

*Hitherto philosophers
have interpreted the
world in various ways.
The point however is to
change it.*

Karl Marx

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1. Workers states are way forward but minus Moscow weak revisionist leadership chaos.

1. The struggle for socialism faces such confusion that only a review of even the most basic assumptions about the individual and society will clarify a way forward.

2. The supposed 'triumph' of the Reagan-Thatcher 'New World Order' and the supposed 'defeat' and 'collapse' of the Soviet Union, plus the retreat of all 'Reformism' into openly accepting (like New Labour) that it is just a movement for full class-collaboration with capitalism on a permanent basis, - have helped spread cynical scepticism about even the most basic class-war science of Marxism.

3. As a result of it now being doubted that any economic system could ever match the phenomenal innovations and technology-productivity of the 'free market', there is also now widespread doubt that anything remotely like the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution could ever happen again.

4. In turn, this muddle gets caught up with sneaking suspicions that the whole Soviet experience might have been a very unhealthy one-off cul-de-sac in history, a sick wrong-turning utterly irrelevant to socialism.

5. Apart from a few groups of museum-Stalinists in some countries who simply deny most of the difficult problems of 20th century development, all the rest of the 57 varieties of Trotskyism, Revisionism, and

Centrism on the fake 'left' tend to capitulate to this all-powerful international anti-communist sentiment.

6. This widespread mentality not only challenges traditional Marxist ideas on how socialism could come about, but on how history itself works. Instead of class-struggle revolutions being civilisation's driving force, idealist philosophy again rules. The fake 'left' spends its entire time manoeuvring for electoral 'alliance' pecking-order position (LSA Trots); trying to recreate 'left' Labourism (CPB, SLP, SP, etc); or pretending to guarantee 'mistake-free socialism' by the pedantic peddling of abstract, generalised programmes, constitutions, or standing orders of some wholly academic immaculate-party conception (CPGB, SLP, Open Polemic, etc).

7. Wholly shunned is any attempt to convince the international working-class that a further development of Marxist scientific understanding alone holds the key to civilisation's future by demonstrating a correct analysis of the current stage of imperialist crisis, and polemically defending it against all comers, -- rebuilding a party of revolutionary theory as Leninism did, in other words.

8. Current world events are either ignored completely, or dealt with by some wooden formula which then not only ignores all polemical critique but even keeps its mind closed when history itself proves things differently. For example, the SWP became the fattest of the fake 'lefts' via decades of the most reactionary anti-Soviet opportunism. Crucial for these anti-communist 'revolutionaries' was the

fiction that 'socialist' solidarity with the USSR against imperialist provocation, subversion, and sabotage was not an issue because the Soviet Union was only 'state-capitalist' itself anyway. When the Gorbachev 'market forces' counter-revolutionary debacle did finally re-introduce state-capitalism (quickly inevitably joined and shafted by robber-baron capitalism), and when the overthrow of proletarian-dictatorship central-planning and discipline via state-capitalist 'market forces' soon devastated the former mighty USSR, thus proving that what went before for 60 years could not have been state-capitalism, -- the SWP simply carried on insisting that its 'theory' which 'justified' its anti-Soviet hatred was 'still correct'.

9. What undermined the Stalinist Revisionist ideology of the USSR was its being proved wrong by events. The entire 57-variety swamp of fake 'leftism' still has not grasped this point and is doomed to destruction along exactly the same sterile path as Third International Revisionism.

10. Such widespread multi-hued anti-Marxism has captured the international workers movement before, of course. It was rescued from 57 varieties of Bernsteinism, Kautskyism, Luxemburgism, social pacifism, social chauvinism, etc, etc, in 1917 by the combination of spontaneous revolutionary struggle ripping the imperialist world apart whether anyone had written a constitutional programme or a set of perfect standing orders for it or not, plus the correct scientific analysis of the world by Lenin's deliberate party of revolutionary theory ('What is to be done', etc) which

was consequently trusted by the masses to give guidance and leadership to the revolution.

11. A recent new feature of the anti-communist fake 'left' has been to replace the old Trot cliché that 'Lenin was a great revolutionary socialist but Stalin's brutal dictatorship imposed a counter-revolution' (which has always caused difficulty since no one could ever agree when, where, and how this counter-revolution took place), - with the more internally-coherent line that 'Lenin's revolution was a monstrous anti-socialist dictatorship from the start', etc.

12. The problem for the anti-communists with this, of course, is the same one that routine anti-Stalinism found difficulty with (apart from in a handful of very wealthy bourgeois Western imperialist countries), - namely, that although very patchy and seriously theoretically-flawed, the actual 70-year record of the Soviet Union in standing up to or challenging imperialist world-domination in so many ways, exposed all instinctive class-based anti-Sovietism for the idealist anti-Marxist reaction that it was. Despite endless allegations of dubious motives, crass interference, grotesque mistakes, etc, the plain reality is that for 70 years, the backward and war-devastated workers state founded by Leninism made colossal disciplined sacrifices to help two-thirds of the world rise up against colonial slavery and start their own independent economic and cultural development, supplying doctors, engineers, educational establish-

ments, agronomists, dams, economic enterprises, backed by scores of special Third-World colleges and institutions set up in the USSR itself, - setting a completely new agenda for the world to replace the bombs, bullets, and scorched-earth tyranny that the dying colonial empires (Britain, France, USA, Holland, Portugal, Belgium, Spain, etc) had tried hanging onto power with post-1945 in Algeria, Malaysia, Vietnam and Indo-China, Egypt, Kenya, Aden, Indonesia, Mozambique, etc, etc, etc. In addition, a score or more countries, from China to Cuba, were further generously helped to establish their own planned economies in defiant independence of the non-stop worldwide imperialist attempts at armed subversion and counter-revolution, at economic embargo-strangulation, and at ideological propaganda-destruction.

13. These most outstanding and astonishing achievements yet (in the history of international political development) only started going irrevocably wrong when the Moscow bureaucracy began to lose the plot theoretically about how the later stages of the international class war to destroy the international imperialist bourgeoisie and its system of 'free-market' world economic domination, would unfold. Widespread confusion started taking root in the international workers movement from the 1930s. Popular Front onwards that capitalism might finally be toppled or tamed, universally, partly by the worldwide pressure of anti-imperialist coalitions of cross-class 'democracy'. This anti-revolutionary delusion was further cemented by the tragic World War II confusion that there were 'good' imperialists (USA, Britain, France, etc) who were prepared to become an 'ally' of the Soviet workers state in its fight for survival against German imperialist onslaught, and

there were 'bad' imperialists (Germany, Japan, Italy, etc) who were out to destroy the USSR. This imbecile falsification of Marxism and history then spawned further stupidities that 'good' imperialism might eventually accept the need to peacefully co-exist permanently with the socialist camp, and in time even acknowledge socialism's superiority as an economic system.

This in turn gave birth around the Third International to the nonsense of the 'peaceful road to socialism', and misled the Moscow bureaucracy into foolish and needless boasts that Soviet consumer products would soon outperform, in terms of quality and productivity, the slickest and most cost-effective output of Western imperialism (which had the whole world to exploit at often slave-labour rates and under direct colonial tyranny), - a pointless and ridiculous claim when socialism's target was pointing in the entirely opposite direction of trying to equalize living standards and investment levels right across the socialist camp from Cuba to North Korea and Vietnam. There was no way that factory shirts e.g. from Uzbekistan with its universal free health service, secondary and higher education, widespread cultural facilities, etc, could ever be turned out with so much labour-content so cheaply as shirts churned out from Bangkok factories by child-labour literally sold into bondage by an illiterate peasantry and sometimes literally chained to the looms and sewing machines for 16 hours a day, 7 days a week.

But this daftest way possible of trying to 'compare' the building of socialism with the cut-throat competitiveness of the monopoly-imperialist free market was pursued relentlessly by the Revisionist Moscow bureaucracy to the point where Gorbachev eventually concluded that free-market capitalism was the better way to run society al-

together, and set about deliberately dismantling the dictatorship of the proletariat.

14. It was the theoretical legacy of the Stalin era which did the damage. The Revisionist bureaucrats subsequent to Stalin idiotically missed this most crucial aspect when struggling to overcome the 'cult of the individual and its consequences', concentrating instead on the alleged paranoid arbitrary illegalities in the war against imperialist subversion and counter-revolutionary backsliding. On most questions of anti-imperialist revolutionary theory, the subsequent Revisionist bureaucrats departed even further from Marxism-Leninism towards international class-collaborationism and liquidationism than Stalin did. On the really essential questions of 'Stalinism', the subsequent detractor-bureaucrats were in fact more Stalinist than Stalin, suggesting by Gorbachev's time, for example, that World War II might not have been an inevitability of imperialist-system crisis but possibly an avoidable bureaucratic mistake by the Moscow leadership of the time (i.e. Stalin).

An entire anti-Stalin Revisionist literature was produced post-Stalin which traced bureaucratic deterioration difficulties in running the Soviet Union all to the weakening of cadres for subjective reasons (only those who could not stand up to Stalin getting promoted, etc, etc) whereas in reality, the deterioration in the bureaucracy came from compounding the mistakes in world analysis (objective mistakes) which earlier bureaucrats (led by Stalin) had made, thereby eventually weakening the ability and authority of the party leadership all round, culminating in its astonishing self-liquidation, - the first case in history of a 'ruling class' abolishing itself (proving thereby, of

course, that it was not a true 'ruling class' in any sense, but really was just a bureaucracy of a truly workers state, - and was, therefore, theoretically susceptible to any and every improvement and transformation, if only the correct understanding of what the world needed could have been arrived at in time).

