

REVOLUTION

SUMMER 1984

***MORE ON THE SOVIET UNION:
ASPECTS OF AN IMPERIALIST SOCIETY***

***Notes Toward an Analysis
of the Soviet Bourgeoisie***

by Lenny Wolff and Aaron Davis

***Against the "Lesser Evil" Thesis:
Soviet Preparations for World War 3***

by Mike Ely

***Soviet Education:
Reading, Writing, and Revisionism***

by Leona Krasny

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Editor's Note

Two years ago the Revolutionary Communist Party issued a call for a debate on the nature and international role of the Soviet Union. The call focused on the urgency of the Soviet question for the revolutionary movement today; as its opening passage explained:

"The long raging debate over the nature and international role of the Soviet Union is intensifying again all over the world and needs to be made sharper and clearer still. The heightening is a product of important world developments over the relatively recent period, including both the reversal in China after Mao's death and the sharpening of the conflict between the Soviet Union and U.S. imperialism.

"Splits have emerged over this question within revolutionary movements, and long-standing alignments have broken with new ones forming. New research and theoretical work has been published and has been welcomed, provoking still newer controversy and debate. Some who claimed to be Maoist have 'reevaluated' their stand on the Soviet Union – while the Chinese revisionists themselves, despite all their proclaimed anti-Sovietism, are unable to find anything in Mao's revolutionary scientific analysis of the process of capitalist restoration that they can uphold.

"Wherever revolutionary-minded people gather, and wherever new forces break into mass struggle – the question pushes itself into the front; 'Soviet Union: friend or foe; capitalist or socialist? What is its underlying nature, its fundamental class relations, what laws of motion motivate its actions across the globe – and fundamentally, how does this superpower confront the revolutionary struggles of the world? As an ally? Or as one more imperialist power to be fought, overthrown and destroyed?"

The timeliness of the call was borne out in practice. Eight hundred people attended the main debate between Raymond Lotta and Albert Szymanski, and hundreds more turned out for a series of six smaller panel discussions in the days before. The international turnout and participation was strong, including original theoretical contributions from Colombia and Uganda printed in the *Revolutionary Worker* newspaper in the

period leading up to the debate. But what most distinguished the entire event, what set it off in an increasingly arid theoretical atmosphere on the Left, was the hard-edged clarity of the theoretical confrontation between the two positions: those who uphold the revolutionary communist analysis of the Soviet Union as an imperialist power, and those (including the position's leading exponents) who insist on the socialist character of Soviet society.

This can be seen in the two books generated by the debate. The first — *The Soviet Union: Socialist or Social-Imperialist? Essays Toward the Debate On the Nature of Soviet Society* — came out before the debate and featured essays by David Laibman, Al Szymanski, and Santosh K. Mehrota and Patrick Clawson. The first two authors published separate critiques of the Maoist thesis of capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union, while the latter two collaborated on an exposure of the imperialist character of Soviet relations with India. The book also reprinted the important 1978 article by the RCP, USA entitled "The 'Tarnished Socialism' Thesis, or the Political Economy of Soviet Social-Imperialism." A new introduction, foreshadowing themes later developed and elaborated on by Raymond Lotta at the debate, accompanied the essay.

The second book — *The Soviet Union: Socialist or Social-Imperialist? The Question is Joined* — is a transcript of the New York City debate itself, between Szymanski and Lotta. Lotta's presentation, of course, built off the pioneering work done by Mao and those grouped around him in China during the '60s, as well as important theoretical work since then, most notably the RCP's own *Red Papers 7: How Capitalism Has Been Restored in the Soviet Union*, published in 1974, and Bob Avakian's path-breaking *Conquer the World? The International Proletariat Must and Will*, published in 1981. While firmly grounded in that tradition, Lotta's presentation clearly broke new ground in analyzing capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union.

Lotta chose not to focus on specific cases of counter-revolutionary betrayal or reactionary social policies and/or institutions in various spheres of Soviet society; instead, he attempted to lay bare how the laws of capital operate in the Soviet Union and how that operation forms part of the global dynamic of imperialist accumulation. In doing so, he addressed four main points: the commanding role of profit in the Soviet economy and the corresponding commodification of labor power; the character of economic planning in the Soviet Union and the assertion of the laws of capital through the medium of the plan itself; the manifestation of the "many-ness" of capital in the Soviet economy in the forms of competition and fragmentation peculiar to the Soviet Union; and finally, the roots of the compulsion driving the Soviet Union and its bloc into ever sharper confrontation with the U.S.-led imperialist bloc.

The above theses can be said to form the point of departure for the articles in this issue of *Revolution*; the articles contained here should be read as complementary to the earlier books. None of the articles attempts an overall critique of the capitalist nature of Soviet society; that, we feel, has been outlined in the Lotta work. What they do show is how the demands of capital and compulsions of imperialism have

twisted and dominated various and important spheres of Soviet society. The first article of this issue, "Notes Toward An Analysis of the Soviet Bourgeoisie," by Lenny Wolff and Aaron Davis, can be said in a sense to answer the constantly offered challenges of Laibman, Szymanski, et al., to prove the existence of a Soviet bourgeoisie. The article is important not only for its research and analysis on the class formation in Soviet society and the reproduction of the Soviet hierarchy, but also for its methodological critique of Szymanski's and Laibman's views on the state and the functioning of the bourgeoisie, as well as their overall approach to social analysis.

Mike Ely's "Against the Lesser Evil" Thesis: Soviet Preparations for World War 3," details Soviet military preparations and strategic doctrine, and puts that data in a Leninist analytical context. Ely specifically criticizes the Kautskyite strain of apologetics for the Soviet military buildup that has emerged in recent years, as well as the illusions of many more honest opponents of the U.S. military buildup. No issue is more central today than the imperialists' preparations for a new — and horrible — war of redivision.

Finally, Soviet education is often put forward as a strong point of Soviet society. Yet Leona Krasny's article "Soviet Education: Reading, Writing, and Revisionism," exposes the real content of Soviet education and begins to analyze its social role in reproducing a bourgeois social division of labor.

In all, the articles brought together in this issue can be said to round out, in a certain sense, the process begun two years ago with the initial call for the debate. All of them were in fact developed out of preparatory research for the debate. The flurry of theoretical work necessitated by the debate (itself called forth by larger historical necessity) has now been synthesized.

In no way does this mean that the question of the Soviet Union has somehow been settled. Marx's aphorism on the relation between the weapons of criticism and the criticism by weapons is to the point here — the Soviets, after all, have an army, they represent a material force, and their influence cannot be vanquished by ideological struggle alone, however sharp. On the other hand, without such struggle no bourgeoisie — including the one currently holding power in Moscow — will ever be vanquished!

Beyond that, however, the debate's importance goes to the heart of the very goal of the revolution, the vision of the society the proletariat has been fighting to construct since the Paris Commune. As Raymond Lotta said in his concluding remarks at the debate, "How we analyze the historical experience of the Soviet Union and how we analyze the developing situation in the world has everything to do with the kind of struggle we wage. Communism can only be achieved through the fiercest, the most determined, and the most conscious struggle to make a leap into the future of mankind."

Such was the importance of the May 1983 debate, and such continues to be the importance of the ongoing struggle over this question. In today's world, when the likelihood of world war and the necessity for world revolution ever more urgently pose themselves, that is no small thing.

Notes Toward an Analysis of the Soviet Bourgeoisie

by Lenny Wolff and Aaron Davis

The authors acknowledge the assistance of Raymond Lotta, whose suggestions and criticisms proved helpful at every stage of preparation.

If the Soviet Union is capitalist, then where is the bourgeoisie? The defenders of the Soviet Union constantly return to this question, and use it to argue the nonexistence of any Soviet bourgeois class. Their line of argument proceeds along two interrelated tracks.

First, they claim that the "logic" of the socialist mode of production – by which they essentially mean state ownership of the means of production – rules out the generation within socialist society of either bourgeois relations or a bourgeoisie. Thus the restoration of capitalism is rendered logically impossible, short of an invasion by imperialists or a counterrevolution by dispossessed exploiters. Second, they list characteristics that are said to typify a capitalist class and then point to the alleged absence of any such phenomena in the Soviet Union to deduce the nonexistence of a Soviet bourgeoisie.

While the question of the function and shape of the Soviet bourgeoisie is secondary to the crucial determinant of Soviet society – the dominance of the law of value – there is some point to examining the arguments marshaled by the revisionists to prove their case. In doing this we, too, will proceed along two tracks: (1) we will take up and refute in turn the assertions by the revisionist apologists concerning constraints on luxury consumption, equality of income, working-class control of the state, the lack of a mechanism for reproduction of a specifically capitalist ruling class, and the role of managers in the Soviet Union; (2) we will analyze and critique the anti-Marxist underpinnings of their entire argument, including their premises regarding the state, the defining characteristics of social classes, and the "logic" of the socialist mode of production.

As a point of departure, we take the following passage from the introduction to the reprinting of "The 'Tarnished

Socialism' Thesis" by the RCP:

"Capitalism does not reside in any single legal property relation between individual men and the means of production. In the real world it consists of a network of relations between social classes, relations which have a material foundation in commodity production, in the differences between mental and manual labor, town and country, etc., and which are expressed through the complex, dialectical interaction between base and superstructure. Thus, there is no form or structure which, by dint of its 'innate characteristics,' is impervious to capitalism."¹

While there is no rigid linkage between certain structural forms and a specific class content, capital must nevertheless generate the forms, in both base and superstructure, that are appropriate to its reproduction. These forms have definite implications for the international practice of the state, the scope of the law of value in social reproduction, the relations between leaders and led, etc. In that sense, we hope both to shed light on how the institutions and practices, of Soviet society serve the reproduction of capitalist social relations and to indicate further lines of research on this question.

I. Who Is the Bourgeoisie in the Epoch of Imperialism?

The Maoist argument, says David Laibman, must demonstrate three things to prove the Soviet Union capitalist: the sources of the power of capital, the existence of a ruling class, and the operation of capitalist laws of motion.² We have no quarrel with Laibman's demands per se, and all of them in our opinion can be (and have been) proven. We do disagree with his definition of terms, his mix of a pre-imperialist model of capitalism with a bourgeois-sociological approach to classes. For Marxism, the bourgeoisie is the personification of bourgeois production relations; thus it's of first importance to correctly understand the character of these production relations today, in the era of imperialism.

But Laibman's sketch of the operation of capital tends to plant at least a foot and several toes back in the nineteenth century. He writes:

"Of utmost importance in establishing the existence of capital is the *valorization*, not only of the separate means of production, but also of the enterprise itself. This would mean that a sum of value functions as capital; i.e., is embodied in the enterprise but is independent of it and is therefore transferable from enterprise to enterprise. Thus, enterprises, together with their physical equipment or separably, can be bought and sold. This valoriza-

tion of the means of production presupposes fragmentation or dispersion of ownership. The objectivity of values arising out of impersonal forces independent of human agency requires uncoordinated, simultaneous micro-decisions and aggregates which are unknown before the fact, indeed, the secrecy and duplication of information-gathering systems characteristic of unplanned, competitive accumulation. The quest for profit at the micro level must be shown to determine the composition of output rates of growth, the path of technical change, and the distribution of income. Moreover, profits accruing to enterprises must appear as the result of a spontaneous struggle, not as the outcome of socially planned activity. Thus, the prices which govern profitability must form spontaneously."³

Here Laibman obscures the *transition* emphasized by Lenin in *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*: the emergence of monopoly, resulting in the immense socialization not only of production but technical invention *and ownership* as well.* The entire second half of Laibman's description basically does not apply to the practice and character of the predominant form of capital under imperialism, which is finance capital. "The quest for profit at the micro level" yields in imperialism to the financial strategies of huge blocks of capital, in which individual enterprises may well be drained and left to stagnate, or else artificially pumped up, depending on the larger interests of the financial group controlling them. Elsewhere, Albert Szymanski and Laibman each try to pose the runaway shop as almost the quintessence of private ownership – but even these runaways are not generally based on decisions at the "micro level" but flow out of economic strategies developed and pursued by the financial group. The point is that in the era of imperialism this more social ownership regulates the flow of capital through many different and variegated channels.

* Lenin's description in *Imperialism* is worth citing at length:

"This is something quite different from the old free competition between manufacturers, scattered and out of touch with one another, and producing for an unknown market. Concentration has reached the point at which it is possible to make an approximate estimate of all sources of raw materials (for example, the iron ore deposits) of a country and even, as we shall see, of several countries, or of the whole world. Not only are such estimates made, but these sources are captured by gigantic monopolist associations. An approximate estimate of the capacity of markets is also made, and the associations 'divide' them up amongst themselves by agreement. Skilled labor is monopolized, the best engineers are engaged; the means of transport are captured... Capitalism in its imperialist stage leads directly to the most comprehensive socialization of production; it, so to speak, drags the capitalists, against their will and consciousness, into some sort of a new social order, a transitional one from complete free competition to complete socialization.

Production becomes social, but appropriation remains private. The social means of production remain the private

property of a few. The general framework of formally recognized free competition remains, and the yoke of a few monopolists on the rest of the population becomes a hundred times heavier, more burdensome and intolerable."⁴

Similarly, the dominance of monopoly and the role of the imperialist state seriously affect price determination: measures like cartel-pricing (to share out profits), government-mandated price controls (to influence the allocation of resources), or the sort of orderly marketing agreements witnessed today within the Western bloc (to lessen the impact of predatory price wars) all contain elements of "social planning" that were either unknown or exceptional before the late nineteenth century. It is impossible to come to grips with such phenomena as the "composition of output rates of growth, the path of technical change, and the distribution of income" outside of an understanding of monopoly coordination and state intervention in the reproductive process.

Does this suggest then that capitalism rationally coordinates production and "macro-plans" in such a way as to overcome crisis? On the contrary. The law of value impinges upon and – through the force of anarchy – determines the outcome of capitalist planning at all levels. Indeed Laibman's schema not only negates the higher forms of organization of imperialism, but also covers over the *heightened anarchy those higher forms generate*. In the stage of imperialism, capital accumulates internationally but remains nationally rooted. As such not only do the contradictions of accumulation lead to unprecedented global crisis, but they also give rise to international rivalry among contending imperialist powers over the division of the world, which sets the framework for international accumulation. This rivalry has periodically erupted into interimperialist war, and it is in this that the contradiction between the unprecedented degree of organization and the greatly heightened anarchy characteristic of modern capital finds its concentrated expression.*

* In fact, the trend toward more social forms of private ownership was noted by Marx and Engels, as well as Lenin; the concept is hardly foreign to Marxism, and it is perhaps a bit disingenuous for those claiming to argue in the Marxist tradition to evade it. Marx noted in *Capital* how direct personal private property in the means of production in the form of individual proprietorships or partnerships was beginning to break down with the rise of stock companies (modern corporations) and the expansion of the credit system:

"The capital . . . is here directly endowed with the form of social capital (capital of directly associated individuals) as distinct from private capital, and its undertakings assume the form of social undertakings as distinct from private undertakings. It is the abolition of capital as private property within the framework of capitalist production itself. . . .

"Aside from the stock-company business . . . credit offers to the individual capitalist, or to one who is regarded a capitalist, absolute control within certain limits over the capital and property of others. . . . The control over social capital, not the individual capital of his own, gives him control

The import for the argument at hand is this: to hinge the concept of private appropriation to one very specific (and no longer dominant) organizational form of capital leads away from an understanding of contemporary social relations, and into a misidentification of the bourgeoisie.* Modern forms of ownership themselves are highly socialized; appropriation principally goes on at the level of the financial group (rather

of social labor" (emphasis added).⁵

In the Soviet Union today we see a highly developed, highly mystified form of control over social capital, not individual capital of one's own, giving control over social labor.

Engels projects the further development of this trend in a passage of *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*. This speaks in particular to Laibman's related contention on the impossibility of state capitalism:

"If the crises revealed the bourgeoisie's incapacity to continue to administer the modern productive forces, the conversion of the large production and communication establishments into joint-stock companies, trusts and state property shows that the bourgeoisie can be dispensed with for this purpose. . . .

"But neither conversion into joint-stock companies and trusts nor conversion into state property deprives the productive forces of their character as capital. This is obvious in the case of joint-stock companies and trusts. But the modern state, too, is only the organization with which bourgeois society provides itself in order to maintain the general external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against encroachments either by the workers or by individual capitalists. The modern state, whatever its form is an essentially capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal aggregate capitalist. The more productive forces it takes over into its possession, the more it becomes a real aggregate capitalist, the more citizens it exploits."⁶

The weakness in Engels' formulation here lies in the fact that "the ideal aggregate capitalist" may be interpreted (and has been by some) to mean that the state is actually a single, unitary capitalist. There is, in fact, real contention between discrete blocs of capital within the formal unitary state form of the Soviet Union, even as the state in the main (and simultaneously) represents the national capital as a whole. Especially in conditions where the state itself is both political representative and major owner this becomes extremely complex, and is an expression of the contradiction between the anarchy of production generally, and the interlinked trend toward ever greater organization.⁷

* While Laibman holds that state monopoly capitalism can only relate to institutions like the post office within a social formation overwhelmingly characterized by juridically private ownership, and cannot possibly describe any conceivable social formation as a whole, other revisionist theoreticians – and the CPUSA itself – routinely use the term to denote an alleged emergence of close personal ties between the monopolies and the members of the state apparatus. Ostensibly this signals a "tighter grip" by the "ultra-right" bourgeoisie on the state apparatus; the converse – that the election of candidates deemed by the CPUSA to be free of open ties to the monopolies represents a step toward socialism – provides part of the theoretical fig leaf for the CP's maneuverings within the Democratic Party.

than the individual enterprise); state intervention (including direct state ownership and constraints on the juridically private sector) is typical. It is such relations which the imperialist bourgeoisie personifies.

To Which Class Does Robert McNamara Belong?

In this light, we turn to Albert Szymanski's surprising digression at the New York City debate with Raymond Lotta on the class position of Robert McNamara.

"If capitalists in the West can hire managers," Szymanski stated, "does the fact that McNamara was president of Ford Motor Company make him part of the ruling class? No, the Ford family can hire McNamara. So in the U.S. there's no confusion that being a manager does not make you part of the capitalist class. So it's completely possible the working class can hire a manager"⁸ — presumably even McNamara himself, were the right opening to present itself. Indeed, if Szymanski means to say that the top leaders of the Soviet Union find their American analog in Robert McNamara, we'd like to thank him for an interesting and rather useful way to get a handle on the class character of the Soviet rulers.

McNamara, remember, was no mere plant manager, but president of one of the ten largest corporations in the U.S. From there he went on to serve nearly two full terms as Secretary of Defense, and afterward headed up the World Bank. What kind of class analysis can maintain this man is part of the managerial stratum, and not a member of the bourgeoisie?*

Robert McNamara was a more significant personification of imperialist production relations than were the vast majority of capitalists who hold controlling interests in any number of small or medium-size firms, even if his private fortune might not come close to theirs. McNamara has exercised tremendous power in his various and sundry positions to allocate means of production as capital and to appropriate surplus value, which is the essence of capital.

True, McNamara's role is complex, and not cut-and-dried. When he ran the Defense Department — and he did not run it in the interests of the Ford family! — his responsibilities did not entail the direct manipulation of capital; he was dealing on the different and higher plane of politics, and

* For one thing it's an analysis that narrows down the bourgeoisie to the "sixteen families" popularized a few years back — that is, only the very wealthiest dominant families of the key financial blocs really qualify as members of the bourgeoisie. While the Fords, Rockefellers, du Ponts, Kennedys, etc., may stand near the apex of the bourgeoisie, the class itself (in the U.S.) is by no means numerically insignificant. The "handful of families" analysis at minimum seriously downplays the necessity for armed struggle and civil war in the imperialist countries, and has served the revisionist parties as an argument for the viability of their "antimonopoly coalition" programme.⁹

represented the interests of the *national capital*, of the bourgeoisie overall.¹⁰ The relationship between politics and economics becomes yet more entangled in considering his stewardship of the World Bank; here, while also principally representing the bourgeoisie as a whole, he did so specifically in the function of creating favorable conditions for the flow of capital into the Third World, supervising the lending of billions of dollars and imposing highly restrictive conditions on the borrowers. In this case he represented the interests of Western-bloc capital as a whole in its rivalry with the Soviet Union, and in its attempts to more thoroughly penetrate and plunder (and secure) the Third World. Through it all, however, McNamara is a modern bourgeois *par excellence*, and we again thank Mr. Szymanski for his assurance that the Soviet rulers — i.e., the Soviet state-monopoly capitalist class — are quite comparable to this criminal!

Laibman and Szymanski posit as criteria for the nonexistence of a Soviet bourgeoisie the organizational props and methods of control of premonopoly capitalism. It is not too difficult to show that these do not apply to the Soviet Union. But precisely because they have set up straw men, we haven't learned anything about the question at hand. What must be studied are the characteristic modes of operation of finance capital and the specific institutional (and historically conditioned) forms it assumes in the Soviet Union.

II. Revisionist Proofs and Pluralist Paradigms

When Laibman and Szymanski take up the study of the Soviet class formation and its reproduction, they fall back almost entirely on the approach of bourgeois sociology. They identify epiphenomena like income, net worth, and family standing as the key determinants of class position. This whole approach arose in opposition to (and continues to oppose) the Marxist focus on the essential question: the relationship of the individual (as a member of a social group) to the means of production. Thus Szymanski sets up his argument as follows:

"(1) [T]here is no wealthy class [in the Soviet Union] which has a living standard or wealth remotely comparable to that of the economic elite of the capitalist countries; (2) the top positions in Soviet society, unlike as in capitalist societies, are largely filled by people of common origins; (3) no privileged elite social stratum exists with its own highly distinctive life style, exclusive intermarriage patterns and virtual certainty of passing on its positions to its children, as is the case in the capitalist countries; and (4) the differences in income, life style and passing on of privileges to children is very much like the differences between the working class and the profes-

sional middle class in the U.S., indicating that those in 'power elite' positions in the USSR are much more like middle managers and professionals in the West than they are like an owning or ruling class. In sum there is no evidence that a 'state bourgeoisie' exists in the USSR."¹¹

In a similar vein, Laibman demands that the Maoists identify

"a stable elite with a distinct upper-class lifestyle as a base for informal communication and differential socialization. A partial list of ingredients: qualitatively significant income differentials, where the differentials are linked to positions of authority in the political-administrative structure; the ability to acquire equity control over natural and produced resources by investing this income; residential segregation; differential access to education; evidence of significant intermarriage among the elite; evidence that most positions of authority in the political-administrative hierarchy are occupied by people who have had elite socialization, i.e., of non-working-class backgrounds."¹²

None of Szymanski's points speak to the essence of the bourgeoisie – its ability to allocate means of production as capital, for the purpose of the self-expansion of value. Laibman at least mentions something resembling this in one of his prerequisites of a bourgeoisie – "the ability to acquire equity control over natural and produced resources by investing this income" – but hinges it again on the *private* (in this case clearly meaning "individual" or juridically private) investment of income, which is not, as has been noted, essential to the capital relation, especially during the era of imperialism.

Despite all that, by thoroughly addressing the four main arguments advanced by Szymanski, and by directly answering Laibman's challenge on its own terms, more can be learned about the class structure of the Soviet Union.

Distribution, Luxury Consumption, and Stratification

Distribution forms a secondary aspect of the relations of production; Marx's point in *Critique of the Gotha Programme* indicates what's wrong in Szymanski's lopsided emphasis on this aspect:

"Any distribution whatever of the means of consumption is only a consequence of the distribution of the conditions of production themselves. The latter distribution, however, is a feature of the mode of production itself. The capitalist mode of production, for example, rests on the fact that the material conditions of production are in the hands of nonworkers

in the form of property in capital and land, while the masses are only owners of the personal condition of production, of labor power. If the elements of production are so distributed, then the present-day distribution of the means of consumption results automatically. If the material conditions of production are the cooperative property of the workers themselves, then there likewise results a distribution of the means of consumption different from the present one. Vulgar socialism (and from it in turn a section of the democracy) has taken over from the bourgeois economists the consideration and treatment of distribution as independent of the mode of production and hence the presentation of socialism as turning principally on distribution. After the real relation has long been made clear, why retrogress again?"¹³

At the same time, the clear (if secondary) corollary of the above passage is that the actual distribution in a capitalist society corresponds to a specifically capitalist ownership of the means of production. And this is in fact the case in the Soviet Union.

Again, as we have stressed, it is not privileged consumption but production as production of capital, as self-expanding value, that essentially characterizes capitalist appropriation. Marx observes in Volume 1 of *Capital*:

"At the historical dawn of capitalist production – and every capitalist upstart has personally to go through this historical stage – avarice, and desire to get rich, are the ruling passions. . . .

"Accumulate, accumulate! That is Moses and the prophets!"

But there is, after all, a social role for luxury consumption. Marx notes that, "When a certain stage of development has been reached, a conventional degree of prodigality, which is also an exhibition of wealth, and consequently a source of credit, becomes a business necessity to the 'unfortunate' capitalist. Luxury enters into capital's expenses of representation." Further, with the growth of accumulation, the possibility of expanding the capitalists' sphere of personal enjoyments without unduly restricting accumulation arises. Often, then, there arises a "conflict between the passion for accumulation" – the essential characteristic of a capitalist – "and the desire for enjoyment."

"Two souls, alas, do dwell within his breast;
The one is ever parting from the other."¹⁴

We address the issue, then, of the relative strength of these two souls in the breast of the Soviet bourgeoisie.

The largest obstacle in developing a precise characterization of the Soviet ruling class in this regard (and in relation to a number of other questions as well) is the fact that the Soviets publish absolutely no income statistics or pay scales applicable to any strata above the level of enterprise managers and professionals, and Soviet sociologists systemati-

cally exclude these strata from study.¹⁵ The upper levels of the party/economic/state hierarchy that constitute the Soviet state-monopoly class are prohibited as an object of (at least published) investigation in the Soviet Union.

We must therefore inevitably rely primarily on Western bourgeois studies – an admittedly biased source. As a check on this bias (since pro-Soviet analysts themselves must inevitably rely upon Western sources as well), we will contrast our own treatment with Albert Szymanski's, focusing here on his books published before the Soviet debate. Szymanski has made the most ambitious attempt to prove that the rulers of the Soviet Union do not indulge in significant privileged luxury consumption. Finally, we will note the confirmation of the essentials of our factual account by pro-Soviet sources.

As noted earlier, appropriation of surplus value and its reinvestment by the Soviet state-monopoly capitalist class takes place overwhelmingly through control over state appropriation and investment. Private incomes of the ruling class do not in the main enter into the accumulation of capital but represent part of that portion of surplus value appropriated as revenue for the personal consumption of the state-monopoly capitalist class.

The personal incomes of members of the state-monopoly capitalist class, to the extent that there is any information available, are significantly higher than those of workers or managers, but do not appear to be spectacular. Szymanski, however, understates their level from the available sources. The one documented figure in his book and article that bears on the issue of ruling class incomes, as opposed to those of managers or professionals, is a single reference to a "top government official" earning 600 rubles, made in passing in Mervyn Matthews' book, *Class and Society in Soviet Russia*. In a subsequent book, *Privilege in the Soviet Union* (perhaps the most comprehensive bourgeois academic account currently available on the subject), Matthews clarifies this matter. Income figures are based on data gleaned from personal interviews. The 600 ruble figure is the reported basic income of the First Secretary of the Tula Oblast, as well as that of the First Secretary of a small republic.¹⁶ They are also eligible for an additional bonus of 210 rubles. Yet such people are hardly the top of the Soviet hierarchy. Unfortunately, the only substantiated figure Matthews has for higher officials is that for a Marshal of the USSR with a total reported monetary income of 2000 rubles a month.¹⁷

But especially near the top of the hierarchy, where the Soviet ruling class is concentrated, monetary income is not the main source of privileged luxury consumption. The greatest part of the privileged consumption is provided for directly by the state or other institutions.¹⁸ Such privileged consumption, as Bob Avakian has pointed out, is "consumption of things which are 'socially' owned – collectively owned by the ruling revisionist bourgeoisie. This certainly does not prevent them from being 'private' in the sense that they are the private preserve of a class, the part of the privately appropriated surplus value (appropriated by the Soviet bourgeoisie from the exploitation of the proletariat in the Soviet Union as well as exploitation and plunder interna-

tionally) that is spent on personal (overwhelmingly luxury) consumption by that class (as opposed to the much larger part that is reinvested)."¹⁹

While institutionally provided "expense accounts" and a broad array of other "perks" are quite common in the West, this phenomenon of the *bulk* of ruling class luxury consumption taking a "socially" organized form is definitely a peculiarity of the revisionist bourgeoisie. This arises, first, out of the historical legacy and current "socialist" cover of the Soviet bourgeoisie, and the consequent political need to disguise the extent of the appropriation of surplus value for the purposes of luxury consumption. (The prohibition of published studies of the Soviet ruling class fills a similar function.)

There are also reasons more tied up with the actual operation of the Soviet economy. Shortages of consumer goods – due to a combination of low prices for the goods that are available, an extremely poor system of distribution, and the lopsided development of the Soviet economy in regard to agriculture and light industry – are so prevalent that monetary income is seldom a guarantee of the ability to consume. This is particularly the case with luxury goods which, as a general rule, are not broadly available, but it extends even to everyday necessities. For instance, in 1979 the Central Committee itself noted "interruptions in trading" of medicine, soap, laundry soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, needles, thread, diapers, and other light industry commodities.²⁰ The shortage in luxury goods for individual consumption in particular flows out of a mixed set of constraints: to effect the sort of shift in the Soviet productive base to make luxury production broadly accessible for individual consumption would both strain the economy and exacerbate the political effect of the extensive shortages in basic goods at a time when tremendous priority is being given to – and sacrifice on the part of the masses being demanded for – military production.²¹

Finally, it is helpful to recall Marx's comment that luxury enters into the capitalist's costs of representation. To the extent that the investment of personal wealth still plays a significant role in the West, luxury born of personal monetary expenditures is a sign of "prosperity" and hence of advantage in promoting common business dealings, securing credit, etc. In the Soviet Union, it is not personal income, but one's position in the hierarchy that is the decisive factor in securing control over a portion of social capital. Position and status in the hierarchy are of importance in securing credit, arranging various deals, etc., which continue to be of important concern to Soviet capitalists.²² Luxury consumption hence takes a form emphasizing one's control over *social* capital.

Luxury consumption also plays a significant part in building a social base through rewards. This is *actually* what Szymanski is dealing with in his focus on the luxury consumption of managers and professionals. But while significant, this form is not the most important manifestation of luxury consumption, which instead takes place in the top echelon of the Soviet bourgeoisie. Where Szymanski does

touch on the privileges of the ruling class, he is generally simply wrong. For instance, he asserts that "there is no tendency for there to be a high concentration of privilege" in housing, among other things, and cites as "proof" a book which *actually* says, "The housing preserves of Soviet political leaders are too well known to require comment, beginning, for example, with the estates in the Kuntsevo region of Moscow."²³

The limousines, country dachas, sanatoria and resorts reserved for the revisionist bourgeoisie and their faithful hangers-on are also too well known to require comment.²⁴ Indeed, an entire department of the Central Committee, the "Administration of Affairs," oversees the expenditure of a secret budget to maintain a network of choice apartments, dachas, guest houses, rest homes, cars, and servants for the party elite.

There is a threefold system of special stores and shopping privileges for the Soviet bourgeoisie and their more privileged functionaries. One is the well-advertised *beryojka* hard-currency shops where Western and superior Soviet goods are sold. The normal Soviet citizen is barred from these shops, but the privileged can buy there, using special certificate rubles (worth eight times their face value on the black market). The second is a network of quality, restricted access, subsidized cafeterias and restricted outlets for home delivery from larger stores and buffets. Finally, there are the well-known closed "special stores" offering quality goods at often nominal prices to a select clientele. Some 100 such stores have been identified in Moscow alone, including specialty shops such as tailors, book dealers, hairdressers, laundrers, cleaners, picture hangers, etc. Hedrik Smith tells the story of a Soviet journalist – herself among the more well-to-do sections of Soviet society – who, after being smuggled into one of these special stores by an acquaintance, emerged with eyes big with wonder and announced to her husband: "For *them*, communism has arrived."

A network of special production units exist to serve this restricted distribution system. For instance, special dairy herds are known to be kept in agricultural enterprises near Moscow, and the Mikoyan Meat Processing Combine is said to have a separate production unit for high-quality meat.

Other privileges for the upper levels of the hierarchy include a special closed system of hospitals, clinics, and dispensaries widely known as the "Fourth Directorate" of the Ministry of Health; provision of servants and maids; special delivery and cleaning services; retirement pensions above the nominal "maximum"; and even special ticket offices and reservations for cultural events.

It is true that even in a genuinely socialist country certain relative privileges for leading persons are necessary (for instance, expenses for visits of diplomatic personnel and dignitaries, etc.), and that more generally the continued existence of the division of labor and inequalities among the people, along with commodities, money, etc., provide a significant pull upon the more privileged sections of the population to attempt to "live it up." This itself is a manifestation of the profoundly contradictory character of genuinely

socialist societies as the transition to classless society – a contradictory character which the revisionists fundamentally deny.

It is also true that during the socialist Stalin period, from the late 1930s on, privileged consumption went beyond what was objectively necessary – and this was, in fact, one factor strengthening the position of the new bourgeoisie arising within the Communist Party itself that seized power after Stalin's death. But it is the predominance of the law of value, not simply the existence of privileged consumption as such, that essentially distinguishes capitalism from socialism – and modern-day Soviet social-imperialism from Soviet socialism under Stalin.²⁵

Moreover, the degree and the actual social and political significance of relative privilege were quite different between the two eras. The cleavage is summarized, oddly enough, by a decidedly anti-Stalinist scholar, Maria Hirszowicz, in a recent book:

"The enormous pressures imposed by Stalin on the party and state bureaucrats obliged them to be feverishly active and left them no time for a private life; simultaneously, the growing terror and ideological uniformity discouraged the administrators from stepping out of line in both their personal interests and habits. On top of all this, the general scarcity took its toll. Their salaries were not very high, their flats were drab, their clothes far from smart and their social life very limited. . . .

"The model of the 'Soviet man' formed under Stalin's rule imposed heavy demands on the party state bureaucracy. In official propaganda and literature the 'Soviet man' was depicted as one prepared to sacrifice his life for the benefit of the party. . . he mistrusted those of upper class origin; he despised the set of values inherited from the ruling class; he rejected western attitudes; he was modest in his life style. . . .

"Under Khrushchev and even more so under Brezhnev, the ethos of the party state bureaucracy seemed to evolve, essentially, into something resembling western consumerist culture. . . . Consumerism ceased to be regarded as an expression of a petty-bourgeois tendency and acquired respectability as the *manifestation of the personal needs and cultural tastes of the individual*. . . . The western standard of living, which was once rejected as the nadir of human culture, was not only approved but set up as a worthwhile model. . . .

"The party and state bureaucracy has developed, then, a new ethos in which the pursuit of a career, the pleasure of purchasing goods, including new gadgets, the placing of personal interests at the centre of one's private life and the acquisition of as much money as possible to satisfy the new wants, are not only approved but encouraged. This is a general trend that applies to all strata in society, yet it is the

bureaucracy first of all that is given the opportunity to satisfy these new aspirations. . . ."²⁶

Despite the obvious expression of the author's prejudices in these lines, the essential distinction is clear enough. This is not to uphold Stalin's method of dealing with this contradiction as a model for a contemporary socialist society – much has been learned in the intervening years about both the problems and dangers tied up with privileged consumption and the necessity to mobilize the masses to struggle against, restrict, and lay the basis to eventually uproot such capitalist remnants. Still it is one thing for errors to occur within an overall setting of proletarian power, and another for such errors to be persisted in, deepened, and petrified into pillars of neobourgeois rule.

Comparisons

Comparisons of the Soviet bourgeoisie to the American bourgeoisie seem to be inevitable. Matthews attempts a rough estimate of the consumption income (both monetary and direct consumption) of the *lowest* level of Soviet "elite," a strata for which somewhat greater information is known or can be inferred. (Szymanski does not like Matthews' estimate, but it is confirmed, for what it's worth, by Yanowitch and McAuley, two other bourgeois academicians whom he cites approvingly in a number of contexts.)²⁷

Matthews concludes that the lowest income of his elite group is approximately five to eight times the average earnings of Soviet workers and employees. This compares to a threshold income for the same top proportion of American incomes of about twelve times the average earnings in the U.S.²⁸

Matthews' "lowest-level income elite" does not really deal with the monopoly-capitalist class proper in either the Soviet Union or the United States. However, it is perhaps useful as a surrogate measure, given the poverty of information generally. If so, it suggests that the Soviet bourgeoisie has yet to attain the imperial splendor of the U.S. ruling monopoly-capitalist class, and to that extent they partake of the character of Marx's "capitalist upstarts." However, it also suggests (particularly if we recall the Soviet figures reflect only consumption income, while the U.S. figures include some income that will be invested) that, in relative terms, the Soviet bourgeoisie does quite well for itself.

As we go further up the Soviet hierarchy, luxury consumption, particularly in the form of direct consumption, rises rapidly – and available information declines just as rapidly. One of the more widely cited estimates of income at the top is that given by Roy Medvedev (the Soviet "Marxist" critic and advocate of "democratization" of what he perceives and supports as Soviet "socialism"), based on personal experience:

"In Soviet ministries and important military establishments, the ratio between the highest and the low-

est rates of pay is also 1:20 or even 1:30, but if one takes into consideration the many services available to nomenklatura officials at public expense (food coupons, medical treatment, holidays, personal transport, dachas, etc.), the total value translated into monetary terms would make the ratio 1:50 or sometimes even 1:100. Obviously this is quite excessive for a socialist country."²⁹

Finally, the privileges of the Soviet bourgeoisie are so obvious and well-known that even many pro-Soviet forces are forced to admit their existence. For instance, Goldfield and Rothenberg, in a book at one point widely distributed by Line of March and intended to prove that the Soviet Union is not capitalist, admit that, "The Soviet elite enjoys access to living quarters, health care, education, and consumer goods denied the Soviet masses. Further, the tastes of this elite for luxury goods and conspicuous consumption is decadent even by western standards."³⁰

The admission of the pervasiveness of Soviet bourgeois luxury consumption squeezed from the value produced by the working class (nationally and internationally), while in itself not proof of the capitalist nature of the Soviet ruling class (the predominance of the law of value and surplus value are the essential questions there), points to the exploitation of the masses by the Soviet ruling class. Yet these people argue that this luxury consumption founded on exploitation reinforces the Soviet rulers' allegiance to "socialism," which has given them these privileges.³¹ And these same revisionist theoreticians accuse Maoists of "idealism"!

Rising Consumption, "Declining Inequality," and Revisionist Political Stabilization

Up until 1966 wages, consumption, and social welfare benefits had risen in the Soviet Union. At the same time, relative income inequality (among the people, *not* between the people and the ruling class) had declined. Insofar as they have been the product of the policies of the revisionist state, they need to be analyzed from the standpoint of grasping the character of the capitalist state as an organ for defending and reproducing the domination of the ruling class and capitalist relations generally.

While consumption and wages have been rising in the Soviet Union, this is comparable to the trend in other imperialist countries in the postwar period.³² To the extent that they are not simply a product of a period of economic expansion, higher wages and various social welfare benefits represent a conscious attempt by the ruling class to underwrite "social peace" in the imperialist metropolises and bribe a more bourgeoisified section of the working class in particular with a portion of the spoils of imperialism. This is essentially the case in the Soviet Union as well. While a complete analysis is beyond the scope of this article, it is interesting to note that

Soviet studies themselves reveal substantial differences among Soviet workers in regard to wages, access to social benefits, and a number of other measures which suggest the division of the Soviet working class along classic imperialist lines of a more bourgeoisified labor aristocracy and a more proletarian section.³³

The contention that income inequality has been declining in the Soviet Union is of some particular interest, as restricting income inequalities is a long-term task under socialism. First, the facts of the matter have frequently been distorted. The Soviet "decile ratios," which are generally the basis for the assertion of declining inequality, measure the ratio of the highest earnings in the bottom 90% of earnings to the highest earnings in the bottom 10% of earnings – in other words, *these ratios are completely unaffected by the size and trend of earnings in the top 10%*. These ratios only measure earnings trends among the people. It is misleading and dishonest to attempt, as is often done, to pass them off as proof of any decline in inequality between the people and the ruling class.³⁴

Further, while it is true that the decile ratio decreased from 4.44 in 1956 to 2.83 in 1968, it has been *increasing* since then, registering 3.35 in 1976³⁵ (the most recently available figure), or almost precisely equal to the degree of inequality in Great Britain by the same measure.³⁶

But the essential question is not simply the trends themselves but what these trends represent: do they represent the strengthening and reproduction of socialist relations or do they represent the strengthening of capitalist relations, i.e., the law of value? In this regard, it is quite significant that the Soviets themselves explain both the decline and the increase in decile-measured inequality by reference to what they call "objective factors" – in reality, value relations.

