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The degeneration of Soviet socialism and the turn of the mid-1930's

"It falls to the Communist Party to deepen and extend socialist consciousness", the first speech on the subject of socialism at the Third Congress of the Marxist-Leninist Party, is in the last issue of the **Supplement** (Dec. 20, 1988). Below we carry another speech on socialism, edited for publication. This speech, and the speech on the Marxist-Leninist principles of socialism also in this issue, put forward various views on Soviet history for discussion, not for decision. Only after a great deal of additional research, study, and discussion will the MLP come to its detailed conclusions on these matters.

Speech at the Third Congress Fall 1988

In this speech I would like to discuss some issues concerning the degeneration of socialism in the Soviet Union. First I want to repeat the cautionary point from my last speech that comrades should not get the idea that we've made a lot of progress in this field of study, or that further work will be smooth sailing.

Over the last year or so, we have been saying in our press that there was a turn in the mid-30s in the Soviet Union not just in foreign policy but in domestic policy as well. We have pointed to our analysis of the turn in international orientation, but we haven't spelled out the turn in domestic affairs. That's what I want to discuss now.

I will cover a good deal of historical territory in this speech. This will give a rough idea of the basic things the Party has to look at in the study of Soviet history. There are roughly three main things:

1) We can see there was a turn in the mid-30s. I will describe some features of this turn. But the task of fully studying each of these features, as well as others, and the task of precisely analyzing what the turn means--that is

something we have yet to do in our study.

2) Naturally then, there is the issue of studying what came before that turn. This involves both studying the accomplishments of the socialist revolution and sorting out how the groundwork was laid for the unfortunate turn of the mid-30s.

3) Then there is the issue of what comes after the turn. How does the process take place of degeneration into the state capitalism we are familiar with today?

To proceed.

We are aware that a series of changes take place in the mid-30s. Not just one or two isolated things, but quite a few. When a whole series of such changes occur in roughly the same time, and when we already know of a fundamental turn in foreign and world policy, the phenomenon definitely gives the impression of a basic turn in domestic affairs as well.

However, in domestic policy it's not quite like the 7th Congress of the Communist International where a whole new line is spelled out at a world congress (albeit in the name of simply a new tactical policy). The turn in domestic matters takes

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**ON THE PARTY-WIDE STUDY OF
THE MARXIST-LENINIST CONCEPT OF SOCIALISM**

**Speech at the Third Congress
Fall 1988**

Comrades:

The first list of works consisted of the central writings on socialism of Marx and Engels, and of some of the key writings of Lenin in the period just prior to the October 1917 revolution and in the period just afterwards, extending to 1919. All of the study groups have probably reached up to, and some have gone beyond, Lenin's **The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government**. A number of reports have been submitted from the different groups on the questions that have come up in the course of the study and how things are going in general. On this basis, it seems clear that we can point to a number of advances that are being made.

Of course one advance is the momentum being imparted to our theoretical work. The party-wide study is substantially deepening our grasp of the classical writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin on socialism. For some, this study is the first time that

Lenin's writings after 1917 have been read. Grasping the classics is our starting point, that helps to illuminate all the social and historical investigation of the Party necessary to accomplish our other goals on this front.

In the course of this study, a large number of questions are raised: this includes questions about historical events such as the Paris Commune; and about the evolution of the Soviet Union in the 20s and 30s and beyond. Questions come up about the Marxist theory of political economy and many, many more subjects. Sometimes it seems that more questions are posed than are even answered. Superficially, this may give the appearance of loose discussion. Or of excessive difficulty. Or even lack of leadership. But all these questions are an achievement. To be able to pose questions that require further investigation, thought, and study is to provide ourselves with the ideas necessary for moving the study forward.

The study groups are also an enlivening factor in the local work, in local agitation and discussions with the masses. Some people are taking up supplementary things to study, whether in connection with presentations they are to make, or due to an interest in getting a better handle on some of the opportunist political trends that we face in the mass movements, and so on. As well, the study groups have drawn in some activists from our mass fronts of work, and there is also a bit of a phenomenon of some Party supporters who had been mostly passive taking up some activity through participation in the study program.

I have been asked by the Central Committee to speak to several questions that have arisen and which allow for a few tentative remarks to be made. They are

- (1) on the issue of stages in the transition from capitalism to communism;
- (2) some points on the Marxist theory of distribution under socialism and the struggle toward equalization of all workers' pay;
- (3) on the combination of authority and democracy in establishing socialist factory discipline in some of Lenin's writings.

**(1) Some points on the stage of
transition to socialism**


In discussing Marx's Critique of the Gotha Pro-

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gram", it is clear that socialism, or the first phase of communism, is quite a high-level society; moreover, one that has not yet been achieved in history.

Marx delineated some of the key features of socialism in the *Critique*. Here, socialism was to include: complete state ownership of the means of production. This means the elimination of all forms of private property in the means of production. And this would imply that such transitional forms in agriculture as collective farms and so forth would have to be superseded by state farms of agricultural workers.

Everyone would be required to contribute their share in productive labor, and all workers would receive roughly equal pay for equal labor-time. (I say "roughly", because it seems probable that allowances would be made for more arduous versus much easier labor; for more dangerous jobs, and so on.) This pay would not be in the form of money, but in that of a "labor-note", or "labor-certificate" (metal, paper, plastic...it makes no difference) signifying the right of that worker to his or her's appropriate share in the fund of consumer products.

These features in turn imply the elimination of both commodity production and exchange, and money.

Now, obviously, socialism in this sense of the word has yet to be achieved. Not in China, the Soviet bloc, or the Soviet Union itself.

But if this is so, what kind of social system did exist in those countries that we have said were socialist at one time or another? And what name should we have called them? What should we call the Soviet Union in the first 10-20 years after the revolution?

In studying some of Lenin's writings from 1918-19, it is clear that he regarded the new order as one in transition from capitalism to socialism. This was a complex process. And in the course of it, the transition toward this first stage of communism was arrested, and the society collapsed back into capitalism of one variety or another.

Nevertheless, it is proper to refer to the early Soviet Union as a socialist country, as long as we are clear that we are not using the term "socialism" in the strict sense. For example, Lenin said the following in *Left-Wing Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality*:

"Nor, I think, has any Communist denied that the term Socialist Soviet Republic implies the determination of Soviet power to achieve the transition to socialism, and not that the new economic system is recognized as a socialist order." (In Section III of the work, or see *Collected Works*, vol. 27, p. 335)

So, it seems proper to refer to both a strict definition of socialism, and a looser term, referring to the forward direction of a society; to a society in the process of the transition to socialism. Perhaps the term "weak socialism" is helpful.

