

Consolidation Study Session 4: The Stalinian Deviation: the main obstacle to revolutionary Leninism.

Readings: Bettelheim, Class Struggles in USSR, Vol 2, pp. 500-566
TR 8, Stalin and Historical Reality
Jacoby, Stalin, Marxism-Leninism, & the Left, pp. 19-27
"The Crisis in the CPUSA", pp. 3-12, 52-63
The Roots of Revisionism, pp.

There are two sections to this introduction: First, we will present a brief recount of Communist history from 1928-1939. This is not to be taken as anything approaching an all-sided summation of this period; it primarily focuses on the aspects of history which we feel characterize the Stalinian Deviation (SD) and its process of consolidation in the 1930's. The history also gives us a chronological context in which to plug in other events we study in the future. Hopefully, the examples laid out in this section will also give a bit more concrete reality to our general notions of "commandism", "forced collectivization", & the "purges" so we can assess them in human terms.

Second, we will present the basic tenets of the SD and discuss why we consider it to be the main obstacle to the development of revolutionary MLism today. This section is the political thrust of this session and, as such, is the more important aspect.

The Stalinian Deviation, Historical Examples

1928-29, the Great Turn.

The period of 1928-29 is best summed up in TR8. The focus in this period was the struggle between the Stalin group and Bukharin and his supporters over the future of the New Economic Policy (NEP)-- the policy of the worker-peasant alliance. This struggle arose in the context of a severe grain crisis which had existed since 1927. Prior to the struggle the Soviet state had implemented "emergency decrees" which amounted to confiscation of grain from the peasantry. These decrees were supported by all factions in the upcoming struggle.

For Bukharin, the emergency decrees could not become a permanent policy for they inherently violated the principles of the NEP as the strategy for moving toward communism. To the cries of the need for a rapid build-up of the defensive posture of the SU, Bukharin replied that the best defense was the revolutionary role of the Asian peoples in the East, and more importantly, a firm alliance between the workers and peasants in the SU. Any course which would compromise this

alliance in the interest of more rapid industrialization was very dangerous. He explicitly warned against the idea of a "3rd revolution" which would impose collectivization from above. He stood for balanced growth of both industry and agriculture, voluntary collectivization, and the role the masses must play in supervising the state apparatuses. It should be noted, however, that Bukharin often repeated Lenin's positions on these issues without being able to present a developed alternative to Stalin's line. In addition, he failed to take his position to the masses and develop a social base for his positions, in the interest of maintaining the appearance of unity in leadership.

In contrast, Stalin's line represented a virtual abandonment of the worker-peasant alliance. The primary basis for building socialism was the economist conception of the development of heavy industry, which must be paid for by continuing to exact a "tribute" from the peasantry (ineffect, making the emergency decrees of the earlier period the political line for building socialism). In the Stalinian conception, the mere advance of technology and the implementation of the collective work form would give rise to the new social relations.

This economist view was the basis of the forced collectivization policy which was implemented in the fall of '29. Due to the fixing of ridiculously high "collectivization targets", local authorities were under extreme pressure-- often their jobs and political careers were at stake if they failed to meet the quotas. Extreme measures were soon taken by all levels of the state and party against peasants who resisted collectivization. Often their land and tools were confiscated, their children were expelled from the schools; many were forcibly relocated on what came to be known as the "death trains" to the barren outlying regions of the USSR. Many peasants died from cold, hunger, and disease. Soon the class term for the rich peasants, kulaks, and the harsh policies developed to counter their anti-socialist activity, were used against any peasants (including the very poor) who refused to join the local collective. Thus, a "class justification" was given for a mass terror.

After 4 months of this intense collectivization, Stalin finally called a halt to the extreme methods. He described the errors made as due to local officials being "dizzy with success". Stalin failed to acknowledge that in fact there was no "dizziness" involved, rather officials had been implementing a bourgeois line of recourse to threats and coercion against the masses for months, with the full

of the party's upper echelons. In reality, the campaign was only halted after the targets had been attained. The "success" of this line was exposed when we see that numerous households fled the collectives once the administrative restraints were relaxed; many joined in counter-revolutionary kulak protests; and numerous peasants destroyed their herds of cattle rather than have them confiscated or "collectivized". Agricultural production did not reach pre-'29 levels for many years.

