exchange of views is quite useful.

In our opinion, the Swedish articles raise many issues that have to be dealt with in this study. At the same time, we see some underlying weaknesses in these articles. Many of their conclusions we think may not hold up to more careful scrutiny, but our main concern is about the methods of study. We think a different approach is needed.

The following comments point to some of what we see as shortcomings in the **Red Dawn** articles. In doing so, we try to highlight the issue of the method of study. We hope to give some idea of the methods that our Party is trying to use in the study of what happened in the Soviet Union.

When Did the Decisive Turn Take Place?

The focus of the **Red Dawn** articles is the question of when capitalist relations were restored in the USSR. The Swedish comrades reject the view that capitalist restoration began in the mid-1950's with the seizure of power by Khrushchov, and hold it began much earlier and led to a capitalist society at the time of the first five-year plan.

The question of when the Soviet Union began to degenerate into capitalism, and of when it arrived at capitalism, are now being closely examined in the Marxist-Leninist movement. It is possible that such questions will not be answered by precise dates, because we are dealing with social processes that may have taken years or even decades to evolve. Nonetheless, assessing roughly when the backward turn was made in the USSR has its importance. Among other things, it is part of studying what are the features of a society in transition to socialism, as opposed to one in transition to a revisionist-capitalist society. And it has importance in judging the transitional methods and tactics used by the Bolsheviks--which ones are contributions to revolutionary tactics and which are mistakes that contributed to the revisionist tragedy.

One view that had existed was that the coming to power of the renegade Nikita Khrushchov in the years following Stalin's death in 1953 marked the beginning in earnest of the process of capitalist restoration. But such a view cannot explain the depths of bureaucratic corrosion that had already been reached when Khrushchov took power in the mid-1950's. It cannot explain the basic continuity in the economic and political system in the Soviet Union during the years of Khrushchov and Brezhnev with the one already existing for a number of years while Stalin was still alive.

At our 3rd Congress there was discussion on the view the turn towards capitalist restoration took place decades before. A speech on our study said:

"It appears that the mid-30's is the crucial

turn in the Soviet revolution. Until this time, there is still an attempt to be revolutionary, even if with weaknesses and problems. But from now on, what takes place is the institutionalization of the revolution in a bourgeois direction. After the turn, the Soviet Union is no longer pursuing a forward march towards socialism, but is in a trajectory of degeneration. In this case, since private capitalism had been largely defeated, the degeneration is towards the state monopoly capitalism we are familiar with in recent decades." (The Supplement, vol. 5, #1, Jan. 15, '89, p. 24, col. 1)

What the Red Dawn Articles Say

The Swedish articles point out that they were presenting, in 1987 and 1988, similar views concerning when the turn took place. However, further study has led them to conclude that the degeneration began much earlier. They now hold that the "decimation of the working class" caused a "substitutionalist" situation in 1920 in which the Soviet government no longer had a class basis, although it was still a "workers' government", and that a bureaucracy of new "communist" bosses and old czarist civil servants gained the real power and initiative several years later in 1923. They believe that this bureaucracy became a ruling class of a state capitalist social system with the first five-year plan that began in 1928. *New Dawn* states:

"What happened during the period from 1923 to 1928 was a quantitative process in direction towards a counterrevolution--in other words, precisely what we hitherto have thought took place between about 1934 and 1956!" (emphasis as in the original)

Our principal concern with the *Red Dawn* articles does not hinge on the assessment of the first five-year plan or on what dates are fixed for the various turns in Soviet history. Indeed, our own views on these issues are still only preliminary. What we want to address is some of the methods used by the Swedish comrades in studying Soviet history.

Studying a Society in Flux

The study of Soviet history is above all a study of a society in the midst of various transitional stages. The early Soviet Republic was a society in flux. The proletariat had seized power in a vast country. In the midst of civil war and social convulsions and a series of abrupt turns, the working class and its Bolshevik Party took steps to transform society from capitalism to socialism.

It was impossible to create socialism at one stroke. The proletariat had to work with what it had inherited from the old society. Even in highly developed, industrialized

countries there will be transitional steps needed for the proletarian revolution to establish the classless, communist system or even its first stage of a fully socialist system. (The speech "On the party-wide study of the Marxist-Leninist concept of socialism" in the Jan. 15 Supplement discusses the issue of what a full socialist system is.) And in Russia, this took particularly painful forms as Russia was a backward society, and moreover it had been laid waste by war and crisis.

Upon seizing power the proletariat did not have the strength, the organization, the culture, or the material conditions (with a devastated industry and vast peasant agriculture) to immediately reorganize the economy on fully socialist lines. Instead the Bolsheviks were compelled to retreat from the immediate establishment of socialism and develop transitional steps. The Soviet Union was a society that was only just beginning to pass through state capitalism under proletarian control to socialist relations. From the very outset the revolution was forced into any number of zig-zags and retreats from the principles that will govern a fully socialist society, and yet at first it made progress. As part of this, they were often compelled to make use of capitalist and state capitalist forms and methods of economic organization.

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All of Lenin's writings from the Soviet period stress this reality. There are repeated references in Lenin's writings that even steps towards state capitalist forms in certain fields would be progress over the then-prevailing anarchy and shambles of the bourgeois relations. Lenin spoke clearly and bluntly about the bourgeois and petty bourgeois forces at work in the economy and the difficult and protracted struggle required to overcome them.

An understanding of this transition process is fundamental to making an assessment of the Soviet revolution. What are the principles of this transition to socialism? How are the capitalist forms overcome? How is socialism brought closer? What led to this process being cut short in the USSR? The various forms used for transition have to be examined. Which ones worked or failed? And, of the various problems hindering the transition to full socialism, which ones were adequately dealt with and which ones deepened and helped kill the socialist society?

The study of the transition is not something that should be hurried over because it is crucial to the assessment of Soviet history and because it has vast significance beyond the Russian revolution. And indeed, the question of transitional steps is not just forced upon the proletariat as a sad necessity, but it provides an important impetus for revolution, for it shows that the socialist revolution doesn't have to wait for a country to develop a higher and higher level of industrialization and capitalism.

As a result of the need for transitional measures, it is not enough to discover that the Soviet economy had many features in common with state capitalism, because this is characteristic of the transition period. It is not enough to see that various Soviet decrees or Bolshevik resolutions do not implement the principles of a full socialist society in order to conclude that the economic roots of capitalist restoration are being laid. It is necessary to make a more careful and difficult analysis in order to see whether such measures helped or hurt proletarian power, and helped develop or pushed backward Soviet society.

Further complicating matters is that it often takes a good deal of work to determine what the significance of a particular law or resolution or decree is. One must judge how far various measures were implemented, and what their actual effect was, because many Soviet decrees never got beyond the paper they were written on. As well, often measures are implemented under the same general name as *previous* measures which actually differ from them.

So the measures taken must be looked at in the light of the economic and social conditions of the time. Moreover, they must be looked at from the theoretical side. The revolution in Russia provided a test on a vast scale of the Marxist theory of revolution, and of the question of transitional steps. The theoretical expression of this revolution, especially the writings of Lenin, must be carefully weighed.

With this approach we can judge the issues that confronted the Soviet working class and its Bolshevik Party; the steps they took; the strengths and weaknesses of what

was done; and their impact on Soviet society. We can deepen our grasp of the Marxist-Leninist theory of socialism. And we can draw out revolutionary principles to provide guideposts for the socialist revolution that we are working towards.

In our opinion, such an approach wasn't held to in the **Red Dawn** articles. Insufficient attention was paid to the issue of the measures and methods of work needed in a transition period. Moreover, not enough thought was given to the theoretical side of the question, to the consideration of the Marxist-Leninist principles of socialist transition. And it appears that the difficulties in establishing the facts about Soviet history and social conditions were not appreciated. These weaknesses undermine much of their argumentation.

Let us look at some of the principal reasons that the articles give for their view that the decisive turn in the Soviet Union took place with the first five-year plan in 1928.

Relations in Soviet Industry

"The first five-year plan," **Red Dawn**, contends, "created a completely new base of society--and this base was not socialist except in form. The first five-year plan was a **qualitative leap**--a counterrevolution. Instead of the workers' state with bureaucratic deformations, there appeared the social-fascist dictatorship of the new bureaucratic bourgeoisie." (Emphasis as in the original.)

Red Dawn then points out what it sees as "the measures which manifested the new socioeconomic relations" in Soviet industry.

When we look at some of these measures, it turns out that the dates given often miss the mark. Most of the measures of industrial organization that are attributed to the first five-year plan were actually put into effect years earlier, or at least were already well underway. And many of the social consequences that are said to have occurred at this time actually occurred later.

This factual inaccuracy affects more than whether something took place a little earlier or later. In revolutionary periods, a huge amount of experience can be concentrated in a short time. The Soviet Union, in a relatively brief period, passed from capitalist rule, to working class political power and control over the economy, to various transformations of the economy displacing the old capitalist classes, and finally to the capitalism of a new revisionist ruling class. A wrong date for a measure can tear it out of its context.

Indeed, it is hard to draw conclusions from any step taken in the course of the Soviet revolution apart from its historical context; outside of the sharp twists and turns in the class struggle in these years; or without carefully thinking through the theoretical principles involved.

To see some of the issues at stake, let us examine some of the measures in Soviet industry listed by *Red Dawn*. Our comments will not prove whether a turn took place during the first-five year plan, but we aim to show that the measures taken in Soviet industry have to be considered more carefully. A careful consideration of transitional measures is not only necessary to judge the evolution of the Soviet economy, but may be even more important than the final conclusion about when the capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union began. As far as the five-year plan itself goes, we will not deal with a series of issues that we have not yet investigated in detail.

a) Economic Autonomy and Profit Accounting

"In 1929, the 'khrozaschot' principle was introduced at Soviet enterprises, which," according to *Red Dawn*, "meant that the enterprises got economic autonomy and became juridical persons [entities with legal standing]. The enterprises were to have their own balance account with profit and loss, at which the income normally was supposed to meet the expenses and therefore also give 'profitability.' The principle of and the striving for cash limit and profit is thus nothing new in the Soviet economy, but was quite the contrary a cornerstone in the planning system already from the first five-year plan on."

There may have been changes in the profit and accounting system in 1929, such as shifting the center of responsibility away from the "trusts" to the individual enterprises. (Soviet "trusts" were coordinated groups of related small enterprises or, sometime, a single large enterprise.) This may bear further looking into. However, the 'khrozaschot' principle was introduced long before the first five-year plan. Although mainly pushed aside by the extreme measures of "war communism" during the civil war, economic autonomy of enterprises and financial accounting were in force in the Soviet economy from the outset of the revolution. Part of the New Economic Policy (NEP) of 1921 was to allow these forces greater play while, at the same time, keeping them under state control and regulation.

In April 10, 1923, a decree was issued reformulating the functions and powers of the industrial trusts. This decree defined that the trusts had a whole range of autonomous rights in marketing products, purchasing supplies, receiving loans, etc. They also carried out profit accounting. There was a system of division of profits between the state, the trust, and the workers and employees in the form of bonuses and benefits. There were also various kinds of profit accounting at the enterprise level, with many non-profitable enterprises closed or amalgamated in the early years of the NEP. (See Joseph Freeman, *The Soviet Worker*, International Publishers, 1932, pages 47-51.)

At the time the Bolsheviks said openly that such mea-

asures were a retreat from socialist organization. They were necessary to make possible going over in the future to fully socialist principles. They were part of a transitional system whereby a market economy and state capitalism existed under the proletarian dictatorship. This was discussed as follows in a Central Committee resolution that was drafted by Lenin. Section 1 said in part:

"Changes in the forms of socialist development are necessary because the Communist Party and the Soviet government are now adopting special methods to implement the general policy of transition from capitalism to socialism and in many respects are operating differently from the way they operated before: they are capturing a number of positions by a 'new flanking movement', so to speak; they are retreating in order to make better preparations for a new offensive against capitalism. In particular, a free market and capitalism, both subject to state control, are now being permitted and are developing; on the other hand, the socialized state enterprises are being reorganized on commercial lines..."

"The transfer of state enterprises to the so-called profit basis," the resolution continued in Section 3, "is inevitably and inseparably connected with the New Economic Policy; in the near future this is bound to become the predominant, if not the sole, form of state enterprise. In actual fact, this means that with the free market now permitted and developing the state enterprises will to a large extent be put on a commercial basis..." (See Lenin, "The Role and Functions of the Trade Unions Under the New Economic Policy" -- decision of the CC, RCP(B), Jan. 12, 1922 or *Collected Works*, vol. 33, pp. 184-196)

Lenin discussed these and related questions of what he called "state capitalism under communism" in his political report to the 11th Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) in March of 1922:

"The state capitalism discussed in all books on economics," Lenin explained, "is that which exists under the capitalist system, where the state brings under its direct control certain capitalist enterprises. But ours is a proletarian state; it rests on the proletariat; it gives the proletariat all political privileges; and through the medium of the proletariat it attracts to itself the lower ranks of the peasantry (you remember that we began this work through the Poor Peasant Committees). ... Our society is one which has left the rails of capitalism, but has not yet got on to new rails. The

state in this society is not ruled by the bourgeoisie, but by the proletariat. We refuse to understand that when we say 'state' we mean ourselves, the proletariat, the vanguard of the working class. State capitalism is capitalism which we shall be able to restrain, and the limits of which we shall be able to fix. This state capitalism is connected with the state, and the state is the workers, the advanced section of the workers, the vanguard. We are the state.

"State capitalism is capitalism that we must confine within certain bounds; but we have not yet learned to confine it within those bounds. That is the whole point..." (See "11th Congress of the RCP(B) -- Political Report of the CC," March 27, 1922 or *Collected Works*, vol. 33, pp.278-9.)

This is not the place to delve in depth into Lenin's arguments. The point of citing this passage is to indicate the tasks of our historical and theoretical investigation. Here we are looking at a society "which has left the rails of capitalism, but has not yet got on to new rails." What was the process that blocked the way to climbing onto these new rails and eventually led to falling back into capitalism? One doesn't get one step closer to this by declaring that the workers' revolution was finished in 1929 because one can find profit-accounting or other features common to capitalism or state capitalism. If that is so, then the workers' revolution ended before it began.

If we are to make a serious consideration of the question of profit accounting and autonomy of enterprises, a different approach is needed. We have to look at what were the economic and political conditions that compelled Lenin and the Bolsheviks to argue for a retreat and accept such things as running enterprises on a "commercial basis." It has to be weighed whether or not such measures were permissible from the standpoint of the principles of the transition from capitalism to socialism. And if so, to examine how such measures were carried out. Were they carried too far? How were they modified by the first five-year plan and subsequently? Without examining these things concretely it is impossible to say whether they should or could have been modified differently at this time. Or whether they should or could have been abolished altogether. Or whether and how they differ from what the revisionists are doing today in their name.

b) One-person Management

"Before the five-year plan," the *Red Dawn* article continues, "the enterprises had been headed by a 'troika,' consisting of a technical director, a trade union official and a political commissar from the Party. According to a decision by the central

committee of the Party in 1929, this system was abolished and replaced by one-man management. According to the Central Committee resolution, the orders of the director should thereafter be 'unconditionally binding on his subordinate administrative staff and on all workers.' ..."

Here, too, it is simply erroneous to imply that one-man management only began in Soviet enterprises in 1929. There may have been adjustments in the organization of management at this time; something that bears looking into further. However, if we are to judge the significance of the introduction of one-man management in Soviet industry we must go back more than ten years previous.

In March of 1918, only months after the Bolshevik Revolution, Lenin wrote his famous article *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government*, which set forth some of his ideas on the principles of the transition from capitalism to socialism. A section of this article (with the heading "Harmonious organization' and dictatorship") is devoted precisely to the question of one-man management in Soviet enterprises, which is also described, with a certain violence of language typical of the times, as "one-man dictatorship". At one point of this section Lenin discusses the outcry from the Left Socialist Revolutionaries (also the "Left Communists" among the Bolsheviks) and others, against the decree of the Soviet government investing "unlimited" powers in the directors of the railways. *Immediate Tasks* raises whether this violates socialist democracy. It argues strongly that it does not.

