

# The restoration of capitalism in former socialist countries, and the struggle for socialism in the present epoch

## Introduction

**This pamphlet was originally prepared in 1989 as a study for intending members of the Workers' Party of New Zealand. It helped provide the basis for a shorter and later pamphlet, published in March, 1991, entitled What went wrong in Russia and China. The complete study of two parts, the second will appear shortly and is entitled The restoration of capitalism in China.**

**The present pamphlet gives a fuller picture of the loss of socialism in Russia and China and is still highly topical. A brief postscript (1997) has been added to the original.**

**Marxist-Leninists have long regarded the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union and China as an established fact. They have dated this restoration in the Soviet bloc from 1956, the time of Khrushchev and the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (the CPSU). In China, they have dated it from the 1976 coup d'état of the Teng Hsiao-ping clique two months after the death of Mao Tse-tung.**

**Most people now see clearly that the so-called 'socialist' countries of Eastern Europe have gone right over to become part of Western imperialism, while the Soviet Union is itself on a similar path.**

In this article we will be more particularly concerned with Russia and China, for the phoney 'socialist' regimes of the Soviet bloc states of Eastern Europe in reality have been copies of the phoney 'socialist' regime in Russia, only without its historic, world-shaking socialist revolution as a starting point.

Though we point to Khrushchev as the revisionist leader who headed the restoration of capitalism from within Russia, that does not mean that we attribute to him alone the transition back to capitalism that took place and is now completing the final stage of counter-revolutionary restoration under Gorbachev. By no means. That would be contrary to the Marxist-Leninist method of dialectical materialism, which seeks the causes of major historical changes, not in the character of individuals – though this plays its part – but in the economic, political and social conditions, determined by history, underlying such changes. In this, the economic factor plays the determining role for, according to the Marxist view, i.e., the view of historical materialism, the nature of the economic basis of society, the way in which society is organised for the production and exchange of its material means of subsistence, is what determines the politics, ideology and intellectual life of that society. This is as true of socialism as it is of capitalism.

In pointing this out we are simply expounding the view of China's great revolutionary thinker and leader, the late Chairman Mao Tse-tung, who was the first and by far the principal figure in the socialist world, to make a proper scientific analysis of the rise of revisionism, and its class basis, the new bourgeoisie, in the Soviet Union, and indeed the existence of this class in all

socialist states without exception. That analysis started from an examination of the economic and social conditions in the Soviet Union which preceded the usurpation of state power by Khrushchev.

By contrast, the Albanian leader, Enver Hoxha, lacking any understanding of dialectics, ascribed the rise of revisionism simply to the actions of Khrushchev. As he publicly declared, Stalin made no mistakes. Therefore, Soviet revisionism must have come into the world already fully grown, for it was only 3 years after Stalin's death that the 20th Congress of the CPSU began the restoration of capitalism. According to Hoxha's un-Marxist view, just as Minerva sprang into existence fully-grown from the head of Jupiter, so revisionism sprang into existence fully-grown, from the head of Khrushchev. As any person with even a scanty knowledge of Marxism knows, this is sheer nonsense. We will consider other reactionary views of Hoxha further on. However, the restoration of capitalism in the USSR and China, once regarded as bastions of Marxism-Leninism, faces the international working class and oppressed peoples with a number of important theoretical and practical problems. It is these that we have to turn our attention to now, for they closely concern the proletarian revolution both before and after the establishment of socialism.

In this study we will consider some of these questions. Also we will examine the main features of the evidence for restoration, together with the superficial appearances which lead some revisionists to assert that one or other, or both of these countries are still socialist. All we will say of this at the moment is, that although the earth appears flat where we live, that by no means proves that the earth as a whole is flat. For instance, there are appearances of a planned economy in the Soviet Union. Production plans exist, they are talked about and sometimes (though nowadays not often) they are carried out. But what counts is the class content of the plan, in whose interests is it drawn up, and who benefits. For multinational corporations also plan, so do international cartels, and so do monopoly capitalist countries.

As we look closer into the matter, look behind the appearances, that is, and behind the protestations of the leaders, we will find that the determining factor in both Russia and China (the Soviet satellite states are only smaller casts of the same mould) is precisely this: which class holds state power! That is the essence of the question, for both capitalism and socialism.

As far as the Soviet Union is concerned the question was definitely settled from the mid-1950s on, during the regimes headed by Khrushchev and his successor, Brezhnev.

### **Some Basic Questions of Marxism-Leninism**

In the nineteenth century Marx and Engels wrote and worked to provide the working class in the main capitalist countries with a scientific world outlook – dialectical and historical materialism – and a clear understanding of class exploitation under capitalism. It followed from Marx's analysis of capitalist production in his great work *Capital*, that socialist society must inevitably replace capitalism because of the continuous growth of the socialisation of labour, and that the historic mission of the proletariat was to accomplish this replacement by establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat as a transitional stage between class society and the abolition of classes. 1

Marx and Engels taught that this dictatorship (another way of putting the idea of working-class state power and forcible suppression of the capitalist class) could only be brought about, in general, through violent revolution.

After their death, opportunists in the European workers' parties suppressed these ideas and emasculated the revolutionary content of Marxism. Leaders of the German Social Democratic Party, at first principally Edouard Bernstein and soon afterwards Karl Kautsky, systematically distorted all the main teachings of Marx in philosophy, political economy, and the class struggle and socialist revolution. This trend of systematic suppression and distortion under cover of which, bourgeois ideology was advocated in place of proletarian socialist ideology, became known as revisionism.

### **The Struggle for Socialism and Against Revisionism**

In the early part of the 20th century Lenin took up the fight against revisionism. In a number of important works – to mention only a few, *Marxism and Revisionism*, *The Collapse of the Second International*, *Imperialism*, *The State and Revolution*, and *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky* – he lashed the revisionists and restored the revolutionary content of Marx's teachings, at the same time creatively developing Marxism, so that it justly became known as Marxism-Leninism.

After Lenin's death in 1924, Stalin became the leader of the world's first socialist state. Although he made errors and had some serious shortcomings, nevertheless it was under his practical and theoretical leadership that socialism in the Soviet Union was built and consolidated against the opposition of bourgeois and anti-Leninist elements both outside and inside the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (hereafter referred to as the CPSU).