The Soviets attribute the decline in inequality among the people from 1956 to 1968 to increases in the skill and educational composition of the labor force and shifts in sectoral development – *not* to any turn toward egalitarian principles of distribution.³⁷ Of these changes, the powerful trend towards urbanization is particularly important, as the income of a collective farmer was (and is) considerably below that of an ordinary laborer. In some regards, however, the Soviets themselves probably overstate the case. While they are undoubtedly correct as concerns some of the overall factors at work in the economy during this period, the increases

* While pay differentials were quite restricted during the '20s and beginning of the '30s, they were expanded during the mid-'30s and persisted into the postwar period. Some of this was in fact necessary in economic terms, due to the early severe shortage of skilled workers and the abnormal situation created by the decimation of the Soviet population in World War 2. Much of it was also politically motivated, as with the exceptional income given to Stakhanovite workers. In any event, in this sphere as in the economy overall, no one, East or West, has accused Stalin of paying *too much* attention to the law of value. However, he did not fully appreciate that such pay differentials are remnants of capitalism and need to be restricted over time, as was the case with China under Mao's leadership.

at that time in the minimum wage in particular (though they did serve the economic goal of drawing more women into the labor force) seem to be explicable mainly in terms of considerations of the *political* stability of the new revisionist regime. (Even after these minimum-wage increases, in 1974, one out of every three Soviet children lived in a family with income below the official – understated – Soviet poverty line.³⁸)

The more recent trend toward increasing earnings inequality among the people is also justified by the Soviets essentially by reference to value categories: "A characteristic feature of the seventies is also the increase in the differentiation of wages as one means of strengthening the principle of material incentives."³⁹

In the '60s rising wages and social welfare benefits and an increased minimum wage contributed to a short-term decline in inequality among the people. The recovery and economic growth after the years of sacrifice under socialism in preparing for, waging, and recovering from the immense devastation of World War 2 made it possible to achieve these things without any significant alteration in the proportion of the Soviet GNP devoted to private and collective forms of consumption.⁴⁰ But the need to carry out these measures was profoundly political.

The transition to capitalist relations – begun in the late '50s and relatively consolidated by the end of the '60s – was fraught with immense dangers and difficulties for the new Soviet bourgeoisie. The necessary and virulent attack on Stalin in 1956 set loose politically destabilizing influences throughout the Soviet-led bloc, and at least partially caused the legitimacy crises in some of the People's Democracies (e.g. the revolts in Hungary and Poland), while serving to further politically disorient the Soviet masses. Meanwhile, U.S. pressure on the Soviets, though relaxed in some respects, still continued; Soviet leaders had to both secure and protect their zone of influence in Europe as well as find the ways to begin penetration into the Third World in the face of U.S. ascendancy. And all the while the revisionists had to carry forward changes in the realm of politics and ideology that would lay the basis for the fully capitalist restructuring of the Soviet economic base.

They thus stood in dire need of the acquiescence of the Soviet working class. The banner under which they sought to win the allegiance – or at least passive acceptance – of the workers was the banner of "goulash communism." Of necessity, particularly in the '60s, a significant amount of goulash was dished out to the Soviet workers (though they have yet to develop the level of bourgeoisification of sections of some Western imperialist working classes). Szymanski's argument that this is evidence of "socialism" is merely the old economist theme song that, in Lenin's phrase, a kopek added to a ruble is worth more than any working-class power and socialism – or, in this case, that it *is* working-class power.

The trend toward equalization of incomes among the people was consciously reversed by the Soviet state in the 1970s. The late '70s and '80s have seen a slowdown in the rate of Soviet economic growth. Whether the Soviet bourgeoisie

will be able to maintain or even increase current levels of wages and social welfare benefits – which is assuredly to their political advantage as they strive to win their people to preparation for yet a third imperialist world war – depends, as it does in the West, on their ability to stave off economic crisis as they prepare for the ultimate bourgeois means of temporarily resolving the crisis of the world imperialist system: world war.

Incidentally, the question of the alleged narrowing of income differentials and the raising of the social wage should not be considered apart from the significant “second economy” in the Soviet Union. This includes everything from private plots in farming (which accounted for one-third of all man-hours in farming and one-fourth of the gross output in Soviet agriculture) to what is recognized as extensive thievery of state property, widespread speculation in hard-to-come-by goods, “tipping” of sales personnel and government officials (i.e., graft), and private entrepreneurial operations. One observer of the Soviet economy cites the “large number of household repair and building services, typically provided by people ‘moonlighting’ outside, or even during, working hours; automotive repair; the sewing and tailoring of garments; the moving of furniture and other transport services”; and goes on to remark on the pervasive character of these sorts of activities – e.g., the widespread knowledge that ownership of a car necessarily entails dealing on the private market for repairs, spare parts, and even gasoline. In addition there are contractors who organize production brigades from the cities to work on collective farms, the classical underground factory owners, and finally the corrupt officials at the higher levels. As examples of the latter, this specialist documents the widespread sale of party and government positions in *Azerbaijan* around 1970 (the sums ranged from 10,000 rubles to 250,000 for Minister of Trade), and in Georgia, two years later, where the central party apparatus stepped in to stop it.⁴¹

These phenomena are significant from several aspects. First, most scholars hold that they are necessary to social reproduction in the USSR, and in particular fill crucial gaps in the realm of consumption, including among the basic masses. At the same time, this kind of growing shadow economy makes for yet another source of anarchy (and is itself – along with the fabled problems in Soviet distribution of consumption goods altogether – an expression of the basic anarchy of the system). Finally, these kinds of activities indicate the basis for a much wider gap in income among the masses than is commonly reported, showing the partial character of the data on income equality among the people as well as the real limits on the so-called social wage (since many must resort to the second economy to actually procure essential services like decent health care, etc.). They also indicate soil for the emergence of significant sections of the petty bourgeoisie and the entrenchment of advantages for the skilled workers (relative to the unskilled), both of which exacerbate class stratification.

In sum, distribution in the Soviet Union is fully compatible with and substantially reflects the rule of the bourgeois-

sie. Luxury consumption, if somewhat peculiar in form, nevertheless takes place on a socially significant scale and plays a role similar to luxury consumption in the West. The distribution among the masses reflects some remnants of the socialist past (including in the political necessity facing the Soviet rulers), but the determinant factor today is the dominance (and reinforcement) of the law of value.

The Class Origins Argument and Economist Instrumentalism

The claim that there is no wealthy elite in the Soviet Union dovetails with the second key argument advanced as to why the working class rules in the Soviet Union – the class origins of the Soviet leadership. At the New York debate, Szymanski stressed:

“In the United States, only about 3 percent of the top businessmen and the top managers are from the working class or poor farm families. In the Soviet Union it’s 80 percent and constant. That’s a qualitative difference – 80 percent of the top managers and top Central Committee people are from the common class, compared to 3 percent in the United States – that’s a qualitative difference that reflects a qualitatively *different* mode of production, because if there was a ruling class there, even a small one, they would *act* like it if they had the power, and they would pass it on.”⁴²

In a similar vein, Laibman includes in his “list of ingredients” for determining the presence of a ruling elite, “evidence that most positions of authority in the political-administrative hierarchy are occupied by people who have had elite socialization, i.e., of non-working-class backgrounds.”⁴³ Thus the class character of the state is assumed to be strongly linked to, even in large part directly determined by, the class *origins* of its leading personnel.

Szymanski reiterates that any putative Soviet elite must be shown to *use* its power, in a way that plainly equates the “use of power” by capitalist elites to the enrichment of specific sectoral interests through control and/or manipulation of the state apparatus. In a characteristic passage, Szymanski says:

“What could be more profitable than General Dynamics, the Trident submarines, and the military stuff? Corporations are making immense amounts of money off the military, but the thing that happens there is they tax you and I and working class people, and that money ends up in the corporations. Across the board, the capitalists don’t do anything that’s not profitable.”⁴⁴

Szymanski’s analysis of the class nature of the state

through (a) the social origins of its leadership and (b) their manipulation of the apparatus to serve (individual) sectoral interests is a form of bourgeois-sociological elite theory, albeit with "left" trappings. Within the left this paradigm has generally been called instrumentalism, which in our view means more precisely that the state is approached as an essentially neutral instrument subject to the manipulation of different elites.*

Bourgeois sociologists often counterpose the model of "plural elites" to the Marxist view of the state as a class dictatorship. Taking the Roosevelt New Deal coalition, for example, they point to the role played by labor unions, small farmers and small businessmen, ethnic minorities, etc. – as well as the opposition of some sections of "big business" to Roosevelt – and argue that no single class can accurately be said to have dominated the state. Hence the state as a neutral instrument; reforms, by extension, are seen as measures of supposed working-class power.**

One stream of left thought tries to refute that argument by attacking its evidence. To pursue the example of the Democratic Party, the radical instrumentalists have attempted to unearth evidence of hidden direct dominance by various financial fat cats. While such dominance evidently exists, the more profound question is the social role played by the Democratic Party. Unfortunately, the approach of the radical instrumentalists leaves the theoretical foundations of the "plural elites" argument intact, and has enabled bourgeois sociology to dominate the terms of the debate.

In fact, the class origins of the leaders of the bourgeois state are often diverse, but their objective function – executive committee for the common affairs of the bourgeoisie – is not. Marx notes in *The Civil War in France* that the French bourgeoisie in the 1850s and 1860s was well-served by the government of Louis Bonaparte, which largely excluded individual capitalists and thus evaded the petty profiteering and endless bickering in which the bourgeoisie was then bogged down.*** Our point is not that the individual actions of

* In this analysis of instrumentalism, the authors have drawn on Nicos Poulantzas' article in *New Left Review*, Nov.-Dec. 1969, "The Problem of the Capitalist State."

** The CPUSA, even in its glory days of the '30s, put forward this openly bourgeois argument to justify their support for Roosevelt from 1935 on, albeit at times with a thin coating of Marxist terminology.

*** Marx's famous statement in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* is relevant here:

"Just as little must one imagine that the democratic representatives are indeed all shopkeepers or enthusiastic champions of shopkeepers. According to their education and their individual position they may be as far apart as heaven from earth. What makes them representatives of the petty bourgeoisie is the fact that in their minds they do not get beyond the limits which the latter do not get beyond in life, that they are consequently driven, theoretically, to the same problems and solutions to which material interest and social position drive the latter practically. This is, in general, the relationship between the political and literary

specific political leaders somehow don't matter, but that (1) their range of political choices is constrained and conditioned by the requirements of the capitalist accumulation process and the historical development and particularity of the institutions of the political superstructure; and (2) their class origins have little to do with how effectively or fully they serve the bourgeoisie.

The practical importance of this issue becomes clearer in considering the role of social-democratic regimes in Europe – Germany in the wake of World War 1, France today, etc. The parameters of the Szymanski/Laibman analysis (and instrumentalism generally) cannot really provide for a critique of such governments.* Anyone who hopes to expose the Mitterrand regime's class character through either analyzing the social origins of its members, or locating which sectors of the French bourgeoisie are enriching themselves through that regime's various measures is at best way wide of the mark. The regime is an adaptation by the French bourgeois system to a particular set of internal and external political and economic circumstances, in a context set mainly by an approaching interimperialist war. Even without the scions of French wealth the Mitterrand regime has been quite vigorous in pursuing French imperial interests.

Lenin did not characterize the democratic republic as the best possible shell for capitalism because men of wealth could most easily penetrate its high positions; he was pointing to the suppleness of its institutions, and to its ability (especially with the advent of imperialism) to bribe and deceive significant sections of the masses so as to "establish its power so securely, so firmly, that no change, either of persons, of institutions, or of parties in the bourgeois-democratic republic, can shake it."⁴⁶ Especially during World War 1 and the revolutionary upsurge which followed it, Lenin stressed the variegated channels of bourgeois influence among the masses, and the class enemy's particular attention to incorporating social-democratic luminaries into the parliaments and war cabinets, and using the social-democratic parties and unions as important conduits for bourgeois political influence. Hence, we would maintain that a Leninist view of the state necessitates a stand against the crude economic determinism pushed by Szymanski (and Laibman).

Szymanski's earlier-cited, off-the-cuff analysis of U.S. military spending puts forth a similarly reductionist model of the actions of the capitalist state. Let's be clear: important state policies like military spending – as well as areas like military and diplomatic strategy overall, concerted aid programs (e.g., the Alliance for Progress), international trade and monetary policies, initiatives concerning key branches

representatives of a class and the class they represent."⁴⁵

Today's revisionists and social democrats differ in one respect – the class limits which straitjacket their thinking are those of the big, not the petty, bourgeoisie.

* Since revisionism internationally pins significant hopes on coalitions with these and similar forces, the limitations of the analysis make a nice fit with revisionist political aims.

of domestic industry (e.g., energy policy) – are undertaken in the interests of the *national capital as a whole*. The state at its highest level mediates these interests of the national capital. While its personnel often represent an amalgam of the key blocs of finance capital, even having been groomed in specific stables, as a governing bloc they principally represent the class overall – they fight not for specific sectoral interests, but for the long-range strategic interests of the *system*.

Moreover, Szymanski negates the state's existence on a plane higher than economics and in effect, he raises economics *above* politics. Politics, as Lenin stated, is the *concentrated expression* of economics. The political sphere necessarily assumes a degree of autonomy from the profit sheets of different financial blocs or even "what's good for the economy overall," in the short run. Vietnam is the classic case in point. The political exigencies of maintaining the overall U.S. empire determined the U.S. aggression there, as well as its later withdrawal. Its effects on the U.S. domestic economy – let alone how it happened to benefit this or that bloc of capital – were very, very secondary in launching the war.

What is crucial to grasp is that the economic base of U.S. society makes neocolonial wars like Vietnam inevitable, and that the specific position of the U.S. in the imperialist world led to prosecute that war.

It's true that this process was the product of contradiction and struggle within the ranks of the bourgeoisie, but those struggles reflected opposed evaluations, strategies, and initiatives *on the political plane* (within an overall unified context of furthering the strategic interests of the national capital). It is a caricature of Marxism to analyze those struggles as shadow-plays concealing supposedly more profound differences focusing on "whose ox is being gored."

To conclude – the question of the imperialist state is a crucial one for the revolution, deserving more attention in its own right. However, any serious discussion must be founded on the basic orientation fought for by Lenin, and must take into account three key functional areas of the state: class dictatorship (including repression, concessions, legitimacy rituals, and so forth, for the purpose of controlling the masses); assuring the reproduction of capitalist production relations (economic management, interventions and adjustments in the various circuits of capital, etc.); and the defense and extension of the international interests of the imperialist national capital.

These functions require and give rise to extensive and highly integrated structures, which make up the core institutions of the imperialist state. The institutional structures of the various capitalist states vary more or less according to historical circumstance and political contingency, but all are ultimately circumscribed and determined by the exigencies of capitalist accumulation.

Further, the capitalist state is not the preserve or province or direct arm of any particular unit of capital; it serves the larger politico-strategic interests of the total national capital in its three main interrelated functions.

Finally, in capitalist society the contradiction between

leaders and led is concentrated in the antagonism between bureaucratic repressive structures and the broad masses. These are the essentials of the bourgeois state, and these indeed apply to and provide the theoretical basis to analyze and understand the Soviet Union.

Birthright vs. the Social Reproduction of the Bourgeoisie

"If there is a ruling class," Szymanski stated at the debate, "it must act like one." He continued:

"It has to have luxury consumption, it has to use its privileges, and has to pass that on. And if the answer is, 'well, they have a new, more advanced form of ruling class,' that doesn't have luxury consumption, it doesn't have a lot of privileges, and doesn't pass it on, you have to ask why not? If they're so powerful, why don't they use that power like every other ruling class does? Don't they care about their children?"⁴⁷

Szymanski's assertion that if the bourgeoisie cannot pass on its capital then it cannot be the bourgeoisie deserves some attention. The question of which comes first – a ruling class, or the specific social relations that it embodies and represents – is not the old chicken-and-egg conundrum, but an important point of Marxism.

Lenin's remark in the early years of proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union is to the point:

"On the ground cleared of one bourgeois generation, new generations continually appear in history, as long as the ground gives rise to them, and it does give rise to any number of bourgeois. As for those who look at the victory over the capitalists in the way that the petty proprietors look at it – 'they grabbed, let me have a go too' – indeed, every one of them is the source of a new generation of bourgeois."⁴⁸

"As long as the ground gives rise to them" – earlier works have analyzed why the "ground" of Soviet society is imperialist, and why production as the production and self-expansion of value necessarily constitutes the essential economic reproduction of the state-monopoly capitalist class and a propertyless proletariat. But what is the specific mechanism of the social reproduction of the bourgeoisie, i.e., how is the next generation of bourgeois selected and developed?

Inheritance of private property, and the consequent weight, particularly in the first stages of capitalist development, of the bourgeois family as an institution for the social reproduction of the capitalist class, dates back at least to forms of private property developed under slave society and codified in Roman law, upon which such early formulations of bourgeois jurisprudence as the Napoleonic Code were based. With the rise of monopoly capitalism and the develop-

ment of more socialized forms of private appropriation (notably modern-day corporations) the educational system grew in significance as an institution for the social reproduction of the capitalist class and for class stratification generally.⁴⁹ The corporate hierarchy and other economic administrative institutions also developed a greater importance in this regard.

Familial social origins do continue to play an important role in the social reproduction of the capitalist class in the West. However, one thing that distinguishes classes under capitalism from the social estates of the feudal period is that social positions are *not* strictly hereditary. In fact, the restlessness of the capitalist mode of production from the very beginning cuts against the rise of an hereditary aristocracy.

Beyond this, Szymanski's argument is simply an extension of the view that directly personal private property in the means of production is the essential feature of capitalism, which we have already dealt with at length. It is its existence as a personification of capital, and not the particularities of its social reproduction, that marks a class as capitalist. Second, such a view ignores such phenomena in the West as state-owned capitalist enterprise, capital controlled by religious institutions, pension funds, union treasuries and the like. In addition, a greater or lesser degree of "inter-generational class mobility" (the *nouveau riche*) is characteristic of capitalism at various stages in its development. And even where membership in the ruling class often has a strong "hereditary" bias, control of particular corporations – not to mention individual positions – frequently changes hands.

As for the Soviet Union, the two main institutions for the social reproduction of the bourgeoisie are the party hierarchy and the educational system.

While during the Stalin period many political leaders, top management, and even many specialists often began their careers as workers – being promoted on the basis of political criteria and often receiving any special education later in life – this has changed decisively in the revisionist period. As one Western academic summarizes the evidence from Soviet studies and other sources: "Higher managerial positions are also increasingly staffed by specialists with higher or specialized secondary education received prior to labor market entry... There is little doubt... that the passage of time has seen a decline in the proportion of managerial personnel and technical specialists who begin their work careers in manual positions..."⁵⁰

Available biographical data and other sources indicate that this trend is characteristic of the core of the state-monopoly capitalist class as well. In Alec Nove's words: "it must be stressed that higher education has now become a necessary (though not sufficient) condition to get into *nomenklatura* and into senior positions generally," and increasingly Soviet bureaucrats are typically recruited into the hierarchy straight out of school.⁵¹ The essence of the matter, even in the case of those who do still nominally begin their careers as "workers," is captured in the words of a recent popular Soviet play: "The point is that he is not going to stay here long. He will dance around the furnace for half a year or

so and up he will go climbing. But for the rest of his life he will call himself a member of the working class."⁵²

However, despite the growing role of the educational system in the social reproduction of the capitalist class, the Communist Party remains the preeminent institution for the selection and reproduction of the ruling class. Indeed, the term *nomenklatura*, often used interchangeably with "elite" in the parlance of Western Sovietologists, refers to those positions appointed by or requiring approval from the appropriate party body and carrying with them special privileges according to rank such as we have described. The careful training, testing, and selection of individuals by the appropriate party bodies as they move up through the hierarchy ensures adherence to the ideology, outlook, and objective class function of the revisionist bourgeoisie on the part of those newly entering its ranks, as well as the loyalty and obedience of those at the lower levels of the bureaucracy through which they have passed. The core of the state-monopoly capitalist class has become an increasingly stable group. For instance, even a somewhat sympathetic observer of the Soviet scene has remarked, "In some respects Central Committee membership during the Brezhnev era took on the appearance of a life peerage – at least members remained until well past normal retirement age."⁵³

As we've seen, the defenders of the Soviet Union make a big deal about the working-class background of many of the current top Soviet leaders. This is, in a significant sense, a product of the socialist period. The present top revisionist leadership is largely drawn from those who came to the fore in the wake of the purges of the 1930s, in a period when the Communist Party and the then socialist state were consciously developing a new leadership and intelligentsia drawn from the ranks of the working class.⁵⁴

While social origins are not an essential distinguishing feature of a capitalist class, available information suggests that the family does have more than a little influence on the social reproduction of the Soviet bourgeoisie, though less than is generally the case in the Western imperialist countries.

Western academic studies, contrasting biographical data on older top Soviet leadership and younger important politicians and administrators recruited more recently, indicate that the proportion of those of working-class origin has been falling, while the proportion drawn from the "intelligentsia" (a broad category including the so-called "administrative-managerial stratum") has been rising.⁵⁵ While Soviet sociologists do not study top leaders, their studies confirm a similar trend among management and specialists at the enterprise level.⁵⁶

This appears to be due in part to the greater role played by the educational system in reproducing class stratification generally. Soviet studies show that the children of white-collar workers are three times as likely to get into college as the children of manual workers – and the disproportion is much higher at prestigious universities. (It would undoubtedly be higher still if manual workers were compared to more privileged strata alone, rather than white-collar

workers as a whole, a category that includes many proletarian clerical and sales workers.)⁵⁷

At the pinnacle of Soviet society, certain universities and institutes have become known as the province of the children of the elite. Such, for instance, are the faculties of journalism and law at Moscow State University, as they are largely "political" fields, as well as the Foreign Languages Institute and the Moscow Institute of International Relations (MIMO), that lead to diplomatic careers. One journalist recounts the following conversation: "You have to have very good Party and Komsomol recommendations to get into MIMO," one graduate told me, and he mentioned a score of sons and daughters of Party and Government officials who had got in through connections. . . . Few 'ordinary' students make it because, although this is not a secret institution, it is not listed in the normal handbook for Soviet institutions of higher education for prospective applicants. My friend said he knew of an instructor at MIMO, a Party member, who had been fired for refusing to obey orders from the dean to give top grades to children from elite families. . . ." ⁵⁸ While this last may be an exaggeration or extreme instance, Nove makes clear that "in recent years there has been a notable increase in the intensity of the scramble for higher education places, owing to the fact that full secondary education has expanded much more rapidly than have institutions of university status. . . . The use of backstairs methods and string pulling via influence has therefore become more important, and here nomenklatura officials and their hangers-on have evident advantages. . . ." ⁵⁹

In sum, as the Soviet sociologist Filippov himself admits, "the systems of vocational, specialized secondary and higher education are nothing but 'extensions' of the existing social structure. Each educational track is 'tied' to a corresponding class, social group, or social stratum."⁶⁰

We do not suggest that the Soviet ruling class is or is soon to become an "hereditary" group – nor is this an essential attribute of a capitalist class. What the evidence does suggest is that the Soviet state-monopoly capitalist class is increasingly drawn from administrative, managerial, and intellectual strata in the upper levels of Soviet society. The Soviet bourgeoisie is socially reproduced primarily through the operation of the party and educational institutions and, secondarily, the family.

The Role of Managers

Szymanski's final empirical argument on the non-existence of a Soviet bourgeois class centers on an analogy between middle-level managers in the U.S. and what Szymanski calls "those in 'power elite' positions in the USSR."⁶¹ Since the capitalist class employs managers, why can't the working class?, he asks. And conversely, since managers must be *employed*, how can they as a class actually control an economy? Bob Avakian's response to this argument is worth quoting at length:

"Szymanski's argument that the managers in the Soviet Union are just that – managers – and could no more run the economy (and the country) than could their counterparts in the (openly) imperialist countries, can be dispatched rather quickly. First, we are not saying that these strata (enterprise managers and the like) do in fact run the economy, that they are in fact the ruling bourgeoisie. They *are* a very important social base (of support) for the actual *state-monopoly capitalist* ruling class (a point made in 'Tarnished') and they are one source (under socialism as well as under capitalism itself, including revisionist capitalism) of new bourgeois elements, some of whom will actually rise to the 'heights' of the ruling class. But more fundamentally, this line of argumentation – or analogy – by Szymanski reveals a basic error in methodology and an ignorance (real or pretended) of the difference between capitalism and socialism (as it *actually* has existed in the world up till now and will continue to exist, as it emerges, for some time in the future). That is, the reason the managers of plants, etc., are not the real ruling class and controllers of capital in the (openly) capitalist countries (and especially in the stage of imperialism) is that the *social position* of these managers – and in particular their position in the overall social productive process – does not enable them to exert control (or effective ownership) over the means of production and to exercise political power in society. It *does* enable them to have a privileged existence vis à vis the workers, to lord it over the latter and to have command over them in the productive process, up to a certain point: but, on the other hand, it does *not* allow them to do the same with (or be anything but subordinate to) the big (finance) capitalists – these managers have neither the capital nor the political power to do this. And for them to do so would require an actual 'revolution of the managerial class,' which (a) they are not capable of achieving, even if a few of them might vaguely conceive of such an idea; and (b) even if it were somehow achieved, it would only result in their rising to the same position as the finance capitalists they 'overthrew,' but would in no way make the managers *as a stratum (as managers)* the commanders of the capital of society, the wielders of political power, etc.

"How does this compare to the situation of this stratum (enterprise managers, for example) in a socialist country and in a revisionist one? While, again, these managers are *not* the ruling class in the Soviet Union – it is not this stratum that was the decisive, commanding force in the revisionist take-over and restoration of capitalism nor is it such in the (capitalist-imperialist) society today in the USSR – still this stratum does occupy a privileged position, in terms of the division of labor, income, etc., vis à vis the proletariat – and it did even when the USSR

was actually socialist (as is the case to one degree or another in all socialist societies). This provides the basis (again, even assuming you are dealing with a socialist country in fact) for these strata to lord it over the workers and to turn their relations with them into antagonistic ones (with more than a little help from revisionists at the 'commanding heights' of society). And if, somehow, these strata did 'seize power' in a socialist country, there would certainly be a basis for them to exploit and politically suppress the proletariat. So what, after all, is Szymanski's point? Let us summarize what his argument really amounts to – and what is the truth his argument is attempting to camouflage. First, his argument is essentially that just as managers in capitalist countries are merely employees, even if fairly privileged ones, of the actual owning and ruling class, the capitalists, and cannot be anything else, so it is in socialist society – the managers are, and can only be, the employees, even if fairly privileged ones, of the owning and ruling class, the working class. But in reality it is like this: the managers in capitalist society, even if they could assume (rise to) the position of the owning and ruling class, could only maintain the same capitalist system, merely replacing their employers with themselves; and in socialist society it is the same – the managers, if somehow they could rise to the position of the ruling class, could only do so as a *capitalist* ruling class (that is, by restoring capitalism), replacing their former employers (the working class) with themselves as the owners and rulers and replacing socialism with capitalism. In other words, the role of such strata as employees of the working class in socialist society is only relative and *sharply contradictory*, and it has proven to be the case that it is profoundly mistaken and very dangerous to simply look upon the managers (and along with them other privileged strata, generally speaking the intellectual workers of various kinds) as mere employees of the working class under socialism (as they were of the capitalists under capitalism). Lenin once said, at a very early point, that the managers had worked for the capitalists and they could work just as well (or even better) for the proletariat, but he certainly came to realize and emphasize that there were grave problems associated with the need to employ, even to 'bribe' these strata, that new bourgeois elements were engendered among them, posing a real threat to socialism, etc. All this has everything to do with the *transitional* and *profoundly contradictory* nature of socialist society – a point fundamentally in opposition to and negated by the revisionists – with the persistence of the 'three great differences,' bourgeois right and other inequalities, commodities, money, wage-labor, etc., as well as the existence of socialist countries in a world dominated by imperialism. Once

again, arguments like Szymanski's are startlingly shallow and ridiculous, and they are no less treacherous."⁶²

As for the particular role of Soviet managers, one should note that the "managers" of Soviet statistics are enterprise managers. As Soviet enterprises typically consist of a single plant, the highest management position in the enterprise (the director) is roughly comparable to a plant manager or plant foreman in the West.⁶³

If one can believe Western academic comparisons of Western and Soviet studies, we find that the gap between workers' and managers' pay is roughly comparable in the Soviet Union and Britain (though greater in the U.S.);⁶⁴ that the decision-making authority of Soviet enterprise directors is somewhat greater than comparable North American plant foremen⁶⁵; that relative educational qualifications are comparable to the U.S., though higher than in Britain; and that managerial careers are relatively stable, as in France, compared to greater mobility in the U.S. and Britain.⁶⁶ While perhaps of interest to some, all of this does not prove a great deal, other than the erroneous methodology of those who would make Soviet managers a stand-in for the revisionist ruling class, or regale us with comparisons between Soviet enterprise directors and Western finance capitalists.

In sum, all four points adduced by Szymanski to show that "there is no evidence that a 'state bourgeoisie' exists in the USSR" – alleged absence of a wealthy elite, working-class origins of Soviet leaders, noninheritance of elite status within families, and insignificant inequality and privilege – prove nothing of the kind. In fact, when the bourgeois analytic framework is stripped away and the data more thoroughly examined, and when Marxism is brought to bear on the question, significant aspects of the forms of the reproduction of bourgeois social relations in the Soviet Union begin to emerge.

III. Proletarian Power and the Soviet Union

Besides their attempted empirical proof of the nonexistence of a Soviet bourgeoisie, Szymanski and Laibman also develop positive arguments as to the proletarian character of the Soviet state. These come down to data on the effectiveness of proletarian participation in the Soviet state and theoretical arguments concerning the structural guarantees afforded by the socialist mode of production. Both are informed by an incorrect theory on the relation between base and superstructure in socialist society.

The arguments concerning the scope and meaning of workers' participation are dealt with well in "The 'Tarnished Socialism' Thesis," and we will only add a few points here before moving on to the more theoretical material.

Revisionist Democracy

Szymanski notes a number of avenues of "worker influence" in the Soviet ruling apparatus. There is, for instance, the matter of elections. While warning us that these are hardly the "most important mechanism of exerting power" in the Soviet Union, he sternly cautions us that they are "not the farce that they are portrayed in the West to be."⁶⁷ He goes on to note that in 1969 candidates were rejected in 145 local Soviet elections – certainly not a rubber stamp. But how significant proportionally have such rejections been? To get a clearer picture, let's examine some more recent data from the 1975 elections. In that year 68 candidates were defeated. This works out to a rejection rate of 1 out of every 30,000 candidates who were up for consideration! And of these 68, 62 were at the village level, where there was an average electorate of 45 people. Further comment seems unnecessary.⁶⁸

Szymanski also puts much stock in the Soviet press. Not only are there "extensive letters to the editors in the Soviet newspapers," the press itself is:

"full of debates on a very wide range of issues: literary policy, economic and legal reforms, city planning, crime, pollution, farm problems, the role of the press, women's role in the economy, access to higher education, etc. The only issues that are more or less immune from open debate and concerted criticism are the basic institutions of Soviet society (e.g., the leading role of the Communist Party, the existence of a military, the desirability of socialism) and the *persons* (but not the policies) of the top leaders of the party. The consensus of those who follow the Soviet media is that the breadth and depth of public debate has been growing and that in recent years there has been virtually no proposal for gradual change in the policy of the Communist Party which has not been aired in the mass media."⁶⁹

One could say much the same about the capitalist press in the West; that's not a debater's point, but an indication that Szymanski is really describing the universal necessity of the bourgeoisie to create public opinion. While every form of bourgeois rule rests on armed dictatorship – and the Soviets have plenty of that – it is to the advantage of the bourgeoisie to clothe this dictatorship in democratic forms, to enforce their rule not simply through recourse to violence at every turn, but also through a many-dimensional bourgeois-democratic mystification of the character of class rule and the state. As Lenin noted:

"Nothing in our times can be done without elections; nothing can be done without the masses. And in this era of printing and parliamentarism it is *impossible* to gain the following of the masses without a widely ramified, systematically managed, well-equipped system of flattery, lies, fraud, juggling with fashionable and popular catchwords, and promising all man-

ner of reforms and blessings to the workers right and left – as long as they renounce the revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie."⁷⁰

Limited debate within the press allows the bourgeoisie to dominate the terms of public discourse and thinking, to stake out both the mainstream position and the limits of acceptable opposition. If workers can be drawn into this in one form or another on a bourgeois basis, the advantages for the ruling class are obvious and significant. The working class is not spontaneously communist, after all.

Despite the convergences, the Soviet state is not a bourgeois democracy out of the Western imperialist mold. In a nutshell, we could say that Soviet democracy lacks any institutionalized decision making by the masses, even in the sham sense of U.S.-style elections. There are far less civil liberties and dissent is much more constricted – though the greater liberalism in the West may be due at least as much to its greater share of the plunder in the Third World, and consequent higher living standards, as it is to the historically given shape of the bourgeois-democratic institutions. On the other hand, the Soviet masses are drawn into participation in administration of social and economic life to a much more extensive degree than are workers in the West.

The particular form of bourgeois dictatorship in the Soviet Union, then, does manifest a number of distinctive differences from the typical bourgeois-democratic forms of the West. We will call the Soviet form "revisionist democracy."^{*}

Revisionist democracy is just as truncated, hypocritical, and false for the proletariat as is bourgeois democracy in the West. As exposure of the class essence of Soviet democracy and participation has been offered elsewhere,⁷² we will confine ourselves to a few additional observations.

The class character of revisionist democracy and participation is reflected in, among other things, who "participates" – and who controls. Looking at the question of party membership, for instance, the majority of managers, administrators, and college-trained specialists are party members. A substantial minority of middle-level white-collar and skilled blue-collar workers are members, but even in a major industry in Leningrad less than 15 percent of the unskilled proletarians belong to the party. Elsewhere, especially where women predominate, proletarian membership rates are even lower.⁷³ Soviet studies indicate similar differences in participation rates in other spheres.⁷⁴ Moreover, one scholar's summary of the results of Soviet studies in Leningrad in 1969 and 1971 indicates that, "in the party, the Komsomol and the trade unions alike, executive jobs are the province of profes-

* There is some evidence to indicate that the Soviets attempt to export this form of democracy. The emergence of the people's power committees in Cuba at the least coincided with the shift to full Soviet domination over the Cuban economy (and tutelage over its political institutions) in the early '70s; the activity of these committees – "mass democracy" over the pettiest details of daily life – seems to be a species of revisionist democracy.⁷¹ Attempts have also been made to implant similar forms in Angola, apparently with less effectiveness.

sional/upper class groups in general and of their administrative sub-group in particular. Even in the soviets, where workers commonly form a majority of deputies, professionals dominate the executive committees and monopolize their chairmanships.⁷⁵

Other evidence indicates that, despite the existence of some democratic and participatory forms, the Soviet ruling class is still having difficulty inculcating bourgeois-democratic illusions among many of the workers. A Soviet study of enterprises in three regions discovered that a majority of skilled, low-skilled, and unskilled workers felt, "they have no influence on the affairs of their work collectives," to say nothing of society as a whole.⁷⁶ In a Soviet survey of worker participants in "permanent production conferences," less than half thought their participation had any effect.⁷⁷ Another Soviet study of a Sverdlovsk machinery plant over the course of a year found that only 1 percent of the directives issued by plant management were related to proposals by workers⁷⁸ and the Soviet literature generally admits "the frequent non-fulfillment of the recommendations of the trade union committee and the production conference."⁷⁹ None of this even involves a question of the control of *society* by the working class – which is of preeminent importance in a truly socialist society – but only "participation" in decisions reached by one-man management at the enterprise level. Yet even here Soviet ideologists, like Chkhikvadze, themselves have to admit that "workers' participation" remains largely ineffective.⁸⁰

While the Soviets have paid attention to developing forms of bourgeois-democratic political control, this does not at all substitute for straight-up armed repression. Though the Western media publicizes only the pro-Western dissidents, we note here the report of Natalia Malakhovskaya, a Christian/feminist exile from the Soviet Union:

"... While I would not stake my head that there is not one single admirer of Trotsky in the Soviet Union, I must say that I have certainly never heard of any such person. Marxists are a different matter: most of them are confined in prisons and psychiatric hospitals. It would be interesting to hear in what other countries adherents of the official ideology are subjected to similar treatment?... As a rule, Marxist groups are made up of teenagers who have read the official textbooks on history and sociology and then, taking a look around themselves have wondered: 'How can this be? Nothing is the way the books say it ought to be! This doesn't follow Lenin! This doesn't follow Marx!' So they dig deeper into their books, whisper among themselves and hold secret meetings and discussions until such time as they are all caught. Incidentally, the authorities have no qualms about imprisoning them for there is no reason to fear any serious support from Western Marxists for these youngsters...."

"It must be noted that all the underground groups in Leningrad, no matter what their leanings, maintain very close contact with each other. They are united, first of all, by their courage, their uncompromising

commitment and firm refusal to swell their ranks by unselective admission of new members. This is why members of the most diverse groups quickly become fast friends, why we always helped one another: we hid each other's materials during house searches and gave shelter to each other's members when necessary. For this same reason my friends attended and recorded trials of neo-Marxists, even though they did not share their views...."⁸¹

While we're on the subject of revisionist democracy and dictatorship, Szymanski's discussion of Poland deserves at least a word of comment. Seemingly confounding double-talk with dialectics, he writes:

"As Poland has made painfully clear, manipulation and lack of consideration for the sentiments (and interests) of the masses results in demoralization and depoliticization, a decline in productivity and the decay of the moral fabric of socialist institutions, and in general social breakdown -- mighty structural pressures indeed -- to insure that the leaders of a socialized economy, however weak their *direct* ties to the working class, take continuous measures to increase popular participation, increase equality and expand the sphere of goods distributed on the basis of need, i.e., lead their countries towards consolidating authentic socialism and perhaps even towards full communism."⁸²

OK, now let's get this straight -- Jaruzelski imposed martial law (at Soviet behest) because the working class was getting too "depoliticized" and he wanted to "take some measures to increase popular participation"? One can only imagine what will happen if and when the Soviet Union feels compelled to push for "full democracy and vigorous political life."

Actually, Szymanski's point isn't too far from that of the various reformists in openly capitalist societies who also decry the breakdown of normal peaceful political domination of the masses during times of upsurge and rebellion, and who complement the sounds of sirens and bullets with choruses promising greater popular participation and a more equal distribution of wealth. Nor, indeed, is the world outlook reflected in this entire apologia.

The Logic of the Socialist Mode of Production

Szymanski also makes a more openly ideological argument on the class character of Soviet state power. In the article published before the Soviet debate, he wrote:

"It is inconsistent for many Marxists to apply qualitatively different criteria to the question of whether the bourgeoisie is the ruling class in a capitalist society (or the landlord class the ruling class

in a feudal society) than they do to the question of whether the proletariat is the ruling class in a socialist society. . . .

"It is clear that there are informal or structural mechanisms operating in class societies to insure that hereditary monarchy, military juntas, fascist dictatorships, as well as popularly elected officials, act in the interest of the dominant propertied class. Why, then, can we not expect that parallel structures could not exist in socialist societies to insure that those in leading positions act in the class interests of the proletariat just as surely as the Brazilian or South Korean junta acts in the interests of capital, or feudal hereditary kings acted in the interest of landlords?"⁸³

At the debate itself he re-expressed the point in cruder terms:

"Say if McNamara when he was head of Ford Motor Company wanted to keep his privilege and wanted to increase his income, how would he do that? He does that by maximizing profits for the corporation, by maximizing profits for the Ford family. Because that's the logic of the capitalist mode of production. So what would happen in a socialist economy if the managers want to keep their jobs? Well, they're going to have to maximize the logic of the socialist mode of production. The parameters of the situation put great structural constraints on the leaders — they channel ambition. So if they were secretly capitalists, they would have to *act* like socialists in order to keep their jobs. And that's good enough for me, and I think that's good enough for most of the workers. . . . It's not a question of the secret motive or even of the line. It's a question of what they do, what's the logic of the mode of production, what's the result, what class is in power."⁸⁴

From a highly determinist instrumentalism, Szymanski jumps to the seemingly opposite, though equally determinist, paradigm that the actions of political leaders are determined mainly by structural constraints of the state apparatus, rather than class origins. Presumably the Soviet structural constraints hailed here by Szymanski make all his previous arguments about class origins irrelevant — Rockefeller (or McNamara!) himself could head a Soviet ministry and would still be obliged to carry out socialism.

The revisionists thus insist upon a rigid linkage between structural form and class content. One looks for central planning, or state ownership, and the matter of class rule is settled because there is no way that these forms — given the mechanistic assumptions of the argument — could accommodate capital. Interestingly, this method is not so far removed from that of Bettelheim and his followers in their attempt to deny that the Soviet Union was ever socialist, even under Lenin. Here, one simply looks for a private sector, wage payments, or commodity exchange. . . and the issue is also settled, because such practices are defined to be incompatible with socialism. In both cases we have a kind of

convenient litmus test, notably a particular practice or form which predetermines the character of a society.

Now there is indeed a unity to a social matrix. But it cannot be deduced by classifying and totting up, in some quantitative way, various institutions. Society is not the mere aggregation of such institutions (or practices). It is a structured, if contradictory, whole which gives determinate context to each of its (component) social institutions. Further, these institutions do not subsist as abstract entities or as things; they embody and reproduce definite class relations.

In determining if a society is on the socialist road it is necessary to examine whether or not the proletariat maintains, at the highest levels of society, the initiative to carry social transformations forward in the interests of, and to promote the advance of, world revolution. But while this initiative is backed by the power of the proletarian state and concentrated in the leading line of the vanguard party, it is rooted in specific production relations which regulate the allocation of social labor and which determine the very purpose of social production. For Marxists, then, the dynamics and direction of society turn on the complex, dialectical interaction between base and superstructure. And as the above discussion suggests, this interaction is even more complex under socialism.

In this light, it is absolutely wrong to equate capitalist and socialist society in the way Szymanski does. One particularity of capitalist society is that the suppressed (but historically rising) class, the proletariat, cannot institute the relations of production characteristic of it within the shell of the old society. This is different from all earlier societies, in which the germs of the new social relations *could* take root and gradually grow within the old. Thus, the circuits of capital and the corresponding class differentiation began to emerge within an overwhelmingly feudal society, and for a rather long period the bourgeoisie more or less shared power with the feudal lords.* It's true, on the other hand, to borrow a phrase, that there were "structural constraints" enforced by that same state that prevented full capitalist domination of society, and that it was ultimately necessary for the bourgeoisie to *smash* the feudal states in order for bourgeois relations to become qualitatively dominant within those societies.

