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WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENNING IN THE USSR

A NOTE TO THE READER

This publication is based on a lecture delivered by Kader Hassim, an Executive member of APDUSA (Natal), at the Summer School organised by APDUSA on 15-16 December 1991.

The purpose of the lecture was threefold:

(a) To assist in making an analysis of the epoch-making events which took place in the Soviet Union and East European countries which belonged to what was formerly called the Socialist Bloc.

We consider a proper understanding of these events by all interested persons as absolutely essential. More so in the case of liberatory movements which now have to wage struggle against imperialism in an arena in which there is only one superpower, namely, United States imperialism.

(b) To challenge and contest the blatant distortions by Hosea Jaffe and his followers of the meaning of concepts like "Glasnost" and the no less blatant untruths about events relating to the "August Coup". We also challenge the Jaffeist approach which, in seeking to condemn Gorbachev and Yeltsin, ends up by defending a vicious, corrupt, repressive anti-Marxist/Leninist bureaucracy whose most complete and notorious representative was Joseph Stalin.

(c) To express our disagreement with certain views expounded by the NUM BULLETIN on those events and to lay a basis for comradely debate. In this regard we need to place on record that when we let our disagreements be known the Editorial Board of the BULLETIN invited us to express our disagreement in the pages of the BULLETIN.

We were, however, unable to take advantage of the comradely offer due to the nature and length of our approach to this matter. It was obviously impossible to accommodate our approach and reply due to the size of the latter.

One of the purposes of publishing this lecture is to invite debate and discussion, both on the polemical matters and other matters of great importance which we have not been able to raise publicly in the past because of the anti-communist law. Some of these matters are:

(a) The nature of the Soviet Union and Soviet society after the bloody purges of the 1930's had wiped out the Bolshevik Party.

(b) The significance or value of the abolition of private property and the placing of the means of production in the hands of the State which was not only brutally repressive but which actively promoted and protected the privileges of a minority at the expense of the ordinary working people

(c) What is the Marxist-Leninist position on the exporting of "revolutions" and the invasion of another country in the name of socialism?

Another important purpose is to bring into sharp focus one's conception of socialism.

Leon Trotsky wrote his "The Revolution Betrayed" in the mid-1930's. He, before most others, saw the betrayal and analysed it in class terms. While some, to this day, deny the betrayal, others are "late developers", to borrow a fine phrase used by the journalist Anthony Daniels, to describe Joe Slovo, chief of the South African Communist Party.

According to Daniels, Joe Slovo stated in 1988 that he first realised in the previous year that "Stalin betrayed the working class and that the Gulag was no mere figment of capitalist propaganda." When Slovo sought to eulogize Soviet achievements in the fields of education, health care, housing, child care, etc, Daniels asked him whether he had investigated these achievements. His reply was a masterpiece of feeble rationalisation and insincerity:

"You must remember that we were there (USSR) as guests of the government and we met only the nomenclatura. They supported us and we believed what they told us; we trusted them." (Sunday Times 21: 11 :92)

For decades, Stalinist Soviet Union was Joe Slovo's idea of the ultimate in socialism.

All those who regard the Soviet Union of Stalin and Brezhnev as being socialist are, in truth, "non-developers". There is nothing in common between their brand of so-called socialism and the vision of Marx, Engels and their illustrious heirs and successors.

Editorial Board of APDUSA VIEWS

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WHAT HAS BEEN HAPPENING IN THE USSR

INTRODUCTION.

No person, including political analysts, dreamt, let alone made a scientific prediction, about the collapse of the governments and social systems in Eastern Europe. Ten years ago, nobody had the faintest notion of the convulsions which are presently wracking the USSR. There was a total unexpectedness, notwithstanding the very highly organised espionage organisations, sophisticated computers and data banks. And what about the armies of "Kremlinologists" and political scientists who are occupied full time monitoring every muscular twitch and change in the breathing rhythm of the body politic of the Soviet Union?

If we leave aside the massive shock suffered by the dedicated socialists, the present epoch must present itself to the political analyst, the scholar and the Marxian socialist as exciting and challenging as was the epoch at the turn of this century. Then, the whole world was abuzz about a new world order called "socialism". The world was pregnant with social revolutions which were aimed at the overthrow of capitalism. Socialism was looked upon by the toiling masses as the only solution to their problems of poverty, exploitation and unfair distribution of wealth. It was their belief that under socialism, society would be re-organised in such a manner that those who produced the wealth in society would determine how that wealth would be distributed.

There would be neither want nor parasites. It would be a society where all would contribute towards the welfare of society as a whole. In such a society, science would progress at a breath-taking rate in order, amongst other things, to discover the wonders of nature.

Today that beautiful dream and noble vision lies shattered in a million pieces. The great twentieth century experiment appears to have failed in the very first country which initiated it. When a country like the USSR collapses, it drags down with it the lesser associates. It also throws the whole Marxist Socialist world into confusion.

Once again, there is world-wide talk of a new order. On this occasion, however, it is an order which will be designed by imperialism in such a manner that it will exist for the benefit of its designer. Whereas for many decades of this century, imperialism and other forces of backwardness had their backs against the wall as the international

liberatory movement hurled one revolution after another against them, in the closing years of this century, the tide has turned against the forces of liberation and socialism.

Now the latter forces have their backs against the wall and they watch helplessly as imperialism and its running dogs dance over their sacred graves.

QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED

The times are such that all those involved in the struggle for liberation, all serious students of politics, the historian, the social scientist, the economist and the psychologist are required to meticulously examine the Great Experiment, its growth and development, its degeneration and finally its collapse. The assignment demands a deep commitment to search out the truth; to examine the events scientifically; to boldly draw inevitable conclusions and most importantly to have the zest and dedication to work at arriving at the most effective suggestions for correction. There are questions of monumental importance which require to be asked and answered. Do experts know enough about the psychology of human beings? What is it that makes a person sacrifice supremely for a cause? For how long will a person work for others or a cause at the expense of himself and his family?

How can selflessness be prolonged? How can we overcome demoralization, despair and loss of faith in a cause? Do we know enough about nationalism? What exactly makes people nationalistic? Why are people so attached to nationalistic sentiments that they are prepared to wage wars for them? Do we know enough about the thinking of people which makes them crave for material objects of one kind or another i.e. the affliction of consumerism? How can people be insulated against the multi-billion dollar advertising campaign which is the basis of consumerism? Why are people so attached to private property?

How to prevent a revolutionary party or leadership which conducted itself in an exemplary fashion during the struggle from becoming corrupt, degenerate and bureaucratic once it assumes power? How to inculcate revolutionary values in a successor generation which had not been steeled in struggle and which was born or brought up in a liberated society? How to build socialism (defined by its founders as the lowest stage of communism but higher than the highest stage of capitalism) in a society which is industrially underdeveloped? What force has reduced the once mighty Soviet Union into a third rate power grovelling at the feet of imperialism for aid? Given the predicament it is in, how does the Soviet Union extricate itself from the morass it is sinking into?