[It should be clear that the speech is not using "weak socialism" as a slur of this type of society. The transitional stage is necessary if socialism is ever to arrive. In a sense, it can also be called the "heroic" or "revolutionary" phase in which the working class and people are still engaged in uprooting the old capitalism. But it is "weak" in an economic sense; it is not yet full socialism; it will not spontaneously lead to socialism by itself; etc. After the overthrow of the political power of the exploiters, the new economic system still remains weaker than the forces of the old capitalism. Only the revolutionary political mobilization of the masses can overcome this. -- Supplement.]

And here is something Lenin said along these lines:

"But we say that our goal is equality, and by that we mean the abolition of classes. Then the class distinction between workers and peasants should be abolished. That is exactly our object. A society in which the class distinction between workers and peasants still exists is neither a communist society nor a socialist society. True, if the word socialism is interpreted in a certain sense, it might be called a socialist society, but that would be mere sophistry, an argument about words. Socialism is the first stage of communism; but it is not worth while arguing about words. One thing is clear, and that is, that as long as the class distinction between workers and peasants exists, it is no use talking about equality, unless we want to bring grist to the mill of the bourgeoisie ...

"Their social conditions, production, living and economic conditions make the peasant half worker and half huckster.

"This is a fact. And you cannot get away from this fact until you have abolished money, until you have abolished exchange. And for this years and years of the stable rule by the proletariat is needed; for only the proletariat is capable of vanquishing the bourgeoisie." (From Lenin's speech of May 19, 1919 at the First All-Russian Congress of Adult Education, "Deception of the People with Slogans of Freedom and Equality, Section IV or *Collected Works*, vol. 29, pp. 358-9)

Here Lenin explains that a society with a class

differentiation between workers and peasants, and hence a society still marked by commodity exchange and money, is not really socialist, in the strict sense of the word.

So it seems that a sharp differentiation between a strict and loose conception of socialism is necessary; a distinction between the stage of transition from capitalism to socialism, and socialism itself; in general, a distinction between a society moving toward socialism and one that has arrived.

When the Bolsheviks came to power, Lenin had to wage a struggle for the Party to understand that it was not an issue of "immediately going over to socialism" but of finding the way to make a gradual transition, step by step. The following is from **The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government** in 1918:

"...The reason why the present position seems peculiar to many of those who would like to be regarded as socialists is that they have been accustomed to contrasting capitalism with socialism abstractly, and that they profoundly put between the two the word 'leap' (some of them, recalling fragments of what they have read of Engels's writings, still more profoundly add the phrase 'leap from the realm of necessity into the realm of freedom'). The majority of these so-called socialists, who have 'read in books' about socialism but who have never seriously thought over the matter, are unable to consider that by 'leap' the teachers of socialism meant turning-points on a world-historical scale, and that leaps of this kind extend over decades and even longer periods." (From the next to last section "The Development of Soviet Organization" or **Collected Works**, vol. 27, p. 273)

So here we have a leap, a qualitative change, from capitalism to socialism, but which may take decades to accomplish, and about which Marx spoke of the "prolonged birth pangs" of the new society.

But above and beyond the mere recognition of this transition period, was the issue of understanding the actual mixture of capitalist and socialist elements in the country, in order to have a scientific plan of action for eliminating the remnants of capitalism.

At this point, it must be noted that it is beyond the scope of this talk to proceed from this to try to discuss Lenin's views at that time on the key issues of the transition period. I just want to add that Lenin stressed the need for an analysis of the modes of production and exchange that existed in society, and on this basis being able to "study

the concrete forms and stages of the transition" that are necessary.

This goes to show that one's starting point is not some scholastic or invented definition of "stages of socialism", but is the actual social and economic relations inherited from the old system. And this is a social tapestry that is about as varied as the number of countries on earth. Of course, the social and economic conditions favorable to socialism are much more in evidence today throughout the world than in Lenin's day.

When we speak of transition between capitalism and socialism, this should not be confused with the transition from socialism to communism. These are two distinct, and consecutive, periods. Together they form the entire period of transition from capitalism to communism.

I don't think there is much controversy attached to this issue [the transition from socialism to communism], as Marx's and Lenin's views on it do not remain as "hidden" as on the previous topic. As well, this is pretty far in the future.

The question of the transition period between capitalism and socialism has been slurred over in last 50-60 years, since Lenin's time. Lenin's works that touch on this issue have not been popularized widely in either Stalin's or Mao's time. Instead it seems that roughly the following formula has been pushed by both the Chinese and Soviet trends:

"Overthrow the capitalists, seize the main means of production, carry out some sort of land reform and cooperative agriculture, and this equals socialism."

But this is only partially true, only in the most loose sense of the term. But no distinction is made by these political trends between a loose and strict sense of the socialism idea. The strict sense of the idea drops out. And with it the very concept of the transition period gets muddled up.

(2) Some of the Marxist principles of socialist distribution:

One thing that we have learned in our study so far is that an aim of the socialist revolution is to work toward the equality of pay. This is touched on in Marx's and Engels' writings on the Paris Commune. And it is discussed in Marx's **Critique of the Gotha Program**. In summing up these views in **The State and Revolution**, Lenin repeatedly stresses that "equality of labor and equality of pay" (end of Ch. 5, Sec. 4 or **Collected Works**, vol. 25, p.474) are features of the first stage of communism, i.e., what is commonly known as socialism. And in many other writings, Lenin deals with a

number of the different sides to this issue.

In the study groups, discussion of this issue of salary equalization often gave rise to comments on growth of wage disparities in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. As well many comrades are aware of Stalin's polemic against what he called

"the 'Leftist' practice of wage equalization" (Section II "Wages" of **New Conditions—New Tasks in Economic Construction**, Speech Delivered at a Conference of Economic Executives, June 23, 1931 or **Problems of Leninism**, p. 537)

and which he cursed three years later as "a reactionary petty-bourgeois absurdity worthy of some primitive sect of ascetics, but not of a socialist society organized on Marxist lines." (**Report to the Seventeenth Party Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B)**, January 26, 1934, Part III "The Party", Sec. 1 "Questions of Ideological and Political Leadership" or **Problems of Leninism**, p. 741)

The next speech goes into some of the facts about the campaign against wage leveling, a campaign which apparently deepens into the bureaucracy pigging out at the trough of the workers' labor.

