

# GORBACHEV: SOUL OF CAPITAL PERSONIFIED

by Philani Socrates Makhaye

**Philani Socrates Makhaye, a member of the BCM (Durban & Districts), explores why Mikhail Gorbachev is at once a mortal adversary and a blood brother of the West.**

**M**rs. Margret Thatcher, the British Prime Minister, enthused when she saw Mikhail Gorbachev in London, December 1984: "I like him. We can do business together." The British press hailed Gorbachev as a "golden boy". *Sunday Times* extolled him to the skies: "A red star rises in the East." French President Mitterrand was equally impressed. He saw a Gorbachev with "a relaxed, resolute mind ...totally unpolemical". George Bush, now President of the United States of America, gave a rather ambiguous view of the Kremlin leader when he warned a West German politician in the White House about Gorbachev being an "impressive ideas salesman".

Maybe the Western world has finally found "a smart man in Moscow" with whom they can do business.

## HIS BACKGROUND

In the Caucasus, in the District of Krasnogvardeysk lies the village of Privolnoye. Here, on March 2 1931, Sergei Andreevich Gorbachev and Maria Panteleeva gave birth to Mikhail Sergeevich Gorbachev. The father, Sergei Andreevich was an agricultural mechanic and later a frontline soldier in the Second World War. Unfortunately for the still sapling Gorbachev, his father could not live long enough to see his political career. He, like 20 million fellow soviet citizens, did not survive the Great Patriotic War.

The Gorbachev family is of Russian origin, having lived for an unknown period in the northern Caucasus, which was not part of old Russia. The people of Caucasus have preserved their traditional individuality and their opposition to being absorbed into the Russian fold. The

Germans briefly occupied Stavropol in 1942, dissolved a few collective farms and permitted private ownership of land, shops and cafes. However, this was to be reversed when Stalin led the Soviet Union to victory against the German fascists. By this time, Gorbachev was in his early teens.

He completed his upper school with a silver medal. At the age of 18 he received a "Red Banner of Labour Group" decoration.

At 19, on the recommendation of his municipality, he was sent to study law at the Lomonov State University in Moscow. Zdenek Mlynar, Gorbachev's fellow-student reminisces: "The day when we were studying collective farm law, Gorbachev explained to me how insignificant collective farm legislation was in day to day life and how important, on the other hand, was brute force, which alone secured working discipline on the collective farms". Perhaps Gorbachev had this in mind; "Socialism is not brute, it only becomes so when it is ensured".

In October 1952, he joined the Communist Party. Having graduated, he left Moscow in 1955 in the company of his wife Raisa Maksimovna Titorenko, an attractive graduate of Marxism-Leninism, for his rural village. He began his Party career in the Komsomol, the "communist" youth organisation. From this time onwards, Gorbachev, with the help of Raisa "the philosopher" experienced a dramatic upward trend of his politi-

cal career and experience. Khrushchev's "Secret Speech" cited at the Party Congress on February 25 1956, in which he pilloried Stalin's "crimes" found Gorbachev back in his native Stavropol, with his widowed mother.

## THE PATH TO POWER

In July 1978 Gorbachev's patron, Fedor Kulakov committed suicide. At his funeral on July 19, 1978, Mikhail Gorbachev delivered his first speech in Red Square. Exciting speech indeed! He had to return to Moscow, four months later, to succeed Kulakov as Central Committee Secretary for Agriculture.

Who called Gorbachev to Moscow?—The names of two pundits come up—Mikhail Suslov and Yuri Andropov.

Suslov, the chief ideologist, who died in 1982, might have been attracted to young Gorbachev in as far as he could be an effective counterweight to Brezhnev's corrupt clique.

Andropov, a highly educated KGB chief, had personal contacts with both Gorbachev and his wife. They shared significant political ventures when Gorbachev was still Regional Party chief. Much more significant is that they both shared an interest in the "modernisation" of the Soviet Union. In this young man, Andropov saw a Soviet Union leader who will lead the country into the 21st century. It was this Gorbachev who was to say later, "Today they say, some with admiration and others with open

hostility, that we are a superpower!"

After Andropov's death on February 9, 1984 there were two candidates contending for office. There was young, bucolic Gorbachev, representing radical change in the Soviet system and there was also Brezhnev's old friend-Chernenko. After a considerably feeble reign by Chernenko, at 19:20 hours on March 10, 1985 ill Chernenko died. The next day, at the Plenum of the Central Committee meeting to elect the new General Secretary, only some 200 of the 300 representatives arrived in time. Some did not care to come. With enormous support from the KGB, Gorbachev was elected new General Secretary, unanimously indeed! In trying to persuade certain groups to support the election of Gorbachev, Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko told them, "Comrades, this man has a nice smile but he has teeth of iron". Of course these teeth were soon to be seen in action when Gorbachev started securing his position silencing his opponents by massive purges, dismissals and "retirements."