Dreadful rationalisation has been retrospectively applied implying that the bureaucracy finally self-liquidated because it saw itself as flawed subjectively and therefore as an obstacle to further progress; but in reality the Gorbachev bureaucracy self-liquidated because it claimed to be able to see market forces as the genuinely better objective way forward for the Soviet economy, - an insanity which the USSR's uncompetitive remains are still tragically and grievously suffering from, and which will look even more insane when world slump starts wiping out the 'higher living standards' (a patchy fraud to start with) of the free market.

The wrong critique of Soviet bureaucracy's humiliation currently circulating, - that "in the age of assessing different variants of new scientific and technological achievements and permitting various types of quests, the wilful methods of leadership were bound to lead to mistakes", etc, etc, - is no advance on Trotsky's reactionary, self-serving, subjective bilge from 1936 in the 'Revolution Betrayed'. If, indeed, it were true, as is argued, that "the Administrative System (meaning the party bureaucracy at the head of the dictatorship of the proletariat running an entirely planned economy, publicly-owned) finds it particularly difficult to function in the conditions of the scientific and technological revolution when industry has to deal on a daily basis not with just one or two inventions, but an avalanche of innovations"; and "the decision-makers, possessing no objective

economic criteria, inevitably become hostages to foreign countries, where what is being used is always correct"; and "the Administrative System proves to be more and more incompetent in dealing with the key problem of the second half of the 20th century - the problem of scientific and technological progress", etc, etc, - - - then market forces would rule forever, and the dream of a planned socialist world would truly be dead.

But in reality, the Soviet workers state carried on successfully technologically transforming itself for a further period four times longer than the span of existence it had covered when Trotsky first declared in 1936 that 'all further Soviet economic progress was now out of the question because the demands of modern technological change had now run into the absolute limits of bureaucratic-dictatorship command-economy management's ability to respond flexibly enough to all the detailed delicate new innovative requirements', etc. If the USSR could multiply its productive-growth period of 1923 to 1936 by five times to reach 1988 successfully, having mastered space exploration, nuclear rocket engineering, aircraft design and mass production, computerised television communications, etc, etc, etc, along the way, despite having been utterly war-destroyed again by another Western imperialist invasion-intervention from 1941 to 1945, and despite having propped up half the Third World with free technological assistance thereafter, - then Trotsky's sour-grapes counter-revolutionary nonsense was clearly proved as such, and the above 1988 Gorbachevite version of the same irrational anti-Marxist mysticism made no sense either. If bureaucratic state planning can do it at one time, it can do it at another time just as easily.

15. What undermined the final generation of Soviet bureaucratic

leadership was not an inability to cope with "the new scale and pace of scientific and technological progress" (Nauka i Zhizn, 1988 - Science & Life, the 3.2million monthly circulation magazine of the All-Union Knowledge Society) but a degenerate Revisionism which made an even more disastrous mess of failing to understand imperialism as an incurable system of boom-and-bust crisis than Stalin had done. The background to this rationalised idealism (about Soviet state planning suddenly becoming incapable, allegedly, of coping with technological innovation any longer), -lay in the confusion sown by Stalin's 1952 work 'Economic Problems of Socialism'. This had mapped out how the conflict with imperialism would be overcome peacefully through the socialist states eventually easily outperforming the capitalist economies.

When this uncorrected anti-Marxist nonsense had failed to prove true by the late 1980s (according to how the then generation of Moscow Revisionist bureaucrats chose to measure things), this ongoing anti-Marxist confusion decided to abort not Stalin's mistaken ideas about this pointless and unrealistic 'competition' and about misunderstanding the boom-bust nature of imperialist crisis, but his sound ideas about how the Soviet economy should continue to organise its development.

When the Western economies failed to decline to a crawl and be overtaken by the socialist camp, as Stalin's 'theory' explained must happen, Gorbachev & Co decided it was because the Soviet economy was failing to make proper use of market mechanisms.

Stalin's 'theory' carried such weight that it was not even questioned, (in spite of much 'anti-Stalin' posturing after his death), because it fitted so well into so many other non-Marxist anti-revolutionary delusions the bureaucracy had lived by. It

suitably admirably the established wishful-thinking that maybe ultimate all-out conflict between the socialist camp and the 'good' Western imperialists (now dominant, -USA, Britain, France) could be avoided. With the socialist camp still constantly growing, and going from success to success, then the cooperative coexistence illusion of the wartime Soviet alliance, -(forced on the West by Stalin cleverly splitting the rearming imperialist warmongers ranged against the USSR in 1939, halting the Western-approved German invasion plan against the USSR by signing the Molotov-Ribbentrop non-aggression pact), ---was envisaged as extending to a near-permanent understanding by the West that it would never be a good idea for capitalism to get involved in a war with the USSR again.

But this not-incorrupt sentiment that(JVS) "the struggle of the capitalist countries for markets and their desire to crush their competitors proved in practice to be stronger than the contradictions between the capitalist camp and the socialist camp", (referring to how WWII started out as an inter-imperialist war in spite of the West's hopes that it would just be anti-Soviet armageddon), - only found expression in hopelessly anti-revolutionary notions.

Extending the idea that inter-imperialist conflicts in practice could overtake the even more fundamental contradictions in the long run between capitalism and socialism, Stalin goes on:

"WWII began not as a war with the USSR but as a war between capitalist countries. Why? Firstly, because war with the USSR, as a socialist land, is more dangerous to capitalism than war between capitalist countries; for whereas war between capitalist countries puts in question only the supremacy of certain capitalist countries over others, war with the USSR must certainly put in question the

existence of capitalism itself."

While this superficially makes sense, and conveys Stalin's clearly-understood and determined revolutionary anti-imperialist purpose in letting the Red Army hold the ring for a series of anti-capitalist power seizures throughout East Europe after the expulsion of the German imperialist invaders, - it also reveals that Stalin had stopped thinking about the revolutionary end to imperialist crisis as being the way forward for the planet.

In the long run, the exact opposite is the outcome, refuting Stalin, as actual world history had already crucially done.

Far from putting in question "only the supremacy of certain capitalist countries over others", war between capitalist countries in 1917 was precisely what first "put in question the existence of capitalism itself" by causing the Bolshevik Revolution. On the other hand, it was precisely Stalin's deluded wish to continue the WWII 'alliance' with the 'good' imperialists, on into the United Nations, which guaranteed that the "war with the USSR" aspect of WWII most certainly did not "put in question the existence of capitalism itself". Just the opposite. Moscow's delusion that workers states now had a permanent safe stake in the world, accepted by the 'good' imperialists, helped breed an attitude around much of the Third International (as was) that the last thing that was needed was any 'revolutionary adventurism', meaning 'premature' bids for working-class power, which would tend to 'unnecessarily rock the boat' of what was seen as a 'good enough' phase of 'stable international peaceful coexistence' which it was imagined would somehow lead to imperialism eventually giving up completely on any general dreams of maintaining active, instant, universal counter-revolutionary responses to block the

path forever to any further socialist advances in the world. In this deluded atmosphere, future socialist advances were seen as almost falling into the lap of the international working class in time, practically automatically. Stalin's casual neglecting to mention the utterly crucial importance to mankind for the working class to be ready to take revolutionary power out of the hands of the bourgeoisie upon the failure of yet another capitalist war-disaster, both reflected and cemented this totally anti-Marxist mentality already established.

Stalin gives this deliberately non-revolutionary perspective further authority in commending the objectives of the heavily internationally CP-backed peace movement. Although not denying that to eliminate war's inevitability altogether, imperialism would have to be "abolished" (but avoiding stating specifically how), -Stalin plainly advocates the following:

"The object of the present-day peace movement is to rouse the masses of the people to fight for the preservation of peace and for the prevention of another world war. Consequently, the aim of this movement is not to overthrow capitalism and establish socialism, - it confines itself to the democratic aim of preserving peace. In this respect, the present-day peace movement differs from the movement of the time of the First World War for the conversion of the imperialist war into civil war, since the latter movement went further and pursued socialist aims".

As Marx or Lenin might have commented, it is impossible to prevent the capitalist system from going to war. It is not impossible to overthrow the capitalist system. So, Surely it would be easier to overthrow capitalism rather than trying to prevent it going to war. But once again, behind this Stalinist anti-revolutionary Revisionism lurks the ass-

umption that the imperialist countries are steadily collapsing economically anyway, and that sooner or later, they will just fall into the hands of the working class like ripe plums. All that is needed from the international workers movement is to guard against letting the imperialists get away with starting another war.

And this was the essence of the "less difficult" task facing the international communist movement than the Bolsheviks had to face in 1917, as Stalin explained it to the 19th Congress of the CPSU in 1952, again implying that bourgeois imperialist decline and decay would make winning power off them relatively easier.

The following passage in 'Economic problems' finally spells out the warped 'theory' behind this anti-revolutionary retreat from Marxist science, which doomed the world movement to an impossible perspective, and condemned it to inevitable ultimate total confusion:

"The result ^{of} East European socialist-camp cooperation is a fast pace of industrial development in these countries. It may be confidently said that with this pace of industrial development, it will soon come to pass that these countries will not only be in no need of imports from capitalist countries, but will themselves feel the necessity of finding an outside market for their surplus products.