Based on studying the Paris Commune and Marx's **Critique of the Gotha Program**, Stalin's views are clearly a departure from Marxism. Later we can examine some quotations from these two previously mentioned works of Stalin to try to capture some of the flavor of this, and to understand the phenomenon a bit more.

But first let's look at a few of the Marxist principles on wage equalization under socialism. This should help provide us with a few ideas that will be useful for judging various wage practices that occur in the history of the Soviet Union, and in other countries that proclaimed their socialist intentions.

The Paris Commune of 1871 was the main revolutionary experience of the 19th Century that Marx and Engels had available to extract socialist lessons from. Marx, in **The Civil War in France**, endorsed the measure for paying officials "workmen's wages".

Twenty years later in 1891, Engels' made the following remarks in his **Introduction to the Civil War in France**:

"And, in the second place, all officials, high or low, were paid only the wages received by other workers. The highest salary paid by the Commune to anyone was 6,000 francs. In this way an effective barrier to place-hunting and careerism was set up, even apart from the binding mandates to delegates to

representative bodies which were added besides." (See the third paragraph from the end)

Clearly Marx and Engels attached much importance to reducing wage disparity in the new working class society. Of course, the Commune did not last very long. It was not able to take any significant practical steps toward the economic emancipation of the working class, that is, any steps other than its heroic declaration of its own existence.

And so, we must turn to Marx's **Critique of the Gotha Program**, where he demonstrates that with the working class taking possession of the means of production of society, there must necessarily follow a complete transformation in the distribution of the means of consumption to the workers. And this transformation is one toward equality of wages.

What does Marx say in the **Critique** about socialist distribution?

In the first place, we are talking about "socialism proper", when the transition from capitalism has resulted in, among other things, the means of production being owned in common, i.e., full-scale socialist ownership. We are not talking about a society such as the Soviet Union was in the 1920s and 30s, where the workers have seized power, but where non-socialist modes of production remain very widespread, especially in agriculture.

On the contrary, in this society where all the means of production are in the possession of the workers' state, all workers are in a sense employees of this one huge corporation.

Everyone is required to perform an appropriate amount of social labor, considering their abilities and considering the relative difficulty of the work. (Obviously, some people are unable to work as long or as intensely as others. As well, different kinds of labor are not equally difficult, arduous, stressful, safe, and so on. And so in each case the workers' state must make adjustments to compensate for these factors. But the general rule should be: from each, relatively equal labor.)

The next rule should be: from each, relatively equal pay for this labor. With one very important qualification, workers are paid for each labor-hour with a note, or certificate, entitling them to one hour's worth of consumer articles. The qualification is this: that the total social product must include, in addition to consumer goods, producer goods; not just articles of consumption, but also means of production. Without this, society would collapse. So, a certain portion of the hours worked are allotted to the maintenance and expansion of the means of production; which are appropriated by the state. As well, another portion of the hours worked must be allotted to producer

and consumer goods so that the workers' government can carry out essential social services, like hospitals, schools, and so forth. (Included in this latter category would be expenditures for such consumer goods and services as medical care for all; child care; and certain housing costs borne by the government. That is, it would include such articles of consumption that can only be distributed rationally on a large-scale, by the state. And these sorts of state expenditures would be a powerful lever in the direction of equalization of pay.)

And so each worker is paid with a labor certificate entitling him or her to one hour's consumer goods for roughly each hour worked, after the necessary deductions from the workers' pay are made to the public fund. Of course, these payments to the public fund benefit the individual worker, if indirectly, just as much as the direct payments to the individual for articles of consumption. And obviously, in this situation exploitation has disappeared.

Of course, there are many other aspects to this question that remain to be explained. For example, there is the necessity for a high level of technique throughout society so that the disparity in labor productivity in each field is reduced. Another example: the educational and cultural level in society needs to be high enough such that an all-encompassing control at the work places by the masses of workers results in a reasonable level of intensity of labor during each hour worked, without excessive shirking, and so forth.

But in the period of transition toward socialism, there would probably be many transitional forms of pay, involving material incentives and wage inequalities of one sort or another. For example, it seems that a type of piece work would be used as a stimulus to train reluctant types of people in having decent labor discipline. How prevalent would this be? It would probably be a subordinate and constantly decreasing phenomenon. It is undeniably the case that large-scale, socialized production, tends to give rise to socialist labor discipline and camaraderie among the workers. Piece work on the other hand, even a "benevolent" piece work that is not driven by the profit motive to absurd heights of sweating, is problematic. It causes some negative competition among workers. There is an inducement to keep productivity secrets from "competitor" workers so as to keep the average rate low and your own pay higher. Not only is production itself harmed to this extent, but there is also a tendency toward the workers harming themselves through excessive strain, so as to increase their pay. So this type of labor discipline must necessarily be of limited advantage to socialism.

And this just touches the surface of some of the complex issues that arise in the transition to socialism on the issue of pay equalization. But aside from all this, it seems pretty clear that Marx's conception of distribution of products under socialism proper is one of striving toward wage equalization.

Lenin, in *The State and Revolution*, explains the following points:

"And as soon as equality is achieved for all members of society in relation to ownership of the means of production, that is, equality of labor and equality of wages, humanity will inevitably be confronted with the question of advancing farther, from formal equality to actual equality, i.e., to the operation of the rule, 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs' ..." (Ch. 5, Sec. 4)

i.e. to the well-known distribution principle of the second stage of communism, as Marx laid it down. (We leave this distribution rule of communism without elaboration as it takes us off our present subject.)

So it seems the Marxist-Leninist classics see the struggle toward the equalization of pay as a goal of socialism. And the achieving of relative pay equality (fully socialist distribution) is itself a transition point to the higher form of equality that is brought into being with communist distribution.

And so, inevitably, questions get raised: What happened in the Soviet Union on this issue? What did Lenin do? Stalin? This is not the place or time to provide definitive answers to these questions. For now only the briefest and most tentative remarks can be made.

The Bolsheviks' Program of 1919 (8th Congress) stresses **striving** to equalize wages, while recognizing the necessity to make exceptions to this principle for some time:

"While striving to equalize wages for every type of labor and to fully realize communism, the Soviet government cannot set itself the immediate task of bringing about this equality today. Only the first steps are now being made in the transition from capitalism to communism. It will therefore be necessary for some time for specialists to receive higher wages so that they can work not worse but better than before. For the same reason it is impossible to dispense with the system of bonuses for the most successful and well-organized work. (From the eighth point on economics)

In *The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government* (March 1918), Lenin elaborates on what it

means to make exceptions to the general rule of wage equality:

"Now we have to resort to the old bourgeois method and to agree to pay a very high price for the 'services' of the top bourgeois experts. ... Clearly, this measure is a compromise, a departure from the principles of the Paris Commune and of every proletarian power, which call for the reduction of all salaries to the level of the wages of the average worker, ..." (From the section "The New Phase of the Struggle against the Bourgeoisie" or **Collected Works**, vol. 27, pp. 248-9)

This doesn't seem to require comment.