It was this great, positive achievement of leading the building of socialism in one country that earned Stalin the undying hatred of the imperialists and revisionists. In a campaign lasting many decades the propagandists of the bourgeoisie have raised an unceasing clamour about 'the crimes of Stalin'. The mouthpieces of revisionism have brought this to a crescendo over the recent past in order to cover up their own unforgivable crime of betrayal of socialism, thereby once more rendering imperialism and the imperialists the greatest aid, assisting them to cover up their history of truly immense, continuous crimes against humanity. These include: the organising of two world wars costing scores of millions of lives; the armed intervention of 14 capitalist countries to destroy the new-born Soviet republic; their enslavement of hundreds of millions in the colonies and semi-colonies; the fire bombing of Dresden by Anglo-US planes, killing almost the whole civilian population so as to prevent the city falling undamaged to the Soviet army poised to take it in World War II; the atom-bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at a time when Japan was on the point of surrender; the killing by US air bombardment of 3 million Koreans, well over a million Vietnamese, and over a million Cambodians, and their 'trifling' mass murder of between five and ten thousand Panamanian civilians at Christmas 1989, during the USA's blitzkrieg invasion of Panama. This is to name but a few of the crimes of imperialism, which has been built on a river of blood and the starvation of countless millions. In an imperialist's eyes, however, these are not crimes, but heroic deeds. What is a crime is to defend socialism against

imperialism. Stalin made mistakes, some of them serious, but history will judge him very differently from his accusers today.

After the disgraceful betrayals of the working class and socialism carried on by the opportunist, parliamentary parties in the first world war, and under the great impetus given to revolutionary socialism by the October Revolution in Russia in 1917, new, Communist, parties were formed in many countries, constituting together with the CPSU a world Communist movement in which, naturally enough, the CPSU and its leaders were held in high esteem because of their pioneering role. It was thought that they could not possibly become opportunist, revisionist. Life was to prove otherwise.

Other revisionist movements arose during and after the Second World War. One was led by the then Secretary of the US Communist Party, Earl Browder by name. He had a wide influence in Western Communist parties, (including the Communist Party of New Zealand) a number of which were already influenced towards opportunism through the pressure of imperialism and the existence of substantial labour aristocracies in the working class. Browder advocated reaching socialism through continuing the wartime 'partnership' of the big capitalist powers with the Soviet Union, and succeeded in getting the CPUSA to liquidate itself as a political party, supposedly to further this 'partnership'. This trend arose in World War II when, in the interests of the defeat of fascism, the Communist parties supported big power (Britain, the Soviet Union, and the USA) unity. It came to an end around 1947 after an attack on it as post-war policy, which was sharply criticised as revisionism, by a French Communist Party leader. At that time the French Communist Party was still supporting the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The other main revisionist trend was that of Titoism in the immediate post-war period. Initially the leader of a large partisan movement during the war, Tito became the leader of the Yugoslav government of people's democracy at the end of World War II, but had Bonapartist ambitions to set up a Balkan Federation in opposition to the USSR. He and the Yugoslav 'League of Communists' which he headed were expelled from the 'Cominform' (Communist Information Bureau) set up as a leading body of European Communist parties after the war. His economic policies based on direct ownership of factories by the workers employed in them were petty-bourgeois, and had already in 1921 been put forward in Russia and been condemned as such by Lenin at the 10th Congress of the CPSU in 1921.

Lenin adhered to Marx's concept of state ownership of industry under centralised direction accompanied by planned, proportionate development of the national economy, which would be made impossible if enterprises were to compete against each other for the exclusive benefit of their worker-owners.

Khrushchev in his time declared that Yugoslavia was a socialist country and that the Soviet Union could learn from it. This was at a time when Yugoslavia had already established close ties with US imperialism and was receiving US economic aid. Still, this was nothing compared to what was to come.

As most people know, in the 1920s and 1930s China had conducted its own mighty revolution, culminating in the proclamation of the Chinese People's Republic in October, 1949. Under the

leadership of the Communist Party of China (hereafter called the CPC) headed by Mao Tse-tung, the rule of the big bourgeoisie of China, together with its political party, the Kuomintang, which acted as agent for a powerful coalition of foreign imperialists, was overthrown in a series of civil wars. This revolution passed through two stages, both under the leadership of the CPC. The first was a new-type democratic revolution which did away with feudalism and expelled the foreign imperialists, while the second stage was one of socialism, which started in about 1956.

It was at this time that Nikita Khrushchev, who had manoeuvred his way into power in the Soviet Union between 1953 and 1956, launched a revisionist campaign which led to the restoration of capitalism in the USSR.

What was revisionist about it?

### **Khrushchev Begins Capitalist Restoration**

The opening shots were fired at the 20th Congress of the CPSU in February, 1956. In the main political report, Khrushchev announced that changes in the relation of forces between capitalism and socialism had now made a peaceful, parliamentary transition to socialism possible in capitalist countries.

This was a direct denial of the Marxist-Leninist position on the question of the state and the necessity of armed struggle to achieve socialism by smashing the capitalist military-bureaucratic state machine. It was a direct denial of the experience of the working class and communist movement in all countries. It was a rehash of Kautsky's advocacy of peaceful transition to socialism which Lenin thoroughly denounced and refuted in his merciless polemics against Kautsky's revisionism.

At the same 20th Congress of the CPSU a secret session was held at which Khrushchev delivered a secret report on Stalin. This report - which was not discussed with any of the other fraternal Communist Parties beforehand - totally negated all of Stalin's life and achievements. It was completely one-sided in character, concentrating entirely on accusations against Stalin under the blanket slogan of the 'cult of the individual'.

The immediate result of this report was an imperialist campaign to stir up a tidal wave of anti-communism throughout the world, for although it was not published in the USSR (and still has not been) the Report was leaked to pro-capitalist forces and published internationally through the agency of the United States Information Service.

In Hungary, which had become socialist after World War II, pro-capitalist and fascist forces which were still in existence, biding their time, carried out, with imperialist support, a counter-revolutionary uprising. Poland was close to the same situation. In socialist China, however, while some people tried to create Hungarian-type disturbances, they failed miserably. Nevertheless, the secret Report was an invaluable weapon placed in the hands of world imperialism by Khrushchev.

Although not openly critical of the CPSU and the 20th Congress at the time, the CPC under Mao's leadership was aware of the departure from Marxism-Leninism the Congress represented.

In April, 1956, less than two months after the Congress, Mao Tse-tung expressed to CPSU leaders the Chinese Party's view that Stalin's 'merits outweighed his faults' and that it was necessary to make 'an all-round evaluation' of Stalin. The CPC began this process with a pamphlet, also published in April, 1956, entitled: On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, in which Stalin's positive role was emphasised as primary while his mistakes, though analysed and criticised, were treated as secondary. Later pamphlets followed the same course, and allotted Stalin 70 percent for achievements and 30 percent for mistakes.