"But it follows from this that the sphere of exploitation of the world's resources by the major capitalist countries (USA, Britain, France) will not expand but contract; that their opportunities for sale in the world markets will deteriorate, and that their industries will be operating more and more below capacity. That in fact is what is meant by the deepening of the general crisis of the world capitalist system in connection with the disintegration of the world market.

"This is felt by the capitalists themselves, for it would be difficult for them not to feel the loss of such markets as the USSR and China. They are trying to offset these difficulties with the 'Marshall Plan', the war in Korea, frantic rearmament, and industrial militarization. But that is very much like a drowning man clutching at a straw.

"This state of affairs has confronted the economists with two questions:

"a) Can it be affirmed that the thesis expounded by Stalin ^{/talking about himself in the third person/} before the Second World War regarding the relative stability of markets in the period of the general crisis of capitalism is still valid?

"b) Can it be affirmed that the thesis expounded by Lenin in the spring of 1916, namely that in spite of the decay of capitalism, "on the whole, capitalism is growing far more rapidly than before", -is still valid?

"I think that it cannot. In view of the new conditions to which the Second World War has given rise, both these theses must be regarded as having lost their validity".

16. This was the gospel in 1952. Despite the start of the open debunking of Stalin in 1956, and the beginnings of China's doubts about how well Moscow understood the world, the November 1960 statement of the 81 communist parties, including China, continued promoting the universal perspective "to achieve the socialist revolution by peaceful means" on the basis that "the pillars of the capitalist system have become so decayed that the ruling imperialist bourgeoisie in many countries can no longer resist, on its own, the forces of democracy and progress which are gaining in scope and strength....The decay of capitalism is particularly marked in the USA, the chief imperialist country....Never has the conflict between the productive forces and relations

of production in the capitalist countries been so acute...." etc.

In the increasingly bitter exchanges of correspondence between Moscow and Beijing in 1963, the perspective that peaceful coexistence was really all that was required for the socialist struggle to prevail against capitalism was still being peddled:

"Availing themselves of the conditions of peaceful coexistence, the socialist countries are scoring more and more new victories in the economic competition with capitalism. Our adversaries realise that it is difficult for them to count on winning the competition against us. They are unable to keep up with the rapid economic advance of the socialist countries; they are powerless in the face of the appeal that the example of the socialist countries makes to the peoples under the yoke of capitalism.... The Soviet Union has already outpaced the leading capitalist countries of Europe in economic development and has come to take second place in the world. The time is not so distant when it will take first place in the world", etc,etc.

By the measurement of superficial consumer products, this was neither necessary, nor possible at the present stage of the anti-imperialist world struggle. Just surviving, being strong enough for self-defence, and developing powerful social-welfare economies, and living conditions, would have been plenty of achievement enough to see the growing anti-imperialist camp through to success in the long run, - (but by revolution, of course, as and when imperialist world-market collapse finally set in, in accordance with Marxist economic laws of over-production crisis.)

But by the late 1980s, the Gorbachevites were still working to the uncorrected Stalinist Revisionist assumptions that capitalism should have been well dead and buried by superior socialist competition by now.

When it did not happen, but imperialist exploitation-productivity and innovations continued to soar ahead (on a limited affluent-world basis), the Revisionist bureaucracy mentality went the whole hog and challenged the workings of socialism, not the mistakes the Stalin-era revisionism had made in completely corrupting the Marxist scientific understanding of the boom-bust crisis nature of the imperialist economy.

One Gorbachevite, Boris Bolotin at the Institute of World Economics at the USSR Academy of Sciences even turned (in a 1988 Moscow News article) to the difficulties that Stalin's 1952 Economic Problems work was now causing them, - - but in order not to challenge its phony perspective on imperialism's growth prospects, but to challenge its prescriptions for further development of the Soviet economy!

He wrote: "Stalin's refusal to accept the market in conditions of socialism, and his opinion that the market and a planned economy were incompatible, firmly shaped economic thinking not only among a considerable number of our economic managers but also among our scholars.....we must not keep quiet about 'Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR' but should analyse and criticise it."

But it was not any tinkering management-adjustments to the continuing survival of commodity-money relations for dealing with the ongoing contradictions between collective-farm property and state-farm property which were any kind of serious problem, - merely routine evolution (of economic organisational forms) which had gone on non-stop from 1917 onwards. It was the Stalinist-Revisionist world view of how the imperialist economic crisis outside of the USSR would evolve that was completely disarming and undermining the Soviet workers state. But to this disastrous aspect of the 1952 'Economic Problems' work, Bolotin makes no reference at

all.

16. Western anti-Marxist attempts to ascribe the USSR's spectacular self-destruction to fundamental incurable flaws in how a workers state must inevitably function, have failed quite sensationally. One of the most exhaustive economics studies was by Ellman (Amsterdam University) and Kontorovich (Haverford College, USA) (1992, Routledge).

This investigated every economic statistic and report available (Soviet and Western sources) from 1953 onwards, claiming to be able to trace and explain scores of various movements, up and down, in every conceivable indicator, - inflation, wages, investment for production goods, investment for consumer goods, GDP growth, military expenditure, shop queuing times, etc, etc.

Much painful unevenness of development is gleefully recorded in this anti-communist book, but it concludes fairly that the USSR was still growing in general economic strength, in line with its development since 1917 more or less, coming up to the Gorbachev political onslaught on how things were running, in 1988-1990, after which a dramatic decline and disintegration set in (the economy of the ex-USSR has collapsed in the subsequent 10 years to less than half its former strength, an economic decline of a major power unknown in the whole of recorded history).

Every plausible and implausible 'explanation' for the sudden deterioration Gorbachev had on his hands is examined: poor planning tying up too much capital investment unproductively; slowdown in supply of new labour from the countryside; increased bureaucratic corruption; natural resources exhaustion; ageing population; environmental destruction; relaxation in social-political discipline; loss of wage incentives; decay of ideological motivation; absolute vastness-of-scale problems for

continued central planning and control; loss of intellectual and moral authority for the system; neglect of infrastructure; increased military expenditure; growth rates tending to get smaller each year since 1958; etc, etc, etc.

None of these are dismissed from having played a part in the accumulated problems Gorbachev thought he had to deal with. But they are all rejected, collectively or separately, as remotely offering any explanation of the disintegration. Repeatedly, and in detail, Ellman and Kontorovich return again and again to the following broad conclusion:

"The Soviet system has been brought down to a considerable extent by the acts of its top executive, starting in 1986....On the one hand, the decision (the 'initial revolution from above') was related to objective difficulties confronting the society. On the other hand, the decisions taken reflected very much the ruler's perception of the situation. Judging by Gorbachev's speeches, it seems to have developed as a trial-and-error response to his perception of the situation he inherited (i.e. failure to compete successfully on the economic front with the capitalist world, widespread drunkenness and corruption, low economic growth, and an official economic doctrine which could not rationalize the policies the leadership wished to pursue).

"The economic collapse has been in part an unintended by-product of the political changes Gorbachev has introduced. These political changes (the withdrawal of the Communist Party from a direct role in the economy; the transfer of substantial powers to the Soviets; detotalitarianization; an expansion of the independence of enterprises were expected to release the human factor in economic development and thus lead to rapid economic growth. In fact they removed the motive force (pressure from above) wh-

ich had propelled the Soviet economy in previous decades, without replacing it by an adequate substitute. Hence, as the political reforms became more radical, the economy went into a tail-spin."

Dumbly tied to Stalin's infantile anti-Marxist perspectives about the historic international class war against the imperialist bourgeoisie being won by the still relatively-backward Soviet workers state getting a greater range of potentially profitable consumer goods onto the market than capitalist world-market exploitation could, - - what this bourgeois economic jargon is describing is Gorbachev's Revisionist destruction of the dictatorship of the proletariat, replacing it with the 'democracy' (bourgeois democracy) of market forces.

These anti-communist Western academics make further admissions:

"The recovery of the Soviet economy from its 1979-82 decline showed that the traditional economic system was viable.... The success of the Andropov and early-Gorbachev policies pointed to a possible strategy of development based on utilizing the strengths of the existing system. Such a strategy would have been based on the comprehensive and consistent enforcement of discipline, but not limited to it. It would also have sought to improve the organization, planning and management of the command system on its own terms, rather than trying to graft market-inspired elements on to the command structure, as so many reforms have done.. ..For a time it looked as if Gorbachev would adopt precisely this strategy. Some innovations of a command type (such as the 'Novopolotsk system' of tight control over labour) were introduced on a small scale. Command methods were deployed to accelerate technological change. The 12th 5-year plan (1986-90) embodied the recommendations of the advocates of increased in-

vestment. What would have happened if this strategy had actually been adhered to?

"Increased pressure on managers alone significantly improved performance in the railroad sector, with its worn-out capital stock and extremely high level of capacity utilization. It would have brought even larger gains in other sectors, where the capital stock was in better shape and capacity reserves higher. If tighter discipline had been supported by streamlining and rationalizing the command system, and by the injection of new investment, the recovery of 1983-86 might have been prolonged into the 1990s. The traditional model of socialist planning was by no means doomed to extinction in the late 1980s. Its eventual ruin was the result of conscious choice on the part of the political leadership."