## **BACKWARD MOBILITY IN THE SOVIET UNION**

In chronicling the genesis of revisionism in the Soviet Union, let us cast our memories back to that "Secret Speech" by Nikita Khrushchev at the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union held in Moscow on 14-25 February 1956. Khrushchev, as part of his "contributions to the development of Marxism" (sic!) maintained that socialism could be achieved through a "parliamentary road". This road had to prove itself in the lessons of history. This happened in the south-western part of South America.

In 1970, on the eve of the election of the Popular Unity government in Chile, headed by Salvador Allende, Fidel Castro wrote an article in a Chilean journal consecrating Chile as an example of the possibility of the electoral path to socialism. Although the Chilean masses were in a position to unleash their revolutionary

potential and to expose and depose comprador bourgeois rule in Chile, the revisionist Communist Party of Chile restrained them and even supported the armed forces in disarming the masses, and appealed to them not to use arms against the reactionary coup organisers who brought about a bloody end to Allende's rule. Allende's heed for this "theory" by Khrushchev resulted in his own rule being drowned in a pool of blood.

In the same address, Khrushchev declared a new policy of "peaceful-coexistence" with capitalist countries. The Communist Party was to seize to be the party of the proletariat and become the party of the "whole people". The dictatorship of the proletariat was attacked and castigated as "unnecessary" since the Soviet Union "no longer had antagonistic classes". The profitability index was reinstated as the major indicator in the planning of production in the Soviet Union. As Aleksei Nikolayevich Kosygin, when he was still General Secretary (1964-1980), noted in his 1965 speech,

..."(T)o orientate the enterprise towards efficiency, it would appear to be better to use profit index".

Classical bourgeois accounting! The Soviet new ruling class, from Khrushchev to Gorbachev, share the myth that profit is the best means of achieving maximum social good coupled with the illusion that the profitability index is necessarily incumbent as an indicator in any institution at the enterprise level, especially if the institution is "efficient".

One of the main ideological weapons



*Gorbachev and Reagan at the 1987 Washington Summit.*

used by Khrushchev to demoralize, demobilize and divide the masses was that much vaunted "goulash communism". By this Khrushchev meant that socialist countries were essentially highly developed "consumer societies" even exceeding such capitalist countries as the USA in this regard. The quest of the Soviet people to have more and better washing machines, refrigerators, television sets and blue jeans was put forward as a reason for the abandonment of class struggle. The ruling class promised to make these abundant and they predicted a USSR with a "good life". This would serve as proof that capitalism should be substituted by this "superior" system, "goulash communism".

## **PERESTROIKA: An exposé**

The Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union saw Mikhail Gorbachev outlining the key elements of his policy of *perestroika* (restructuring) and *oruskoneriye* (acceleration) shortly after becoming General Secretary. The major target of *perestroika* is economic instability in the Soviet Union. "Basic Provisions for the Radical Restructuring of Economic Management" ratified by the June 1987

Plenum of the Central Committee is a drastic endeavour by Gorbachev and Co. to reshape the economy but it also touches on social and political matters as well. The meaning and objectives of *perestroika* could best be learnt from Gorbachev's own words and the actions of the whole ruling class. Changes that come with *perestroika* can be seen here:

"Many things are unusual in our country now: election of managers at enterprises and offices, multiple candidates for elections in some districts, joint ventures with foreign firms, self-financed factories and plants, state and collective farms, the lifting of restrictions on farms producing food products for enterprises and run by them, closure of non-paying plants and factories operating at a loss..."

With the same spirit he continues,

..."(E)nterprises must be put in such conditions as to encourage competition for the best satisfaction of consumer demands and employee's incomes must strictly depend on end production, on profits".

The profit index objectively unifies the results of sales efforts and cost reduction into a single indicator that can be compared across industries. This indicator can be applied if, and only if, it yields results compatible with the net laws of profitability.

Presently a large section of all investments in the Soviet Union come out of retained profits at the enterprise level. As long as capitalism reigns, Lenin pointed out, emphasizing particularly the features of capitalism in its imperialist stage, surplus profit will not be utilized to raise the standards of living of the masses or to overcome the gap between agriculture and industry but instead will be exported abroad, especially in backward countries, to gain superprofits. And this is precisely what the Soviet Union is doing, though its export of capital and wringing of superprofits often revolves around the sale of arms and /or takes the appearance of unequal trade (eg. India) and of "aid" (eg. Angola) and loans whose terms require the recipient to purchase Soviet goods at prices *well above* the world

market price. Capital is driven, in search of profits, to produce and reproduce itself as a social relation and does so as if it has no boundaries. It only tolerates production that is commensurate with the profitable employment of existing capital.