With respect to industry and railroads, *Immediate Tasks* goes on to state that

"... unquestioning subordination to a single will is absolutely necessary for the success of processes organized on the pattern of large-scale machine industry. On the railways it is twice and three times as necessary."

Finally, Lenin explains, this does not negate the importance of the mass forms of workers democracy, but must go hand-in-hand with it. Lenin appeals to lead the people "along the true path, along the path of labor discipline, along the path of coordinating the task of arguing at mass meetings about the conditions of work with the task of unquestioningly obeying the will of the Soviet leader, of the dictator, during the work." (*Collected Works*, vol. 27, pp. 267-71)

There was a stormy debate, both inside and outside the party, over the question of one-man management. It culminated at the 9th Congress of the Communist Party in March 1920. From that time it was decided to replace the "troika" or various forms of the "collegial" system with a single director at most Soviet enterprises. By the end of 1920, about 88% of the large enterprises in the Soviet Republic were already under individual managers, and this

system was further extended in the following years. (See E.H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution 1917-1923*, Vol. 2, pages 190-191.)

There is the question, however, of what the actual situation was in enterprises which formally had a one-person management system. According to some sources, informal "troika" systems may have developed. (It is not yet clear to us whether the late 20's "troika" in the factory is the same as the earlier "troika.") Various statements reaffirming one-person management occur in the late 20's. There is the question of what effect they had, and when. As well, there is the question of the experience of one-person management.

Here, too, the problem with the Swedish comrades' article is not so much that they fixed the wrong date on the adoption of this measure. But they have skipped over addressing the conditions and issues that gave rise to the decisions in favor of one-man management, or assessing the experience of one-person management. As well, they have not dealt with the theoretical issues raised on this by Lenin. It is one thing to agree or disagree with Lenin's views on this question, but it is another thing to ignore them.

Was one-person management a necessary step in the face of the acute crisis, bourgeois sabotage and social disintegration? Should it have been adopted? Should it have been continued or modified? Is it compatible in principle with steps towards socialism? What is its relationship to proletarian power, democratic centralism, and working class democracy?

Some of these issues were raised for discussion at our 3rd Congress. We do not have final views on these matters. However, it seems wrong to simply present that one-man management, as opposed to collective management, is necessarily--outside of time and place--incompatible with the transition to socialism. (See the Supplement, vol. 5, #1 and #4, January and April, '89).

c) Wage Policy

The **Red Dawn** article then points to a number of issues of wage policy that were supposedly introduced with the first five-year plan. They discuss both the piecework system and the disparities in pay according to work done, job skills, and so forth.

But here too, it is a mistake to begin the examination of these questions at the outset of the first five-year plan. Both the issues of piece work and wage discrepancies were posed from the early days of Soviet power. For instance, in April-May, 1918 the CC of the Communist Party adopted Lenin's **Six Theses on the Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government**. The fifth thesis reads:

"5. Particular significance now attaches to measures for raising labor discipline and the productivity of labor. Every effort must be exerted for the steps already undertaken in this direction... This includes, for exam-

ple, the introduction of piecework, the adoption of much that is scientific and progressive in the Taylor system, the payment of wages commensurate with the general results of the work of a factory..." (Collected Works, vol. 27, p. 316)

Piecework was seen as a necessary means to raise output and instill discipline at work in the midst of economic collapse and chaos. It was introduced to the extent that it was possible to organize it, and it became widespread under the NEP. The system was apparently further consolidated with the first five-year plan.

Similarly, the discrepancies in pay according to work done and relatively high salaries for specialists and technical experts were put into effect from almost the beginning. Lenin repeatedly referred to this as "unjust" and a retreat from socialist equalization. He stressed that it was a "step backward and departure from the principles of the Paris Commune." (See, for example, the fourth thesis in **Six Theses**) At the same time, Lenin considered this "departure" absolutely essential for the revival of the economy and the eventual transfer to fully socialist principles of distribution.

To make an assessment of both piecework and unequal wages, it seems necessary to judge whether such measures are permissible in principle during the transition to socialism. As well, it is necessary to look at the concrete situation that Lenin and the Bolsheviks faced in order to assess the steps that they took. Only then can we answer whether these things were correct and necessary.

If they were correct and needed, then the question arises of when were they carried too far. Why were these things allowed to go unchecked and, eventually, consciously spurred on to huge levels? It is clear that they contributed to the deep stratification of Soviet society that became obvious by the mid and late 30's with the consolidation of a labor aristocracy and a wealthy stratum of Soviet technicians and intellectuals. (The questions of wages, piecework and related matters were also discussed at our 3rd Congress. See the January and April issues of the Supplement.)

The **Red Dawn** article goes on to draw further conclusions from what it considers the low wage levels and the piecework system. It sums up that by the first five-year plan the Soviet working class was subject to a "belt tightening policy." Moreover, that it suffered from a "rate of exploitation that would make any western private capitalist pale with envy."

Some of the facts presented to prove this seem questionable. Moreover, by focusing on money wages, it fails to take into account the social measures that were made in favor of the working masses: in health care, in education, in childcare, in assuring low cost of housing despite shortages, etc. These things were remarkable given that the revolution was only beginning to work out of the extreme poverty which it inherited. There is no question that the Soviet Union was a poor country, and the revolution could

not immediately change this. But its idea of social measures was remarkable when compared to the much richer capitalist west, which was plunged into economic crisis.

Beyond this, phrases like "belt tightening" and "rate of exploitation" must be used with care. After all, no revolution is possible without sacrifice. For the first years of the revolution the workers had gone cold and hungry, fought a brutal civil war, and suffered every torment in order to defend their power. By the late 20's the economy was barely getting off of its knees. A huge effort was still undoubtedly necessary if the working class was to turn back the capitalist forces at work in the fields of trade and the vast private kulak economy in the countryside.

Sacrifices on the part of the workers to guard their power, to reorganize society along socialist lines, to build up their factories and lay the foundations of socialist prosperity—that is one thing. For workers to be squeezed in order to fatten the rich ruling bureaucrats—that is something else. How and when the one reverted to the other can't be answered as simply as just measuring "belt tightening" with the same assumption, that all the surplus product goes to the rich as under capitalism.

d) Bonuses for Officials

Part of answering this is to examine how and when the new class of wealthy Soviet officials and bureaucrats was formed. **Red Dawn** proceeds to list a series of perks and bonuses aimed at party and state officials, and technicians and intellectuals. Unfortunately, **Red Dawn** gives few hard facts. What's more, developments in the 1920's, 30's and 40's are thrown together in a heap. Sometimes it is left unclear what took place when. In other cases the dates simply do not seem accurate.

For example, at a certain point the Soviet government no longer confiscated the inheritances of the wealthy. When this took place may have significance because it may perhaps indicate when a wealthy stratum was in place that would be worried about passing down its riches. **Red Dawn** claims that the October Revolution's confiscatory high level of taxation on inheritances was lifted in 1929. At that time it claims that a new law was passed allowing inheritances above 500,000 rubles and putting a lid of 10% on the level of taxing even such large inheritances.

It appears that some changes in the inheritance laws may have taken place in 1929. However, the sources we have seen say that the confiscatory levels of taxation were *still in force* in 1929, although there may have been some other changes in the law at that time. One source puts the date of adoption of what seems to be the law **Red Dawn** is referring to as 9 January 1943. This source also claims that from the early days of the revolution, the "confiscatory level of taxation [of inheritances] was retained until the forties." (See Mervyn Matthews, **Privilege in the Soviet Union**, pages 72 and 102)

Besides the question of inheritance, there is a whole string of other questions about the whens and hows of the

creation of the USSR's rich, bourgeois stratum. As we have already discussed, even from the days of the NEP there were high salaries, privileges and bonuses for the technicians and experts that had been trained under the capitalists. At the early stages, this was discussed openly as a necessary retreat from proletarian principle born of the need to purchase the use of their expertise. Lenin's discussion of this is pretty clear. Less clear is why there was the step-by-step introduction of higher salaries and other perks for communist and Soviet officials. Exactly what was done and why needs further examination. However, this, too, did not begin with the first five-year plan. Moreover, it seems that it was after the first five-year plan that these salaries and bonuses became truly exorbitant.

e) Work Books and Restrictive Measures

Finally, **Red Dawn** lists a number of measures which it says added up to "political and administrative oppression to a considerable degree" against the working class. It decries various measures enforcing a stiff labor discipline and, in particular, condemns the work books, introduced for industrial and transport workers in 1931, as "An effective way of blacklisting 'trouble-making' workers!"

We ourselves have looked with concern on the increasing resort to administrative measures as one of the major weaknesses and problems in the period of the first five-year plan. (See the **Supplement**, Jan. 15, pp. 20, 21) This is an issue that definitely deserves further consideration.

However, here too there has to be careful consideration of what actually happened in this period to determine how the problem developed.

Take the issue of work books. They were first used in the Soviet Union during the war communism period. They were later reintroduced in late 1930 or 1931 and "arbitrary termination of employment" listed. It may well be significant that this did not take place in 1928 or 29, at the beginning of the first five-year plan, but later on, when already certain changes were being made. For one thing, it does not fit in with the idea that the beginning of the first five-year plan marked the social-fascist dictatorship over the workers. Moreover, it seems that it was not until 1938—that is, the third five-year plan, not the first—that all disciplinary measures at the workplace were entered in work books. (Geoffrey Hosking, **The First Socialist Society**, pp. 156-7)

Red Dawn says that the work books were an effective way to get rid of trouble-making workers. We don't know if they are just assuming this from the nature of the regulations or have found this out from study. In any case, **Red Dawn** also says that in 1932 the Labor Code was revised and that "workers were forbidden to change their employment or place of residence without permission." But in fact there seems to have been massive turnover in Soviet factories and migration of workers from factory town to factory town throughout most of the 1930's. This was discussed as a problem during this period, and it seems to have persisted anyway. We do not yet know the full nature

of the internal passport and work books, but it doesn't seem that one can just assume that everyone was simply ordered about.

Furthermore, the issue of work books itself requires discussion beyond simply assuming that any work books are automatically oppression of the workers. Undoubtedly, under a capitalist regime work books could be used as another chain binding the workers to their employers. But under a proletarian regime the issue is more complex. Lenin considered that work books could also be used in the process of socialist reorganization of the society. A work book was seen as a weapon against the rich, submitting the former idlers and speculators to the socialist principle "those who do not work, neither shall they eat."

During the First World War, the capitalist government of Russia had imposed work books and compulsory labor on the workers. On the eve of the October Revolution, Lenin discussed the significance of these measures under the workers' government that was about to be born:

"...The means and instruments for this have been placed in our hands by the capitalist state in the war. These means are the grain monopoly, bread rationing and labor conscription. 'He who does not work, neither shall he eat'--this is the fundamental, the first and most important rule the Soviets of Workers' Deputies can and will introduce when they become the ruling power.

"Every worker has a work book," Lenin continued. "This book does not degrade him, although at present it is undoubtedly a document of capitalist wage-slavery, certifying that the workman belongs to some parasite.

"The Soviets will introduce work books for the rich and then gradually for the whole population (in a peasant country work books will probably not be needed for a long time for the overwhelming majority of the peasants). The work book will cease to be the badge of the 'common herd', a document of the 'lower' orders, a certificate of wage-slavery. It will become a document certifying that in the new society there are no longer any 'workmen,' nor, on the other hand, are there any longer men who do not work." (See "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?", September, 1917 in *Collected Works*, vol. 26, pp. 109-110)

This was written before the socialist revolution. Then, from the first days after the triumph of the Soviet revolution, the Bolsheviks tried to tackle the problem of organizing a universal and compulsory labor service in the face of sabotage and social disintegration. Debates raged in the ranks of the Bolshevik Party and the trade unions on how this was to be accomplished, on the proper role and forms

of compulsion, and so forth.

In the first days, labor exchanges connected to the unions controlled employment. Later the labor exchanges became part of the Peoples Commissariat of Labor and various other forms were used. The workers of Petrograd and Moscow were issued work book in June, 1919. (See E.H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution*, vol. 2, page 192.) From the beginning severe sanctions were taken against those who refused assigned work or violated labor discipline. (Frederick I. Kaplan, *Bolshevik Ideology and the Ethics of Soviet Labor*, chapter XII "Labor Discipline," page 335-372.) With the adoption of the NEP there was a relaxation of the measures of compulsion used during "war communism" in the civil war.

Now the conditions of the civil war and the first five-year plan vary a good deal with respect to the problems of labor discipline. And a measure like work books can change and have different significance at different periods--there may already have been severe problems with the work books of 1931. Nevertheless, what all these considerations show, is that one has to discuss the issue more carefully than just pointing to work books and labor discipline. There are issues to weigh, both concerning what actually happened, and concerning the principles at stake with different methods of labor discipline in the transition to socialism. Were certain forms wrong from the start? And if not, how does one ensure that they are used in favor of the working class? Etc.

There are a number of other issues of restrictive measures that are of importance, but which we do not yet have sufficient knowledge to discuss. It seems to us that, precisely because the issue of the growth of administrative measures, draconic threats, and bureaucratic decrees was a problem in the 1930's, it has to be discussed more carefully than Red Dawn does.

* * *

Such are the points on industry from which Red Dawn concludes that the workers were placed under a state capitalist regime with the first five-year plan. On each point, there is a lack of a concrete historical assessment. In our comments here, we have not given this assessment, but simply pointed to some factors that have to be taken into account in making it. Whatever the final conclusion on the five-year plan, such a historical assessment is vital to actually get a picture of revolutionary methods as contrasted to methods of capitalist restoration.

Collectivization

The other major economic issue raised by Red Dawn with respect to the five-year plan is the collectivization of the peasantry. The peasant question is, if anything, even more complex. At least it is a more foreign subject for us as we have no experience with a peasantry like that in Russia. Nonetheless, it is evident that Red Dawn makes similar lapses in historical concreteness on this front as well.

In 1928, along with the first five-year plan, came the launching of the collectivization of the peasantry on a mass scale. Up until that time the great majority of peasants had been engaged in individual farming on a capitalist or commodity production basis. **Red Dawn** condemns the collectivization campaign of the late 20's and early 30's with sweeping strokes. It is declared to be an assault against the peasantry as a whole:

"The aim of the enforced collectivization -- which is estimated to have been the death for millions of peasants -- not only kulaks -- was to eliminate the economic power of the peasantry and to pump food-stuffs and raw materials into the town for the industrialization, without having to give the peasants manufactured goods in return."

Red Dawn then argues that collectivization could have been carried out voluntarily without so much violence, destruction and opposition.

To begin with, whatever can be said about collectivization, it certainly cannot be said to have been simply to plunder the countryside without supplying anything in return to the peasants. For example, one of the key elements of the first five-year plan was a crash effort to build up the industry to build tractors, machinery and other necessities of modern large-scale farming. And large number of tractors and other supplies were sent to the countryside throughout the 1930's. There may have been major problems connected to the fast pace of collectivization at the beginning of the first five-year plan when industry was just beginning to produce the farm machinery and other supplies needed to attract the peasants to the collective farms. There may have been any number of weaknesses in how agriculture was supplied, and even larger amount of supplies may well have been needed. But it cannot be said that the peasants were simply squeezed for grain and raw materials "without having to give the peasants manufactured goods in return."

Undoubtedly, every type of mistake was committed in this collectivization. After all, it was an unprecedented social undertaking involving tens of millions of households. Undoubtedly there were all kinds of abuses. There were tendencies to rely on administrative measures from above that undercut mass mobilization and provoked antagonism among the rural masses. However, any overall evaluation must make an assessment of the class struggle that was gripping the society at the time. What were the prospects of the revolutionary power holding out in the face of the tightening vice of the kulak (capitalist) economy in the countryside? What was the nature of the class contradictions among the peasants? What stand did the poorer sections take towards the collectivization? Is it even conceivable that such a vast reorganization of the peasant economy was possible without a relatively deep foundation of sympathy, if not active support, among the poor? What role did the working class play? It seems that these things must be posed and studied carefully before drawing the

conclusion that this collectivization was simply imposed against the will of the peasantry.