After detailing how some of Gorbachev's attempted command-strategy policies in fact proved counter-productive due to their clumsy, crude implementation (anti-alcohol campaign, accelerated machine-building investment, restrictions on the black economy, etc), this bourgeois economic science contentedly concludes:

"The command strategy, however, was not adhered to. After the 27th party congress in 1986, Gorbachev started the policies that undermined discipline. One reason for abandoning the command strategy was dissatisfaction with its results. In 1983-86 the net material product grew, according to official statistics, at an annual average rate of 2.8 per cent. This was too low for a lagging country which was trying to catch up. Soviet aspirations were expressed in Gorbachev's speeches of 1985 as catching up with the world's leading powers in terms of high technology, and as being within the targets of the 12th 5-year plan, which envisaged acceleration of growth. Apparently, Soviet politicians

perceived (correctly in our view) that the traditional economic system, however strengthened, was not up to this task....

"Whether or not the economic situation in the USSR in the early 1980s was a 'crisis' depended not only on the economic performance of the USSR considered in isolation but on the economic performance of the USSR relative to that of the USA. The 1980s was a decade in which Soviet economic policy came under the influence of the international demonstration effect of the worldwide successes of capitalism. In North America, western Europe and East Asia, high-and-rising living standards and rapid technical progress (both the introduction of new products and the rapid resource-saving in production) were very visible and had a great influence on Soviet policy formation....the OECD countries had achieved much higher living standards than the USSR. Furthermore, judging by the rhetoric of Reagan and Thatcher, the market economies were full of self-confidence in the superiority of their system. The USSR had long been engaged in the 'competition between the two systems', and it was important for the legitimization of Soviet power to score successes in this competition. The complete failure of the USSR to catch up with the advanced countries in living standards undermined the legitimacy of the regime. This was particularly marked among the elite who travelled abroad and/or were able to obtain imported consumer goods."

17. In reality, of course, it was no shame at all for the Soviet workers state, — struggling in a reasonably honest and altruistic manner alongside Cuba, Korea, China, Vietnam, East Europe, and much of the Third World to try to contain world imperialist domination, — to have not yet remotely caught up with top bourgeois living standards at the apex of the long-

est and vastest international capitalist trade boom in history, — especially when the USSR was once again at that precise moment (as Ellman and Kontorovich admit) having to allocate more precious resources to military needs than ever because of the threatened US Star Wars programme.

But Stalin's anti-revolutionary Revisionist complacency, — with its utterly naive perspectives on imperialist development, not seeing the boom but equally now ignorantly unaware that the most massive bust and slump in history must also subsequently follow, — still totally ruled the Moscow bureaucracy.

And in the sick, sad aim of wishing to 'catch up' with what the imperialist system of vicious Third World exploitation could achieve in terms of shallow profiteering consumerism and trade-war market manipulation and domination, this degenerate Revisionism then took the knife to the workers state itself, and to all connection with the science and aims of Marxism-Leninism.

In the terms of this bourgeois economists' account:

"The leadership itself removed (from the building it was trying to rebuild) crucial load-bearing 'bricks' on which the stability of the structure rested. As a result, the whole structure came crashing down. The three key 'bricks' which Gorbachev removed, or weakened, were: the central bureaucratic apparatus; the official ideology; and the active role of the party in the economy."

For example, the Western professors mention the 28th party congress in June 1990:

"Among other things, the congress criticized the endless administrative reorganizations affecting agriculture: 'In recent years, the agro-industrial complex has been continuously reorganized. This has destroyed the links and interrelationships between the different parts of the agro-industrial complex,

led to the loss of many highly qualified specialists, and weakened technological, productive and state discipline'. This was the view of most of the agricultural delegates. At the section on agrarian policy of the congress, practically all the speakers proposed re-establishing the Ministry of Agriculture. The resolution of the congress on agricultural policy specifically called for the restoration of the Ministries of Agriculture and Agricultural Machinery (abolished by Gorbachev in 1985), and the re-establishment of a supply and service system specifically for agriculture. These demands were not conceded, partly because that would have been an admission that Gorbachev's earlier reorganizations had been harmful, and partly because they came from people opposed to Gorbachev's partial de-collectivization policy."

Scores more examples are given of specific disastrous economic effects of the perestroika revolution where the 'liberalization' delusion just led to a chaotic breakdown in management discipline. Summarising it all as an effective destruction of the USSR's state ideology, this anti-communist observation continues:

"By removing the party from its role in the economy, Gorbachev removed as essential feature of the smooth running of the traditional model. In the traditional model, the party committees at all levels played an essential role. They cut through the maze of conflicting bureaucratic bodies and enforced the priorities of the centre. Once they withdrew from the economy however, factories, cities, regions, and republics were free to do what they thought best, regardless of the documents emanating from the centre. Furthermore, the process of detotalitarianization, by transferring much power to the Soviets and permitting the emergence of independent social organizations, led to destabilizing economic consequences,

varying from the introduction of customs posts round republics, and depriving non-residents of certain cities of the possibility of shopping there, - to the closing of ecologically-harmful factories. It also led to the coming to power of anti-communists in parts of the country (Moscow, Leningrad, RSFSR, Baltic republics, Georgia). These anti-communists were prepared to go ahead with reforms regardless of their short-run negative effects.... One of the striking effects of the disintegration of Marxism-Leninism was that it was partially replaced by religion and nationalism. In a multi-national and multi-religious state... the disintegration of Marxism-Leninism and the revival of religion and nationalism automatically led to a weakening of the USSR as a unitary state. Replacing an ideology which was uniform throughout the country by ones which divided it on ethnic lines was a recipe for conflicts... and had serious economic costs." Numerous examples are appended.

18. So finally, a Stalinist counter-revolution really did take place and destroyed the workers state, building socialism. But not until 1990-91, - on average, 60 years after the first generations of fake 'lefts' started putting their boot into the Soviet Union for a variety of bogus 'reasons'. These same petty-bourgeois still argue: 'So it collapsed eventually anyway. So what?'

Utterly irrelevant are all the smartarse comments about 'Call that socialism? Life in a capitalist prison would be preferable'. Such philistine Western ignorance will count for as little in the long run as any other mentality originating in the colonial-racist complacency of monopoly-imperialist affluence. It is the survival of the West's world-exploitation for so long that is the real historical anomaly, not the outstanding achievements of the world's first workers state, lasting 70 years despite starting in the most difficult

and backward country imaginable, and despite being three times dismembered or devastated by war since October 1917; threatened or sabotaged by further imperialist intervention continuously; economically blockaded, subverted, and blackmailed throughout; and vilified, provoked, lied about, and distorted by non-stop hostile propaganda and hatred between states, nothing the like of which had ever been seen in all history. And that anti-communist Cold-War poison atmosphere is still polluting the world as dominantly today as ever it was (e.g. Zimbabwe has just been given the full treatment for refusing to toe the West's monopoly-capital-subservient line. Yugoslavia, Iraq, China, Korea, etc, got it before. The IRA and Sinn Fein got it in Britain. Revolutionaries in Colombia, Palestine, and Mexico are being lined up for it next. Or possibly China again, or Vietnam, - wherever panicking imperialism sees the next threat looming to Western prestige as 'the best way to run the world, politically or economically'. Any kind of revolt (against Western domination) seen as 'successful', whatever it is, is regarded as a deadly threat because of how it might give billions of others in the Third World the idea of revolution against Western control as well.)

It is on these basic class-war questions that Soviet communism is not dead at all.

For 700 years, the bourgeoisie has dominated the world and every sphere of human achievement with its 'capitalist democracy' way of doing things. But it could never stop ending up as monopoly-imperialist domination-exploitation of the rest of mankind through war-conquest and the market. The Soviet workers state was the first successful resistance to that domination, making miraculous achievements without a bourgeois-capitalist class in sight, let alone in total control (as is the condition of the

'free world'). No wonder it was, and is still, so hated by every scrap of ruling-class and petty-bourgeois propaganda.

19. But if it failed in the end, why does it matter? Why would any part of the world want to re-tread the Soviet Union's route? The vast majority of impoverished Third World mankind still would. And they are going to want to emulate Soviet workers-state achievements even more urgently, before much longer, because of the fundamental reality of world development which every wretched renegade from the dictatorship of the proletariat has always ignored (Revisionist, Trotskyite, or Reformist), - the basic Marxist science that no boom period in imperialist world trade can last forever. A crisis of 'surplus' capital must cause a Crash sooner or later. All-out trade-war and shooting war will inevitably follow. Relatively speaking, the world will be back to 1917 once again. Billions of ordinary people around the globe, suffering capitalist war horrors as well as capitalist slump horrors once more, after stifling endlessly under capitalist exploitation anyway, will not put up with it. Communist revolution will yet again be the only future for mankind.

20. 'Left' electoralism, without a genuine revolutionary content, will soon have the Trots, etc, as hated as the rest of bourgeois political opportunism in Parliament. Only renewed parties of Leninist revolutionary theory will capture longterm working-class allegiance now, and be able to turn it into successful revolutionary struggle. There is no way forward for mankind but via the whole works of Leninist science. Tactical compromises can be endlessly flexible over broad-front possibilities for mass party-building activities, but such has been the corruption of workers-movement think-

ing by 80 years of Cold War anti-communism and by recent decades of reformist single-issue political correctness pursuing extreme individualist philosophies (feminism, black nationalism, homosexuality, etc) that any restriction on Marxist-Leninist polemics can only lead back again to total chaos fairly soon. 'Left' electoralism may briefly be turned to (out of working-class habit in this country). But while it may temporarily encourage Trot opportunism, it will not be able to prevent electoralism itself from being held in ever-increasing contempt by the working class.