But the "structural constraints" of capitalism are dif-

* From the *Communist Manifesto*: "Each step in the development of the bourgeoisie was accompanied by a corresponding political advance of that class. An oppressed class under the sway of the feudal nobility, an armed and self-governing association in the medieval commune; here independent urban republic (as in Italy and Germany), there taxable 'third estate' of the monarchy (as in France), afterwards, in the period of manufacture proper, serving either the semifeudal or the absolute monarchy as a counterpoise against the nobility, and, in fact, cornerstone of the great monarchies in general, the bourgeoisie has at last, since the establishment of Modern Industry and of the world-market, conquered for itself, in the modern representative State, exclusive political sway. The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie."⁸⁵

ferent. Revisionism to the contrary, the proletariat cannot "share power" or dig-in in the bourgeois state. For example, the state sector within capitalist society cannot be seen as some sort of potentially (or actually) socialist stronghold within capitalist society, as it is subordinate to and entirely conditioned by the dictates of the self-expansion of value. It is this overall dominance of the law of value that marks a society as capitalist; once that is ascertained, analysis must then proceed on the basis of grasping the essential relationships of the various superstructural institutions to that operation.

But what about socialism? Socialist society is unique in that throughout its existence its economic base will simultaneously contain and generate economic relations characteristic of capitalism (e.g., exchange through money), socialism (e.g., payment for work) and communism (e.g., subbotniks). This will find expression in the socialist superstructure (more on this shortly), and for this reason alone it is a serious error not to apply "qualitatively different criteria" to the state in capitalist and socialist society.

The soil for capitalist relations within socialist society includes the differences (and inequalities) between mental and manual labor, between agriculture and industry, and between the city and the countryside; it also comprehends the continued operation of the law of value in a number of important spheres, including exchange through money, payment according to work and even significant sections of the ownership system. What happens to those relations – that is, whether their scope of operation is entrenched and expanded or struggled against and restricted is mainly fought out in the superstructure and must be carried through in the economic base. The soil for capitalist relations in the base finds expression in lines and policies which, if applied, broaden the sphere of those bourgeois relations. Those who fight for and implement those lines, at the top levels of the party, are the core of the bourgeoisie under socialism (and become the new bourgeois rulers if capitalism is restored). This sheds light on the irreducible importance of "what line leads" in every sphere of socialist society. Bourgeois lines in command mean the expansion of bourgeois relations and the strengthening of the bourgeoisie; proletarian lines, their restriction (and motion towards eventual elimination). All this has direct material implications.

The state becomes an arena for struggle between the proletariat and the new bourgeoisie generated within socialist society. Things are further complicated by the fact that ownership in socialist society (and overall direction of the economy) necessarily rests in the hands of the state. Thus as forces in positions of power and leadership espouse a bourgeois line – that is, a line representing the bourgeois relations in society (and finding support internationally in the existence of imperialism worldwide) – their authority becomes transformed "from leadership guiding the masses in revolution toward the goal of communism into oppression over the masses, forcing them back to capitalism – in the name, however, of 'socialism' and 'communism.'"⁸⁶ Ownership in a sense changes hands in various units, elements of the superstructure (including, very importantly, parts of the

party) become neobourgeois strongholds, and different parts of the superstructure begin serving capitalism, not socialism.

At the same time, as long as the state is principally in the hands of the proletariat, as long as the overall line guiding society indeed serves the international proletarian revolution and fosters the transition to communism, society is socialist and the proletariat holds power in fact. This is not tautological; the real direction of any society purporting to be socialist can be analyzed and evaluated. As Bob Avakian wrote concerning the Soviet Union:

"This just takes us back to the fundamental question: what is commanding what, what is determining and regulating? Is commodity production, the law of value and surplus value in command, or are these things subordinate to and in the service of principles, policies and relations that serve to move society toward a new stage where such things have been eliminated? Do these things dominate and lead to the reproduction, on an extended scale, of relations in which they are essential and regulating, or are they dominated by 'calculations' and a whole process of increasingly conscious mass decision making (and implementing) that (over any period of time) increasingly *restricts* and moves toward finally eliminating their role altogether? Can anyone argue that such things as the law of value, profit, etc., have *diminished* over, say, the last two or three decades in the USSR? On the contrary, everyone knows – and the Soviet apologists do not attempt to hide this, though they certainly do attempt to explain away its implications even while actually extolling the fact – that these 'categories' have assumed an *increasing* (and in fact a commanding) role."⁸⁷

The proletariat under socialism has going for it the proletarian headquarters in the party, the mass organizations, the sections of the state apparatus adhering to the revolutionary line, state ownership, and (again) the revolutionary direction of the economy overall, etc., as well as the highly important factor of other revolutionary struggles going on internationally. But it's up against a bourgeoisie which is headquartered in the highest reaches of the party and the state apparatus, and which finds soil in the still fairly extensive bourgeois-type relations within the socialist society, in the international dominance of the bourgeoisie, and in the powerful force of habit of 5,000 years of class society.

Szymanski uses the concept of "structural constraints," however, to imply that once state ownership and related practices are established, proletarian rule is more or less "locked in." This is not only wrong, but extremely damaging: it's wrong because the only thing the proletariat is "locked into" in socialism is continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat to transform the world into a communist one, and it's damaging because the very act of telling the proletariat that its rule is guaranteed by all these so-called structural constraints tends to "lock" the working class itself

into a state of political passivity.

The proletariat establishes its dictatorship to effect the (long and tortuous) transition to communism, and its superstructure must be fitted (and constantly re-fitted) to that task. This transition has to entail a narrowing of the division of labor in society, both in the base and in the superstructure, in which the masses are aroused to increasingly overcome what Marx called this "enslaving subordination." This crucial point – the mobilization of the workers to increasingly assume the leadership over and actual direction of all spheres of society – does not reduce itself to Laibman's assurances that the trade union leaders are staying on the ball, or Szymanski's focus on the class origins of the Soviet leaders or the greater role of the militias; it means mass political struggle over cardinal questions before society, over society's overall direction. Such struggle is both continuous and inevitably and periodically comes to a head in all-out battles between the proletariat and the (new) bourgeoisie to determine which class will in fact hold power and in which direction society will move. Both the continual revolutionization of society and the major leaps called forward by the exigencies of the class struggle (internationally and within the socialist country, and in their interpenetration) find institutional expression: at different junctures new organs of power, institutions, practices, etc., arise to carry forward and consolidate the transformations effected by the mass struggle in various spheres. And yes, a key characteristic of this process is changing the social composition of the organs of power and leading institutions in society to afford and reflect deeper and more conscious involvement of the masses themselves as a crucial part in breaking down the division of labor inherited from capitalist society.

But again, exactly because *all* these forms arise within the contradictory soil of socialist society, they can be utilized to fight for either restricting or expanding bourgeois relations; none is somehow immune to capital.

In a funny kind of way, Szymanski gives us both instrumentalism and instrumentalism inside out. In analyzing capitalism, he seems to see the capitalist state as an institution able to be seized and suborned by different sectors of the bourgeoisie. The voluntarism in this approach comes out in the notion that the ascendant bourgeois forces more or less blithely utilize the state to fill their pockets (after all, "don't they care about their children?"). By substituting the sociological notion of the capitalist class for the Marxist-Leninist analysis of the laws governing the capitalist economic base (including their effects on and relative objectification in the class formation), he lays the basis for his detachment of the superstructure from the dynamics and imperatives of the economic base, and for the interrelated struggle on the higher and concentrated plane of politics.

But when he approaches socialist society, in which the latitude for the superstructure (and for consciousness generally) is far greater and qualitatively different, he utterly negates its initiative, its importance, and its ability to affect and transform the economic base. *Both* approaches share a mechanical view of the relation between base and

superstructure.

The real relation, in any society, must be treated dialectically – that is, in a framework recognizing that they are mutually exclusive yet constantly interpenetrating, each conditioning and constantly transforming the existence of the other. The analysis of any society must be founded in the dynamics and contradictions of its economic base, and the content and significance of the various forms of the superstructure must be understood in terms of *their* generation from, interpenetration with, and reaction back on the base. But it's not a one-way causal arrow in any case; the superstructure will at times be principal (e.g., during periods of revolution), and is extremely intertwined at all times with the base in the era of imperialism. As for socialist society, the dynamic role of the superstructure is qualitatively greater – while the base remains the foundation, the superstructure plays an initiating role, and the scope for human consciousness is unprecedented.

That is the leap humanity is currently fighting to make, and that is the leap which the Soviet bourgeoisie – like its U.S. counterparts – aims to suppress and prevent. And for that reason the Soviet bourgeoisie – again, with its Western counterparts – must be overthrown, repressed, and replaced by a genuine proletarian dictatorship.

Behind all the talk of narrowing wage scales and institutional constraints there lies an apologia, a method, and a model for the future.

The apologia is for a society dominated by the capital relation, with that domination reflected in all its institutions. Its outer differences with the imperialist societies of the West are like distinctions between different kinds of dinosaurs – the astute student will take the wide variation fully into account without losing sight of the basic generic unity. The petrification of the antagonistic division between rulers and ruled; the role of the state in fighting for and assuring favorable conditions for the accumulation of capital, internally and around the world; the military suppression of the oppressed nations and the preparation for a world war of redivision, resting on the use of nuclear weapons; and the reduction of the masses of workers to mere means for the self-expansion of value – all these are the rule in both the Soviet Union and the more classically capitalist powers. Apologetics for such a ruling class are apologetics for criminals.

The method is bourgeois sociology filtered through revisionism. Analysis of class origins replaces analysis of class relations, warmed-over elite theory (a little pink around the edges) is posed against the Leninist understanding of the state, and a retreat to nineteenth-century conditions of capitalism is set in opposition to the real dynamics of imperialism and the importance of the distinction between capitalism's two stages.

And the model society for the future? Not communism, not socialism, but what Raymond Lotta called "decapitated capitalism." The class privileges and prerogatives of the petty bourgeoisie and other intermediate strata are to remain intact in this system, while the "irrational" institution of private ownership of the means of production will be brought under control of the state. Thoroughgoing revolution is out; the rule of the beneficial elite is in. And when the savior's mask inevitably turns back into the familiar visage of the capitalist (even if now a bureaucrat-capitalist), calculating profits and barking orders, sponsoring invasions and planning wars, the masses are assured it's all for their own good.

Soviet society in particular demands apologetics; nowhere is the gap between professed ideal and direct experience as chasm-like. Sophistry and hypocrisy are the stock in trade of defenders of a capitalism that dare not speak its name. It is on Marxists to take up the task of stripping away the mystification, preparatory to ripping up the social relations that generate and rely on it. And this task, in regard to the Soviet Union, must continue to deepen. □

Notes

¹ Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, "The 'Tarnished Socialism' Thesis, or the Political Economy of Soviet Social-Imperialism," *The Soviet Union: Socialist or Social-Imperialist? Essays Toward the Debate on the Nature of Soviet Society* (Chicago: RCP Publications, 1983), pp. 148-49.

² David Laibman, "The 'State Capitalist' and 'Bureaucratic-Exploitative' Interpretations of the Soviet Social Formation: A Critique," *Essays Toward the Debate*, pp. 16-18.

³ Laibman, "Interpretations of the Soviet Social Formation: A Critique," p. 16-17.

⁴ V.I. Lenin, *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism, Collected Works (LCW), Volume 22* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), p. 205.

⁵ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 3 (New York: International Publishers, 1967), pp. 436, 438-39.

⁶ Frederick Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press [FLP], 1975), p. 90-91.

⁷ See Raymond Lotta with Frank Shannon, *America in Decline: An Analysis of the Developments Toward War and Revolution, in the U.S. and Worldwide, in the 1980s* (Chicago: Banner Press, 1984), pp. 120-23.

⁸ Albert Szymanski, "The Red Flag Still Flies: Workers' Power in the USSR," *The Soviet Union: Socialist or Social-Imperialist? Part II: The Question is Joined* (Chicago: RCP Publications, 1983), p. 31.

⁹ See Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, *Charting the Uncharted Course* (Chicago: RCP Publications, 1981), pp. 10-17.

¹⁰ For a discussion of the concept of the national capital formation, see Lotta, *America in Decline*, pp. 117-19.

¹¹ Szymanski, "Soviet Socialism and Proletarian Internationalism," *Essays Toward the Debate*, p. 43.

¹² Laibman, "Interpretations of the Soviet Social Formation: A Critique," p. 17.

¹³ Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme, Selected Works of Marx and Engels (MESW)*, Vol. 3 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969), pp. 19-20.

¹⁴ This series of quotes is from Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, pp. 593-95.

¹⁵ See Murray Yanowitch, *Social and Economic Inequality in the Soviet Union* (Armonk, N. Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1977), p. 9; Mervyn Matthews, *Privilege in the Soviet Union* (London and Boston: Allen Unwin, 1978), p. 20.

¹⁶ Matthews, *Privilege in the Soviet Union*, p. 23. Szymanski maintains that this is also the income of economic ministers, though he provides no documentation for this assertion (see *The Question is Joined*, p. 88). Perhaps he views this as the general income level among higher government officials. In either case, he does not document his claim, nor are we aware of sources which could substantiate it.

¹⁷ See Matthews, *Privilege in the Soviet Union*, p. 27.

¹⁸ See Matthews, *Privilege in the Soviet Union*, p. 53.

¹⁹ Bob Avakian, "Some Thoughts on the Soviet Debate," unpublished paper, 1983, p. 10.

²⁰ S. Dzarasov, "Economic Initiative and the Organization of Centralized Planning," *Problems of Economics*, December 1983, p. 92.

²¹ See Matthews, *Privilege in the Soviet Union*, p. 38.

²² See Lotta, "Realities of Social-Imperialism Versus Dogmas of Cynical Realism: The Dynamics of the Soviet Capital Formation," *The Question is Joined*. This outlines some of the necessities facing the Soviet capitalists.

²³ Szymanski, "Soviet Socialism and Proletarian Internationalism," p. 41; Robert Osborn, *Soviet Social Policies* (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey Press, 1970), pp. 259-60. Szymanski, in the same passage, also claims Osborn as evidence that there is not privileged access to automobiles or special stores. Osborn makes no such absurd claims. The chapter in Osborn's book that Szymanski cites (Chapter 6) does not deal with these issues at all but is concerned with size, planning, and investment inequalities among urban areas.

²⁴ This and the following brief summary account of privileges are drawn from Hedrik Smith, *The Russians* (New York: Times Books, 1983), Chapter 1; Robert Kaiser, *Russia, the People and the Power* (1976), pp. 175-79; Matthews, *Privilege in the Soviet Union*, Chapter 2; and Alistair McAuley, *Economic Welfare in the Soviet Union* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), pp. 11-12.

²⁵ For a discussion of the Soviet Union during the Stalin era, see Avakian, *Conquer the World? The International Proletariat Must and Will*, published as *Revolution*, No. 50 (December 1981), pp. 17-29.

²⁶ Maria Hirsowicz, *The Bureaucratic Leviathan* (New York: New York University Press, 1980), pp. 115-17.

²⁷ See Yanowitch, "Review: Mervyn Matthews, *Privilege in the Soviet Union*," *Soviet Studies*, January 1980, pp. 160-61; McAuley, *Economic Welfare in the Soviet Union*, p. 67. Szymanski's attempt (see *The Question is Joined*, pp. 87-88) to compare this estimate of the lowest level of the Soviet income "elite" with the top levels of the U.S. ruling class is obviously silly.

²⁸ Matthews, *Privilege in the Soviet Union*, p. 180.

²⁹ Roy Medvedev, *On Socialist Democracy* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), p. 224.

³⁰ Michael Goldfield and Melvin Rothenberg, *The Myth of*

Capitalism Reborn (Oakland: Line of March, 1980), p. 42.

³¹ See Bruce O'Ceña and Irwin Silber, "Capitalism in the USSR? An Opportunist Theory in Disarray, Part 1," *Line of March*, November/December 1980, p. 64.

³² Consumption per capita increased more rapidly in the USSR in the period 1955-70 than in the U.S. or Britain, but the Soviets were outpaced by such countries as Japan, West Germany, France, and Italy in the same period (Abram Bergson, *Productivity and the Social System - the USSR and the West* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978], p. 173). It is true that these trends have faltered with the development of crisis in the Western bloc, but similar trends can also be noted recently in the Soviet bloc, most starkly in Poland.

³³ For a summation of Soviet studies, see Alex Pravda, "Is There a Soviet Working Class?", *Problems of Communism*, November/December 1982.

³⁴ "It is the nature of the Soviet definition, measuring inequality by quantile boundaries, not quantile averages, that the impoverishment or enrichment of the top people will not normally be reflected in the decile ratio" (Alec Nove, "Income Distribution in the USSR: A Possible Explanation of Some Recent Data," *Soviet Studies*, April 1982, p. 288).

³⁵ Michael Ellman, "A Note on the Distribution of Earnings in the USSR Under Brezhnev," *Slavic Review*, December 1980, p. 670. The figure sometimes cited of 7.24 for 1946 has been shown by both Soviet and Western economists to be statistically unreliable and to drastically exaggerate inequality due to extensive rationing and other factors. Earlier figures are much lower. On this point, see also Peter Wiles, *Distribution of Income East and West* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Co., 1974), pp. xii-xiv.

³⁶ Peter Wiles, "Recent Data on Soviet Income Distribution," *Economic Aspects of Life in the USSR* (1975), p. 120. The decile ratio for the UK in 1966 was 3.4 "gross of a much heavier income tax. The British figure also includes agricultural workers, while Soviet figures exclude the lowly paid collective farm workers. Both of these factors would serve to make the British figure significantly more equal than the Soviet." The impact of various social services is unclear. However, even McAuley, who has investigated the subject extensively and is fairly sympathetic to the Soviets on the issue of social equality, concludes that "Existing institutions tend to reinforce as often as counteract existing social and sexual inequality" (McAuley, "Welfare and Social Security," in Leonard Schapiro and Joseph Godson, eds., *The Soviet Worker* [New York: St. Martin, 1981], p. 227). See also McAuley, *Economic Welfare in the Soviet Union*, pp. 97, 287-88; Osborn, *Soviet Social Policies*, pp. 41, 50-51; and Pravda, "Is There a Soviet Working Class?"

³⁷ See Yanowitch, *Social and Economic Inequality in the Soviet Union*, p. 24.

³⁸ McAuley, "Welfare and Social Security," p. 214.

³⁹ Quoted by Ellman, "A Note on the Distribution of Earnings in the USSR Under Brezhnev," p. 669.

⁴⁰ See David Dyker, "Planning and the Worker," in Schapiro and Godson, eds., *The Soviet Worker*, p. 48.

⁴¹ Gregory Grossman, "The 'Second Economy' of the USSR," *Problems of Communism*, September/October 1977, pp. 25-40.

⁴² Szymanski, *The Question if Joined*, pp. 20-21.

⁴³ Laibman, *Essays Toward the Debate*, p. 17.

⁴⁴ Szymanski, *The Question is Joined*, p. 68.

⁴⁵ Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte," *MESW*, Vol. 1, p. 424.

⁴⁶ Lenin, *The State and Revolution* (Peking: FLP, 1970), pp. 16.

⁴⁷ Szymanski, *The Question is Joined*, p. 14.

⁴⁸ Lenin, "Report to a Session of the All-Russian CEC (April 29, 1918), *LCW*, Vol. 27, p. 300.

⁴⁹ See, for example, G. William Domhoff, *Who Rules America?* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967), pp. 16 and following; also Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist*

America (New York: Basic Books, 1976).

⁵⁰ Yanowitch, *Social and Economic Inequality in the Soviet Union*, p. 126.

⁵¹ Nove, "Is There a Ruling Class in the USSR?", *Soviet Studies*, October 1975, p. 617. On this question see also, Peter Zwick, "An Aggregate Biographical Analysis of the Soviet Political Elite," Doctoral Dissertation (Duke University, 1971), pp. 391-92; David Lane, *The Socialist Industrial State* (London and Boston: Allen Unwin, 1977), pp. 126-29; and Jerry Hough, *Soviet Leadership in Transition* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1980), pp. 26, 68.

⁵² From Bordanko's *Steel Founders*, quoted in Vera Dunham, "The Waning Theme of the Worker as Hero in Recent Soviet Literature," in Arcadius Kahan and Blair Ruble, eds., *Industrial Labor in the USSR* (Oxford, England: Pergamon, 1979), p. 408.

⁵³ Hough, *Soviet Leadership in Transition*, p. 64.

⁵⁴ See Hough, *Soviet Leadership in Transition*, p. 9. As part of the line of developing a new working class leadership and intelligentsia, in the early '30s the proportion of workers and peasants enrolled in Soviet universities reached an all-time high of 72% of enrollment (Richard Dobson, "Education and Opportunity," in Jerry Pankhurst and Michael Sacks, eds., *Contemporary Soviet Society: Sociological Perspectives* [New York: Praeger, 1980], p. 116).

⁵⁵ Hough, *Soviet Leadership in Transition*, pp. 50, 58.

⁵⁶ See, for instance, three Soviet studies summarized in Lane, *The Socialist Industrial State*, pp. 207-11.

⁵⁷ Even those manual workers' children that do make it into college are drawn disproportionately from the more skilled workers. See summaries of the evidence of Soviet studies in Pravda, "Is There a Soviet Working Class?", pp. 12-13; and Lane, *The Socialist Industrial State*, p. 187.

⁵⁸ Smith, *The Russians*, pp. 47-48.

⁵⁹ Nove, "Income Distribution in the USSR," p. 288.

⁶⁰ Fridrikh Filippov, *Sotsiologiya obrazovaniia* (1980), p. 57.

⁶¹ Szymanski, "Soviet Socialism and Proletarian Internationalism," p. 43.

⁶² Avakian, "Some Thoughts on the Soviet Debate," pp. 11-13.

⁶³ See McAuley, *Economic Welfare in the Soviet Union*, p. 237.

⁶⁴ Comparisons are very rough, of necessity, due to limited availability of statistics and problems in the comparability of occupational classifications. Wiles gives British and Soviet figures that suggest a larger Soviet gap (Wiles, "Recent Data on Soviet Income Distribution," p. 121). McAuley finds the Soviet difference "rather less than would be found in the UK" without allowing for income tax - nor does he cite British figures (McAuley, *Economic Welfare in the Soviet Union*). Granick finds the differential roughly the same before tax - after tax the Soviet differential is more unequal (David Granick, *Managerial Comparisons of Four Developed Countries: France, Britain, United States and Russia* [1972], p. 264).

⁶⁵ Richard Carson, "Property Rights," in Carmelo Mesa-Lago and Carl Beck, eds., *Comparative Socialist Systems* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1974), pp. 325-26.

⁶⁶ Granick, *Managerial Comparisons*, pp. 197, 245.

⁶⁷ Szymanski, *Essays Toward the Debate*, p. 46.

⁶⁸ Theodore Friedgut, *Political Participation in the USSR* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 130.

⁶⁹ Szymanski, *Essays Toward the Debate*, pp. 46-47.

⁷⁰ Lenin, *Imperialism and the Split in Socialism*, *LCW*, Vol. 23, p. 117.

⁷¹ See, for example, Marta Harnecker, *Cuba: Dictatorship or Democracy* (Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill and Co., 1980).

⁷² Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, See "The 'Tarnished Socialism' Thesis," Introduction, pp. 135-53.

⁷³ Yanowitch, *Social and Economic Inequality in the Soviet Union*, p. 34; Pravda, "Is There a Soviet Working Class?", p. 19.

⁷⁴ See David Lane and Felicity O'Dell, *The Soviet Industrial Worker* (New York: St. Martin, 1978), p. 35; Pravda, "Is There a Soviet Work-

ing Class?"

⁷⁵ Pravda, "Is There a Soviet Working Class?", p. 18.

⁷⁶ Iu V. Arutunian, "Socio-Economic Foundations of Group Differences," translated and reprinted in Murray Yanowitch and Wesley Fisher, translators and eds., *Social Stratification and Mobility in the USSR* (Armonk, N. Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1973), pp. 113-14.

⁷⁷ Cited in Lane and O'Dell, *The Soviet Industrial Worker*, p. 36.

⁷⁸ Yanowitch, *Social and Economic Inequality in the Soviet Union*, p. 152.

⁷⁹ Yanowitch, *Social and Economic Inequality in the Soviet Union*, p. 155.

⁸⁰ V. Chkhikvadze, *The State, Democracy and Legality*, referred to in Medvedev, *On Socialist Democracy*, p. 261.

⁸¹ Natalia Malakhovskaya, quoted in "Marxist-Leninist Resistance Inside the USSR," *Women and Revolution*, Spring 1981; see also *Revolutionary Worker*, No. 135 (December 18, 1981), p. 11.

⁸² Szymanski, *Essays Toward the Debate*, p. 54.

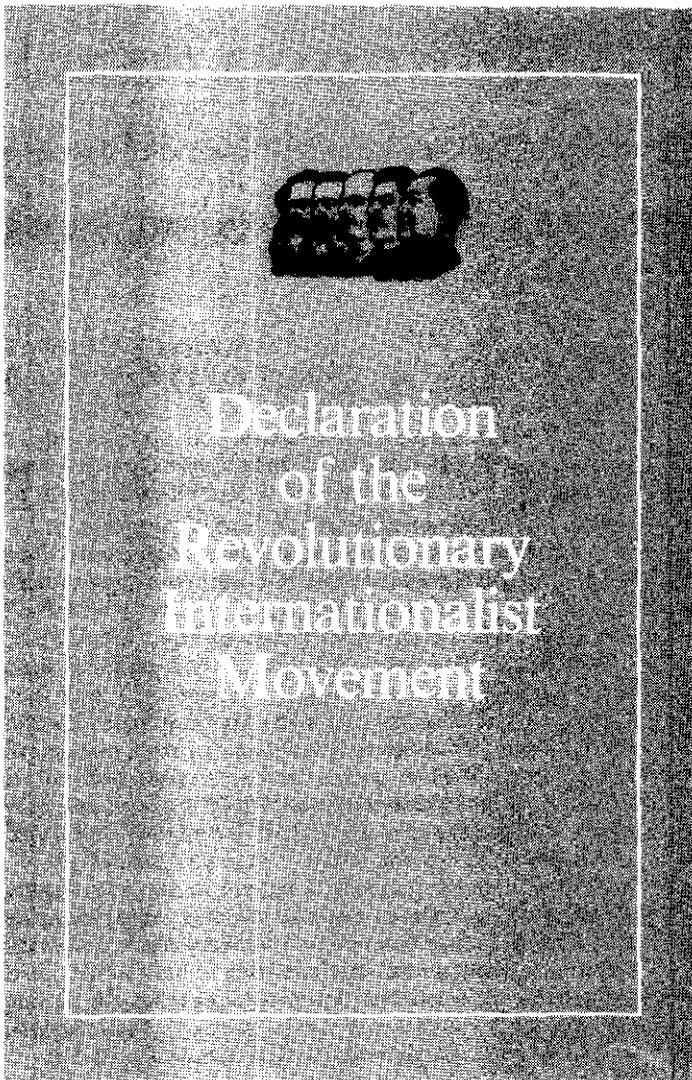
⁸³ Szymanski, *Essays Toward the Debate*, pp. 50-51.

⁸⁴ Szymanski, *The Question is Joined*, p. 32.

⁸⁵ Marx and Engels, *The Manifesto of the Communist Party*, MESW, Vol. 1, pp. 110-11.

⁸⁶ Revolutionary Communist Party, *New Programme and New Constitution of the Revolutionary Communist Party* (Chicago: RCP Publications, 1981), p. 112.

⁸⁷ Avakian, "Some Thoughts on the Soviet Debate," pp. 6-7.



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Against the "Lesser Evil" Thesis: Soviet Preparations for World War 3

by Mike Ely

No one argues that the Soviet Union is not an active participant in the intense rivalry between blocs, or that the Soviets have not constructed a massive and expanding military. However, an influential argument has been raised that we are passing through a "new cold war" which has been one-sidedly instigated by the West, and perhaps by the United States alone. The Soviet Union is portrayed as being dragged into confrontation by aggressive Western provocations and by its own, more understandable, instincts for security and self-defense. Specifically, the very notion that the Soviet Union might, like the Western powers, have global and imperial ambitions is denounced as the cynical fabrication of American policy makers.

This is, in fact, the position of the rulers of the Soviet Union. Leonid Brezhnev insisted at the 24th Congress of the CPSU:

"Whenever imperialists want to cover up an aggressive scheme, they try to revive the lie of a Soviet threat. They seek evidence of this threat in the depths of the Indian Ocean and on the peaks of the Cordilleras. And, of course, if seen through NATO field-glasses the plains of Europe are teeming with Soviet divisions poised for a leap against the West.

"But the peoples will not be deceived by any attempt to ascribe to the Soviet Union intentions which are alien to it. We declare with all emphasis: we have no territorial claims on anyone, we threaten no one, and we have no intention of attacking anyone, we stand for the free and independent development of all nations. But let no one try and talk to us in terms of ultimatums and from positions of strength.

"We have all the requisites – a genuine peace policy, military might, and the unity of Soviet people

– to ensure the inviolability of our borders against any encroachments, and to defend the gains of socialism."¹

Parallel to such intergovernmental polemics over the cause of war tensions, a debate has broken out among a variety of political forces – including many genuine opponents of the West's accelerating war preparations – over the purpose and character of the Soviet military. Here there are political figures, some professing a radical distaste for the Soviet system, who nonetheless argue, for a number of reasons, that the Soviet leadership is accurate in claiming that its armed forces are essentially *defensive*, and exist to serve an overall "peace policy" by leveling a restraining threat against the West.

Fred Halliday, for example, writes in an essay in *Extermination and Cold War*:

"If we look at the historical character of the Soviet Union and the United States as societies, or at the respective roles they play in the world at large, there is not so much an isomorphism as an asymmetry of internal structure and international consequence.

"The record of the past decade is, in this respect, clear enough. The two world powers do not have an equal responsibility for the current Cold War, or for the arms race that is accompanying it. The deterioration in the international climate in the latter part of the 1970s has been essentially precipitated by changes in the global posture of one state, namely the USA. No such change can be detected in the USSR: it has not engaged in a sudden expansion of its military forces, it has not seen a quite new leadership emerge after a ferocious internal political debate, and it has not introduced new conditions into US-Soviet negotiations, let alone abandoned the explicit pursuit of detente. This is not to say, as we have stressed, that the USSR bears no responsibility for bringing the present crisis upon us. In a longer-term sense its political involution [i.e., its political degeneration into a corrupt bureaucracy – *M.E.*] has helped to render it possible at all. But this responsibility is different in kind from that of the USA."²

Similarly, Roy and Zhores Medvedev wield their prestige as the "Marxist Soviet dissidents" to contend:

"In the interests of a realistic understanding of the current crisis and the tasks facing the peace movement, we cannot accept the notion of a functional equivalence between the 'deep structures of the cold war' within both blocs.

"Such ideas obscure, in our opinion, major differences in the bipolar confrontation – whether we consider the institutional role of military spending, official attitudes toward the usage of nuclear weapons, the history of previous attempts at arms

limitations, popular perceptions of nuclear policy, the problem of proliferation or the ultimate logics of strategic rivalry."³

Others, such as Fred Kaplan in his book *Dubious Specter, A Skeptical Look at the Soviet Nuclear Threat* and Andrew Cockburn in *The Threat: Inside the Soviet Military Machine*, draw somewhat similar conclusions concerning the "Soviet danger" through analysis of various weaknesses and limitations of Soviet military power. It is significant that even someone like E.P. Thompson, famous for his "plague on both your houses" approach to the two superpowers (and for his corresponding "softness" on the nature and role of his "own" European bourgeoisie) differentiates between the driving forces within the two blocs by describing an "incremental thrust in profit-taking (in the West) and in action-reaction (in the East)."⁴

If the argument being made by proponents of a theory of "asymmetry" were simply that revolutionary or antiwar forces in the Western bloc should principally target and expose their "own" imperialists' war preparations, we would have little argument. Certainly the current Western drum beating about the "Soviet Menace" is bloodsoaked with hypocrisy, and serves to obscure and justify the real content of Western imperialist preparations for global warfare behind numbing nonsense about American inferiority, the "defense of the Free World," and so on. But in fact, this theory of Soviet defensiveness forms a cornerstone in a whole analysis of present international dynamics which is not only wrong, but quite dangerous to revolutionary preparations if left unchallenged. In essence, the theory implies that there are no objective, deeply rooted, *interimperialist* conflicts of interest between the Eastern and Western blocs. The current tensions are portrayed either as a justification for increased American arms profiteering, as a cover for stepped-up U.S. strangling of smaller nations, or even as irrational "anti-Sovietism" of the political right-wing. Interbloc tensions are presented as unrelated (or even as antagonistic) to the basic national interests of U.S. imperialism. In short, the theory that the Soviet Union is somehow peaceful and their military preparations "defensive" not only constitutes an apology for the war preparations of the Soviet bloc, it also seriously underestimates the actual danger of a global nuclear war – which would be a *hot* war, not a "new cold war." This assessment directly sustains the reformist strategy which assumes that mass pressure within the NATO countries, linked with external peace pressure (read: the restraining might of Soviet peace missiles), can deflect U.S. aggression short of either world war or revolution.

The "Soviet defensiveness" thesis posits that in several crucial respects the Soviet approach to war and peace is qualitatively different than that of the U.S. bloc. First, it is argued, there are important differences in their deployment of forces: as opposed to the U.S., the Soviet Union concentrates its troops and missiles overwhelmingly within its own borders, not in a web of bases stretching over the globe. In contrast to the record of innumerable invasions and "police

actions" by the U.S. and its allies, the periodic Soviet invasions have been confined to erring allies and neighbors, where the rationale of Soviet national defense seems a bit more plausible, at least to some observers. A second major argument is made out of the fact that the U.S. has generally taken the lead in the arms race, introducing most new weapons systems, and remains ahead in most military technologies today. And third, the Soviet leadership, we are told, exhibits a sincere appreciation of the tremendous danger of nuclear war, labeling it "suicidal" and "unwinnable," whereas American political leaders have talked openly about the possibility of "limited" nuclear wars, and "prevailing" in protracted nuclear conflict. A sharp contrast is drawn between the current brusque American attitude toward arms negotiations, and the Soviet Union's stream of more "serious and sincere" proposals covering a whole range of arms control and disarmament issues.

In short, a selective checklist of differences between the blocs has been marshaled in an attempt to document a qualitative difference in their respective roles in the world today, their military preparations in particular. Clearly such perceptions of asymmetry are not simply the result of clever Soviet propaganda; there are major material differences between the two rival camps in the world today. But as we shall discuss in this article, such differences, while real, flow from the particular history, geography, and economic and political development of the Soviet bloc; they say nothing about the fundamental character of Soviet society and the profound contradictions inherent to it that are propelling it on a collision course with the imperialist West. Of course this method of drawing up checklists of various secondary characteristics in order to determine which imperialist power is the main source of war and which is the "lesser evil" on a world scale has been used in one form or another in previous world wars. Whatever the intent of those making this argument then, or now, it objectively justifies enlisting with one imperialist against another, and covers up the deepest contradictions of the world imperialist system which are the actual source of such wars. The only thing that has changed in the interim is which characteristics count as "peaceful," and which denote "warmongering."

In this article, we will first criticize this approach in its own right. Then on that basis, we will try to piece together a starkly different picture of reality, based on an examination of Soviet military doctrine, force posture, and military preparations. Such an examination does not reveal an "inward looking," "reactive," "defensive" power concerned only with protecting its own borders, much less a revolutionary socialist state striving to advance the world proletarian revolution. Instead, the picture that emerges is of an imperialist power, in the Leninist sense — albeit with particular strengths and weaknesses and a particular political and geographical position in the world — that is calculatingly building up its armed forces for the purpose of confronting and defeating a rival imperialist bloc in global warfare, of seizing key areas of the world, and on that basis — through unparalleled bloodshed, devastation, and suffering — forging

a new imperialist division of the world.

An all-sided proof of the imperialist character of Soviet society, of its rivalry with the U.S.-led bloc, or even of current Soviet military preparations cannot, of course, be extracted from study of the military sphere alone. "With reference to wars, the main thesis of dialectics . . . is that 'war is simply the continuation of politics by other [i.e., violent] means.' . . . [A]ny war [is] the continuation of the politics of the powers concerned — and the various classes within these countries — in a definite period."⁵ Hence, the character of any country's armed forces and military preparations, and the wars it wages, are fundamentally determined by the nature of that society, as determined by its production and class relations. This point is important because confusion about the character of Soviet society has fueled this mistaken and dangerous notion that the Soviet Union is not co-equally responsible for the growing danger of world war. Such an all-sided analysis of the nature of Soviet society has been taken up elsewhere, and readers are urged to study it.⁶ At the same time, however, because war and military matters are an extension of politics, they bear the indelible imprint of the politics they serve; in fact at certain times, particularly during wartime, military policy is a concentration of the politics of a given society. Thus, an examination of the doctrine and structure of the Soviet military does reveal much about its purpose and character, as well as contribute to the larger debate on the nature of Soviet society and the contention between the U.S.- and Soviet-led blocs.

We cannot fully elaborate Soviet military strategy and doctrine, or even its force posture; we are not privy to the Kremlin's closely guarded war plans and stratagems, and beyond that, plans and strategies are fluid and change with objective developments. However, on the basis of studying the military doctrine articulated by the Soviet leadership, and the kind of military they have constructed, it is possible to paint a general picture of just what these "peaceful" troops and weapons are designed to do.

Any critical examination of the Soviet Union inevitably provokes howls from the banshees of revisionism that Maoists are either objectively or consciously serving the interests of U.S. imperialism by confirming the ravings of the Pentagon and the "extreme right" on the "Soviet menace." Fine, let them howl! The hard reality of the present world is that each bloc does, in fact, menace the most vital "national interests" of its rivals; each poses a definite military threat to its enemy. We are not reformists who pretend that it is possible to prevent American war preparations while upholding the very "national interests" that call them into being; nor do we hold that to oppose the war preparations of one bloc, one must prettify or support the equally reactionary and blood-soaked war preparations of its rival. Let us simply say, for clarity, that while this article focuses on Soviet social-imperialism, nothing here should be mistaken for an argument that the Soviet Union is somehow "the main source of war." On the contrary, the whole point here is that the war presently shaping up does not arise from the "aggressive" politics of one bloc or the other, but from the imperialist rivalry between them.

What Disparities Do and Don't Reveal

One admittedly provocative way to open fire on the method of using "asymmetries" to uncover "lesser evils" is to imagine a hypothetical article which applies some of the same arguments used to apologize for the USSR to the differences between the imperialist powers prior to World War 2. It might go something like this:

Clearly the German Reich is defensive. This is a Germany that was encircled and occupied by enemies repeatedly within the memory of living men and women, and where the horrors of the previous wars have given rise to an almost irrational craving for national defense, for military strength, and for stable, secure border regions.

Those who ascribe expansionist motives to Germany have to deal with numerous hard facts. Germany does not possess colonies. It has not exported appreciable capital outside its borders since the last war, and has shown a remarkable capacity to absorb its surpluses internally. Unlike Britain, not a single German soldier has been used to suppress a colonial revolution or spar for imperialist influence in the colonial world since World War 1. Admittedly Germany has constructed vast modern armed forces, but they are gathered within her own borders. And in the recent wars of the late '30s, Germany has used those troops either to reclaim traditionally German territory, to gather ethnic Germans under one national roof, or to occupy strategic strips essential for a credible defense against the belligerent powers which everyone admits surround the Third Reich.

Such wars are waged by a Germany unquestionably inferior to the combined military strength of its rivals and enemies in every respect: in the size of its armies, navies, and air forces; in the size of its strategic reserves and industrial war-making capacity, in the size of available manpower. . . .

And so on. . . .

The point is not to draw the parallel "Soviet Union now, equals Germany then," but the fact that such arguments are outrageously false when applied to Nazi Germany says something about the methodological error of equating superficial differences between antagonists with some underlying difference in military-political purpose.

Consider the oft-cited contrast between the technical and economic bases of the two blocs today. In 1979, after decades of real economic expansion in the Soviet Union, the size of the U.S. GNP remained almost twice as large as the Soviet. The ratio of NATO's GNP to that of Warsaw Pact countries is even more imbalanced: approximately 284:100. And if we include other significant economies on either side (Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan for

the U.S.; Cuba, Mongolia, Vietnam, Kampuchea, and Laos for the Soviets; leaving India and China aside for simplicity), the economic gap becomes 347:100.⁷

This contrast has thrown up difficulties for the Soviet Union throughout the current prewar spiral. Although it is relatively self-sufficient in raw materials, it has far less wealth to work with and is less developed technologically than the West, and hence has had difficulty in keeping up in the "arms race," particularly in qualitative terms. Halliday, in an essay dedicated to revealing "The Sources of the New Cold War," spends pages on strategic "bean counting," documenting innumerable areas in which the Soviets remain weaker (or at least smaller) than the West. He attempts to show that "The mythology of an apparent Soviet advantage distorts what is in fact no more than a diminution of a previous U.S. superiority," and implies that the Soviets have pursued their arms buildup reluctantly.⁸

But what does proving, in a rather mechanical fashion, that there are military and economic asymmetries between the two blocs really show, beyond puncturing some of the more transparent American ravings about being behind the Soviets in the arms race? Do these distinctions really illuminate anything about the "sources" of the current international situation, a Soviet reluctance to wage war, or the character of their military buildup?