Within the Communist Party of China, Mao was quite sharp over the revisionist nature of the 20th Congress.

At a Central Committee plenary session on November 15, 1956, Mao said in a speech:

**I would like to say a few words about the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. I think there are two 'swords': one is Lenin and the other Stalin. The sword of Stalin has now been discarded by the Russians. Gomulka [Polish revisionist. RN.] and some people in Hungary have picked it up to stab at the Soviet Union and oppose so-called Stalinism ... The imperialists also use this sword to slay people with. Dulles [then US Foreign Secretary], has brandished it for some time. This sword has not been lent out, it has been thrown out. We Chinese have not thrown it away. First, we protect Stalin, and, second, we at the same time criticise his mistakes ... Unlike some people who have tried to defame Stalin, we are acting in accordance with objective reality.**

**As for the sword of Lenin, hasn't it too been discarded to a certain extent by some Soviet leaders? In my view, it has been discarded to a considerable extent. Is the October Revolution still valid? Can it still serve as the example for all countries? Khrushchev's report at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union says it is possible to seize state power by the parliamentary road, that is to say, it is no longer necessary for all countries to learn from the October Revolution. Once this gate is opened, by and large Leninism is thrown away. 3**

And further, in the same speech:

**How much capital do you have? Just Lenin and Stalin. Now you have abandoned Stalin and practically all of Lenin as well, with Lenin's feet gone, or perhaps with only his head left, or with one of his hands cut off. We on our part, stick to studying Marxism-Leninism and learning from the October Revolution. 4**

### **Growing Differences**

The 20th Congress marked the first steps in a process of transforming the socialist Soviet Union into a state of social-imperialism, that is, one practising socialism in words but imperialism in

deeds. It began the restoration of capitalism in the USSR, even though this took some decades to fully accomplish. Fundamentally, the question turned, as in all revolutions and counter-revolutions, on the issue of which class was to hold state power. In this overall development, the differences between the CPC and the leaders of the CPSU steadily grew in extent. In 1960, Khrushchev launched a surprise attack on the CPC at a Rumanian Party Congress. While the growing sharpness of the differences was contained within the world Communist movement for a time, the CPSU kept to the path of revisionism, publicly attacking the Albanian Party of Labour at the 22nd Congress of the CPSU in October, 1961, which also adopted a new, revisionist Party programme.

Further public attacks on China were also launched at congresses of East European and some Western Communist parties which fell in behind the Soviet line. China, in the interests of struggling for principled Marxist-Leninist unity within the international Communist movement, did its best to avoid public polemics, though it did make stinging replies to the attacks on itself launched by 5 Soviet-aligned Parties including those of Italy and the USA. However, a full-scale, open ideological dispute developed following an all-out attack on the CPC, full of barefaced lies and unprincipled distortions, contained in a published Open Letter of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, dated March 30, 1963.

China's response to this open letter was, first of all, to publish it in its own press, an example which the CPSU did not dare to follow in respect of the Chinese Party's reply, for reply they did, in a series of ten pamphlets drawn up under Mao's general direction, which analysed objectively and in great detail all of the main ideological and political features of the Soviet revisionist line. These pamphlets, suppressed by the now-revisionist CPC, appearing between June, 1963 and November, 1964, were collected in a publication entitled: *The Polemic on the General Line of the International Communist Movement*. To this day this collection remains the most deeply analytical, thorough and well-documented account and refutation of Soviet revisionism. Its correctness has been borne out by all subsequent Soviet development, from Khrushchev, through Brezhnev and up to and including Gorbachev. As well as this it remains a splendid defence of the basic features of Marxism-Leninism, and a further development of it during the present epoch.

Before considering the main aspects of revisionism as demonstrated by yesterday's and today's CPSU leadership, we must briefly ask ourselves how it was that the delegates to the 20th CPSU Congress did not throw out Khrushchev's Report and the Secret Session denunciation of Stalin.

### **Origins of the New Bourgeoisie**

After Stalin's death, though Georgi Malenkov was appointed First Secretary of the CPSU he relinquished the post to Khrushchev, who made good use of it to intrigue to discredit Malenkov and usurp power. He managed to pin on to Malenkov, Molotov and Kaganovich - all closer to Stalin than he had ever been - the brand of 'anti-Party group', and to carry out a wholesale removal of their supporters from the central Party bodies before the 20th Congress, replacing them with Khrushchev supporters. That such a thing could happen indicates that a new and reactionary force had grown up within Soviet society and particularly in the CPSU top echelons. This was the 'new bourgeoisie', about whom we will say a good deal further on, a grouping that formed the social basis for the new revisionism.

First of all we must say that while socialism is the lower (or first) stage of communist society, it has to develop out of the economic and social conditions of capitalism. It cannot do away with the inequalities of capitalism at one blow. For this a long historical period is necessary, during which the class struggle against capitalist elements both within the basis and the superstructure of socialist society has to be waged.

In his Critique of the Gotha Programme, Marx pointed out that under socialism 'bourgeois right' still prevails. That is, despite apparent equality in principle in relation to members of a society in which all work and receive payment (or its equivalent) according to that work, this in itself makes equal right unequal, for 'one man is superior to another physically or mentally and so supplies more labour in the same time, or can labour for a longer time ... Thus with an equal output and hence an equal share in the social consumption fund, one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another and so on. To avoid all these defects, right, instead of being equal, would have to be unequal. But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged after prolonged birth pangs from capitalist society. Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and the cultural development thereby determined.' 5

Thus, socialism does not grow up on its own basis, but out of capitalism, so that differences in remuneration exist, as do class differences. Moreover, many small producers still remain, continuing to breed capitalism and the outlook of capitalist society.