Regional parliamentary nationalism will prove just as sterile. The working class in Britain has far more culture in common than the average proletarian does with the average bourgeois in any part of the land, England, Scotland, or Wales, - and on far more crucial questions in view of the coming crisis of capitalism. When international imperialist counter-revolution is on the rampage everywhere, the working class of Britain will stand far better chance of defending any revolutionary gains made if united rather than if atomised into a separate England, Scotland, and Wales. Blair's devolution concessions are strictly a boomtime gimmick to gain electoral popularity, saddling the working class with yet another layer of bloated bureaucracy to support, and wrapping yet more confusing 'parliamentary' cover-ups around the still-continuing basic capitalist system, which will remain as dominated by uncontrollable monopoly-imperialist interests as ever, and which will carry on the class-divided exploitation of the unprotected and non-business-owning proletariat the same as before. Come the slump, and the contempt for this petty-bourgeois nationalist plaything will know no bounds.

The defeat of British colonial-imperialism by the heroic Irish national-liberation struggle truly re-

flects the world crisis of the monopoly-capitalist system facing insuperable odds from the Third World billions in revolt. Even when outnumbered, the dispossessed (as in Occupied Palestine and the Occupied Zone of Ireland) can learn how to fight with far more determination and skill and political superiority to bring colonial annexationism to its knees. Every significant setback for world imperialism, large or small, will serve to inspire the revolt everywhere else. Marx's inescapable law of capital over-production-crisis also implies that the vaster and longer the boom that artificial credit-creation has constructed (in effect through huge dollar hand-outs to every anti-communist crook and chancer on earth since 1945), - the more devastating will be the wipe-out of 'surplus' capital once the rate of profit collapses and confidence shatters everywhere. The world is in for the most catastrophic crash and slump in history. All-out war for economic survival is inevitable. Suddenly, the mass-involvement in the slow steady but reliable progress of the Soviet economy, however muddled and bureaucratic, will seem like paradise. And how are workers states supposed to be able to function anyway? Like the disorganised chaos of the average trade union or 'left' party in Britain? The only model in history of any sort of workers state is the Soviet one, followed by a couple of dozen allies and imitators. How is the underclass in Britain expected to learn statecraft for building towards an egalitarian society in the future? With difficulty, and by massive hard work and discipline, under a mass-party-led proletarian dictatorship, exactly as the Leninists did it.

The only reason for refusing to rebuild a Leninist movement in open polemical struggle is because petty-bourgeois complacency, philistinism, and cynicism still does not believe that capital-

ism is about to collapse, or sees nothing wrong with its total cultural degeneracy anyway. But only three years ago, the SWP said Blairism had a future worth voting for. Look at its sick collapsing mess now, dithering whether to crawl into the German imperialist camp, or deeper into the American laager, - eventual humiliation and war in either direction. By its incurable nature, capitalism is on a course of increasing frustration, alienation, and divisiveness. Only Marxist-Leninist science offers a sane constructive way forward for human community. Build the EPSR.

21. Cynicism has most difficulty getting its brain round how easily derisible unsophisticated Soviet bureaucracy made itself, - in its sick cult-of-the-individual days; in its farcical self-liquidation which no one fought hard to prevent; in its clumsy pollution; in some of its crude simplistic brutalities for political control or to exert social/cultural pressure. How could part of the future frequently look so embarrassingly naive and barbaric, and end up falling flat on its face anyway?

The first point is to forget all comparison with life in the West. Compare Soviet workers-state achievements with the hell-hole of Tsarist Russia, or even with the hell-hole since 1990 in spite of massive Western aid and investment flooding in to try to make capitalism look good. The only comparison for Soviet achievements would be with some other vast backward semi-asiatic hell-hole like Tsarist Russia, but none exist. A better comparison on whether workers states should be seen as part of the world's past or crucial to its future would have been seen in likening China's progress to India's from similar starting points and with similar problems, which China won hands down, but then partly confused the picture by borrowing some capitalist methods of development

2. Thinking that 'free-world triumph' means imperialist war-fascism epoch has ended will be a fatal mistake. 'Human rights' fraud is just a cover for West domination.

22. That the expectation of ceaseless revolutionary struggle needs to be the mentality at the heart of a genuinely Marxist philosophical outlook, is well demonstrated by the US imperialist retreat in June 2000 over the case of Elian Gonzalez, (the 6-year-old kidnapped from Cuba to go on a failed reactionary 'boat people' disaster, seduced by Miami's bright lights), and then kidnapped again by the American authorities, preventing the lad being restored to his father in Cuba).

The worst thing and the greatest danger that could flow from this fiasco is to think that 'maybe Washington is finally seeing reason' on its previous barbaric fascist-imperialist bullying and blockade of Cuba, and 'maybe Cuba will now be left to live in peace, and maybe conflict with imperialism will no longer be necessary', etc.

Workers states will all the time be able to take advantage of

all sorts of weaknesses and anomalies in the frequently chaotic and unpredictable lurches and splits in general imperialist policy, but the fatal mistake would be to return to the Stalin Revisionist nonsense that maybe imperialism's fascist aggressive nastiness will just fade away as far as causing further major war and destruction threats to significant workers-state developments are concerned.

Nothing could be further from the truth. A thousand and one sick sad calculations could be behind the USA's decision to pull back now from this outrage, but all of them undoubtedly unfailingly nasty, and boding no good for Cuba or any other workers state. The anti-communist propaganda failed to carry public opinion with it this time; rival 'friendly' imperialist-state opinion may have been extremely unfavourable; important vulnerable reactionary Third World regimes, especially

for its own use.

A clear sight of Cuba's outstanding superiority to anywhere else in Latin America in eradicating illiteracy, ill-health, grinding slum-poverty, and much else of traditional backwardness of the region, has been deliberately clouded by US imperialist might bending every sinew to subvert, undermine, blockade, poison, terrorise, vilify, etc, to keep everything on edge and prevent clear thinking about Cuba's remarkable achievements. By accident or design, Vietnam's progress has been obscured by the surrounding 'miracle' economies of the South East Asian 'tigers'. But the first collapse later, and Indonesia is up in flames of revolt. When the world crash comes, how will the comparison seem then?

And what crucially matters is how it is seen locally, not from Islington. China's potential for revolutionary workers-state regional leadership is far from over yet. As was always going to be the case, the fate of the world imperialist trade-war crisis will be decisive in what future the Third World chooses for itself, - throughout Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. And once revolutionary workers-states become the dominant pattern on earth, then the Western imperialist 'free market' racket of exploiting the whole planet for its own benefit really will find its days numbered. A much healthier, more rational world is in view. Build Marxism-Leninism.



elsewhere in Latin America, may have been suffering an adverse fall-out from Washington's outrageous behaviour; even far worse setbacks or disasters might be in the pipeline for imperialism imminently (such as a revolution somewhere, or a Wall Street Crash), and as much existing bad publicity as possible might have been needed to be cleared out of the way as soon as possible, - such as finally letting Elian go home; etc. Maybe it was thrown in as additional makeweight with the sops tossed to American farmers who have been complaining bitterly about losing valuable trade-to-Cuba opportunities to foreign rivals because of the US embargo on American business deals with the socialist island, now to be just partially relaxed in response to energetic lobbying by corporate America. The details are not important to this particular argument. The point to stress, however, is

that imperialism as a historical force, remains on unalterable course to eventually be compelled to try to stifle the life out of every scrap of workers-state new-history still around, or threatening to return. The contradiction between the development of workers states and the survival of the imperialist bourgeoisie (which has ruled the world for the last 700 years) is ultimately absolute. And however much this historic battle between class systems for the further advance of civilisation might be influenced by more pro-socialist propaganda, (managing to accrue out of this brief minor recoil from antagonising Cuba by US imperialism), - the monopoly-capitalist bourgeoisie will only finally be toppled from their world ruling-class position by revolution.

23. The astonishing international uproar against Mugabe's ZANU in Zimbabwe provides another current exam-

ple of this crucial lesson for the only realistic world philosophy available to progressive mankind for some time to come. This completely manufactured ferocious vilification against ZANU is entirely because it has dusted down some class-war actions and rhetoric for addressing the land-reform crisis with. By openly threatening confiscation of vast monopoly-capitalist landholdings as the correct approach towards more justice and equality for the Third World's poor masses, especially where the propertyless poor are black and the rich & powerful are clearly representative of white international bourgeois culture, - the ZANU class-war threats have sent alarm bells ringing right round the world market economy. And this is particularly so because Mugabe had previously been willing to play dutifully the 'restrained international statesman' role that imperialist compromise expects and loves in former national-liberation-war leaders. Having won and been granted 'respect', the Western hatred could be unbounded (for any 'national-democracy' leader who then reverts to guerrilla-war rhetoric) for setting a 'bad example' to billions which could terrify international capitalism in due course.