Red Dawn says that collectivization "is estimated to have been the death for millions." There are indeed widely conflicting stories on collectivization, but **Red Dawn** does not explain why it believes such estimates and how it thinks the deaths occurred. If this actually took place during collectivization, it would have been a major disaster, and undoubtedly would have had a big effect on the country as a whole. It would pose a number of serious questions about the cause of these deaths, the conditions under which they took place, and who was involved. It would show the gravity of the social conflict at the time. This was a time in Soviet history of extremely acute struggles and social upheaval. And such a tragic result of the struggle would underline the necessity of carefully studying the situation. To say that many died without discussing how and why and under what conditions is of little help in analyzing this history.

The collectivization of the late 20's and early 30's, with the enormous strains that it placed on the whole society, surely had a major impact on subsequent development in the 1930's and afterwards. It was a huge experiment in social and economic transformation. To learn from this experiment, to understand the economic and social results, to judge the strengths and weaknesses cannot be done by reducing it to plundering the peasants.

Education

Red Dawn also takes up the question of education. Here too it finds that the first-five year plan marks a dividing line. Although in general **Red Dawn** believes that the 1923-28 period was a period of quantitative degeneration leading to a qualitative counterrevolution, in the field of education it finds that the situation was pretty good until the first five-year plan. It says that:

"...The 1920's was also a period of radical pedagogical experiments, aiming at breaking down the traditional grinding, stimulating collectivism and independent thinking and providing the toilers' sons and daughters with as fair possibilities as the situation allowed. As well, a quota was established, which reserved the majority of places at institutions of higher education for children of workers and peasants.

"But during the first five-year plan, a marked change took place. In 1930, a new curriculum was passed, which meant an end to the radical aim and direction. Theoretical and practical education was now separated from each other, the quotas were removed and the old pre-revolutionary mark and examination system was restored. Soon the result appeared. In 1938, as much as 47.3% of the students were children of civil

servants and intellectuals--stratas constituting only 6% of the population of the country. ... In 1940, fees were introduced for all education from middle school and upwards."

Education is actually quite an important issue for the Soviet Union. Among other things, it is connected to the issue of how the working class is to take over practical direction of the entire state and economy.

But here again the situation is more complicated than what *Red Dawn* depicts. In fact, the first five-year plan seems to be the period with the greatest efforts to have the working class conquer the educational strongholds. A look at this may be of value not only for its own sake, but to show some of the complexity and zig-zags typical of Soviet history and to show that one cannot study history solely from decrees.

First let us look into the question of admissions to higher education.

In 1918, right after the socialist revolution of October 1917, the Soviet government proclaimed a policy of open admissions to higher education for all who wanted. Secondary school education was not a requirement for such admission. In some places, experimental "rabfaks"--workers' faculties--were opened up to provide workers with an alternative to formal secondary schooling.

But this policy could not be sustained. On the one hand, the scarcity of resources meant that there were only a limited number of seats in the universities. On the other hand, under the NEP an important concession to the old intelligentsia and some remnants of the urban propertied classes was giving their children the possibility of getting a university education. Thus by 1922 the policy of open admissions was replaced by a quota system under which preference would go to students of worker or peasant origin.

However, the implementation of this quota system was quite weak. For one thing, almost anyone could pose as a son or daughter of the working class. For another, the professors, overwhelmingly from the old society, took a positive delight in making life miserable for the "riff-raff" foisted on them by the quota system. As a result of professorial persecution, of economic pressures, and of the poorer quality of secondary schooling of most working class students, the drop-out rate for working class students was very high. The proportion of students of working class origin in this period was nominally no more than 30%, and was probably lower in reality. (Early Soviet education is dealt with by Kendall E. Bailes, *Technology and Society under Lenin and Stalin*, pp. 189-191)

In fact, the quota system was dropped altogether in 1926, during NEP, not the first five-year plan. (Lewin, in *Cultural Revolution in Russia 1928-1931*, Sheila Fitzpatrick editor, p.51).

In 1928, with the start of the first five-year plan, a new quote system was introduced. It focused on the admission of industrial workers to higher technical education, which

became the principal area of higher education. A mass campaign was run in the factories for the nomination of workers to go to the university; in this campaign special attention was placed on nominating Party members. The rabfaks were greatly extended, and workers were frequently given time off for study. The proportion of students of working class origin reached 58% in 1932-33, a level never reached during the NEP in the 20's. (Lapidus, in *Cultural Revolution in Russia 1928-1931*, p. 92)

However, a change began in 1931, in the latter part of the first five-year plan. Quotas were revised, giving the technical intelligentsia equality with industrial workers. It was not until 1935, during the second five-year plan, that they were abolished altogether. (Lewin, p. 73, Bailes, p. 205) The rabfaks were curtailed and in 1938 (at the start of the third five-year plan) gave way to the "zaochnye fakultery", which were night schools, with no time off for study. (Geoffrey Hosking, *The First Socialist Society*, p. 216) During the mid and latter 1930's the proportion of students of working class origin fell to NEP levels, though there were twice or three times more such students than a decade earlier. (Lewin, p.73 and Frederick Schuman, *Soviet Politics at Home and Abroad* p. 337)

Meanwhile the period of the first five-year plan also witnessed the growth of primary and secondary education by some two million students. As well, pre-school enrollment grew from about 100,000 to one million or so. (Lapidus, p. 101)

What about the question of curriculum, which is raised by *Red Dawn*? Here too the twists and turns seem more complex than what *Red Dawn* presented. There were educational experiments after the socialist revolution. But nevertheless, through the bulk of the 1920's, the "gymnasium" system of the old society was preserved, although under a different name. (Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union 1921-1934*). For better or worse, the height of radical experimentation in curriculum may have come in the period of 1929-1931. (See Lapidus)

There do appear to be reversals in educational policy in 1931-1932. But these were reversals of policies launched in 1928-29, earlier in the first five-year plan.

Red Dawn also talks about 1938 and 1940, but this refers to a much later period. 1938 and 1940 are in the third five-year plan, and can hardly be used as evidence of the policy followed in the first five-year plan.

We will come back to the issue of education again later while discussing *Red Dawn's* use of educational figures with respect to party composition. But here it is already clear that the policy on education went through a series of convulsions, of leaps forward and turns back. It is necessary to study this process carefully to understand its meaning, what was consistent with the march towards socialism, and what weighed against it. It is clear that it was not practically possible to immediately introduce a truly socialist educational system, and so the study of the various leaps and twists is not simply a study of some quirks, but has a

good deal of interest. But this study of education, however, requires a good deal of effort to ascertain the facts, and a broad conception of what issues are at stake.

What About the New Economic Policy?

Red Dawn contends that what it considers to have been a catastrophic collectivization was created by the previous wrong policy:

"A correct policy," **Red Dawn** concludes, "would have been to much earlier base the policy on a proletarian class stand, basing it on the poor peasants and the main parts of the middle peasants, sharpen the class struggle in the countryside against the kulaks, and thus develop the tiny collectivization movement which in fact did exist. But the bureaucracy instead made concessions to the kulaks, held back the poor peasants and neglected their interests, thus helping drive many middle-peasants in under the influence of the kulaks--and because of that, later the bureaucracy was forced to turn rightabout, smash the kulaks and, through force instead of mass mobilization, carry through a collectivization."

This presumably is put forward as an alternative or replacement for the New Economic Policy, which was carried out in the period before first five-year plan. But there is no overall consideration of the NEP, although there is the condemnation of "making concessions to the kulaks."

The NEP was adopted in 1921 after a broad party debate. Lenin argued strenuously for its adoption as a necessary retreat in the process of socialist transformation--a retreat that would open the way for a further socialist advance. He stated openly and repeatedly that the NEP was a series of unpleasant concessions to the capitalist elements, including concessions to the kulak elements among the peasants, that had been forced on the proletariat and poor by the situation.

In order to judge the "concessions to the kulaks," it would be necessary to discuss the conditions in which these concessions were made. Were these backward steps necessary? Were Lenin and the others correct in arguing that drastic concessions were permissible in principle and essential for the eventual transition to socialism in the given conditions? As well, there is not just the issue of how NEP was originally conceived, but how it was carried out in practice and whether additional and harmful concessions were made. Finally, what did NEP accomplish? Was it carried on too far or for too long?

Red Dawn skims over the top of these issues. At one point it may be implying that the NEP was extended too long. But at other points it appears to condemn the NEP altogether without necessarily realizing that it is doing so. For example, as early as 1923 it refers to the bureaucracy

in power having a policy of "acquiescing to the pressures from the NEP-men and kulaks"--which apparently is a reference to the concessions to the kulaks and capitalists involved in the NEP. In this way **Red Dawn** tends to dispense with all the issues involved in the NEP policy and instead present it as mere unprincipled bending on the part of the evil bureaucracy. This is an easy explanation but, in our view, not a very good one.

The Party Between 1920 and 1928

Besides the particular question of the NEP, the **Red Dawn** touches on other issues from the earlier Soviet history. It sums up that:

"What happened during the period from 1923 to 1928 was a **quantitative process** in the direction towards counterrevolution,"

with this process culminating in the consolidation of state capitalism by 1928. Why, given its points of view, it says that the process towards counterrevolution began in 1923 and not before is unclear. Of course, it may be influenced by the fact that Lenin was still playing a major role up until then. But many of the policies **Red Dawn** denounces actually began soon after the triumph of the Soviets in October, 1917 or were advocated and defended by Lenin.

Red Dawn says that a process of bureaucratization took place in the party. It states that

"By the end of the 1920's most of those who had been part of the Party which had led the revolution, had been removed from real influence over politics. They were replaced by men whose role in the revolution had been insignificant: the second-order functionaries who had manned the apparatus of the party, such ones who had passed over to the Bolsheviks from the Mensheviks after the revolution and, in many cases, even after the civil war, the new bureaucracy which had multiplied during the 1920's."

But what basis is there for all these assertions? What type of study has been made of the nature of the party, and of the influx of new members (which is something that should take place in a living party)? What evidence is there that the people who carried out the revolution were gone, and that those who joined the party after the revolution were all insignificant or bad elements? This is a dramatic assertion, but it doesn't seem to be based on any close study of the Party. In any case, little is given in the article to back it up.

The second article, **On the question of the Stalinist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union**, gives some statistics about party membership, so let's look at them. It talks of the "disappearance of the old Guard" and says that only 10% of those who were in the Party in 1917 were still there in 1939. This, however, leaves open the question of what happened in the 1920's. Furthermore, unless one

could trace this figure over the years between 1917 and 1939, it is hard to see how one could get any idea of the question **Red Dawn** asks "what happened with the others?" How many were killed by the counterrevolutionaries in the Civil War? How many proved incapable of disciplined party work? How many had political disagreements? How many were expelled, and for what? Etc. Without examining these things, the significance of the figures is unclear.

Furthermore, 1917 was a year in which the Bolshevik Party expanded immensely and rapidly with a new influx of workers during the revolutionary upsurge. If one doesn't take a sentimental attitude to 1917, but looks at it realistically, then one would generally expect that such an influx into the party might be very volatile. There is the process of sorting out those who can carry out party work. There are the many unexpected turns of the revolution, from the Civil War to the various changes in economic policies, which would take its toll on new members who came in during a inebriating upsurge of the revolution, a time of immediate action when there may not have been much time for theoretical tempering. And there may be many who only wanted to devote so many years to active revolutionary work before they "settled down."

And what happens if we look not at those who joined the party in the 1917 upsurge, but those who were in the party prior to 1917, those few thousands Bolsheviks who had gone through long painful years of underground work? We find that this "old guard" or former "undergrounders" seems to have maintained great influence in the party. One source claims that, on the eve of the first five-year plan,

"the further up one looked in the party hierarchy the more prominent the 'undergrounders' became. 'Undergrounders' formed 44 per cent of the delegates to the Fourteenth Congress in 1925, for example, and together with civil war veterans still dominated the higher party committees in 1927. Thus, about three-quarters of all senior secretaries were of pre-1917 seniority in 1925, and the 'undergrounders' still formed 71 per cent in 1927; 14 percent were civil war veterans. All but 10 of the Central Committee elected in 1927 had joined the party before 1917." (Schapiro, **The Communist Party of the Soviet Union**, revised edition, 1971, p. 314)

It doesn't appear that the position of this "old guard" was shaken in the next years. They did suffer badly in the repression of the late 30's (which is long after the events of the 20's). However, this was because the repression hit heavily at party members in influential positions, and the "old guard" was concentrated in these positions. J. Arch Getty, in his doctoral thesis **The 'Great Purges' Reconsidered: The Soviet Communist Party, 1933-39** examined whether this "old guard" was singled out for repression, and he holds that it wasn't. (See the section "the Question of the Old Bolsheviks" in Chapter 9, "the 18th Party Congress

and Retrospective". Getty's doctoral thesis has apparently also been published as a book.)

This is hardly a picture of the "old guard" being reduced to insignificance, whether in the 20's or the first five-year plan or even after. The idea that a bureaucracy displaced the "old guard", thus allowing the restoration of capitalism, just doesn't work. As far as we can tell, it is simply not true that the "old guard" was pushed aside.

Red Dawn also raises that only 18% of the 730,000 members in the party in March 1921 were still in the Party in 1939. But once again, without a study of what happened to them in the intervening years, one is left only with suppositions. The study of Party history has to base itself on careful analysis, and not on impressions or sentimentality.

Red Dawn, in order to show the bureaucratization of the Party, gives percentages on the number of factory directors who are party members. It states that

"In 1923, 29% of the factory directors were party members, while already in 1925 the figure reached 95%. In 1936, it was reported to be 99.1%."

But what does this show? If it were really possible to use these figures without further consideration, they would show that something happened as early as 1925, rather than three years later. But actually, without knowing more about the situation, it is hard to deal with these figures at all. As we discussed above, there was a policy to establish one-person management. In the course of setting up this system there were a series of experiments with who the directors should be. So do these figures mean that the old administrators and managers are now filling the party? Or do they show that a policy exists to place communists in the position of directors? And if the latter, does this indicate an increase in the ability of the working class to actually direct the factories that it has formally taken over from the capitalists, or is it solely a bad phenomenon?

Such concrete questions have to be asked. And it is quite possible that the answer varies over time, with apparently similar statistics about managers being party member having different meanings at different times. Consider, for example, that one source claims that, with regard to the directors of state enterprises in 1928,

"The great majority of the directors, nearly nine-tenths, were party members, but only 2.8 per cent of them had had higher education. As against this, of the non-party directors, 58 per cent had higher educational training." (See Schapiro, **The Communist Party of the Soviet Union**, who is citing the Soviet journal **Bolshevik**)

This suggests that, at this time, there was a process of ordinary communists taking over management posts.

Another statistic given by **Red Dawn** to deal with the composition of the party goes as follows.

"...in 1939 only 5% of the Soviet citizens had gone through secondary school, but

29% of the Party members. That had been the case with somewhat above 11% of the members in 1927."

This is part of the evidence for the degeneration of the Party into a bureaucratic elite. Now, in fact we know that by 1939 a bourgeois strata was being consolidated out of the Soviet bureaucracy and intelligentsia, and that the Party stand towards its own class composition had changed. Nevertheless, to study this process, one has to do more than just cite this particular statistic. For one thing, this figure about 1939 doesn't say anything about whether the decisive change was in 1928 or much later. As well, at the very minimum, one would probably have to ask how many urban workers had high school education, especially among the relatively younger workers, and not just take the presumably much lower figure for society as a whole.