Our purpose here is not to assess which side is stronger than the other — frankly, we hope both sides are "weaker." An analysis that relies on counting numbers of weapons and troops and comparing GNPs doesn't even tell much about the military balance. To actually wage and try to win war, it is not particularly relevant whether the Soviets match the West in every category of weapons or reserves. War differs from chess in that the prewar maps are not an even, checkered board and the rivals are not issued identical pieces before the fighting is allowed to commence.

Because each imperialist bloc is "dealt a different set of cards" by geography, economic development, and history, their corresponding military strategies and force postures will naturally be quite different — to some extent even converses of each other — while each pursues the shared goal of victory. The costs of empire are different for each, making meaningful comparisons of who spends more difficult at best. Finally, and most importantly, such "bean counting" doesn't take into account the multitude of political factors that affect the course of war and can upset the imperialists' best laid plans: for example, the morale of the troops (which is more important than numbers of weapons), the relative social coherence of belligerents, or the possibility of revolutionary outbreaks in either or both blocs before, or in the course of, a world war.

But more to the point, the fact that there are real differences in the various strengths and weaknesses of the rival blocs tells us nothing about their political character or the nature of their military preparations. Lenin noted that uneven development was an essential feature of imperialism: "[T]he strength of these participants in the division [of the world] does not change to an equal degree, for the *even*

development of different undertakings, trusts, branches of industry, or countries is impossible under capitalism."⁹ But from this Lenin did not draw the conclusion that some powers had more necessity, much less more justification, for waging imperialist war! In fact, uneven development is simply a reflection of the anarchy of capitalist production, which propels all the world's imperialist powers on an "expand or die" collision course with their rivals.

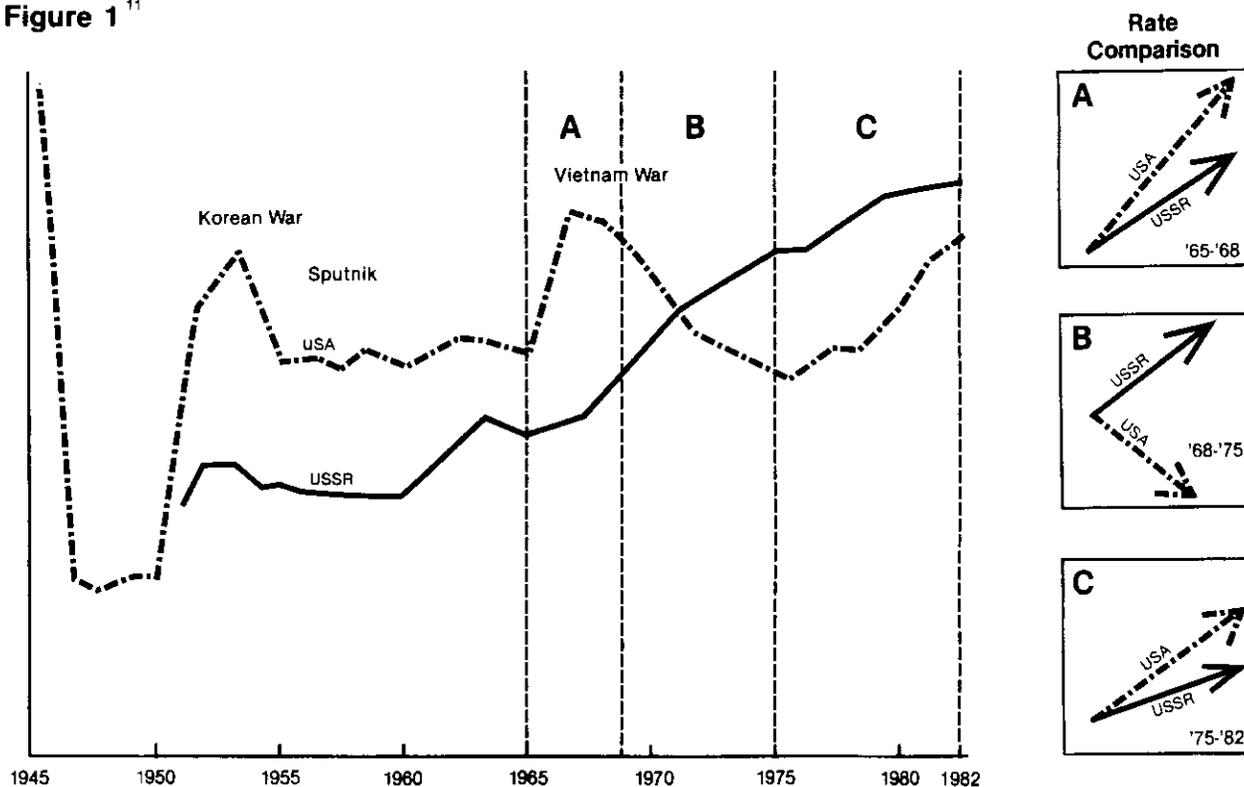
Yet Halliday is simply one more in an unfortunately long line of theorists who have ended up twisting the reality of uneven development into a rationalization for the imperialist politics of one side or the other.

For example, Halliday places great weight on the fact that "in the later part of the 1970s" the USSR "has not engaged in a sudden expansion of its military forces." True enough, especially when compared to the United States. In the last years of the Carter administration, the U.S. bourgeoisie launched an unprecedented arms buildup, crystallized in Reagan's five-year, \$1.5 trillion military budget proposal. By contrast, even a number of official Western reports note that while Soviet military expenditures increased, it was nothing like the American spurt. NATO recently estimated that, "since 1976, Moscow's defense outlays have grown at less than 2.5 percent a year after inflation, compared with 4 to 5 percent in the early seventies."¹⁰

However, to create (as Halliday does) a one-way causal link between this accelerated U.S. arms buildup and the momentum toward war, obscures the overall dynamics of the contention between the U.S. and Soviet blocs, and betrays a curious, double-edged logic as well. Examine Figure 1. A picture is given of the relative trends of expenditure. (The absolute figures represented by the vertical axis are admittedly controversial but irrelevant to the discussion here). What emerges is the fact that during the late '60s, through the mid-'70s, the amount of U.S. military spending decreased while that of the Soviet Union steadily increased, with U.S. military spending rising again after 1975.

What does this reflect? Basically that during the 1968-75 period the U.S., battered by its defeat in Vietnam and increasingly challenged by the USSR, was forced to retreat from Southeast Asia and regroup and reorient its forces and alliances to confront the Soviets; and that following this, driven by the intensification of the crisis of imperialism and their rivalry with the Soviets, they have been forced to greatly step up their preparations for war with the Soviets in the latter '70s and into the '80s. On the other hand, the Soviet bloc, having thoroughly restored capitalism by the 1960s, was compelled to expand and challenge the U.S. empire, and was given something of an opening to do so by the protracted U.S. aggression and ultimate defeat in Vietnam. A central

Figure 1¹¹



component of its stepping out was a sustained military buildup – of strategic nuclear weapons in particular – a buildup it has basically sustained from the late 1950s to the present.

Applying Halliday's logic to these developments, one might assume that while the U.S. alone was "the main source of war" in the late '60s, but that from 1968 until 1975 the Soviet Union emerged as the "main danger" hounding an exhausted, defeated U.S.! Who does not know that some forces on the left rode exactly this logic from anti-imperialism to open American chauvinism? We are curious how Halliday settled on the late 1970s as the focus of his example. With his logic, an earlier year might have led him to support a different bloc!

If anything, the very ways the Soviet Union has dealt with its relative economic weakness says much about how both sides must try to minimize their weaknesses and build their own strength to match that of their rivals. Rather than a "reluctance" to engage in the arms race, we see here evidence of a compelling necessity and a deep determination to prepare to confront the U.S. bloc militarily. The *Basic Principles For the Unity of Marxist-Leninists and For the Line of the International Communist Movement* (a draft position paper for discussion prepared by leaders of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Chile and the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA) sums up the situation:

"The Soviet Union has for a number of years invited in capital from the U.S. bloc to jointly exploit the peoples of the USSR and piled debt upon debt to the countries of this bloc, including the U.S. itself – by 1980 Soviet bloc indebtedness to its rival bloc had reached 68 billion dollars! This demonstrates not that the Soviet Union is in danger of being reduced to a status of neo-colonial dependency on the U.S. bloc but that its rulers have a calculated plan for world war against this bloc. Put simply, they are luring the rival imperialists with the prospect of fat profits and borrowing heavily from them not only or mainly with the purpose of encouraging some U.S. allies to 'switch sides' or 'remain neutral,' but most of all in order to strengthen the technical base of the Soviet bloc war machine. . . . In sum, they are counting on the fact that debts can be cancelled, whole new terms dictated to the 'other side' and contradictions within their own bloc handled by fighting and emerging victorious in world war.

"This is linked directly with the fact that the Soviet social-imperialists have devoted a very large percentage of their resources to building up their conventional and nuclear arsenals and getting their forces combat-ready. Such a tremendous military expenditure, on the same level as the U.S. but on a far weaker productive base than the U.S., has greatly heightened the parasitism and serious problems in the Soviet economy. . . . But, again, the Soviet social-imperialists are counting on dealing with this by

using the military might they have thus built up to bring under their control and reorganize according to their interests a large part of the capital and productive forces in Western Europe and Japan and to seize a far greater part of the dependent and backward countries as sources of superprofits – through world war."¹²

On the much discussed technological front in particular, Soviet inability to forge ahead of the U.S. in some areas should not for a moment be confused with a lack of willingness to do so. The Soviets have been making tremendous efforts to catch up technologically, and according to some assessments have considerably narrowed the gap between themselves and the West.¹³ In addition, the Soviets have tried to compensate for this technological lag by stressing the numbers and reliability of their weapons. And let us not forget that it was, after all, the Soviet Union which took the early lead in the development of ICBMs and was the first to test ABM systems. Before being overtaken in these fields by the U.S., Khrushchev boasted, "Naturally we will do everything to use the time we have gained in the development of rocket weapons and to keep our lead in this field until an international agreement on disarmament is reached."¹⁴

Finally, to try to prove a defensive and reactive posture for the Soviets on the basis of certain military or economic inferiorities, is to make the totally false assumption that countries and blocs somehow "choose" to provoke major wars against lethal adversaries on the basis of their respective military dominance. It may seem ironic that the United States didn't initiate war with the USSR when it was unmistakably superior, and might be forced to when it no longer is. But the approach of war does not rest in arbitrary choice or seizure of military opportunity; it results from the maturation of antagonism over colliding interests, rooted in economics but developing a significant dynamic in the political-military rivalry between states. As Raymond Lotta writes in *America in Decline*:

"More specifically, the intensification of contradictions in a particular spiral reaches a point past which a major strategic gain by either side can no longer occur without rupturing the whole framework. Any change of such magnitude in the international equation might embolden the immediate beneficiary to launch a bid for decisive advantage and supremacy or precipitate a massive, preemptive response from the other."¹⁵

In other words, there is a real compulsion on both sides that leads them to ultimately take the mortal risk that world war entails for all ruling classes, and it is a compulsion which gives no guarantees that it will only arise under conditions of parity, or within a power enjoying superiority.

Does Geography Determine Political Character?

A second leg of the "lesser evil" thesis rests on the particularities of geography and the post-World War 2 division of the world. The Soviet Union does not presently have bases spanning the globe the same way the West does. Nor does it send armadas across vast seas for Vietnam-style invasions. (Instead, the Soviets prefer to invade over land!) Somehow in the minds of Soviet apologists this implies less compulsion to contend for spheres of influence and less need to wage world war. This ignores two facts.

First, one of the underlying conflicts between the Soviet Union and its rivals is exactly that the USSR is presently cut off from access to vast parts of the world by the political arrangements made coming out of WW2 at Yalta, and by the subsequent policies of containment carried out by U.S. imperialism. Being contained is not disproof of their imperialism; it is the present, intolerable restraints *these* imperialists confront – and are preparing to burst through by going to war.

Second, the Soviet Union already possesses a considerable sphere of influence, which from the Brezhnev Doctrine to the invasion of Afghanistan is hardly ruled with a benevolent hand. To suggest that these are somehow "border regions" and that therefore Soviet invasions there are less an indication of imperialism is a strange argument. The very people who raise it would correctly bristle if someone used such logic to justify an American invasion of Central America, or say, Mexico!

The United States, Britain, and Japan are imperialist powers surrounded by water. Their acquisition and defense of spheres for exploitation requires "power projection" far from their borders over oceans – and their military posture reflects that. The Soviet Union is in a far different position. It straddles the entire northern tier of the largest land mass on earth, with a 20,000 kilometer land border directly touching vast, heavily populated parts of the globe.

One pro-Soviet arms expert shot herself in the foot with a useful insight. Describing the difference between the Soviet and U.S. ability to project power, which she found politically significant, she pointed out that Soviet troop-transport planes had a maximum range of 1,500 miles. Quite true! However, unlike the situation for any of the Western imperialists, 85 percent of the world's people and most of the key strategic areas of the world are precisely within 1,500 miles of a Soviet border!

Such geographic distinctions have much to do with how specific imperialist empires are structured, defended, and expanded. In war, such differences have historically led to quite different activities in combat itself, where the military necessities facing any particular bloc (and the strategies which flow from them) are far from identical to those of their rivals. The fact that continental powers like Germany have sought to carve their "place in the sun" largely over land, while oceanic powers like the U.S. have relied more heavily on the projection of power across the seas, does not in the slightest disprove the equally imperialist compulsions at

work on each, and the equally reactionary character of their colonial enterprises. This misreading of geography is used to substantiate the theory that the Soviet Union is somehow inherently a "defensive" power, and that its military posture somehow reflects that.

There is, of course, a genuinely defensive component to Soviet military preparations. After all, if war erupts, the Western alliance will try to destroy the Soviet military capacity, flatten its strategic industry, shatter the morale of the Soviet population, decapitate its political structure, and dismantle the Soviet bloc (and perhaps the Soviet Union itself) by force. So, naturally the Soviet Union has trained and deployed sections of its own forces to defensively frustrate exactly those Western goals. It has massive land armies straddling the traditional invasion routes leading into Soviet territory. (Note, however, that those same routes also lead out of Soviet territory, and Soviet troops, like their adversaries, are also well versed in deep offense.) Similarly, the Soviet Union has an arsenal of missiles to "defensively" destroy Western weapons on their launchpads, and systems to destroy forces that manage to enter Soviet airspace. However, who can deny that the Western bloc, too, has exactly such defensive components to its war preparations? Its forces are set to "defend" its shipping lanes, or its ICBMs, and Western Europe. In this light, the line between "defense" and "offense" becomes a little blurred. Which is exactly the point – defense forms a unity of opposites with offense in the conduct of all wars, and reflects the fact that in major conflicts belligerents are genuinely threatened by their opponents. Merely documenting strategically defensive preparations on the part of either bloc says nothing, *literally nothing*, about the *political* character of the war that is being prepared for. And genuine Marxists have always insisted that political purpose is *the* cardinal question in evaluating any war. Lenin, for example, declared that:

"By 'defensive' war Socialists have always meant a 'just' war. . . .

"But picture to yourself a slave-owner who owned 100 slaves warring against a slave-owner who owned 200 slaves for a more 'just' distribution of slaves. Clearly, the application of the term 'defensive' war, or war 'for the defense of the fatherland' in such a case would be historically false, and in practice would be sheer deception of the common people, of philistines, of ignorant people.

And further:

"The character of the war (whether it is reactionary or revolutionary) does not depend on who the attacker was, or in whose country the 'enemy' is stationed; it depends on what class is waging the war, and on what politics this war is a continuation of."¹⁶

The assumption that defensive preparations themselves imply preparation for a just war is rooted in the thoroughly

bourgeois notion that there is something inherently justified in the defense of your nation, its territory, and by extension, something inherently justified about retaliating for attacks on its troops, its allies, etc. But defense is never abstract; it can only mean the specific defense of the *social* relations characterizing any state or bloc. France waged World War I almost entirely on its own territory against a German invasion — was its war then just? Hardly. It remained, in essence, a defense of French imperialist power in the world, and a defense of its right to exploit its colonies and expand that exploitation into German colonies. We have to ask: just what is progressive today about “defending” the Soviet Union, an oppressive, nonrevolutionary, in fact imperialist, overlord of its own empire? To argue that such defensive preparations are justified, and worthy of support, ignores that they are a subordinate part of the fight for the global strategic interests of the Soviet ruling class, for which war (even war on Soviet territory itself) is to be waged.

Our apologists, confused by geography, absorbed with missile counts, befuddled by the significance of offense and defense, and most importantly, blind to the compulsions driving both blocs toward war, seem incapable of comprehending either the kind of war that is shaping up today or the significance of the Soviet military buildup taking place within this context.

No, the Soviet Union has not built a military aimed at wresting the neocolonies piecemeal out of the grasp of its rivals, launching Vietnam-style invasions on every continent, or matching that of the U.S. bloc in every category. What it has constructed, however, is a military force geared to the exigencies that confront the Soviets in waging and winning an imperialist world war: taking on and defeating the military forces of the imperialist powers arrayed against it, and, flowing from and related to that, seizing areas of the globe vital to establishing a new division of the world in the interests of Soviet imperialism.

Nuclear Strategy

At the heart of both Soviet military doctrine and its actual military forces are strategic nuclear weapons. The best place to start for an overview of Soviet military writings is the work of the late Marshal V.D. Sokolovskiy. In the wake of Khrushchev's seizure of power, a wave of counterrevolution swept through society and as part of this Joseph Stalin's line on military affairs was overthrown. Although Stalin's views on military matters, as in other spheres, were marred by muddle and mechanical thinking, the new Soviet rulers had to repudiate two key tenets which he had, in the main, correctly defended; first, that the long-range and determining factors in warfare were in the rear strength of the combatants, i.e., in the political cohesion and class nature of their societies and in their economic strength; and second, on that basis, the necessity and the possibility of resisting American nuclear blackmail, rather than abandoning crucial revolutionary prin-

ciples. Central to the new revisionist military doctrine was an elevation of weapons, particularly nuclear weapons, above the masses of people as the principal factor in modern warfare.

This counterrevolution in military affairs was crystallized in the collective study *Military Affairs*, first published in 1962 and written under the direction of the revisionist Marshal Sokolovskiy. While Soviet doctrine has developed in the ensuing years — something we shall discuss further — Sokolovskiy's appraisal of the essential form and nature of modern warfare has been repeatedly upheld and restated in the doctrine of the social-imperialists. New editions of his work appeared in 1963 and 1968, and the further development of Soviet doctrine rested upon his basic theses.

Sokolovskiy wrote:

“From the point of view of the means of armed combat, a third world war will be first of all a *nuclear rocket war*. The mass use of nuclear — particularly thermonuclear — weapons will impart to the war an unprecedented destructive and devastating nature. The main means of attaining the goals of the war and for solving the main strategic and operational problems will be rockets with nuclear charges. Consequently, the leading service of the [Soviet] Armed Forces will be the Strategic Rocket Forces, while the role and purpose of the other services will be essentially changed. At the same time, final victory will be attained only as a result of the mutual efforts of all services of the Armed Forces.

“The basic method of waging war will be massed nuclear rocket attacks inflicted for the purpose of destroying the aggressor's means of nuclear attack and for the simultaneous mass destruction and devastation of the vitally important objectives comprising the enemy's military, political and economic might, for crushing his will to resist and for achieving victory within the shortest period of time.

“*The center of gravity of the entire armed combat under these conditions is transferred from the zone of combat between the adversaries as was the case in past wars, into the depth of the enemy's location, including the most remote regions. As a result the war will require an unprecedented spatial scope.*

“Since modern means of combat make it possible to achieve exceptionally great strategic results in the briefest time, *decisive importance for the outcome of the entire war will be given to its initial period*, and also to methods of frustrating the aggressive designs of the enemy by the timely infliction of a shattering attack upon him.”¹⁷

Sokolovskiy's emphasis on the primacy of weapons informs all facets of Soviet military doctrine and has shaped the armed forces they have created. This in itself is an exposure of the profoundly reactionary character of the Soviet military. Mao Tsetung was the first Marxist-Leninist to synthesize and develop a comprehensive Marxist understanding and line on

military affairs. The linchpin of his thinking was reliance on the masses of people. Bob Avakian wrote in *Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions*:

"Mao's military line was rooted in the basic fact that revolutionary war depends on the masses of people and can only succeed on the basis that it enjoys their support and enlists them actively in the struggle against the counter-revolutionary forces. In other words, as Mao said, a people's war is a war of the masses. This has important application not only in countries like China but universally for the revolutionary struggle in all countries."¹⁸

This is not some humanitarian credo or pragmatic maxim for choosing the "most effective" military tactics. Revolutionary warfare must be a war of the masses because in a fundamental sense only the masses can emancipate themselves; hence, any military strategy serving the cause of proletarian revolution must be infused with and guided by this cardinal principle. The rulers of the Soviet Union, like all reactionary ruling classes, may draw millions into motion — as pawns in their designs — when forced to, but only to the extent pressed on them by necessity, and all the while straining to ride herd over them. How could any imperialist army fundamentally base itself upon the arousal and mobilization of the masses, when its whole *raison d'être* is, in the final analysis, their enslavement.

It can certainly at times be necessary and correct for socialist states, when they do exist, to render direct military support to revolutionary struggles in other countries. Yet such aid hardly negates or supercedes the principle that the masses are the makers of history; rather, if it is genuinely internationalist, it will be predicated upon and guided by precisely that principle.

Where are the calls to the people of the world to rise in revolution against imperialism and its preparations for a third world war, which would certainly be an essential ingredient in the strategy of any revolutionary state in today's international situation? Try as one might, however, one will never find such calls in the mountains of "peace" propaganda churned out by the "socialist camp." But then Soviet strategy isn't exactly based upon the revolutionary masses: instead the incineration of scores of millions through nuclear strikes, or the use of other millions as cannonfodder in the field, is what is seen as decisive by Soviet strategists, and is, in fact, what corresponds to the Soviet goal — a rearranged *imperialist* order.

Ironically, the Soviets have elaborated a doctrine and built a military machine around thousands of nuclear weapons, while castigating Mao as a madman who was oblivious to the horror of nuclear conflict and bent on instigating nuclear war; this, while Mao consistently upheld revolutionary principle, including relying on the masses in warfare and struggling for the complete and thorough abolition of nuclear weapons through overthrowing imperialism.

The point here is not that weapons are insignificant: "weapons are an important factor in war," Mao wrote, "but not

the decisive factor; it is people, not things that are decisive."¹⁹ Nor is it the case that socialist states should never possess nuclear weapons. In a world where such countries are threatened by nuclear-armed imperialist states, nuclear weapons would be a necessity. The question is the politics that are guiding the use of any weapons as reflected in military doctrine and posture. In no sense are the Soviet armed forces, guided by a weapons-first doctrine and built around thousands of nuclear warheads a tool for the liberation of humanity. In fact, this doctrine alone is almost reason enough to condemn the Soviet military as imperialist.

Sokolovskiy's statement above, and more importantly the entire body of Soviet military writing, makes it clear that all the revisionists' declarations that nuclear war is "unthinkable," "suicidal," or "madness" are cynical and calculated attempts at deception; and further, whatever their public posture, the Soviets have never embraced the view that nuclear weapons exist solely to deter an opponent's attack by threatening massive retaliation. Rather they have consistently viewed nuclear arms as weapons with various and specific military missions, in particular, "destroying the aggressor's means of nuclear attack" and the mass destruction of "vitaly important objectives comprising the enemy's military, political and economic might, for crushing his will to resist."

Instead of making war "unthinkable," the Soviets have reformulated their whole strategic doctrine and force posture to incorporate the qualitative changes they contend have been wrought by the development of nuclear weapons. For instance, one of Sokolovskiy's key conclusions was that any future war must take place under conditions in which the USSR had eliminated American dominance in nuclear weapons. This was the basis for the Soviet decision to funnel massive national resources into building up its strategic nuclear arsenal. As Sokolovskiy noted: "The ability of a nation's economy to engage in mass production of military equipment, especially nuclear rocket weapons, to create a superiority over the enemy in modern means of armed combat determines the material prerequisites of victory."²⁰

The Soviets also stress the fact that for the first time in history an army can destroy its enemy's strategic reserves, command centers, and key industries without hacking piecemeal through protecting rings of fortifications and ground troops. In military terms this means a tremendous erosion in the distinction between frontlines and rear areas.²¹

Such statements shed light on how the Soviet Union plans to be able to overcome its particular weaknesses and neutralize U.S. strengths in order to prevail in a global war. Nuclear weapons can act as an unprecedented leveler of economic and strategic inequalities, with the capacity to lop off strategic advantages — for instance the economic might of the U.S. bloc — before they can be brought into play as military factors. Thus great stress is placed by the Soviets on amassing — *and using* — greater forces at the outset of war.²² It is also clear from doctrine and from their conventional and theater deployments, that the Soviets are banking on being able to bring their geographic proximity to key theaters into full play in the aftermath of deep nuclear strikes — when the

U.S. could well be crippled economically and cut off from much of the world.

The Link Between Doctrine and War Plans

A number of writers downplay the significance of doctrinal statements by the Soviet military, partly in response to how certain U.S. military analysts have interpreted and used such statements. In the late '70s bourgeois figures such as Richard Pipes, Paul Nitze, and others grouped around the Committee on the Present Danger (CPD), invoked Soviet military writings as proof of Soviet malevolence and aggressiveness: they demonstrated that the Soviets were "Clausewitzians" who viewed war, including nuclear war, as the continuation of politics rather than as simply unthinkable (as U.S. theorists supposedly did). And flowing from this, they argued, Soviet nuclear doctrine was geared to fighting and winning wars (while NATO strategy was supposedly based solely on deterrence).

In *Dubious Specter*, Fred Kaplan derides the arguments of the CPD. "The published ideas of a particular group of military officers, in any country, do not necessarily reflect the actual convictions of the political leaders," he writes, adding that Soviet leaders have long declared their aversion to any kind of nuclear war. Further, Kaplan argues that the Soviet view of war as an extension of politics is simply a recognition of reality, not a sign of evil intent, which should, in fact, be "some-what reassuring." After all, what political object could warrant risking the destruction of the Soviet homeland? In this light Kaplan contends that Soviet views concerning the relationship between fighting and deterring war aren't so different from those of the U.S. Defense Department: "According to Soviet philosophy deterrence resides in the ability to fight a war if need be." This position has, Kaplan correctly notes, been echoed by various Secretaries of Defense, who have conceded that the U.S. has had plans for waging (and winning) nuclear war should one occur since the invention of the bomb, which have included plans for targeting key military and strategic objectives in the Soviet Union.²³

Kaplan is certainly correct to hit at the hypocrisy of Pipes, et al.: U.S. nuclear strategy, like Soviet strategy, has always been a continuation of politics and has never been defined simply by the desire to avoid war. Yet the fact that this U.S. gang of "war-fighters" are hypocrites, and thus have no right to speak on the evils of Soviet nuclear doctrine and strategy, doesn't automatically make all their charges against the Soviets totally false. Each side sometimes reveals aspects of the truth — when denouncing the evils of the other!

More fundamentally, while Kaplan seems to agree that war is the continuation of politics, he not only ducks the question of the politics underlying Soviet military preparations, he dismisses the corollary that a state's military doctrine does not merely reflect the views of some warmongering generals, but reflects that state's class character, is formulated in concert with the political leadership, and will be implemented by

them, along with the military leadership, when conditions demand.

Insofar as Kaplan does discuss the politics guiding Soviet military strategy, he assumes these political goals are at bottom the preservation of the Soviet motherland. However, as we shall discuss shortly, preventing a nuclear attack on Soviet soil is not the alpha and omega of Soviet strategy. Undeniably, deterrence has been a component part of Soviet and U.S. military doctrine. Each side wants to preserve and protect its vital interests and spheres of influence, which demand military power. And at a time when war was not immediately on the horizon, in the 1960s and much of the '70s, the politics guiding the military strategies of both blocs (which reflect the underlying exigencies of imperialist politics and economics) were mainly those of contending for influence without resorting to war to restructure world relations. Thus deterrence was a prime function of the nuclear strategies and arsenals of each. However, as Sokolovskiy and company make clear, the Soviet imperialists have never assumed that this state of mutual deterrence would last forever; at some point war could erupt and in that situation the Soviet military had to be prepared to wage and win a world war, on an imperialist basis, against the U.S. and its allies. And these changes in the world situation are likewise reflected in the evolution of the military doctrines and strategies of each side — which are increasingly geared to waging, not deterring, world war. (In fact, one of the main aims of the Committee on the Present Danger was to jolt U.S. nuclear doctrine out of the "detente" framework and to pave the way for the U.S.'s present nuclear buildup.)

But the most telling refutation of Kaplan's argument lies in examining what the Soviets have actually done. In the early 1960s, when Sokolovskiy's doctrines were embraced, the Soviet Union embarked upon an intense and sustained buildup of their strategic nuclear forces. Since that time they have built up their nuclear arsenal from 472 ICBMs, bombers and submarine-launched missiles to one that today contains nearly 1,400 ICBMs, 950 submarine-launched missiles, and 150 strategic bombers capable of delivering between 7,000 and 8,000 warheads with a destructive power equivalent to 100,000 Hiroshimas. And like their U.S. counterparts, the Soviets have emphasized the development of accurate missiles, such as the SS-18 and the SS-20, capable of fulfilling specific military missions, in particular strikes against U.S. nuclear weapons and command and control.²⁴

How else is one to explain the vast numbers of nuclear weapons possessed by each side except that Soviet (and U.S.) statements of war-fighting doctrine are deadly serious? Many opponents of the nuclear arms race have argued that it is "senseless" and "irrational" for the U.S. and the Soviet Union to have so many nuclear weapons, since each has enough to destroy the other many times over. However, there is an imperialist logic to this criminal madness: having many thousands of nuclear weapons makes perfect sense — in fact it's absolutely essential — if military strategy is based on the practical use of a whole range of nuclear weapons in an assortment of flexible "options" against a host of specific military, economic, and political targets; and on having enough nuclear weapons to

survive an attack with nuclear reserves.²⁵

Within a framework of relying upon massive numbers of nuclear weapons, and especially ones designed for counterforce warfare, the various superficial differences in doctrine and forces that some seize upon to argue that one side or the other is less responsible for the nuclear peril fade in significance. ("Counterforce" refers to attacks aimed at military and command targets in which the threat of massive direct strikes against cities is to a certain extent held in reserve to deter the enemy from launching such attacks on population centers. "Countervalue" is the name of the nuclear strategy of directly targeting cities.) Soviet doctrine has its counterpart in U.S. strategy, which calls upon U.S. nuclear forces to be able to assure the destruction of an enemy's "nuclear and conventional military forces and industry critical to military power." And like the Soviets, the U.S. imperialists are feverishly building their forces to carry out such a strategy, including developing a whole new generation of counterforce weapons such as the MX, the cruise missile, and the Trident D-5; deploying Pershing II missiles close to Soviet borders, and implementing a program designed to add 30,000 nuclear warheads to the U.S. arsenal over the next ten years, including 14,000 hard-target counterforce weapons.²⁶

For their part, the Soviets are striving to increase their capabilities to wage counterforce war and to match any perceived U.S. superiority. Soviet submarines are stationed near the coasts of the U.S. and cold-launchable, solid-fuel SS-20 missiles are targeted against European NATO powers, giving the Soviets a quick striking force. While the Soviets have made great strides in improving the accuracy of their missiles, they also rely on heavier missiles with more MIRVed warheads of greater megatonnage in order to guarantee their counterforce capabilities. It is mind-boggling indeed that some can argue, in light of all this, that somehow the Soviet Union's nuclear arsenal is qualitatively different, and its purpose distinct, from that of the U.S.

The Compulsion to Strike First

Given the parallel decisions of both blocs to build massive nuclear arsenals as the backbones of their war-fighting capabilities, the logic of preparing to strike first forces itself on both of them. In a sense this is inherent in the very notion of counterforce targeting: why aim at missile silos if you aren't going to strike while the missiles are still there? And if events indicate that war is imminent or has already begun, why wait until the bulk of the enemy's missiles have battered down on your head before launching your own salvo?

The pressures compelling both sides to adopt first-strike strategies and capabilities are doubly reinforced by the vulnerabilities of command and control. One U.S. analyst wrote in the magazine *Foreign Policy*:

"...[B]y eliminating central coordination [a first decapitating strike] sharply reduces the military effec-

tiveness of opposing strategic forces; second, it offers some small chance that complete decapitation will occur and no retaliation will follow. The latter possibility, however slight, is probably the only imaginable route to decisive victory in nuclear war."²⁷

The significance of striking first is underscored by the limitations of a "launch on warning" strategy, designed as a response to surprise attack. With "launch on warning" in effect, a country would launch its ICBMs at the first sign of an enemy missile attack, rather than waiting until the enemy's missiles had landed and presumably taken out much of its ICBM force. Yet some bourgeois analysts argue that even a "launch on warning" posture would not fully compensate for the ill effects of receiving a first blow; and the country on the receiving end would have great difficulty executing a successful counterattack (that is against enemy military installations), particularly if the attacker made an effort to disrupt command and control — which is almost a certainty. Thus whoever struck first would gain an important and perhaps decisive advantage.²⁸

The Soviet imperialists, while publicly declaring that they will not be first to use nuclear weapons (a declaration we will explore later), have historically emphasized surprise and preemption in their statements of doctrine, including from their very first counterrevolutionary reevaluations of nuclear strategy. One article from the 1950s declared:

"Surprise attack with the massive employment of new weapons can cause the rapid collapse of a government whose capacity to resist is low as a consequence of radical faults in its social and economic structure and also as a consequence of an unfavorable geographic position. . . .

"[T]he duty of the Soviet Armed Forces is not to permit an enemy surprise attack on our country and, in the event of an attempt to accomplish one, not only to repel the attack successfully but also to deal the enemy counterblows, or even pre-emptive (uprezhadayushchie) surprise blows, of terrible destructive force."²⁹

Major General Vasily I. Zemskov, in a statement representative of Soviet doctrine in the late 1960s, made the same point more circumspectly:

"In a nuclear war, if one breaks out, the combatants will use from the very beginning all the available forces and means at their disposal, above all strategic nuclear means. . . . The decisive act of a nuclear war in all conditions is the infliction of a strike by strategic nuclear means, in the course of which both sides will obviously use the main portion of the most powerful nuclear weapons. The moment of infliction of this strike will be the culminating point of the strategic effort, which can virtually be combined with the beginning of a war. This was not the case in any of the past wars."³⁰

Some argue that the threat of a Soviet first strike is simply a myth invented by the Reagan crowd to justify the U.S.'s current nuclear arms buildup. The argument is that while the Soviets may have the theoretical ability to destroy about 90 percent of U.S. ICBMs,³¹ the Soviets would never chance it because, for a variety of technical reasons, it is uncertain whether or not they could successfully pull off such a strike; and second, even if they did, they would still face retaliation from U.S. submarines and bombers.

The point is, however, that neither side anticipates being able to successfully complete a "totally decapitating first strike" which would literally destroy *all* the strategic weapons of their rivals. And both recognize that it is unlikely that their side will completely avoid having to "absorb" some kind of nuclear strike, even if they attack first. Their strategy (expressed in imperialist nukespeak) is to "degrade the whole spectrum of the enemy's response" by hitting as many missiles as possible, and especially by disrupting command and control. Even if the Soviet force could not destroy all U.S. land-based missiles, there is an obvious advantage to destroying as many as they can once it became clear that the decisive conflict was going down, especially since the Soviet missile force, being much more concentrated in land-based missiles, is more vulnerable to surprise attack than the U.S. force.

The argument that "first strike" would be madness unless it could completely destroy all opposing nukes is related to the assumption that neither power could ever launch war because of the danger of domestic destruction — in other words, it assumes that nuclear war really *is* unthinkable.

The Soviets have actually tested their ability to coordinate a "preemptive" strike. In June 1982, in an unprecedented many-faceted nuclear military maneuver, SS-11s were launched from widely separated silos in western and central Siberia, representing a test of the key ICBM centers. Concurrently, a medium-range SS-20 was also fired — of the type that would be needed to take out U.S. Pershing IIs in Western Europe and similar NATO forces. And at the same time the Soviets also launched an SS-N-8 from a submarine in the White Sea, plus two antiballistic missiles and an anti-satellite missile (of the type designed to "blind" U.S. early warning systems).³²

We are not arguing that the Soviets have planned ahead of time to "shoot first" and therefore single-handedly deserve the mantle of "aggressors." Certainly the United States has the same necessity acting on it. History is yet unwritten; it is by no means certain who will end up striking first, and who will therefore be reduced to a "second strike" against reserves, or even if either imperialist bloc will bank on a preemptive strike — certainly their nuclear doctrine doesn't reduce itself to that.

What is clear however, is that no matter who strikes first, both blocs have participated equally in a criminal enterprise, elevating their national interests above humanity, threatening millions of people and possibly the survival of humanity.

Limited and Protracted Nuclear War

Apologists tout the Soviets' public refusal to countenance Western notions of "limited," "controlled," or "protracted" nuclear warfare. Soviet officials have called these scenarios "a demagogic trap designed to lull public opinion and to make the prospect of nuclear war more acceptable or, if you like, more digestible..."³³ The Soviets' contention that no nuclear war could remain limited, but would inevitably escalate to an all-out conflagration, has been interpreted as a more sober and cautious approach to the use of nuclear weapons. Roy and Zhores Medvedev argue:

"In official Western discussion about the new generation of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems one can discern a profoundly troubling change of attitude. If in the past nuclear weapons were considered almost entirely as deterrents, now there are suggestions about the practicality of so-called 'theatre nuclear weapons' and certain *rules* of nuclear warfare. This discussion of 'limited' or 'flexible' nuclear war has only occurred within NATO. The Soviet official attitude remains the old-fashioned belief that nuclear war is unthinkable, criminal and unwinnable."³⁴

A couple of points need be made on this question. For one, the Soviets' opposition to limited or controlled nuclear war does not stem from a refusal on their part to grapple with the "rules" of nuclear warfare, as the voluminous Soviet writing on nuclear warfare makes quite evident. Nor does it flow from horror over the fact that any "limited" nuclear war would cause millions of casualties; they have their *own* plans for launching massive nuclear strikes.³⁵ No, the problem that the Soviet Union has with theories of limited or controlled nuclear escalation is that such strategies play to the strengths of their enemies and into their own weaknesses, running counter to their *own* strategies for waging World War 3!³⁶

The doctrine of limited nuclear war, or "flexible response," was first articulated in the 1960s, largely as a means of using the U.S.'s nuclear superiority to overcome NATO's conventional weaknesses vis-à-vis the Soviet bloc. While the concept of "flexible response" has since been subsumed by new U.S. doctrines of protracted and controlled nuclear war, the Soviets continue to object to Western doctrines of limited nuclear war for a number of reasons.

A war in which the use of nuclear weapons was "limited" to Europe would involve nuclear strikes against areas of the Soviet Union and could neutralize the Soviets' conventional advantages. It would leave the U.S. unscathed and still fully able to churn out war matériel for the front — clearly an intolerable situation for the Soviet Union, and contrary to their overall war doctrine. Soviet admonitions against the concept of a "limited" nuclear war are a statement and a warning that the Soviets are not going to "play by U.S. rules," that they are going to do everything in their power to frustrate U.S. designs, and that they aren't going to concede anything in the

strategically vital European theater. In other words, they reject ahead of time any nuclear scenario that would leave them devastated and would leave their main rival, the U.S., outside the arena of combat.

But here, we would like to step back a little and point to a blind spot afflicting Soviet apologists. On the one hand, we are presented with the U.S. and its allies who toy with the grotesque notions of "limited" nuclear war and are seeking ways to use nuclear arsenals against their rivals most effectively (i.e., surgically), while limiting damage to their own imperialist homelands. And on the other hand, we are given the Soviets, who announce they will not play by such rules and insist that *their* preparations are to meet any nuclear exchanges with all-out and general nuclear bombardments of the planet. We would like to ask the defenders of Soviet "peacefulness": where in *this* collision of strategies do you see a basis for concluding that the *Soviet* approach is somehow more humane? Your reasoning escapes us!

Controlled War? The Question Is "Controlled By Whom?"

Soviet public statements on the "unthinkability" of limited nuclear war, and their rejection of certain strategies debated in the West, however, doesn't mean that the Soviets don't countenance any form of nuclear warfare other than massive, all-out strategic exchanges. Their doctrine instead comprehends forms of protracted and controlled nuclear warfare more advantageous to their geopolitical position.

The goal of Soviet military strategy, including their nuclear strategy, is not to totally destroy or "colonize" the West; rather it is to militarily defeat the U.S. bloc in order to force it to submit to a qualitative recasting of world political and economic relations in favor of Soviet social-imperialism. These overriding political goals shape Soviet strategy. As Clausewitz put it, "Policy will therefore permeate the whole action of war and exercise a continuous influence upon it... for the political design is the object, while war is the means, and the means can never be thought apart from the object."³⁷

This approach is implicit in the Soviets' emphasis on counterforce targeting, which, of course, is a form of limited war. Col. M. Shirokov, a major Soviet strategist, declared:

"[T]he objective is not to turn the large economic and industrial regions into a heap of ruins (although great destruction apparently is unavoidable), but to deliver strikes which will destroy strategic combat means, paralyze enemy military production, making it incapable of satisfying the priority needs of the front and rear areas and sharply reduce the enemy capacity to conduct strikes."³⁸

And certainly to contemplate the capitulation of an enemy in the context of nuclear war is obviously to contemplate the

"limitation" of nuclear exchanges at some point short of simple exhaustion of nuclear reserves.