With regard to industrial production, there was a similar emphasis on "maximum" development. Goals for the building of large-scale industries were constantly revised upward throughout the 1st Five Year Plan ('27-32/33). These changes reflected only changes in the political line (and Stalin's consolidation of power), and they had no relation to the existing potential of the Soviet economy. Moreover, the plans offered no prospect of change in the social relations of production (control by the working masses over the means of production). Instead, the increases were based on the proposed exercise of increased authority over the workers by the managers and the trade unions.

It was quite apparent to anyone with a knowledge of the material resources available that the goals were impossible to attain. However, in the atmosphere of "ruthless struggle" against the so-called "Right deviation" (Bukharin and his supporters), cadre kept quiet. This includes even those closest to Stalin in the party and state hierarchy. No one wanted to risk their positions or further demotion, including the closest supporters of Bukharin.

In the party the '28-'29 period signalled the beginning of the end of a collective style of leadership. The party leadership also conducted a massive purge of the broad party ranks. In the resolutions approving the purge, it was emphasized that the masses (party and non-party) must be thoroughly involved and the targets were careerist/bureaucratic functionaries. In practice, the masses were never mobilized and only a few of the most obvious bureaucrats were purged. Most energy was spent on expelling those with views opposed to the majority line, even if they were implementing the party policy. From this point on, ideological struggle was reduced to administrative fiat; dissent meant expulsion, or worse.

In the state apparatus, there was a growing bureaucratization which, while recognized as a danger, was not systematically combatted. In fact, as we saw above, the practice of maximum industrialization and forced collectivization, coupled with the purges, strengthened

the bureaucracy and capitalist social relations. It was in this period as well that the trade unions became subordinated to the state apparatus, functioning only to discipline the workers and abandoning the fight for their material interests.

In the international arena, the Bukharin-Stalin struggle played itself out in a different form. This time the issue was the characterization of the "Third Period." (1st period=revolutionary situation after WWI, 2d period=mid '20's when capitalism had stabilized) For Bukharin, revolution was not on the immediate agenda in the West. In fact, his forces described a coming period of "super-stabilization" which would, oddly enough, sharpen the class contradictions creating a revolutionary situation some time in the future. Unity of the working class was still the key strategic thrust in the Third Period.

Stalin's position was that the Third Period represented a revolutionary conjuncture in the West. The economic crisis ~~was~~ implied a revolutionary crisis. This dictated 3 tactics: 1) refusal of any collaboration with Social Democrats, and the need to create new, revolutionary trade unions so as to take advantage ~~of~~ of the revolutionary situation, 2) destruction of the "lingering" reformist influence over the working class, for in this new period the Social Democratic parties became the main enemy of the working class ("social fascists"), 3) purging the Communist parties of all vacillating elements, especially the "Right deviationists", who became the main danger in the Communist movement. This was the line developed to combat the rise of Nazism!

In the Comintern, we can see the sectarian and ultra-left extent to which this line reached: Referring to the masses still under the sway of the social democrats, Comintern leader Ernst Thälmann stated, "As long as they are not delivered from the influence of the social fascists, these millions of workers are lost to the anti-fascist struggle." In Die Internationale, one communist wrote, "But the most important problem in our struggle against national socialism (nazism)...is that of the correct revolutionary strategy to carry out the decisions of the Ninth Plenum and to strike hardest at social democracy... as a precondition for victory over Hitler's fascism."

As we can see, the elements of the International tactics of the 3rd Period closely parallel the policies in the SU, in terms of voluntarist notions of the abilities of the communist parties, the destruction of class alliances (including working class unity) and administrative purges in place of principled ideological struggle.

As TR 8 notes, the elected majority of the CPUSA under Lovestone was expelled as a result of this turn in the Comintern. They refused to perceive the revolutionary situation which was upon them. Foster & Browder were willing to uphold the 3rd Period line.

