Why Has Soviet Revisionism Changed Its Tune
On the Middle East?

The change in tune on the Middle East question by the Soviet revisionist leading clique in the past few months merits attention.

The concentrated expression of this change can be found in a speech by Soviet revisionist chieftain Brezhnev in the Moldavian Republic of the Soviet Union on October 11. He said that “the immediate, political settlement of the (Middle East) conflict” had emerged as the main task of the day, that it was necessary that “liberation of the Israel-captured lands be ensured, the legitimate interests of the Arab people of Palestine be met and their right to their national home be satisfied.” He declared that “the U.S.S.R. resolutely comes out for the earliest and effective resumption of the work of the Geneva peace conference, with all the sides concerned, including Palestinians, participating.”

Other Soviet revisionist chieftains and the Soviet press recently have also clamored that it is necessary to find an “overall settlement,” a “thorough settlement” or a “final settlement” to the Middle East question.

People still remember that for a long time the Soviet revisionist social-imperialists called for the “settlement” of the Middle East issue “stage by stage,” and that they described the Palestine issue as a “refugee issue,” asking the Arab countries and their people “not to overemphasize” this question. Now they are raising a hue and cry for an “immediate” and “overall settlement” and trying to present themselves as “supporters” of the “legitimate interests” of the Palestinian people.

This contrast in attitudes makes it obvious that a sharp change has taken place in the Soviet revisionists’ tune. One can only ask: What is behind it?

Is the Soviet revisionist leading clique now genuinely supporting the “legitimate interests” of the Palestinian people, as it claims? Of course not. If one examines Middle East developments, it is not difficult to understand why the Soviet revisionists have changed their tune on this issue.

As a result of several tours of the Middle East after the October Middle East war and particularly from the beginning of the year, U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, pushing the Soviet revisionists aside, got Egypt and Israel, Syria and Israel to reach agreement on troop disengagement. The United States resumed diplomatic relations with Egypt and Syria. In the contention for Middle East influence between the two superpowers, it is obvious that the United States has gone over to the offensive and its influence there has increased whereas the Soviet revisionists have been forced on to the defensive and their influence has decreased. These are the changed circumstances causing the Soviet revisionists to strike up the tune of an “immediate,” “overall” and “thorough” settlement of the Middle East issue. Meanwhile, they have reproached the United States for manipulating the Middle East peace talks and Brezhnev himself came out to accuse once again the United States of putting forward “ersatz plans” for a Middle East settlement, which meant, he said, to “replace the overall settlement with ‘partial’ agreement of various kinds.” “But it could in no way replace a real settlement.”

The setting specified for the “overall settlement” advocated by Soviet revisionist social-imperialism is “the Geneva peace conference.” In a speech last April, Brezhnev pointed out clearly that “a durable and just settlement (in the Middle East) can and must be” worked out in “the authoritative international forum, the Geneva conference.” A recent TASS commentary said: “The Geneva peace conference is the most appropriate forum in the quest for a radical peace settlement that would satisfy all the sides involved in the conflict.” Brezhnev unequivocally asserted that the Soviet Union intended to be present at all stages and in all aspects of a settlement in the Middle East. To put it bluntly, the Soviet revisionists’ “overall settlement” and their choice of “the Geneva peace conference” mean that they want to have a hand in the Middle East settlement and are trying to prevent U.S. manipulation of it. Western news agencies recently pointed out that after some months’ hesitation the Soviet Union is beginning to make a resolute effort for a come-back in the Middle East and to resist growing U.S. influence in this key strategic region. The aim of the Soviet counter-attack, they report, is to get the Geneva conference resumed for this will enable the Soviet Union to have a direct hand in the mediation.

People still have fresh recollections of the Soviet revisionist leading clique’s attitude towards the Palestinian guerrillas. Attacks by the clique on the Palestine liberation movement appeared frequently in the Soviet press which defamed the Palestinian guerrillas’ persistent armed struggle as “irresponsible adventurist riots.” The aim was to negate the Palestine liberation cause and remove the “obstacle” — the Palestinian guerrillas — that stands in the way of the two superpowers which are contending in the Middle East.

At present the Soviet revisionist chieftains noisily boast about their “support” for the “legitimate in-
Contention Between Hsun Kuang and Mencius Is a Two-Line Struggle

by Chin Yun-ko

In the Warring States Period (475-221 B.C.), there was a fierce struggle on the ideological front between Hsun Kuang* and Mencius (see "Mencius — a Trumpeter for Restoring the Slave System" in our issue No. 37). Over the last 2,000 years many historians described it as a struggle between the Confucianists themselves, thereby concealing its class nature. Actually, the contention between Hsun Kuang and Mencius was a struggle between the Confucian and Legalist schools after Shang Yang's reforms to decide which of the two would win out; it was a two-line struggle between the new emerging landlord class which advocated changes and opposed restoration and the declining slave-owning class which opposed changes and worked for restoration. When the class nature of this contention is made clear, we will have a better understanding of the significance of the struggle between the Confucianists and the Legalists and a clearer idea of the reactionary and progressive roles played by the two schools of thought respectively. It will also be of help in our further criticism of the ultra-Rightist nature of Lin Piao's line.

From the latter part of the Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 B.C.) to the Warring States Period, new feudal relations of production appeared. This was the result of the steady decline of the state power of the slave-owning aristocrats and the extensive use of iron implements and oxen in farming; which in turn brought about the rapid growth of the productive forces in agriculture and the demolition of the nine squares (ching tien) land system that once served as the economic base of the slave system. Karl Marx said: "With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed." (Preface to "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy"). During the transition from slavery to feudalism in China, slave uprisings rocked and toppled the political power of the slave-owners, and representatives of the rising landlord class rose one after another to seize power from the slave-owning aristocrats; concomitant with this were the reform movements of the Legalist school which represented the up-and-coming landlord class.

The reform movements were carried out in the midst of repeated trials of strength between the two

* Hsun Kuang (c. 313-238 B.C.), a native of the State of Choo (in what is now the western part of Hopei Province, the central and northern parts of Shansi Province) in the later days of the Warring States Period. Known as Hsun Ching in his time, he was a materialist thinker and an outstanding representative of the Legalist school. He gave lectures in Lintzü (north of present-day Yiju in Shantung Province), the capital city of the State of Chi, and had considerable influence. Among his disciples were the famous Legalists Han Fei and Li Ssu. Only thirty-two of his articles, collated in his work Hsun Tzu, are now extant. Many of them are militant political essays and have been preserved to this day.