Lenin fully recognised this aspect of socialism and wrote about it in State and Revolution (Chapter 5) and other works. He was quite alive to the danger of new bourgeois elements growing up under a socialist system and in fact took steps to counter this tendency in 1920 as can be seen in his Draft Resolution on the Immediate Tasks of Party Development. He writes:

**The indescribably grave position of the Soviet Republic in the early years of its existence, extreme devastation and grave military danger, made it necessary to designate 'shock' (and therefore virtually privileged) departments and groups of workers. This was unavoidable, since the ruined country could not be saved unless resources and energies were concentrated on such departments and groups of workers, without the strengthening of which the imperialists of the whole world would certainly have crushed us and prevented the Soviet Republic from even starting on economic construction. 6**

So far, Lenin - rightly - justifies inequalities by revolutionary necessity. However, despite a missing intervening page in the manuscript, it is clear from what follows that he regarded this situation as temporary and exceptional as we can note from point (3) in the Resolution: 'precise practical rules are to be drawn up on measures for eliminating inequality (in the conditions of life, size of salaries and so forth) between specialists and executives, on the one hand, and the rank and file, on the other - an inequality that violates democracy, is a source of demoralisation within the Party and lowers the prestige of Communists ...'7 That this was no isolated expression of Lenin's view can be seen from other references at about the same time. In a draft decree on The Salaries of High-Ranking Office Employees and Officials Lenin calls for the relatively low salary of 500 rubles a month for People's Commissars (equivalent to Western cabinet ministers) along with special taxes on high-ranking employees, state and private, and for the Ministry of

Finance and all respective Commissars to 'immediately study the estimates of the ministries and cut all excessively high salaries and pensions.' 8 As well, we find in Notes on the Immediate Tasks of the Party, also in 1920, the following: 'Point 2) Strengthening the Socialist foundation: seven million trade union members. Equality in place of shock work'. This last sentence clearly relates to changing over to equal rates of pay instead of the former special privileges for shock work.

Thus it is clear that Lenin considered it necessary to narrow down the inequalities in socialist society, as soon as it became practicable with the drawing to a close of the civil war period. However, in Stalin's lifetime, and particularly from the mid-thirties on, a policy of large material incentives was adopted. No doubt Stalin was actuated by the need to achieve more rapid economic development in order to meet the anticipated assault by imperialism. As a result, very high piece-work wage rates were adopted, and special rewards and privileges went to the best workers and managers of the most productive enterprises. The Soviet press was filled with stories of 'proletarian millionaires'.

At the time, Communists internationally justified this policy on the grounds of the necessity to develop the productive forces. However, though it might have been expedient, it contrasted with Lenin's policy of reducing and eliminating inequalities in salary and of keeping state functionaries on workers' wages in line with the practice of the Paris Commune. (See, e.g., *State and Revolution*, Chapter 3).

The overall result of the policy of large material incentives was to lay an economic and social basis for the development of a new bourgeoisie in the form of highly-paid bureaucrats and administrators, enterprise managers, better-off professional and technical people, and as well, a labour aristocracy.

### **Proletarian Dictatorship - Its Decisive Role**

The question of ensuring the dictatorship of the proletariat against a capitalist restoration is obviously a decisive one for the entire future of the proletarian revolution. Life brought this question to the fore in a form which could not be envisaged precisely by Marx or Lenin, although certainly Lenin was conscious of - and warned against - the danger of capitalist restoration being assisted by political degeneration within a socialist country. However, the Soviet Union was in its infancy when Lenin died. Naturally, in the conditions of the time, the main side of the question confronting Lenin and the Bolsheviks was that concerning the defence of the proletarian dictatorship against armed counter-revolution supported by international imperialism.

The danger of a 'peaceful transition' of a socialist country back to capitalism could not appear as the main danger until later. Nor could it appear in a general form until other countries established the dictatorship of the proletariat. However, the essence of the question underlying both dangers is the same - that is, that class struggle exists under socialism, taking different forms according to the differing conditions of development, right up to the stage of developed Communism.

In 1919 Lenin wrote:

**The proletariat does not cease the class struggle after it has captured political power, but continues it until classes are abolished - of course, under different circumstances, in different form and by different means.**

**And what does the 'abolition of classes' mean? All those who call themselves socialists recognise this as the ultimate goal of socialism, but by no means all give thought to its significance ...**

**Clearly, in order to abolish classes completely, it is not enough to overthrow the exploiters, the landowners and the capitalists, not enough to abolish their rights of ownership; it is necessary to abolish all private ownership of the means of production, it is necessary to abolish the distinction between town and country, as well as the distinction between manual workers and brain workers. This requires a very long period of time. 9**

This is crystal clear. Communism is the complete abolition of classes. It has to be reached by eliminating class antagonisms and the survivals of bourgeois ideology and bourgeois right. This process takes a 'very long time' during which class struggle does not cease.

### **Socialism and Communism**

Marx made it clear in his Critique of the Gotha Programme that Socialism was the first, or lower stage of Communism during which the principle prevailed: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work." Not until full communism was reached and both an economy of abundance and a new type of person, one who regarded work as the mainspring of life, had been achieved was it possible to live according the principle of communism: 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs'. Throughout the entire transitional stage the dictatorship of the proletariat remains absolutely necessary in order to accomplish the transition.

By the time of the 22nd Congress of the CPSU in 1961, Khrushchev had carried his revision of Marxism-Leninism to the level of systematisation. He declared that as there were no longer antagonistic classes in the Soviet Union there was no longer need for the dictatorship of the proletariat. He proclaimed that the Soviet Union now had a state of the whole people and a party of the whole people, no longer a party of the working class. Besides this, the Congress produced a political line the main content of which comprised peaceful transition, peaceful coexistence and peaceful competition. In their criticism of Khrushchev's wholesale jettisoning of Marxism-Leninism the Chinese Party, under Mao's leadership, usually referred to these policies for simplicity's sake as: the 'three peacefuls and the two entires'. That is, peaceful transition, coexistence and competition; and the state of the whole (entire) people and the party of the whole (entire) people.

In declaring that there were no longer antagonistic classes and therefore there was no longer a need for the dictatorship of the proletariat, Khrushchev was building on an error of Stalin's. While Stalin was a great proletarian revolutionary, still, he was not free from mistakes. One of these was to prematurely declare in an article of 1936 On the Draft Constitution of the USSR that there were "no longer antagonistic classes" in the Soviet Union and that it was 'free of class conflicts', 10 thus overlooking its contradictions and one-sidedly stressing its homogeneity. This

was in a period which followed the tremendous changes achieved in the industrialisation of the Soviet Union and the collectivisation of agriculture.

The fact was, however, that elements of the old bourgeoisie still remained, bourgeois ideology was still influential in the spheres of culture and education, small-producer mentality had not been eliminated, and conditions were being created for the rise of the new bourgeoisie through excessive pay differentials - giving rise to a labour aristocracy, and special privileges allotted to managers of enterprises, bureaucrats, Party officials, and the professional and technical intelligentsia. Beneath the surface of Soviet society the new bourgeoisie grew to the point where, at the time of Stalin's death, it was already reaching a position where, as a class, it could contend for the reins of power. That a crude intriguer like Khrushchev should appear as their representative and perform for the bourgeoisie the counter-revolutionary task of replacing the dictatorship of the proletariat with that of the bourgeoisie, this was a matter of historical chance. The roots of the development of the new bourgeoisie, however, lay in the economic development of Soviet socialist society, its relations of production and the political, legal and ideological superstructure to which these gave rise.