These are some of the questions which need to be asked AND answered. The questions must be asked even if they cannot all be answered at present. The answers will only emerge if there are the questions to incite, prod and provoke answers.

There is no substitute for serious, consistent, disciplined and honest research, study and thinking. We have in our ideological armoury amongst other things, the tools of analysis provided by Marxism, namely, dialectical and historical materialism.

OUR DUTY

When events of such magnitude take place, the oppressed and exploited throughout the world are deluged with the foul effluence from the propaganda machines of imperialism and local oppressors. It therefore becomes our bounden duty to EXPLAIN what is going on to our people. The explanation must be done

painstakingly so that the whirlpool of events and activities becomes clear to people. If we fail to do this, we will, in truth, be facilitating the work of imperialism. In the absence of a proper explanation, people will accept the versions churned out by imperialism and the local oppressors. And when they do this, who can blame them?

The events which have taken place in Eastern Europe and those which are shaking the USSR (1) to its foundation are part of an extremely complex process. We need to have a sound knowledge of the history of the USSR from 1917 to the present. We need to undertake the assignment with eagerness; we need boldness and we need creative imagination. Above all we need honesty and integrity in dealing with this matter. Trotting out a pile of labels in attacking people like Gorbachev is, in itself, of little value. The intelligent reader would appreciate it if he or she is told why Gorbachev is a traitor. It makes far more sense to first analyse and then to attach the label.

We are also duty bound to present to the reader ALL the relevant facts and not to select only those which supports the writer's viewpoint. For example, where the reader is told that those who succeeded in foiling the coup d'etat are accused, amongst other things, of outlawing PRAVDA (2), the Russian newspaper, the reader is led to believe that the anti-coup faction does not believe in civil liberties. The further implication is that the coup leaders were doughty defenders of civil liberties. The truth is quite different.

When the State of Emergency was declared, the coup leaders allowed only 9 newspapers i.e. those which supported the coup to be published. The thousands of other newspapers, journals, magazines etc. were banned; demonstrations were banned, there was the imposition of a curfew, the President of the USSR was placed under house arrest and, finally, there is the spine chilling anecdote of an order placed by the coup leaders for 250 000 pairs of handcuffs!

Without this vitally important information, the reader is bound to be misled as to who were the real violators of civil liberties.

KNEE JERK POLITICS

Knee Jerk politics goes something like this :

"I love what my enemy hates, but I hate what he likes. "

or

"My enemy's friend is my enemy, while his enemy is my friend."

This is useful only in certain cases. It can put one on immediate guard. For example, why is U.S. imperialism so friendly with the Aquino Government? It is also useful as a check against thorough and independent analysis. Without these heavy qualifications, knee jerk politics can lead to disastrous consequences.

There are numerous examples in history to illustrate the point. We choose the tragic case of Subhas Chandra Bose, that great Indian patriot. He broke with the collaborationist position taken by Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru in their attitude towards British Imperialism when World War II broke out.

While Gandhi and Nehru did not want to "take advantage of Great Britain in her hour of agony", Subhas Chandra Bose saw the War as a golden opportunity to strike against the hated British Raj. He therefore forged an alliance with Nazi Germany and militaristic Japan - his enemy's enemies. He sought to obtain arms and training facilities for militants. He was, however, used by his allies to broadcast fascist and Nazi propaganda and in the end Bose's cause gained little apart from the image of armed warriors against British Imperialism.

Knee Jerk politics on its own is the politics of the ideological bankrupt and the political indolent. Independent thinking, research and analysis gives way to "imperialist watching" and then taking a contrary position.

THE DISTORTING OF THE TRUTH.

We occupy the moral high ground because, amongst other things, we are purveyors of the truth. Truth is something that lies at the very innermost chambers of our moral being. Combatting distortion is one important way of defending the truth. Hence we are duty bound not to deceive the reader or listener. We respect our readers and we therefore will do nothing to deliberately distort the truth.

One of the most blatant distortions we came across recently was the one by Hosea Jaffe in his paper entitled: "Coup" and Restoration in the USSR, August 19 - September 7, 1991. (3) According to Jaffe, for "glasnost", the reader should read: "massive penetration of western capital and abandonment of socialist and anti imperialist internationalism. " II The question is where does Jaffe get that meaning or interpretation from?

He does not tell us why we should read "glasnost" as he wants us to. The unwary reader may well read "glasnost" as he or she is requested to.

What does "glasnost" mean? The modern English dictionary assigns it the meaning of "openness" or "frankness". Gorbachev, who popularised the word, states in his book "PERESTROIKA":

Glasnost seeks... "more openness about public affairs in every sphere of life. People should know what is good, and what is bad, too, in order to multiply the good and to combat the bad. That is how things should be under socialism. " Glasnost "makes it possible for people to understand better what happened in the past, what is taking place now, what we are striving for and what our plans are, and, on the basis of this understanding, to participate in the restructuring effort consciously. "I've have begun drafting bills that should guarantee glasnost. These

bills are designed to ensure the greatest possible openness in the work of the government and mass organisations and to enable working people to express their opinions on any issue of social life and government activity without fear. "

Ernest Mandel, a highly respected scholar and a member of the Fourth International, writes in his stimulating book "Beyond Perestroika":

"Glasnost is the collection of political reforms which, in general, take the form of a democratization of the system. "

The above ought to suffice to show the meaning of and concept contained in the word "glasnost" in the Russian language and in the current political situation in the Soviet Union.

The question remains: Why does Jaffe take a perfectly clear concept, drain it of all meaning and gives it an abhorrent and degrading meaning? Why does he defile so noble a concept as glasnost? We cannot think of a rational motive. We are forced to the conclusion that Jaffe is

driven by the same compulsion which drives an adult graffiti "artist" to adorn the walls of subways and such like places. (4)

BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE BACKGROUND.

1. The October revolution of 1917 has become an important landmark in the history of humanity in its forward movement toward seeking a proper solution to the contradictions generated by feudalism and capitalism in Russia and the surrounding nationalities.
2. Whereas the founders of modern socialism - Marx and Engels -expected and predicted that the socialist revolution would occur in the highly industrialized countries, history took the opposite course. It was in Russia, the most backward country in Europe that the first socialist revolution took place. The unexpected turn of events has been explained on the basis that the capitalist chain snapped at its weakest link i.e. Russia.
3. It was believed by all the leading Marxist thinkers of that time (by Lenin more than anybody else) that socialism in Russia would only survive if leading European countries also took the socialist road..
4. The Bolshevik Party (later called the Communist party) led the revolution. A few months prior to the revolution it was one of the smaller parties, but was best organised and had the clearest programme.
5. After the revolution, and during the civil war, many of the Bolsheviks were either killed or absorbed into the state administrative machinery. This deprived the Communist Party of the services of many of its best and most politically conscious members.