The Early 30's

We have spent some time on the '28-29 period since it is really the foundation for the line and practice of ~~the~~ many years to come. We can now see how these policies were practiced.

Domestically in the SU, forced relocation of the peasantry continued, despite Stalin's official halt to such measures. Agricultural output declined throughout the first Five Year Plan. Only in 1935 did draft power (animals and tractors) surpass 1928 levels and the dearth of organic fertilizer (due to the loss of livestock) continued to be felt well into the 2d & 3d Five Yr. Plans. Grain was seized at even greater rates (at very low prices) in order to supply the growing urban population. Left without sufficient grain for food and fodder, peasants began to steal the grain; this often met with long sentences or death. Villages that didn't meet their grain quotas were left without any deliveries of goods and at times whole villages were relocated. In 1932-33, thousands and thousands of peasants died of hunger, famine was rampant.

In industry, great advances were certainly made. However, none of the goals set by the Plan was met, despite Stalin's declaration to the contrary. In addition, the urban population grew at an extraordinary rate due to the arrival of desperate peasants and the slow start up of many of the projected industries. The standard of living of the workers dropped.

This period also signalled the beginning of the increase in the trials of political dissidents and "wreckers". One of the first targets was the specialists who were alleged to be undermining ("wrecking") the building of socialism and the attainment of the Plan's goals. As Graham Lock notes, Stalin dealt with these problems with specialists in very contradictory ways. On the one hand, the people were forced to greatly rely on the expertise of the specialists; they were offered great material incentives to serve the SU. This served to reinforce the capitalist relations of separation of experts from the working class. On the other hand, Stalin fostered the development of another set of practices which ultimately proved to threaten the ~~xxxxxx~~ SU even more than the specialists--the massive repressive state apparatus.

~~Repression was unleashed~~

In unleashing repression on the mass of specialists, a number of real counter-revolutionaries were no doubt caught. But it is now well established that many of the victims were those who simply couldn't meet the unrealistic requirements set by the Plan. These people were tried, imprisoned and sometimes killed as scapegoats for Stalin's voluntarism.

In these trials a number of methods were initiated which received much use throughout the '30's. NKVD (internal security) officials invented numerous counter-revolutionary organizations which defendants were then charged with being members of. Defendants were forced to confess to elaborate counter-revolutionary activities which they read out at trial. Confessions were obtained by a variety of torture techniques. Often there was literally no documented evidence of guilt aside from the confessions.

Trials were soon held against many former oppositionists, from ex-Mensheviks to ex-Workers' Oppositionists, to Trotskyists, etc. even if the person had had no recent dealings with the old organizations or no longer held those views. Charges usually involved plots to kill Stalin or overthrow the Soviet government, or being a member of an underground organization with a membership of thousands. Most of this was impossible to prove absent the confessions.

Internationally, the "social fascism" line was fully implemented, with particularly grave results in Germany. Since May, 1928, the social democrats had ruled Germany in coalition with the leading party of the German big bourgeoisie. And the socialist ministers faithfully served their ^{partners} through the implementation of numerous financial measures which bolstered landowners and the bourgeoisie and particularly through their use of police power against the militant working class. The basis for Communist-Socialist antagonism was well laid.

For their own part, the Communists failed to distinguish between the reactionary policies of the pre-Hitler government and outright fascism. Thus they continually flung around accusations of fascism and social-fascism without realizing the disarming effect it would have on the masses when Hitler's fascism was imminent. The Communists even joined with the Nazis in supporting a referendum to recall the the bourgeois/socialist government. When the socialists proposed a united front on the eve of Hitler's rise to power, the Communists rejected it.

~~Even at the point of Hitler's consolidation of power,~~

Even after months of Nazi terror, the banning of the Communist Party, and the imprisonment of numerous working class leaders, the Comintern could declare,

"The establishment of an open fascist dictatorship, by destroying all democratic illusions among the masses and liberating them from the influence of Social-Democracy, accelerates the rate of Germany's development toward proletarian revolution."