The Soviets have also devoted considerable attention to the relationships between strategic and theater warfare, and between nuclear and conventional forms of warfare, and have over the last decade come to the view that a third world war would in all likelihood be a protracted war on a number of fronts, employing a whole spectrum of weapons. Although the Soviet leadership, including Marshal Ogarkov, insists – mainly for political reasons – that any nuclear war would be "all-out," Ogarkov did write in the 1982 edition of the *Soviet Military Encyclopedia*: "The possibility cannot be excluded that the war could also be protracted."³⁹ What meaning can this possibility of protracted war have, short of some control over exchanges within the context of war?

Whether these various imperialist schemes for "controlling" nuclear warfare – which amount to nothing less than coldly calculating how many millions of people they can and must incinerate, and how much of the world they must lay to waste in order to grab a bigger share of the plunder – can be carried out, or whether a nuclear war would spiral out of their control, is another question entirely.

What is really at issue in the most recent *public* declarations of the Soviets are the *NATO* scenarios of limiting war (or portions of a more protracted war) to *Europe*. In entering *this* public debate, the Soviets are seeking to intensify the contradictions within the Western alliance. By stating ahead of time their refusal to allow a nuclear war limited to the continent, the Soviets forcefully make it a question within *NATO* whether the U.S. would "risk New York for Paris." It is this prewar maneuvering, aimed at creating more favorable political conditions for Soviet victory, rather than some genuine horror at Western thinking about nuclear war, that most fully explains the Soviet noise about recent *NATO* utterances.

Do the Social-Imperialists View Nuclear War As Suicidal?

A central element in the argument that the Soviet Union would never seriously contemplate nuclear war is that Soviet leaders realize nuclear war would be suicidal madness which could only result in the destruction of the USSR. This thesis underlies much of the tendency to take Soviet declarations on limited war at face value and to believe their assertions that their nuclear arsenal exists solely for deterrence.

Fred Kaplan writes:

"Yet nobody – including those who dwell on Clausewitz and his lineage of contemporary Soviet warplanners – has conceived of a credible scenario in which the Soviet leadership would risk a chance of nuclear attack on the Motherland; no one has thought of a political goal whose gain would be worth the

sacrifice of possible American nuclear retaliation."⁴⁰

In somewhat the same vein, Roy and Zhores Medvedev declare:

"In the Soviet Union . . . there are no illusions about the rationality of nuclear war. Despite periodic claims by NATO spokesmen, there is no planning in the USSR for mass survival in a nuclear conflict: shelters are non-existent in the new Moscow housing districts, while civil defense training in the provinces is confined to perfunctory bus trips into the forests. Likewise, no serious official statement has ever envisaged the USSR winning such a war."⁴¹

These observations are true in two respects. First, they mirror the official face of Soviet policy, particularly post-1977. When President Reagan commented in October 1981 that the "Soviet Union has made it very plain that among themselves they believe [a nuclear war] is winnable," Brezhnev responded that starting a nuclear war in the expectation of victory would be tantamount to suicide. Marshal Ogarkov, echoed those sentiments, writing that in a new world war "many hundreds of millions of people would be caught up in its maelstrom. In the bitterness and scale of possible destruction it could not be compared with any wars of the past. The very character of modern weapons has become such that, if they are set in motion the future of all mankind will be at stake."⁴² We will be forgiven, however, if we don't take such Soviet statements at face value. Certainly the identical protestations from the American bourgeoisie (yes, including Reagan!⁴³) is training enough that such things are easy enough to say. There are valuable political benefits to be gained by appearing benign. Second, the above statements do reflect the truth that the imperialists of both blocs are acutely aware of the grave dangers that nuclear conflict poses for their continued reign.

But what is ignored is that the ruling classes confront grave dangers to their continued existence if they *don't* go to war and successfully redivide the globe. The view that the imperialists can and will avoid a nuclear war because of its evident destructiveness negates the exigencies of imperialism and the all-sided rivalry that it calls forth which are propelling them toward the desperate gamble of global warfare. It assumes that the imperialists can simply live forever with the present status quo.

Bob Avakian succinctly summed up the situation the imperialists confront, and their outlook in the face of it. While speaking of the West, his comments apply equally to the Soviet social-imperialists:

"But whether they really want [war] in whatever they have instead of a heart of hearts is not really the decisive question. The question should be phrased another way and people have to think deeply about it. In fact, the question to be put directly to these imperialists and their spokesmen: don't they in fact prefer nuclear war to seeing the U.S. and the Western bloc

and Western Civilization (as they often call it) reduced to a second rate power in the world, and still worse seeing it overthrown by revolution? And I think if you put the question that way, and that's the way the question is going to be posing itself in the real world, then they will answer in practice, yes."⁴⁴

The argument that the imperialists would not dare risk war because of the destruction it would wreak is nothing new. Before the First World War Karl Kautsky argued that "The urge of capital to expand . . . can be best promoted, not by the violent means of imperialism, but by peaceful democracy." And one A. Neymarck: "After calculating the thousands of millions of francs representing 'international' securities, exclaimed in 1912: 'Is it possible to believe that peace may be disturbed . . . that, in the face of these enormous figures, anyone would risk starting a war?'" Lenin castigated both: "Instead of an analysis of imperialism and an exposure of the depths of its contradictions, we have nothing but a reformist 'pious wish' to wave them aside, to evade them."⁴⁵ History, as well, has rendered its verdict on such idealist prognostications.

There is no question that nuclear weapons are qualitatively more destructive than those used in past wars. But how *do* the Soviets (or the U.S., for that matter) attempt to deal with the profound destructiveness and inherent danger posed by the war that looms today? Not by renouncing war at all costs, nor by saying that war today can only be an extension of madness rather than politics. This is shown both by their military preparations and by the frequent declarations of both blocs that they would use nuclear weapons if their vital interests were threatened. Rather, these contradictory concerns are incorporated into their overall strategic preparations, including their military strategy. Ultimately it is a risk they are forced to take, and which they seek to minimize in the course of war by grabbing for decisive victory. Mao Tsetung, in summing up the laws of war, wrote:

"The object of war is specifically to preserve oneself and destroy the enemy (to destroy the enemy means to disarm him or 'deprive him of the power to resist,' and does not mean to destroy every member of his forces physically). . . . Attack is the chief means of destroying the enemy, but defense cannot be dispensed with. In attack the immediate object is to destroy the enemy, but at the same time it is self-preservation, because if the enemy is not destroyed, you will be destroyed."⁴⁶

This dialectic is reflected in the discussions in both blocs on the feasibility of mainly targeting the military forces of the other side, in particular wiping out enemy nuclear weapons before they can be used; of "controlling" nuclear warfare by withholding massive, all-encompassing assaults on each other's cities; and of making their own military forces less vulnerable to attack.

The Soviet position has been graphically demonstrated by

the ridicule heaped upon the "war is an extension of madness" position in Soviet military debates. One example is the decisive repudiation of one General Nikolai Talensky who, once retired in 1965, developed a disturbing habit of elaborating the following thesis:

"In our days there can be no more dangerous illusion than the idea that thermonuclear war can still serve as an instrument of politics, that it is possible to achieve political aims by using nuclear weapons and still survive."

This brought immediate and vehement criticism, by name, in the press from active military commanders. One such attack, written by General K. Bochkarev, deputy commandant of the General Staff Academy, stated that if these ideas took hold:

"[T]he armed forces of the socialist states . . . will not be able to set for themselves the goal of defeating imperialism and the global nuclear war which it unleashes and the mission of attaining victory in it, and our military science should not even work out a strategy for the conduct of war since the latter has lost its meaning and its significance. . . . In this case, the very call to raise the combat readiness of our armed forces and improve their capability to defeat any aggressor is senseless."

The dominant perspective of the Soviet leadership is summed up by the Soviet General A.S. Milovidov in 1974:

"There is a profound error and harm in the disorienting claims of bourgeois ideologists that there will be no victors in a nuclear war."⁴⁷

The Soviets are also counting on the "advantages of their social and state order" (Marshal Ogarkov's words), as well as geography, to see them through to survival. Khrushchev, for all his whining in the face of U.S. nuclear weapons, was also quite willing to crow (once he had some nuclear missiles of his own to wave around):

"It is perfectly clear to all sober-minded people that atomic and hydrogen weapons are particularly dangerous to the countries that are densely populated. Of course, all countries will suffer in one way or another in the event of a new world war. We, too, shall suffer much, shall sustain great losses, but we shall survive. Our territory is immense and our population less concentrated in large industrial centers than is the case in many other countries. The West will suffer incomparably more."⁴⁸

The Medvedevs' illusion that this could not be the intention of the Soviet leadership because there was not a plan to save *the masses* in case of attack is almost touching.

Without getting into all the ins and outs of the current

debate over just what the Soviets have and haven't done on the civil defense front, the fact of the matter is that the Soviets have a serious and significant plan to preserve first and foremost their military command, communications, and control and at least the core of Soviet society from nuclear destruction. Given the reality of all class societies, their plan starts with the leadership and filters down. The Soviet civil defense system actively employs 100,000 militarized operatives directing a three-tier system: the first involves the preservation of the top leadership and their ability to continue to direct hostilities; the second is an elaborate system of shelters and other facilities designed to save government and party cadre down to the *oblast* (county) level; and finally there are major, but obviously less effective, plans for the evacuation of urban millions to remote rural areas (which explains why there are no fallout shelters in mass apartments in Moscow, where they would be useless in any case!). One thing that impedes the imperialists (and this applies both East and West) from openly stepping up their *mass* civil defense preparations – and might prevent them almost entirely – is that such open preparations would cause widespread political unrest, and could fuel a serious political crisis.⁴⁹

Another illusion is the oft-repeated tale that even speculation on "accepting" millions of casualties is unthinkable in the Soviet Union because of the trauma of World War 2. Unfortunately, ruling classes have never taken such deeply felt aversions of the masses into account when they planned or launched wars. If they did the world would truly be a different place. In fact, part of the counterrevolution in military affairs in the late 1950s focused heavily on how to sum up the experience of the beginning of World War 2 – their conclusion, which has more contemporary relevance than historical truth, was: *Never again!* Never again were Soviet forces going to be caught unawares, and never again was an enemy to be allowed to wage war on *Soviet* soil. The second conclusion from the experience of World War 2, which the Soviet ruling class (if not the masses) has drawn and which they have publicly thrown out as a challenge to the West, is that the Soviet Union can absorb massive destruction and casualties and "bounce back" within decades to challenge even far less damaged powers.

In short, the question posed openly by conservatives in the U.S. – "How many millions dead is it worth to decisively crush our long-time rival?" – is asked in Moscow as well.

Theater and Conventional Warfare

Alongside its strategic nuclear forces, now massed in rough equivalence with the U.S., there has been an enormous growth in Soviet theater and conventional capabilities in the past 30 years, including the development of modern theater nuclear forces, the creation of a deep-water navy, and the expansion and modernization of Soviet ground and air forces in

Europe, the Far East, and Southwest Asia.

These changes, which apologists for the Soviet Union are even less eager to discuss than the Soviets' nuclear posture, raise some obvious questions. If massive regional conflicts with theater nuclear weapons will "inexorably" lead to suicidal general nuclear war, as the Soviet leadership has so often claimed, just what is the point of the vast array of Soviet theater nuclear weapons, particularly those aimed against countries like China with no comparable forces? If, as Marshal Ogarkov, Chief of the Soviet General Staff, says, "[T]he Soviet armed forces are no threat to anyone. They have never been used to capture foreign territory or to enslave the peoples of other countries,"⁵⁰ then why are thirty Soviet divisions permanently stationed on their southern frontier and in Afghanistan (which, to our knowledge, is not part of the Soviet Union) facing a Southwest Asia devoid of massed Western imperialist forces? And what purpose is served by transforming the former U.S. entrance to Vietnam, Cam Ranh Bay, into a major Soviet naval base patrolling the lifelines to Japan? Nothin' here but deterrence and defense? Hardly.

While Soviet literature discusses waging war to victory, few documents define the content of said victory. Like other imperialist powers, the Soviet Union does not publicly spell out its particular war aims. However, an examination of the forces the Soviets have built up and deployed, and their missions as discussed in Soviet military publications, shows that they have been designed to take on and defeat the armed forces of the U.S. bloc in all key theaters, and on that basis be able to seize, hold, or otherwise dominate those regions pivotal to the creation of a new postwar imperialist alignment (including Europe, the Persian Gulf, China, and Japan).

Theater Doctrine

In contrast to official pronouncements that the lights would simply go out after a strategic nuclear exchange, Soviet doctrine envisions fierce battles erupting before, during, and after strategic nuclear strikes, in a variety of theaters, employing a broad spectrum of forces — from theater nuclear weapons to a full range of conventional forces. Soviet doctrine stresses that nuclear and nonnuclear forces are complementary, not mutually exclusive. As Sokolovskiy put it, in the quote cited earlier, "... final victory will be attained only as a result of the mutual efforts of all services of the armed forces."

An article written by General Major Vasily I. Zemskov, shortly before he became editor of the official journal *Military Thought*, illustrates Soviet thinking on these questions. While noting that strategic nuclear strikes are the backbone of Soviet strategy, Zemskov writes that subsequent to them, "great importance can also be attached to operations and combat operations of armed forces in completing the defeat of the remaining groupings of the opposing side." Zemskov goes on to state that "an extremely active nuclear conflict in the theaters of military operations" and "highly-maneuverable offensive and defensive battles of

ground troops, as well as operations of fleets at sea and in the oceans will now unfold. In these conditions, the role of conventional means of destruction will increase." He also stresses that the unfolding of war, in a situation in which much of the armed forces of both sides would be wiped out, could be complex and protracted: "Both offensive and defensive operations of various scales are possible here. The initiative can switch several times from one to another. In military operations in individual zones, as well as in theaters on the whole, lengthy operational intervals are not excluded. Active combat operations in particular regions might decrease and then break out anew."⁵¹

The Soviets, like the Western imperialists, are striving for the maximum flexibility and power at all levels of conflict, no matter how war jumps off or unfolds. While Khrushchev argued in the early '60s that nuclear weapons had made other forms of warfare obsolete, and therefore the other armed forces should be cut by one-third, the Soviet hierarchy quickly rejected this approach. Under Brezhnev's tenure the Soviet Union vastly built up its conventional and theater forces, increasing the size of its armed forces by 1.5 million men to approximately 4.9 million, the tonnage of ordnance that tactical Soviet airpower could deliver by ninefold, and the number of tanks by 66 percent.⁵²

It is important to note in this regard, that while the Soviets hold that any war between the U.S. and Soviet blocs would probably rapidly escalate to strategic nuclear exchanges, there have been increasing if cautious discussions of the possibility of a nonnuclear phase at the beginning of a global war.⁵³ This concept is closely related to the Soviet hope to exploit their geographic advantages to thrust into key regions on the Eurasian land mass in a situation in which the U.S. may well be, at least partly, cut off from the action, or have difficulty concentrating its forces in distant battlefields. In short, the question of who is going to bog down whom, and which side is going to suffer most in a multifront war, is as yet undetermined (something reflected by the debate within the U.S. bourgeoisie about how many theaters the U.S. military needs to be able to wage simultaneous war in — the well-known 1½ versus 2½ war controversy).

The European Theater

In a discussion of tensions over Europe, the Medvedev brothers ask how anyone could conceive of a reason for the Soviet Union to wage war for that continent. They point out that there are few inflamed territorial disputes between East and West there, and that there is little economically to be gained by annexing a continent that has just been irradiated by nuclear weapons. In other words, what would be the trigger, and what would be the purpose?

The answer is that a war would not simply be *for* Europe, or to settle long-standing disputes arising within the narrow confines of that corner of the world. Contrary to the views popular within the European left, the Old Continent is not

Figure 2



This illustrates the target coverage of Soviet SS-20s, and incidentally, shows how the bulk of mankind is geographically situated on the Soviet "periphery."⁵⁷

simply some innocent prize being contested by superpower barbarians. It is the home of major powers, imperialist in their own right, complete with neocolonial spheres of influence, ambitions for future expansion, and (quite to the point here) armed to the teeth, including with nuclear weapons. The Western European powers are an integral part of a bloc that militarily and politically represents *the* obstacle to Soviet ambitions to expand its take from international exploitation. Their importance to the Soviet Union is further heightened by the fact that the military and productive power of the old-line imperialist states of Western Europe is one of the particular strengths of the U.S. bloc, and because Europe is the land base from which an invasion of the Soviet heartland would most likely take place.

These realities are reflected in the forces that the Soviet Union has deployed in the European theater. At center stage is a large and diverse arsenal of tactical and theater nuclear weapons, including nearly 1,000 short-range missiles and artillery shells, roughly 1,000 medium-range rockets, and bombers capable of carrying some 1,900 warheads, as well as chemical and biological weapons.⁵⁴

The 243 SS-20s, with three warheads each,⁵⁵ play a key role in Soviet nuclear forces in Europe as well as in the other theaters on the Eurasian land mass (see Fig. 2). The difference between the SS-20s and the older missiles they replaced is that they are highly accurate, mobile, and do not require protracted (detectable) fueling with liquid propellants. In other words, while their predecessors were both vulnerable and only accurate enough for "city-swapping" countervalue standoffs, the new arsenal is far more capable of surviving strategic strikes on the Soviet Union and carrying out the mission of accurately wiping out crucial NATO military targets.⁵⁶

The Soviets have also amassed a huge conventional force in the European theater, including 30 divisions of ground forces in Eastern Europe and another 67 in the European republics of the Soviet Union, totaling between 1 and 1.4 million men; an air force of some 1,350 fighter bombers, 2,050 interceptors, and 550 reconnaissance planes; and the bulk of the Soviets' force of 50,000 tanks, including 19,500 stationed directly in Eastern Europe.⁵⁸

We refuse to get sucked into the endless controversy over which side is ahead in Europe. There is no doubt that NATO's conventional inferiority has been vastly blown out of proportion in the West in order to create public opinion for increased Western European defense spending, on conventional weapons in particular, as well as to justify NATO's reliance on nuclear weapons. The NATO allies, including the U.S., have a larger population, slightly larger armed forces, greater gross national product, nearly double the annual military expenditures, and an edge in technologically sophisticated weaponry over the Warsaw Pact. On the other side, the Warsaw Pact has the advantage in numbers of some categories of weapons, and most importantly geography. Not only does it have a deeper rear for maneuver, and interior lines of supply, but the proximity of the Soviet Union means that the Warsaw Pact could bring a greater number of troops (by a

160:100 or 200:100 margin) to bear in the early stages of a war.⁵⁹ Again in nuclear warfare, accumulated forces already "on line" in crucial theaters of combat may play an unprecedentedly important role if means of military production and transport are quickly destroyed by nuclear weapons.

The point is that the Soviets *have* assembled an army with the potential – and mission – of defeating NATO forces and occupying Europe.

Some have seized upon the fact that Soviet forces fall short of the classic 3:1 preponderance assumed necessary for offensive invasion to conclude that Soviet forces in Europe are merely "defensive." But this is a dogmatic misreading of the current state of warfare in which the existence of nuclear weapons, as well as the speed and mobility of modern forces, transforms all such theoretical ratios. Imperialist military planners no doubt have new assessments of the necessary force ratios.

For instance, Soviet writings on theater warfare stress the close coordination between nuclear weapons (which they label "the basic means of destruction") and conventional weapons, and they emphasize the importance of surprise and rapid offensive actions in gaining a decisive military advantage.⁶⁰

Southwest Asia and China

By this point in the discussion, the assertions by students of asymmetries that the Soviets "never go outside their sphere" should sound a little hollow. After all, what has been documented is precisely that the Soviet military focus is on forging the means to *break out of that sphere*, in a context far different from the trail of localized incidents the apologists concentrate on. However, a brief sketch of Soviet military forces facing south and east helps hammer this overall point home from yet another side.

The invasion of Afghanistan, dismissed as either an anti-feudal intervention or Soviet border paranoia by the "lesser danger" school, is actually more a preview and preparation for what is to come than a self-contained episode. Besides whatever immediate goals and necessities spurred this imperial intervention, the net result is that the Soviets are hundreds of miles closer to the strategically vital waterways of the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf and more completely flank both Iran and Pakistan. Further, the southeastern corner of Afghanistan is the site of a massive new military infrastructure, serving both as an airbase providing cover and offensive capabilities into the Indian Ocean and as a massive depot of supplies for any future moves south. This is neither accidental nor unrelated to strategic war preparations. The same can also be said for the 85,000-plus Soviet troops in Afghanistan and the twenty-four Soviet divisions, comprised of roughly 300,000 men, that face Iran and Turkey.⁶¹

The Soviets have also used Afghanistan as a proving ground for their new weaponry and tactics, paralleling U.S.

use of Israeli battle data. And the invasion itself also reflected a newly acquired deftness in Soviet offensive tactics, far in advance over the march into Czechoslovakia. It was a bold strike, tightly coordinating four motorized divisions with special assault detachments that took Kabul from within. The tactics used there, quite successfully at first, should help dispel the mythology of an inherently lethargic bureaucratic bear.⁶²

More importantly the lingering nature of the Afghan war itself has been used to refine training and tactics for the Soviet military as a whole. There has been a massive rotation of lower-level officers through the combat zone, and new regulations have been promulgated giving such veterans accelerated promotions to spread experience and the smell of gunpowder through the ranks.

Massive armed forces also face China. Here again we hear cries about Soviet "defense." We are not about to apologize for China's reactionary collaboration with U.S. imperialism, but those who raise this shrill cry of "defense" seem to have forgotten a bit of recent history. In 1969 it was the Soviet Union that massed a million troops on the Chinese border, provoked numerous border incidents, and threatened to launch a nuclear assault against then *revolutionary* China — an assault postponed due to the preparedness of the Chinese (and in part because of Nixon's warning to the Soviets to desist).

It is these same politics of imperialist bullying that the present Soviet military buildup continues, though now at a time when world war is more immediately on the agenda. Today the Soviets' goals vis-à-vis China are to neutralize whatever military actions the Chinese take in concert with the Western alliance and to bludgeon the Chinese into the Soviet orbit in the process, without getting drawn into a protracted "two front" war or a draining occupation of heavily populated eastern China.

A look at the kinds of forces deployed on the two sides of the Sino-Soviet border indicates something of their purposes. While the Chinese do have nuclear weapons and a large army, they have neither the nuclear arsenal to take the Soviets head-on, nor mechanized units capable of deep thrusts into the Soviet Union. Western strategy is, essentially, to use China to force the Soviets to commit a large number of forces to Asia and to "keep Soviet forces along the Chinese border tied down," maximizing the U.S. bloc's freedom in other theaters.⁶³

On the other side, the Soviet Union has made a concerted effort to boost its capability to strike deep and hard against China, while not tying down the bulk of their forces — thus frustrating Western strategy. The Soviets have deployed 108 SS-20 missiles in the eastern theater, capable of strikes against Chinese nuclear installations, troop concentrations, and key military facilities (as well as use against Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, etc.), and there are reports that plans are afoot to deploy another 100 on top of that. The Soviets have also stationed between 50 and 60 nuclear-capable Backfire bombers near China and Japan. Whereas in 1967 it would have taken about three-fourths of the Soviet ballistic missile

force to wage a counterforce offensive against China, less than ten percent of the Soviet nuclear forces would be needed today.⁶⁴

A similar purpose guides the Soviet conventional buildup in East Asia. Since 1967 troop strength has doubled from twenty-five divisions to an estimated fifty-two today. While the bulk of this increase occurred during the period of border clashes with China, the Soviets have since then done a tremendous amount of work to make them more combat capable. Roadways and rail lines have been constructed linking this front with supply centers in the Soviet heartland; modern airfields, permanent barracks, command centers, and supply depots have been constructed; and a new command structure, giving Soviet forces more flexibility, was organized.⁶⁵ Because Soviet troops are highly mechanized — seven are armored divisions — and ill-suited for either stationary defense against masses of Chinese troops or for occupation of the country as a whole, there is speculation in the West that Soviet strategy is to strike rapidly at key targets deep inside China and/or perhaps to actually seize chunks of Western China (where the population is sparse and non-Han and where geography makes guerrilla war difficult), and to force capitulation on that basis.

The Soviet armed forces in East Asia are also directed against Japan. Despite its waning pacifist disguise, Japan is an imperialist nation with specific and growing military responsibilities in the U.S. bloc. These responsibilities include, among other things, defending itself and the sea lanes for one thousand miles around it. In addition to being a component part of the U.S. strategy of absorbing, tying down, and assaulting Soviet forces in Asia, this is designed to enable the West to bottle up the Soviet Pacific fleet in its home waters, as well as allow the U.S. to "swing" forces from the Pacific to key battle zones in Europe and the Middle East.

The Soviets have been sanguinely blunt about how they plan to deal with Japan and its contributions to the Western war effort. When Japan's Prime Minister Nakasone bragged that his country was an "unsinkable aircraft carrier," Andropov retorted that "there are no unsinkable aircraft carriers." If there were any lingering doubts about the implications of Andropov's threat, *Tass* soon dispelled them. Warning that participating in the U.S. military alliance would make Japan "a likely target" for Soviet nuclear missiles, *Tass* stated that "for such a densely populated, insular country as Japan," Soviet nuclear strikes "could spell a national disaster more serious than the one that befell it thirty-seven years ago."⁶⁶

Besides the increased numbers of SS-20 missiles, Backfire bombers, and troops already mentioned, the Soviet buildup in the Asian theater has included the strengthening of its Pacific fleet, which includes a major detachment of nuclear missile-carrying submarines stationed at the Sakhalin Island base of Flight 007 notoriety. And the Soviets have reinforced their bases on the Kuril Islands, off the northern coast of Hokkaido, with modern jet aircraft and increased numbers of troops.

The Soviets have a number of objectives here. Their forces

are designed to counter a U.S./Japanese blockade and enable the Soviet fleet to burst into the western Pacific to interdict vital Western shipping lanes, surround and perhaps cut off Japan, and disrupt U.S.-bloc operations in the theater as a whole. There is also much speculation that the Soviets aim to turn the Sea of Okhotsk into a "protected lake" where their nuclear submarines can operate with impunity.⁶⁷

Soviet Naval Forces

In the 1950s, the Soviet navy was a small force used for coastal defense. Today, the Soviet navy is truly a "blue water" navy, with 289 major combat ships, 350 attack submarines, 2 aircraft carriers, and 2 helicopter carriers. The U.S. bloc, however, remains dominant at sea. While the Soviets have more major combat ships and submarines than does the U.S., "the U.S. fleet is still superior in firepower, logistics and the ability to operate for extended periods," in part because of the Soviets' limited access to the oceans, and few ports of call around the world.⁶⁸

But the role of the Soviet navy is neither to simply challenge U.S. naval superiority ship for ship, nor to serve an identical function of preserving the links in a global oceanic alliance. Its design anticipates interrelated functions which combine both strategic nuclear missions with the distinctly naval mission of disrupting the oceanic links of the Western bloc.

A key function is to serve as a component part of the Soviet Union's strategic nuclear forces, as floating launching pads. The waters north of the Greenland-Iceland-U.K. line have been transformed over recent years into a regular haunt of Soviet nuclear-equipped submarines, to preserve a retaliatory capacity in the case that land-based ICBMs are destroyed or used. In addition, the USSR recently shifted submarine patrols closer to the eastern seaboard of North America, bringing their missiles within ten minutes striking time of the U.S. command centers, replicating U.S. capabilities for launching decapitating strikes.

Second, the fleets are designed to prevent the U.S. forces from using the oceans as a reliable link for supply and reinforcement during war, especially to reinforce Europe during land war, and to sever oil links to states like Japan.

And third, these forces are to serve the purpose of the defense of the Soviet Union itself. They are to destroy those Western naval forces poised to attack the Soviet Union from sea and especially the surface fleets are fashioned to protect the strategic nuclear weapons stationed under the waves by fighting U.S. submarine-killers.

Admiral Sergey G. Gorshkov, the father of the modern Soviet navy, once boasted that his fleet was designed to "force the United States to recognize that the ocean, which in the past protected the American continent from the revenge of the victims of its aggression, has no longer its old role as a protecting barrier." He elaborates the overall rationale for the transformation of the Soviet navy as follows:

"In the mid-1950s, in connection with the revolution in military affairs, the Central Committee of our party defined the path of fleet development, as well as the fleet's role and place in the system of Armed Forces in the country. The course taken was one which required the construction of an ocean going fleet, capable of carrying out offensive strategic missions. Submarines and naval aviation equipped with nuclear weapons had a leading place in the program. . . .

"For the first time in its history our Navy was converted, in the full sense of the word, into an offensive type of long-ranged armed force. Along with the strategic Rocket Forces, the Navy had become the most important weapon the Supreme Command had, one which could exert a decisive influence on the course of an armed struggle on theaters of military operations of vast extent.

"The fleet which for a long time could only carry on combat operations in seas directly next to its own coasts, and which had had experience in a continental war . . . now sailed the broad expanses of the oceans, and acquired the capacity to carry out strategic missions in the struggle with the strongest of naval enemies. This brought about a fleet requirement for new tactics, for a new operational art, and for a theory covering the strategic utilization of its forces. . . ."⁶⁹

The increasing vulnerability of Soviet land-based missiles to U.S. counterforce attacks, plus a greater Soviet recognition of the possibility of a protracted nuclear conflict, has led them to place more and more emphasis on their nuclear navy, building it to a force of some 62 nuclear-powered submarines, armed with 950 nuclear missiles. Recently Gorshkov declared, "In response to the development by the United States of a strategic submarine missile system, directed above all at the Soviet Union, a similar system has been developed by us. This confronts any aggressor with the inevitability of retaliation."⁷⁰

One of the most significant previews of what is to come was a Soviet exercise centered in the North Atlantic called OKEAN '75. The maneuver started on April 8, 1975, when a unit of destroyers and cruisers left the Soviet military base on the Kola Peninsula for the north of Iceland. There, at the "chokepoints" marking the prospective NATO battleline to contain the Soviet navy within northern waters, the detachment linked up with forces emerging from the Baltic. Together they constituted a pincers movement for engagement in the North Atlantic, armed with ship-to-air missiles capable of both challenging American naval fighter squadrons and the transport planes designed to "big lift" U.S. forces to the combat in Central Europe.

Simultaneously, a battle group was exercising in the sea lanes connecting the northern and southern Atlantic — the group consisted of two missile-equipped destroyers from the Soviet base on Cuba meeting with components of both the

Baltic and Mediterranean Soviet fleets. Another destroyer, together with a submarine tender and a tanker, left the Mediterranean going south and was stationed off the coast of Guinea. Finally a string of submarines stretched through the Atlantic between these two concentration points north and south. This whole open-ocean maneuver was accompanied with landing operations along the Polish and East German Baltic coasts, testing the naval capacity to establish beachheads from Northern European seas, while the Mediterranean fleet was practicing maneuvers around Corsica and Sardinia designed to defeat NATO forces on that sea and for cutting off oil links from Northern Africa to NATO forces.

Alongside the OKEAN '75 maneuvers in the North Atlantic, there were simultaneous exercises in the Indian Ocean at the exit of the Persian Gulf and at the entrance to the Red Sea, including with maneuvers along the tanker route around Africa, at Madagascar, the Cape, and the West African coast. Naval units and air-based land support were deployed from Soviet bases in European Russia, Somalia, and Cuba. In short, the exercise practiced operating in every ocean under a unified command.⁷¹

This April, apparently similar, if yet larger, maneuvers were held involving over 250 warships, support vessels, submarines, amphibious craft, Backfire bombers, and long-range reconnaissance planes, in a number of areas around the world simultaneously.⁷²

Soviet Conduct in the Oppressed Nations

Then there is the question of Soviet activity in the oppressed nations, long considered a trump card by the "lesser evil" school because the Soviets have had less going on in the Third World, and the action they have been involved in has often been under the rubric of "supporting the national liberation struggle."

Our purpose here is not to review the Soviets' reactionary intrigues in the oppressed nations nor to fully analyze the imperialist content of their relationship with various clients – a task taken up elsewhere.⁷³ Suffice it to say that donning the cloak of friend of the national liberation movements doesn't make it so – witness the numerous imperialist "liberators" in the past. Here we want to focus on how the Soviet actions in the oppressed nations fit into their overall plans for waging global imperialist war.

Over the last decades the Soviet Union has struck out far beyond its border regions. Some twenty-seven countries outside the Warsaw Pact equip their armies with varying amounts of Soviet equipment, and thirteen are trained by Soviet missions. Twenty thousand Soviet military personnel are also stationed in nine countries outside the Pact (not counting Afghanistan!) and significant numbers of East Germans, Czechs, and of course Cubans are deployed in other countries as well.⁷⁴

Where the Soviets have tried to establish beachheads in the oppressed nations, they have concentrated on areas that

would be strategically useful in a global military conflict. As *Basic Principles* notes:

"[W]hile seeking generally to penetrate, dominate and plunder throughout the colonial (and neo-colonial) and dependent countries, the Soviet social-imperialists are concentrating much of their 'aid' in areas that are key in strategic-military terms – including the Middle East and parts of Africa – areas rich in strategic materials such as oil and/or crucial as springboards and buffers in preparation for and then in fighting a world war."⁷⁵

A few examples highlight the quality and importance of Soviet incursions around the world. Take the case of Vietnam, a country now tightly integrated into the Soviet bloc. Vietnam has a battle-tested army of one million men, which could be used to pin down U.S. allies, including China, and expand Soviet influence throughout Southeast Asia during wartime. The naval and air base at Cam Ranh Bay, which the Soviets apparently now directly administer, houses Soviet forces capable of hitting targets from southeast China to Singapore, and of projecting naval power into the sea lanes linking the Western Pacific to the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf.⁷⁶

Similarly, their intervention in Angola has enabled the Soviets to establish a substantial military presence, via Cuban and Angolan troops, in the heart of Africa, and gain access to air bases and ports of call in an area rich in strategic minerals and contiguous to important shipping lanes in the Atlantic.⁷⁷

Ethiopia – one of the most highly militarized countries in the world, with 122 soldiers for every medical person, supporting a Cuban army, an ongoing antipopular war against Eritrea, and importing arms at a rate many times higher than any similarly primitive economy in the world – is well placed as a springboard for action against U.S. allies Somalia to the east or Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Egypt to the north.

Soviet actions in the Indian Ocean are a final case in point. Here the Soviets have centered their efforts on obtaining naval facilities from their client states: at Socotra, a Yemeni island in the Arabian Sea, the old British port of Aden in South Yemen, and Perim and the Dahlak Archipelago, islands belonging to Ethiopia. In addition, the Soviets are pressing for bases in Madagascar, on Diego Suarez, and the Maldives. Such bases would greatly strengthen Soviet ability to close or seize the Persian Gulf oil spigot as well as intercept those U.S. forces assigned to shift from the Pacific to either the Middle East or Europe during a war.⁷⁸

Ironically, much of this is noted by some who contend that the Soviet Union is not preparing for world war. Fred Halliday admits:

"[I]t is clear that the USSR has typically sought to extract strategic advantages from its interventions in the Third World, whether or not these were in the interest of the countries concerned themselves. In

most cases, its objectives have not gone much beyond refueling facilities for its naval forces and fishing fleets, or landing rights for its aircraft. There is no doubt that its worldwide intelligence and tracking capacities have been enlarged in the wake of its increased military assistance to the Third World Revolution in the past decade. But no permanent overseas bases have been set up by the Soviet Union anywhere outside the WTO [Warsaw Treaty Organization] itself. This record of relative caution may, however, yet be broken in Afghanistan.⁷⁹

We would like to ask Mr. Halliday, just what is the content of these "strategic advantages," the purpose of these "refueling facilities for its naval forces," "landing rights for its aircraft," etc.? Truly the outlook of some writers blinds them to the significance of the events they themselves document and describe!

In 1974, Minister of Defense Marshal A.A. Grechko spelled out the new Soviet approach to power projection:

"At the present stage the historic function of the Soviet Armed Forces is not restricted merely to their function in defending our Motherland and the other socialist countries. In its foreign policy activity the Soviet state actively and purposefully opposes the export of counter-revolution and the policy of oppression, supports the national liberation struggle, and resolutely resists imperialist aggression in whatever distant region of our planet it may appear."⁸⁰

It is more than symbolic that Soviet armed forces have now been issued "tropical uniforms" consisting of light materials, shorts, and short-sleeved shirts. We can assume that pith helmets were avoided for reasons of tact.

How Soviet Peace Proposals Serve War Preparations

In the past several years an escalating "peace war" parallel to the military preparations of both blocs has developed. Both sides have bombarded the world with sermons, admonitions, and a staccato of proposals for peace and disarmament. In this competition as well, many detect a fundamental difference between the two sides. The U.S. refused to ratify the SALT II treaty, wouldn't even come to the negotiating table for over a year following Reagan's election, and has consistently submitted proposals designed to elicit rejection. The Soviet Union, on the other hand, endorsed SALT II, tipped its hat to the freeze proposal, declared it would not be the first to use weapons, has urged treaties banning war in space and nuclear testing, and even proposed the simultaneous dissolution of both NATO and the Warsaw Pact. By Soviet count, they have submitted over 150 proposals. Surely, our critics argue, there is some real

substance to these differences.

Indeed there is substance: the two contending blocs have different strengths and weaknesses, which are reflected in their differing proposals. The substance here is different *political* and military strategies for preparing for world war!

Arms-control negotiations are not antithetical to military strategy; rather they complement each other within the framework of the long-range goals of an imperialist state. Arms-control agreements can head off or restrict the development of the enemy's most threatening weapons, while preserving one's own most important weapons; arms control enables one to explore an opponent's force posture, as well as channel arms competition in favorable and controllable directions; and of course arms negotiations are a key political weapon for legitimizing one's own actions as "peaceful," while demonstrating that an opponent is "warlike."

The SALT I and II treaties are clear illustrations of the place of arms control in imperialist strategy. The SALT I treaty, signed in 1972, imposed strict limits on antiballistic missile systems and placed a five-year freeze on the deployment of ICBMs and SLBMs, while not limiting increases in warheads, bombers, or technological improvement of existing systems.

SALT I was useful to the U.S. in that it helped slow down the momentum of the Soviet arms buildup, particularly in heavy land-based missiles (the Soviets had expanded their ICBM force from 190 in 1964 to 1,527 in 1972),⁸¹ and it imposed some more general restraints upon Soviet expansion around the world at a time when the U.S., embroiled in Vietnam, was in no position to challenge the Soviet buildup head on. The treaty provided a political and strategic framework for the U.S. imperialists to regroup their forces, domestically and internationally, in order to take the Soviets on. Within this context, the treaty did not restrict the U.S.'s nuclear buildup, which at that time focused on increasing the number and accuracy of U.S. nuclear warheads rather than the number of missiles.⁸²

From the Soviet standpoint, SALT I also had important strategic benefits. It legitimized the Soviet claim to superpower status and opened new avenues for Soviet contention throughout the world, while enabling the Soviets to fluff their "peace loving" plumage. The freeze on nuclear missiles, and in particular the limitations imposed on antiballistic (ABM) systems, gave the Soviets added protection, albeit quite temporary, against the danger of a U.S. nuclear strike, something that had greatly worried them in the 1950s and much of the 1960s. While the Soviet Union had been the first to work on antimissile systems, it feared that once the U.S. undertook such an effort it would quickly outpace the Soviets, as it had in the ICBM race of the early 1960s. And like the U.S., the Soviets left themselves plenty of freedom to augment their nuclear arsenal. David Holloway notes:

"The Soviet Union negotiated the Interim Agreement with great care, so as not to prevent the deployment of a new generation of ICBMs in the mid-1970s. Competition in offensive strategic missiles has continued apace since 1972, in spite of the negotiations to con-

clude a second SALT treaty.⁸³

SALT II was essentially a continuation of this process: it limited each side to 2,250 delivery systems (about 200 more than the U.S. had at the time), while allowing vast increases in the number of warheads and doing nothing to restrict the arms race in such key fields as bombers and cruise missiles. It restricted that which no one intended to increase; and if anything, the SALT process provided both sides with a "peaceful" rationalization for continuing to refine their nuclear stockpiles. While SALT I and II have been in force, the Soviet arsenal has gone from 2,500 to somewhere over 7,000 warheads, while the U.S.'s has climbed from 5,700 to over 9,000!⁸⁴ Thus, for each side, the SALT process was a form of contention in a particular international framework; a form of preparing to violently recast that framework.

But what of the differences that have emerged since SALT II? Without getting into the details of the various negotiations, a couple of examples suffice to illustrate something of their substance.

Take the question of the Soviet ratification of SALT II, their tacit endorsement of the freeze, and their proposal to limit weapons in outer space.⁸⁵ The Soviets are facing a determined U.S. effort, crystallized in the Reagan five-year, \$1.5 trillion military budget to utilize the West's superior technical and industrial base to bring a whole new generation of nuclear weapons – including the MX, the cruise, the Trident D-5 missiles, the B-1 and Stealth bombers, and antimissile and antisatellite systems – on stream, and gain a decisive nuclear edge over the Soviet Union. In this situation, the Soviets have more to gain than lose by attempting to impose some limits on this prewar arms race. The observation that the Soviets make concrete proposals when they want to close a potentially disadvantageous branch of the arms race, and make "general disarmament" proposals when they want to actively pursue a line of armament, is correct.

Contention between rival imperialist blocs doesn't proceed evenly, but by lurches and spurts within and between the contending blocs. In reality, there is a tiny grain of truth to the Reagan refrain that a freeze today would mean "freezing Soviet superiority." While the Soviets clearly don't have strategic superiority over the U.S. bloc, a freeze today *would* mean freezing a balance of nuclear forces that evolved during the late 1960s and much of the 1970s when the Soviets had more freedom to rapidly build up their arsenal than did the U.S. It would thus freeze things at that point when the Soviets had lurched into rough parity – before the U.S. consummates its leap to the kind of superiority it would like to have at the onset of a third world war.

Of course, it is important to remember that while the Soviets have been churning out various peace proposals, and seeking to reap whatever political advantage they can therefrom, they have also been furiously striving to increase the size and strength of their nuclear arsenal, including trying to match the U.S. on certain key fronts such as star wars, cruise missiles, and ABM systems.