But there is also a more fundamental question. When using such a statistic, one would have to discuss the general relationship of the Party to education. When the working class becomes the ruling class, is it surprising that politically active people seek education? Wouldn't one expect that young party members, recruited from the more energetic and active section of the population, would tend to seek education? At a time when the working class needed to run society and industry, and given the shortage of technically competent people, and the need to displace the old specialists and bureaucrats, wouldn't education even be one of the political tasks of active people? If so, one would have to analyze educational figures more carefully in order to see what is bourgeoisification and what is typical of the thirst for education of the working class.

In fact, any workers' party when it takes power will be faced with the issue of managing the economy, training communist workers for administrative and technical work, and so forth. Moreover, this isn't only a question for the party itself, but a broader question for the working class as the new ruling class. In the Soviet Union, hundreds of thousands of workers were taken out of factory and manual work to carry out administrative and white collar tasks--the alternative would be to leave this to the old technical and bourgeois strata. This raises some fundamental questions about how to handle this process while keeping the party and society revolutionary? How is the crystallization of a labor aristocracy and bureaucracy above the class to be avoided? How is the bourgeoisification and bureaucratization of the party to be prevented? There is a great deal that can be learned about these questions from the tragic degeneration of the revolution in the Soviet Union. However, it takes more than simply showing that communists received education or took over factory management.

After all, we are studying Soviet history not just to provide a thousand and one facts to back up our condemnation of the present-day Soviet Union as a capitalist ruling class. First and foremost, we are studying it to learn the laws of revolution and to deepen our knowledge of issues that will affect all proletarian revolutions.

"Substitutionalism" and the Role of the Proletarian Party

As we mentioned, *Red Dawn* dates the bureaucratization of the party from 1920, although actually various of the policies and difficulties it discusses go back to the very start of the revolution. In 1920, *Red Dawn* says in the article *Some Remarks...*, "the working class which had made the revolution was itself decimated" by the impact of the wars and the economic collapse. It concludes from this:

"In the absence of the proletariat, there was no alternative than that the dictatorship of the class under the leadership of the party instead became the dictatorship of the party itself. This was a substitutionist situation."

Hence, supposedly, this situation compelled the Bolsheviks to resort to bureaucratic and authoritarian methods. And *Red Dawn* follows this to the rise of "communist bosses" and the defeat of the revolution.

It is certainly true that the small size of the working class and its dispersal was an acute problem for the new Soviet power. Among other things there was a severe shortage of trained workers to take on the new tasks of Soviet administration and organization in this vast peasant country. This made it that much harder to dispense with the bureaucracy.

However, it would be a mistake to consider that this dispersal of the working class is something altogether particular to the Russian revolution. Every workers' revolution in history has taken place in connection with wars or devastating crises. Even a severe economic crisis in "ordinary" times leads to major dislocations and even dispersal of the proletariat. That is one of the reasons why the workers need organization if they are to act as a cohesive class in a revolutionary crisis. In the first place that is why they need their political party which can organize and direct the action of the conscious workers, even when their natural factory organization is undermined or broken, even when dispersed in the midst of desperate civil war. This is one of the most fundamental positive lessons of the Russian Revolution.

Indeed, when the *Red Dawn* says that the revolutionary proletariat disappeared, it is overstating the situation. The existence of the Bolshevik Party, of the workers' state, of the Red Army, of the trade unions, etc. showed that the working class had succeeded, through organization, in maintaining itself in a difficult situation. It is impossible to work out the concept of the "substitutionist" situation without downplaying or devaluing the role of working class political organization and the role of party form of organization in particular. It is impossible to work out this theory consistently without ending up in a position that would deny the class basis for many events, regarding them all as a substitution of the revolutionary struggle for the masses.

In our opinion, the conditions facing the Bolsheviks in 1920, that *Red Dawn* points to, pose a different series of questions. Among other things, what were the tasks of

party building in this difficult situation? How did the Bolshevik Party undertake its work of organizing and mobilizing the masses?

Red Dawn cites Lenin on the dangers of bureaucracy to the Bolshevik Party. But it bypasses dealing with his overall analysis of the class struggle at that time. Lenin did not believe that a "substitutionalist" situation existed. He did not think that admitting the difficult problems facing the party meant denying its class basis or regarding it as an alien body sitting over the working class, and he bitterly denied the charge that the Party was a "Bonapartist" force detached from the working class. It seems to us that Lenin's views should be examined and studied. If one disagrees with these views, then the reasons for thinking they are wrong should be presented--it is misleading to instead leave things on the level of asserting that Lenin too talked about the dangers of bureaucracy.

"Substitutionalism" and the tasks of the revolution.

The "substitutionalist" analysis appears to replace consideration of the tasks of the revolution with doubts about the legitimacy of various revolutionary methods and of the centralism that is part of any revolution. The method of approach tends to be to take every flaw, every weakness (some real, some not) in the early Soviet period and draw a parallel to features of the later bureaucratic-revisionist regime. Thus **Red Dawn** denounces from 1920 the "authoritarian methods", "appointment from above", and "new 'communist' bosses." And it is hard to see why this denunciation should not logically apply to earlier years as well, since forceful methods were particularly used in the civil war and the "war communism" period and were in the process of being relaxed by 1920-3.

Of course, there were bureaucratic distortions, authoritarian excesses, and every type of flaw in the new Soviet power. But **Red Dawn's** treatment of these issues breezes over the necessary context. And that context is revolutionary methods to smash the old system and liberate the masses.

In the writings of Lenin and the Bolsheviks in the first years, there is merciless criticism of bureaucracy, militarist tendencies, and other shortcomings of the new Soviet power. However, that is only one side of things. On the other side, they repeatedly referred to the criticism that Engels leveled at so-called anti-authoritarians. "Have these gentlemen," Engels asked, "ever seen a revolution? A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is..." (Cited in Lenin's **The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky**, near the end of the first chapter)

Lenin and Bolsheviks stressed that for the workers' revolution to be successful it requires severe, even ruthless when necessary, methods against the class enemy and against disorganization. To defeat the more powerful forces of counterrevolution and to unite the efforts of the masses across a vast land required centralism as well, which implies the necessity of certain appointments from above. The

Bolshevik revolution introduced freedom for the masses, mass meetings of all types, democratic centralism, but it also required the building up of revolutionary authority.

No doubt the revisionists and bureaucrats of all types have and continue to try to legitimize themselves by presenting their iron-heeled methods of bureaucratic rule over the masses as the revolutionary methods and discipline required when the proletariat (and not the fatcat state capitalists) are on top. But the task of Marxist-Leninist criticism is teach the masses how to distinguish revolutionary dictatorship, revolutionary force based on the masses, from the revisionist counterfeit. Otherwise the critique of revisionism, no matter how satisfying it may seem, will fall apart the moment it is applied to the real test--guiding the next attempt of the proletariat to take and consolidate power.

Thus blanket and unqualified denunciation of the "new 'communist' bosses" in the first years of Soviet Russia carries the danger of renouncing the authoritarian, forceful, coercive--in short, dictatorial side--of revolution. And without this side, proletarian revolution and the transition to socialism are impossible, and the dictatorship of the proletariat is an empty phrase.

Did the Soviet government have a class basis?

The concept of the "substitutionalist" situation also seems to divert away from the issue of revolutionary policy by implying that the situation was hopeless. The objective situation had led to the alleged end of proletarian democracy and of working class power by 1920. **Red Dawn** does not give any mistakes that led to this alleged situation in 1920, but simply relates the objective difficulties facing the revolution.

Red Dawn does stress the character of the 1917 October Socialist Revolution as a proletarian revolution. It stresses that

"such allegations...that the working class played a small or no role and that Lenin seized power with an autocratically-run party, without the workers or over their heads, are nothing but lies and slanders."

For 1917.

Then comes 1920.

"...three years later the party still was in possession of power ... but the working class itself hardly existed any more. ...Of course, the regime still remained socialist, but now not because of its class basis, but through the fact that the government, the party holding power, in its activities represented the objective class interests of the working class and worked in the direction of a socialist construction. In the absence of the proletariat, there was no alternative than that the dictatorship of the class under the leadership of the party instead became

the dictatorship of the party itself. This was a substitutionalist situation." (Emphasis in the original)

Taken seriously, this would raise whether the Soviet government was still legitimate in 1920.

Red Dawn however holds that the Soviet government was "still by definition a workers' state." But, if there really was a "substitutionalist" situation, it was a strange workers' state. One without a class basis. One which was based on a party dictatorship substituting for the working class. One which had to build up a bureaucracy because it couldn't rely on the workers. But this is hard to understand theoretically or practically. How can a "workers' state" not have a class basis? What is left of the concept of workers' state? What is left of the concept of the class struggle? And how could the Soviet government stand up against foreign intervention and internal counterrevolution without a class basis?

There may well be such a thing as a substitutionalist government. For example, historically certain reformist governments have tried to carry out certain measures of benefit to the masses while refusing to mobilize the masses themselves. But such governments do have a class basis (although not a proletarian one) and are not workers' governments.

But back to the Soviet government in 1920. It is supposed to be a socialist state anyway, but only because its policies represented the objective interests of the working class (or, perhaps, the future working class, since the class-conscious working class is supposed to be basically non-existent.) But, although **Red Dawn** doesn't say so, can these policies completely represent the workers' interests when they lead to the alleged takeover by the bureaucracy in 1923? And doesn't this whole conception lead to divorcing the analysis of Soviet history from the class struggle to an arbitrary struggle of policies or personalities?

Red Dawn refers to Lenin's his famous description of the Soviet state as "a workers' state with bureaucratic distortions." But this doesn't fit in at all with the idea of a "substitutionalist situation", unless one can show that Lenin believed in the concept of a workers state "without a class basis". The significance of the concept of the "substitutionalist" situation is not the recognition of the problem of bureaucracy, but the conclusions it draws from this problem. Similarly, in discussing Lenin's views, one must not leave it at that Lenin recognized that there were problems, but continue onto Lenin's analysis of the tasks of the time, the way to fight bureaucratic distortions, and how the class struggle was unfolding.

We Must Study the Problems That Confronted the Soviet Revolution

Overall, it seems to us that the presentation of Soviet history made in the **Red Dawn** article does not have sufficient depth. For example, various basic economic measures are assigned the wrong date, the reasons for their

original establishment are not dealt with, nor is the experience with them examined. Nor has attention been paid to the theoretical side of these measures--such as the issue of transitional measures in the transition from capitalism to socialism, or the views of Lenin on the early Soviet state. In many cases conclusions have been drawn from isolated facts or statistics, apparently without seeing the need for a more painstaking study of the circumstances involved and the often complex history. Meanwhile the concept of the "substitutionalist" situation is, it seems to us, a step backwards, which is not historically accurate and which obscures the revolutionary tasks of the time and the role and significance of the proletarian political party.

Nevertheless **Red Dawn** has eagerly began the process of looking into a wide range of issues on Soviet history, and we expect that it will continue to take an active part in sorting out the burning questions of revolutionary theory.

We realize that our comments have posed questions rather than answering them. However, the study of the Soviet degeneration needs to address these and other questions or we will wind up with a critique of the Soviet Union that is hardly less superficial than the one offered by the Chinese or Albanians before us. Moreover, and this is the main thing, we will not be a step closer to grasping the Marxist-Leninist principles of the socialist transformation of society.

The Soviet revolution provides invaluable experience for the revolutionary proletariat precisely because it posed a series of the complex problems that this socialist transformation entails. It did so in a sharper way than any mass revolution before or since. The weakness in **Red Dawn's** critique is that it tends to bypass even posing what these problems and contradictions were.

We need to go deeper and further. This is the only way to give the working class a clear perspective of their socialist goals. This is the only way to instill confidence that they can organize themselves as the ruling class. Moreover, that they can successfully use their power to complete the transition from capitalist to socialist and communist society.

* * *

Postscript on Tony Cliff

As we were finishing the above article a few days ago, we received the June 15 issue of **Red Dawn**, along with **Red Dawn's** brief summary in English for the foreign reader. This issue contains a number of useful items on world events. It also contains some materials relating to theoretical issues. It includes a brief article on Tony Cliff's book **State Capitalism in Russia**. As well, it reprints the pamphlet **Deflected Permanent Revolution** by Tony Cliff, whom they regard as an "English Marxist theoretician". In our view, however, Cliff's framework is anti-Leninist. And, although he is critical of certain well-known trotskyst formulas, he basically is an ardent promoter of the trotskyst ideology.

Red Dawn certainly doesn't agree with Cliff on everything. But it seems to us that they have an overly favorable impression of his work. In studying their articles on Soviet history, we had noticed that a number of specific mistakes with regard to facts and certain weaknesses with regard to the method of study paralleled those in Cliff's book.

Perhaps the attraction of Cliff's book is that he presents a lot of facts about the Soviet Union that have not been dealt with by the Chinese and Albanians. He seems on the surface to carefully document his work, and, for example, includes statistics and abundant footnotes. The book appears to be comprehensive, and Cliff makes a great display of supposed theoretical depth. As well, he argues against the well-known trotskyst defense of the Soviet revisionist state as a "degenerated workers' state".

But we think that revolutionary Marxist-Leninists will find that the apparent strengths of Cliff's book vanish step by step as they look at it more carefully. The worst thing is that Cliff's method of approach inhibits further study. His historical framework is not only wrong, but it is so shallow and emotional it may inhibit interest in looking into further facets of Soviet history. Here we are not giving a full review of his book and his views, partially because we would prefer to be further along in our own study before doing so. But we will point to certain features of Cliff's work.

For one thing, his facts are often wrong or distorted or presented in a misleading way. He puts next to each other events taking place in quite different time periods, thus mixing together very different periods in Soviet history.

One of his key methods is to take some fact about the Soviet economy, and ask what is the worst thing it would mean if it were implemented under a capitalist or even a fascist regime. He then turns around and uses this answer to say that, see, the Soviet Union is obviously capitalist--and even worse than most capitalist states. Does the question of piece-work come up? He immediately says piece-work was used in Nazi Germany, and quotes an analysis of Nazi methods and motivations. Does the Soviet Union spend much effort on insuring its military preparedness? This shows how it squeezes the workers. Is the Soviet Union still poorer than the advanced capitalist states despite the revolution? This shows how its exploitation is even worse than that in the West.

This method of approach shows that Cliff is actually unable to analyze how capitalist restoration proceeded.

He essentially presents Soviet history, from a fairly early period, as one long horror story. This creates an atmosphere of indifference to checking the accuracy of such stories, and to studying Soviet history closely. After all, what difference would it make if 5% or 50% or 95% of the horrors are false, or if they are attributed to the wrong year--since it is not going to change the one basic conclusion the reader is supposed to draw, that things were really horrible in the Stalinist hell? The complexity and interest of Soviet history is basically lost--it is all reduced to just

the police and repression. And he ends up looking to the manifestoes of pro-Nazi Ukrainians working with the Hitlerites in World War II in the section of his book entitled "The social goals of the anti-Stalinist opposition." (pp. 262-3)

On the theoretical side, he may discuss many things, including "Arab feudalism under the Mamelukes" of past centuries as "an example of class society based on state property." (Cliff, pp. 273-5) But the more one comes to terms with such key and fundamental issues as the necessary transitional steps to socialism, how they were begun in the Soviet Union, how they evolved, how things went wrong, and how can correct transitional measures be distinguished from revisionist distortions of them, the more shallow and superficial Cliff turns out to be. Cliff believes that the basic answer is simple: "...as the October revolution did not spread, what social order could appear in Russia?" (p. 146) He asks, could it "be anything but 'a point in the process' of the development of capitalism, even if the capitalist class is abolished?" (p. 152) So naturally, for him, there can be no real issue of the correct revolutionary measures and transitional stages to deal with such a situation. All that is left is to contrast the general idea of socialism, or of the transition to socialism in ideal and easy conditions, with various bad things that eventually took place in the Soviet Union.