In the Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, Karl Marx gave a brilliant historical materialist analysis of a political event - the Bonapartist coup d'état of 1851 - which no contemporary bourgeois historian could have even attempted. In it, he writes:

**It is not enough to say, as the French do, that their nation was taken unawares. A nation and a woman are not forgiven the unguarded hour in which the first adventurer that came along could violate them. The riddle is not solved by such turns of speech, but merely formulated differently. 11**

Marx was pointing out that the role of the individual is subordinate to the social forces he or she represents in the class struggle, which itself reflects the mode of production and exchange in society. Thus, simply to lay the rise of Soviet revisionism at the door of the individual Khrushchev, as does Enver Hoxha, is quite un-Marxist.

### **Mao Tse-tung and Creative Marxism**

In his speeches to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (the CPC) and to other inner-Party meetings, Mao made numerous references to mistaken policies followed by the Soviet Union and Stalin, but still he upheld the view that Stalin was a great Marxist-Leninist despite his mistakes. Mao could speak with much authority, having great experience of class and revolutionary struggle behind him, and himself being a close student of Marxism-Leninism and an outstanding theoretician in his own right. One of the things he had quite plainly absorbed and translated into practice was Engels' statement concerning the joint views of Marx and himself: 'Our theory is not a dogma but a guide to action'. His criticisms of Stalin are not the one-sided denunciations of a Khrushchev but go much deeper, into Stalin's shortcomings in dialectics and ideology, particularly (but not only) in his lack of understanding of contradictions among the people and how to treat them.

It was Mao's non-dogmatist, dialectical approach to the Chinese revolution, a truly creative, Marxist-Leninist approach, which enabled it to triumph in the face of seemingly insuperable obstacles, both internal and external.

But the different policies followed in China as compared to the USSR, and the criticisms of Stalin were not made public, but were kept within the Party at that time, for Mao was mindful of the offensive of US and world imperialism against socialism and the USSR, and still sought by patient and reasoned struggle to win over the majority of the CPSU leadership to a correct line. On January 7, 1957, he wrote:

**In my opinion, circumstances are more powerful than individuals, even than high officials. The force of circumstances will make it impossible for those die-hard elements in the Soviet Union [i.e., the Khrushchev revisionists] to get anywhere if they continue to push their great-nation chauvinism. Our present policy is still to help them by talking things over with them face to face. This time when our delegation went to the Soviet Union we came straight to the point on a number of questions. I told Comrade Chou En-lai over the phone that these people are blinded by their material gains and the best way to deal with them is to give them a good dressing down. What are their material gains? Nothing but 50 million tons of steel, 400 million tons of coal and 80 million tons of petroleum. Does this amount to so much? Not at all. Now at the sight of this much their heads are swelled. What Communists! What Marxists! I say multiply all that tenfold, or even a hundredfold, it still doesn't amount to much. All you have done is to extract something from the earth, turn it into steel, and make some cars, planes and what not. What is so remarkable about that? And yet you make all this such a heavy burden on your backs that you even cast away revolutionary principles. Isn't this being blinded by material gains? If one attains high office one can be blinded by material gain too. To be the first secretary [Khrushchev's title] is some kind of material gain, which is also liable to swell one's head. When a man's head gets too swelled, we have to give him a good bawling out one way or another. This time in Moscow Comrade Chou En-lai did not stand on ceremony and took them on, and consequently they kicked up a row. This is good, straightening things out face to face. They tried to influence us and we tried to influence them. However, we didn't come straight to the point on every question, we didn't play all our cards, but kept some up our sleeves. There will always be contradictions. As long as things are tolerable on the whole, we can seek common grounds and reserve differences, to be dealt with later. If they insist on having their own way, sooner or later we will have to bring everything into the open. 12**

This speech was not published until 1977, after Mao's death. What it shows is that Mao was pursuing united front tactics towards the Soviet Union according to his long-standing maxim: firm in principle, flexible in tactics, at a time when it was still possible that the Khrushchev clique might have been toppled by others in the leadership. Later, everything had to, and did, come into the open. Thus, what later became the great ideological dispute was already in being, and Mao was preparing the CPC to meet the developing situation. The speech also shows that Mao had a clear understanding of the essence of Khrushchev's revisionism at a time when Enver Hoxha could only scratch the surface of it.

## What Is Socialism?

In China itself at this time an intense struggle was developing as Mao and his followers sought to move from the stage of democratic revolution to that of the socialist revolution. Taking heart from counter-revolutionary events in Eastern Europe right-wing forces in China were already denouncing socialism. In a speech at the conference of cadres in Shanghai on July 9, 1957, Mao wrote:

**The socialist revolution came swiftly. In a matter of six or seven years the socialist transformation of capitalist ownership and of individual ownership of small producers has by and large been completed. But the transformation of man still has a long way to go, though some progress has been made. 13**

This statement alone refutes the false and ridiculous assertions of Enver Hoxha, made over 20 years later, that China under Mao had never had socialism or attempted to build it. In continuing the same speech Mao gives a very striking and profound definition of what socialism consists of:

**Socialist transformation is a twofold task, one is to transform the system and the other to transform man. The system embraces not only ownership, it also includes the superstructure, primarily the state apparatus and ideology ... Until at least the extinction of imperialism the press and everything else in the realm of ideology will reflect class relations. School education, literature and art., all fall within the scope of ideology, belong to the superstructure and have a class nature. 14**

If we look at Khrushchev's usurpation from this standpoint we can see that the seizure of leading positions in the Communist Party in any socialist country must be a strategic aim of the new bourgeoisie and the elements of the old, ruling bourgeoisie which still remain, perhaps with positions of influence in the field of ideology - including education and culture - through which avenues they can still make a comeback.