So let us return to the subject of Stalin's views in 1931, where he denounces Leftist equalization: the context is apparently trying to deal with a situation of disruptions in the factories caused by workers moving from job to job. He states that the unskilled had no incentive to stay and be trained for skilled positions, and the skilled had no incentive to stick around but went out in search of higher paying positions. It is quite possible that there was an issue here of maintaining certain wage disparities. But this was not dealt with by Stalin as a problem imposed by the past, as a concession, a departure from the principles of the Paris Commune, as Lenin put it. Instead Stalin states:

"Hence, the task is to put an end to the fluidity of manpower, to do away with wage equalization, to organize wages properly and to improve the living conditions of the workers." (From **New Conditions--New Tasks in Economic Construction**, June 23, 1931, Sec II "Wages" or **Problems of Leninism**, p. 540, emphasis as in the original)

That is, there is no talk of a problem in "doing away with wage equalization. On the contrary, this is considered the right thing to do without any qualification.

And it gets worse. By 1934, Stalin just seems to be on a vulgar tirade against the struggle toward wage equality. He uses several tricks to try to pull this off. His main demagoguery is to equate wage equalization with demanding that everyone in society have the same "requirements and tastes", to say that this is the same thing as "Bourgeois writers (who) are fond of depicting Marxist socialism in the shape of the old tsarist barracks, where everything is subordinated to the 'principle' of equalization." (**Report to the 17th Congress of the CPSU, III "The Party"**, 1. "Questions of Ideological and Political

Leadership" or Problems of Leninism, p. 743)

In other words, to be for wage equalization is depicted as being equivalent to wanting a socialism a la the equality of boot camp, or as I mentioned earlier, "some primitive sect of ascetics". Here, we apparently have a call to the new bureaucracy, officials and so forth, to fight "asceticism", i.e., for themselves, but apparently not for the lower wage levels...

Another of Stalin's demagogic tricks is to butcher one aspect of socialist distribution principles. In 1934 he states

"c) the equal duty of all to work according to their ability, and the equal right of all working people to receive in return for this according to the work performed (socialist society)." (**Ibid.**, p. 741)

Now, on the surface, this is OK, depending on what you mean by "the work performed." Marx and Lenin are clear: under socialism, it is "labor-time" and it is compensated roughly the same for all. Stalin has a different view. It is expressed in his 1931 talk in crude form. And it is a forgery of Marxism:

"We cannot tolerate a situation where a rolling-mill worker in the iron and steel industry earns no more than a sweeper. We cannot tolerate a situation where a locomotive driver earns only as much as a copying clerk. Marx and Lenin said that the difference between skilled and unskilled labor would exist even under socialism, even after classes had been abolished; that only under communism would this difference disappear and that, consequently, even under socialism 'wages' must be paid according to work performed and not according to needs." (**New Conditions--New Tasks in Economic Construction**, II "Wages" or **Problems of Leninism**, p. 538)

This argument is false. Why? Because by work performed, Stalin clearly means that some forms of labor are more valuable than others and should be paid more, and that this is Marxism. This is what is behind Stalin's sneering at unskilled labor. But this is only true under capitalism, under commodity production, where production is ruled by the law of value. But, this situation changes under socialism. What Marx meant by payment for **work performed** under socialism, was not higher pay for skilled labor, but was roughly equal payment for equal amounts of work, for equal labor-time.

Marx and Engels did recognize the difference between skilled and unskilled labor, which they term simple and compound labor. They recognized

that the distinction between them would continue under socialism for a long time; and they recognized that, under capitalism, compound labor has a higher value than simple labor and is necessarily paid according to this higher value. But they denied that this disparity in pay should continue under socialism. Listen to Engels:

"How then are we to solve the whole important question of the higher wages paid for compound labor? In a society of private producers, private individuals or their families pay the costs of training the qualified worker; hence the higher price paid for qualified labor-power accrues first of all to private individuals: the skilful slave is sold for a higher price, and the skilful wage-earner is paid higher wages. In a socialistically organized society, these costs are borne by society, and to it therefore belong the fruits, the greater values produced by compound labor. The worker himself has no claim to extra pay. And from this, incidentally, follows the moral that at times there is a drawback to the popular demand of the workers for 'the full proceeds of labor.'" (**Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science (Anti-Dühring)**, the last paragraph of Ch. VI, "Simple and Compound Labor")

This is not to deny the temporary need for some wage disparities in the transition period. But Engels is opposing the idea inherited from capitalism that wage disparities, corresponding to such differences as skilled and unskilled varieties of labor, are "natural" and "inevitable". Stalin on the other hand is clearly playing on this latter prejudice in the passages just mentioned. And in this atmosphere, the struggle toward wage equality cannot go anywhere.

Was there no one in the CPSU who could read **Anti-Dühring**? Or was Stalin becoming the political representative of an aspiring labor bureaucracy who did not care what Engels, Marx or Lenin said on these matters. It seems like the latter.

(3) Labor discipline and one-man dictatorship in 1918

Various questions arose in the study groups on this issue.

In the period of transition to socialism, there is an issue of building up conscious, mostly voluntary, labor discipline, and of building up the organization and political consciousness of the workers so that the masses themselves exercise overall control

over labor discipline in society. That is, of building up socialist labor discipline. And this process most likely requires an entire historical period, measured in decades, if not longer.

Let's assume that the society achieves equal pay according to labor-time. There most likely will remain for a longer time the issue of enforcing equality of work. That is, it must be enforced that

(a) everyone works roughly the same amount as others;

b) that a reasonable intensity, and quality, of work is done;

c) that this work is done according to the needs of the enterprise, according to policy, and so forth.

Only once it has become habit that everyone works according to their ability, and that this work is enjoyable **and what you want to do anyway**, will it be possible to dispense with the enforcing of a "bourgeois right", or equal standard, in regard to labor discipline. Until then, enforcing labor discipline, via coercion as the bottom line, is a necessity for the worker's government.

In 1918 Russia, Lenin and the Bolsheviks faced a difficult situation regarding labor discipline:

(1) There was sabotage by the overthrown exploiting classes.