24. Another clue to the real issues which strike fear into the very heart of the bourgeoisie's long rule on earth, - and thereby instruct workers on what is the crucial essence of the whole class-struggle question, - is capitalist propaganda's relentless campaigning on the matter of so-called 'workers-state violence', - (meaning the revolution's audacity in establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat to replace the existing 'capitalist democracy' world of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie (and there is no alternative replacement)), - but dressed up by the

philosophical individualism of the imperialists as questions of 'human rights'. This complete fraud of supposed 'totalitarianism' versus supposed 'humanitarianism' has been used as a get-out clause by more millions of petty-bourgeois-minded people than anything else for escaping into anti-communism from the pressures in the West against loyalty to the workers states and to the socialist revolution.

Serious scientific research may one day be able to sort out the actual record of any mistakes, disasters, or wrong-headedness which workers states might have been responsible for, but a blood-curdling worldwide torrent of lies, distortions, and rumours has been pouring out against the dictatorship of the proletariat from day 1 in 1917 and continues to this moment against China, Cuba, Korea, etc, and unceasing in retrospect against the USSR, - constantly alleging 'millions' of deaths here, there, and everywhere.

If that same research were also to count up the totals allegedly killed by the revolution since October 1917, in all the newspaper, magazine, book, and broadcast hysteria of the whole bourgeois world, it would come to many, many hundreds of millions of dead bodies. Populations would have been decimated. As it happens, the population of Tsarist Russia/USSR went from 140 million in 1917 to nearly 280 million by 1989, despite having almost an entire generation of young men killed liberating Russia and Europe from imperialist war-aggression in 1941-45 which killed more than 20 million Soviet citizens, - a dramatic population increase for a European state. Over the same 72 years, the population of France, for example, which lost very few people in World War II, went from 50 million to 52 million. And the positive stability making possible that huge Soviet popul-

ation increase, has disappeared completely following the destruction of the dictatorship of the proletariat in 1990, and life expectancy, plus population totals and projections, are now in serious decline.

What Western brainwashing has also never bothered to explain is why would any workers-state regime, such as the USSR, - which never had an unemployment problem, - only labour shortages because of its planned economy, - and which only became an ever-greater power with its ever-expanding highly-educated and scientifically-skilled mass population, -- ever want to just start killing all its own people for no reason?

The defence of the workers states against non-stop counter-revolutionary attempts or provocations by surrounding imperialism since 1917 is obviously a different subject entirely. After armies from 14 of the leading capitalist countries staged a counter-revolutionary invasion of the Soviet Union after 1917 and destroyed virtually the whole territory with bombing and scorched-earth terror, and then financed and armed a further two years devastating civil war, followed by endless sabotage against the young workers state, - the tension in the USSR was enormous within the rush to build the country up before the next terrifying invasion threat from vastly-stronger imperialism materialised just 12 years later when Nazi Germany began its colossal master-race rearmament programme, financed by Western bankers and politically turned a blind eye to by the other Great Powers (despite its obvious fascist-aggressive dangers, and despite being forbidden by the Versailles Treaty) because of Hitler's determination to find more Lebensraum for a Greater Germany to the East, - meaning the Soviet workers state would soon be invaded and put to the sword again. The not-

orious 'Fifth Column' of fascist traitors had already helped in the German-financed destruction of the soft-left Spanish Republic from 1936-39. Bureaucratic paranoia in Moscow was regrettably high. The Stalinist Revisionist degeneration from the higher scientific grasp of international class struggle of Marxism-Leninism laid the rest of the USSR's existence up to 1990 open to many mistakes of all kinds.

The same can be said of all the other workers states, in different ways and for different reasons. But with what conclusion? That workers revolutions should never attempt to build their own states because they may have to use the power of the dictatorship of the proletariat to survive, and that these new regimes in different countries (usually previously backward) might not always be able to run things perfectly, or avoid mistakes or wrong-headedness?? This is not a serious approach to history. Such philosophical idealist irrelevance can only fill the minds of the most academic 'revolutionary' posturers in the West, - without exception, all in the anti-communist counter-revolutionary camp in reality.

Another interesting propaganda point is that made by the 'Tiananmen Square massacre' which the whole planet has a graphic grasp of and will unfailingly bring up whenever a communist world (as an alternative to capitalism) is spoken of. What is fascinating is that of some 30,000 days that workers states have existed since 1917 for massacring the hundreds of millions of murdered people supposedly to their credit, only Tiananmen is always confidently quoted as an 'example' of this happening. Other named 'massacres' confidently quoted might just include the Katyn Forest, or Hungary 1956, or the Ukraine famine, or the Moscow Trials, - but not much else.

Now although Western

sources have subsequently admitted that not a single life was actually lost on Tiananmen Square itself (despite the terrifying pictures of tents, bicycles, and barricades crushed by tanks), - nevertheless there was undoubtedly a civil war skirmish in Beijing in 1989, and up to 150 people lost their lives in total in that centre (and one or two others), - as agreed by all slightly-more-responsible anti-communist Western hysterics. And at least 50 of these were state officials (soldiers, police, postmen, bus-drivers, etc) murdered by the mob.

But if a round 500 million is the total butchered by communism since 1917 after adding up every single Western horror story published or broadcast since then, then the accounting for them by Western anecdote, which never progresses spontaneously far beyond Tiananmen when proof is demanded, would still leave 499,999,900 butchered by communism unaccounted for. Throw in the most exaggerated anti-communist estimates of deaths due to 'workers-state responsibility' in the Ukraine famine, Moscow Trials, Katyn, and Hungary, - and there are still more than 495 million dead at communism's hands since 1917 that most people cannot remotely quote a source for, - place, incident, struggle, or whatever.

Yet no one has difficulty in remembering Auschwitz and the holocaust which killed several million Jews, Gypsies, communists, trade-unionists, Soviet prisoners-of-war, etc, etc (although never described as the victims of capitalist democracy (which voted Hitler into power in 1933) as opposed to everyone always bringing up the victims of communist rule). The Somme and other places of trench-war butchery of tens of thousands at a time are also easily remembered. Yet people cannot put a place or a time to at least 495 million people killed allegedly by communism since 1917. But the name Tiananmen, on the

other hand, is never forgotten by anybody, - a 'massacre' of just 100 people.

If 'labour camps' is the supposed answer, why are there no names to them? Without any research necessary, most people can name genuine labour death-camps from the same period of history, - capitalist labour death-camps: Auschwitz, Belsen, Birkenau, Treblinka, Dachau, Buchenwald, Maidanek, etc. Russian names too difficult? But everyone has heard of Lyubianka the KGB's prison HQ. Actual historical records will one day disprove this 'Soviet death-camp' nonsense.

Conclusion? That there have never been any 'mass victims' of workers states at all, any time, anywhere; that the entire 500 million are just the nonsensical fiction of relentless Western anti-communist brainwashing, prolonged to this day thanks to hordes of anti-communist fake 'lefts' thronging the labour movements in the West.

And the 100 killed over a 10-day period around the counter-revolutionary stunt on Tiananmen Square (of erecting a replica Statue of Liberty, & masking this clear pro-imperialist orientation by CIA-planned ironic singing of the Communist International by the crowds of petty-bourgeois-minded students bribed to go there???) It should only serve to remind the working class that 1) there would hardly be a counter-revolutionary phenomenon against workers states finally taking power in different countries if it were not for the international imperialist forces and market influences surrounding such states; 2) the truly astonishing volume of anti-China propaganda that flooded the world for months around that not-very-major incident (in terms of not representing any serious counter-revolutionary force to challenge the Chinese workers state) and has continued to pour out ever since 1989, - indicates graphically how the question of the

dictatorship of the proletariat is the turning point of all world history, guaranteeing the eventual end everywhere of the capitalist era, and the eventual triumph of a completely new socialist civilisation of international cooperation on earth; 3) it would have been even better if the Chinese workers state had acted far more vigorously, decisively and rapidly in defence of the dictatorship of the proletariat against this blatant pro-Western-democracy stunt, and could indicate to the world-public much clearer understanding of the need to be far more vigilant and alert to the counter-revolution's tricks, and to act far more ruthlessly, the next time that Western influences manufacture such a provocation, (which will surely come if China learns the lessons of the Gorbachev catastrophe, and instead of fatal class-compromise with 'market forces', keeps on strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat instead).

25. Spontaneous anti-communism on the 'left' will dismiss such EPSR-Perspectives concerns as "not in the real world", etc, and will prefer to believe that networking and manoeuvring to provide platforms and rub shoulders with 'left' Labourites like Livingstone and Benn at many a tedious 'Marxist summer university', or in semi-detached electoral support, or in drawing up 'joint tickets' with lesser chattering-class celebrities like Paul Foot, Mark Steel, Jeremy Hardy, and Ken Loach, - is the only thing that "really matters". The pretence is that such activities can make possible "real polemics" for eventually hammering out a "real programme for socialism". It is all total delusion and a grotesque hoax on the working class. Such opportunist lash-ups can never produce serious worthwhile polemics because such 'personalities' have nothing to gain and everything to lose by gen-

uinely debating with the mass socialist movement. A 'performance' is all there is ever time for. Even tiny fake-'left' sects, quite close to each other in the anti-communist political swamp, find it impossible to seriously objectively polemicise with each other; and the majority of Trot and Revisionist groups cannot even tolerate internal polemics which genuinely pose a choice and real conflict over the correct next politics to adopt. Manipulative authoritarian guru-worship or leading-clique-worship prevails throughout the fake 'left'.