Once the leadership of the Party is in the hands of the new bourgeoisie, that means that they have control, through the Party, not only of the state machine, but also of the whole political and ideological superstructure. The state, of course, is the principal lever of political power. That is why Marx, Engels and Lenin analysed its role in detail and placed such stress upon it. But control over it is not enough on its own to guarantee the maintenance of a given economic foundation. The latter also has to be reinforced by the entire superstructure, or certainly its main elements. Hence the importance of the Party, which has the task not only of directing the state, but of transforming also the ideology of society. With the Party in their hands, the new bourgeoisie in the USSR (and in their satellite states) were in command of all the essentials which enabled them to transform the political and ideological superstructure from being socialist to being capitalist, thereby clearing the way for transforming the economic basis from social ownership to capitalist ownership. This was all quite clear to Mao. In Stalin's time it was not so clear to him. Mao remarks:

**For a long time Stalin denied that contradictions between the relations of production and the productive forces and between the superstructure and the economic base exist under**

**the socialist system. Not until the year before his death when he wrote ‘Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR’ did he hesitantly mention the contradiction between the relations of production and the productive forces under the socialist system and admit that incorrect policies and improper adjustments would lead to trouble. Even then he did not pose the question of the contradictions between the relations of production and the productive forces and between the superstructure and the economic base under the socialist system as a question of overall importance, nor did he realise that they are the basic contradictions which propel socialist society forward. He thought all was secure under his rule. We on our part mustn’t presume that all is secure under our rule; it is secure and yet insecure. 15**

### **Origins of Eastern Europe’s Collapse**

In regard to Eastern European countries, Mao already saw the basic weakness of their regimes in 1957. Already existing in Stalin’s time, the problems of these countries intensified in the years from Khrushchev to Gorbachev. In his previously quoted remarks on the CPSU 20th Congress Mao paid one of his many tributes to Lenin and Leninism. He wrote:

**The doctrine of Leninism has developed Marxism. In what respects has it done so? First, in world outlook, that is, in materialism and dialectics; and second, in revolutionary theory and tactics, particularly on the question of class struggle, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the political party of the proletariat. And then there are Lenin’s teachings on socialist construction. Beginning from the October Revolution of 1917, construction went on in the midst of revolution, and thus Lenin had seven years of practical experience in construction, something denied to Marx. It is precisely these fundamental principles we have been learning ... It is from the October Revolution that we have learned to wage class struggle. During the October Revolution, the masses in the cities and villages were fully mobilised to wage class struggle.**

A paragraph later he virtually forecasts what is happening today in Eastern Europe. He writes:

**The fundamental problem with some East European countries is that they have not done a good job of waging class struggle and have left so many counter-revolutionaries at large; nor have they trained their proletariat in class struggle to help them learn how to draw a clear distinction between the people and the enemy, between right and wrong and between materialism and idealism. And now they have to reap what they have sown, they have brought the fire upon their own heads.**

Pointing to one of the basic economic shortcomings of both the USSR and Eastern Europe - as early as April, 1956 - Mao commented:

**The emphasis in our country is on heavy industry. The production of the means of production must be given priority, that’s settled. But it definitely does not follow that the production of the means of subsistence, especially grain, can be neglected ...**

**In dealing with this relationship we have not made mistakes of principle. We have done better than the Soviet Union and a number of East European countries. The prolonged**

**failure of the Soviet Union to reach the highest pre-October Revolution level in grain output, the grave problems arising from the glaring disequilibrium between the development of heavy industry and that of light industry in some East European countries - such problems do not exist in our country. Their lop-sided stress on heavy industry to the neglect of agriculture and light industry results in a shortage of goods on the market and an unstable currency. We, on the other hand, attach more importance to agriculture and light industry. 16**

### **The Class Struggle Is Basic**

These remarks obviously apply to the period before Khrushchev, as well as at the time of writing. With only Albania not following the Khrushchev line, Eastern Europe began the restoration of capitalism with a new bourgeoisie in charge, creating regimes which were not socialist but state capitalist, only with a socialist facade. Now that facade has gone, and the regimes have rapidly transformed into openly capitalist regimes.

However, the peoples of those countries, duped by the revisionist new bourgeoisie and by the old, established imperialisms into blaming communism, are now being integrated into the imperialist world - but not as equals. They are already finding themselves the slaves of neo-colonialism, and although being mainly a skilled work force, are being forced to accept third-world pay rates and conditions. This is already happening in Poland, Hungary and Rumania. Most others will be in a similar situation.

In a definitive summing up of the origins of Khrushchev's revisionism, Mao gave a scientific explanation which is applicable to all countries reaching socialism. None are, or can be immune from the development of a revisionist new bourgeoisie rooted in the existence, even under socialism, of bourgeois right and the inequalities arising from it. Thus the class struggle must continue under socialism, for while it is not possible to prevent the growth of the new bourgeoisie, it by no means follows that they can or should be permitted to seize power. It is possible to counter and to prevent this from happening, once the problem is understood, by concrete measures to narrow down pay differentials, gradually iron out inequalities by reducing privileges, to prevent the development of an elite class separated entirely from physical labour by insisting that mental workers also regularly take part in a certain amount of physical labour, to gradually eliminate small-scale production under individual ownership, to steadily narrow the differences between town and country, and to continually raise the ideological and political level of the working-class and the masses. All of these things (and they are not a complete list) are matters of class struggle. They are particular features of the general theory advanced by Mao, known as the Theory of Continued Revolution under the Dictatorship of The Proletariat.

Mao formulated this theory as a result of his studies of the experience of the Soviet Union and the growth of Soviet revisionism during the years Khrushchev was in power. He summed up his views in the pamphlet: 'On Khrushchev's Phoney Communism and Its Historical Lessons for the World' (1964). 17 Beginning from an analysis of bourgeois right, he continues:

**Following the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat was established in the Soviet Union, capitalist private ownership was destroyed**

**and socialist ownership by the whole people and socialist collective ownership were established through the nationalisation of industry and the collectivisation of agriculture, and great achievements in socialist construction were scored during several decades. All this constituted an indelible victory of tremendous historic significance won by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Soviet people under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin.**

**However, the old bourgeoisie and other exploiting classes which had been overthrown in the Soviet Union were not eradicated and survived after industry was nationalised and agriculture collectivised. The political and ideological influence of the bourgeoisie remained. Spontaneous capitalist tendencies continued to exist both in the city and in the countryside. New bourgeois elements and kulaks [very rich peasants] were still incessantly generated. Throughout the long intervening period the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and the struggle between the socialist and capitalist roads have continued in the political, economic and ideological spheres.**

**As the Soviet Union was the first, and at the time the only, country to build socialism and had no foreign experience to go by, and as Stalin departed from Marxist-Leninist dialectics in his understanding of the laws of class struggle in socialist society, he prematurely declared after agriculture was basically collectivised that there were ‘no longer antagonistic classes’ 18 in the Soviet Union and that it was ‘free of class conflicts’ 19, one-sidedly stressed the internal homogeneity of socialist society and overlooked its contradictions, failed to rely upon the working class and the masses in the struggle against the forces of capitalism and regarded the possibility of the restoration of capitalism as associated only with armed attack by international imperialism. This was wrong both in theory and in practice. Nevertheless, Stalin remained a great Marxist-Leninist. As long as he led the Soviet Party and state, he held fast to the dictatorship and the socialist course, pursued a Marxist-Leninist line and ensured the Soviet Union’s victorious advance along the road of socialism. 20**

Mao devoted part of the same chapter quoted above to numerous current examples culled from the Soviet press - of new bourgeois corruption, degeneration, and criminal, anti-socialist behaviour to show that class antagonisms still existed in the USSR. They have become far worse since Mao wrote.