6. The first workers' government was therefore compelled to rely increasingly on the large remnants of the Tsarist State machinery, including the Army Officers. It is this segment of society we call the Bureaucracy.

More on this later.

7. The bureaucracy, consisting of millions of civil servants, was already in existence at the birth of the revolution. By 1924 it was moving to entrench itself. In Stalin, the bureaucracy found its perfect man and it was this layer of society that Stalin served until his death.

8. By 1925 the bureaucracy, by adopting the policy of "Socialism in One Country", announced to world imperialism its capitulation and a public renunciation of Proletarian Internationalism. This, incidentally, was the first clear sign of the Soviet Union succumbing to imperialist pressure. (5) 9. Lenin's death was the signal for the bureaucracy to

declare war on Bolshevism and on the revolution. Even while Lenin was alive the bureaucracy, through Stalin, began baring its fangs. Lenin, from his sick-bed prepared to wage battle against it. He formed a bloc with Trotsky for this purpose. In the meantime Lenin not only broke personal relations with Stalin but directed in his Testament that Stalin be removed as Secretary General of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU). Needless to say Lenin's wishes were ignored by the Bureaucracy.

10. The ideological war waged by the bureaucracy against Bolshevism took the form of a dirty campaign against what Stalin labelled "Trotskyism". All fundamental Bolshevik tenets were simply branded as being "Trotskyist".

11.. The smear campaign, the falsification of history, the organised thuggery the persecution and the denigration was followed by mass expulsion from the CPSU. Expulsion in turn led to arrests, charges and deportations to labour camps in Siberia and other snow-bound areas for thousands of Bolsheviks.

12. In 1934 Kirov, a leading Bolshevik turned Stalinist, was assassinated. This gave the Stalinist ruling class the opportunity to switch to a bloody purge. Torture made its appearance; trials became farcical and the firing squad began working overtime. Nobody was safe. Even Lenin's closest comrades were tried on trumped up charges and sentenced to death. It was then that Trotsky is reported to have stated words to the following effect: A river of blood separated Bolshevism from Stalinism. (6)

13. Isaac Deutscher in his book, "The Prophet Outcast" gives a gripping description of this phenomenon and its long term consequences:

The terror of the Yezhov period amounted to political genocide: it destroyed the whole species of the anti-Stalinist Bolsheviks. During the remaining fifteen years of Stalin's rule no group was left in Soviet Union,

not even in the prisons and camps, capable of challenging him. No centre of independent political thinking had been allowed to survive. A tremendous gap had been torn in the nation's consciousness; its collective memory was shattered; the continuity of its revolutionary traditions was broken; and its capacity to form and crystallize any nonconformist notions was destroyed. The Soviet Union was finally left, not merely in its practical politics, but even in its hidden mental process, without any alternative to Stalinism (Such was the amorphousness of the popular mind that even after Stalin's death no anti-Stalinist movement could spring from below, from the depth of the society; and the reform of the most anachronistic features of the Stalinist regime could be undertaken only from above. Stalin's former underlings and accomplices.)

While the trials in Moscow were engaging the world's awestruck attention, the great massacre in the concentration camps passed almost unnoticed. It was carried out in such deep secrecy that it took years for the truth to leak out. Trotsky knew better than anyone that only a small part of the terror revealed itself through the trials; he surmised what was happening in the background. Yet even he could not guess or visualise the whole truth; and had he done so, his mind would hardly have been able to absorb its full enormity and all its implications during the short time left to him. He still assumed that anti-Stalinist forces would presently come to the fore, articulate and politically effective; be able to overthrow Stalin in the course of the war and conduct the war towards a victorious and revolutionary conclusion. He still reckoned on the regeneration of the old Bolshevism to whose wide and deep influence Stalin's ceaseless crusades seemed to be unwitting tributes. He was unaware of the fact that all anti-Stalinist forces had been wiped out; that Trotskyism, Zinovievism, and Bukharinism, all drowned in blood, had, ~e some Atlantis, vanished from all political horizons; and that he himself was now the sole survivor of Atlantis." (our underlining)

The sole survivor did not have much time left to him because on the 20 August 1940 Trotsky was assassinated by Stalin's henchman. His death was the final blow against Bolshevism and the revolution.

14. When the bureaucracy physically exterminated the various strands of Bolshevism, there was nothing Bolshevik left in the USSR. Yet it was Bolshevism which had been and still is regarded as being synonymous with revolution. Therefore when there exists a state of affairs where Bolshevism is banned from disseminating its ideas, when its adherents are imprisoned, tortured, flung to the notorious labour camps from which few return alive and when, failing all else, they are lined up and shot, we are entitled to claim that the attack on Bolshevism was in fact an attack on the 1917 Revolution. The attack succeeded and Bolshevism was physically and intellectually wiped out.

15. That state of affairs, we hold, was the COUNTER-REVOLUTION. (7) The symbolism to be found in the murder of the survivor of the two principal leaders of the revolution cannot escape any person who claims to have studied the course of the Russian Revolution. The

dictatorship of the proletariat was replaced by the dictatorship of the bureaucrats.

WHAT IS THE BUREAUCRACY?

The term bureaucracy is used when describing the present ruling class of Russia. It consists of the human beings who run the apparatus of the state. In a society where the State is the sole or principal employer of labour, the term bureaucracy is extended to include trade union officials, the military personnel, directors and managers of industries and collective farm administrators and specialists of the Soviet economy, officials of the Communist Party, the local soviets and so on.

Trotsky in his book " The Revolution Betrayed" estimated that in 1936, if one included the above categories in addition to the ordinary bureaucracy and the family members of all, the bureaucracy would number a staggering twenty to twenty five million.

There are no modern statistics available to update the 1936 estimates. However, bearing in mind that bureaucracies have a tendency to increase and not to shrink in developing societies, we can safely estimate the bureaucrats and their family members to number not less than 50 million. It is the bureaucracy, that vast and gargantuan machine, which runs the State.

Mandel, in his aforementioned book, gives us John Stuart's description of the bureaucracy :

"The Tsar himself is powerless against the bureaucratic body; he can send any of them to Siberia, but cannot govern without them, or against their will. On every decree of his, they have a tacit veto, by merely refraining from carrying it out."

From the same book we uplift a quotation from Lenin:

"If we take Moscow with its 4700 Communists in responsible positions, and if we take that huge bureaucratic machine, that gigantic heap, we must ask: Who is directing whom? I doubt very much that it can be truthfully said that the Communists are directing that heap. To tell the truth, they are not directing. They are being directed. "

Even Lenin, notwithstanding his penetrating power of perception, was unable to see that in that heap there lurked a beast the likes of which was hitherto unknown. He was unable to foresee that soon enough that beast would spring out and devour the entire Bolshevik Party and destroy the revolution and all that he stood and fought for.