The Soviet supporters make hay over Brezhnev's June 15,

1982 statement that "the Soviet state solemnly declares the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics assumes an obligation not to be the first to use nuclear weapons." But anyone who believes that vampires will honor peacemongering declarations when vital interests are on the line needs his head examined. In fact Brezhnev put a gigantic escape clause in his "no first use" promise. Later in the statement he said: "In the conduct of its policy, the Soviet Union will naturally continue to take into account how the other nuclear powers act; whether they heed the voice of reason and follow our good example or push the world downhill."⁸⁶ In other words, "we've made this promise, but don't expect us to keep it if the other side provokes us." (Brezhnev's caveat completely continues the longstanding Soviet policy of making a distinction between "preventive" and "preemptive" nuclear strikes; in other words, the Soviets have always insisted they will never "preventively" strike *out of the blue* in an unprovoked assault, while they have consistently hammered home that they would exercise their right to "preemptively" strike if they had reason to believe that an American strike was imminent.)

The entire rhetorical exchange around "first use" in fact has a great deal to do with the struggle for public opinion in Europe, where in fact NATO's strategy has always been based on preparing a first (supposedly tactical) use of nuclear weapons to counteract Soviet conventional preponderances on the continent. As we have already discussed, the Soviets have much to gain politically by proposing a "no first use" pact (which they know the West must decline at present), while they could only gain something of an edge militarily if the West were somehow pressured into agreeing to it. By forcing the West to openly acknowledge their strategic preparations to use nuclear weapons first, and by making that policy part of the realm of public debate (especially in Europe), the Soviets have been able to go far in the last couple of years, strutting under a mantle of "reasonable peace lovers," toward fanning some political contradictions within the NATO countries and creating favorable political conditions for themselves, to be used in the context of war in the European theater.

The utter cynicism and hypocrisy of Brezhnev's "no first use" pledge is also obvious from the fact that until recently the Soviet Union not only hadn't run out such a plan, but sharply opposed revolutionary China's call in the 1960s for all powers to renounce the first use of nuclear weapons. This opposition stemmed in part from the fact that the Soviets were exercising nuclear blackmail and actually planning a preemptive nuclear strike against China; and from the fact that in the early '60s, before they attained strategic parity, Soviet strategy rested upon holding Europe nuclear hostage in order to prevent a U.S. attack!⁸⁷

In sum, the differences between U.S. and Soviet arms-control proposals reflect differing political and geographical necessities, as well as contention by both – albeit in somewhat different ways – for political advantage. These differences do not reflect some fundamentally different Soviet approach to war and peace.

Conclusion

The armed forces of the Soviet Union are thoroughly imperialist in character: they have been built on an imperialist basis and their central purpose today is to enable the Soviet Union to wage and win a war for the redivision of the world against a rival imperialist alliance. No other analysis comprehends the sum total of Soviet actions, in particular its military doctrine and military-strategic preparations. It is no exaggeration to say that the Soviet social-imperialists, along with the U.S. and its allies, threaten the very existence of humanity by their mutual reliance on massive nuclear arsenals totaling tens of thousands of warheads. Such a posture would be inconceivable for a revolutionary proletarian state.

The argument that the Soviet Union is the "lesser evil" today, that it is not really compelled to go to war, that its military preparations are simply for "defense," rests on a Kautskyite outlook of conciliation with imperialist chauvinism — in this case the USSR's. It blurs over, obscures, and just plain refuses to come to grips with the profound contradictions of imperialism that are driving the world toward war. It is striking that in the debate over the nature of the Soviet military, a whole host of secondary characteristics of the Soviet Union, of particular differences in the position of the two blocs, are seized upon — and clung to — in an attempt to paint the Soviets as fundamentally different than the U.S. imperialists. Ironically, this argument has been given new life today, when preparations for war are becoming more open on both sides. This isn't only because the U.S. has dramatically and blatantly accelerated its military buildup. It also stems from the fact that some have sought refuge from the real possibility of global nuclear war in the notion that the Soviet Union is different, less imperialist, more peaceful than the U.S.: hence war isn't really inevitable. In short, as international tensions have grown, the Soviet Union has begun to look better and better to some people; a "fear of sharp turns and a disbelief in them,"⁸ as Lenin put it, has found expression in the idea that somehow the Soviet Union isn't so bad after all.

At the same time, there are people who have been drawn to this position out of an honest desire to oppose the war preparations of their "own" governments in the West. Debunking NATO propaganda of an "evil empire" and the "Soviet Menace," this line of reasoning goes, serves to deflate any justification for U.S.-bloc military preparations, and therefore contributes to the prevention of war. This is not true. If the resultant analysis is false and misrepresents the actual dynamics unfolding around us, it can only find itself politically paralyzed as events develop, and add to disorientation and even capitulation. At best, the theory of a reactive, defensive, lesser-evil Soviet Union is an illusion that leads away from the revolutionary conclusions that need to be drawn from the present world situation. At worst, it is a call to enlist with one gang of cutthroats in a war against another.

Should war break out, imperialism will be gravely weakened and opportunities for revolution will arise in many parts of the globe. But what stands out even more from an

analysis of the war plans of the imperialists, West and East, is the need to face fully the implications of their murderous projects and on that basis to accelerate work to overthrow them before they can commit such monstrous crimes and unleash such unprecedented horror upon humanity.

Notes

¹ Leonid Brezhnev, "Central Committee Report to the 24th Congress of the CPSU (30 March 1971)," cited in *The Lie of a Soviet War Threat* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1980), p. 10.

² Fred Halliday, "The Sources of the New Cold War," *New Left Review*, ed., *Exterminism and Cold War* (London: New Left Review, 1982), p. 319.

³ Roy Medvedev and Zhores Medvedev, "The USSR and the Arms Race," *Exterminism and Cold War*, p. 154.

⁴ Fred M. Kaplan, *Dubious Specter, A Skeptical Look at the Soviet Nuclear Threat* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Policy Studies, 1980); Andrew Cockburn, *The Threat: Inside the Soviet Military Machine* (New York: Random House, 1983); and Edward P. Thompson, "Notes on Exterminism, the Last Stage of Civilization," *Exterminism and Cold War*, p. 6.

⁵ V.I. Lenin, *The Collapse of the Second International, Collected Works (LCW)* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), Vol. 21, p. 219.

⁶ See the Editors of *The Communist*, eds., *The Soviet Union: Socialist or Social-Imperialist? Essays Toward the Debate on the Nature of Soviet Society* (Chicago: RCP Publications, 1983), and *The Soviet Union: Socialist or Social-Imperialist?, Part II: The Question is Joined, Raymond Lotta vs. Albert Szymanski* (Chicago: RCP Publications, 1983).

⁷ Herbert Block, "The Economic Basis of Soviet Power," in Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy of the Soviet Union* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983), pp. 145, 170.

⁸ Halliday, "The Sources of the New Cold War," p. 295.

⁹ Lenin, *Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism, LCW*, Vol. 22, p. 295.

¹⁰ "New NATO Study Says Spending by Soviets on Military Has Slowed," *New York Times*, January 30, 1983.

¹¹ Figures from Bruce Russett and Bruce Blair, eds., *Progress in Arms Control? Readings from Scientific American* (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, 1979), p. 5, supplemented by material from U.S. Defense Department, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (U.S.A.C.D.A.), and Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Soviet data since 1966 are American CIA estimates. (See U.S.A.C.D.A., *World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers, 1968-1977* [Washington, D.C.: U.S.A.C.D.A., 1979]. We have employed lower estimates in the portrayal here of Soviet figures, including recent reassessments by Western intelligence cited in footnote 10. The question of absolute figures and their comparison remains a contentious problem in the analysis of war preparation. There are no "disinterested observers" with first-hand access to data; all figures on the Soviet Union flow from either the Soviet government or from Western intelligence — and neither is particularly trustworthy. As just one example: the Soviet Union releases only one figure for military expenditures annually, covering gross costs. Over the last decade they simply assert a leveling off of their absolute expenditures; in fact, they even insist that their military expenditures have gone through a subtle, politically attractive, decline. Needless to say, this claim is absurd on the face of it. They can't both be claiming to roughly match the United States in military power (which is overall true) and also claim to be winding down

their military effort.

For the purposes of this article, this controversy is fortunately avoidable. Our arguments (unlike the arguments of our opponents) do not rest on comparative bean counting and do not really require the construction of an estimation of military expenditures by both sides. The reader will note that we have consciously kept the use of absolute figures at a minimum. When it proved unavoidable we used the only available sources (i.e., largely Western estimates). However, even there we have largely kept to those figures and estimates for which there should be little controversy.

¹² Revolutionary Communist Party of Chile and Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, *Basic Principles For the Unity of Marxist-Leninists and For the Line of the International Communist Movement* (Chicago: RCP Publications, 1981), p. 6, paragraphs 30-31.

¹³ See, for example, "Soviet Arms Technology Has Shown Steady Gains," *New York Times*, December 8, 1980.

¹⁴ N.S. Khrushchev, *On Peaceful Coexistence* (Moscow: Foreign Language Publishing House, 1961), pp. 148-51, 160-63; excerpts cited in Harriet Fast Scott and William F. Scott, eds., *The Soviet Art of War: Doctrine, Strategy, and Tactics* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1982), p. 164. This book by the Scotts is particularly useful for an investigation of Soviet military doctrine because, unlike writings by Western military theorists that simply quote snippets of Soviet works, this translates extensive excerpts of the Soviet writers themselves, with abbreviated and separated commentary by the Scotts. When using this and similar collections we have attempted to make sure, to the extent possible, that Soviet doctrinal ideas are not quoted here in a way that distorts their actual point and violates the context in which they were originally presented.

¹⁵ Raymond Lotta with Frank Shannon, *America in Decline: An Analysis of the Developments Toward War and Revolution, in the U.S. and Worldwide, in the 1980s* (Chicago: Banner Press, 1984), p. 150.

¹⁶ Lenin, "Socialism and War," *Lenin on War and Peace, Three Articles* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1970), pp. 6-7; and Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, *LCW*, Vol. 28, p. 286.

¹⁷ V.D. Sokolovskiy, ed., *Military Strategy*, first edition (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1962), pp. 237-39; cited in Scott and Scott, *The Soviet Art of War*, p. 175.

¹⁸ Bob Avakian, *Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions* (Chicago: RCP Publications, 1979), p. 42.

¹⁹ Mao Tsetung, *On Protracted War, Selected Works (MSW)* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967), Vol. 2, p. 143.

²⁰ Sokolovskiy, *Military Strategy*, p. 176.

²¹ For instance, one Soviet military publication noted: "Nuclear missiles have altered the relationship of tactical, operational and strategic acts of the armed conflict. If in the past the strategic end-result was secured by a succession of sequential, most often long-term, efforts [and] comprised the sum of tactical and operational successes, strategy being able to realize its intentions only with the assistance of the art of operations and tactics, then today, by means of powerful nuclear strikes, strategy can attain its objectives directly" (*Methodological Problems of Military Theory and Practice* [Moscow: Ministry of Defense of the USSR, 1969], p. 288); cited in Richard Pipes, "Why the Soviet Union Thinks It Could Fight and Win a Nuclear War," *Commentary*, July 1977, pp. 29-30.

²² On the importance of economic strength in previous wars, Henry Kissinger noted that, "we have won two world wars by outproducing our opponent . . ." (Henry Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* [New York: W.W. Norton, 1969], p. 16). And the changes in warfare in this regard, wrought by nuclear weapons was indicated by one Soviet strategist who insisted that, "The first law of war is that the course and outcome of war . . . depends primarily on the correlation of available, strictly military forces of the combatants at the beginning of the war . . . the beginning of a war can have a decisive effect on the outcome" (V. Ye. Savkin, *Operational Art and Tactics* [Moscow: Military Publishing House, 1972], p. 89); cited in Robert Kennedy,

"Soviet Theater-Nuclear Forces: Implications for NATO Defense," *Orbis*, Summer 1981, p. 339.

²³ Kaplan, *Dubious Specter*, pp. 15-24; for an example of the CPD approach see Pipes, "Why The Soviet Union Thinks."

²⁴ David Holloway, *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 60.

²⁵ This logic was spelled out explicitly by the U.S. government's *Fiscal Year 1984-88 Defense Guidance*, which stated that the U.S. military should have enough nuclear weapons "so that the United States would never emerge from a nuclear war without nuclear weapons while still being threatened by enemy nuclear weapons" ("New Atom-War Strategy Confirmed," *New York Times*, June 4, 1982).

²⁶ "Pentagon Draws Up First Strategy for Fighting a Long Nuclear War," *New York Times*, May 30, 1982. The number of warheads was given in Thomas B. Cochran, William M. Arkin, and Milton M. Hoenig, *Nuclear Weapons Data Book, Vol. 1: U.S. Nuclear Forces and Capabilities* (Cambridge, Mass.: Natural Resources Defense Council Book, Ballinger Publishing Company, Harper and Row), cited in "Deception, Self-Deception and Nuclear Arms," *New York Review of Books*, March 11, 1984, pp. 3, 15.

²⁷ John D. Steinbruner, "Nuclear Decapitation," *Foreign Policy*, Winter 1981-82, p. 19. And according to the *New York Times*, the U.S.'s "Nuclear strategy would be based on what is known as decapitation, meaning strikes at Soviet political and military leadership and communications lines" ("Pentagon Draws Up," May 30, 1982). Steinbruner also notes: "Given the vulnerabilities of current forces and the strains to which they are subject, a full two-sided alert in crisis must prudently be considered tantamount to war and should not be undertaken for reasons less powerful than those required to justify war itself" (p. 28). This hair-trigger situation is not fundamentally the result of the kinds of weapons both powers have armed themselves with; in fact, the weapons and the kind of instability Steinbruner notes are themselves a reflection, indeed a concentration, of the imperialist rivalry that is the source of war. However, on this basis, the accelerating arms race does develop destabilizing dynamics of its own.

²⁸ See John Steinbruner, "Launch Under Attack," *Scientific American*, January 1984, pp. 37-47.

²⁹ Holloway, *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race*, p. 37. Holloway argues that the Soviet stress on preemption may have resulted, in part, from the fact that in the early '60s their strategic inferiority made them vulnerable to a U.S. first strike, and now that they have attained parity, "strategic thinking has placed less emphasis on the idea of preemption" (p. 57). No doubt their vulnerabilities were a factor in their early stress on striking first, and that since then Soviet thinking on nuclear war has evolved to encompass a wider range of scenarios; however, the objective pressures to strike first, as we have noted, remain despite parity, and thus it would be wrong to conclude that Soviet thinking on this question has changed fundamentally.

³⁰ V.I. Zernskov, *Military Thought*, No. 7 (July 1969), excerpts cited in Scott and Scott, *The Soviet Art of War*, pp. 211-212.

³¹ Holloway, *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race*, p. 60.

³² Cockburn, *Soviet Military Machine*, p. 197.

³³ G.A. Arbatov, "The American Strategic Debate: A Soviet View," *Survival*, Vol. XVI, No. 3 (May/June 1974), pp. 133-34; cited in Desmond Ball, "Can Nuclear War Be Controlled?," *Adelphi Papers* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, Autumn 1981), No. 169, p. 32.

³⁴ Medvedev and Medvedev, "The USSR and the Arms Race," p. 168.

³⁵ For example, a 1975 Department of Defense study, which vastly underrates the number of casualties in a nuclear conflict, estimates that an attack against only military targets in the U.S. would kill 21.7 million people (Report from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, *The Effects of Limited Nuclear Warfare*, September 18, 1975, p. 9;

cited in Ball, "Can Nuclear War Be Controlled?" p. 27).

³⁶ U.S. plans for fighting 'limited' nuclear wars were also designed to exploit the U.S.'s technological superiority. Henry Kissinger expresses, in *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, his complaint that the U.S. hadn't fully exploited its nuclear superiority against the Soviet Union: "For a nation with a superior industrial capacity and a broader base of technology, it will be strategically most productive to use weapons sufficiently complex to exploit its industrial advantage, sufficiently destructive so that manpower cannot be substituted for technology yet discriminating enough to permit the establishment of a significant margin of superiority." And: "It would seem that the weapons systems appropriate for limited nuclear war meet these requirements. . . . It is much less certain that with its [the Soviet Union's - M.E.] inferior industrial plant it could compete with us in developing the diversified capability for a limited nuclear war. . . ." "It is no wonder that Soviet propaganda has been insistent on two themes: there is no such thing as limited nuclear war, and 'ban the bomb.' Both themes, if accepted, deprive us of flexibility and undermine the basis of the most effective United States strategy" [Kissinger, *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy*, pp. 161, 164].

³⁷ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (Combat Forces Press, 1953), p. 16; cited in Roman Kolkowicz, "U.S. and Soviet Approaches to Military Strategy: Theory vs. Experience," *Orbis*, Summer 1981, p. 310.

³⁸ Cited in Ball, "Can Nuclear War Be Controlled?", p. 34.

³⁹ Cited in "Soviet Marshal Warns the U.S. on its Missiles," *New York Times*, March 17, 1983.

⁴⁰ Kaplan, *Dubious Specter*, p. 16.

⁴¹ Medvedev and Medvedev, "The USSR and the Arms Race," p. 168.

⁴² Holloway, *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race*, p. 41.

⁴³ Reagan, *New York Times*, October 2, 1981; Brezhnev, *Pravda*, October 20, 1981; Ogarkov, *Kommunist*, No. 10 (1981), p. 85; all cited in Holloway, pp. 49, 53. For example, two weeks before the MX missile vote of May 1983, Reagan pointedly told the West German magazine *Bunte* that he did not believe that a limited nuclear war in Europe is possible, thereby sparking headlines in the U.S. and striking a peace-loving pose necessary to usher the MX program through its birth pangs. Later, Reagan, in his 1984 State of the Union message noted for the record: "A nuclear war cannot be won, and must never be fought."

⁴⁴ "Bob Avakian on Radio WFRG: World War, Nuclear Weapons, and Revolution," *Revolutionary Worker*, No. 189 (January 21, 1983), p. 3.

⁴⁵ Kautsky and Neymarck quoted in Lenin, *Imperialism, LCW*, Vol. 22, pp. 289, 288.

⁴⁶ Mao, *On Protracted War, SW*, Vol. 2, p. 156.

⁴⁷ All three quotes cited in Cockburn, *Soviet Military Machine*, p. 214.

⁴⁸ Ogarkov, quoted in Holloway, *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race*, p. 54; Khrushchev, quoted in Scott and Scott, *The Soviet Art of War*, pp. 163-164.

⁴⁹ Much of this information is drawn from Cockburn, *Soviet Military Machine*, pp. 230-41.

⁵⁰ Marshal N.V. Ogarkov, "The 'Soviet Threat': Myth and Reality," in *The Lie of a Soviet War Threat*, p. 88.

⁵¹ Zemskov, cited in Scott and Scott, *The Soviet Art of War*, pp. 213-14.

⁵² These figures are derived from a major article in the West German magazine *Spiegel*, April 11, 1983, pp. 154-71. Because this article is arguing that U.S. military estimates exaggerate the "Soviet threat," it more or less confines itself to conservative estimates and to military forces whose existence are hardly disputed by either East or West.

⁵³ See S.V. Shtrik, *Military Thought*, No. 1 (January 1968); excerpted in Scott and Scott, *The Soviet Art of War*, pp. 202-205.

⁵⁴ Kurt Gottfried, Henry W. Kendall, and John M. Lee, "No 'First Use' of Nuclear Weapons," *Scientific American*, March 1984, p. 36.

⁵⁵ "New Bases for Missiles in Siberia," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 9, 1983.

⁵⁶ "New Bases for Missiles in Siberia," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 9, 1983. According to one U.S. defense analyst: "In 1971 Marshal Grechko detailed Soviet targeting priorities for their longer-range theater-nuclear forces. At the top of the list were U.S. Pershing missile bases, nuclear-capable NATO air force units, tanker bases, British and French nuclear submarines, tactical-nuclear weapons storage sites, and U.S. aircraft carriers. These targets were followed by major ports, military bases and barracks, nuclear reactors, command-and-control centers, and the transportation supply net" (Grechko, *On Guard for Peace*, cited in Kennedy, "Soviet Theater-Nuclear Forces," p. 343).

⁵⁷ Figure 2 is from *NATO and the Warsaw Pact Force Comparisons*, a booklet put out by NATO, p. 57.

⁵⁸ "Soviet's Military Buildup a Major Issue for Reagan," *New York Times*, December 7, 1980; and "Soviet Armed Forces Exhibiting Weakness in Several Key Areas," *New York Times*, December 9, 1980.

⁵⁹ A roughly accurate estimate is that NATO, including the U.S., is larger than the Warsaw Pact in population, 575 million to 375 million; GNP, 5.77 trillion to 2.02 trillion; numbers in the armed forces, 4.9 million to 4.76 million; in addition to having the advantage in sophisticated weaponry, including jet aircraft and precision-guided munitions. The Warsaw Pact, on the other hand, has the advantages of geography and a 264:100 superiority in heavy tanks; 207:100 in artillery and rocket launchers; 379:100 in surface-to-air guided missiles; and 177:100 in helicopters. The Warsaw Pact also has more troops in Europe itself (excluding the Soviet Union), between 830,000 (the Soviet estimate) and 980,000 (the American estimate) to NATO's 793,000 troops (Gottfried, Kendall, and Lee, "No First Use," pp. 34, 38, 39, 40; figures for troops in Europe from "West Discloses New Plans for Troop Cuts," *New York Times*, July 9, 1982).

⁶⁰ V. Ye. Savkin writes: "[T]he offensive is the basic form of combat actions, since only by a decisive offensive conducted at a high tempo and to a great depth is total defeat of the enemy achieved." And further, that through "the stunning effect of surprise attacks by nuclear and conventional weapons and decisive offensive operations by troops, the enemy's capabilities are sharply lowered. . . . the correlation of forces changes immediately. . . . He may panic and his morale will be crushed" (Savkin, *Operational Art and Tactics*, pp. 248, 232-33; cited in Kennedy, "Soviet Theater-Nuclear Forces," pp. 339, 340).

⁶¹ "Soviet Armed Forces Exhibiting Weakness," *New York Times*, December 9, 1980.

⁶² See Edward N. Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, pp. 81-83.

⁶³ "Pentagon Draws Up First Strategy," *New York Times*, May 30, 1982.

⁶⁴ "New Bases for Missiles in Siberia," *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 9, 1983, for figures on number of SS-20s; "Soviet Buildup in Far East Causing U.S. Concern," *New York Times*, January 30, 1984, for figures on number of Backfire bombers; and Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, p. 95, for percentage of missiles needed.

⁶⁵ "Soviet's Military Buildup," *New York Times*, December 7, 1980, and "Soviet Buildup in Far East," January 30, 1982, for figures on number of troops. See also Luttwak, *The Grand Strategy*, pp. 89-107; and Robert P. Berman and John C. Baker, *Soviet Strategic Forces: Requirements and Responses* (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution), pp. 12-13.

⁶⁶ "Soviet Use of Nuclear Terror," *San Francisco Examiner*, February 6, 1983, Section B.

⁶⁷ "Soviets in Asia: Navy Buildup in the Pacific," *New York Times*, December 30, 1982; and Mike M. Mochizuki, "Japan's Search for

Strategy," *International Security*, Winter 1983-84, pp. 152-79, for some discussion of Soviet aims and military buildup vis-à-vis Japan.

⁶⁸ "Soviet's Military Buildup," *New York Times*, December 7, 1980.

⁶⁹ S.G. Gorshkov, *The Sea Power of the State*, Russian edition, published in Moscow in 1976, p. 106, excerpted in *Soviet Naval Strategy*, Dirk Hennings and Alexandra Herrmann (London: Democratic Defense Pamphlet, No. 2, September 1977) p. 29; and Gorshkov, *Naval Collections*, No. 2 (February 1967), pp. 20-21; cited in Scott and Scott, *The Soviet Art of War*, pp. 182-85.

⁷⁰ Cited in Holloway, *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race*, p. 60, for figures on submarine-launched missiles; Thomas B. Allen and Norman Polmar, "The Silent Chase - Tracking Soviet Submarines," *New York Times Magazine*, January 1, 1984, for figures on number of missile-carrying submarines; and Gorshkov, quoted in "Soviet Union's 'Retaliatory' Sub System," *San Francisco Chronicle*, July 26, 1982.

⁷¹ The source for this description of OKEAN '75 is an article which originally appeared in the West Berlin magazine *Befreiung*, No. 9 (1977), republished as "Soviet Naval Strategy," by Democratic Defense in pamphlet form. The sources cited for the above information are from more available publications: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 20, 1975; *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, February 20, 1976; *Hsinhua*, April 30, 1975; *Die Welt*, March 19, 1977 and February 17, 1976. Also the Tokyo newspaper *Mainichi Daily News* contains a retrospective analysis of OKEAN '75.

⁷² "Soviet Union is Holding Big Naval Games," *New York Times*, April 4, 1984; "The Case of the Vanishing War Games," *Revolutionary Worker*, No. 251, p. 5.

⁷³ See, for example, Nicholas Cummings, "Angola: A Case Study in Soviet Neocolonialism," *Revolution*, Spring 1984; Santosh K. Mehotra and Patrick Clawson, "Soviet Economic Relations with India and other Third World Countries," *The Soviet Union: Socialist or Social-Imperialist. Essays Toward the Debate*; Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, *Cuba, the Evaporation of a Myth* (Chicago: RCP Publications, Third Printing, 1983); "The Role of Social-Imperialism in Colombia," *Cuadernos El Trabajador*, No. 4 (October 1982), reprinted in *Revolutionary Worker*, No. 182 (November 26, 1982), p. 8; and Mahmood Mamdani, *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda* (Trenton, N.J.: Africa World Press, 1984), Chapter 6: "The Army and the Soviet Connection: 1973-78," pp. 68-77, reprinted in *Revolutionary Worker*, No. 168 (August 20, 1982), pp. 8-10.

⁷⁴ John Erikson and E.J. Feuchtwanger, eds., *Soviet Military Power and Performance* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1979), p. 47; "Soviet Armed Forces," *New York Times*, December 9, 1980

⁷⁵ *Basic Principles*, p. 6, para. 29.

⁷⁶ See "Soviet Buildup in the Far East," *New York Times*, January 30, 1984.

⁷⁷ Cummings, "Angola: A Case Study," p. 43.

⁷⁸ "U.S. Naval Buildup is Challenging Soviet Advances in Asia and Africa," *New York Times*, April 19, 1981.

⁷⁹ Halliday, "The Sources of the New Cold War," p. 310.

⁸⁰ A.A. Grechko, "The Leading Role of the CPSU in Building the Army of a Developed Socialist Society," *Problems of History of the CPSU*, May 1974; translated by Foreign Broadcast Information Service, cited in Scott and Scott, *The Soviet Art of War*, p. 243, emphasis added.

⁸¹ Holloway, *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race*, pp. 58-60.

⁸² Kissinger, for instance, writes: "Detente did not prevent resistance to Soviet expansion; on the contrary, it fostered the only possible psychological framework for such resistance. . . . If the Vietnam war had taught us anything it was that a military confrontation could be sustained only if the American people were convinced there was no other choice." And: "SALT I caused us to give up not a single offensive weapons program. The freeze was essential, indeed, if we were ever going to catch up. And we followed SALT I with a substantial modernization of our strategic forces" (Kissinger, *Years of*

Upheaval [Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1982], pp. 235, 237, 257).

⁸³ Holloway, *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race*, p. 47.

⁸⁴ Holloway, *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race*, pp. 58-60.

⁸⁵ "Brezhnev's Statement," *New York Times*, June 16, 1982; "Andropov Offers Ban on Space Arms," *New York Times*, April 28, 1983.

⁸⁶ "Brezhnev's Statement," *New York Times*, June 16, 1982.

⁸⁷ For example, Holloway notes that during the early 1960s the Soviets placed primary emphasis on deploying theater nuclear weapons, 750 of them compared to only 224 intercontinental systems by 1965. He also writes that:

"In September 1961, during the Berlin crisis, *Izvestia* carried a report of an interview Khrushchev had given the *New York Times*. This said that 'Khrushchev believes absolutely that when it comes to a showdown, Britain, France and Italy would refuse to join the United States in a war over Berlin for fear of their absolute destruction. Quite blandly he asserts that these countries are, figuratively speaking, hostages to the USSR and a guarantee against war.' Khrushchev is reported to have told the British Ambassador during the same Berlin crisis that all Western Europe was at his mercy: six hydrogen bombs would annihilate the British Isles, while nine others would take care of France" (Holloway, *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race*, pp. 66, 67).

A final note on the hypocrisy of the Soviet Union's 'no first use' pledge. It could well be that it is the Soviets who end up initiating the use of nuclear weapons - at sea. The fact that the Soviets are at a disadvantage on the seas, combined with the importance of controlling them - albeit for different reasons for each side - may impel the Soviets to resort to nuclear strikes against Western naval forces in order to neutralize them and prevent them from destroying or bottling up the Soviet navy. Certainly Soviet military doctrine stress on both the importance of preemption and the role of nuclear weapons in 'changing the balance of forces' supports this possibility. Further, some Western military analysts write that, "[N]uclear weapons have been closely integrated with a general strategy of sea denial and with a set of battle tactics predicated on winning at sea with less." That this possibility is taken seriously in the U.S. was indicated by the fact that the Pentagon's *Fiscal Year 1984-88 Defense Guidance* paper noted that, according to the *New York Times*, "the Soviet Union might be tempted to start a nuclear attack on the United States Navy in the belief that the conflict could be limited to the sea." The *Guidance Paper* then went on to state specifically: "Therefore it will be United States policy that a nuclear war beginning with Soviet attacks at sea will not necessarily remain limited to the sea" (Gordon H. McCormick and Mark E. Miller, "American Seapower at Risk: Nuclear Weapons in Soviet Naval Planning," *Orbis*, Summer 1981, p. 351; "Pentagon Draws Up First Strategy," *New York Times*, May 30, 1982).

⁸⁸ Lenin, *Collapse of the Second International*, LCW, Vol. 21, p. 243.

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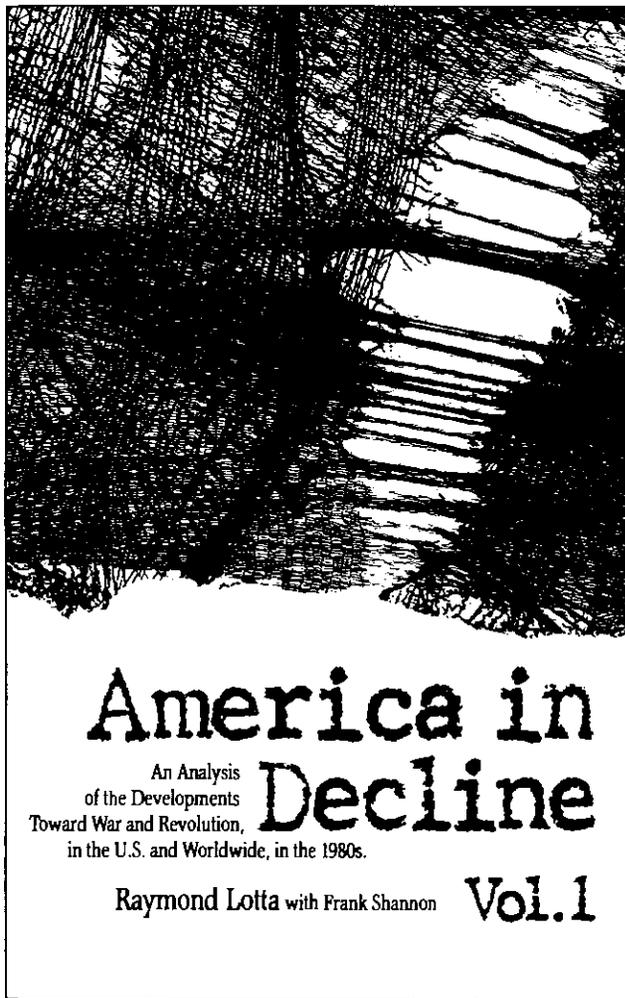
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Soviet Education: Reading, Writing, and Revisionism

by *Leona Krasny*

While education doesn't tell the whole story of any given system and its social relations, it nonetheless "is an extremely important part of the superstructure and plays a very crucial role in maintaining and reinforcing one kind of class relations or another." The content of the curriculum, the relationship between the schools and the division of labor in society at large, the sorts of social relations and the kind of outlook permeating and guiding the classroom itself – all these both flow from and reciprocally affect a society's overall class relations.

The education system of the Soviet Union is decidedly capitalist: reflecting, maintaining, and reinforcing bourgeois, reactionary class relations. From the "socialist" tracking system to the revisionist content of textbooks, from the promotion of self-seeking competition through the pursuit of grades to the maintenance of the absolute authority of the teacher and administration, the entire school system is set up to make a principle of the division between mental and manual labor; to train the students in the peculiar revisionist ideology of "me first (for the benefit of all) with everyone in their specialized place"; to divorce (Marxist) theory from practice and the masses from the running of society; and to politically indoctrinate Soviet youth in narrow Russian chauvinism and the "justice" of class society revisionist-style.

The Soviet social-imperialists and their apologists argue that the big gains in literacy since 1917, including the fact that many children of workers get a university education and that nearly all youth receive a secondary education, would be impossible under capitalism. These developments, they say, demonstrate the superiority of the socialist system. In fact, these phenomena typify all modern imperialist societies, and their existence in the Soviet Union – as elsewhere in the imperialist world – flows from the specific needs and serves the interests of social-imperialism, as does the like-minded emphasis on the worship of various achievements in science and technology. These are

necessary to the expansion of capital in the era of imperialism; and, like all good capitalists, the Soviets do what the needs of capital dictate.

Revisionists may reply that, yes, there are problems and weaknesses, but that these are part of the legacy left from capitalism and are being gradually overcome. In fact these "flaws" are not left over from the capitalism of prerevolutionary Russia, but are part of a conscious policy on education reflecting the overall relations of an imperialist system with a socialist veneer. Indeed, the aspects of the Soviet system of education that reflect the legacy of 40 years of socialism – for example, the attempts under Lenin and Stalin to upgrade education for the oppressed nationalities and narrow the gap between the (formerly) oppressor and oppressed nations – have been steadily dismantled.

The Soviet line on education is concentrated, for instance, in a statement on the function of education taken from a book done by Soviet sociologists on the cultural life of workers in the Ural region:

"Education is a means by which each new generation can assimilate the knowledge accumulated by humanity. The knowledge and skills obtained make it possible for the individual to adapt to the social environment around him. In the process of education, the individual assimilates cultural values, making them his own spiritual resource. Man does not simply obtain systematized knowledge of the world, he also prepares himself for the performance of specific labor."²

This is essentially the same view of education found in any U.S. sociology textbook, with the added twist that "socialist" education prepares young people for a specific job (a point now also getting some emphasis in the U.S.). This is extolled in their propaganda aimed at the West: unlike capitalism, where youth often have no skills and no job, the Soviet system prepares students so that they come out of school trained and ready to do the same job for life. "Job training" becomes the revisionists' vulgarized version of the Marxist principle of integrating theory and practice.

The revisionist line on education cited above views the students' role of "assimilating knowledge" as a passive one. Lenin, it is true, spoke of the need for communist youth to "assimilate the wealth of knowledge amassed by mankind" but, unlike the social-imperialists of today, he stressed that "you should not merely assimilate this knowledge, but assimilate it critically."³ The revisionists view the student as a blank slate on which society – through the educational system – draws the proper image. He or she is little more than an empty head to be filled with supposedly classless "knowledge accumulated by humanity."

This is more than a "bad formulation" on education; it reflects a bourgeois class viewpoint on the role of the masses and on education. It is diametrically opposed to the genuinely communist view that the masses are the makers of history and that they must be unleashed through consciously grasping the

laws of nature and the class struggle, a process entailing participation in struggle and a direct involvement in theory and practice at all levels and in all spheres – not a passive spoon-feeding by experts and authorities.

A basic principle of Marxist materialism – understanding the world in the course of changing it, and in order to change it – is negated on both sides. On understanding the world, the basic educational system is not intended to train the masses in knowing the world through learning to critically and analytically examine *all* phenomena in their contradictory motion and development, nor is it designed to foster the challenge of all traditional ideas and traditional relations between people. Instead, traditional capitalist relations and methods prevail: the teachers and books put forward the "right" answers while the students learn to regurgitate them on cue, the teachers keep order while the students "assimilate knowledge" and "adapt to the social environment." One learns about the world, in this conservative system, through mastering a closed body of knowledge with new facts and theories added by the higher authorities for proper digestion by students.

As for changing the world, the role of the masses is reduced to learning what they need to know to fulfill a specific and extremely limited function in society – their trade or profession. Doing a good job, being conscientious – this is extolled as "socialist consciousness!"

Certainly in a genuinely socialist system the youth, and the masses in general, have to work at jobs, doing specific kinds of labor demanding certain knowledge specific to that work. The division of labor inherited from capitalism does not disappear overnight. But neither does it "disappear" at all without a conscious and fierce struggle to limit and transform the inherited division of labor as much as possible. This is a crucial task of the transition from socialism to communism, and as the experience of the Cultural Revolution in China showed, it is one that entails both ongoing struggle at every level of society and truly profound upheaval. While the Cultural Revolution itself is outside the scope of this article, it's worth noting that that struggle began in the universities and was marked by perhaps the most thoroughgoing and wide-ranging rethinking on and reform of the educational system ever witnessed in any society.⁴ Through all the struggle over education ran the basic theme of transforming the educational system inherited from capitalism into one that served the development of true successors to revolution, true inheritors of the Communards' spirit of daring to storm the heavens. The transformations were carried out with the aim of serving the revolution worldwide, unleashing the leadership of the proletariat in every sphere (including, but not limited to, production) and utilizing the educational system to break down the great differences inherited from capitalism (between town and country, agriculture and industry, and – very important for education – mental and manual labor).

By contrast, Soviet theory and practice is aimed at producing an efficient elite to run the society, and a docile mass to obey them. Their theory, which basically identifies much of education with job preparation, has exactly the aim of maintaining and

reinforcing the division of labor, especially the most fundamental division between who rules and who is ruled. If the essential thing a person needs to know is the knowledge required for their job, then how is society's division of labor to be transformed? Then how are the great majority of masses going to play the kind of political role necessary to push society forward and liberate all of mankind? They aren't, except for perhaps the sham role of endorsing this or that revisionist proposal or candidate. It is okay and necessary, from the revisionist point of view, for the masses to develop knowledge of certain objective "laws" on the job (whether this be on the factory floor or in the science lab), but social-imperialism cannot promote genuine dialectical materialism as a guiding philosophy for the masses because to do so would be to arm them with a weapon against their own imperialist class rule. So having a trade, "knowing how to do something," is extolled as the goal of the proletarians in the Soviet Union today. But even this limited role takes many years of training, according to Soviet experts:

"Before entering the system of social production and social life, every individual undergoes many years of preparation in the education system. . . . Thus, the education system has two basic social functions: socialization and professionalization of the younger generation. At its first stages (primary and secondary general education) the former predominate. Acquisition of general academic knowledge can be viewed as fundamental training for work in any job. In secondary special and higher education, on the contrary, professionalization moves to the fore. The young person there completes his schooling and begins an independent life."⁵

Thus, Soviet youth, like those in other imperialist nations, spend a long, long time in society's "womb" being constantly bombarded with society's reactionary values, being "assimilated" and "adapted," contorted and distorted before they are trusted to be part of social life and have their own "independent" life. Their supposedly empty heads are to be filled with bourgeois knowledge and minutely-specialized technical job training before they are considered to be "an educated citizen conscious of his civic duty," i.e., for the broad masses, cannonfodder or a wage-slave.⁶

Training the Youth in Revisionism

As mentioned above, the revisionists view children as apprentice human beings with empty heads to be filled up. School is for "assimilating knowledge and cultural values." In line with the particular needs of social-imperialism, they desire to encourage what they call a "collectivist" approach — which boils down to placing a high premium on conformity

and peer pressure to conform. Blatant individualism and "me first" is veiled under the idea that high individual achievement, coupled with social and political conformity and "service," is the best thing for yourself *and* the nation and is therefore noble and should be rewarded. There is definitely more attention paid by the state and society in general to the upbringing of the youth than in the U.S., although the individual family (i.e., the mother) is still mainly responsible. The lever of persuasion to conform to standards is exerted mainly by withdrawal of approval by adults and other children, not by physical punishment. Striking a child is forbidden in practice as well as by official regulations. But this is not outside the scope of liberal bourgeois ideology and in fact is part of the ideological requirements of being a "socialist" imperialism — "people working for the greater good, caring for your fellow man, etc.," is not so dissimilar from the attractions of a liberal church community in the U.S., and it can be and is used to actually enforce the status quo.

"Standard Rules of Pupils and Uniform Requirements," issued centrally in the Soviet Union, are a good indication of how the revisionists view youth and their role. "The 'Rules for Pupils' indicate an endorsement of the idea that discipline is a primary condition for the normal life of a society, and for a free development of all its members," states the text. "The restoration of discipline also indicates acceptance of the authority of the parents, teachers and elders. The restored discipline differs from the traditional in many respects. It is based not on religion but on social motivation and is free from all the harsh aspects of coercion characteristic of the tsarist schools."⁷

Tsarist religion, no; state religion, yes. Rules and regulations themselves have a class character, and the Soviet rules cited below bear the mark of and serve bourgeois rule. Read these rules for grades 1-3 and then ask what their attitude is towards the creativity, energy, and natural questioning and daring of children entering school. Do such rules foster and temper the rebelliousness of students, or do they stupefy them with a so-called "collectivism" of blind obedience? Is knowledge viewed as something to gain and share with others, or as personal capital for one's own advancement?