Thus, on the theoretical side, his book is actually directed against Lenin's views on the transition to socialism. He doesn't openly say this. He will quote Lenin on this or that, to imply that he is a Leninist, and then be silent about Lenin's views when he disagrees. Let us take just one example. Cliff deals with the relation of the "Taylor system" of industrial management to socialism. Since Taylorism, and the rationalization of production in general, means bitter oppression under capitalism, he implies that any use of Taylorism in the Soviet Union is also oppression. He sees nothing in Taylorism other than "the most refined method of capitalist exploitation" and cites Lenin's article **The Taylor system--the enslavement of man by the machine**, and even footnotes this to a Russian-language edition of Lenin's works. (Cliff, Chapter 1, p.22) However, Lenin, even in that very article, says the opposite. Lenin stresses that the rationalization of labor from Taylorism, **under capitalism**, leads to "still greater oppression and exploitation". But he also points that, **under workers' rule**, the rationalization of labor will help the workers improve their productivity and make themselves much "better off than they are today." (See Lenin's **Collected Works**, vol. 20, pp. 152-54, March 13, 1914. Later, after the socialist revolution of October 1917, Lenin again raised the issue of using what he saw as the positive part of Taylorism. See, for example, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government", **Collected Works**, vol. 27, pp. 258-9 in 1918 or "A Fly in the Ointment," **Collected Works**, vol. 33, p. 368 in 1922.) Cliff undoubtedly knew Lenin's views on this, but he didn't want to give his reader a chance to consider them.

The result is that the more the revolutionary study of

Soviet history develops, the more the emptiness of Cliff appears. And, with Cliff, the horror story approach to Soviet history seems like a concession to Cold War anti-communism.

Indeed it is notable that Cliff's pamphlet **The Deflected Permanent Revolution** displays a positive grudge about the development of revolutionary movements in the last fifty years. But we'll leave for later a theoretical discussion of his pamphlet.

If one doesn't recognize the empty nature of Cliff's approach, the danger exists that one may be diverted from further study. As we said in the introduction to this article, we have a high opinion of **Red Dawn's** enthusiasm to deal with Soviet history. But, it seems to us, that for **Red Dawn**, as for ourselves, the study of Soviet history is just beginning. If hasty conclusions were to be drawn and the study were to stop now, the results would be unfortunate. By denouncing Cliff's framework, we wish to point out that it is necessary to continue and deepen the study of Soviet history.

It seems to us that the method of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism in the study of Soviet history has to be slower and more painstaking than Cliff's collection of horrors. We must get a far more concrete picture of Soviet history. And we have a far deeper set of questions to ask about economic and political evolution in the Soviet Union. We expect that this will be a slow and even frustrating process. For that matter, it is not easy when one has to take weeks and months to verify the real reality and not just make quick

assumptions. It is not easy when one has to bear in mind constantly the problem of dealing with various sources all of whom have their own axes to grind. And at first each step of study seems to raise more questions than it answers. But serious work is the only way to get a fundamentally deeper analysis than has existed in the past. It is the only way to answer the questions needed to direct revolutionary practice.

It should also be noted that Cliff, despite his disagreement with certain formulas upheld by most trotskysts today--such as that the Soviet revisionist state is today a "degenerated workers' state"--is nevertheless a fervent trotskyst. Thus his superficial approach to Soviet history, and his anti-Leninism, are in line with his overall ideology. Cliff, in fact, has been a big figure in one of the major trends of trotskysm--the trend which used to call itself "International Socialists" and whose most prominent grouping is the SWP in Britain. In practice, underneath its phrasemongering, this has been one of the more rightist trends in its practical stand toward the political struggle.

Today revolutionary Marxist-Leninists are faced with the task of unrelenting struggle against the anti-Leninist ideology of Trotskyism, as well as against Soviet revisionism. True, in doing historical research on the Soviet Union, one just judge everything with open eyes, unprejudiced, the acts and role of Trotsky too. But everything we have seen so far reinforces not only our opposition to Soviet revisionism, but our determination to carry through the struggle against Trotskyism as well. ■

Two articles from Swedish "Red Dawn" on the degeneration of the Soviet Union

Below we reprint two articles, translated from Röd Gryning (Red Dawn), journal of the Communist League of Norrköping. The first article is from issue #7, 1988 and the second is from issue #9, 1988. Elsewhere in this issue of the Supplement we give our views on the important issues raised by these articles. We extend our thanks to Red Dawn for having provided us with these English translations, and we have made some minor grammatical changes.

Some remarks concerning the analysis of the degeneration of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the victory of the counterrevolution in the Soviet Union

The view of the Soviet Union (and also other states of the same kind, for instance the East European countries, China, and Cuba) is a question of decisive importance for the revolutionary struggle. It not only concerns how to take a stand in various concrete situations of international politics, although that in and by itself is not something unimportant. No, above all it concerns which alternative we are to put forward as our goal, i.e., what kind of society we want, what we mean by socialism.

There could hardly be any doubt about what enormous harm to the cause of socialism the degeneration of the USSR has caused. A long series of awful regimes of oppression, from Poland to Ethiopia, are dragging the banner of communism in the mud by posturing as "socialist". This is one of the main arguments of the class enemy against the revolution. It is also something which has not failed to influence the best elements of the working class towards an ambivalent and disillusioned attitude—many of them are for this very reason skeptical about the task of carrying out a proletarian revolution. They ask if all sacrifices would be in vain, if it is unavoidable that the oppressors of today would simply be replaced by new ones, as has happened in these countries.

Therefore, it could hardly be an exaggeration to say that the credibility of Marxist-Leninists, to a great extent, depends on the ability to in a clear way define the real character of the USSR, without being vague or hiding behind dogmatic phrases, and to give a concrete, scientific explanation of how those things that happened could happen.

The Marxist-Leninist movement's traditional analysis of the Soviet Union

What usually is being referred to as the Marxist-Leninist movement began to take form on a world scale after Albania and China had broken with the USSR in the beginning of the 1960's. The old communist parties had in most cases completely degenerated—they had been following

the anti-Leninist "popular front" policy of the Comintern after 1935 with all its consequences, and when the 20th Soviet Party Congress in 1956 put forward an outright revisionist line, it was nothing but a programmatic confirmation of a policy which in fact had been implemented for years before by the Russians as well as by most of the other "communist" parties.

The difference with the Stalin period is thus just a quantitative one, and it consisted mainly in throwing overboard the formal veil of "ideological orthodoxy" that had earlier been firmly upheld. The condemnation of Stalin, who until then had been the object of the most devout glorification, created much more of a shock as it took place simultaneously. A result of this was that Stalin was being identified with a correct policy quite contrary to the one which Khrushchev and company represented. A typical example of this is the Swedish communist Set Persson, one of the main leaders of the Communist Party, who at least since the mid-1940's fought against the degeneration of the party, thereby putting forward a line which in the main was correct, but who despite that was not able to see the connection between, on one hand, the degeneration of the Swedish Communist Party and the world communist movement, and on the other hand, the 7th Congress of the CI and the Soviet policy under Stalin. After being expelled from the party in 1953 together with some adherents, shortly after the 20th Soviet Party Congress three years later he was the first one in the world openly taking up the struggle against modern Soviet revisionism. But at the same time as defending revolutionary Leninism, he in an almost mechanical way defended Stalin. With that he blocked his own way

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to understanding the roots of the evil, and thus his criticism could never be consistent enough.

The same thing can be said about the Party of Labor of Albania which, objectively, never had been a Stalinist, i.e. revisionist, party. During World War II, the PLA did not carry out any real "popular front" policy, e.g., it did not implement the liquidationist and opportunist schemes of the 7th Comintern congress (something which, on the contrary, many of the PLA's sister parties at that time did do), but did all the time uphold the independent class interests of the workers and the toiling masses. This made possible the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the construction of socialism in Albania, in contrast to the other so-called "people's democracies". But nevertheless, the PLA was not able to really emancipate itself from the Stalin tradition, but did in the same way get stuck into a dogmatic defense of Stalin and the Stalin period.

The Communist Party of China had already in the 1930's developed their own hue of modern revisionism--"Mao Zedong Thought". The Chinese "People's Republic" which was established in 1949 was a bourgeois state based on class collaboration of a typical social-democratic kind. Mao backed up Khrushchov at the beginning, but turned his coat about 1958-59 when the national interests of these "socialist" big powers collided with each other. The CPC now joined with the PLA and began to attack the Khrushchevites for "deviations from Marxism-Leninism", at first internally but later on also in public. And, of course, the Chinese had their own reasons for basing themselves on the Stalinist tradition and avoiding dealing closer with the revisionism that existed before the 20th Soviet Party Congress. Nevertheless, the polemics which were carried out by the CPC against the Soviets and their parrots--"the great polemic"--did in words contain a lot of good stands, which provided great inspiration and guidance to the growing Marxist-Leninist movement. That was a couple of years before the Chinese were to proclaim "Mao Zedong Thought" as being "the third and highest stage of Marxism-Leninism, Marxism-Leninism in the epoch when imperialism is heading for its final collapse and socialism is advancing towards its world-wide victory," and to force it down the throats of the Marxist-Leninist parties as the "general line of the world movement".

Thus, such was thus the ideological background of the formation of the Marxist-Leninist movement. Despite all shortcomings, it was a great step forward; it was a renaissance for revolutionary Leninism. Because it was there that the stress was put--nor would any other thing have been possible, either, since it was in outright confrontation with the theses of the 20th Party Congress. The various Marxist-Leninist parties were oriented towards a proletarian class stand, defending the scientific teachings on the class struggle, the class character of the state, the armed revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat, the class character of social-democracy and revisionism, differences between just and unjust wars, etc. Given the situation at that time, this was the main side, but one has to be clear

about the fact that these correct stands were taken not because of sticking to Stalin, but rather despite that. (This was shown later on, when the emphasis was shifted over to the "popular front" line, something which made possible the "three worlds" theory as well as those rightist deviations being put forward today by the PLA.)

The fact that a counterrevolution must have taken place in the Soviet Union, and that it had led to the establishment of a special kind of state monopoly capitalism, became clear early on to the PLA and the Marxist-Leninist movement. But because of the above mentioned inability to look further back than 1956 in the struggle against modern revisionism, it became a generally accepted axiom that this counterrevolution must have taken place after the death of Stalin. So wrote, to take an example, the First Secretary of the PLA, Comrade Enver Hoxha, in October, 1964:

"It is true that an historical turn started when the Khrushchev group took the reins of state in their hands, but this was a big retrogressive turn, a turn that flung the doors open to opportunism and revisionism, to treachery and degeneration, to the undermining of unity and beginning the rift in the communist movement, to approaches to, and unity with, the imperialists and other enemies of peoples and socialism, towards sabotage of the revolution and restoration of capitalism." (Hoxha, *Speeches and Articles 1963-64*, "8 Nëntori" Publishing House, Tirana 1977, p. 241-242)

The Communist Party of China were, of course, those who went the furthest; their point of departure was not Marxist-Leninist, and in their case it was hardly a matter of failure and inability to make a correct analysis, but rather of the idealist way in which Maoism derives class character from temporary political maneuvers (see the article "Some Comments on the Philosophy of Mao Zedong," in *Red Dawn* number 5 and 6, 1988). This is how the Chinese described the restoration of capitalism in the USSR:

"Being the first state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Soviet Union lacked experience in consolidating this dictatorship and preventing the restoration of capitalism. In these circumstances, and after Stalin's death, Khrushchev, a capitalist-roader in power hiding in the Soviet Communist Party, came out with a surprise attack in his 'secret report' viciously slandering Stalin and by every kind of treacherous maneuver usurped Party and government power in the Soviet Union. This was a counterrevolutionary coup d'etat, which turned the dictatorship of the proletariat into the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and which overthrew socialism and restored capitalism." (*Leninism or Social-Imperialism?*, published by the

Office of Culture and Information at the Embassy of the People's Republic of China, Stockholm 1970, in Swedish, page 9. [We have substituted the English language pamphlet version from China, 1970,p.13.-- Supplement.]

This is not only anti-Marxist, but absurd too! As if a small clique of intrigue-makers--may they be "evil" and "cunning" or not--through a simple coup d'etat could be able to overthrow a whole social system! We, for our part, can take such fairy tales for what they are, because reality is not like the scenario of a Peking opera. But if one considers the fact that Mao saw class struggle as independent of its material basis--production--then it is not too strange that he and his followers could see the question in such a way ...

Sure, "analyses" were made of what could have led to the counterrevolution that was considered to have taken place during the 1950's. But it is in the nature of the matter that these analyses could not be too deep-going even among Marxist-Leninists. In Albania, extensive discussions were held during the 1960's and the first half of the 1970's on what happened in the USSR and how a repeat of that was to be avoided. A series of practical measures were taken--measures which in their content were something quite different from the policy that was carried out in the USSR at the time of Stalin. The existing tendencies of a privileged and omnipotent bureaucracy were fought through mass mobilization and workers' and peasants' control. Class struggle was intensified and the level of political consciousness of the masses was elevated--the dictatorship of the proletariat was strengthened. But since the PLA was not able to see the fundamental difference with the USSR of Stalin, but saw the difference as important but nevertheless quantitative, it was considered as a merely tactical question of how far to go! During the last ten-year period, the mass movements and revolutionization campaigns seem to have faded away, while pragmatic considerations have come to dominate. That may have very serious consequences with regard to the ability of socialism to survive and develop in Albania.

Let us see how Comrade Enver looked upon the situation in the USSR under Stalin:

"After the Great Patriotic War (i.e. World War II--*Red Dawn's* remark) some negative phenomena appeared in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The difficult economic situation, the devastation and destruction, the great human losses which occurred in the Soviet Union, required a total mobilization of the cadres and the masses for its consolidation and progress. However, instead of this, a falling-off in the character and morale of many cadres was noticed. On the other hand, through their conceit and boasting about the glory of the battles won, through their

decorations and privileges, with their many vices and distorted views, the power-seeking elements were overwhelming the vigilance of the party and causing it to decay from within. A caste was created in the army which extended its despotic and arrogant domination to the party, too, altering its proletarian character. The party should have been the sword of the revolution, but this caste corroded it.

"I am of the opinion that even before the war, but especially after the war, signs of deplorable apathy appeared in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. This party had a great reputation, and had achieved colossal successes in the course of its work, but at the same time it had started to lose the revolutionary spirit and was infected by bureaucracy and routine. The Leninist norms, the teachings of Lenin and Stalin had been transformed by the apparatchiki into stale platitudes and hackneyed slogans devoid of operative worth. The Soviet Union was a vast country, the people worked, produced, created. It was said that industry was developing at the necessary rates and that the socialist agriculture was advancing. But this development was not at the level it should have been.

"It was not the «wrong» line of Stalin which held up the progress. On the contrary, this line was correct and Marxist-Leninist, but it was frequently applied badly and even distorted and sabotaged by enemy elements. Stalin's correct line was distorted also by the disguised enemies in the ranks of the party and in the organs of the state, by the opportunists, liberals, trotskyites and revisionists..." (Hoxha, *The Khrushchevites, Memoirs*, "8 Nëntori" Publishing House, Tirana 1980, pp. 42-44 [near the beginning of chapter 2].)

Comrade Enver did at least deal with the question in a serious way, contrary to the CPC, and did really try to come to an answer. But as we see, he did not reach very far: he could not see anything wrong with the Stalinist general line, and even less with Soviet society as such, but reasons as if it all was merely some psychological or moral problem.

The analysis is developing, deepening and changing

After the break with Maoism in the end of the 1970's, the Marxist-Leninist movement was soon facing a crossroad. The "three worlds" theory, like the liquidationist tendencies that were in many cases intensifying, was nothing but the

"people's front" policy taken to its final conclusion. When the Maoists defended the "three worlds" theory, they often referred to the 7th Congress of the Comintern and the foreign policy of the Soviet Union during the 1930's and World War II. Most Marxist-Leninists rejected, with indignation, such parallels, sincerely believing that the USSR and the CI at that time had carried out a correct policy in the main aspects.