The bureaucracy, a sizeable segment of Soviet society, lives off the wealth produced by the workers, urban and rural. From Trotsky's book mentioned above, we learn that:

"Formally, these good things are, of course, available to the whole population, or at least to the population of the cities. But in reality, they are accessible only in exceptional cases. The bureaucracy, on the contrary, avails itself of them as a rule when and to what extent it wishes as of its personal property. If you count not only salaries and all forms of services in kind and every type of semi-legal supplementary source of income, but also the share of the bureaucracy and the Soviet aristocracy in the theatres, rest places, hospitals, sanatoriums, summer resorts, museums, clubs, athletic institutions etc it would be necessary to conclude that 15% or say, 20% of the population enjoys not much less of wealth than is enjoyed by the remaining 80 to 85 per cent. "

This means that 80% -85% of the population have access to only 50% of the wealth produced while only 15%-20% of the population enjoys the other 50%. These are the privileges that the bureaucracy enjoys and these are the privileges it will fight for to the death. The basis of all Soviet Union politics from the ascendancy of Stalinism is the protection, enjoyment and augmentation of those privileges.

The question is often asked : Why is the bureaucracy so vicious? In other words, why is it so intolerant of differing viewpoints and what makes it so ruthless against dissidents?

In his book, "The Unfinished Revolution", Deutscher suggests that the bureaucracy behaves in this manner because of its insecurity. The bureaucrat enjoys his privilege for so long as he retains his position. The day he is dismissed or loses favour with his superiors, he becomes an outcast. The first to suffer is his standard of living. He has no wealth of his own to fall back on; he cannot easily obtain employment elsewhere. It would mean social and economic ruin. Hence he clings to his position; hence his blind loyalty to his superiors; hence his insane hatred towards any person who is going to rock his boat. Precariousness daily gnaws at his vital organs. He craves for stability and will go to extremes to attain it.

BEFORE GORBACHEV

The Stalin era proper lasted from 1925 to 1953 - almost three decades. It was during this period that the bureaucracy proved its capabilities in matters of

ruthlessness, inhumanity and the use of unbridled terror, not only to subdue opposition, but also to expunge it from Soviet society. Stalin's death was the occasion used by his heirs, like Khrushchev and others, to steer a new course in ruling the Soviet Union. The role of terror was publicly exposed and condemned.

The public was officially told of the horrors of the thirties when the juggernaut fashioned by Stalin was let loose among the population.

The Khrushchev era was the first step away from the bloodletting days of Stalin. There was some loosening in censorship; rehabilitation of victims of Stalin; release of political prisoners, a limited freedom of conscience - a sort of a mini - glasnost.

The Khrushchev era is also noted for its open appeasement of imperialism. Khrushchev spelt out openly what Stalin practised. The anti-Leninist policy of socialism via the ballot box became the official line of all pro-Moscow Communist Parties. The bureaucracy represented by Khrushchev advocated that the contradiction between socialism and imperialism would be resolved by peaceful co-existence. It was this era which witnessed the ideological split in the international communist movement.

The cautious and semi-conservative government of Khrushchev and his colleagues was regarded as being too radical by the reactionary section of the bureaucracy. Using the excuse of the failure of his agricultural policy, Khrushchev was peacefully removed from power in 1964. His fall ushered in the Brezhnev era. This era preceded the Andropov-Gorbachev phase. The Brezhnev government and rulership has been marked by certain characteristics:

1. It reverted to the Stalin era minus the firing squad.
2. The limited civil liberties allowed by Khrushchev were taken away.
3. Once again fear pervaded the country. This was the time when dissidents who could not be put away into prisons were slapped into psychiatric hospitals. To question the repressive system was regarded as insanity. Psychiatry and psychology were debased in the service of the bureaucracy.
4. But this was also the period of SAMIZDAT - the old Russian practice, of circulating uncensored material privately, usually in manuscript form, in order

to escape Czarist censorship. By use of typewriters and the photocopiers, Samizdat in the Brezhnev era was far more effective.

5. In an endeavour to establish its hegemony, Brezhnev and his ruling cliques set the Soviet Union on to a course of international aggression:

- a. The ideological war between China and the Soviet Union was transformed into a shooting skirmish on China's north-western borders. The Soviet Union directed nuclear missiles against China which in turn moved half a million troops to this border.
- b. The Soviet Union under Brezhnev invaded Afghanistan, a neighbour which posed no threat to the Soviet Union and which lived peacefully with it for centuries. The invasion resulted in millions being rendered homeless, two million deaths including hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women and children.
6. The Brezhnev regime advocated the doctrines of "limited sovereignty" and "international dictatorship" to enable it to interfere in the internal affairs of a country under the pretext of defending socialism. The question arose: Who was to invade the Soviet Union when the latter turns out to be a danger to socialism
7. The Brezhnev regime encouraged Vietnam's invasion of Cambodia.
8. The Brezhnev regime supplied arms and gave aid to the tune of six billion dollars to the dictator Mengistu of Ethiopia in the latter's wars against the Eritrean liberatory movement and other authentic movements.
9. Amongst the bureaucrats, crass consumerism is rampant. Years ago, we read of the wives of diplomats and others who were allowed out of the Soviet Union returning with suitcases swollen with fashionable clothes, shoes, perfumes and other luxury goods the ordinary Russian, can only dream of. Consumerism has grown and has become a blight which has affected the whole of the society.

The bureaucracy set the pace. Its members deny themselves nothing. Brezhnev had, as one writer put it: "a stableful of luxury cars." His people could not even afford motorcycles! "Dachas", country houses or places for holidays, became increasingly luxurious. According to Mandel, every high official was given the right to have hunting areas well stocked with game and which were guarded and denied access to ordinary hunters.

There was very little, if any of the socialist ethic. Irrational acquisition of material objects and hoarding increased. Ordinary sensitive people

began questioning this. Here is an extract of a letter sent to IZVESTIA, a widely read Russian newspaper:

"You come into our flat and its stuffed full. All the walls are covered, all the corners piled high. There is no room to breathe, but my daughter-in-law keeps bringing back more and more. Not just to keep up with the other people, but to make these people burst with envy. But in fact nobody is jealous of us, and its becoming harder and harder to live here. However much I try to convince her to buy things in moderation, she does not listen. And not even I, an old man, haven't got even a little corner to myself... dear editors, try to tell such people that they are ill. "

10. A ruling class which stays in power through violence and repression occupies the moral low ground. Wallowing in luxury is one facet of moral decadence. According to Khrushchev, the KGB chief, Lavrenti Beria was guilty of more than a hundred acts of rape. In Mandel's book mentioned above, we read how Brezhnev's bureaucrats in the higher echelons shamelessly engage in prostitution. "Maids", "cooks" and "secretaries" were euphemisms for high-class call girls.