(2) And there was also the extreme disintegration in society, crime, famine, "every man for himself-ism", that was also reflected among sections of the workers, and all of which interfered with the labor discipline necessary to start getting revolutionary Russia onto its feet economically.

In this situation, as we studied in **The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government**, the Bolsheviks gave a call to establish "one-man dictatorship" in economic enterprises, so as to be able to use coercion against these two sources of chaos in the economy, and to be able to enforce adherence to "a single will" in these enterprises. As everyone knows, modern industry cannot operate without very tight adherence to "a single plan, will, policy" and so forth. This means that authority is inherent in large-scale enterprise, whether capitalist or socialist, feudal or slave. In fact, authority is inherent in any collective enterprise.

In large-scale industry under capitalism, workers feel this authority, this discipline, as the lash of the exploiters, the threat of unemployment, of impoverishment and disaster for his or her family.

Under socialism, in the strict sense of the term, the need for this authority, this discipline, should be understood. In this case, to use Lenin's analogy, the symphony follows the conductor, to make sweet sounds, mainly without coercion.

All of this should really not be too controversial for us. Let's take a look at Engels on this

issue: (On Authority):

"But the necessity of authority, and of imperious authority at that, will nowhere be found more evident than on board a ship on the high seas. There, in time of danger, the lives of all depend on the instantaneous and absolute obedience of all to the will of one." (**On Authority**, 1872-3)

And there are very strict penalties on seaman or sailors to back up the authority of the captain. This is a type of one-person dictatorship, and it does not arouse much controversy.

Socialism, in the loose sense of a society in transition from capitalism, must find a way to combine democracy and authority, including dictatorship. The democratic side of things is what draws more and more of the masses of workers into themselves exercising authority over shirkers and disruptors of the essential labor-discipline. The democratic side of things is what allows for reducing the concentration of power in the hands of an authoritative entity, separate from the masses (whether this entity is a one-person dictator, chief, etc., or a collective body). The democratic side of things is what protects the masses from bureaucratic abuses of power by this authority.

The democratic side of this equation is not simply formal rules, like "right of recall of elected officials". More essentially, it involves the raising of the masses' political consciousness and of their organized participation in deciding all issues.

In **The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government**, Lenin speaks of a situation where there is a mania for meetings among the masses, and there is a huge amount of democratic discussion, but that this does not automatically result in labor discipline. After all, there is this problem of the bourgeois elements, and of the declassed workers. And there is the problem of general chaos. And besides, the masses are just beginning to be drawn into running things. Centuries of enforced ignorance are not overcome in a day or year. And a huge broken-down railway system in a ruined country, for example, cannot be run, day-to-day or long-term, by such mass meetings. (See in particular the section "'Harmonious organization' and dictatorship" in **Immediate Tasks**.)

So you need a combination of democracy and authority/coercion/dictatorship. On the dictatorship side of the equation, there may be an individual or collective form of that authority. This is not a question of principle. Apparently, in the late teens and early 20s, Lenin argued that the collective form gave rise to the evading of responsibility, which was not as easily done when there was "one-man" management. If in fact the collective form made evasion easier, then it would to

that degree make "control from below" by the masses harder. That is, the collective form would interfere with mass democracy because it would make evading responsibility and control easier. The comrades who have studied the debate on this question, between Lenin and Tomsky and others, could not find enough information to come to an independent opinion on this issue of individual or collective bodies. But from this argument, I think it is not necessarily the case that collective forms of authority always provide for more democracy than individual forms of authority.

Normally, collective forms provide for more all-sidedness in decision-making. But there are lots of occasions when this is not a benefit. Like in various emergencies. As well, collective forms assume enough capable people to form the collective. And so forth. It depends on the conditions.

The following quote from Engels covers several of the issues previously mentioned, including the individual versus collective form of authority:

"Let us take another example--the railway. Here too the cooperation of an infinite number of individuals is absolutely necessary, and this cooperation must be practiced during precisely fixed hours so that no accidents may happen. Here, too, the first condition of the job is a dominant will that settles all subordinate questions, **whether this will is represented by a single delegate or a committee** charged with the execution of the resolutions of the majority of persons interested. In either case there is a very pronounced authority." (**On Authority**, emphasis added)

So it does not seem that it is a question of principle whether there is "one-person management/dictatorship" or a "collegium" form. This depends on the conditions of the time, what is most favorable; not only for exercising authority, but also for facilitating democratic control. And here it seems is the point of principle: facilitating the ever-increasing democratic control from below by the masses of workers. What Engels mentions as "execution of the resolutions of the majority of persons interested."

For example, how is the authority chosen? Does an emergency require the appointee, top-down method? If so, what channels are available to prevent abuse of this authority? Elections with a readily useable right of recall is preferable if conditions permit.

This is just a rough outline of some of the issues that have been raised.

Finally, I wish to stress the usefulness of keeping a close track on the various questions that get raised in the course of the study. <>

By its own injection, we will become the cure to its cancer and it will have to eventually and inevitably die to give birth to the transformed rebel elements!

PRISONERS UNITED FOR
REVOLUTIONARY EDUCATION

Venceremos!

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**DEGENERATION OF SOVIET SOCIALISM
AND THE TURN IN LINE OF THE MID-1930'S**

Continued from the front page

place in a different way. It takes the form of a series of new decrees, laws, campaigns, and economic, political and theoretical pronouncements. Due to all these changes, the Soviet government and its relations with the toilers appears to undergo a major change.

I will get to discussing the turn in a moment. But first, a natural question comes up. If we say a turn took place, what was it from and what is the turn towards? I'd like to first touch on "from what?"

The October Socialist Revolution

The October 1917 Revolution was a socialist revolution which established the dictatorship of the proletariat. In carrying this out, the Russian workers also completed the unfinished tasks of the democratic revolution.

The task the Russian workers faced after October wasn't one of being able to immediately establish socialism but of beginning a transition towards socialism. As Lenin put it in one place, the program of the Soviet government

"consisted of gradual, but firm and un-deviating measures, towards socialism."

And in May 1918, he said,

"No one, I think, in studying the question of the economics of Russia, has denied their transitional character. Nor, I think, has any Communist denied that the term Socialist Soviet Republic implies the determination of the Soviet government to achieve the transition to socialism, and not that the new economic order is a socialist order."
("Left-wing" Childishness and

**Petty-bourgeois Mentality, Section III--
see Collected Works, Vol. 27, p. 335)**

And in Russia they faced the task of carrying out a transition to socialism in the conditions of a relatively undeveloped country, a country in which small production remained overwhelming, and a country which was soon to be gripped by a cruel and destructive civil war from the overthrown bourgeoisie backed by world imperialism.