Surplus value, the product of capitalist production, regulates and dominates production in the Soviet Union. This is to show that there is a direct link between the profitability index and investment criteria. The overall thrust of all these various reforms in the Soviet Union has been to bring profit-and-loss accounting to the centre stage at the enterprise, production, associations and ministerial level.

Gorbachev has another target in mind, the management system. He says, "The management system which took shape in the forties and thirties began gradually to contradict the demands and conditions of economic progress. Its positive potential was exhausted. It become more and more of a hindrance, and gave rise to the braking mechanism which did us so much harm later."

"It was in these conditions that a prejudiced attitude to the role of commodity-money relations and the law of value under socialism developed and the claim was often made that they were opposite and alien to socialism. All this was combined with an underestimation of profit and loss accounting, and produced disarray in pricing, and a disregard for the circulation of money".

Of course, people *must* develop a prejudiced attitude towards commodity-money relations, and *must* have a disdain for profit and loss accounting. These are opposite and alien to the end goal of socialism. Supremacy of commodity-money relation means supremacy of the bour-

geoisie. The law of value basically presupposes profit as the motive force of production. A stand against these bourgeois determinants must be encouraged and strengthened. Why then is Gorbachev sobbing over this socialist stand of the Soviet masses? Isn't this a revelation?

Gorbachev insists that he has been helped by "Lenin's works, especially his last". He does not consider Lenin's analysis of imperialism, the state, the party, tasks of a revolution and Marxism as a whole. What he singles out is "Lenin's valuable ideas on management and self-management, profit and loss accounting, and the linking of public and personal interests". Gorbachev therefore tells us that he is a "Leninist". In fact Gorbachev kills Leninism in embrace.

During the early 1920's, after a revolution and three years of civil war and battles against 14 invading powers, at a time when large scale industry in the USSR had seized to exist, when peasants could not be persuaded to sell their crops because there was nothing for them to spend their money on, at a time when the only way of keeping everyone from starving was for the Red Army to go to the countryside and haul away the peasant's surplus food whether they liked it or not, Lenin, seeing the danger of a possible uprising, came



up with what became known as the New Economic Policy (NEP). He called this policy a "strategic retreat", a "reverting to capitalism to a certain extent". This was the only choice facing the ruling proletariat if it was to secure and strengthen its political power. NEP allowed a certain level of private ownership and unrestricted production in peasant families. The proletariat had to hire some former bourgeois factory owners and experts and functionaries because it had not yet had practical experience in certain fields of industry and government. The NEP was meant to curb a socio-economic sickness and was to be discouraged once the sickness was cured. What Lenin saw as a "retreat", Gorbachev sees as an absolute, a way to be followed by the Soviet Union, a "positive change".

## **GORBACHEV'S TARNISHED SOCIALISM**

Shortly after Mikhail Gorbachev attained supreme authority as General Secretary, he made a symbolic choice. He set February 25 as the date for the opening of the 27th Party Congress in 1986. February 25 was the date on which Nikita Khrushchev poured slop on Stalin's political career, at the 20th Party Congress.

In his speech to the 2nd November 1987 meeting of the Central Committee, Gorbachev declared that the "guilt of Stalin and his entourage" is "enormous and unforgivable". What does Gorbachev consider Stalin guilty of? His criticism of Stalin in the realm of theory could not be more telling. In the same speech Gorbachev attacks what he terms Stalin's "erroneous theory of an aggravation of class struggle in the course of socialist construction." Gorbachev sees no need to sweep away the bourgeoisie under socialism. He is under no illusion:

"Socialism has a different criterion for distribution of social benefits: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work". There is no exploitation of man by man, no division into rich and poor, into millio-

naire and pauper, all nations are equal among equals, all people are guaranteed jobs. This is the embodiment of social justice under socialism".

Stalin started by committing the same mistake when in 1936 in his report "On the Draft Constitution of the USSR" he stated, "Thus the complete victory of the socialist system in all spheres of the national economy is now a fact --- It means that the exploitation of man by man has been abolished, eliminated ----- thus all the exploiting classes have now been eliminated". This led Stalin to the wrong conclusion as witnessed in his report to the 18th Congress in 1935:

"The feature that distinguishes Soviet society today from any capitalist society is that it no longer contains antagonistic hostile classes, that the exploiting classes have been eliminated while the workers, peasants and intellectuals who make up the Soviet society live and work in friendly collaboration".

In essence, Stalin one-sidedly emphasized the ownership system and failed to deal sufficiently and correctly with other aspects of the relations of production and the superstructure and their reaction to the ownership system. Stalin concluded that since ownership was well socialized, antagonistic classes and the internal basis for capitalist restoration had been eliminated. This Stalinist theory reduced capitalism to little more than the system of private ownership and the existence of antagonistic classes. Once political power is seized and a system of public ownership of the means of production applied, no thought is then given to a thoroughgoing socialist revolution (a revolution within a revolution) on the political and ideological fronts. Attention is only given to production and more production.