But soon it became obvious that the Maoists, on that point, in fact were right--something which, however, is not to the advantage of the "three worlds" theory but rather to the disadvantage of the "popular front"! What directly led to this understanding was that the PLA in about 1980 began to turn rightwards, something which was to have serious effects for the international movement. In earlier issues of *Red Dawn* we have discussed the deviations of the PLA (see for example the article *Some views on the 9th Congress of the PLA* in numbers 1 and 2, 1988), and are therefore not going to dwell on them here. Let us just draw attention to the fact that they are not in contradiction to Stalinist tradition--quite the contrary. Most of those Marxist-Leninist parties that today follow the Albanians justify--and rightly so--their line through pointing at the 7th Congress of the Comintern. This "shift" was possible because there was no clear understanding of Stalinism. What does that mean, then? It means nothing less than that what in the beginning of the emergence of the movement was of subordinate importance, today has become the main side in the contradiction. With that, the circle is closed! Thus, if the struggle against revisionism should continue, then it is necessary to go further, from the break with Maoism, and break with Stalinism too. That is a precondition for the unity, development and strengthening of the Marxist-Leninist movement. It is as well the task which has been put on the agenda by Marxist-Leninists around the world.

Of course this has its effect also on the analysis of the degeneration of the Soviet Union. As the policy of the Comintern, especially the "popular front" policy, is subject to renewed examination, then it is natural that the question is being put forward whether perhaps the counterrevolution in the USSR may have taken place long before 1956.

Such an examination takes a lot of time. It is not as easy as simply "going back in history" with the earlier criterion as the point of departure. This because there has existed, as we have seen, no reliable criteria! CLN (the Communist League of Norrköping) has hitherto not put in question that the qualitative leap really might have taken place in the 1950's, but we have at the same time pointed out that a qualitative leap, according the laws of dialectics, can not take place if it is not preceded by a quantitative process. That is, the degeneration must in any case have begun far earlier--and by degeneration we do not simply mean such changes in the minds of some cadres, as comrade Enver is talking about. We prefer to keep to the method of class analysis rather than psycho-analysis! We, rather, regard degeneration as a regular class differentia-

tion, i.e., the growing up of a privileged stratum which by degrees disenfranchises the working class of control of the means of production and state power. The final constitution of this stratum as an exploiting class is thus the victory of the counterrevolution. It is quite clear that this must be what happened. But when? Up until now, we have believed that this process begun sometime in the mid-1930's, to later accelerate during the rest of the Stalin period. This is how we described our view in the article "Where is Gorbachev leading the Soviet Union?", in *Red Dawn* number 2, 1987:

"...the degeneration of the Soviet Union began about the mid-1930's, when the party leadership, headed by Stalin, began to retreat from a number of essential positions before the pressure from world capitalism. Thereby, a negative development began, which finally was to result in a counter-revolution by peaceful means, in the restoration of capitalism in a new form."

And further:

"The Soviet leadership gave up the independent proletarian class stand and declared that the class struggle was over; instead of working for the strengthening and development of socialist Soviet democracy, securing and confirming the leading role of the working class, elevating the general level of political consciousness and fighting the expansion of the bureaucracy, the appearance of privileged groups was promoted with the pragmatic justification that 'it is necessary for the rapid development of the country'. Pure nationalism more and more appeared in the forefront as ideological motivation. Party democracy was entombed by branding opposition to the leadership's line as 'sabotage', 'undermining activity' and even as 'a work of fascist agents.' In short, the changes concerned all spheres of society. During the war, this process accelerated further. Eventually society lost all of its socialist features (except for the form). At least by the time of the takeover of power of the Khrushchevites in the mid-1950's, the Soviet Union had become a state capitalist society."

As well, we wrote in *Red Dawn* number 3, 1988 (in the commentary by the staff to Part II of the Iranian article *Trotsky and the Critique of the Socio-Economic Relations and State Power in the Soviet Union*):

"We believe that the general line of the Bolshevik Party, which after the death of Lenin was represented foremost by Stalin, stood, in the main points, for a correct policy, let alone with some weaknesses, but that later on, in the beginning or middle

of the 1930's, it had a sharp turn rightwards (comparable with the 'popular front' line of the Comintern from 1935), which was to pave the way to the growth of revisionism, the victory of counterrevolution and the restoration of capitalism."

A view resembling this has also been expressed by Marxist-Leninists in other countries. The organ of the central committee of the Marxist-Leninist Party, USA, *The Workers' Advocate*, writes in this way about the first five-year plan (1928-33):

"Our historical study so far leads us to believe that positive steps in socialist construction were taken in the period of the first five-year plan and that there were major accomplishments. At the same time, problems also emerged in this period. The rightward turn in the mid-30's appears, in part, as an erroneous response to the difficulties of the preceding period--an attempt to resolve these difficulties through abandoning revolutionary principle." (from the article *A Comment on Some Views of the Communist Party of Iran on Socialism*, in the *Supplement*, number 4, 1988, also reprinted in *Red Dawn* number 5, 1988)

It is clear that this is a considerable step forward in the analysis of the degeneration of the USSR. But one may ask if it is enough! We do not think so. Sure, it is true that a number of changes took place within Soviet society about 1934-36. Phenomena like, for example, "the Stakhanovite movement", appeared. In the Red Army, the old czarist officers' hierarchy which had been abolished in 1917 was reinstated. The new "Stalin constitution" put an end to the earlier system of councils based on production units, combining legislative and executive power, and replaced this by a kind of pseudo-parliamentary version (despite the one-party system!), at the same time giving the right to vote and to be elected back the former exploiters' classes. Abortion was prohibited by law and divorces were made more difficult, things which hardly could have strengthened the position of the Soviet woman. Yes, even the textbooks in the schools were rewritten in order to glorify old czars and the expansion of the great-Russian empire!

Since these changes mainly concerned the superstructure of the society, and thus were not enough to replace one kind of relations of production by another, i.e. fundamentally change the base of the society, it is of course quite correct to characterize them as quantitative and not qualitative. But the question still is what this was a reflection of. Could it have been the case that these changes reflected, were the product of, a fundamental change in the base of the society shortly before? I.e. that a counterrevolution had taken place only just before in the Soviet Union and that the above-mentioned changes were an expression of the "new order" of the new ruling class?

What actually confirms that, is that these changes were

so drastic and far-reaching. Could it really be supposed that they would have taken place in a society that is carrying on the construction of socialism? Now, if the first five-year plan really had been socialist, would it then not have been an enormous triumph to the toiling people and a strengthening and confirming of the proletarian dictatorship? Problems might have appeared, and perhaps there would have been unclear views on how to overcome them; and maybe such things, in combination with pressure from outside as well as other factors, could have given rise to pragmatism and a short-sighted way of thinking which could have resulted in violating revolutionary principles--but how on earth would something like that lead to such reactionary changes, and so fast at that?

As well there are facts, which we will present further on in this article, which do show that already during the first five-year plan, great changes were carried out of a much more deep-going kind--if not to say a fundamental kind: changes which had to do with the very relations of production. With other words--it is obvious that we have to look for the qualitative leap not after the death of Stalin or at all after those above-mentioned 'changes in the superstructure, but on the contrary, before them. But in order to have some understanding of the background, let us begin our study at the time of the revolution, in 1917.

From the October Revolution to the first five-year plan

The Great October Socialist Revolution was a work by the industrial proletariat in alliance with the masses of millions of peasants. Beyond any doubt, such allegations, which can from time to time be heard from various directions, not the least from social-democracy, that the working class played a small or no role and that Lenin seized power with an autocratically-run party, without the workers or over their heads, are nothing but lies and slanders. As one of the most prominent opponents of the Bolsheviks, the Menshevik leader Martov, admitted at the time:

"Understand, please, what we have before us after all is a victorious uprising of the proletariat--almost the entire proletariat supports Lenin and expects its social liberation from the uprising..." (Letter from Martov to Axelrod, November 19, 1917, quoted from Israel Getzler, *Martov*, Cambridge 1967)

At that time, the Bolshevik Party was already a mass party; the number of members at the time of the takeover of power has been estimated to be about 200,000. As there were a mere two million workers employed then, something approaching 10% of the class must have been members of this party. As regards inner-party democracy, free debate, in which the whole party participated--and on occasion even workers outside the party--was an integral feature of the work of the party. And the revolution which overthrew the social-democratic-liberal "provisional government", replaced it by a government freely chosen by the workers',

peasants' and soldiers' deputies which assembled at the Second Congress of the Soviets. A congress which by the way did not only consist of Bolsheviks at all.

Ten years later, little remained of the proletarian democracy of 1917. But this could hardly be blamed on those who took power in the October Revolution. For during a long and bitter struggle against counterrevolution and the invasion of fourteen capitalist states, the working class which had made the revolution was itself decimated. By 1920, industrial production had fallen to about 18% of what it had been in 1916, while the number of workers employed was about half of the 1916 figure. The civil war had cut off industry from a supply of raw materials and spare parts. The workers could not keep alive on what their collective product would buy, and many of them had to resort to direct barter with peasants—exchanging their products, yes, even parts of their machines, for food. Large numbers of workers were at the front, where they, dispersed over a vast area, in an army consisting mainly of peasants, hardly were able to exercise immediate and direct control over the Soviet apparatus in the cities. The best and most militant among the workers were in the front rank in the bloody struggle for the defense of the revolution, and many of them gave their lives. Those who survived would return from the army not as workers but as political commissars and administrators in the new Soviet state. Their place in the factories would be taken over by raw peasants from the countryside without socialist traditions and aspirations, dreaming about their own plot of land and with often quite hazy concepts of politics.

The Bolshevik Party had come to power as the most conscious section of the working class; three years later the party still was in possession of power and had led the Red Army to victory in the civil war—but the working class itself hardly existed any more. The revolutionary gains of 1917 were saved but their class basis undermined. Of course, the regime still remained socialist, but now not because of its class basis, but through the fact that the government, the party holding power, in its activities represented the objective class interests of the working class and worked in the direction of a socialist construction. In the absence of the proletariat, there was no alternative than that the dictatorship of the class under the leadership of the party instead became the dictatorship of the party itself. This was a substitutionist situation.

In order to hold together the country after the decimation and to reconstruct it, the Bolshevik Party was forced to resort to certain bureaucratic methods. They had no choice but to do their best to build up a reliable state apparatus. In order to be able to do that, they had to utilize what in many cases were the only qualified administrators, i.e. members of the old czarist bureaucracy. But these of course did not share the revolutionary aspirations of 1917, and were accustomed to diametrically opposed methods in dealing with their tasks, compared with what the soviets stood for. Such methods and attitudes were bound to "influence" Bolshevik party members working

alongside them. Lenin himself was acutely aware of this:

"Let us look at Moscow. Who is leading whom? The 4700 responsible communists, the mass of bureaucrats, or the other way around? I do not seriously think you can say the communists are leading this mass. To be honest they are not the leaders but the led." (Lenin, *Selected Works* vol. III, Swedish edition, Moscow 1975, page 604.)

As Lenin was dying, it became obvious that not even the top leadership of the party was immune to these distortions. Lenin's last political act was to recommend the removal of Stalin from his office as general secretary of the central committee to some other task, since he had shown a crude bureaucratism in carrying out his duties as well as in his behavior in relation to other party members. In the years that followed, the authoritarian methods which had entered the party from its environment were used to eliminate from the leadership those who challenged the bureaucratic approach.

The decimation of the working class in the civil war had thus left power with the Bolshevik Party alone. In absence of the class which the party represented, there was no choice but to call into being a massive bureaucracy. And it was soon it which de facto controlled the state, and thereby the state-owned means of production. But the party still remained revolutionary, communist; the decisions taken and the policies implemented still was based on its subjective, Marxist-Leninist intentions. It was based on a proletarian class stand, which served as a compass. However, these subjective intentions were undermined by the objective situation. As the party and the bureaucracy more and more merged, the very structure of the party changed. Free discussion, criticism and self-criticism, etc. was more and more suppressed, while elections from below to various organs often were replaced by appointments from above. A rule of the "apparatchiki" was extending at the cost of the activity of the rank-and-file members. The factional struggles in the party during the 1920's were not only a struggle between different lines, but also a struggle between those who ran the central bureaucratic apparatus and those who had led the party through the revolution. In this struggle, those who represented the apparatus began to define their own interests in opposition to the revolutionary tradition of October. In a series of key confrontations they broke with this tradition and forced physically out of its ranks all those who adhered, however inconsistently, to this tradition. By the end of the 1920's most of those who had been part of the party which had led the revolution, had been removed from real influence over politics. They were replaced by men whose role in the revolution had been insignificant: the second-order functionaries who had manned the apparatus of the party, such ones who had passed over to the Bolsheviks from the Mensheviks after the revolution and, in many cases, even after the civil war, the new bureaucracy which had multiplied during the 1920's.

The bureaucracy—both the old czarist civil servants and

the new "communist" bosses--were from around 1923 in possession of the initiative and the real power. Their chief characteristic was inertia and complacency, and they more and more feared and fought against any perspective which might disturb their positions. At home it meant acquiescing to pressures from the NEP-men and kulaks; abroad subordinating foreign communist parties to the need to ensure international security for the Soviet Union. But despite the fact that the Soviet state in this period no longer was something like that "state of the type of the Paris Commune" which the Bolshevik Party had fought for and which Lenin described in his book *State and Revolution*, it nevertheless did not yet represent aims and goals being in a diametrical contradiction to those of the toiling masses. The Soviet state was still by definition a workers' state, although a workers' state with a "bureaucratic deformation", as Lenin pointed out already in 1920. Although the bureaucracy more and more began to form a "class in itself," i.e. a collection of individuals occupying a similar relationship to the means of production, it nevertheless had not yet constituted itself as a "class for itself," i.e. a group aware of its common interests and acting together as an independent historical force to achieve them. The degeneration process was going on, it had not yet reached its completion, it had not yet resulted in the establishment of a state capitalist system. What happened during the period from 1923 to 1928 was a quantitative process in the direction towards a counterrevolution--in other words, precisely what we hitherto have thought took place between about 1934 and 1956!

In 1928, the policies of the Soviet party and state leadership suddenly underwent a dramatic reversal. For several years Stalin and the bureaucracy, in alliance with the right wing of the party (the Bukharinites), had been arguing against the Trotskyites and the united left opposition, who held that the industrialization was too slow and that the policy towards the countryside was helping to strengthen the kulaks, who they feared would try to use their strength in order to, in alliance with the NEP-men and the bureaucracy, carry out a counterrevolution ("thermidor"). What now happened was that the kulaks and a big part of the middle peasantry on a mass scale in big parts of the country refused to sell the ordered part of their harvest to the state. The cities were soon threatened by hunger, and ration cards were introduced. In this situation, the bureaucracy had no choice but to strike back and use methods of force. Stalin now broke off with the Bukharinites, declared NEP finished and raised the slogan of "liquidating the kulaks as a class" and collectivization of agriculture. Troops were sent out to the countryside in order to collect what was needed to feed the growing population in the cities, to arrest and deport not just kulaks but in fact all peasants who tried to resist, and in order to "encourage" as many peasants as possible to get together in kolkhozes [collective farms]. This was done at a very fast speed: while the first five-year plan at its inauguration planned a collectivization of 20% of the land, the actual

figure at the end of the plan was no less than 60%! Even Stalin himself had, at least one moment (in 1930), to check this somewhat before the risk of peasant uprisings and civil war.

The aim of the enforced collectivization--which is estimated to have been the death for millions of peasants --not only kulaks--was to eliminate the economic power of the peasantry and to pump foodstuffs and raw materials into the town for the industrialization, without having to give the peasants manufactured goods in return. Even though the collectivization did not lead to an increase in the total agricultural production (still in the early 1950's it was hardly higher than before the First World War) and led to a catastrophic decline in the production of many foodstuffs it nevertheless enabled the bureaucracy to get more grain from the peasants than earlier. This was what made the USSR the number one exporter of wheat in the world, at the same time as the peasants did not always have enough to eat.