It is quite breathtaking when you consider what the Bolsheviks sought to establish. A political power based on the masses, not on bureaucrats. A power based on the armed toilers. An economy in which the capitalists would be expropriated, and steps taken to develop both an apparatus for central planning and also means to draw the workers into running the economy. The freeing of the peasants from the landlords. Liberation and then development for the oppressed nations. Support for the world proletariat and the revolutionary movements of the oppressed peoples.

At the same time, they faced harsh realities. They had to make zigzags and even make concessions away from socialist principle. But where they did so, Lenin and the Bolsheviks had the principled attitude of recognizing retreats as retreats. For example, comrades are familiar [from

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the Party-wide study program] with Lenin's discussion of the bribing of the specialists with higher pay, a step which diverges from the Paris Commune's principle of paying average workers' wages to officials. (For example, see the second part of the section "The new phase of the struggle against the bourgeoisie" in the **Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government in Collected Works**, Vol. 27, pp. 247-251.)

A few years after the revolution, they had to make the biggest zigzag of all, the New Economic Policy (NEP). But power remained in the hands of the proletariat. The partial revival of capitalist elements during the NEP period, the fact that the Russian revolution was not followed by victorious socialist revolutions elsewhere (i.e. not any that lasted), the continuing pressure of world imperialism--all this meant intense pressures on the Soviet Union.

The Period of the 1st Five Year Plan

With the complicated situation created by the NEP, a series of further steps had to be taken. The Soviet workers had to go on an offensive of industrialization and push forward the collectivization of the countryside. We believe that these steps were necessary at that time. At the same time, more study is required on how these things were carried out. While advances were certainly made and the groundwork laid for potentially even bigger advances, it is also apparent that there were major weaknesses and problems. (Problems such as resorting more and more to administrative measures; neglecting work "from below" when taking measures "from above"; the lessening of organizational work; and so on.)

Still, in the period of the 1st Five Year Plan one can still see an attempt to remain revolutionary, an effort to be guided by a proletarian class line, and a good deal of mass activity among the toilers. The point here is not to endorse everything done as correct but to suggest that the revolution continued to be alive.

Let us look at some examples.

**There was much mass mobilization in the work of industrial construction. There was mass participation in socialist competition. Socialist ideas like the importance of mutual aid and workers' solidarity were promoted. Working class solidarity was pursued across nationality lines.

**Although the Soviets appear to have weakened, there were still efforts to mobilize workers' participation in the operation of government. For example, this took place in the Workers' and

Peasants' Inspection.

**To push forward the struggle against the kulaks and collectivize agriculture, urban workers sent out a number of contingents into the countryside.

**There wasn't yet the degree of embracing of money and material incentives that we see a few years later. While material incentives did grow, there still remained a sizeable phenomenon of those who worked not for personal interest but for the social interest. This could be found especially among communist and Komsomol (Young Communist League) workers.

**There was a major offensive in the cultural revolution. This wasn't just a matter of training new engineers, technicians, etc.--a task which was definitely necessary and now being done on a bigger scale. There were also other mass campaigns in the cultural field. Such as a big campaign for the liquidation of illiteracy. In favor of extending general and preschool education. To spread modern ideas of hygiene. There was an active fight against religion, against alcoholism, and against nationalism.

**In the fight for the emancipation of women, concrete measures were being discussed and extended.

The point here is not to describe the situation in detail, but to indicate some of the evidence of a class spirit; of efforts to strengthen socialist relations; of efforts to draw the masses into affairs of government and economy; etc.

The Final Victory of Socialism?

However, after the first big steps have been taken, the "victory of socialism" is declared. And it appears to be in this guise that various fundamental changes are made and justified.

A mood of euphoria was created. In Jan. 1933, Stalin says that the collectivization during the 1st five year plan would "eliminate the possibility of the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union." (**Results of the First Five-Year Plan**, Section II "The Fundamental Task of the Five-Year Plan and the Way to its Fulfillment", see **Problems of Leninism**, p. 589.) The 7th Congress of the CI in 1935 proclaimed "the final and irrevocable triumph of socialism" in the Soviet Union. A year later, discussing the new Constitution for the USSR, Stalin declared that the Marxist conception of socialism, as the lower phase of communism, had "in the

main" already been achieved. (**On the Draft Constitution of the U.S.S.R.**, Section III, in **Problems of Leninism**, p. 806). This doesn't seem right.

The truth is, the Soviet Union had only reached a further rung in the process of transition to socialism, but it was still in that transition. It is a far cry from reality to declare that socialism had already achieved final victory. And Stalin went on to talk of the transition to communism itself!

True, there had been big advances. One can say that a certain foundation had been laid. Large-scale production had expanded tremendously, creating the possibility of even greater economic advances. The danger of capitalist restoration from private capitalist elements, such as the kulaks, had been blocked, and collectivization created even bigger possibilities of increase of agricultural productivity.

But there were still huge problems before the Soviet Union. For one thing, various problems had accumulated over this period. But even more, the vast social changes unleashed by the five-year plan brought their own social, political, and economic consequences--all of which had to be dealt with.

Let me point to a few examples of these.

******The big leap in industrialization meant that the working class was reinforced many times over by new recruits from the countryside. During the 1st five-year plan, at least 9 million peasants left the villages to join the urban, industrial workforce. Between 1926 and 1939, some 19 million migrated to the city. This was quite a mixture of people. Many of them lacked proletarian or revolutionary traditions.

Industrial technique had obviously expanded and improved. Large scale production was set up. But productivity lagged behind. The Soviet Union faced the immense task of training and organizing peasants and rural youth into modern industrial production. It faced the task of doing this without throwing aside communist principles.

Another related question was the task of training this mass to be class conscious. The task of imbuing it with socialist consciousness and organization. And of drawing it into the proletarian state and the management of the economy.

******At the same time, many among the vanguard of the workers had to go into administrative, managerial and technical work. For example, at the end of 1933, of the 861,000 posts of "leading cadres and specialists", over 140,000 were filled

by persons who had been workers at the bench in 1928. More than half a million communist workers moved from manual to white-collar occupations between 1930-33. The total number of workers moving into white collar jobs during the 1st five year plan was probably at least one and a half million.