Note that Mao, while criticising Stalin’s defects, defends his life and work as Marxist-Leninist, when at the present time there is a vast flood of abusive invective about Stalin pouring out of the USSR. The simple fact of the matter is that just as Khrushchev used his attack on Stalin to cover the usurpation of power by the new bourgeoisie in 1956, so under Gorbachev the current attack is used to cover the much more rapid transition to open-slather capitalism, and to hide the real responsibility for the wholesale degeneration of Soviet society under Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and now Gorbachev himself. This degeneration is borne out (if played down) by Gorbachev’s book *Perestroika* and daily in newspaper headlines.

## Capitalism in Control

As we remarked earlier, the key factor in the Soviet transition back to capitalism was Khrushchev's usurpation of power in 1956. This gave him and his clique control of both the Party and the state apparatus, which meant that the new bourgeoisie which he represented were now in command and in a position to expropriate the workers from the means of production. They had to proceed cautiously, so as to not immediately alienate the masses of workers who wanted to keep socialism. The sale of the machine and tractor stations - which were state-owned and were the basis of farm mechanisation - to the collective farms began the transfer of means of production to private ownership. The dismantling of centralised planning bodies arduously built under Lenin and Stalin started to follow. A decisive step in the economic field took place in 1965 after Khrushchev's ouster, under the then premier Alexei Kosygin. Then open propaganda flooded the Soviet media for "putting the rouble in command", and profits became the new ideal to be held up to the workers. This became the rule during the Brezhnev era, though the pretence of socialism was kept up.

Gorbachev's book *Perestroika* (Collins, 1987) paints a picture of almost complete stagnation of the Soviet economy under Brezhnev. This is hardly surprising. Between them, the revisionist leaders of the USSR had utterly destroyed the enthusiasm of the masses for building socialism. Yet this was precisely what had built the Soviet Union into a powerful modern state, whose levels of production in Stalin's day rivalled the advanced Western states and enabled the Soviet armed forces to smash those of Nazi Germany in World War II.

To anyone who is familiar with the writings of Lenin, Gorbachev's book, *Perestroika*, is quite illuminating in its blatant misrepresentation of Lenin's views. In this it follows in the footsteps of Khrushchev. Lenin explained the process back in 1917 in *The State and Revolution*. He writes:

**During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes constantly hounded them, received their theories with the most savage malice, the most furious hatred and the most unscrupulous campaigns of lies and slander. After their death, attempts are made to convert them into harmless icons, to canonise them, so to say, and to hallow their names to a certain extent for the 'consolation' of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping the latter, while at the same time robbing the revolutionary theory of its substance, blunting its revolutionary edge and vulgarising it. 21**

Lenin was writing of Karl Marx. But that also is what has happened to Lenin and Leninism under Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and now today, Gorbachev.

## Leninism Distorted

Khrushchev, by asserting the possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism, emasculated the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state; he distorted Lenin's theory of imperialism out of recognition, becoming an open apologist of neo-colonialism; he stood Lenin's views on war and peace on their head, in the process transforming Lenin from a Marxist revolutionary into a common or garden bourgeois pacifist. Even as he did this, he substituted his own revisionist views for Lenin's while paying (false) homage to Lenin's name.

Gorbachev does the same. He follows Khrushchevism in regard to war and peace and the necessity of suppressing national liberation struggles. In his lifetime Lenin repeatedly stressed the need for the masses to carry out accounting and control so as to economise and prevent the state from being cheated. Always he stressed that with modern production and ordinary high school education such accounting and control was within everyone's compass. Gorbachev has twisted this into claiming that Lenin advocated 'cost accounting', i.e., a special profession which has nothing to do with the working masses. According to him, Lenin was not a proletarian revolutionary but a bourgeois cost accountant! Like Khrushchev, he too pays homage to Lenin's name. Likewise in relation to war and peace. Lenin, in explaining the sources and nature of modern war, frequently made complimentary reference to the great German military theoretician Clausewitz's dictum: "War is the continuation of politics by other, i.e., forcible, means". Today Gorbachev sneers at this, declaring that it cannot be made the basis of any policy. In Russian schools, Lenin has been made into an icon. He is 'dyadya' (uncle) Lenin to the children, but his teachings are never explained.

So far we have said nothing about the nationalist rebellions which have been breaking out like bushfires in almost all the Soviet national republics and are threatening at any time to bring about the rapid disintegration of the Soviet Union as a political entity.

What held the national republics and autonomous regions of the Soviet Union together under Lenin and Stalin, despite the latter's shortcomings, was the solid unity of the working class of the whole country for the building of socialist society. Under the rule of the new bourgeoisie with its capitalist, me-first ideology in command, proletarian internationalism has been replaced by bourgeois nationalism. That is what, at the time of writing, can now be seen flaring up into armed struggle against the central authority and between nations, such as the armed clashes between Azerbaijan and Armenia, between Georgians and Abkhazians, and along the borders of the Central Asian republics.

That Mao knew all was not well in regard to the proper development of the national minorities in the Soviet Union can be seen from his remarks on the same problem in China back in April, 1956. He points out that the Han population numbered 94 percent of the total, and that in former ages they had bullied the minority peoples. He wrote:

**Even among the working people it is not easy to eliminate the resultant influences in a short time. So we have to make extensive and sustained efforts to educate both the cadres and the masses in our proletarian nationality policy ...**

**We must sincerely and actively help the minority nationalities to develop their economy and culture. In the Soviet Union the relationship between the Russian nationality and the minority nationalities is very abnormal; we should draw lessons from this. 22**

The growing disintegration of the Soviet Union is part of the price being paid for the restoration of capitalism. A new ruling class is in power, living off the exploitation of the working class and the masses.