This theory of the productive forces seriously hampers the genuine tasks facing the proletariat in that it confines the proletariat to production and production alone. As a result whatever struggle the proletariat can wage, it will be nothing more than for

economic demands. Economism is therefore entrenched.

The other major weakness of this theory is that it is preoccupied with the economic base at the expense of the superstructure. There are a host of closely related positions that flow from this preoccupation: disregard for the masses as makers of history, reliance on planners, preoccupation with technology and expertise, confidence in hierarchy and one-man management, reliance on material incentives, and a total lack of interest in the transformation of an individual's world view. The end result becomes the growth of a powerful bureaucratic apparatus completely alienated from the masses.

During the latter part of his life, Stalin did begin to attempt to analyze some of the contradictions that still exist under socialism. This is especially so in his last work, "Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR". Stalin here does lay stress on the fact that contradictions between the forces and relations of production *continue* to exist under socialism and that if not properly handled these contradictions could become antagonistic and even provide a basis for capitalist restoration or for bourgeois elements finding a breathing space to disturb socialist programmes. But still, he did not deal with the continuing contradiction between the base and the superstructure and did not point out that this contradiction constitutes a basic contradiction in a socialist society and also finds expression throughout socialism principally in the existence of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and the struggle between them.

It is only during the last part of his reign that Stalin unleashed class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Mr Gorbachev attacks this very class struggle under socialism. He sees it as anarchic and unnecessary. We in the Black Consciousness Movement criticize Stalin for:-

1. failing to grasp and apply dialectical materialism in the understanding of the laws of class

struggle in a socialist society,

2. failing to recognize that after extensive collectivization of agriculture class struggle and the contradiction between the socialist and capitalist roads continues,
3. seeing no material base for capitalist restoration *inside* the Soviet Union but only seeing a threat of invasion by international capitalism,
4. seriously neglecting agriculture and peasant life and lopsidedly stressing heavy industry,
5. having a cynical internationalist policy (as can be seen in his attitude towards the Chinese Revolution),
6. giving supremacy to production rather than class/ideological struggle,
7. unrealistically prioritizing the economic base rather than the superstructure,
8. being a technocrat,
9. excessively suppressing and liquidating opponents in the purges of the 1930s

but nevertheless uphold Stalin from the slanders of Trotsky, Khrushchev and Gorbachev.

Gorbachev intends to model the most rancid features of capitalist societies. He says,

"The essence of what we plan to do throughout the country is to replace predominantly administrative methods with predominantly economic methods".

"If personal interests are disregarded, nothing will come of the effort, and society will only stand to loose"

"There are benefits for people in the sphere of production and culture. For instance, we take special care of our eminent scientists, academicians and writers."

Not surprisingly, *perestroika* has its greatest emphasis on the principle "From each according to his ability,

to each according to his work". This is sometimes called "bourgeois right". Gorbachev sees this principle as something whose scope is to be widened, entrenched and strengthened, not to be restricted bit by bit until the attainment of that supreme goal, "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs". The latter is completely pushed under the carpet!