During the Lesson

1. When the teacher or any adult person enters the class, get up silently and sit down only on a given signal.
2. When the teacher records attendance and calls your name, get up silently. . . .
5. Sit straight, do not slouch and do not turn around.
6. Do not correct your classmate's answer without the teacher's permit. Do not prompt. [One has to learn that knowledge is private capital after all.]
7. If you are called, get up, stand straight and answer precisely, not hurrying. . . .
9. When you want to ask the teacher a question, raise your right hand, keep the elbow on the desk. On receiving the teacher's permit, get up, ask the question, sit down. . . .

15. If the teacher has punished you by ordering you to stand, go to the door, and stand turned to the blackboard. Do not start any arguments because of your punishment.

During Recesses and After Classes

1. On the premises of the school do not scream, do not run, keep order. . . .
3. When you meet an adult, stop, make way and greet. If you are sitting when an adult passes, get up and greet.

At Home

1. Strictly observe your schedule of daily activities - train your willpower.
2. Begin your homework beginning with the most difficult subjects [homework for grades 1-3 is recommended to be from 1 to 4 hours per day]. . . .
10. Behave in a cultured way at the table.
11. Be polite and courteous not only to your relatives but also to your neighbors in your apartment; do not make noise.

Outward Appearance

1. Come to school in a clean, neatly ironed uniform with polished buttons and shined shoes.
2. Do not keep in your pockets unnecessary things. Do not keep your hands in your pockets.

Speech

1. Watch your speech. Do not use "parasitic" words.
2. Do not use rude expressions and nicknames.
3. Behave modestly and decently; do not embarrass people who surround you. Do not push, do not yell, do not speak too loudly, do not sing where it is not accepted.⁸

This should give an indication of the type of youth that the revisionists would like to see emerging "socialized" from the school system. At this point one is tempted to mutter a few "parasitic words." Any U.S. military academy would be proud of students who would adhere to such a regimen.

It is no wonder why Mao Tsetung was considered a complete heretic and troublemaker by the Soviet social-imperialists for comments like the following on the Chinese schools before the Cultural Revolution:

"At examinations whispering into each other's ears and taking other people's places ought to be allowed. If your answer is good and I copy it, then mine should be counted as good. Whispering in other people's ears and taking examinations in other people's names used to be done secretly. Let it now be done openly. . . . We must do things in a lively fashion, not in a lifeless fashion. There are teachers who ramble on and on when they lecture; they should let their students doze off. If your lecture is no good, why insist on others

listening to you? Rather than keeping your eyes open and listening to boring lectures, it is better to get some refreshing sleep. You don't have to listen to nonsense, you can rest your brain instead."⁹

Mao's principal orientation on education was to call on the youth to boldly participate in society, challenging the old, overthrowing the reactionary, and bringing forward socialist new things. In line with this, he consistently fought for the integration of theory and practice at every grade level, both in politics and production. As part of the latter, schools carried out manual labor and were often linked to production units. To carry out this orientation, Mao opposed the piling on of bookwork to the detriment not only of politics and production but plays, sports, and social activities as well, and he upheld the all-around development of children and youth, including their physical and social development.

There was great struggle during the Cultural Revolution that particularly focused on such questions as blind obedience to authority and the role of students in society. The Chinese revolutionaries fought for applying the mass line in teaching methods in opposition to the revisionist garbage of "teacher talks, you listen" seen in the Soviet rules and requirements.

"In practicing this new teaching method, it is essential to adhere to the mass line of 'from the masses, to the masses' in teaching. The teacher should serve the students. His role is to help raise the ability of the students to think for themselves, to study problems and to practice. Therefore, he should learn from the students and make investigations among them."¹⁰

"Teaching methods are definitely not only a question of specific methods, but, what is more important, are a question of principle, a question of organizing teaching according to which class' theory of knowledge and methodology. The bourgeois teaching methods center on books and teachers and divorces theory from practice. 'The teacher crams the students with his lecture throughout the class while the students follow him mechanically.' These methods completely violate the law of knowing the truth and they can only bring up bookworms who divorce themselves from proletarian politics, from the worker and peasant masses and from practice."¹¹

To try and get the children to obey the rules and authorities, Soviet teachers are instructed to use something they call "socialist competition." This might be known in the U.S. as "using peer-group pressure to get the desired results." Except that in the Soviet Union, achieving conformity is projected as acquiring communist consciousness. One of the most important elements in this discipline is a continuous attempt to develop a child's identification with the group or as the Soviets put it, the "children's collective." If a child skips class, fails to do his homework properly, performs poorly on a test, he is chastised more for letting the group down than

for his individual errors. Soviet schools make extensive use of public criticism by other students as well as teachers to produce conforming children.

American author Urie Bronfenbrenner, who did research in the Soviet Union on their methods of child upbringing, relates the following observation of collective discipline (and humiliation) in a first-grade classroom where each child was to recite a memorized poem:

"It is now Larissa's turn. She walks primly to the front of the room, starts off bravely and finished two stanzas. Suddenly, silence. Larissa has forgotten. There is no prompting either from teacher or from friends. The silence continues.

"Then the teacher speaks, softly but firmly, 'Larissa, you have disappointed your mother, you have disappointed your father and above all, you have disappointed your comrades who are sitting before you. Go back to your place. They do not wish to hear anything more from you today.'

"With head down, Larissa silently returns to her seat, a teardrop flowing down each cheek."¹²

While this may be trumpeted by the revisionists as "socialist" pedagogy for trying to develop a "collective consciousness" among the youth in opposition to the individualism of the Western imperialists, the question has to be posed: collective consciousness for what? For gaining adherence to the reactionary status quo, for going along with the social-imperialist tide. This is not socialist. The bottom line here is kowtowing to authority, using "the majority" as a club to gain obedience.

However, despite the detailing of every minute proper behavior and the great attention paid to gaining the compliance of the youth, the Soviets don't have qualitatively more success in suppressing the youth than the schools do in the U.S. A Soviet magazine article called "A Typical Day in A School Without Uniform Requirements," bemoans the lack of discipline in a typical school. The article describes such anti-social behavior as refusing to stand when answering in class, prompting other students and arguing with the teacher, causing commotions in the hallways – "pushing everybody they meet out of their path." And worse yet "a welter of confused and discordant sounds fills the air" (this must be particularly displeasing to the revisionists since "harmony" is the hallmark of a dutiful subject of social-imperialism). According to this article, even the student monitors lose faith in having success in "putting things right" and prefer to go about their own business. The article concludes:

"School is over but the students continue to roam about. Such kind of discipline is characteristic of many schools. No serious disruptions take place. Sometimes a pupil breaks a window pane or is rude to a teacher. No greater transgressions of established norms occur than copying an assignment, cheating, coming late or failure to greet. If only academic progress is good, such a school is considered as good.

However, Russian pedagogues believe that from an education point of view such a discipline is disturbing. Lack of firm requirements and indifference to little things educate indifferent people with a negligent attitude to work and society, inclined to show off and even, if necessary, to cheat."¹³

And even, perhaps, to question and rebel

How the Soviets View the Socialization Process

The Soviets themselves lay out quite frankly how they see developing what they call "a communist world view" in their students. Unfortunately, the "communist world view" – in the Soviet rendition – is hard to distinguish from the tenets of good citizenship taught in U.S. schools.

A recent Soviet text on education – in a section specifically devoted to "instilling a communist world view" – correctly notes that "the formation of a communist world view . . . cannot be reduced solely to the assimilation of a sum total of scientific facts." Values and attitudes are also critical. But the values and attitudes spoken of here seem to be obedience pure and simple:

"Thus, the formation of an attitude towards knowledge taught in school (belief in its truthfulness) and toward the school's norms and rules of behavior (acceptance of the latter) must be singled out as yet another stage [in the development of a communist worldview]. This stage includes an understanding of the need to master basic, socially necessary knowledge (scientific principles) and behavioral norms and to make one's own value judgments."¹⁴

Search as one might through this entire work, and you will not find anything about the need to develop the capacity to criticize, or still less what Mao once called a conquering spirit. The closest that the text approaches this is somewhat later, when the need to defend one's convictions in disputes against "philistines and rumor mongers . . . ideological opponents and religionists" is stressed. But the far more important quality that must be developed – the need to be willing to go against a tide of those in authority and (closely related to that) to be able to discern a Marxist-Leninist from a revisionist line – is utterly negated. Indeed, the emphasis on defending "one's convictions" against what in the Soviet Union are essentially minority viewpoints is little more than a call for the sort of self-starting ventriloquists' dummies so common in bourgeois society. And when the authors sum up the sort of qualities they are trying to instill, one reads a homily little different than the Boy Scout credo:

"The world view is inseparable from the general orientation of the human personality. A person who possesses a communist world view is characterized by

honesty, principle, staunchness, courage, purposefulness, decisiveness, steadfastness in carrying out formulated tasks, and a feeling of responsibility for an assigned task."¹⁵

The text also covers the role of the schools in this process. The authors note how the teacher can use the various subjects to draw out the basic principles of materialism. But this materialism is a very dry and dessicated thing indeed, well within the bounds of bourgeois conventional wisdom, at least of the liberal variety. All reactionary ideology, for example, is here reduced to religion; the need to combat the more pervasive, sophisticated, and damaging bourgeois philosophies of positivism, pragmatism, agnosticism, and the various mechanical materialist ideologies (social-Darwinism, reductionism, etc.) is not mentioned at all.

Beyond that, missing in this training is the *masses*. The only way given in the text for instilling in the "pupils a feeling of proletarian internationalism and fraternal solidarity with the peoples of countries that are fighting for their liberty and independence" is geography! Contrast that with the orientation in the *New Programme of the RCP, USA* towards this task of the socialist education system:

"This [education in internationalism] will be done not only through study and general discussion, including classes educating all students in the real history, scientifically understood, of the various oppressed peoples and nations, inside and outside this country, of the oppression of women in class society, etc., but also by bringing out from the experience of the masses themselves, and through debate and struggle among them, what the concrete effects of national oppression, the oppression of women, and similar crimes of capitalism are and whose interests they and their ideological expressions of racism and chauvinism serve. And this will not be carried out by the students alone, in isolation from the rest of society and the masses of people, but by having representatives of the masses, including even workers and oppressed people from other countries, come into the classrooms and give the students a living understanding of these questions, and by having the students go out broadly among the workers, the formerly oppressed nationalities, women and others, and hold discussion and struggle with them on these decisive questions."¹⁶

In contrast, in this Soviet text on education, the notion of the importance of extracurricular activity is similarly slanted. Field trips, of course, are *de rigeur*, and the teacher is encouraged to allow especially apt pupils to prepare lectures, etc. But all this has a very pat character – again, the similarity to the class trips to Washington, D.C. and to various imperialist shrines in the U.S. comes immediately to mind – and is far from actually plunging actively into the class struggle.

The Soviets also take note of the importance of labor, but the reasons adduced have nothing to do with narrowing the gap

between mental and manual labor, or making education serve proletarian politics; indeed, just the opposite. We are told that "this work helps pupils choose an occupation and, at the same time, introduces them to the general principles of work organization at a socialist production enterprise through the example of actual production." Again . . . U.S. educational reformers, take note!

The Rat Race, Soviet-Style

As in the openly capitalist societies, grades are used to train the students in a bourgeois attitude towards knowledge and in bourgeois values generally. Grades, along with entrance exams, determine what kind of job the student will get. High grades in grammar school funnel a student into an academic high school; high grades and good test scores lead from there to a higher education institution – the *vuz* – and from there to the middle or upper levels of Soviet society. Low grades, on the other hand, channel the student to technical school and manual labor – that is, to wage-slavery.

Why study? To get rich. Soviet sociologists are clear on this:

"Direct material stimulation is immediate reward for specific activity through increased pay. Indirect stimulation is not connected with such direct reward; it is rather, the individual's hope that he may improve his material situation, by say, increased skill or productivity. In the final analysis, both material and moral incentives aim to implant a correct social evaluation of education and to develop among youth the aspiration to increase their knowledge."¹⁷

What all this pseudo-scientific claptrap comes down to is promotion of "me-first" bourgeois ideology through Pavlovian behaviorism, plus the "socialist" part of helping society through doing a good job of helping yourself. Play the game well and you will be rewarded. The moral incentives spoken of are not those of communist morality serving the struggle to liberate all of humanity, but the bourgeois morality of the chase after commodities. These are the high aspirations and so-called "socialist consciousness" instilled by the workings of the education system.

A young Soviet woman described this scramble for "rewards" in *Moscow Women*:

"In the beginning, it wasn't too bad, but the older I became the worse it got. When I reached the eighth or ninth grade I could hardly stand it any longer. . . . You know, our system is antiquated. They don't beat us the way they did under the czars, but otherwise nothing has changed. The system forces us to learn things by rote, to study without understanding. It's very seldom a teacher tries to arouse the students' interest in anything. Everyone is required to learn the

same thing and think in the same way. And the hysteria over marks is horrible. Even seven- and eight-year-olds strive for high marks, and many are beaten if they come home with D's and F's. There's a terrible ruckus in school as well if someone gets a bad mark. The teachers yell and the students have to go to meetings and stuff like that to discipline them. That must absolutely be the worst way to get a child to learn something."¹⁸

The grading system teaches the students to shrewdly calculate their market value, and to identify that with their essence, their very *raison d'être*, or at the least their worth as humans. The message is made clear – those who are not trained to run the maze well are worth less, and the working class is worth least of all. Knowledge is private property, something to be hoarded rather than shared, used to raise one's selling price rather than revolutionize the world. The explicit lip service paid to rule of the proletariat, the nobility of manual labor, and so on – which is admittedly quite prevalent in the Soviet school system – counts for little against the content of the entire practice of the Soviet education system. At best it amounts to making a minor icon of The Skilled Tradesman.

Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities have historically played an important part in the Soviet educational system; especially before the recent introduction of "options" or elective courses in the late '60s – essentially a method to give some students the "option" of college-prep courses and others the "option" of vocational ed – these were the main way of giving specialized college preparatory instruction to students in general schools.¹⁹ While the stated aim of these activities is the all-around education of the youth, this too is aimed toward nurturing "special talents" among the better students while others take up more ordinary interests. The after-school clubs generally focus on subjects such as math, science, etc., and aim to give the students accelerated work outside the "egalitarian" curriculum of the general school. Obviously it's not wrong for students to pursue special interests in, say, science or language, but the role of these clubs is to enhance the practice and view of increasing personal capital through specializing in a prestigious field at an early age. The heavy emphasis on academics from the 6-day school week to the 3-4 hours recommended daily homework, to the addition of "clubs" which essentially prime the students for college entrance exams, all point to the revisionists' view that an advanced youth is one who has his/her nose stuck in a book at all times.

In addition to school clubs are children's sections of Palaces and Houses for Pioneers and Schoolchildren. These often have special circles in math, science, astronomy, and languages for the "academically gifted" who can only get in based on entrance requirements of good grades. Testimonials

from circle leaders give an added boost for *vuz* (higher-education institution) entry. These are much more accessible in the major cities than in rural areas and much more so in the European republics. There are also the extracurricular Young People's Mathematics Schools with selective admission that teach engineering design, electronics, and computer technology, as well as mathematics. Attendance and hard work are obligatory at these schools; in fact at some, applicants have to produce medical certificates showing they can take the pace! There are also Little Academies with faculties of architecture and construction, geology and geophysics, biogeography, math and physics, chemistry, medicine, history, foreign languages, literature, and journalism.²⁰

From a bourgeois point of view these extracurricular activities show the excellence of Soviet education. All these activities lay heavy stress on pushing youth to find a specialty at an early age and pursue it. No doubt those who lack such an earnest revisionist view of life lose out on the ladder to personal gain and fame as an adult. The Puritan work ethic is alive and well in the Soviet Union.

While the official "egalitarian" policy has all the students for the first eight grades sit in the same class irregardless of their marks, the splitting of them socially into those who "diligently study" the great majority of their time and the "laggards" and goof-offs who just want to have fun after school and on weekends is bound to be encouraged by the set-up itself without ever having to say an official word. This social division is carried into the openly tracked high-school system where the technical schools report a much greater problem with discipline – absenteeism, lack of respect, alcoholism – than in the general schools.

Political Education

Thus far we have focused on the ideological viewpoint inculcated in the students of the Soviet school system. At the same time, in any educational system there is also an important role for direct political training. Political education in the early grades in the Soviet system is strikingly similar in essence to that of the U.S. They have various rituals whose messages concern patriotism: "how lucky we are to have it so good," "working hard for ourselves, our family, our collective and our country," etc. In certain respects the form is closer to fundamentalist bible schools in the U.S. – without the corporal punishment, than to the general run of the public schools. The children may be too young for study of the revisionist version of the "science" of Marxism-Leninism, but they can still be inculcated with the devotion of a penitent to the state religion.

The "life and activities of Lenin" is a main focal point of political education throughout all grades. Jacoby, an American writer who lived in the Soviet Union, describes it:

"Lenin is an adequate substitute for any gods the children might desire. My first impression of the similarity between Soviet schools and the Roman

Catholic schools I attended as a child was reinforced by the 'shrines' to Lenin in nearly every kindergarten classroom. Each room would have a portrait of Lenin surrounded by fresh flowers and ribbons, usually placed on a small table beneath the picture. Sometimes there would be a popular picture of Lenin with children on his knee, reminding me of my old schoolroom pictures of Jesus the Good Shepherd."²¹

Lenin's main attribute for consumption by children, according to the revisionists, is his concern for the welfare of the people – a kindly old uncle. To increase the active involvement and interest of the children in studying and "believing in" this benevolent old man, the students sing songs and make field trips to different places connected with Lenin.

"Teachers read stores about Dyadya Lenin (Uncle Lenin) and his love and concern for children. The children sing songs about Lenin. The five- and six-year-olds make excursions to different places connected with the life of Lenin... their teacher told them: This spot is where Dyadya Lenin made one of his most important speeches to the workers. They were people just like your parents, and he told them in our country from that day on, no children would ever be hungry. There were children like you who had never seen white bread. They would not have recognized the candy and ice cream which you have for dessert. Dyadya Lenin dreamed of a world in which all these things would seem ordinary to children like you and his dream has come true."²²

So here we have Lenin as father of "ice cream communism," completely stripped of his revolutionary line and spirit.

In the eighth grade all students take a course called "Fundamental Principles of the Soviet State and Law," which is roughly equivalent to "civics" or "Constitution" courses in the U.S. This is the first formal political-education course the students take. An extremely enlightening (and self-exposing) article, "V.I. Lenin and the Teaching of State Law to Youth," appeared in a 1980 journal of the USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences. The article is written for teachers in pedagogical institutes who teach political education courses, and itself is an excellent example of using the "bible verse" method of so-called Marxism – quoting phrases from Lenin as an authority totally out of context to make this or that revisionist point. The article goes into the need for the "Teaching of State Law" course and what purpose it hopes to accomplish:

"In recent years our country has developed and implemented a number of basic measures to intensify the law education of youth. The program for this activity was formulated in Comrade L.I. Brezhnev's well-known words that respect for the law must become everyone's personal conviction."

And,

"Moral education creates the necessary prerequisite for instilling a deep respect for the authority of the law, and education about the law affirms communist morality in everyday life."²³

Any why is it so important for the youth to have such a "deep respect for the authority of the law"?

"Teaching the 'Fundamental Principles of the Soviet State and Law' promotes more active participation of school youth in the maintenance of public order. It is illustrative that in the last two years, the number of young Dzerzhinski-ites and Young Friends of the Police[!] has increased more than 1.5 fold and is now over 50,000."²⁴

The article goes on to criticize schools that try to avoid introducing children to involvement as finks and enforcers through such things as "school monitor duty, order and discipline patrols... and Friends of the Police." It then cites the "gap between books and practical life that Lenin warned against" as the theoretical justification for the practice of ratting. This would be laughable if it weren't so reactionary. Not only is the nature of this course completely reactionary but they utterly distort Lenin's line on education to justify their aims.

Using Lenin as the ultimate authority and god-like figure is one of the main ways the revisionists operate to keep the thin veneer of socialism in place. For example, another reason cited in the above article for the importance of legal knowledge for youth is that Lenin studied law and was himself a lawyer, and that further, "Lenin had a profound knowledge of Soviet legislation and was interested in its development down to the finest detail." Well, of course. He was leading the Bolshevik Party at the time the proletariat seized power and moved to completely abolish the tsarist and bourgeois superstructure and, for the first time in the world, replace it with the dictatorship of the proletariat – meaning whole new institutions, laws, etc. This socialist superstructure was an historical first and it was necessary for the laws to reflect new and arising social relations from the communist point of view. So, of course, Lenin paid a lot of attention to such important matters. But from this reality is abstracted the notion that "Lenin was interested in laws" and the unsaid conclusion – therefore you should be interested too. Then to make this analysis appear "materialist" the following is added, "Naturally this [Lenin's interest] was not an interest in abstract legal pseudo-science, remote from life. He was interested in the striking precision of legal formulations." This is the theoretical basis for requiring eighth-graders to memorize current revisionist legal formulations, just as U.S. eighth-graders memorize the Constitution, Bill of Rights, etc. The article concludes:

"Further development of Lenin's ideas on the education of youth in a spirit of civic-mindedness, deep respect for law and intolerance of lawbreaking, and

improvement in the forms and methods of this work is one of the prerequisites for a state of society in which people become accustomed to observing elementary social rules that have been known for centuries and have been repeated for millennia in all the written maxims governing communal living."²⁵

This whole use of Lenin was anticipated, albeit unknowingly, by Lenin himself, in his famous opening to *The State and Revolution*:

"During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes constantly hounded them, received their teachings with the most savage malice, the most furious hatred and the most unscrupulous campaigns of lies and slander. After their death, attempts are made to convert them into harmless icons, to canonize them, so to say, and to surround their names with a certain halo for the 'consolation' of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping the latter, while at the same time emasculating the essence of the revolutionary teaching, blunting its revolutionary edge and vulgarizing it."²⁶

In high school the revisionists' version of history is studied. The major history text is *History of the USSR*. After each chapter, students are required to regurgitate the material by answering such stirring questions as "How did our country prepare for the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution?" and "How did the representatives of other countries feel about the USSR's jubilee?" The same text is used throughout the Soviet Union, and it clearly upholds the Great Russian domination of the oppressed nationalities as part of an overall social-imperialist view of the world. One stark example is the treatment of the liberation struggles of the Kazakh people against tsarist annexation and enslavement. Before the revisionists seized power and rewrote the history books, these struggles were upheld as powerful revolutionary-nationalist uprisings. According to the "revised" history, this movement "was a reactionary, feudal-monarchal manifestation, aimed at holding the Kazakh people back and strengthening the patriarchal-feudal system, working toward the alienation of Kazakhstan from Russia and the Russian people."²⁷

Not surprisingly high-school literature classes also introduce revisionist politics at every opportunity. Here again, we find the fascination with Lenin's life both as a method of promoting him as a great man – minus his sweeping communist line – and as a ludicrous exercise in rote thinking. The following is a sample:

"An article on the teaching of Russian in Ukrainian schools suggested several activities to whet the students' appetite for Russian literature. In a lesson on Chekhov, the pupils might 'independently look for facts in the articles of V.I. Lenin . . . in order to complete an assignment on the theme: "Chekhovian im-

ages in the works of V.I. Lenin." The ninth-graders of another school completed a three-step assignment on the works of the nineteenth-century poet Nekrasov. The purposes were: (1) To select material testifying to the fact that Lenin liked the poetry of Nekrasov. (2) To select facts characterizing the influence of the works of Nekrasov on Soviet poetry. (3) To establish facts to support the conclusions: The poetry of Nekrasov is close to us, the Soviet people."²⁸

This approach to literature seems guaranteed to turn off the students to Lenin, Chekhov, and Nekrasov. By the way, the method of question number 3, of finding facts to support an *a priori* conclusion is a fairly common method of teaching in the Soviet Union. This is the kind of "creative" thinking that is promoted.

At the *vuz* level, for the first time students take up serious and concentrated study of the history of the Communist Party of the USSR, political economy, and so-called historical and dialectical materialism. These are required courses for all students regardless of specialty, and amount to about 10 percent of their total course load. Here both the primary works of Marx and Lenin are studied, along with a heavy dose of the latest directives of the party and the current leaders' interpretation of philosophy and political economy. It is quite striking that no one else in society except college students, professors, and party functionaries actually studies these subjects directly, especially reading actual works of Marx and Lenin and not just one-sentence quotes. Lenin's works are portrayed broadly to the masses as extremely difficult to read and grasp – that in order to understand what he's saying you have to know everything about the particular situation he was writing about and for this it is best to have an interpreter. Heaven knows, only experienced scholars and high-level revisionists can interpret Lenin's works correctly. The ordinary person might make the mistake of getting the essence of what he was saying.

The fact that Marxist works are only studied after years of revisionist indoctrination in the grade school and high school makes you wonder if it is not a conscious method of the social-imperialists to both bore and mystify the students for years with the so-called "Marxist-Leninist" catechism so that by the time they are old enough to read it for themselves, either all interest has been squelched or else the views of Marx and Lenin have become so distorted that the theory is rendered harmless. But even when Marxist theory of sorts is studied at the university level, theory is something to be memorized, the "truth" to be swallowed whole and regurgitated. For example, college students who are training to be teachers of social studies and Soviet law courses are offered courses that teach you how to find an appropriate quote from Lenin on just about any subject, putting the official blessing on the "bible verse" method of instruction in "Leninism."

Yet, this is a society where supposedly the working class rules. One of the major revolutionary transformations of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China was the widespread study of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung

Thought by the broad masses of all ages. No dry, boring subject restricted to the classroom, the masses were mobilized to take up revolutionary theory as a weapon in the class struggle and apply it to all spheres. Workers', peasants', and students' study circles sprang up, which studied and debated the major struggles and often wrote up theoretical contributions applying that theory to production, science, and class struggle. But in the Soviet Union the "gifted and talented" run the party and state on behalf of the workers. This elite, as well as the intellectuals and technicians, are schooled in the theory of revisionist ideology and politics to use it as a club over the heads of the masses. As in every sphere of political life, the revisionists have creatively adapted the science of revolution to fit the practice of social-imperialism.

One cannot do justice to Soviet political education without taking some note of the rather pervasive military education. The 1967 new Law on Military Service, which reduced the length of service by one year, instituted preinduction military training for children of fifteen and older. The Soviet organization DOSAAF – the Voluntary Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation and the Navy – claims to have about 80 million members. According to the *Soviet Military Encyclopedia*:

"[M]ilitary-patriotic education is called upon to instill a readiness to perform military duty, responsibility for strengthening the defense capability of the country, respect for the Soviet Armed Forces, pride in the Motherland and the ambition to preserve and increase the heroic traditions of the Soviet people. . . . Of great significance for military-patriotic education is the mastery of basic military and military-technical skills which young people acquire in secondary schools, technical schools, higher educational establishments, in studies at the houses of defense and technical creativity, aero-, auto- and radio clubs, at the young technicians' stations, in military-patriotic schools, defense circles, at points of preinduction training, in civil defense formations."²⁹

Mass military training is hardly bourgeois or imperialist *per se*; indeed, all genuine socialist societies have relied on arming the masses both politically and militarily. The context of Soviet society in which this training occurs is what mainly stamps it as imperialist. Beyond that, we note that observers have commented on the specifically patriotic thrust of this education in the Soviet Union and the ways in which the actual training seems to be designed toward slotting youth into one or another specialty of the imperialist armed forces, rather than schooling them in proletarian politics and proletarian military science.

Soviet Education and the Social Division of Labor

All this – the ideological and political training, in all its variegated forms, open and hidden – speaks directly to the underlying role of the Soviet educational system, i.e., broadly inculcating the bourgeois-revisionist outlook in the youth. At the same time, like all good imperialist education systems, it accomplishes this in the course of training, that is, aiding in the reproduction of the social division of labor, and most particularly in the reproduction of bourgeoisie and proletariat.

Tracking

The Soviets have an official prohibition against tracking, a prohibition which they have formally maintained despite various "innovations" which in reality have instituted tracking. This prohibition was initiated by the Bolsheviks as part of their revolutionary program in education following seizure of power. It was continued under Stalin and was viewed as one of the principles of socialist education. To openly toss this out the window on a policy level and argue that students should be tracked from grade school on up, into tracks leading to various occupational levels, would tear away some of the facade which the revisionists keep up to make a differentiation between their so-called "socialist" system and capitalism. Each time the revisionists have further widened the gap between "ordinary" students and "gifted" students, the majority line of the CPSU has been to carefully try to find justification under a "socialist" signboard.

Yet the formal prohibition cannot cover the actual function and practice of the school system which ends up efficiently "guiding" children into their proper place in society. No doubt the revisionists would object to this characterization. They can show that a substantial minority of university students are children of industrial workers and a lesser share from the agricultural workers. In fact, in some higher education institutions a majority are from worker families. They argue that since all tuition and fees are free and students receive a living stipend, tracking by income level is impossible.

But it is not true that capitalism, especially when it reaches the stage of imperialism, has to keep the workers and peasants all uneducated, nor that a certain percentage of them cannot be drawn into the ranks of professions that demand a college degree. In fact the need for a relatively educated laboring class historically differentiated capitalism from feudalism. The need to bring some workers into the ranks of technicians and professionals even becomes more pressing when those occupations are developing and expanding.

But the upward mobility of a minority of the working class does not negate the fact that the proletariat as a class continues to exist within imperialist society, as does the contradiction between mental and manual labor. And as we shall see later on, the "democratization" of the Soviet education system is

highly exaggerated. In the most prestigious universities, students from the industrial workers form a much smaller percentage than those from the intelligentsia and bureaucracy, and those from the peasantry a tinier percentage still.

The widespread stratification of the Soviet education system does not depend on blatant tracking, although tracking in fact exists. But there is also the use of grades and exams in determining access to higher education, the already existing advantages for the children of intellectuals and of technical strata on entering the school world, and the competitive race for a limited number of spaces that all serve to reinforce the class divisions in Soviet society and the split between mental and manual labor. At best the Soviet system aspires to a bourgeois model of gradually building "equal opportunity" for the children of any stratum to grow up and become a bigshot or overlord.

The exacerbation of the mental/manual contradiction in the Soviet Union begins at the earliest grades – at the entry to school at age seven. While the majority of grammar schools are considered "egalitarian," i.e., students of varying "abilities" sit in the same class, the fact that children come to school with various backgrounds, combined with the type of curriculum, favors certain social strata over others.

The curriculum is a classical academic one: the 3 Rs plus music and art in the primary grades, and the 3 Rs plus heavy emphasis on math and science in the upper elementary grades. These are taught in rote fashion and based on bourgeois methods and viewpoint. Thus, those children with parents who have a more academic background tend as a group to "naturally" adapt to the situation and do better than those who do not. In addition to this group are those students who accept and excel at the bourgeois ideology of the system at an early age, who commit themselves to working hard at rote learning and learn for the sake of "making it," who go along with the program and are "good little boys and girls." If they pursue this and get good grades, children of industrial and farm workers can also "do well" (relative to others in the working class) in school, but this still does not change the fact that the education system streams working-class children overwhelmingly into the working class while children of the middle and upper strata overwhelmingly stay in those strata.

We have seen the emphasis placed by the Soviet education system on adapting to societal norms and assimilating knowledge as it is fed to them. Those who adjust to this bourgeois mold are considered "bright" and "gifted" and are rewarded with good grades. In the primary grades it is already mainly apparent which children will be headed toward the academic future, which toward skilled jobs, and which toward unskilled jobs.

Special Grammar Schools

Alongside the so-called egalitarian policy applied to the general grade school is the policy for "talented" or "gifted" students. Special schools are set up which only admit "excep-

tional" students, starting in the first grade and continuing all the way through high school.

In the mid- to late-1960s there was a great expansion of special schools, especially language schools. These were set up overwhelmingly in the big cities. They were established to train cadres of future diplomats, dealers in international commerce, translators to serve them, etc. They concentrated on English and other main European languages.

Admission is highly selective – the pupils entering the school at first grade (age seven) must take an entrance exam to get in. A Soviet journalist compares the commotion around getting into such a school to that around Moscow State University at entrance exam time:

"Smartly turned-out children go before an incomprehensible and consequently still more terrifying committee, whose job it is to find out their aptitude for foreign languages, by listening to their poems and hearing them describe little pictures."³⁰

Of course, right off the bat, children whose parents speak a European language or English to them or read them poems and stories, or whose parents can afford and have the connections to send their child to the special foreign-language nursery schools – i.e., the children of the intellectuals and party elite – will have an added edge. By going to these special schools they have a much better chance to get admitted to the *vuzy*. The average *vuz* entrance rate in 1968 was 65.7% of language-school graduates compared with 25% of youth leaving all Soviet secondary day schools. And at certain language schools an 80% admission rate is reported. About 1 in 150 Soviet pupils attends one of these language schools, and while the authorities try to play down the fact that these are special schools, they are elite and highly sought after, as is expressed in this excerpt from a short story by Yuri Trifonov:

"Nataska became a schoolgirl. The special English school in Utinyi Lane, object of desire and envy, gauge of parents' love and their readiness to go to any lengths. A different microdistrict! It was almost unthinkable. And it would have been too much for anyone but Lena [the mother]. Because she got her teeth into what she wanted like a bulldog."³¹

Such are the high aspirations championed by revisionism. This story was not at all criticizing Lena but rather typifying a common experience and aspiration. For all the talk of "socialist consciousness," this is quite naturally the product of a system that makes developing your labor power to sell at the highest price the name of the game.

"Marxist" Explanation for Tracking

The official "Marxist" explanation dreamed up by the revisionists to justify their rapid expansion of special schools and

tracking is that this policy is an application of the socialist principle "from each according to his ability to each according to his work."

This is an utter perversion of Marx, who saw that principle as transitional and almost on the order of a necessary evil, and who in the same passage focused on the need to transcend humanity's "enslaving subordination to the division of labor" and to transform labor from an odious necessity into man's greatest want. Historically, revisionists have always emphasized and absolutized the second half of Marx's phrase (to each according to his work). They have emphasized material incentive, negated the "incentive" of communist revolutionary spirit and politics, and "forgotten" that Marx saw payment according to work as merely a transition to "to each according to need."

But leave it to the Soviets to creatively interpret the first half of Marx's principle, too. They twist the principle of "each according to his ability" to mean that some have more ability than others in subjects such as science, math, and foreign languages and that therefore they should not be "held back with ordinary students." Of course, some people might have a special talent for fixing tractors or pitching hay which doesn't require much schooling, so it would also be holding them back to keep them in school any more than the minimum since they won't have much use for knowledge of science and history . . . as they are not in the class which runs society! So what is left of Marx's slogan? Each in his own place making his own contribution to society according to job classification. And expect payment accordingly. A standard recipe for the status quo in all capitalist societies.

Labor power is a commodity in the Soviet Union, and from this fact flows the ideology of trying to develop your own commodity of labor power to the maximum degree so as to secure the highest price for it. For the masses, the school system offers at best nothing but a way to increase their exchange value on the market.

To further justify this state of affairs, the revisionists argue that people will have no incentive to learn if they can't parlay their knowledge into a direct personal material reward. In the article "What Is the Intention of People of the Lin Piao Type in Advocating 'Private Ownership of Knowledge'?", Chinese revolutionaries get to the heart of the matter: "As regards the allegation that knowledge will not be learned if private ownership of knowledge is criticized, this is but a major exposure of the reactionary nature of the bourgeoisie who contend for what is profitable and refuse to do anything unprofitable. . . ." ³²

Furthermore, while major and even rapid developments can and do take place under capitalism, knowledge as private property is ultimately a fetter on the development of science and culture.

"Because they are interested in personal fame and gain, they will not painstakingly pursue scientific truth for the revolution or brave difficulties and dangers to scale the pinnacles of science. With their minds filled with bourgeois ideas and the idealist or

metaphysical world outlook, their recognition and mastery of objective truth will also be affected. 'People are afraid of becoming famous and pigs are afraid of growing plump.' The idea of fame and gains often makes people with a little fame become timid and cowardly. They either look upon themselves as an 'authority' or repress the new things."³³

This line and practice leaves largely untapped the knowledge and creativity of the broad masses of people which the class struggle is the key catalyst for unleashing.

In the Soviet Union today in order to hold a position as a leader or manager, a person must first have a college degree. And not only a degree, but a degree in the proper specialty. So when high-school students apply to the university or institute, they not only apply to a particular school but to be accepted in a certain specialty. These specialties are ranked, as are the universities. To become a part of the upper echelon a person must go to one of the top universities. As we have seen, this process often begins years before.

To become a foreign diplomat, for example, a person would start at age seven in the foreign-language school, progress through such a school through high school and then apply to the prestigious Moscow Institute for International Relations for university training. This university is so exclusive that it is not listed in the manual of all higher-education institutions and their specialties available to college applicants. Admission is said to require a recommendation from a *raion* (a district equivalent to at least two U.S. counties or larger) party secretary, plus considerable influence, even at Central Committee level. A few other institutes, university faculties and military academies - some secret - may also resemble the Institute for International Relations in this respect. ³⁴

Given this state of affairs it is not hard to understand the tremendous competition for *vuz* places at all levels, but especially for the top places. It is quite widely acknowledged that parents will use all their influence whether it is personal connections, political clout, or monetary bribery to get their child into the university. *Komsomolskaya Pravda* reported:

"Reliable and respected engineers and teachers, intelligent people who have been through the war and the period of reconstruction, suddenly lose their human dignity and become pitiable supplicants, blocking the doorways of rectors' offices and ministries, bombarding prominent friends with telephone calls and imploring almost on their knees: 'Get my daughter (or son) into an institute'. . . No stone is left unturned, from the exploitation of the names and the reputations of forebears to gambling with what are the most sacred values for us all."³⁵

Private coaches are hired by the vast majority of applicants who succeed, and they often charge upwards of \$10 an hour.

The entrance procedure consists of mainly oral exams in front of a panel, as well as taking into account high-school grades, recommendations, and awards. If an applicant doesn't

pass the exam of the specialty of their choice, she/he may be admitted to another *vuz* which has unfilled places and will accept lower marks. A quite clear ranking of specialties is inherent in the system. The admittance procedure is bound to favor those who have been favored all along through the tracking system, weeding out the vast majority of college-age youth.

"In the Leningrad region, which is already favored by virtue of being a major urban area, it was reported in 1969 that 73 percent of the children of 'intellectuals' secured daytime places at universities and technical colleges, while only 50 percent of industrial workers' children and 35 percent of agricultural workers' children did so. (These figures refer not to the population as a whole but to the social origins of high-school graduates applying to universities. This set of statistics sheds some light on the plight of farm children, since students on collective farms in the immediate region around Leningrad... have much more access to cultural amenities than students on ordinary farms located far away from large urban areas.)"³⁶

It should also be remembered that most children of workers and peasants don't even apply to the *vuz* and that many of the rural pupils who do get into higher-education institutions are the children of management of the farms.

Tracking into Manual Work

Given the heavy emphasis on personal status and "making it" into a prestigious job, it is not surprising that a large percentage of high-school students want to go on to higher education. Yet this presents a contradiction for the Soviet rulers since there are not nearly as many places available as there are applicants. This leads to cutthroat competition.

The economy still needs a large number of unskilled workers and the pool of youth coming out of school is the main source of new laborers for such positions. While society clearly holds that the valued goal is to be an expert or a bureaucrat (for which college education is mandatory), 73% of the workforce of the Soviet Union are manual workers.

In addressing this problem to the masses, the party uses its "socialist" facade to put forward hollow decrees and appeals to the youth on the "nobility" of manual work. When labor power is so clearly a commodity and more knowledge means a higher selling price, it is a contradiction for the youth to be exhorted (and now required) to receive a high-school education, when one will later be paid according to the value of unskilled labor not requiring such knowledge. On the other hand, many youth pay little attention to the idea of doing any kind of manual work and continue to aim for an academic career even though only 1 in 8 high-school graduates enter college.

A study done in 1973 of 792 school-leavers in the Cheremushki district in Moscow showed that only 16% actually wished to go out and work, although this was greatly at

odds with the requirements of the labor market. Of the 83.8% who planned to continue their education, 70% wished to go into *vuzy*; about 10% aimed at secondary special education institutions (which turn out skilled workers and semi-professionals); and a few percent looked to vocational training. The study also showed differences in aspirations between youth in different types of schools. Going to work was unpopular everywhere, but youth in the special schools were the least oriented towards it (1%) and in fact did go to work less than any others (26%). In the boarding schools where the "underprivileged" children predominated, while only 2% wanted to go to work, they had the highest percent actually going to work (54%), with only 12% who studied and 17% who worked and studied. *Pravda*, March 23, 1977, spoke about this contradiction:

"With the transition to universal secondary education, four-fifths of the general school leavers get jobs immediately after graduation. Yet the thrust of the school programme, that is, the content and scope of the curriculum, remains virtually the same. In fact, the 'modernization' of instruction that has been carried out in the last few years has intensified this one-sidedness. Is there any wonder that many pupils, teenagers especially, display indifference towards learning and the grades they receive, declaring, 'I won't get into an institute anyhow, and I don't need high grades to get a job'... The times dictate that we redefine the pedagogical aim of present-day general secondary education."³⁷

What they then call for is even more specific job training in high school and in the general schools, which essentially means even heavier tracking, especially at the juncture between grade school and high school. Already there is a split after eighth grade where official tracking begins. Students then choose either to continue at the general school (which was in the past, and is still seen today, as the path to the *vuz*) or a technical high school where they can receive a general diploma as well as a trade certification. The increasing emphasis on job specialization at the high-school level would mean that most students would choose their life's manual career at age 15, while a small minority would choose theirs upon entering college.