11. Corruption has become so rampant that it is regularly reported in the newspapers. One of the most notorious cases involved Usmanov, the Uzbek Minister in charge of the Cotton Industry. According to Mandel he was a Brezhnev favourite. The extent of the corruption was so vast that 2000 officials in the republic of Uzbekistan were consequently dismissed. They were all part of what is known as the Uzbek Mafia. Two leading officials were executed. More than four billion roubles were stolen from the State. The above is a very sketchy account of some of characteristics of the Brezhnev regime. It was this society, with all the evils and vices, which was handed to Gorbachev to reform and restructure.

ENTER MIKHAIL GORBACHEV.

Gorbachev was handed the command of the Soviet ship in 1985. By that time, the ship was already sinking. We have sketched the kind of society he was handed. Economically, the Soviet Union was grinding to a halt. Let us see what Gorbachev has had to say about this process:

"At some stage - this became particularly clear in the latter half of the seventies - something happened that was at first sight inexplicable. The country began to lose momentum. Economic failures became more frequent. Difficulties began to accumulate and deteriorate, and unresolved problems to multiply. Elements of what we call stagnation and other phenomena alien to socialism began to appear in the life of society. A kind of "braking mechanism" affecting social and economic development formed. And all this happened at a time when scientific and technological revolution opened up new prospects for economic and social progress.

Something strange was taking place: the huge fly-wheel of a powerful machine was revolving, while either transmission from it to work places was skidding or drive belts were too loose.

Analysing the situation, we first discovered a slowing economic growth.

In the last fifteen years the national income growth rates had declined by more than a half and by the beginning of the eighties had fallen to a level close to economic stagnation. A country that was once quickly closing on the world's advanced nations began to lose one position after another. "

(The quotation is from pages 18 and 19 of Gorbachev's book entitled "Perestroika". The underlining is ours.)

The braking or slowing down process is confirmed by Mandel in his book mentioned above. He presents the following table to show the annual decrease in the average growth in the Soviet National Income:

1951-55	11.2%
1956-60	9.2%
1961-65	6.6%
1966-70	7.75%
1971-75	5,75%
1976-80	4,75%
1981-85	3.5%

Mandel goes on to quote various economists to show that the figures in the table were inflated and that in the eleventh 5 year plan, the rate of growth of the Soviet economy was indeed ZERO.

It will therefore be seen that Gorbachev did not initiate the downward trend in the Soviet economy. He inherited it and all the other problems mentioned earlier.

It has been said that Gorbachev is a traitor to the cause of socialism. The truth of the matter is that all the bureaucrats had turned traitors to the cause of socialism, none more so than Stalin. Singling out Gorbachev for the pillory is going to conceal more than illuminate. Gorbachev needs to be placed in the context of the layer of society he represents. He is not acting on his own or for his family.

Gorbachev and Yeltsin and the others are part and parcel of the ruling bureaucracy. They received their training and upbringing under the Brezhnev regime. But the bureaucracy is not a monolith. Just as economically and socially there is stratification, so there are differences politically. With the information on hand we are able to discern at least four major positions. (9) There is firstly the extreme reactionary wing led by Yegor Ligachev. This tendency is opposed to all change. Moving to its "left" is the wing which constitutes the top leadership of the CPSU. Most of this wing were the Coup leaders. They are the Andropov type reformers who want reform at a snail's pace but controlled with an iron grip. This section is intolerant of basic civil liberties especially the right to criticise the government and the CPSU.

Gorbachev represents what Mandel calls the "modernist" wing of the bureaucracy. Others have called it the "Thaw" tendency. We prefer to call it the farsighted section of the bureaucracy. All ruling classes have sentinels who are the first to hear the roar of the waterfall. It was this section which realised that society could no longer be ruled the old way. Although Gorbachev holds himself out to be a Marxist Leninist, he fails to approach the problem from a class position. He believed that major structural changes to Soviet society could be effected without class struggle. He and his group believed that it was possible to revolutionize

society by persuasion, by passing laws etc. In other words, to launch a revolution from above. The bureaucracy which got power by trampling over countless dead bodies was not going to co-operate in implementing the death sentence against itself.

In attempting to carry out the revolution from above, Gorbachev chose four main weapons "glasnost, perestroika, legality and democracy". The employment of these weapons was intended to galvanise society into motion; to unleash initiative, creativity, debate and discussion. These weapons were also to turn against those bureaucrats who resisted change and would seek to undermine reform.

The sections of society that the reformers used to advance their strategy were the intelligentsia and technocrats. The proposals were attractive and hence the initial overwhelming enthusiasm to the Gorbachevian reforms. Six years later, Gorbachev's popularity plummeted. While glasnost, democratisation and the rule of law were seized eagerly by the people, the economic measures entailed in perestroika were unwelcome. But when an economy is ailing due to lack of motivation, initiative and discipline and when unproductivity is the norm, how does one begin to cure it ?

Various measures have in the past been used to resuscitate such an economy:

The use of state controlled capitalism;

Concessions to foreign companies;

Foreign investment in joint stock companies;

Leases to foreign companies;

Material incentives to workers;

Cost accounting;

Latest techniques make the workers as much productive as possible even though this includes "refined brutality of bourgeois exploitation"

The above were some of the measures employed by Lenin's government to save the Soviet economy soon after the revolution.

The Chinese have adopted the above measures with considerable success.

These were also some of the measures which would have formed part of perestroika.

Perestroika, however, did not stand a chance against the "tacit veto" of the bureaucracy, including the coup conspirators. Failure of perestroika and therefore the failure of the economy to recover, lost Gorbachev the support of the intelligentsia. The threats of removing price control and subsidies together with removal of guaranteed employment made the Gorbachev wing unpopular with a section of the workers.

In addition to these factors, Gorbachev and his group found themselves vacillating between the reactionary bureaucrats and the liberal elements led by Boris Yeltsin of the fourth tendency. The latter faction gained massive support from those intellectuals who had lost faith in "socialism" and believed that the problems of the Soviet Union could only be solved by capitalism. Large sections of the educated workers were and are attracted by the abundance of consumer goods which capitalism makes available to its people. Hence their attraction to

capitalism. Yet they are repulsed by the drastic measures which will be applied if a capitalist economy were to replace the existing one.

Occupying a centrist position in times of crisis is bound to cause loss of support to both extremes. While on one of his pendulous swings towards the liberals, the reactionary elements struck against Gorbachev. This was the time of the August 19 coup. The specific issue over which the coup took place was the Union Treaty between the various Republics composing the Soviet Union.