Gorbachev had hoped to make more rapid progress back to open-slathe capitalism with his policies of perestroika and glasnost. The vast miners' strikes that took place right across the Soviet Union showed just how much faith the working class have in the ruling class which promises them everything and gives them nothing. They have a difficult task changing things. Nothing short of a new revolution will do it. But in time new Marxist-Leninist revolutionary forces will emerge to lead the working masses in overthrowing the capitalist rule of the new bourgeoisie as their forefathers did in 1917 with Tsarism, capitalism and the old bourgeoisie.

## **A Summing Up**

Briefly, to sum up, we must say that we see the present situation in the Soviet Union as the second and final stage of the counter-revolution to restore capitalism and imperialism. Khrushchev and his new bourgeois, revisionist clique began it. After Khrushchev's fall from power in 1964, Brezhnev did not overthrow Khrushchevism, which is synonymous with bourgeois rule, but continued and consolidated it, building his own 'personality cult' and eclipsing Khrushchev.

Between them, Khrushchev and Brezhnev had brought a new form of state-monopoly capitalism into being, in which a few appearances of socialism were kept in order to dupe the working masses that equality reigned, whereas in reality the grossest forms of exploitation existed, the grossest forms of corruption, under a crude dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

With Gorbachev, we have now entered the final stage of counter-revolutionary capitalist restoration. This consists of throwing off the remaining trappings of their 'socialism', the pretence of socialist planning, the guaranteed 'right to work' etc., which were already a mere husk to cover an almost complete system of capitalism.

What, then of the Boris Yeltsins, the so-called 'radicals' demanding more rapid application of 'Perestroika'? They are different from Gorbachev only in this, that they feel themselves, the bourgeoisie, sufficiently strong to ignore any workers' rebellions against their projected new utopia of free-market capitalism. Gorbachev is not so sure. There are differences, not of principle, simply of timing. Only one thing is sure: whoever wins in the struggle to complete the counter-revolution, the working masses are certain to remain exploited. How long they will put up with this situation, time alone will show.

## **Notes**

1. See Marx's Letter to Wedemeyer, March 5, 1852, Marx-Engels Correspondence, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1953 Russian Edition, p. 86.
2. 'The Origin and Development of the Differences Between the Leadership of the CPSU and Ourselves', published by Peking separately as a pamphlet and included in the collection entitled: 'The Polemic on the General Line of the Communist Movement', Foreign Languages Press, Peking 1965, p.64.
3. Mao Tse-tung, sel. wks. ,vol.5, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, p.341.

4. *ibid.*, p.342.
5. Marx, K, 'Critique of the Gotha Programme', Lawrence and Wishart, London, pp. 12-14.
6. Lenin, V I, 'Draft Resolution on the Immediate Tasks of Party Development', coll. wks., vol. 42, p. 212.
7. *ibid.*, p.213.
8. Lenin, V I, 'The Salaries of High-Ranking Office Employees and Officials', coll. wks., vol. 42, p.38.
9. Lenin, V I, 'A Great Beginning', coll. wks., vol. 29, pp. 420-421.
10. Stalin, J V, 'On the Draft Constitution of the USSR', 'Problems of Leninism', Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954.
11. Marx, K, 'The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte', Marx-Engels, sel. wks., vol. 1, p. 229.
12. Mao Tse-tung, 'Talks at a Conference of Party Committee Secretaries; II The Talk of January 27', sel. wks., vol. 5, p. 365.
13. Mao Tse-tung, 'Beat Back the Attacks of the Bourgeois Rightists', sel. wks., vol. 5, p. 460.
14. *ibid.* p. 460.
15. Mao Tse-tung, 'Talks at a Conference of Party Committee Secretaries', sel. wks., vol. 5, p.376.
16. Mao Tse-tung, 'On the Ten Major Relationships', sel. wks., vol. 5, p. 285.
17. Mao Tse-tung, 'On Khrushchev's Phoney Communism and Its Historical Lessons for the World', 'The Polemic on the General Line of the International Communist Movement', Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1965, pp.428-429.
18. Stalin, J V, 'On the Draft Constitution of the USSR', 'Problems of Leninism', Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1955, p. 690, 1943 edition, p. 567.
19. Stalin, J V, 'Report to the Eighteenth Congress of the CPSU (B) on the Work of the Central Committee', 'Problems of Leninism', Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1943 edition, p. 645.
20. Mao Tse-tung, 'On Khrushchev's Phoney Communism' etc., *op. cit.*, pp. 428-429.
- 21 Lenin, V I, 'The State and Revolution', coll. wks., vol. 25, p.385.

22. Mao Tse-tung, 'On the Ten Major Relationships', op. cit., pp. 295-296.

## **Postscript**

In the late eighties the phoney socialist systems in eastern Europe began completion of the process of restoring capitalism. One after the other, regimes toppled. Then the failed coup d'état of August 1991 brought Boris Yeltsin to power in the Soviet Union. The Soviet new bourgeoisie cast off even the trappings of socialism. For the mass of the people their lot went from the bad of phoney communism to the worse of open-slaughter capitalism. Millions could not get paid wages. All public services such as health care, education and welfare became quite chaotic. Crime flourished, a mafia appeared and were a power in all cities. Expectation of life, in steady decline, dwindled as the economy became more and more chaotic. Food was scarce. To get even a bare minimum was a struggle. People hawked their belongings on the streets just to survive. One product soared in favour - vodka.

Yeltsin has established a personal dictatorship while presiding over the dismemberment of the Soviet Union. Even the favoured military seldom get paid, and many sell their weapons to augment their occasional pay. Unemployment is rife.

Is all this a total surprise? No, not to genuine Marxist-Leninists. After the 20th Congress of the CPSU it was predictable, and it was predicted by those who sided with Mao in the ideological dispute which followed.

World imperialism howled with glee, 'Communism is dead'. But genuine communism had already died from 1956 onward. What existed after that was a travesty of the real thing, a far cry from the new social order established under Lenin.

Our party, the Workers' Party of New Zealand, from its formation in 1991, had no illusions about the decline and fall of the Soviet Union. Generally speaking, things have turned out as we said they would.

The task now facing the world's Marxist-Leninists is to grasp the lessons of the loss of socialism in order to build anew on a still stronger basis.

World imperialism is riven by deep contradictions - economic, political and social. Despite appearances, it is a system in decay. That will spell its downfall. There are no shortcuts to achieve this end. A lengthy period of rebuilding is unavoidable, but that this will in due course be accomplished is certain. The laws of capitalist development will ensure this. The international working class and the oppressed peoples are an unstoppable social force. Together, they will triumph.