The manual training which does exist in the general (i.e., college-prep) schools is aimed at diverting some of the students who aspire to college to self-track themselves towards manual jobs and to go to vocational high school instead of the general academic high school.

But the very pulling-and-pushing anarchy of imperialism militates against the efficient slotting of each student into the proper place. We have already examined the attitudes of the youth. In addition, teachers at the general schools object to manual training because it cuts into "academic standards." And managers of factories and farms don't want to bother with students working or learning in their enterprises because often the youth don't care about such work, and allowing students to

come in and work disrupts production and the almighty pursuit of profit. Despite the desires of the revisionists to get more youth to want to take up production jobs, production work by itself combined with bourgeois ideology will not change anyone's attitude towards "love of labor." No, those who end up there do so by the workings of the market, when they don't get accepted to the *vuz* or find any other way to get into the better-paying, more prestigious jobs.

Elite High Schools

The opposite side of the "streamlining students into manual jobs" line is the policy of elite high schools for "gifted" students. In the 1960s, schools for math and physics, computer technology, biology and agrobiolgy were established, in addition to the elite language schools spoken of earlier and special sports and arts schools. These schools, like the universities, have competitive entrance exams. They are elite in the sense that they take 15-year-olds who have already specialized in certain fields and give them further special (and hothouse) training which practically guarantees admittance to universities and then quite likely to graduate schools from which high positions are obtained.

Pupils at the math and physics schools have a 100% entry rate to *vuzy*. Pupils of language schools are three times as likely to enter *vuzy* as those at ordinary general schools (and it should be remembered that this figure excludes the many youth who go to technical high schools where there is a 0% entry rate to *vuzy*). Students at other special schools are three to four times as likely to be admitted.³⁸

For this elite, while their specialty is the main thing, the revisionists recognize the necessity to have all-around potential bourgeois retainers, thus necessitating a more all-around education than that of most students. An article from the periodical *Sovietskaia Pedagogika* deals with the broader education of these students:

"...Academicians Kolmogorov and Kokoli, Professor Smorodinski and other teachers constantly orient their students toward not being locked within the narrow boundaries of their specialty, and toward aspiring to be broadly educated and spiritually enriched people who love and understand creative literature and art and who are patriots of their socialist motherland and active participants in its social."³⁹

And what "socialist" phenomena are they talking about?

"[Kolmogorov] gave an interesting, richly illustrated lecture on Michelangelo Buonarroti. In the last school year he gave the student collective his record player and collection of classical music. Naturally, such an attitude on the part of the venerable mathematicians and physicists toward art and the humanities is transferred to the students."⁴⁰

Yes, indeed. Lock, stock and barrel – reverence for bourgeois culture handed down from venerable teacher to pupil. What better way to raise up the new generation of revisionist successors and flunkies to their new place in society and set them apart from the ranks of the "ordinary?"

As students progress through the two or three years of this special high school, their potential is assessed and then "it is determined by assessing the young people's aptitudes whether they should be trained as specialists in a restricted field, as all-rounders or as science administrators."⁴¹ Thus at age 17 they are elected a future in the intelligentsia or even the higher strata of the party.

One of the country's leading scientists and head of the math and physics high school at Akademgorodok in Siberia put the matter this way:

"There are different kinds of elite; the young people being educated at the FMSH (math and physics school) are not a hereditary intellectual aristocracy but represent the most talented and dedicated few who will have to undertake the most difficult problems and responsibilities. An elite, as we understand it in the Soviet Union, is the ornament of society, its pride, the best part of it."⁴²

We would agree that "hereditary" is not the crux of what an elite is, but it is worth noting that substantial percentages of the students at these schools just happen to be the children of mathematicians and other highly educated scientific parents of the Russian nationality. They are almost all from the cities. And it just so "happens" that the talented, creative youth of the Soviet Union are mostly male. In 1975 at Akademgorodok it was six males to every female. And the most favorable male to female ratio in all special high schools in the USSR was in Kiev, where it was 3 to 1.⁴³

Maintaining and Reinforcing the Rural/Urban Contradiction, National Oppression, and the Oppression of Women

Up to this point we have examined the education as it applies in general throughout the Soviet Union and to students in general. But it is further revealing to examine the education system in relation to the rural/urban contradiction, the national question (which interpenetrates with the rural/urban contradiction), and the woman question.

Rural

Rural schools are acknowledged by the Soviet authorities to be much inferior to those in the cities. Though a number of upgrading policies have been put forward, the conditions of life in general are more backward due to the dominance of the law of value, which causes agriculture to lag behind. There is still a need in the Soviet Union for a large number of unskilled agricultural workers who don't need much education to do their job, and this is reflected in the inferior quality of the rural schools. A teacher in a Siberian rural school described what she regarded as the typical rural student:

"Most of my children came from homes where the parents did not have a high-school education. There were no books in their homes, and they didn't have the opportunity to go to a kindergarten. Most of them had never been to a movie or a museum; they had radios but not television sets. The parents worked much longer hours than people do in the cities – very hard physical labor. Most of them didn't have the time or the energy to help their children with their homework, even if they wanted to. Most important of all, there were no people around to inspire them with the importance of learning. . . . Most of the children became high-school drop-outs. . . . I wanted to help change things when I came, but the older teachers – there were only three of us in our small school – said, 'You can't do anything. This is the way these people have lived for centuries.'"⁴⁴

The fact that the revisionists let the rural schools languish far behind the city schools, not expecting the children there to learn very much, is further shown through examining the condition of the school facilities and equipment. Jacoby interviewed a number of teachers who had returned from their two-year mandatory tours of duty spent in the rural schools (following graduation).

"They spoke of a 50% dropout rate before seventh-grade, one-room schoolhouses for children between the ages of seven and thirteen, severe textbook shortages and nonexistent equipment. 'I taught for two years in an elementary school in the far northeast,' one teacher told me. 'The first year, there were exactly four math textbooks and six reading books for fourteen students. The second year was the switch to the new curriculum and we were supposed to receive entirely new sets of textbooks. The textbooks for the year beginning in the fall of 1970 arrived in March of 1971.'"⁴⁵

Further, many of those who do gain an education and have been to the city do not want to return to the village. As of 1973, people in the Soviet Union born on farms were not issued internal passports. Without this passport they are not allowed to move to the city. One of the few legal ways to get

one is through admissions to the *vuz*. Letting too many youth off the farm to college would contribute to the labor shortage. Those rural youth who are encouraged to go to the *vuzy* are mainly trained in professions and vocations that are needed on the farm, since no one else wants to go there. It is almost unheard of for urban youth to choose a profession that would place them on a farm.

However, since rural education is so poor, few rural youth get into the institutes and thus the chance of getting any decently trained teachers to come to the village to stay (as opposed to consigning recent graduates for two years) is reduced, keeping the quality low.

The chairman of a rural Soviet executive committee in a mountainous area of Georgia wrote the following letter to *Izvestia* on the problem:

"Every year we prepare for the next semester of our school with loving care. We purchase fuel and repair the classrooms and the teachers' apartments. Recently we built an annex to the school to accommodate 150 students. When September 1 comes, however, our disappointment begins. What could be wrong? We await our teachers, but they do not arrive. When we address ourselves to the Ministry of Education in Grozny, reminding them of our request, they reply: 'There are not enough teachers in the republic, so give the ones you have more work and hire assistants.' That is what we are doing, since there is nothing else we can do. What troubles us most, however, is that not one of the twenty-seven graduates of our school last year was admitted to a (teacher-training) institute. Through your newspaper we would like to ask just when the Ministry of Education will send teachers to our school."⁴⁶

And Georgia has the best education throughout its republic of all the republics in the Soviet Union, including the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic!

The following letter which appeared in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* illustrates the contradictions faced by the rural youth trying to gain admission to the *vuz*:

"I live in a village. When I come to the city I often see the announcements glued on special boards: 'I give lessons in physics, apply at the following address. . . . 'I am looking for a tutor in. . . . ' The pages of the city newspapers are also full of such notices. A strange feeling is created. It seems, then, that the skills you received in school are something unreal, while for 'cash' they'll force authentic knowledge into your head and then you'll definitely get into an institute.

"This is one side of the case. There is another. What should we do, the villagers? Young men and women who grow up here also dream about one or another institute and also deserve to receive a higher education. Where are they to find coaches? We have

no professors or Ph.D. candidates in our villages. Here it is difficult just to find good teachers. Who will prepare our children for entrance to the institute?

"Even without this [coaching] the village school is behind the city schools. Here the people often complain: the teacher is not as good, and the equipment is not the same, and the libraries do not compare at all with those in the city. The village children, especially those who live far away from the regional roads, are deprived of museums, theaters, lectures. Consequently their preparation is already worse. But in addition to all these other things, one must add 'the competition of the purse . . .'"⁴⁷

The revisionists have from time to time set up some experimental programs to provide special tutoring for the rural students mainly for cosmetic purposes, but these programs were abandoned after a year or two, being summed up as too expensive. The reality is that it is not in the interests of the revisionists to make higher education a reality for rural children since they don't need it for their manual jobs and it would only continue the already serious exodus to the cities. As with the mental/manual contradiction, the division between city and countryside is not viewed as a political contradiction – one of relations between people – nor are the masses called upon or politically mobilized to struggle to narrow these divisions. It is all a matter of balancing and planning at the top, with profit and the political needs of *social-imperialism* as the key criteria, to try to even out the worst consequences of this inevitable schism.

National Question

The problem of poor quality education producing a dearth of teachers native to the rural areas is related to the national question. Many of the teachers, especially in the Central Asian republics (which have 50% of the schoolchildren in the USSR), are university graduates of the Slavic nationalities doing their two-year compulsory work stint. Most have no intention of staying in these areas after their mandatory work assignment is up and they have little understanding or sympathy for the culture of the people. Since they do not know the native language, they teach only in Russian. Thus, children entering school for the first time who already have little contact with books, libraries, museums, television, and movies are also confronted with a teacher who does not speak their language and books written in a foreign language. Jacoby relates the following example of this situation:

"I met two young Russian women who were students at a teacher-training institute in Kustanai, a city of approximately 100,000 in Kazakhstan. One was the daughter of an army colonel, the other the daughter of an engineer. They had both lived in Kazakhstan for

seven years and they were studying to become secondary-school English teachers. One of the girls pulled out a snapshot of her English class of fifty students. She proudly drew my attention to the one Tatar and the two Kazakhs in the group. . . the other students in the picture were obviously Russian or of some other 'European' origin; yet Kazakhs and minorities like the Tatars make up over half the republic's population.

"Neither of the girls spoke Kazakh, and they expected that all the Kazakh high-school students who were studying English would already speak excellent Russian. '[Kazakh] is a very difficult language,' one of the girls said, 'and I won't really need it. Kazakh is my third language, and it would be much too difficult for me to teach English to students who did not speak Russian.' Her statement illustrates the difficulties any minority-group student would encounter unless he mastered Russian at an early age."⁴⁸

The policy of the revisionists since their first major reform, the Education Reform of 1958, has been one of forcible assimilation and Great Russian chauvinism in the form of Russification of the oppressed nations – suppressing the languages of the oppressed nationalities through such things as teaching only in Russian, or demanding that Russian be taught wherever another language is taught (but not vice versa). One Soviet text declares, "Groups of people who have changed their language, in the course of time, usually also change their ethnic [national] identity."⁴⁹

Since 1958 the trend has been more and more to teaching only in Russian at earlier and earlier grades, although Russian is theoretically elective. The Russian language is the official language of the Soviet Union. It is the medium of communication between the central government and that of the republics. To enter any institution of higher education, the applicant must demonstrate a mastery of the Russian language. Although, again theoretically, a student has a right to be taught in his/her native language in the *vuz*, this rarely happens since there are not the appropriate professors fluent in the language.

Almost all managerial and technical jobs demand mastery and use of Russian and since these jobs require a college diploma, which also requires mastery of Russian, this reinforces the use of Russian. In Central Asia it is a particularly stark situation. Almost all the people in professional positions are Slavs – predominantly Russians, while the native people work on the farms and other unskilled jobs. Here the "benign neglect" of the schools cited earlier stands out quite clearly as part of the process of enforced Russification. The children are given such a poor education that even those who receive their primary education in their native language most often drop out after eight grades, so there are very few who go on to higher education. Of those who do go to the *vuz*, most are siphoned off for various reasons.

The policy of Russification is in sharp opposition to policies carried out under Lenin and Stalin (at least until WW2). Then the native language was encouraged and in some

languages for the first time an alphabet was developed and put into written language. A conscious effort was made to develop teachers from the republics to teach in the native languages.

Today in the Soviet Union, grade-school texts are still translated into the main minority languages, but the translation of secondary textbooks lags way behind and text translations for smaller language groups have lower priority. One official in Moscow bluntly stated, "Is it so bad to expect a high-school student to study science in Russian? Let's face facts — Uzbek isn't going to be an international scientific language."⁵⁰ What better statement of the oppressor mentality and Great Russian chauvinism of the Soviet revisionists?

While the overall trend is towards rapid Russification, there are differences in the success of this among different nationalities and in different republics. Most of the smaller nationalities in the Russian Republic are not taught in their native language at all any more and the others only in the earliest grades together with the Russian language.

In the urban centers of the minority-nationality republics there are many Russians and Russian is the official language of all state business. The pull away from education in the native language is helped along both by the Russians working in these areas, who only send their children to Russian schools, and the non-Slavic parents who want their children to make it into scientific or technical jobs requiring university degrees (which require Russian). This leaves the workers and peasants in what national-language schools that do exist. The end result is a clearcut class difference along national lines in the quality of the education received.

At this time the continuation of instruction in a child's native language is continued mainly for the purpose of easing the child into the transition to Russian, much as is done in bilingual education when it is offered in the U.S. It is not to preserve and develop the culture of the minority nationalities and enhance their ability to contribute to society in all spheres, but rather to aid in enforcing a "peaceful transition" to the complete dominance of Russian and Russians in all spheres of the Soviet state.

Woman Question

In the Soviet Union, women make up 51% of *vuz* students. After Finland this is the second highest percentage in the world. This is often advertised by the Soviets as another reason why their "socialist" system is superior to Western imperialism.

History, as well as the particular problems and needs of social-imperialism, plays an important role in this. The Bolsheviks after 1917, led by Lenin and then by Stalin in the later '20s and '30s, fought hard to bring women into the economic and political life of the society. Universal literacy was basically achieved in this period. Quotas were set aside in the *vuzy* for women workers and peasants, not only in traditionally women's fields but in scientific and technical fields as well.

Then with the preparation for and outbreak of WW2, women were called upon to take up even more responsibility

in the running of the economy since most men were mobilized in the armed forces. At that time the percentage of women in all schools was at its highest, for example, 77% in the *vuzy*.

The tremendous loss of life in the Soviet Union during that war left the country with a severe labor shortage, especially in jobs that were still mainly done by men — so women continued to be called upon to work in almost every field, both mental and manual, and this was reflected in the education system.

When the revisionists seized power, the labor shortage caused by WW2 still existed and was forecast to continue for a long period because fewer children had been born to the WW2 generation during and after the war. Mainly because of this and because the socialist tradition of women working outside the home had been firmly established, the revisionists did not demand that women quit working outside the home, but rather used the precedents achieved under the dictatorship of the proletariat to serve the needs of the bourgeoisie. Few job barriers not crossed before the revisionists took over have been crossed by women since that time, and the breakdown of sex ratios in various fields of study, especially in the vocational schools and the *vuzy*, reflects that.

From raw statistics of participation in schools and the workforce, women have equality to a higher degree in the Soviet Union than in the U.S. However, scratch the surface of this picture and you will find the bedrock on which the profound oppression of women rests intact and upheld by the social-imperialists — woman as the primary caretaker and provider of the basic maintenance needs of the family. Not surprisingly this is also reflected and reinforced in the education of the younger generation.

Soviet social theory, as well as social practice, claims that men and women have innate personality and psychological differences which result in women being naturally more nurturant, emotional, supportive of others, modest, and restrained than men. Women have a knack for household work and men do not. Women are good at taking care of others' needs, men are not. This theory reflects the actual sex-stereotyped roles of women and men in Soviet society.

Even without the reinforcement of the education system, this ideological and political line is no doubt powerfully (though often wordlessly) conveyed to the youth through example and tradition. However, the education system *does* play an important role in promoting these ideas. The most blatant way is in sex-differential courses. For example, in the upper grades of grammar school, girls take the equivalent of U.S. junior-high home ec and boys take "shop" for their "labor" courses. In high school, during the compulsory military courses, boys get combat training and girls take first aid.

But there are also more veiled, pervasive, and effective ways of promoting women's oppression in the education system, through concentrating and reflecting the status quo in the daily lessons. A recent study of early-grades Soviet textbooks by a U.S. sociologist shows a definite sex-role bias. In the USSR all textbooks come from the central education ministry and are written with very conscious goals in mind, not only for the grammar or alphabet or math, but also for the

political content and "moral lessons" to be conveyed. This is not an aberration but a conscious promotion of women's oppression to the children and youth. The author of this study states that:

"The findings are dramatic: the stories present a view of adult males as sources of directive and instructive behavior, altruistic, and politically involved. The male has a favorable self-image and is concerned with his advancement. He has potential for leadership. Though male children are sometimes selfish and anti-social, this is not true of male adults. A boy rarely engages in nurturant behavior and only infrequently participates in household tasks. The adult female, on the other hand, is heavily involved in traditional household tasks and nurturance in these stories. Women tend to be presented as emotionally expressive and supportive of the advancement of others, though relatively unconcerned with their own self-advancement. They tend to be careless. They also engage in more passive activities (reading, sitting, watching) than men do. Not only are they uninvolved politically, they are actually politically naive."⁵¹

The one story in the four reading books studied that had a female as the central character in an overtly "political" story was "Tania, the Revolutionary." While the girl herself is a heroine and saves her father from the tsar's police, her mother is "in no way involved with her husband's underground activities, is ignorant of the plans for an armed uprising and is so thoroughly frightened of his participation that he reprimands her: 'You are chattering nonsense! Are you not the wife of a Bolshevik? You dare to be a coward!'" According to the study, this type of adult woman is not at all unusual in the stories. For example, in another story about the Bolsheviks before the revolution, the only female character in the story does three things: "She 'silently prepares dinner,' she lies to the detective who comes to confiscate the leaflets and she cries after the detective departs."⁵²

But more telling is that the main concentration of stories with women as the central characters was around International Women's Day, which in the Soviet Union has been reduced to their version of Mothers Day. Of the 23 separate stories and poems in the four readers studied, 19 were concerned with women identified as mothers and most of these were "eulogies to mothers." Only one story, about Krupskaya, was about a woman in the revolution.⁵³

There were numerous stories involving characters and their occupations. It is interesting to note that of all the occupations listed, more than twice as many involved male characters as female — a typical proportion especially as the stories become more complicated. Of these, the characters overwhelmingly follow the occupational breakdown in society, and in fact exaggerate it.

Another aspect of the education system which reinforces and promotes the oppression of women is that almost all the teachers in the nurseries, kindergartens, and grammar

schools are women, a clear statement to the children that it is the women's job to take care of the children. In the general high schools women still predominate, while in the vocational high schools men predominate. The student body of these technical schools which produce skilled workers is also overwhelmingly male. This is especially true in the rural areas. A survey done in 1970 in four European *oblasti* found that 90.3% of the students in the rural technical schools were male.⁵⁴ In another study it was revealed that not a single girl was accepted into the six agriculture mechanics schools in the Smolensk *oblast* in 1965, yet at that time 60% of the agricultural labor force of the *oblast* was female. Even where there is a 30% rate of acceptance to the technical high schools (in the cities) women mainly enter into trades connected to the garment industry or other concentrations of female labor.⁵⁵

Often this tracking of male and female students into mainly male- or female-dominated occupations happens "naturally." The clearcut sex roles in society as well as the subtle and not so subtle steering by parents, teachers, and fellow students lead spontaneously to a sex-typed division of labor.

However, there is blatant discrimination as well. Here the form is not based on an officially stated belief that women are too stupid, or too fragile, or not mathematically inclined, etc., but directly on her role as potential (or actual) mother. Reasons given are that she would take off days to be with a sick child (it is unheard of for a man to do such a thing), that she would not relocate for the job, or might have to relocate because of her husband's job, that she would not be able to keep up with new developments in a profession because of the time spent on her "home job." Since higher-education admissions quotas are based directly on state-projected quotas for fitting personnel into particular slots in the economy, requests from directors of industries for men-only are projected directly onto *vuzy* (as well as secondary technical school) admissions. A young Soviet woman relates her experience with the subtle and not so subtle tracking by sex:

"In school I said that I wanted to be a geologist, but I was told that it was better to be a geophysicist. But that didn't have anything to do with what I was dreaming about. It was the taiga, the campfires, and the other romantic stuff that attracted me. When I left school (high school) I didn't have any idea what to do. So finally I applied to a geological institute, but they didn't accept girls except as reserves. They said that girls would eventually have families, and a woman with a family couldn't be a real geologist. Since I wasn't accepted, I had to find something else. I didn't know where to turn to find a job, and didn't have a soul to ask or consult. Finally, I enrolled in a trade school to learn lathe work, a two-year course. There were only boys. I did okay even though I didn't exactly love it. I liked the work, but it was a strain to be the only girl. My group wasn't too happy to have me around, and the fact that I did well didn't help any."⁵⁶

She eventually dropped out.

The admission quotas by sex are often based on employers' orders. Employers may request only boys for jobs at which girls may be equally well-suited, according to a study by V.B. Mikhailiuk done in 1970. "As a result," she states, "girls study mainly those occupations in which simply by tradition female labor is widely employed."⁵⁷

Further, because girls tend to gravitate towards certain traditionally "feminine" professions like humanities and health sciences, there is a much greater competition among them for the limited number of places in the *vuzy*. A study done in 1968 of applications to five major *vuzy* in Leningrad found that there were twice as many female as male applicants, yet the actual enrollment showed an approximately equal number of men and women admitted. Eighty percent of the women applicants were not admitted, compared with 50% of the men.⁵⁸ The preference for males, even in female-dominated fields such as medicine, is defended on the basis of the greater long-range productivity and reliability of men who have no family responsibilities other than earning an income:

"Boys, and it is unfitting to conceal this, are accepted to medical institutions with a lower average than girls. . . . Girls occupy a more complex position in medicine than do boys: marriage, immobility for purposes of assignment, departures from work – temporary or permanent – when family interests outweigh professional considerations, especially when the family's material situation makes this possible. Boys may not always have deeper knowledge nor do they know how to apply it any better, but given time they become dependable workers."⁵⁹

The Soviet school system, in sum, both reflects and promotes the oppression of women.

Conclusion

Education is one of the Soviet Union's showpieces to the West and the rest of the world – "proof" of the success of socialism. Youth in the USSR receive an enlightened, modern education with greater emphasis on science and math than in the U.S. Education through graduate school is free. They have almost achieved universal complete secondary education among the younger generation. In the realm of equal opportunity to education, women are over 50% of all university students, and children of workers constitute over 50%. Higher-education institutions have been built in areas of minority nationalities. Discipline and order among the youth are stronger than in many advanced Western countries. Job and career training are built into the education system, with students trained to take jobs upon completion of school.

These attributes are praised by Western educators and pointed to by the Soviets as further evidence of the superiority of socialism:

"Such an increase in the level of education can't be considered simply a normal consequence of a country's industrial development. This is a monumental historically unprecedented leap from illiteracy to universal complete secondary education."⁶⁰

The actual differences, however, are only significant when making comparisons based on bourgeois standards. There is no qualitative difference between the "achievements" of the Soviet revisionists and the Western imperialists. The specific features that the Soviets hold up as socialist are fundamentally bourgeois but with a specific revisionist character that serves the ideological, economic, political, and military needs of social-imperialism as it has developed in the Soviet Union.

The emphasis on science principally serves contention with the advanced Western technology, especially for military needs. They have had to come from behind in raising the level of scientific and technological know-how in comparison to the West and therefore emphasize this in education and among youth broadly. It is also to address these needs that lots of resources (for such things as free tuition) and much attention are devoted to education.

On the higher percentage of workers attending higher-education institutions: This is necessary because of the expanded needs of the economy and military for technical strata. The expansion of middle- and upper-level jobs also holds out the possibility to the workers of "making it" if they work hard. From the standpoint of viewing socialism as mainly a rising standard of living and increased opportunities to better yourself, the gains in this development are perhaps impressive. But from the point of view of the proletariat revolutionizing society, transforming class relations, narrowing the differences between mental and manual labor and city and country, and entering into and mastering all spheres of society (as opposed to being taken care of and gradually raising the standard of living), there is no rupture from bourgeois relations, much less a radical rupture.

As for the much-touted, supposedly socialist "collectivism," order and self-discipline among the students, one must ask – for what? In this case it serves to promote going along with the status quo, preserving the order and stability of a reactionary social system through peer and societal pressure. The social purpose of such behavior is succinctly stated in the following quote from a popular Soviet child "up-bringing" book cited by Bronfenbrenner:

"Obedience in young children provides the basis for developing that most precious of qualities: self-discipline. Obedience in adolescents and older school children – this is the effective expression of their love, trust and respect toward parents and other adult family members, a conscious desire to acknowledge their experience and wisdom. This is an important aspect of preparing young people for life in a Communist society. We shall be asked: what about developing independence in children? We shall

answer: if a child does not obey and does not consider others, then his independence invariably takes ugly forms. Ordinarily this gives rise to anarchistic behavior, which can in no way be reconciled with laws of living in Soviet society."⁶¹

Teaching of atheism is also pointed to as proof that the Soviet education system is socialist. It is true that this practice from the dictatorship of the proletariat was continued by the revisionists but again we must ask -- why? All the better to promote *revisionist* morals and philosophy -- revisionist humanism and pragmatism, blind reverence for living authorities on earth instead of invisible ones in the sky. Certainly atheism is more progressive than religion, but it alone cannot be equated with materialist dialectics, and in the Soviet Union what replaces religion is a state religion fundamentally opposed to the development of class consciousness and to revolution.

The Soviets still advertise internationally their practice (ever-shrinking and limited more and more to younger ages) of teaching in the native languages of minority nationalities. They say this shows their greater concern and the equal treatment of these peoples in contrast with Western imperialist countries. To the degree this practice still exists it is due both to the resistance of the various minority nationalities to the liquidation of their language and culture, and to the attempts by the social-imperialists to use bilingual education as a more effective method of teaching Russian. Wherever a native language is the main language in use in the schools, Russian is also supposed to be taught. And in many areas where a native language is supposed to be taught there are no teachers who can teach in that language, leaving many of the children semi-illiterate and dropouts as teenagers.

The rural economic and cultural backwardness of the Soviet Union is a major problem for the social-imperialists and not something they point to with pride. But this is viewed as a long process of overcoming the historical legacy of the tsars, a long struggle to upgrade the education there and achieve universal secondary education. While this legacy is real, the struggle to upgrade is based on the overall needs of social-imperialism and not a struggle to narrow the differences between the mental/manual, town/country contradictions. Some upgrading is necessary to expand the number of mechanics, agricultural technicians, etc., and upgrade their skills. But still one-third of the Soviet labor force is tied down to agriculture, and a large number of these work by hand (mostly women and youth). The rural youth are educated for what they need to know for their job and in fact schools in the countryside are allowed to languish as one way to stem the exodus of rural youth to the cities. If they get too much education they will take their more valuable labor power to someplace more lucrative.

The high educational level women as a group have achieved is a big public relations bonus for the Soviets in chalking up their "equal opportunity" selling points against those of the West, but this too reflects the particular needs and problems of social-imperialism in the USSR. Due to the massive loss of lives in World War 2, the number of women far exceeded that of men

after the war, and to this day there are still 20 million more women than men. This means that the revisionists need women to work all their lives on a full-time basis and at the same time to have as many babies as possible. This accounts for the high percentage of women in the *vuzy*, including substantial numbers in fields like engineering and other technical jobs. The need to boost the birth rate also accounts for the "mother workshop" trend in school textbooks.

The attributes and criteria of the Soviet education system do not shatter but in fact flow from a bourgeois framework. They reflect a goal of more planned, "equal opportunity" imperialism suited to the particular needs of the economics, politics, and ideology of an imperialism with a socialist cover. A successful, quality product of such a system -- the so-called communist man -- is a competent specialist, hard-working, keeping up with his field, giving his best in hopes of material reward and the personal satisfaction of thinking he has helped his fellow man in the bargain. This is a profoundly conservative system underneath its progressive, enlightened, "socialist" exterior. □

Notes

¹ Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, *Revolution and Counter-Revolution, The Revisionist Coup in China and the Struggle in the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA* (Chicago: RCP Publications, 1978), p. 54.

² M.T. Iovchuk, ed., *The Cultural Life of the Soviet Worker: A Sociological Study* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), p. 44.

³ V.I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues," *On Youth* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1970), p. 240.

⁴ See, for example, Shi Ming Hu, and Eli Seisman, eds., *Toward a New World Outlook: A Documentary History of Education in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1976* (New York: AMS Press Inc., 1976).

⁵ Iovchuk, *The Cultural Life of the Soviet Worker*, p. 64.

⁶ Following a period of struggle and experimentation to create a new Marxist education system linked with the production and class struggle, the Soviet leadership, in the 1930s, brought back the basic academic curriculum which was then in effect in Europe, along with an emphasis on grades and exams, discipline, rote teaching, uniforms, etc. They attempted to give these bourgeois forms a

socialist content (training workers as experts, encouraging the ideology of serving the then still genuinely socialist Soviet Union, etc.). All this was part and parcel of a whole package of changes in Soviet society in that period, flowing from Stalin's assessment that the interests of the international proletariat lay chiefly in defending socialism in the Soviet Union. That meant particularly within the Soviet Union subordinating everything to rapid industrialization as the main way to prepare for war. An analysis of the early period and the changes in the 1930s is beyond the scope of this article; however, for a theoretical framework readers should refer to Bob Avakian, *Conquer the World? The International Proletariat Must and Will Revolution*, No. 50 (December 1981).

The education reforms in the 1930s redefined the main task of the communist youth organizations from that of mainly being active in the political struggle to studying hard and maintaining discipline among the students and looking out for their welfare. However, it is not as though Stalin neglected the political education of the youth. He spearheaded the gigantic (and correct) effort to develop Marxist textbooks especially on history, dialectical and historical materialism, and political economy. But these were grafted onto old bourgeois forms as "subjects" to memorize and recite in class while sitting up straight at a desk. Still as late as 1938 he put forward the line that the key task of the universities and the university students was their ideological and political training. His aim was to bring up proletarian experts and technicians, but this was squeezed into a rather narrow academic scope. No doubt this flowed in part from his analysis that there were no longer antagonistic classes in the Soviet Union.

With the outbreak of World War 2 and Stalin's bending everything to win the war (which meant dredging up Russian patriotism, etc. — see *Conquer the World* for major analysis of the line in this period), this too was reflected in the education system. All sorts of old Russians from the days of the tsars were brought out as heroes in the readers, and patriotism and Russian chauvinism dripped from their pages. This is also the period when Lenin began to appear as the kindly old uncle, a national icon of sorts, to the children.

As Avakian said in *Conquer the World*, it would have taken a major shakeup in the superstructure of the magnitude of the Cultural Revolution in China to get back on the correct road after World War 2, and this did not happen. The revisionists were able to take much of the education system intact for the first few years after they seized power. They took the bourgeois methods and curriculum that existed during the last 20 years of the dictatorship of the proletariat, gutted and twisted the genuinely Marxist analysis and stand which *did* exist alongside the errors in some of the courses and books under Stalin, and substituted revisionist analysis. Furthermore, many of the things which the social-imperialists point to today to prove that their "socialist" education is superior to the other imperialists (such as the greater achievements in equality of women and national minorities, greater overall literacy, free tuition, etc. were all achieved under socialism and have been continued by the revisionists *only because they further their own class interests (both economic and political).*

⁷ Abraham Kreusler, *Contemporary Education and Moral Upbringing in the Soviet Union* (Milwaukee: University Microfilms International, 1976), p. 104.

⁸ Kreusler, *Contemporary Education*, pp. 140-43.

⁹ Mao Tsetung, "Remarks at the Spring Festival, February 13, 1964," in Stuart Schram, ed., *Chairman Mao Talks to the People* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), p. 204.

¹⁰ *Strive to Build a Socialist University of Science and Engineering* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1972), p. 35.

¹¹ *Strive to Build a Socialist University*, p. 32.

¹² Urie Bronfenbrenner, *Two Worlds of Childhood, U.S. and USSR* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), p. 63.

¹³ Kreusler, *Contemporary Education*, p. 139.

¹⁴ "Instilling a Communist World View," *Soviet Education* (July-August 1980), Vol. xxii, Nos. 9-10, p. 129. This is a reprint of Chapter 9 of the book *School Pedagogy*, written by a collective at the Lenin Pedagogical Institute in Moscow, Iran Ogorodnikov, ed., and Arlo Schultz, translator. The U.S. publishers of this journal note that this book was selected by a jury of the USSR Ministry of Education as the best manuscript submitted for a competition held in the late 1970s.

¹⁵ "Instilling a Communist World View," *Soviet Education*, p. 130.

¹⁶ *Revolutionary Communist Party, USA. New Programme and New Constitution of the Revolutionary Communist Party USA* (Chicago: RCP Publications, 1981), pp. 82-83.

¹⁷ Iovchuk, *The Cultural Life of the Soviet Worker*, p. 67.

¹⁸ Cited in Carola Hanson and Karin Liden, *Moscow Women* (New York: Pantheon, 1983), p. 59.

¹⁹ The options reform itself ran into trouble in the form of the Soviet version of "back to basics" in the '70s. Time for options was increasingly cut into by the need for more time for military training for boys. To sweeten the pill of military training and keep up with the modern "job training" image, new options were introduced for military-technical training, such as driver of motor vehicles and cycles, helmsman of motor launches, radar station operator, radio telephone operator, electrical engineer, radio engineer, and TV engineer. No doubt some of the graduates of these courses are putting their training to use and being all that they can be today in Afghanistan.

²⁰ See John Dunstan, *Paths to Excellence and the Soviet School* (Windsor: NFER Publishing Company, 1978), pp. 210-13.

²¹ Susan Jacoby, *Inside Soviet Schools* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975), p. 172.

²² Jacoby, *Inside Soviet Schools*, p. 173.

²³ N. Ia. Sokolov, "V.I. Lenin and the Teaching of State Law to Youth," *Soviet Education* February 1981, p. 86. (Originally published in Russian in 1980 by USSR Academy of Pedagogical Sciences.)

²⁴ Sokolov, "Lenin and the Teaching of State Law," p. 86.

²⁵ Sokolov, "Lenin and the Teaching of State Law," p. 94.

²⁶ V. I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1970) p. 5.

²⁷ *History of the Kazakh SSR (1957)*, quote in Revolutionary Union, *Red Papers 7: How Capitalism Has Been Restored in the Soviet Union and What This Means for the World Struggle* (Chicago: Revolutionary Union, 1974), p. 90.

²⁸ Jacoby, *Inside Soviet Schools*, p. 182.

²⁹ *Sovetskaya Voenmaya Entsiklopediya*, Vol. 2 (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1976), p. 245; cited in David Holloway, *The Soviet Union and the Arms Race* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983), p. 161.

³⁰ Cited in Dunstan, *Paths to Excellence*, p. 99.

³¹ Cited in Dunstan, *Paths to Excellence*, p. 101.

³² Liang Hsiao, "What Is the Intention of People of the Lin Piao Type in Advocating Private Ownership of Knowledge?" in Raymond Lotta, ed., *And Mao Makes 5* (Chicago: Banner Press, 1978), p. 343.

³³ Liang, "What Is the Intention of People of the Lin Piao Type?", p. 342.

³⁴ See Mervyn Matthews, *Privilege in the Soviet Union* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978), p. 48.

³⁵ *Komsomkava Pravda*, September 19, 1970; cited in Jacoby, *Inside Soviet Schools*, p. 141.

³⁶ *Sobialnye Problemy Truda i Proizvodstva*, (Moscow: 1969), pp. 56-57; cited in Jacoby, *Inside Soviet Schools*, p. 143.

³⁷ *Pravda*, March 23, 1977; cited in Mervyn Matthews, *Education in the Soviet Union: Policies and Institutions Since Stalin* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982) pp. 55-58.

³⁸ Dunstan, *Paths to Excellence*, p. 128.

³⁹ A. V. Zosimovski, "An Interesting Experiment" from *Sovetskaiia Pedagogika*, 1965, in Fred Albin, ed., *Contemporary Soviet Education: A Collection of Readings from Soviet Journals*, International Arts and Sciences Press, 1969), p. 124.

⁴⁰ Zosimovski, *Contemporary Soviet Education*, p. 124.

- ⁴⁰ Cited in Dunstan, *Paths to Excellence*, p. 128.
- ⁴¹ Cited in Dunstan, *Paths to Excellence*, p. 137.
- ⁴² Dunstan, *Paths to Excellence*, p. 127.
- ⁴³ Cited in Jacoby, *Inside Soviet Schools*, p. 147.
- ⁴⁴ Cited in Jacoby, *Inside Soviet Schools*, p. 150.
- ⁴⁵ Cited in Jacoby, *Inside Soviet Schools*, 1952.
- ⁴⁶ *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, March 8, 1972; cited by Jacoby, *Inside Soviet Schools*, p. 141.
- ⁴⁷ Cited in Jacoby, *Inside Soviet Schools*, p. 157.
- ⁴⁸ Cited in Revolutionary Union, *Red Papers* 7, p. 90.
- ⁴⁹ Jacoby, *Inside Soviet Schools*, p. 160.
- ⁵⁰ Mollie Schwartz Rosenhan, "Images of Male and Female in Children's Readers," in Dorothy Atkinson, et al., eds., *Women in Russia*, (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1977), pp. 296-97.
- ⁵¹ Rosenhan, "Images of Male and Female," p. 299.
- ⁵² Rosenhan, "Images of Male and Female," p. 302.
- ⁵³ Ethel Dunn, "Russian Rural Women," in Dorothy Atkinson, et al., eds., *Women in Russia*, p. 176.
- ⁵⁴ Dunn, "Russian Rural Women," p. 176.
- ⁵⁵ Hanson and Liden, *Moscow Women*, p. 101.
- ⁵⁶ Cited in Richard B. Dobson, "Educational Policies and Attainment," in Dorothy Atkinson, et al., eds., *Women in Russia*, p. 283.
- ⁵⁷ Gail Warshorsky Lapidus, *Women in Soviet Society: Equality, Development and Social Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), p. 150.
- ⁵⁸ Lapidus, *Women in Soviet Society*, pp. 150-51.
- ⁵⁹ Iovchuk, *The Current Life of the Soviet Worker*, p. 48.
- ⁶⁰ Bronfenbrenner, *Two Worlds of Childhood*, p. 12.

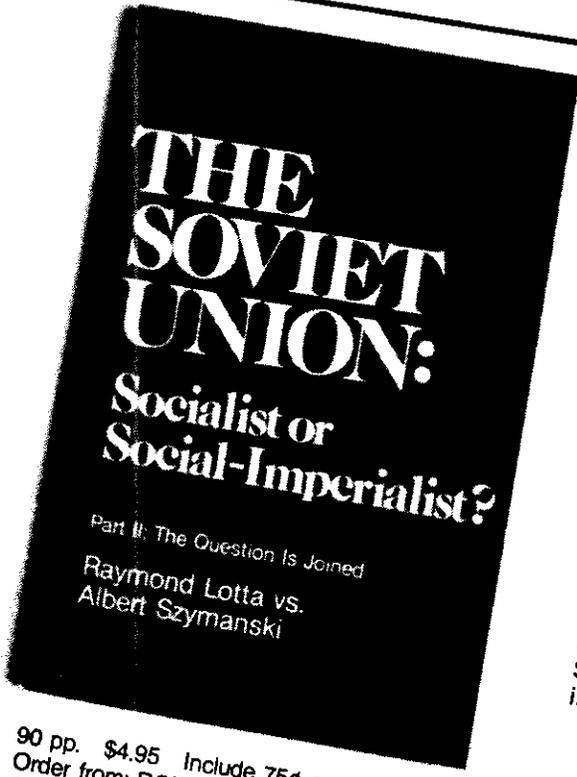
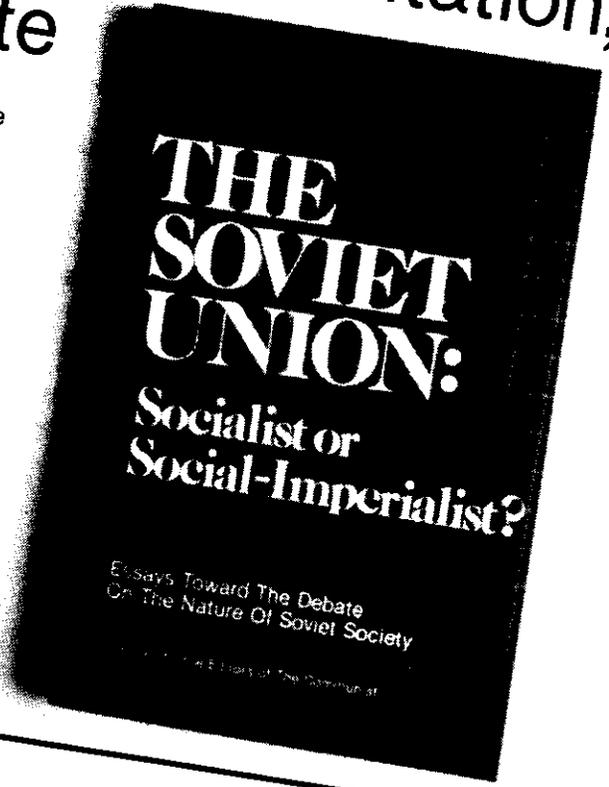
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