Of course, this does not mean that we agree with the Bukharinites, who in 1928-30 formed a right opposition within the party, and who aimed at continuing the NEP-policy as before and even developing and deepening it. Such a policy would also have led to a counterrevolution, although in another way--in that way which the left opposition had predicted. That would have been a situation which perhaps, to a certain extent, could be compared with the Nicaragua of today, with the Bolshevik Party in the same position and with about the same policy as the Sandinistas. The NEP-men and the kulaks would then have been [picked] up by imperialism, something which would have led to the restoration of capitalism, but not state capitalism--rather some kind of "mixed economy." (It should be added that the metaphor has a shortcoming, namely, the fact that Nicaragua is not and has not been a workers' state.) What alternative would there have been? Establishing a planned economy, industrialization and agricultural collectivization would have been unavoidable in a socialist construction. The wrong point with the five-year plan was that it was carried out by the bureaucracy, against the working class and the peasantry. A correct policy would have been to much earlier base the policy on a proletarian class stand, basing it on the poor peasants and the main parts of the middle peasants, sharpen the class struggle in the countryside against the kulaks, and thus develop the tiny collectivization movement which in fact did exist. But the bureaucracy instead made concessions to the kulaks, held back the poor peasants and neglected their interests, thus helping to drive many middle peasants under the influence of the kulaks--and because of that, later the bureaucracy was forced to turn right-about, smash the kulaks and, through force instead of mass mobilization, carry through a collectivization. When the left opposition in the mid-1920's advocated an industrial growth of about 20% per year and a gradual collectivization of agriculture, it was accused by Stalin (and, of course, by Bukharin, too) of aiming at "superindustrialization", "plundering the

peasantry", etc. In 1930, the same Stalin spoke about an annual growth rate of 40!

This cannot be excused as just a clumsy policy on Stalin's part. As we already have pointed out, there were class reasons for this line. But what does that mean? It means that as the Soviet state bureaucracy took over the control of all the main means of production, it became accurately a "class for itself", i.e. a ruling class. The first five-year plan created a completely new base of society--and this base was not socialist except in form. The first five-year plan was a qualitative leap--a counterrevolution. Instead of the workers' state with bureaucratic deformations, there appeared the social-fascist dictatorship of the new bureaucrat bourgeoisie.

Let us have a look at the administrative measures that were taken during the first five-year plan--measures which manifested the new socio-economic relations.

In 1929, the "khozrashchot" principle ["financial autonomy" or "business accounting"] was introduced at Soviet enterprises, which meant that the enterprises got economic autonomy and became juridical persons. The enterprises were to have their own balance account with profit and loss, on which the incomes normally were supposed to meet the expenses and therefore also give "profitability." The principle of and striving for cash limit and profit is thus nothing new in the Soviet economy, but was quite the contrary a cornerstone in the planning system already from the first five-year plan on.

Before this five-year plan, the enterprises had been headed by a "troika," consisting of a technical director, a trade union official and a political commissar from the party. According to a decision by the central committee of the party in 1929, this system was abolished and replaced by one-man management. According to the Central Committee resolution, the orders of the director should thereafter be "unconditionally binding on his subordinate administrative staff and on all workers." The CC also declared that the workers' committees in the enterprises "may not intervene directly in the running of the plant or endeavor in any way to replace plant administration; they shall by all means help to secure one-man management, increase production, plant development, and thereby, improvement of the material conditions of the working class." Of course, strikes were prohibited at the same time.

The wages were now established through central decisions, instead of through negotiations with the trade unions, which up until then had been the case. And what decisions! The workers were subordinated to the world's most comprehensive and studied piece-work system. In 1930, 29% of the industrial workers worked under piece-work systems; in 1932 68% and in 1934 as much as 75%. Also within transport and public service branches, yes, everywhere where it was possible to do so, piece-work was introduced. And there was not a question of the usual, proportional payment, but a progressive piece-work system! At the same time, a job classification system was introduced, which stated more than ten times higher wages for skilled workers

than for "unqualified" ones--differences which later were to be increased even more through the "Stakhanovite movement." That all this meant a rate of exploitation which would make any western private capitalist pale with envy, and as well a considerable lowering of the living standard for the huge majority of the population, is shown by the fact that the average wage was less than half of the wages of the best paid workers, and that this average was lowered by as much as 50% during the seven years from 1929 on, without any lowering of the prices on food-stuffs and consumer goods. Really a belt-tightening policy!

Meanwhile, a number of various emoluments in kind were introduced, besides considerable wage raises, for the new bureaucrat bourgeoisie: special shops filled with luxury goods, special schools, hospitals, rest homes, etc., as well as allotment of plush villas, cars and other things. But in order to make possible also big incomes in ready money, the "party maximum" was modified in 1929 and totally abolished a couple of years later. This rule had meant that a party member could not earn more than a skilled professional worker, and had initially been established in order to avoid formation of a privileged stratum within the party of the working class. Yes, even the regulations on inheritances were changed. The victorious October Revolution had in 1918 by decree confiscated all inheritances of more than 10,000 rubles. This regulation was modified when the NEP was introduced in 1921, but despite the fact that the NEP was concluded in 1928, a law was issued in 1929 on taxation and inheritances above 500,000 rubles, and the tax did not go beyond 10%.

The class differences which were established during the first five-year plan were however to increase even more later on. As we have mentioned, earlier in this article, a lot of changes were taking place in the superstructure of the society during the 1930's, something which made the differences widen more. As an example there might be mentioned that during World War II a Soviet colonel earned 240 times as much as a private soldier, while the corresponding difference in the American army was "only" six and a half times! But more about that in further articles.

Self-evidently, as the new system of exploitation was established, the working class was subject to political and administrative oppression to a considerable degree. Let us take some examples.

Until the first five-year plan, the Labor Code of 1922 was in force, in which it was stated that employees could not be transferred from one job to another without the consent of those employees concerned. As late as in 1930, the Small Soviet Encyclopedia wrote that "the custom of internal passports, instituted by the autocracy as an instrument of police oppression of the toiling masses, was suppressed by the October Revolution." But in 1932 the Labor Code was revised, and the internal passport system reintroduced. With that, workers were forbidden to change their employment or place of residence without permission. All industrial enterprises were prohibited to employ workers who had left their former place of work without permission.

In 1931, Labor Books were introduced for industrial and transport workers. They had to be presented to the director of the enterprise when a job is first taken on, and in those books the directors were to note all disciplinary measures taken against the workers in question, from a warning to dismissal, and specify the reasons. An effective way of blacklisting "trouble-making" workers! And according to the new Labor Code, it was quite easy to get fired: one day's absence without good reason could be enough for that, as well as "carelessness in work" or "carelessness with machines and materials." In case of dismissal, the worker would also lose his social benefits--pension, illness insurance and work accident insurance--and could as well

in many cases be evicted from his home, since apartments often were tied to the place of employment.

These regulations were to be sharpened, too, during the following years, by the drawing up of a completely new set of laws, which were to replace earlier Soviet civil codes.

We hope that we, by this article have been able to provide a surveyable explanation for our reconsideration of the reasons for, and point of time of, the degeneration of the Soviet Union. However, the last word about this issue, as well as about what political conclusions are to be drawn from it, is far from being said yet. We would be grateful for criticisms and views from our readers. ■

On the question of the Stalinist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union

Below is the second of the two articles from Red Dawn on Soviet history that we are reprinting in this issue of the Supplement.

In the article *Some Remarks Concerning the Analysis of the Degeneration of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and the Victory of the Counterrevolution in the Soviet Union* (Red Dawn, number 7, 1988), we discussed the view of the Marxist-Leninist movement on this issue and explained the path of reasoning which has led us to the view that the qualitative leap into state capitalism can not have taken place in 1956, but much earlier, during the first five-year plan, which was inaugurated in 1928. We briefly dealt with the situation in the Soviet Union after the civil war--how the already backward country was severely devastated; how the working class was decimated in number and nearly atomized; how a substitutionist situation thereby appeared which forced the Bolsheviks not only to make use of the old czarist state apparatus but also to lean on it, etc. We described how the growing party bureaucracy melted together with the old bureaucracy and formed a privileged stratum which, to an ever increasing extent, existed above any democratic control, and how it, with the first five-year plan, took possession of all the means of production in the society, thereby turning into a ruling class. Finally, we gave a few examples of the reactionary measures which were taken in connection with that.

In this article, we are going to follow this up through having a closer look on what happened in the Soviet Union during the 1930's, when the state capitalist system was

consolidated.

The Party

The emancipation of the working class is the work of the working class itself, and if the communist party is its conscious vanguard and staff of struggle, then communists of course cannot have any interests deviating from those of the class. Thus, the party cannot be monolithic and totalitarian without losing its revolutionary character.

Without painting up the Bolshevik Party as allegedly free from fault, one nevertheless has to establish that before the civil war, it differed much from what Stalin later on was to define as "Bolshevik Party spirit". Despite difficult illegal circumstances under the czarist autocracy, and a complicated situation during the year of revolution, 1917, democratic centralism worked. There are even several examples of how Lenin himself was in minority at party conferences and central committee plenums. Perhaps the most well-known examples are how he had to fight hard to win the party for his line on the so-called April theses at the spring of 1917, or on the peace negotiations with Germany in the beginning of 1918. There is no doubt at all about who was right, but the interesting point here is that

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it shows quite clearly that there was a free discussion and that one man or a clique did not dictate the political line arbitrarily. It is also a significant example that while Lenin put forward his proposal at the 10th party congress for prohibition of factionalism, he at the same time rejected a proposed amendment that the prohibition should be extended to putting forward platforms at elections within the party:

"The present congress cannot in any way bind the elections to the next congress. Supposing we are faced with a question like, say, the conclusion of the Brest peace. Can you guarantee that no such question will arise? No, you cannot. In the circumstances, the elections may have to be based on platforms." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, English, Moscow, vol. 32, page 261.)

There lies no contradiction in this. The Bolsheviks showed during their history a great flexibility concerning organizational forms of the party. They were not static, but were put in relation to the situation of the class struggle and its tasks. During periods of upsurge in the mass movements, the party could accept a greater inflow of new members from the ranks of working class militants, while during times of ebb in the struggle and offensive on the part of the class enemy tighten and carry out purges within the party in order to strengthen it. The skillful combination of open, legal work in the Duma [czarist parliament] and in mass organizations, and an effective, underground organization of professional revolutionaries, was in fact a precondition for the ability of the Bolsheviks to be oriented in different, often quickly changing, situations. In the same way, one must look dialectically at Lenin's proposal of prohibiting factions in 1921, according to the then prevailing conditions. The party was forced to uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat in the absence of the proletariat, and at the same time make concessions to both capital (the NEP-policy) and to the old czarist bureaucracy. Obviously, there was no choice but to tighten the reins hard, since a possible split of the party would have had grave consequences. But exactly the above quoted distinction that Lenin made, indicates very clearly that he saw disagreements as a natural and unavoidable thing within a revolutionary party, and the suppression of factions--something that was not done even during the civil war--was to him not an abstract principle, but a tactic, a measure considered because of necessity. It may be noted also that the Bolsheviks themselves constituted a faction within the Russian Social-Democratic Workers' party during a long period, from 1903 to 1912 when it finally split. Stalin's well-known transformation of the prohibition of factions into a principle of universal application through stating that "the party is, as a united will, irreconcilable with the existence of factions", reflected a completely different thing, i.e. the total control, on the part of the bureaucratic party apparatus, of the inner life of the party.

Here it should be added, that we by this do not at all

aim to advocate some permanent factionalism as something self-evident and normal within a communist party. Absolutely not! What we are trying to point out is that the Stalinist party concept is a crude distortion of the Leninist one, and that the very essence of the term "democratic centralism" was changed completely. That was, however, logical since the party was transformed from having been a tool of the working class to become a tool of the counterrevolution, of the new bureaucrat bourgeoisie which grew up and took over power in the society.

According to the party statutes, the congress was the supreme organ of the party, and congresses were to be held annually. That was actually applied until the 14th congress, which took place in 1925. But after that, there were two years until the next one, and between the 15th and 16th congresses 2½ years passed. Then 3½ years passed until the 17th congress, and between that one and the 18th--5 years. After that, as much as 13½ years (!) passed until the 19th party congress took place.

According to the statutes, the central committee was to be the supreme body of the party between the congresses. It was to meet four times a year at least. In reality, these meetings were, however, held more and more irregularly. For example, not at all during World War II (while during the civil war, even party congresses took place, completely according to the statutes). After the war, there was no plenum before 1947, and after that one 5 years passed until the next one. Worth noting is also the fact that between the 17th and 18th congresses, an overwhelming majority of the CC were purged; of 71 ordinary CC members elected in 1934, only 16 remained until the end of the congress period, and only 8 out of 68 candidate members.

As regards the social composition of the party, all publication of survey statistics about that was stopped in 1930--quite characteristically. But there are other figures, which also provide some hint about the matter.

For example, in 1939 only 5% of the Soviet citizens had gone through secondary school, but 29% of the party members. That had been the case with somewhat above 11% of the members in 1927. 31.5% of the delegates to the party congress in 1939 had university education, and as much as 41.8% of the delegates to the party conference in 1941, while the corresponding figure about the delegates to the party congresses in 1930 and 1924 were 7.2% and 6.5% respectively. As regards the number of congress delegates being industrial or agricultural workers, we only possess figures from 1934, but that one is nevertheless quite obvious: 9.3%.

Further. In 1923, 29% of the factory directors were party members, while already in 1925 the figure reached 95%. In 1936, it was reported to be 99.1%. The same kind of figures appear also regarding higher officials, army commanders, etc. On that, one must keep in mind that the number of people with such occupations increased a lot, so the number of persons from these groups that were members of the party increased much more than the percentage figures.

Thus, it is obvious that the social composition of the party indeed did change considerably. That must also have been strengthened by the disappearance of the old guard. In 1939, the party had 1,588,852 members; thereof only 1.3% (20,655) since the revolution, 1917, and 8.3% (131,875) since the end of the civil war in 1920. But just a short while before the October Revolution, the membership amounted to 200,000, and in March 1921 to 730,000. This means that only about 10% and 18% of them respectively were still in the party in 1939! What happened with the others, what was their fate? In fact, the majority of all members were quite young. As late as in 1927, only 2.8% of the members were above 50 years of age.

The State

The workers' state which was born out of the flames of the October Revolution, based itself on workers, soldiers, and peasants councils, elected directly in the factories, at the army and navy units and in the villages. Since the working class constituted a minority of the population, the proletarian character of the state was secured through the implementation of a system that gave the workers' councils the largest amount of deputies to the all-Russian (after 1922, all-Union) Soviet congresses. One important principle was that the councils were not based on territorial units, but on production units, and that (contrary to a parliamentary system) there was no division into legislative and executive power. Another important principle, which however there was no possibility to put into practice, was the abolition of the bureaucracy and the standing army. But this did not hinder the implementation of principles as egalitarian as the conditions allowed. As an example there can be mentioned that, despite the fact that the Red Army could not be organized as a popular militia, but had to be a standing army and even take many former czarist officers in service, nevertheless ranks, batmen, special officers' messes, etc. were abolished. The same thing with the state apparatus--many officials were in possession of some material privileges, but they were clearly limited, they were not for party members, and the main parts of the bureaucracy did actually gain salaries which were about the same level as what a skilled worker could earn.

But all that was changed. The councils, the soviets, got lesser and lesser importance as the domination of the bureaucracy became more and more total. It was, on the whole, difficult to uphold a properly working council's democracy in a situation in which workers' power did not have the same firm ground socially. Parallel with that, the soviet congresses began to meet more and more seldom, and for a shorter and shorter time every time. They were reduced to voting machines. It became usual that candidates at elections were nominated by the party bureaucracy and consisted of party and state bureaucrats. Since the end of the 1920's, there no longer occurred any debates and all decisions were taken unanimously. Many of these decisions were even taken after they had been put into practice!