Thus the Soviet Union faced the task of training communists and workers in administrative work without giving in to bureaucratization. And at the same time, it faced the task of ensuring the growing presence and activity of communists at the base, among the rank-and-file workers. And the task of training new workers as communist party activists.

******While the countryside was largely collectivized, there were huge issues there too. There was the question of actually utilizing collective agriculture to increase productivity. There was the issue of raising the socialized character of production in the collective farms. The peasantry had become collectivized, but it's not as if they had become workers yet. In fact, the way the collective farms operated, there were still a number of factors reinforcing peasant mentality among the collective peasants, such as how they were paid, how they were attached to their private plots, etc.

******Meanwhile, in the party, trade unions and government, various problems had accumulated. The Soviets had been weakened considerably. There were questions of dealing with bureaucratization in the party and unions. There was a growing tendency of short-cutting organizational and ideological work, such as attempting to deal with social and economic problems with administrative means and threats in repressive decrees.

These are just some key examples. All these problems needed to be dealt with. They needed solutions in a Marxist-Leninist spirit. But theoretical work had suffered greatly.

At this point it is also important to remember that with the victory of the Nazis in Germany and the growth of fascism in Europe, the reactionary pressure on the Soviet Union expanded considerably. This is an important context in which the turn of the mid-30s takes place.

But instead of dealing with the whole situation in a Marxist-Leninist way, the actual state of affairs was glossed over and a major turn for the

worse taken in the name of the triumph of socialism.

The Turn of the Mid-30s

Fundamentally, the turn appears to be one of giving up the revolutionary drive in favor of "institutionalization" in a more and more bourgeois direction. At the heart of this was, on the one hand, the consolidation of a bureaucracy detached from the masses, and on the other, the removal of the working masses from participation and control over the economy and state and the reduction of the masses into passive producers.

The bureaucracy was of course not simply created by this turn in the mid-30s but the groundwork was paved for it earlier. But it appears that at this time that the bureaucracy congeals in a certain form, as a bureaucracy based essentially on a workers' aristocracy and standing above the masses of toilers.

I would like to now go through some features of the turn.

Inequality and Privileges

A big campaign is organized against "leveling and equalization". This had been launched in 1931 and it is one of the issues that Stalin rails about in his speech to the 17th Congress of the CPSU in 1934. (See Stalin's Report, Part III "The Party", Section 1 "Questions of ideological and political leadership" in **Problems of Leninism**, pp. 740-3) Now there may have been some examples of groups of workers and peasants who tried premature equalization, but that's not what the campaign is about.

The speech [see elsewhere in this issue of the Supplement] on the Party-wide study of socialist principles discussed the theoretical side of this question more. Here I just wanted to note that this campaign officially abandons the idea that the Bolsheviks had held until then (e.g. in the 1919 Communist Party program) of aiming for a gradual equalization of wages. Now, when the need is considered to provide bonuses and extra pay to cadre, it is no longer seen as a forced retreat but as the genuine embodiment of socialist distribution.

The early Bolshevik policy had foreseen a gradual equalization of wages. At the same time, they had recognized the need to make concessions, such as to the specialists. Throughout the 20s both these trends can be seen. Sometimes certain higher pay and privileges were even retracted.

In the first five year plan period, some additional concessions were made in favor of material incentives both for managers and engineers and for skilled workers. Some of these things were prob-

ably necessary. But it doesn't appear there was recognition of the potential dangers when those measures were taken.

But with the onset of the big campaign against "leveling," the groundwork is created for an even bigger change. Sometime in the early 30s the "party maximum" is given up (it had been modified earlier); this was a cap on party members' salaries which existed even at times when non-party people in comparable positions were being paid more.

After the mid-30s there are additional steps to extend the privileges of the bureaucracy. A system of specialty shops for them is begun. They are provided with a much better housing. And so forth. And the salaries themselves are raised super-high above the ordinary workers.

Most salary figures were not published after the mid-30s. But some estimates have been made which give a picture of things. I will give one set of figures so that comrades can see what I'm talking about.

In 1937-38 the average monthly wage was about 250 rubles. Mind you, this is an average monthly wage, which means that many workers got less than this. A minimum wage was set for piece workers to be 110 rubles a month and 115 for time-workers. It appears that skilled workers generally made between 200-300 a month. During this period, apparently an upper section of workers also existed who made more than 1000 rubles a month. That gives an idea of the high differential among the workers themselves.

At this time, plant engineers were making 1500 rubles a month and directors 2,000. This was salary and didn't include bonuses. There is apparently a published decree in January 1938 which said that deputies (i.e. legislators) would get 1,000 rubles a month plus 150 rubles expenses for every day's session. The presidents of the 11 federated republics were to get 12,500 rubles a month. And the president and vice-president of the Union would get 25,000 a month. Compare that to the 110 ruble minimum wage or the 250 ruble average wage!

This gives us some picture of the privileges and pay for the upper bureaucracy, army leaders, and intellectuals, etc. Note that the issue is no longer just of the specialists inherited from the old regime but of new officials, who are drawn mainly from former workers and peasants. The core of the upper officialdom after 1938-9 is made up of the 150,000 workers and communists who had entered higher education during the 1st five year plan. This is the Khrushchev-Brezhnev generation.

As one can see, there is a huge expansion of material incentives in society. The money culture becomes a prime motivator for work. This infects both the party and the toilers.

The New Constitution of 1936

In December 1936 a new constitution is approved. This appears to mark a legislative abandonment of Soviet power. I want to raise two issues about it.

It reorganizes the Soviets on a territorial basis, abandoning the idea of Soviets based in the work places. But this was one of the key points stressed by Lenin about how the Soviets could be closely connected to the needs of the masses and draw them into government.

Another thing is that the new constitution does away with working class hegemony in the name of equal rights for the "two friendly classes" and the socialist intelligentsia. In the earlier setup, the working class had been given disproportionate weight in the Soviet system. Even if that needed to be modified by this time--and perhaps it did--there was no consideration given to adopting any other special measures to ensure working class hegemony. Despite the fact that the working class proper was quite a different class than the collectivist peasantry or the intelligentsia.

Other Changes

••There are major changes in the army. In 1935 the system of ranks is restored, which had been abolished after the revolution. The restoration of ranks wasn't an issue of having commanders--the Red Army had always had that. A socialist army of course needs commanders but what it doesn't need is to make the officer strata a separate, privileged section. The restoration of ranks was aimed at that.

••There are changes in the way things are run inside the work places. The authority of factory management appears to be enlarged more than ever while the workers' role is reduced.