In other countries, Communist parties applied similar ultra-left tactics which only isolated the communists from the majority of the working classes. While this strategy was known as "class against class", we should be clear that "class" had nothing to do with the analysis; the strategy in practice meant communists versus everyone else, but primarily the right wing leaders of the working class.

In the area of trade union work, many parties set up dual unions to win the workers away from the reactionary bureaucratic unions. In reality, this amounted to an abandonment of the majority of the working class to the labor bureaucrats. An interesting aspect of this policy is the right errors made by the revolutionary unions in their drive for legitimacy; for example, in the needle trades, the union was willing to take a pay cut for its workers in order to show their willingness to deal with employers.

Such right errors in this predominantly "left" period are proof of our assertion that the key error from '28 on lies not in the right or left deviation but the entire problematic out of which these errors were generated: the economist/voluntarist problematic, with its particular lack of class analysis.

Mid to Late '30's

Within the SU, the 2d Five Yr Plan was under way and industrialization was proceeding rapidly. As we saw above, it was at this point that agricultural output was beginning to recover from the devastation caused by forced collectivization and its consequences.

Yet this approach toward stabilization did not impede the growth of the repressive apparatus. On the contrary, according to Stalin, the class struggle was sharpening ^{but} ~~not~~ because of the developing capitalist social relations (bureaucratic relations between the party/state and masses, coercion against the working masses, the continued existence of commodity production, etc). Stalin didn't

have any concept of this threat for, according to the notion of the socialist mode of production, the socialist social relations were now in conformity with the economic base. Rather the class struggle was sharpening due to the remnants of the old exploiting classes and agents of foreign imperialism within the SU.

This view served as the justification for the incredible mass repression which culminated in the Purge Trials of 1936-38, where Bukharin, inactive in party politics for years, was finally killed along with fellow "oppositionist" Rykov. (Tomsky, the 3rd major member of the Right Opposition, had committed suicide rather than face torture and execution.)

It is impossible to recount the extent of the terror unleashed in this period. Literally no section of society was left untouched. Charges were trumped up so fast that even the prosecutors couldn't keep track of who was supposed to be a member of the "Union Bureau of Mensheviks", the "Trotskyite-Zinovievite United Center" or who was working with France to overthrow the SU. Comrades were forced to turn on one another or face death, torture was rampant.

The Old Guard of the Bolshevik Party was decimated. Famed international communists who had worked with Lenin from the founding of the 3rd International, if not further back, were also killed.

Entire local party committees were arrested and shot. The general staff of the Red Army was purged, arrested, and shot--- right before the Fascist onslaught of WWII. (Even a number of retired officers were executed.) Numerous literary and scientific figures were imprisoned or shot. Even the repressive apparatus itself was purged now and then in order for Stalin to maintain a tight command.

Medvedev states (in Let History Judge) that within 2 years, more communists had been lost than in all the years of underground struggles, the 3 revolutions (1905, Feb '17, Oct '17) and the Civil War combined. The toll was even greater among non-party people: 400,000-500,000 persons were shot, while millions were imprisoned.

While this was occurring in the SU, the international communist movement was reeling from the growing onslaught on fascism. The reality of the situation finally hit them and in 1935, under intense pressure from numerous parties, the Comintern announced the United Front (all working class parties unite) and the Popular Front (working

class and other non-fascist classes/clas fractions unite). While this was certainly a welcome turn since the main enemy was now correctly seen as fascism, the line was articulated and implemented with the same ignorance of class analysis which gave rise to the 3rd Period line. From "no unity with social fascists", the Comintern went full swing to uncritical unity with all, including major fractions of the bourgeoisie. In this way the parties of the various countries made grave right errors of capitulation to their "own" bourgeoisies.

For example, in France, following the election of a Popular Front government, the French CP allied far more often with the right wing Radical Party in its efforts to halt the Socialists' moves to nationalize the Bank of France and control of gold trade. The CP castigated the SP for its attempts to upset the French bourgeoisie. The CP also put down a spontaneous strike wave by the militant working classes after their election of a Pop Front government.