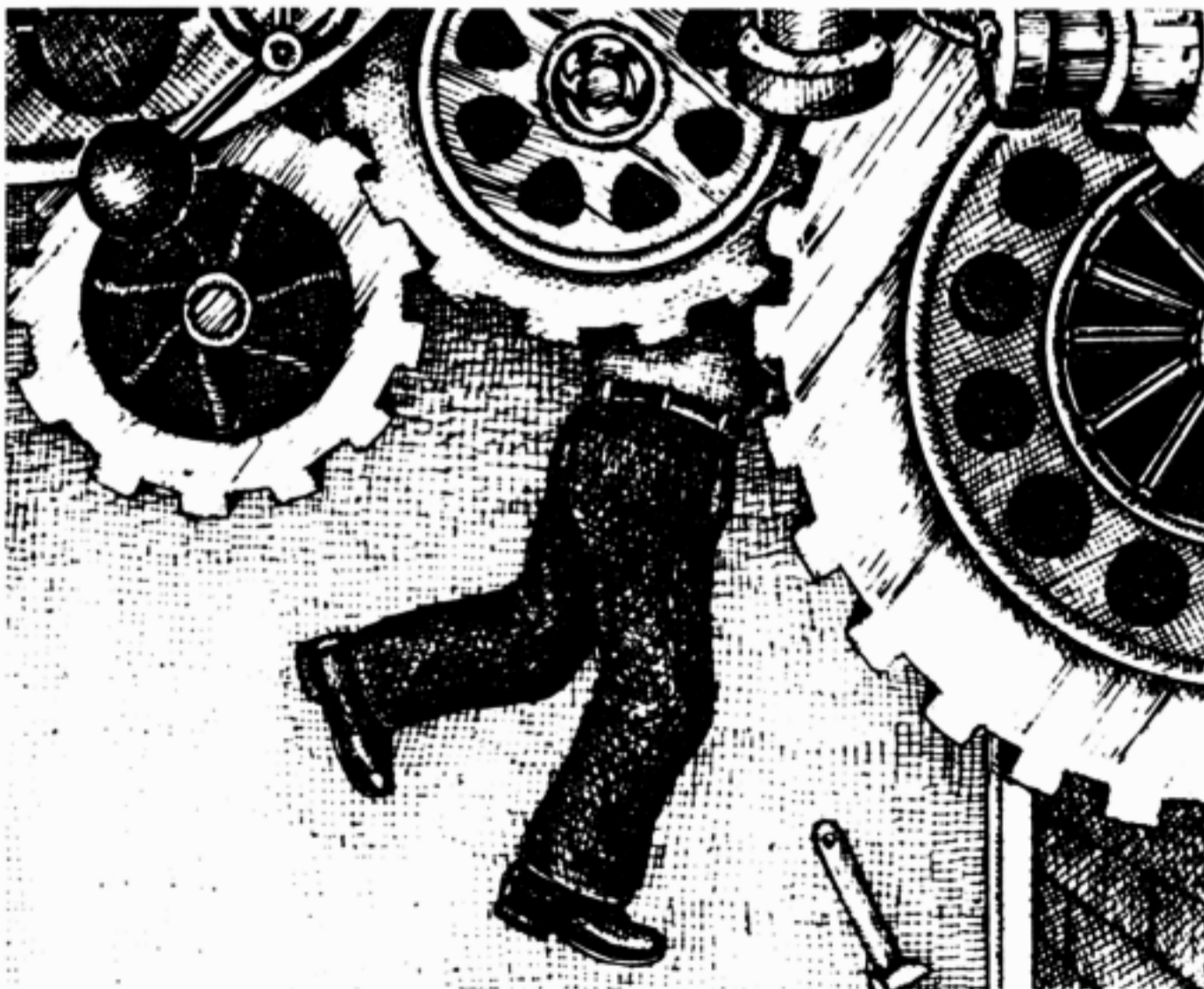
No wonder he complains so much about "wage-levelling". He sees pay according to work as supreme social justice.

That conservative shibboleth, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work" serves as a watchword for Gorbachev's labour policy. Like all other capitalists Gorbachev claims that labour is paid according to work performed. (Gorbachev earns 1500 roubles a month which is about R5 834, about seven times the average pay of a Soviet worker).

"What is the main short-coming of the old economic machinery?," Gorbachev asks. He then provides an answer, "It is above all the lack of inner stimuli for self-development". This inner stimulus is profits. He therefore concludes that this stimulus must become "a powerful lever, a motivating force for resourceful

quality performance". For the country not to "stand to loose" its people need "deserved" material incentives. No capitalist could say it better!

The idea of worker participation in the management of production occupies an important place in the new law on state enterprises adopted during June 1987 in the Soviet Union, which provides for the election of the managerial personnel by the members of the labour collective. Revisionists hail this as a broader campaign for *glasnost* (openness) and "democratization" throughout the Soviet society. In a further move to increase participation of the workers, a new institution called the labour collective council (*soviet trudonovo kollektiva*) has in the main been established. However, as should be expected, Soviet productive units were not transformed into centres of class struggle and relations between these units were not transformed in order to break down the relative separation of the workers from direct access to the means of production, distribution and exchange. Labour is still subordinated to strict hierarchical forms of authority, given incentives which amount to profit-sharing and the workers are consciously starved of information about national and world issues. Gor-



bachev boasts about this worker participation and also the existence of production committees in the Soviet Union. We hear much talk about labour enjoying rights of "having a say" in the affairs of production but no discussion of its right to run the whole state, enterprises, education, media and culture and transforming the whole world into its image! In fact this is its greatest right under revolutionary socialism.

No matter how cosy the new management system is, the point is once the production of surplus-value dominates social production, wage labour becomes a commodity. Once the urge to produce more becomes the requirement for maximization of profits with a minimum of capital invested in a particular labour process, once this characterizes planning, the producers become alienated, oppressed. Wage-labour thus become a *very dependent* commodity. This means that this labour power is controlled and utilized on an expanded basis to produce and reproduce relations which are alien to the working class. In your country, Mr. Gorbachev, labour is socially useful (and employable) only in so far as it is capable of producing surplus-value and meeting the demands of profitability. Worker participation in the echelons of management is perfunctory if the shop-floor worker is reduced to a propertyless proletarian-competing in the sale of his only commodity - his labour power - to keep life going.