When a country has lived under repression for almost seven decades, powerful pressures build up. Unless pressure is allowed to escape in a safe manner, there is going to be an explosion which will shatter the entire country.

When a person or a group embarks on a radical path, it is not always possible to foresee the consequences or the extent of the consequences.

Glasnost and the decision to remove its troops from Warsaw Pact countries and to give them autonomy or independence resulted in events which the Soviet Union could not have foreseen. In Eastern Europe, the weakness of "Socialism via the Red Army" became obvious. The various nationalities in the Soviet Union which, constitutionally, had the right to secede but which dared not even breathe a word about it now exploded into ethnic violence and demands for independence from the Soviet Union. It was while attempting to accommodate this explosion, that the coup conspirators struck.

COUP D'ETAT

The coup was initiated by Gorbachev's handpicked men. They were also the leading members of the highest leadership of the CPSU. Talk about a possible coup had been going on for a whole year before the actual event.

The fact that Gorbachev was warned about the coup on a number of occasions and yet did nothing is explained by the following: A state of emergency was one of the options discussed by the leading members of the government including Gorbachev - the co-called Pinochet Option, that is reforms under a dictatorship of the bureaucrats.

The highlights of the coup are:

1. While Gorbachev was on a working holiday in Crimea, his telephones were found to be not functioning. He and his party were cut-off from the rest of the country.
2. The conspirators then presented him with an ultimatum that he either supports the coup and formally hands power to his Vice-President Yanayev or he resigns. According to a diarist who was part of Gorbachev's entourage the ultimatum was rudely rejected.
3. Yanayev and his fellow conspirators then appeared on television. He announced that the task of governing the country was handed to a Committee of Eight. He informed the public that Gorbachev was ill and needed a long rest. Reporters who were present remarked how ill at ease Yanayev was, how unconvincing he sounded and how his hands shook when making the announcement.

4. The LIE about Gorbachev being sick and the shaking hands indicated the absence of a moral basis and the necessary confidence on the part of the conspirators.

5. The conspirators had no visible public support. All mass public activities were directed against the coup. And the activities were massive as they were unprecedented.

6. The conspirators sought, by a formidable show of force to intimidate the population. The row of tanks stretched for about six kilometers.

7. The show of force and threats failed to intimidate the population.

8. When the conspirators realized that they could not stare down the people, their morale evaporated and the coup crumbled.

9. The coup will go down in history as the most inept, most ill-prepared and most ill-organised. The blundering colossal failure fits to the tee the general conduct and behaviour of the coup leaders when it came to the running of the country and the economy.

10. There was then the undignified attempt on the part of the conspirators to beg for forgiveness from Gorbachev for their attempted coup.

11. The coup lacked initiative as it lacked purposefulness and a clear programme. Can there be anything so ludicrous as coup leaders shrinking away from bloodshed? They wanted a non-violent Gandhian coup!

12. Insofar as a programme was concerned, the conspirators offered the public a return to BREZHNEVISM! This will explain why a population which disliked Gorbachev, fought against those who overthrew him. They hated the thought of returning to Brezhnevism more than their dislike for Gorbachev! No sane non-Stalinist Russian wanted that. Hence their total lack of support for the coup.

13. In defeat the conspirators were devoid of dignity and self-respect. According to newspaper reports, Yanayev (8) was paralytically drunk at the time of his arrest. Pugo could not take the consequence of his actions and therefore committed suicide. Pavlov and others landed in hospital with what has been described as "coup fever". Anatoli Lukyanov, the former chairman of the Supreme Soviet, is reported to have proclaimed: "I could never be traitor to a man I've known for 40 years."

14. Was the coup legal? Put it differently: Was the declaration of the State of Emergency and the subsequent removal of Gorbachev as President legal or constitutional?
 - a) Ultimately, all acts of government are done in the name of the people in a democracy. Such a government needs to justify its actions in those terms.

- b) In terms of the Soviet Constitution, Gorbachev's presidency was an executive one. He had vast powers given to him including the use of decrees. In such an arrangement, the prime minister has little more power, if at all than the ordinary cabinet minister.
- c) Apparently, the President could only be removed by an Act of the Supreme Soviet, death or incapacity due to illness.
- d) The Supreme Law making body was the parliament known as the Supreme Soviet.
- e) When the majority of Gorbachev's cabinet ministers decided on the coup, they went to him for his consent and support or failing which his resignation. If the conspirators were acting constitutionally, why did they seek Gorbachev's consent?
- f) The coup came into operation the moment the conspirators prevented Gorbachev from carrying out his duties.
- g) Announcing the State of Emergency, TASS reported that Yanayev had taken over the duties of the President of the USSR in accordance with Article 127, Clause 7 of the Soviet Constitution due to Gorbachev's inability to perform his duties for health reasons. As the Constitution provided no relief to the conspirators they had to resort to a bare-faced LIE. Hence from the outset, the removal of Gorbachev as President was tainted with illegality.
- h) Interestingly, in June 1990, Pavlov, the prime minister sought to deprive Gorbachev of certain powers and thereby assume them for himself. This move, called the "Constitutional Coup", was rejected by the Supreme Soviet.
- i) The people of the Soviet Union did not support the State of Emergency or the removal of Gorbachev.
- j) When the Supreme Soviet met soon after the collapse of the coup, it voted 283 against 29 against the CPSU. It also dismissed the entire Cabinet of Ministers. Decrees passed by the Committee of Eight were annulled.
- k) The pertinent question is: By virtue of what law, section of the Constitution or mandate from the people did the conspirators declare a State of Emergency; house arrest the President; replace the President;

pass a pack of repressive decrees and send in the army? Let those who surround the word coup with inverted commas answer these questions.

CONSEQUENCES AND REACTIONS TO THE COUP

1. The coup triggered off a series of events which went far beyond the expectations of the conspirators. Apart from their imprisonment or dismissal, the

coup has caused the opposite of what they intended. Instead of preserving the Soviet Union, the coup resulted in its speedy dissolution.

2. Boris Yeltsin, the maverick, has routed and defeated Gorbachev who was his patron and benefactor and later his arch-rival. He has risen as the most powerful person in the Commonwealth of Independent States. For how long ? It is anybody's guess. Yeltsin is presented as the representative of that section of the bureaucracy which sees its salvation in capitalism.

3. Gorbachev, who six years ago was the most popular person in the USSR, has now been sidelined. He has been made the scapegoat for the failure of the Soviet economy to recover and for the failure to satisfy people's demand for consumer goods. He has been reviled and called many denigratory names. People's China has gone as far as blaming him and the policy of glasnost for the chaos in the USSR and Eastern Europe.