In Spain, where the left-socialist^{government} was fighting the Fascist Franco forces, the USSR pledged to give arms only if the government abstained from any socialist measures. The USSR, afraid of upsetting its capitalist "allies", thus forced the end of the left wing government and a right socialist force took its place. Moreover, Soviet advisers imported the purge tactics in order to break up any left wing challenge (either from communists or anarchists) to their policy. The Comintern went so far as to declare that a Popular Front victory would result in a "new type of democratic republic... where there will be no place for fascism, where its economic basis has been uprooted, and where the material guarantees have been created for the defense of the rights, liberty, and interests of the people."!

As part of its international policy, the Comintern offered to dissolve all fractions in the trade unions. In the US, the CP dissolved all factory nuclei. Browder went on to declare that Communism was 20th century Americanism, based on Jeffersonian principles. In line with this ultra-nationalism, the CP adhered to its no-strike pledge with greater fervor than even the labor bureaucrats. They also capitulated to the reintroduction of the the piece work system in various industries.

Finally, in 1939 Stalin concluded a non-aggression pact with Hitler in order to forestall the eventual attack on the SU. While we would not question the necessity of the pact itself, its implications for the international communist movement were unnecessary. Each party was instructed to stop its anti-fascist alliance and to now declare the war to be mere inter-imperialist rivalry. Solid anti-fascist fronts were thoroughly disoriented. Allies of the CP fled from the coalitions, isolating the parties once again. For its part, the SU handed over numerous communists and Jews to the Nazis as part of the pact; in addition, the Polish CP was dissolved by secret order. Not until the Nazi invasion of the SU in June, 1941, was the alliance between the communists and other working class parties reestablished (on the same right opportunist basis as before the pact).

Once again, this is obviously not an exhaustive history of the the period. It is laid out solely for our discussion on the Stalinian Deviation, in order to see some of its major historical examples. The TR has not yet done a summation of this period which is necessary to develop a more all-sided analysis.

The Stalinian Deviation

Paul Costello has summed up the SD, in terms of its conception of socialist development, as follows

In terms of its international perspective, the SD carried over its economism by equating the economic crises of capitalism with a revolutionary situation. With the rise of fascism, the bourgeoisie was seen to be using its "last" form of political dictatorship--the ultimate expression of the permanently revolutionary conditions which only needed communist intervention to realize itself. The absence of an understanding of the primacy of class struggle and the fundamental need for scientific class analysis led the Comintern to liquidate the need for class alliances altogether, or to subordinate the working class to the hegemony of other class forces depending on the conjuncture.

The relations between the CPSU and the Comintern Parties was characterized by an extreme national chauvinism which consistently subordinated the interests of the world revolutionary movement to the immediate interests of the SU. Each party within the Comintern, for its part, displayed a deep-rooted flunkeyism by obeying every twist and turn in line, regardless of its impact on the national class struggle.

In addition, the parties carried over the bureaucratic centralism and suppression of inner-party struggle which had come to be the hallmark of Stalinian "democratic centralism". They too relied on everyone but the working masses in their struggle for socialism (ie in the 3d period, they relied only on party members; in the UF period, they relied on the "people": enlightened bourgeoisie, petit-bourgeoisie, etc.) Every Stalinian party had failed in its attempt to become a vanguard of the proletariat in the Leninist sense of the term.

Recalling our first session of this study, we defined revisionism as "the abandonment of the class stand of the proletariat in theory and practice. Revisionism is the liquidation of the primacy of class struggle as the motor force of history. Class analysis is sacrificed for economism.... As this view is developed and practiced in any particular period, an entire set of political/ideological relations consolidate in accordance with the concrete conditions."

Thus we can see how the Stalinian Deviation constitutes a consolidated form of revisionism. We can also see how ~~the~~ many of the fundamental tenets and current practices of modern revisionism find precedent, if not their actual origins, in the Stalinian Deviation.

But it is the Stalinian Deviation and not modern revisionism that we say is the main obstacle to revolutionary MLism in the world

today. Why is that and what do we mean by this statement?