What makes a society socialist is the fact that a proletarian line is overall in command, that society is on the socialist road, overcoming bourgeois relations, exposing and destroying capitalist roaders within it, and most important, functioning as a spring-board for socialist revolutions in other parts of the world.

On the question of women, Gorbachev sees the role of women in the society almost the same way as did the Tsars years before him. He says "... that is why we are now holding heated debates in the press, in public organisations, at work and at home, about the question of what we

should do to make it possible for women to return to their purely womanly mission". This "mission" is their role as mothers and homemakers. The heroic image of the Soviet women who gave their lives during the October Revolution in 1917 and were actively involved in the armed struggle and the revolution must now give way to Gorbachev's philistine "womanly mission!"

## "... WE ARE A SUPERPOWER"

One of the reasons why Gorbachev cannot allow class struggle in a socialist society is that it will cause "lawlessness". He wants "peace" and "mutual understanding" between "groups". Substitute "classes" for groups. He writes, "There is no democracy, nor can there be, without *glasnost*. And there is no present-day socialism, nor can there be, without democracy. "More socialism means a more dynamic pace and creative endeavour, more organisation, law and order, more scientific methods and initiative in economic management, efficiency in administration, and a better and richer material life for the people".

What then is the definition of capitalism if this typifies socialism? Gorbachev seems to have a belief that whatever the USSR does merits being said to be in the name of socialism. Socialism is imbibed like high school civics and has been transformed from a philosophy of rebellion and conscious struggle for emancipation of the proletariat into a religion of the Soviet status quo. Gorbachev sees Hungary where enterprise targets are not even set centrally anymore --- or Rumania --- where even the pretence of a monopoly on foreign trade has been discarded -- and China post 1976 -- where private ownership and capitalist relations of production have been reintroduced on a grand scale --- as all "socialist" countries. Now that we have found the Rossetta stone for Gorbachev's language we may conclude that Hungary, Rumania and others are "socialist" because they are loyal members of the Soviet dominated COMECON and WARSAW

PACT.

Gorbachev, dispirited by the military's low key response to *perestroika* met senior military officers at Minsk and told them,

"We need energetic leaders who can command and communicate, people with initiative who are competent in their work".

Dmitriy Yazov replaced the aging Sergey Sokolov as USSR defence minister in May 1987. Not only is Yazov a nimble-minded militarist, he is an ardent supporter of *perestroika*.

Marshal Orgakov, a leading Soviet military spokesperson who is close to Gorbachev politically, argued that: "Nothing is more dependent on the state of the economy than the army. Weapons, supplies, tactics and even strategy depend on the level of production and the means of communication".

Again the same Orgakov confesses:

" In order to increase the military preparedness of the country, today as never before, it is necessary to co-ordinate mobilization and deployment of the armed forces".

The USSR has an undying revolutionary legacy. Gorbachev knows this very well. He therefore seeks to wear this legacy to serve his reactionary interests. He talks about goodness in Soviet history in that it "brought formerly backward Russia to the right place- the place the Soviet Union occupies in human progress". What place is that? Gorbachev enjoys this question. He arrogantly says: "Today they say, some with admiration and others with open hostility, that we are a superpower". He therefore leads the USSR in *behaving* like one. This takes him beyond Soviet borders to look for " areas of influence".

So desperate are the Soviets they now challenge America even in places long regarded as sacrosanct arenas of American influence. The Pacific has long been regarded as "an American lake". In the summer of 1986 Gorbachev announced in a speech given at the USSR's largest Pacific port, Vladivostok, that, "The

Soviet Union is also an Asian and Pacific country". This message was not lost to the ears of the rival US imperialists.

Soviet warships are teeming in the war-torn Persian Gulf with Gorbachev proclaiming the Soviet Union "the guarantor of Gulf security". The US is claiming the same status. The Soviets increased their military aid to North Korea and Vietnam, inaugurated diplomatic and commercial relations with certain Polynesian island states, moved to secure commercial ties with Saudi-Arabia and even ran Kuwaiti oil tankers under Soviet flags.

## HOW NOT TO FREE THE LESS DEVELOPED COUNTRIES . . .

Gorbachev notes that the whole world needs restructuring. But this is not what he really means.

The first thing to point out is that the division of the world into oppressor and oppressed nations is not objectionable to Gorbachev. He only complains about a "widening rather than narrowing" gap between the two.