We do not accept that any individual, real or in fantasy, can be responsible for all the dramatic happenings in those countries. The approach is unmarxist and therefore unscientific. It would be far more productive to seek to ascertain why the "Socialist Bloc" which included a superpower, crumbled when exposed to a gust of democracy and why the millions of bureaucrats :

*"Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing. .
Yellow and black, and pale and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes.... "*

4. The people of the USSR, including a large section of the Army, did not support the coup. The citizens of Moscow were so determined to defeat the coup that they were prepared to face tanks with nothing but their moral courage. What can be more dramatic than unarmed human beings confronting a metal monster, designed only for death and destruction?

Gorbachev's role has yet to be soberly assessed in terms of Marxism-Leninism. Justin Schwartz, in an article entitled "A Future for Socialism In The USSR" states that Gorbachev:

"...suffers under the limits of his back-ground as an apparatchik. He is a reforming, even a visionary bureaucrat, but a bureaucrat none the less and not, despite his self-image. a socialist. "

According to Gorbachev:

"The works of Lenin and his ideals of socialism remained for us an inexhaustible source of dialectical creative thought, theoretical wealth and political sagacity. " (perestroika).

And again:

" I am one of those who have never concealed their conviction. I am a confirmed supporter of socialism. " (The August Coup)

There is no need for us to regard an assessment of Gorbachev as a matter of life and death. We should be patient. Let all relevant material come to hand. Let events play themselves out fully. We can then make a sober assessment.

5. The imperialists were jubilant and stood hovering over Yeltsin, Gorbachev and company, ready with support, The motivation of imperialism is multifactored. There is the obvious delight at the crumbling Soviet regime, the most powerful opponent of imperialism. There is also the expectation that Russia and some of the other republics will take the capitalist road.

But there is also a genuine concern about the fate of the 27 000 nuclear warheads. Since the crisis, civil war in USSR was a real possibility. Civil war in the present circumstances will be no ordinary civil war for the combatants have nuclear weapons. From this setting, World War III can be born.

6. The South African Communist Party (SACP) engaged in its usual acrobatics. They condemned the coup only after it failed. According to Chris Hani, Gorbachev's "most serious and fatal blunder" was the suspension of the Central Committee and the dissolution of the CPSU. This is not unexpected. The SACP has with blind loyalty served all the leaderships of the CPSU. It is grateful for all the money and support it has received from the CPSU. What is surprising is the SACP's denunciation of what Hani calls Gorbachev's undemocratic decision. The previous regimes have committed countless acts of atrocity and yet there has not been a murmur of protest from the SACP. The SACP acted true to form.

7. From the non-Stalinist left, there has been no criticism of the defeat of the coup except for Hosea Jaffe and the NUM BULLETIN.

THE POSITION OF THE BULLETIN

The editorial states:

" The failure of the workers in the Soviet Union to defend the victory of the October 1917 revolution has made it possible for the renegade Gorbachev and the arch-collaborator Yeltsin to let loose among Soviet citizens ruthless exploiting forces. "

We have a number of problems with this formulation and approach:

1. How much of the victory of the October Revolution had survived after Stalin and his successors have had a bloody go at it for almost seventy years?
2. What was there for the workers to defend? To have supported the coup meant supporting the repressive regime of a Stalinist/Brezhnevist CPSU with its sickening record of over sixty years of rottenness and vileness.
3. Why blame the workers for their inability to take a political position? Workers have to be organised. This can only be done by a vanguard party with the necessary dedication and correct political theory. A vanguard party like the Bolshevik Party. The question is why is there no such party in existence? Stalinism and Brezhnevism saw to it that such a party was destroyed root and branch.

We cannot therefore agree to a condemnation of a working class which does not defend the very bureaucracy which has made it impossible for the emergence of a vanguard party. If such a party were in existence, the reader can rest assured that party would be involved not in defending the bureaucracy but in destroying it.

4. If the CPSU is regarded by the "BULLETIN" as the custodian of the October Revolution, then it ought to have condemned the CPSU with its fifteen million members for not rising to the defence of its leadership.

Instead of condemning the working class for not doing something against its interest and experiences it would have been more profitable to find out what has happened to the fifteen million members of the CPSU.

Another article in the Bulletin is captioned "Counter revolution In the USSR" The implications of the caption are :

i. The October 1917 revolution survived , that is, its gains and achievements, until August 1991 when all that was lost by another revolution.

ii. The custodian of that Revolution was the CPSU. Its defeat ushered in the Counter Revolution.

We have shown earlier that counter revolution gained victory in the Soviet Union in the 1930s and reached its zenith when it succeeded in killing Trotsky.

Any person who believes that the gains and achievements of the October 1917 Revolution survived until August 1991 has either not studied the twentieth century history of the Russian Revolution or is advocating the view that, notwithstanding the intellectual and physical destruction of Bolshevism, there are still in existence important gains of the October Revolution. If it is the latter. then that is nothing more than the old, decrepit, moth-eaten Stalinist apologia. But we will then be confronted with the position that Trotsky held. Trotsky believed in the 1930's that the Soviet Union was a degenerate workers' state in that:

social revolution betrayed by the ruling party, still exists in property relations and in the consciousness of the toiling masses" (The Revolution Betrayed)

Before dealing with the Trotsky's conclusions, it is necessary to set out certain relevant facts:

1. The Russian Revolution was Trotsky's life work. In addition to being co-leader with Lenin, he was also the brilliant organiser of the Red Army which defeated the counter- revolutionaries in the 1918-1921 Civil War. It was not easy for him to mentally accept the demise of the revolution.

2. At the time of his death, Trotsky had no contacts in the USSR. Were it otherwise, he would have realised that there had occurred the annihilation of the entire Bolshevik Party.

It is true that up to the present, property and the means of production are state-owned. Time has shown that state-owned property in the USSR did not (from Stalin's rule) mean that the workers had control over the property or the means of production. In the end, it did not matter who owned the property or means of production. What mattered was who enjoyed the surplus value, that is, the wealth of society? That in turn is linked with who determined how the wealth was to be distributed.

In the USSR we know that it was the bureaucracy which controlled the assets of the country; it was the bureaucracy which decided how the wealth was to be distributed. The working class had no say in these important matters. It is thus that 15%-20% of the population enjoyed 50% of all wealth produced.

Insofar as the revolution residing in the consciousness of the toiling masses is concerned, we can say categorically that at the time of Trotsky's death, there was none. The savagery with which the bureaucracy fell upon the population instilled great terror in them. It was bad enough that non-violent opponents of the Stalinists were sentenced to death, torture and untold misery. Increasingly, many more people were unjustly accused, farcically tried and sent to their deaths. Whether you were innocent or guilty, mattered little. In such circumstances, all that people wanted was not to draw attention upon themselves. People who visited Russia those days wrote about a greyness shrouding the people. When questioned, their answers were robot-like and safe.

The last thing the people had in their consciousness was revolution. We are certain that had Trotsky lived longer and was able to get the facts, he certainly would not have adhered to his belief that social revolution was a possibility in the short term.