The line of modern revisionism, like the politics of the 2d International, is discredited among revolutionaries world-wide. The two now stand together as the major right wing deviations from Marxism which have sold out the revolutionary interests of all oppressed peoples. But this is not so with the Stalinian Deviation. On the contrary, the SD, as it developed, was seen as an extension of Leninism. And Leninism's revolutionary significance lay in its break with the revisionism of the 2d International. Thus Stalin carried the mantle of the revolutionary alternative to the 2d International's degeneration.

The politics and practice of the Stalin era ~~have rarely been~~ ^{were not} systematically criticized from a ML viewpoint, ^{in all time.} Rather, Trotskyists and social democrats, the 2 major historical alternatives to Stalin ^{in that} ~~times have~~ both failed to offer revolutionary paths forward. Although Trotskyism developed in opposition to the Stalinian Deviation, it offered only the same economism and voluntarism (commandism), if in different political forms, as Stalin. More fundamentally, it was tainted from the outset with its struggle against the idea that socialism could even be built in the SU. The social-democrats, on the other hand, represented only a harking back to the original revisionism.

The international communist opposition, which generally adhered to the Bukharinist positions, certainly offered some incisive elementary criticisms of the Stalinian deviation in the early thirties, but it failed to offer any concrete programmatic alternative. It rapidly degenerated into dwindling sects and anti-communism by the end of the decade. From the point of view of opposing the hegemony of the Stalinian Deviation, the Opposition has had little if any lasting impact and remains unknown in our ML movement today.

In fact, only the actual practice of the Chinese CP under Mao in the '30's and 40's can be said to embody the necessary revolutionary break with the Stalinian practices of that era. Yet its alternative remained mostly in what Althusser calls "the practical state", without a theoretical/ideological articulation, or was rarely presented as a break with the Stalin line. Thus, its impact as the "vanguard opposition" was also limited.

In addition, we cannot underestimate ^{the fact} that at that time, the USSR was the only socialist nation in the midst of the world imperialist

Objectively, it represented the lineage of the October Revolution and Lenin. It should cause little wonder, then, that every twist and turn of the various parties to keep in step with the Soviet line was honestly justified as ~~the~~ in the interest of "existing socialism" in its struggle against imperialism. Since socialism posed to the imperialist system its future grave, we can see why Stalin's cries of imperialist intervention, counter-revolution and the need for massive trials were believed by the world communist movement.

These factors, in ~~the~~ their combination, led to an identification of Stalinian Marxism with revolutionary MLism, and not just in name only. The theory, politics and practice of the Stalin era are what pass for MLism today. It is Stalinian Marxism which is so "concretely applied to the concrete conditions" ~~of~~ of the world; and it is Stalinian practice which stands as the model for the entire array of strategy and tactics engaged in by contemporary MLists. This is the foundation of the present crisis of MLism, theoretically and politically.

Having seen why, or at least how, there was no break with the SD in its period of consolidation, we can then see how, since 1956 the international communist movement has continued to live under its hegemony.

The Khrushchevite turn in 1956, with its exposé and denunciation of Stalin, distinguished itself from its predecessor only by political shifts to the right. In no way did it constitute a break with the SD. But in its ~~move~~ move to the right, coupled with the condemnation of Stalin the man, it focused the attention of

The Khrushchevite turn in 1956 in no way constituted a break with the SD. Rather, it distinguished itself from the Stalin era only with a shift to the right in numerous political lines. Moreover, by coupling this rightward move with a scathing denunciation of Stalin "the man", it focused the attention of revolutionary MLists on the right wing politics, instead of on the crisis created by the SD in the first place. Thus, in many ways, Khrushchev reinforced the hegemony of orthodox Stalinian Marxism, and the image of Stalin the Leninist among anti-revisionists.

Even Mao's and the CCP's polemics against revisionism in the '60's spared the Stalinian roots of the problem. They too focused on Khrushchev's "Phony communism". While in fact many of the practices

and theoretical premises of the Cultural Revolution run directly against the SD*, they were articulated most often as against a post-56 revisionism. The criticisms of Stalin were implicit or developed in lesser known analyses of Stalin's economic positions. Thus in the fervor of the spread of "Maoism" worldwide (in the US it was the impetus of the NCM) the potential for drawing the lessons of the Stalin period were essentially lost on most MLists. (The fact that ~~ix~~ both Khrushchev and Mao served to ignite the advances of Althusser et al will be discussed in a future session).