He declares that the USSR recognizes how important "the Middle East, Asia, Latin America, other Third World regions and also South Africa are for American and Western European economies, in particular as *raw material* sources. To cut those links is the *last thing* we want to do, and we have no desire to provoke ruptures in historically formed, mutual economic interests". He goes on to say they (the Soviets) "do not pursue goals inimical to Western interests". His sheer apologia is revealed here:

"While we do not approve the character of the current *relations* between the West and the developing countries, we do *not* urge that they be disrupted".

He therefore suggests "a new world economic order" that, he says, came out of a conversation with French President Mitterand: "If the enterprise is to function effectively, it is imperative that the employees incomes are

guaranteed, and, despite their low level, are able to enable them to restore their production capacities, maintain their health, upgrade their qualifications, and raise their children". He accuses the West of failing to understand this "simple truth".

Soviet dealings with dependant countries are by no means dissimilar. Soviet trade with LDCs expands Soviet industry in two ways:

1. By providing a market for Soviet machinery, and,
2. By providing (imported) raw materials for industry (including foodstuff for its workers in industry).

When the USSR imports raw materials from LDCs, it is able to reduce the more expensive expansion of domestic output of these raw materials. For instance the import of long staple cotton from Egypt and Sudan is less expensive than the construction of extensive irrigation systems in Soviet Central Asia. By exporting manufactured goods in return for raw material imports, the USSR is able to increase its rate of industrialization. A rapid pace of capital accumulation allows for the constant introduction of new technology. All these factors enable the USSR to become a world power while preserving (if not reinforcing) the subordinate role of the LDCs.

From 1956 on, the USSR has been extending credits on a large scale. According to US estimates, from 1955 through 1976 the USSR extended 11.8 billion dollars, over 95 percent of which was loans. Eastern European countries extended 6.4 billion dollars. 28 percent of Soviet aid has gone to Egypt and India. Another 43 per cent has gone to the Middle East, broadly defined (Afghanistan, Algeria, Iraq, Syria and Turkey). 10



per cent has gone to sub-Saharan Africa, and 20 per cent to the rest of the world. The credits authorized in an aid agreement cannot be used until further agreements are signed. The Soviets must approve of each project for which the funds are to be used. The credits must be spent on goods purchased in the Soviet Union.

The above figures on Soviet "aid" do not include military aid. Soviet arms shipments to LDCs from 1967 until 1976 are estimated at 13 460 million dollars. From 1965 to 1974 Egypt purchased 2 400 million dollars, Syria and Iraq together bought 2 000 million dollars, and India purchased 1 300 million dollars. Soviet arms sales - often called Soviet military "aid" - are generally financed by ten-year credits (with at most a three year grace period) at 2 to 2 1/2 per cent interest. The prices paid by LDCs for Soviet arms are 40 to 50 per cent below Western prices. The USSR can import more valuable goods than it exports because the LDCs must pay interest demanded by Soviet loans



("aid"). Soviet arms shipments have been a large portion of total Soviet exports to the LDCs. The Soviet Union is exploiting the dependent countries need for defence for its own economic advantages. Most arms sales by both the West and the Soviets to the Third World countries are usually of older equipment and of old-fashioned calibre. As they accumulate profits from this trade, the Soviet leadership is able to purchase Western technology.

Some revisionists argue that since the Soviets do not export capital the way the West does, then it means the USSR is not imperialist. Let us look at this difference even more closely.

It is true that the Soviet Union does not follow the Western style of direct investment abroad, or at least, not as massively as the West does. Soviet "aid" could be repaid in kind through barter arrangements. In other words, the Soviet Union will lend money to help construct a factory and part of the output of that factory will then

have to return to the Soviet Union. There is no fundamental difference between payment in commodities and payment in money. In both cases value is being generated abroad and transferred back to the imperialist country in another form, but it is still extracted value, materialized as a commodity. However, this is not to say that the Soviet Union's overseas profits represent a large share of total profits. This is to say these profits play a prominent role within the operations of the decisive and leading units of Soviet finance capital. Some of the Soviet Union's major economic transactions depend on these overseas profits.

We must remember that the act of exporting capital always remains, in essence, exportation of a social relation. In the "Third World" countries this social relation plays a dual role:

1. it ensures continued relations between the imperialist and the dependent country,
2. it ossifies the ruling class of the dependent country.

Soviet-financed industrialization in the Third World serves in fact to expand capitalist relations of production: Soviet built factories expand wage labour employment (under conditions of intense exploitation) at the expense of sometimes preferable pre-capitalist modes of production. The aid that goes to the Third World governments goes straight to the coffers of the ruling class, never to the working classes. The governments of India, Egypt, Syria and other Soviet "aid" recipients are in the hands of the comprador bourgeoisie. Neo-colonialism therefore is the control of the economies of the "Third World" countries by imperialist powers, the tying of the comprador bourgeois classes to the apron strings of the international bourgeoisie.