The 'socialist alliances' will never get the world's need to clarify the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat onto the agenda, let alone thrash out any agreement on it, which is life or death for the future of socialist revolution. And the pretence of arriving at a "real socialist programme" via such LSA posturing opportunism is just as silly and nasty a joke on the working class. Electoral 'left reformism' is all that such back-scratching hot air can produce, and the time will come when that 'democracy' fraud is regarded by workers as just the foulest treachery on offer.

Necessary serious polemics struggling to precisely clarify the next new understanding and class experience on the long development towards socialist revolution, can only possibly flourish within an already-agreed deep and wide-ranging platform of basic Marxist science on crucial historical and ideological questions.

In theory, such attempts at objective responsible struggle could be seen as working within a larger amalgamated framework such as Socialist Labour, (once the separate-recruitment Trot factionalists, just using it as a membership source, had been booted out). But the NUM authoritarian guru clique never had any intention in reality of letting any polit-

ical or philosophical thinking flourish but their own illiterate museum-Stalinism, and trade-unionist anti-theory philistinism, - further proving the point about the impossibility of polemics within such a deliberate electoral-opportunist lash-up. Running an occasional journal of trade-union struggle-anecdotes which consciously rules out any polemics on historical turning points in the anti-imperialist international class war, or any 'internecine strife' against anti-communist ideology around the SLP, is not what is needed by workers at this crucial moment for understanding imperialist crisis as the revolutionary driving force, and proletarian dictatorship as the only possible answer to it. War or Bolshevism is the only realistic choice open to the working class of the entire planet (as the Yugoslav people recently discovered, criminally ill-advised by the SLP along with the rest of the anti-Leninist fake-'left' swamp to try to stem NATO-Nazi imperialist aggression with social-pacifist 'No to war' nonsense); and for the Trot and Revisionist world of retreat 'left-Labour' electoral opportunism to pretend that petty-bourgeois 'summer university' celebrity posturing; Ken Livingstone's electoral coat-tails; and Follett's follies making possible 'fresh recruitment from New Labour', is the real world, is to live in a pipe-dream.

26 Such affluent middle-class concerns in the West are almost sealed off from the actual life of the overwhelming masses on the planet, whose different existence entirely can be deduced from capitalist-press admissions about the Third World on virtually any day of the year. Catastrophic declines in living standards and intolerable deterioration in circumstances through tyranny, war, or natural disaster are an ever-widening experi-

ence as sharpening imperialist crisis means that the rich become ever richer and the poor ever poorer, even on official UN income statistics. The astounding phenomenon is seen of countries like Mongolia, supposedly 'liberated' from Soviet communist tyranny only 8 years ago to join the 'free world', now using national elections to practically unanimously vote their former ruling Communist Party ('Soviet stooge-tyrants' of yore) back into power, - such has been the cataclysmic experience of monopoly-imperialist-gear world market forces on an economically-small and relatively fragile country. Sadly, as has happened all over East Europe, where similar communist election 'shocks' have taken place, Revisionist nonsense still dominates understanding, as under Moscow's tutelage previously; but now that the dictatorship of the proletariat has been dismantled, replacing planned command economies with market forces, - the 'reform socialist' gibberish of these former ruling parties is utterly useless for helping to really change the situation.

The world's torment from the slump/over-production crisis of the monopoly-imperialist-biased (i.e. the West's) market forces is growing relentlessly worse. Already there are flames of revolt everywhere, from Indonesia and the Philippines in the Far East to Colombia and Mexico in the Far West, - the whole world over. The post-communist 'new order' was doomed from the start to be able to produce nothing but new communist revolutions, - as the EPSR was explaining must happen even as Gorbachev was dismantling the dictatorship of the proletariat to join the 'free world'. It is the outstanding achievements of the planned workers states since 1917 which represent the only progressive, stable, and secure future for civilisation and the planet. Build Marxism-Leninism.

3. The greatest myth is that the Soviet workers state went wrong because over the years, its leadership had acted bureaucratically and dictatorially. The Stalin era went wrong because of theoretical bankruptcy in failing to understand what was really happening to the world. The incur-

27. The most catastrophic mistake of all by the fake 'left', dominating the international workers movement, - a mistake which makes them the permanent paralysed stooges of Western propaganda on the essential question of anti-imperialist struggle, - is the imbecile delusion that the Soviet workers state 'failed' because of 'a lack of democracy'. Firstly, it was not the workers state which failed at all. It was its leading philosophy which failed disastrously, deliberately handing the workers state over for destruction by dismantling the dictatorship of the proletariat. (See paragraphs 16 & 17). Secondly, it is utterly fanciful nonsense, closer to voodoo than Marxism, to speculate that practices closer to Western traditions of 'party democracy', - basically petty-bourgeois traditions, - would have saved the CPSU bureaucracy from its ultimate revisionist lunacy of liquidating its own state power.

It makes utter gibberish of Marxist history to give credence to the barmy notion that Revisionism's damage to the international workers movement should best be categorised as a leadership behaving bureaucratically or dictatorially, and that stricter observance of a more democratic set of standing orders for a revolutionary party is the essential question to worry about for solving the problem.

12 In 100 volumes of the collected works of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, an enormous part of which was de-

voted to the polemical defeat of Revisionist nonsense attempting to undermine, hold back, or mislead the understanding of the world, being fought out in the First, Second and Third Internationals, - it was the wrong analysis and ideas of the Revisionist backsliders, misinterpreting capitalist society developments, which bore 99.99% of the Marxist-Leninist onslaught, not the undoubtedly arrogant and undemocratic disposition of these Revisionists, or their bureaucratic practice. Lassalle, Proudhon, Bakunin, Bernstein, Kautsky, Plekhanov, Trotsky, etc, may all have been the biggest 'democracy' hypocrites on earth, - denouncing Marx, Engels, or Lenin for their allegedly 'dictatorial ways', etc, while being genuinely hostile to the true spirit of communist democracy and objective truth themselves. But denouncing such 'democracy' humbug hardly features at all in the classic Marxist-Leninist destruction of these false prophets. Always it was their utterly wrong leadership which they attempted to give the socialist movement about the correct assessment of the latest changes in the capitalist system and the class & national struggle internationally, and the perspectives for revolution, - which Marxist science concentrated on.

But despite 73 years of living experience of the Soviet workers state's successes and failures, and a further 10 years hindsight on the causes of the self-liquidation debacle by the CPSU leadership, Western petty-bourgeois ideological influence has proved

able revolutionary-crisis essence of imperialism was deliberately suppressed in favour of vain hopes for 'peaceful roads to socialism' and permanent peace with 'good' imperialists.

powerful enough to leave contemporary Russian would-be 'left' groups (already 57 varieties of them) parroting nothing better than the same dumbed-down superficialities that the Trot and Revisionist fake 'lefts' are limited to in the West.

Although, usefully, in their descriptions of USSR problems there is no attempt to deny the considerable success of the completely publicly-owned and entirely planned Soviet economic achievements up to 1990, - or any thought of denying it, - the feeble conclusions of this new 'left' swamp in Russia about what went wrong with the USSR fail to rise above such shallowness as:

As a result of Russia's economic difficulties and isolation, officialdom managed to take political power out of the working class's hands, seized in 1917 by the proletariat. Having become an out-of-control parasitic layer, the hierarchy made broad use of bureaucratic manoeuvring methods enabling it to protect itself both from capitalist restorationists and from the pressure of the working class. Such balancing between classes, layers, and parties in society bears the name bonapartism.

"The bureaucratic system had its resources of historical development since it confirmed itself on the gains of October. But the USSR's economic stagnation, plus the zig-zags of bureaucratic planning, signalled the exhaustion of the proletarian revolution's potential. At a critical moment in the 1980s, historical development left only two ways out. Either society had to be democratised with the building of class-based Soviets (councils) and freeing the plan from the clutches of the bur-

eaucracy; or the economy had to be transferred into private hands and the dictatorship of the market.

"However, the hierarchy was not united, and under the blows of the crisis in society, it split into distinct rival fractions. The most cynical, young, and active branch of the bureaucracy ('the democrats') saw the possibility through the market of turning state property, of which it was only the management, into its own private bourgeois property. It found a leader in Yeltsin.

"A more amorphous but more numerous section ('the conservatives') feared exchanging their privileges for the risky life of a bourgeois. They just wanted cautious reforms along the Chinese pattern. Ligachev became the mouthpiece for this fraction, and after him Zhuganov.

"A third wing of the bureaucracy ('the irreconcilables') was the least clued-up, not grasping the historical limitations of Stalinism and the necessity for reform, and incapable of coping with the new conditions. The party secretaries of the major primary organisations would usually be in this group, pathologically opposed to any changes. The voice of this section was Nina Andreyeva, and after that General Makashov.

"In the sharpening conditions, Gorbachev could neither pacify nor strike down these fractions because the virus of these splits had penetrated into the system of control run by the KGB and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. As a result, in August 1991 there came into power the hungriest and most determined fraction of marketeers.

"An independent workers movement and the cultivation of Marx-

ist thinking had been destroyed in the Stalin years. Without any experience of struggle, and without any real idea of what the market would mean, and tired of the lies and the bossiness of the CPSU, - a section of workers which might have become active, swallowed Yeltsin's radical anti-bureaucracy slogans, and gave him their support.....