In fact, instead of appropriating the anti-Stalinian implications of the practice of the Cultural Revolution, the world wide anti-revisionist movement grabbed onto its rhetorical, voluntarist excesses. Instead of noting the qualitative distinction between Mao's problematic and Stalin's, anti-revisionists saw the ~~them~~ in direct lineage-- Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao.

And today, we can see an even further step backwards in the remains of the party building movement ~~and~~ well as world wide (most notably in the Party of Labor of Albania). Mao's problematic is coming under heavy attack, the Cultural Revolution is being cast off as a "peasant coup" or an exercise in "anarchism" without any critical analysis whatsoever. The anti-revisionist movement is backsliding right into a more formal and conscious belief in Stalinian Marxism and a reverence for Stalin. For most MLists, the SD is still, just as it has been since 1929, the iron shield against "revisionism".

As the world imperialist system moves into a crisis conjuncture, the international communist movement finds itself weaker and more divided than it has been since 1914. In this period, we can least afford the continuing falsification of our heritage. ~~is blocking the critical analysis which must be given our communist heritage;~~ Instead of suppressing all talk of the Third Period and equating the United Front with the victory over fascism, our movement requires a thorough elaboration of the ~~xxxx~~ revisionist errors of ~~the~~ Stalinian practice in its confrontation with capitalism's

*For example, the overall anti-economist emphasis characterized by the de-emphasis of heavy industry, the conscious struggle against capitalist social relations and for proletarian democracy and socialization, the building of a mass movement which included non-party elements to criticize the party and its bureaucratic distortions, etc. While TR hasn't yet made an all-sided analysis of the CR, it seems clear that this thrust is the dominant aspect.

last major restructuring crisis.

More narrowly, the SD hinders our entire party building effort: ~~within the ML movement~~ It should now be quite clear to us how the SD prevents the development of a revolutionary program and strategy which could unite the ML movement and be the basis for fusion with the working class in the USA. In a very real sense, the SD mystifies the nature and meaning of the struggle against revisionism within the communist movement.

In relation to left wing social democrats and "independents", the objective identification of MLism with the uncritical support for our tragic history, the bureaucracy of revisionism in state power, and, in recent periods, an extreme sectarianism holds many people back from embracing a revolutionary course. These people are driven away from MLism by the Stalinian Deviation.

Even many Trotskyists cling to Trotskyism, despite its own political/theoretical crisis, in reaction to the historic capitulations of the Stalinian movement to the international bourgeoisie. While these people must first be willing to break with the Trotskyist problematic, the present claim by the Stalinian Deviation to the definitive critique of Trotskyism blocks ~~on~~ both the real exposure of Trotskyism and the development of a revolutionary Leninism which can give impetus to a person's willingness to abandon Trotskyism.

Finally, and in many ways most importantly, the SD blocks the effort to fuse MLism with the working class movement. It does so primarily by providing a revisionist theory and practice which prevents communist fusion. But it ~~is~~ also blocks the fusion process because it fails to explain the Stalin era and current day socialism in any way which accords with reality. The US working class will simply not take up socialism, Soviet style, as its own for it cannot and does not see its liberation in it.

~~This is what it means to say that the SD is the main obstacle to the development of revolutionary Leninism.~~

Only the thorough break with the SD, in all aspects of its theory and practice, can give us the foundation of a renaissance of genuine communist practice in the US. Our notions of what MLism is

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must continually be critically evaluated in order to distinguish the revolutionary elements and the Stalinian elements. We, as cadre of the line which bases itself on the critique of the SD, cannot expect to avoid Stalinian pitfalls simply because of our commitment. Rather, it will take continual struggle at every step, from crit/self-crit, democratic centralism, to party building strategy, united front work, to program development and ultimately revolution and beyond to defeat the hegemony of the Stalinian Deviation.