Imperialism therefore is not an anachronistic government policy nor a cynical conspiracy against less developed countries by monopoly-capitalists nor is it a search of markets beyond one's borders. *Imperialism is rooted in the laws of motion of capital, in the nature of capital as a*

*self-expanding value. It is that system of capital exportation which reinforces an unequal international division of labour in which a few countries dominate the world economy and the rest assume the role of being mere subordinates.* Imperialism is capital in maximum mobility, swiftest production and reproduction of its family, emphasis and re-emphasis on itself as an expanding social relation, a relation that, through its own contradictions extends, reinforces and reveals itself to the proletariat as enemy number one, at home and abroad. In most cases, capital conditions behavioral patterns of the proletariat in the mother country and that of the dependent country (successfully or unsuccessfully). The proletariat of the mother country is largely embourgeoisified. Their standard of living is considerably higher than that of the dependent country. This split creates contradictions between members of the same family (the proletarian family). Capital, ever looking for more areas of influence, expands on an unlimited scale thereby heightening contradictions and crises in the whole world, giving fresh possibilities of world war. Gorbachev is very aware of this.

## **"We would not beg for peace"**

"The fundamental principle of the new political outlook is very simple: nuclear war cannot be a means of achieving political, economic, ideological or any other goals." Gorbachev therefore calls for peaceful-coexistence between countries. Yet even in Gorbachev's noisiest calls for peace the rivalry and tension between the American and Soviet imperialist blocs is audible.

Gorbachev accuses the US as prime perpetrators of armed conflict. He recalls the Tripoli incident: "In April 1986 American war planes bombed Tripoli, Benghazi and other facilities in Libyan territory." He accuses the government of the NATO countries for silently watching the developments and not doing anything to oppose this US action. Even worse is the fact that in the attack, "American war



planes took off from bases in Britain and flew through the air space of Western Europe." He then uses this attack as a yardstick, "And what if the American military takes a notion to punish one of the Warsaw Treaty countries by bombing it? What then? Act as if nothing happened? But this is war!" Should the US think the SOVIET UNION is powerless, this would be "wishful thinking." If the Soviet Union, when it was much weaker than now, was in a position to meet the challenges that it faced, then indeed "only a blind person would be unable to see that our capacity to maintain strong defences and simultaneously resolve social and other tasks has enormously increased."

A nuclear war would be a US fault. The US sets the tone for the arms race. The Soviet Union and the US are both signatories to the treaty banning nuclear tests. But the US "went on with a series of nuclear tests. Its spokesmen officially declared that it is Moscow's business whether to test nuclear charges or not. As far as the US was concerned the tests would continue without any let-up." Soviet strategists, Gorbachev included, consider the incineration of scores of millions through nuclear strikes and the use of other millions as cannon-fodder in the field as decisive. Soviet strategy implies a rearranged *imperialist* order.

It is true that in a world where socialist countries are threatened by nuclear-armed imperialist states, nuclear weapons would be a necessity. But the Soviet armed forces are guided by a weapons-first doctrine built around nuclear warheads. In fact, this doctrine alone is reason enough to condemn the Soviet military as imperialist.

What we are presented with is this: Bush and his NATO allies toy with grotesque notions of "limited" nuclear war and seek ways to surgically use their nuclear arsenals against their rivals, while limiting damage to their own imperialist homelands. Gorbachev and his Warsaw Pact allies announce that they will not play by such rules and insist that *their* preparations are to meet *any* nuclear exchange with all out and general nuclear bombardment of the planet!

It is the United States that started to pull out of the SALT-II Treaty, argues Gorbachev. This treaty was declared "dead". Then the Americans started to brainwash their citizens and the world's public in order to destroy the unlimited Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. It is the US government administration that sees it fit to continue with the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI). Gorbachev therefore says: "Yes, we are against SDI, because we are for complete elimination of nu-

clear weapons and because SDI makes the world ever more unstable". This parts the smile.

"They (the West) think that if the USSR is afraid of SDI it should be intimidated morally, economically, politically and militarily. This explains the great stress on SDI, the aim being to exhaust us".

Then comes the teeth. "We would not beg for peace. We had more than once responded to challenges and would do so again". What else can "respond to challenges" mean except waging and winning a war, coldly calculating how many millions of people can and must be incinerated and how much of the world must be laid to waste in order to grab a bigger share of the plunder?

He recalls: "The Soviet Union emerged from the Second World War in a very difficult condition. Nevertheless, we succeeded in restoring what had been destroyed, in building up our economic potential and in confidently tackling our defensive tasks. Is this not the lesson for the future?" Yes, it is Gorbachev. It is also a challenge to the international proletariat and the oppressed nations to rise up against both your imperialist bloc and the US bloc in order to free humanity from threats of nuclear war attacks and the destruction of every living soul on the planet, earth. ■