••A conservative line is pushed in family and personal affairs. There are new laws dealing with women and family questions. Abortion is outlawed and hindrances placed on the right to divorce. Homosexuality is made a criminal offense.

••There are changes in the educational system. They include changes in methods of education. And in 1940 fees are even introduced for secondary school and higher education.

••The approach to the study of history is revised, involving a revival of nationalism. Tsarist and other national heroes of early times now find praise.

••There is a growth of repression and penal measures. There was already a bad tendency in the 1st Five Year Plan period of developing more and more harsh laws to deal with social problems. But the mid-30s on brings in a stepped-up use of

repression and still more harsh laws.

••While already a bad tendency had developed of exaggerating the figure of Stalin, initiated by official observation of his 50th birthday in 1929, the mid-30s marks a big expansion of Stalin's personality cult. Which gets worse and worse with each passing year. And apparently at the regional and local level, cults are built around regional and local personalities as well.

On the Theory of the State

One of the big theoretical changes that takes place is on the theory of the state.

Many comrades probably know that in 1939 Stalin "corrects" Engels and declares that yes, under communism in the Soviet Union too there will continue to be a state. (**Report to the 18th Congress of the CPSU(B)**, Part III, Section 4, "Some Questions of Theory") On the grounds of defense against foreign military attack, spies, wreckers, etc. This theorizing has obviously gone into a realm of total fantasy. For one thing, it is difficult to conceive that a classless, communist society could be built in the Soviet Union within the domestic and world conditions of that time. For another, the theory of a classless state is a travesty of Marxism, which has always seen the state as a feature of class society.

But this was merely the culmination of a tendency which had already started earlier. When they declared the final and irrevocable victory of socialism, Stalin and the Soviet leaders also revised the Marxist-Leninist theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. For one thing, we have already noted that in the new constitution they eliminated any question of ensuring proletarian hegemony in the state.

In this period they also raised the call of strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat. (See endnote 1) But this was essentially seen only as reinforcing the coercive side of the dictatorship of the proletariat and building up the economic administration apparatus. A polemic was launched against the idea of the withering away of the state, which is declared to be an issue for a later period (when that period supposedly came, there was no more discussion of it.) I want to raise some questions about this.

There is a contradiction between saying that socialism was already victorious and that the dictatorship of the proletariat needed to be further strengthened. If indeed socialism was victorious and there were only minor remnants of exploiters left to deal with, then it would be reason for taking big steps in reducing the coercive and repressive aspects of the socialist state. If indeed there are no longer hostile classes, no class an-

tagonisms--as they were describing things at that time--there would no longer even be reason to have a proletarian dictatorship. But if as they were saying, the dictatorship of the proletariat needed strengthening in this period, then one would have to more realistically and concede that the final victory of socialism was not here yet.

Instead of bombastic declarations which contradicted one another, a Marxist-Leninist approach would have actually dealt with the concrete situation as it existed. It would have looked at what the class situation actually was, seen what were the issues for the coercive side of the state, what were the steps necessary to draw the masses into the administration of economy and government, what measures to reduce the state apparatus, etc. But no such concrete discussion took place.

What then do all these changes that took place in the mid-30s mean? It means reducing the working class into the position of simply being producers. The work of revolutionary mobilization and participation in affairs of society is abandoned. Meanwhile the bureaucracy becomes detached and establishes a rule above the masses. It affirms privileges for itself and is bourgeoisified.

Those then are some features of the change. In our study, we will be faced with fully analyzing the change and the factors that led to it.

After the mid-30s

Then there is the question of how things proceed from the mid-30s on. It appears that the mid-30s is the crucial turn in the Soviet revolution. Until this time, there is still an attempt to be revolutionary, even if with weaknesses and problems. But from now on, what takes place is the institutionalization of the revolution in a bourgeois direction. After the turn, the Soviet Union is no longer pursuing a forward march towards socialism, but is in a trajectory of degeneration. In this case, since private capitalism had been largely defeated, the degeneration is towards the state monopoly capitalism we are familiar with in recent decades.

Of course a society does not completely change character overnight. The big decline begins in the mid-30s, but it would be wrong to say that all the gains from the revolution are instantly stripped away. The workers still retain various gains. And it should also be kept in mind that neither the overthrown Tsarist regime nor the old Russian bourgeoisie is restored to power.

Thus we are also faced with the task of studying the process of degeneration after the turn of the mid-30s. It involves analyzing why the working class could not stand up to the change. And it involves studying the successive stages of

degeneration. There is the period of World War II. There is the period of post-war reconstruction. There are the changes introduced by Khrushchev, Brezhnev, etc. Thus we have to study how the decay from bureaucratic degeneration to outright state capitalism took place. We have to study the process concretely to see how quantity changes into quality. There are in fact a series of things that take place from the mid-30s on, including further strengthening of the bureaucracy, the growth of militarism, escalation of nationalism, and so forth.

The views on capitalist restoration expressed by the Chinese and Albanians are not sufficient. They tried to describe the change by talking about a Khrushchev coup d'etat, and by attempting to describe capitalist restoration as, in large part, a matter of the introduction of various private capitalist and market features. But in looking at the evolution of things it is difficult to find any qualitative change in the mid-50s such as the Chinese and Albanians described. In fact, there are various threads of continuity in many of the features of the economy and political system between the mid-30s and today. Of course with various changes that have taken place in the last several decades. Khrushchev in the 50s and Kosygin in the 60s tried to extend the realm of such things as the enterprises and the collective farms but their efforts only went so far. And Brezhnev even appears to have reversed various of those efforts. It has fallen on Gorbachev to really push forward the realm of private capitalism in the Soviet Union. This whole issue is closely linked to the question of developing further our analysis of state capitalism.

Before I finish I did want to note that while I have concentrated on domestic policy, there is also the important issue of foreign policy and the relationship of the Soviet Union to the world revolutionary movement. That side of things is not a detached matter but is closely intertwined in the whole process. In this speech I dealt with the domestic side of things only.

(1) In Soviet literature from this time, a certain terminological issue arises. In Section II of his report **On the Draft Constitution** to a 1936 Soviet Congress of Soviets, Stalin says that the term "proletariat" refers to an oppressed and exploited class, and so the Soviet working class is no longer a proletariat. (See **Problems of Leninism**, pp. 800-1.) He then, in Section IV, makes a point of talking of the dictatorship of the working class, instead of using the term dictatorship of the proletariat. (*Ibid.*, pp. 817-9) But later the term dictatorship of the proletariat is still used.--**Supplement.** <>