By 1939, a few months prior to his death, Trotsky himself began seeing the real possibility of the bureaucracy becoming a new exploiting class. In his collection of essays called "Post Revolutionary Society" Paul Sweezy quotes Trotsky as stating:

"... the inability of the proletariat to take into its hands the leadership of society could actually lead under these conditions to the growth of a new exploiting class from the Bonapartist fascist bureaucracy... If contrary to all probabilities the October Revolution fails during the course of the present war, or immediately thereafter to find its continuation in any of the advanced countries... then we should doubtlessly have to revise our conception of the present epoch and its driving forces." (our underlining)

From this it will be seen that although the revolutionary in Trotsky was brimming with optimism, Trotsky the Marxist remained within the bounds of scientific possibility.

Isaac Deutscher, in an essay entitled "On Socialist Man", describes the socialist man created by Stalin:

"The socialist man Stalin presented to the world was the hungry, ill-clad, ill-shod or even barefoot worker or peasant

selling or buying a shirt, a piece of furniture, a few ounces of meat or even a piece of bread on black or grey markets, working ten or twelve hours a day under a barracks-like factory discipline and, sometimes, paying for any real or alleged offence with years of forced labour in a concentration camp. He did not dare to criticise a factory manager, let alone a party boss. He had no right to express any opinion on any major issue affecting his and the nation's destiny. He had to vote as he was ordered; and to let his dignity and personality be mocked by the so-called personality cult. These are the facts, now officially so described by the Soviet Leaders and reflected in a vast Soviet literature with all the emphasis of authenticity. Although in recent years conditions have been greatly mitigated, the poverty, the inequality, the lack of political and intellectual freedom and the bureaucratic terror are still there. "

While one can understand why Trotsky hoped until his death for the overthrow of Stalinist rule in the near future, we cannot grant that indulgence to persons writing on this very matter 50 years later.

CONCLUSION

1. The processes which are taking place in the Soviet Union are very fluid. In this kind of situation, there is no call on us to make hard and fast judgments.
2. There is no need for us to let our dislike for Gorbachev, Yeltsin and company drive us into a position where we are seen to be defending the Stalinist CPSU. (10)
3. One thing is clear. The leadership of the CPSU who are the heirs of Stalin and Brezhnev have received a blow which could well be mortal. It is not for us to lament the demise of the CPSU. Let the SACP and other Stalinist groups mourn the fate of CPSU. We save our mourning for the thousands of brave and noble members of the Left Opposition who perished in the torture-labour camps of Stalin.
4. As to which group we should support: the Yanayev or Yeltsin wing of the bureaucracy? Our answer should be unhesitating - namely: A PLAGUE ON BOTH YOUR HOUSES! We oppose both groups and will be attacking them from a principled and programmatic position.

5. In one sense and once sense only. we believe that there may be some virtue in the vice of capitalism becoming the official economic system in the Soviet Union (now the Commonwealth of Independent States).

In describing the modus operandi of capitalism, Marx and Engels write as follows in the Communist Manifesto:

"The bourgeoisie wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his "natural superiors, " and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous" cash payment". It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless inalienable chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom - Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation. "

This is what we would call a clearing of the decks. The oppressor and exploiter of the Soviet worker will no longer rule in the name of Marxism-Leninism and thereby defile the latter. No longer will the oppressor and exploiter shield behind the mummified remains of Lenin and his statues and Collected Works. The exploitation and oppression will have to be done without disguise namely, in the name of the "free market".

6. In the place of oppressors and exploiters who committed the most horrific deeds in the name of Marxism-Leninism, the working people of the Soviet Union will for the first time look at capitalism in all its terrible nakedness. It will not take much time to convince the people that their happiness cannot lie in capitalism and the free market economy. They will receive first hand experience of the contradictions of capitalism. Once again people will look for solutions and once again they will have to realise that their aspirations can best be realised in socialism.

7. But this time, with all the wealth of experience behind them, revolutionaries will be "sadder but wiser" men and women. Their wisdom will ensure that next socialist society they set up will not allow itself to be violated by Stalinism or any kindred system.

NOTES

(1) It was announced on television on the 21 December 1991 that the Soviet Union has formally been dissolved and in its place has been set up a Commonwealth of Republics. Gorbachev has been dismissed as President.

(2) PRAVDA which means the "Truth" was a revolutionary newspaper until Stalin laid his hands on it. From that time, until very recently, PRAVDA became the classic example of prostituted journalism. It plied this trade for 60 years. It is true that PRAVDA was banned for a few days or weeks at the most. Vladimir Bukovsky, one of the early dissidents who left the USSR in 1976 returned to Moscow after the coup. In an interview with "Newsweek" he stated:

" Today " PRAVDA" is open but is a totally different paper; it is a bunch of young people who still believe in some ideals of communism but are not structurally connected with the regime. " (Newsweek 30/9/91)

(3) We recommend that the reader should read this paper and the devastating reply to it by Comrade Sastri Mda of Umtata.

(4) This compulsion seems to be contagious. In a recently presented paper, further degrading meanings were given to "glasnost" :

- a. Glasnost meant increasing dependency on, subservience to and collaboration with NATO and the EC
- b. Glasnost was called "peaceful co-existence" by Stalin
- c. Glasnost meant betraying Iraq to a USA/UN resolution Again, no attempt whatsoever is made to explain how freedom to debate, discuss, expose and the right to demand accountability from state structures and officials can lead to all these terrible things.

(5) And NOT the rise of Gorbachev and implementation of glasnost and perestroika as is claimed in an article in the BULLETIN of October/November 1991.

(6) In his "Diary in Exile" Trotsky recalls how in 1926 he had said at a meeting of the Politburo that Stalin had finally entered his candidacy for the post of the grave digger of the revolution. In response Rykov and Rudzutak moved a motion of censure against Trotsky. Both movers of the resolution were sentenced to death and executed. Ironically their gravedigger was none other than Stalin!

(7) The Chinese Communist Party for opportunistic reasons holds that Counter Revolution took place when Khrushchev assumed power in the 1950's.

The BULLETIN – October/November 1991 issue, claims that counter revolution took place in August 1991 !

(8) In the USSR many a bureaucrat advanced his or her career by presenting a thesis based on lies. That is what the Soviet bureaucracy wanted from its intellectuals. A favourite theme which won immediate favour from their superiors was to attribute any evil to "Trotskyism". Yanayev was one such person. He holds a doctorate in political science. The thesis for his doctorate is "Problems of Trotskyism and Anarchism."

(9) This refers to a situation as it existed at the end of 1991.

(10) It was reported that in a demonstration against the price increases demonstrators displayed portraits of Stalin and called for the restoration of the old Soviet union (that is, the pre-coup political set-up).
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