That was the case with e.g. both the first five year-plan and the following ones. The purely ceremonial nature of this body could hardly appear in a more obvious way! In 1936 the "Stalin Constitution" was introduced, which meant a reorganization of the very structure of the system of councils. Thereby those forms which were introduced by the revolution were abolished even formally, and replaced by "parliamentary" forms of organization: the councils were transformed into territorial units and the bourgeois principles of division of power were copied. Direct election to a "parliament", the Supreme Soviet, which replaced the Soviet Congress, were introduced. The unique position of the working class was abolished, and those who had been deprived of the right to vote at the time of the revolution now got that back again. Had it not been for the one-party system, this would have been a completely bourgeois-parliamentary system. But significantly the one-party system was stated in the new constitution--there had never been such a thing before, although in reality of course there only had existed a single party since the end of the civil war.

In our earlier article on the Soviet Union, we described how wage differences, piece-work systems and job classifications were introduced on a large scale for the workers during the first five-year plan. This was combined, as we mentioned, with the abolition of the income ceiling for party members and with an inheritance tax that made it possible to inherit a lot of wealth. Let's have a look at what the salaries and benefits for the bureaucrat bourgeoisie were as its positions were secured and strengthened.

In 1926, the average annual income of the workers was 465 rubles, counted at the pre-war rate. The maximum for "specialists" of various kinds was 1811 rubles, but there were only 114,000 people who earned so much. They consisted of only 0.3% of all incomes in the entire country, and their incomes, put together, would not exceed 1% of the national income. But by "the victorious construction of socialism", this was changed. At the Soviet Congress in 1935, Molotov declared:

"Bolshevik policy demands a resolute struggle against egalitarians as accomplices of the class enemy, as elements hostile to socialism." (Quoted by Chernomordik, *The Economic Policy of the USSR*, Russian, Moscow-Leningrad 1936, page 240.)

In 1934, figures relating to the divisions of various groups and professions by income ceased to be published. Only the average income of all workers and employees together were reported after that. The minimum wage in industry in 1937 was 110 rubles a month. That many workers did not earn more than that is shown by the fact that when a new law on minimum wages was instituted the next year, it led to a budget grant of 600,000,000 rubles extra. At the same time it was established in law that the four top-ranked place holders in the Supreme Soviet were to have an annual wage of 300,000 rubles (about 227 times as much!). The presidents of the various Soviet republics were to have 150,000 a year, while the "MP's" of the

Supreme Soviet got 1000 rubles a month and a remuneration of 150 rubles for each day of session.

But let's go back to industry. Educated professional workers earned about 500 rubles a month, but the average wage was much lower--231 rubles--and since this average figure includes everyone, one can understand that the huge majority earned very little. The elite workers, the Stakhanovites, could on the other hand earn up to 2,000 rubles. In the beginning there was a rule stating that the work norms (for piecework) should be set in such a way that they were in accordance with the aim of keeping the workers' health at an acceptable level. But in 1936, this rule was abolished, and the norms were raised considerably. In the coal industry by about 25%, in the iron and steel industry by 13-20%, in the non-iron metallurgical industry by 30-35%, in the machine-building industry by 30-40%, in the construction industry by 54-80%. Later they were raised even more. As well, the norms themselves were divided into part-norms in order to make the piece-work systems even more effective; for example, in 1939 there existed as much as 2,026,000 different work norms within only those branches administered by the Commissariat of General Machine and Vehicle Construction.

For officials and higher position-holders, various kinds of bonuses were introduced besides the already high salaries. In 1936, the Directors' funds were introduced. To those, 4% of the planned profit of the enterprises and 50% of all profits beyond it were to be transferred. It could be large sums; for example the funds within the oil industry in 1937 were equivalent to 345 rubles per worker, in the meat industry 753 rubles per worker and in the liquor industry 1175 rubles per worker. It was the director who had to decide about what to do with the funded money, and although it officially was supposed to be used for social welfare, etc., it nevertheless seems to have gone straight into the pockets of the rich: at a factory in Kharkov, the funded sum of 60,000 rubles in 1937 was shared so that the director himself got 22,000, the secretary of the party committee 10,000, the chief engineer 8,000, the chief treasurer 6,000 and the chairman of the local union and the overseer 5,000 rubles each. But also the salaries themselves carried real "carrots": if a high-ranked manager fulfilled the plan for 1948, he got an increment of 30% for that and then up to 4% for each per cent unit with which the plan was overfulfilled. For a department chief it was 25% and 3% respectively, and for shop chiefs 20% and 3%.

The bureaucrat bourgeoisie also had an extra source of income in the state prizes. In 1939, the Stalin prize was introduced on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the "fatherly leader's" birthday. From the beginning, the maximum prize sum was 100,000 rubles (tax-free), but later it was raised to 300,000. Each year about 1,000 such prizes were awarded at about 50,000-300,000 rubles. With regard to all this, it's not strange at all that some Soviet citizens became millionaires in the 1930's. During the war, there were often reports in the newspapers about citizens buying war obligations for 1,000,000 rubles or even more.

As regards the wage differences in the army, they were considerably bigger after 1935, when the bourgeois officers' hierarchy was re-established in all its magnificence and dazzle, and with that as well the separate officers' messes, batmen and other benefits belonging to the rank. During World War II, a private got 10 rubles a month, a lieutenant 1,000 and a colonel 2,400. (Just for comparison, in the U.S. army, which actually never even claimed to be socialist, the corresponding wages were 50, 140 and 333 dollars respectively.) In order to keep up the appearance of superior breeding, officers were not permitted to carry large parcels in the street, and privates and commanders of lower rank were obliged to give up their seats to men of superior rank when traveling on public transport; however, high officers were not at all allowed to go by local bus, tramcar or underground or to sit at table with other ranks in public. Comradely relations between privates and superiors were condemned as undermining discipline, discussions among subordinates were prohibited as well as group grievances, for which an officer got the right to shoot a soldier on the spot for insubordination! For the sake of clearness, it may be added that the last-mentioned principle, as well as the other rules, can not even be explained away as an excess in a war situation--it was introduced in 1936.

Naturally, the counterrevolution was accompanied by a very reactionary and repressive criminal code. In our earlier article, we briefly discussed the labor laws which were introduced with the new conditions of exploitation. Let's now see how the subordination of the workers to property and to the needs of capital accumulation, also corresponded to legislation which covered all spheres of society, being quite well comparable with that which existed during the childhood of capitalism in the western industrial nations.

In 1932, a law was adopted "On the Protection of the Property of State Enterprises, Collective Farms and Cooperatives and Institutions of Socialist Property", specifying capital punishment for theft of such property or, in extenuating circumstances, not less than 10 years of imprisonment and confiscation of all personal property. Stalin called this law "the foundation of revolutionary legality". But since this law usually was not applied in cases of larceny and minor theft, other laws were passed later, specifying 5-10 years of imprisonment in a labor camp if it occurred for the first time, and 8-25 years if it was repeated or committed by an organized group or on a large scale. In 1935 it was specified that children from 12 years of age would be punishable according to the penal code, and the special juvenile courts, which until then had existed for youngsters below 18 years of age, were abolished. The apology for that was that the number of cases of juvenile delinquency only in Moscow had doubled between 1931 and 1934. There were reports about executions of very young delinquents, and according to witnesses, a lot of children were to be found in Siberian labor camps, where they had to work in factories and mines. In 1941, a decree was passed stating that knowledge of a crime and negligence about it would be regarded as being an accomplice. In

1943, the Soviet government issued an order about establishment of special reformatory colonies for confinement without juridical procedure for children from 11 to 16 years of age who had committed vagrancy.

Education, Culture, Ideology

One of the first measures of the October Revolution was to separate the school from the church and to abolish chastise [corporal punishment?] and religious indoctrination in teaching. Despite civil war and scarce material resources, the building up of a 4-year compulsory school all over the country was carried out successfully. The 1920's was also a period of radical pedagogical experiments, aiming at breaking down the traditional grinding, stimulating collectivism and independent thinking and providing the toilers' sons and daughters with as fair possibilities as the situation allowed. As well, a quota system was established, which reserved the majority of places at institutions of higher education for children of workers and peasants.

But during the first five-year plan a marked change took place. In 1930, a new curriculum was passed, which meant an end to the radical aim and direction. Theoretical and practical education was now separated from each other, the quotas were removed and the old pre-revolutionary mark and examination system was restored. Soon the result appeared. In 1938, as much as 47.3% of the students were children of civil servants and intellectuals--stratas constituting only 6% of the population of the country. Then all figures of the social composition of students ceased to be published. In 1940, fees were introduced for all education from middle schools upwards. At universities, the term fees were 150-250 rubles, which as we already have seen was much money for an ordinary worker. In the same year, a law was passed on the draft of between 800,000 and 1,000,000 boys annually from 14 to 17 years of age into compulsory vocational education. Since middle school pupils were exempt from that it was obviously first and foremost children from poor families which were drafted. It seems that the discipline for those apprentices was very harsh; for example, one year of confinement in a reformatory was stipulated for anyone leaving without permission!

According to a government decree issued in 1932, the text-books in history, literature, etc. were re-written in order to glorify the growth--and expansion!--of the Russian empire as a "progressive" development. This tendency was soon to dominate the official propaganda as a whole. Old czars and tyrants like Ivan the Terrible or Peter the Great were hailed in a tone which reminds one of how the Swedish bourgeoisie used to boast about Gustav Vasa, Gustav II Adolph or Charles XII (old Swedish kings, governing 1523-1560, 1611-1632 and 1697-1718 respectively, alleged "heroes" and "fathers of the nation"--translator's note by *Red Dawn*), while leaders of peasant uprisings, the "the false Dimitri", Stenka Razin or Pugachev, now were said to have been agents of foreign powers! The view held by Bolsheviks, revolutionaries and progressive Russian

democrats on the czarist empire as "a prison to the peoples", was now swept away--why, they even went so far as to portray the 19th century annexation of e.g. the Caucasus or Central Asia as something bringing these peoples "liberation", "protection" and "represented the only path of socio-economic and cultural development"! All this was accompanied by a great-Russian chauvinist campaign, suppressing the national traditions of the non-Russian Soviet Republics in so far as they contradicted "the leading role of the Russian people". A result was the nomination of Russians to the important positions within the party and state apparatus and economy of these republics. Sometimes it happens that these events are explained with arguments like that the country was facing the outbreak of World War II and that, therefore, it was necessary to appeal to "the patriotism of the masses". If so, then one may wonder how it was possible for the Soviet power to stand firm against the intervention of fourteen imperialist powers soon after the revolution! Was perhaps the uncompromising internationalism of the Bolsheviks a mistake? Hardly so. It's quite obvious that this social-chauvinism reflected the restoration of Russia by the new bureaucrat bourgeoisie as an imperialist big power. Let's illustrate this with a couple of quotations--the first one from the pan-Slavic (!) committee which was established in Moscow during the war, and the second one from Stalin when commenting on the capitulation of Japan in 1945.

"The friendship between the Slavs is no occasional phenomenon. It is nourished by blood-bonds between the numerous Slav peoples, by the common goals and by the noble strivings of all Slavs for progress, peace and friendship... These blood-bonds express themselves in everything: language, culture, morals, habits and belief ... Linguistic connection would have been impossible without common physiological and psychological features among the Slavs ... The kinship of the Slavonic languages is a durable proof of the spiritual unity of the Slavs." (*Slaviany*, journal of the pan-Slavic committee, August issue, 1942)

"... the defeat of the Russian troops in 1904, in the Russo-Japanese war, left bitter memories among our people. It was a dark spot on our country. Our people waited with confidence for the day when Japan would be defeated and the spot would be washed off. In forty years we, the elder generation, have waited for this day to come. And not it has come." (Stalin, *The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union*, Swedish, Moscow 1954, page 198)

In one sphere after the other, one can see how the Stalinists revised Marxism-Leninism, distorting it into a bourgeois ideology. We have in earlier issues of *Red Dawn* discussed the "popular front" line which was introduced in

the communist movement in 1934-35. It was possible precisely because of the bureaucratization of the Comintern and its transformation into an appendix to the needs of the Soviet foreign policy--a gradual process which, at least, can be dated back to the mid-1920's and which then manifested itself as deviations from a generally correct line--for example, the catastrophic policy for China which to a great extent was a predecessor of the "popular front," or the fatal theory on "social fascism". The period after the 6th Congress of the CI in 1928 was in itself a tremendous contradiction--on one hand a revolutionary policy and a continued struggle against social-democracy and opportunism, but on the other hand also a diehard support for the Soviet Union, which at that time went through its counterrevolution covered with "left"-sounding phrases. This contradiction, which undermined the world communist movement, was finally "resolved" through the breakthrough and victory of revisionism at the 7th CI congress in 1935. An alternative solution would have been if the communist parties, emphasizing the proletarian class stand which they in fact stood for at home, would have got rid of the rigid, sectarian deviations which were nothing but an expression of the counterrevolutionary Soviet state interests, exposed the reality behind the five-year plan and taken up the struggle against the "popular front" policy. But that was not possible just because of the changes the Comintern went through.

Another example is the question of the Soviet state. Sometimes it is said that Khrushchev was a pioneer in revising the Leninist view with his theory of "the state of the entire people". But in reality, Stalin had already previously completely distorted the Marxist-Leninist theory on the dictatorship of the proletariat. According to what he said at the 17th party congress in 1934, socialism had nothing to do with equality--the Marxist idea of equality should allegedly mean simply the abolition of private property in the means of production, thus making everyone equal, in juridical terms, in relation to them. Here we have the heart of the matter! Sure, it's true that he, during the first five-year plan, e.g. in the struggle against Bukharin, did talk about the continuation and even sharpening of the class struggle during the period of socialist construction--but what he meant by that was the struggle against NEP-men and kulaks, a struggle which was carried out from above, by administrative means. That theory thus served as a "left"-sounding argument for what in reality was the establishment of a state-capitalist base in society. Later he claimed that since the antagonistic classes had been expropriated, there were no class contradictions left

anymore. This picture was painted in, for example, Stalin's speech on the constitution (1936) or at the 18th party congress (1939). The term "the dictatorship of the proletariat" was kept, but was now motivated by the need of defense against external enemies and against individuals carrying out espionage or committing violence, theft, etc. When Stalin did talk about "class struggle under socialism"--like in his well-known speech before the central committee in 1937 on "the struggle against the fascist agents of Trotskyism"--then actually it was all reduced to such things. At the same time, Stalin said (at the 18th party congress) that the state would not wither away but be strengthened also during the, as he claimed, approaching "construction of communism", with the reasoning that that would take place in one country, too.

So, Stalin's theory didn't differ too much from Khrushchev's--the latter one did just make a small amendment to it, through re-baptizing what Stalin called the "dictatorship of the proletariat" into "the state of the entire people" with the reasoning that now the "class struggle" in the USSR had been concluded. The reason for that seems to have been that the state capitalist development in the country had matured and reached a new stage, in which it became necessary to ease the repression somewhat and to try to loosen the central reins of the economy. For the same reasons, during the 1950's and 1960's the biggest wage differences were narrowed and the fees for higher education removed, etc.

Well, what about the class struggle in a genuine socialist society then, does it continue? Does a proletarian dictatorship remain right until communism? Yes, without doubt. In the communist society there will not exist any classes, and therefore not any state, either. Communism in a single country is an absurdity just as a "state of the entire people" is. Socialism, on the contrary, is not a separate social system but a transitional society, in which remnants from capitalism still exist, like e.g. bourgeois right in distribution ("to each according to work"). Thus there is an objective danger of degeneration still after the expropriation of private property. But the proletarian dictatorship is strengthened just through taking steps in the direction towards its own withering away, something which begins immediately after the revolution although it for various reasons may extend over a long historical period.

Such is our view on the question of the Stalinist counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. More articles will appear in *Red Dawn* on this theme. ■