"The lesson is obvious. It is only possible to build a proletarian party on a basis of democracy, internationalism, and conscious principledness. Any other course leads to degeneration, splits, and extinction." ('Left Vanguard' No 37, Jan 27, 2000. Publishing since 1990. Translated from the Russian).

Such is the astonishingly sad and reactionary confusion which 60 years of Revisionist dominance in Moscow, matched by 60 years of Trot and Revisionist fake 'left'-ism in the West, have produced. This was some 'bonapartism'!!! In Marxist science always a term implying chronic instability, lack of clear-cut purpose, and regimes of a likely extremely temporary nature, - this so-called 'bonapartism', however, totally transformed the most difficult country on earth to rule from the utterly degraded backward illiterate depths of collapsed Tsarist autocracy in 1917 to becoming a world superpower only 30 years later, able to hold at bay the greatest imperialist strength and domination the world has ever seen, - and do it on behalf of virtually the entire Third World, breaking free from colonial empire, - eventually obliging the American, British, French, Dutch, Portuguese empires (etc, etc) to abandon their counter-revolutionary struggles through aiding in one way or another the local national-liberation forces. It managed to develop every aspect of modern society and statehood, easily equal to the average achievement over the whole capit-

alist world market, and to easily keep this going for 73 years (1917 - 1990) in spite of the country twice being totally destroyed by Western imperialist intervention, and despite having to cope with permanent international economic embargo throughout that time, - and without a scrap of any capitalist class or free market in sight!!! Some 'instability'!!! Some 'lack of purpose'!!!

This imbecile Trot gibberish now puddling young minds in Moscow as usual fails to specify when, where, and how the effective 'counter-revolution' took place whereby this apparently classless 'officialdom' achieved this astonishing feat of "managing to take political power out of the working class's hands", - a remarkable accomplishment which Lenin, for example, died in 1924 convinced that 7 years of non-stop war-intervention, scorched-earth destruction, economic strangulation, and sabotage had failed to achieve despite the best efforts of, first, German imperialism and its allies (who were succeeding in giving the might of American and West European imperialist such a hard time in the First World War (1914-1918)); then the 14 capitalist invasion armies, including troops and bombing aircraft from all the leading Western powers; and finally the unspeakable destructive savagery of the Western-backed counter-revolutionary White-guard armies which put the whole country to the sword from 1920 to 1922. And if what Lenin led in those six most dramatic years of all world history was a proletarian state, the world's first, locked in life or death conflict of unbelievably savage class and national war to keep the power in the hands of the working class (which in Marxist science of modern society is the only way possible of preventing power returning into the hands of the bourgeoisie), then how can any alternative

description be applied to the even more titanic and destructive armageddon fought by that same proletarian state from 1941 to 1945 against even mightier bourgeois-imperialist forces. That most colossal destruction in the whole history of warfare aimed to complete the task which the West had failed to achieve from 1917 to 1922, to defeat the Soviet workers state and to retake power for the capitalist-colonialist system, or in class terms to get power back into the hands of the bourgeoisie by taking it out of the hands of the working class. So still in 1945, power is obviously still in the hands of the undefeated, party-led Soviet working class.

It hardly makes sense to suggest that the greatest invasion force ever, - fleets, tanks, planes, guns, and millions of troops, - were defeated by 'officialdom'.

So when and how was this mighty trick done which the whole might of world imperialism could not do, - taking over control of the USSR, the government of it, the political power, - but which some hostile-to-the-working-class 'officialdom' managed to do, apparently, but which has no historical date to it, no venue, no noteworthy incidents???

It might be argued that not much of a fight was put up in 1991 when political power clearly was finally being seized by new class forces of a deliberately-revived privatising-bourgeois mentality deliberately supported by officially-encouraged Western capitalist intervention.

But the pointlessness of the analogy is made by the fact that the transformation between the Soviet workers state and the freebooting capitalist hell-hole that Yeltsin unleashed was unmistakable, unmissable. Times, places, personalities, and incident after incident. The stripping of political and economic

power from the planned socialism of the Soviet workers state is an undisputed matter of detailed history from 1989 to 1991. So the question remains: When, comparably, was political power lost by the working class before that? Time? Place? Personalities? Incident after incident after incident???

The entire thesis of these fake-'lefts' about the Soviet Union having been a 'bonapartist' regime is embarrassing political illiteracy from the start. Marxist science knows only of bonapartism as a temporary balancing act between the two major classes fighting for power within any country, - a regime which must very quickly, - within weeks or months, - reveal which decisive class force it wishes to throw in its lot with and gain legitimacy (and survival) from. This Trot verbal trickery wisely avoids saying that any Bolshevik government survived by actually 'resting on the Russian capitalist class'. The whole history of the USSR from 1917 onwards is known by the whole world as one non-stop battle to destroy the capitalist class in Russia, - and succeeding fairly rapidly.

But since it is also well-known that Western intervention never ceased, after that, trying to restore the capitalist class to power in Russia, then describing the Bolshevik government as always needing to "protect itself from capitalist restorationists and from the pressure of the working class" can appear, at superficial glance, to have established the conditions for 'bonapartism'. No such thing. Only one class was left with any power by the Russian Revolution, - the working class.

The notion of the Bolshevik regime "protecting itself from the pressure of the working class" is just sick slick meaningless from the phrasebook of anarchist philosophy, the longtime historic rival to Marxism in the workers mo-

vement, which dreamed that after capitalism was overthrown, there should be no more governments or leadership of any kind. It has been the childish mantra of 'rank-and-file-socialism' dilettantes ever since. A government of communist leadership invariably tries to put pressure on the working class to change its ways, adopt new methods, respond to new challenges, and make even more sacrifices, etc., etc. Nearly 73 years of positive communist government in the Soviet Union led the working class to miraculous achievements. Just when, on what occasions, over what incidents, did communist government in the USSR ever identifiably or memorably "protect itself from the pressure of the working class"??? It is more pure anti-Marxist gibberish.

Much more adultly and interestingly, these modern Trot anti-communists in Moscow help demolish, inadvertently, another widespread myth:- namely, that the admittedly Revisionism-befuddled CPSU regime supposedly, however, had gone beyond the point of any cure or improvement by the late 1980s. These Trots, who were there, utterly hostile to communism, admit it themselves that far from total paralysis, or being so emotionally and aspirationally afflicted that it was in no condition for anything other than to commit suicide, - the CPSU leadership was, on the contrary, battling things out in three quite spirited factions, ready for conflict and not remotely prepared to just crawl away and die, ashamed of what they historically represented as CPSU leaders.

14 Tragically, as is obvious, decades of 'peaceful-road-to-socialism' and 'imperialism-can-no-longer-develop-economically' Revisionist confusion had undermined any Marxist scientific ability to grasp that an international working-class fight against imperialist crisis

via world socialist revolutionary struggle was the only possible objective perspective for civilisation's further survival and flourishing, and that without such a philosophy being restored to the CPSU, the Soviet workers state itself would find it increasingly difficult to maintain production and innovation enthusiasm or sufficient socialist harmony in society. Moreover, the long decades of Revisionist, anti-revolutionary, incipient-international-class-collaborationist mentality of Stalinism would lead to total paralysis or worse if the pointlessness and insane perspective of overtaking the highest levels of Western consumerist life with even higher levels of Soviet consumerist life was not abandoned.

28. Earlier in its struggles for an objective scientific understanding of world development, the EPSR/ILWP Bulletin campaigned widely trying to warn that Gorbachev's frustrated tinkering and anti-Marxist ignorance was missing the point in a big way about the world's future (and the USSR's) and threatened real danger. Chapter titles from a collection published in 1988 (ILWP Books vol 13) declared: "Only Leninist revolutionary theory can inspire USSR, - not Gorbachev's exhortations" (No 331, 26/2/86); "The 'dissident' problem will become unmanageable unless there is a return to Leninist international revolutionary perspectives" (No 375, 7/1/87); "The West's enthusiasm for Gorbachev's distortions of Lenin on peaceful coexistence, class-collaboration, and human rights is a grave counter-revolutionary warning" (No 376, 14/1/87); "Revolutionary communism is the only worthwhile individualism. 'Dissident' artists are purely bourgeois stooges. West cheers Soviet 'shake-up' so as to undermine dictatorship of the proletariat" (No 385, 18/3/87);

"Death of Marxism through ignorance is the only real Moscow news" (No 419, 11/11/87); "Nationalism rampant due to zero Leninist leadership by Gorbachev" (No 433, 2/3/88); etc., etc.

Conclusions written for that 1988 collection (and first published in EPSRs 450 & 451 of 29/6 & 6/7/88) failed to resolve a mistaken assertion frequently repeated in this period by the Review that the collectively-responsible society and the planned economic gains of the USSR were by now so deeply ingrained in the Soviet workers state's way of life that a complete reversal to capitalist free-for-all would no longer be possible, (although repeated clear reminders that such a danger was posed are evident from the conclusions-extracts (below) and the chapter headings (above)). Such hopeful confidence was a mistake in understanding, born of personal cadre limitations in the EPSR at that time; but although wiser now about just how immense was the paralysing damage to the workers state population's political consciousness caused by Stalinism's petrified revisionist dogma and refusal to daily pursue every new development worldwide to extract the maximum revolutionary inspiration, understanding, and propaganda from it, - the particular grasp of historical forces which misled the EPSR on that point remains an important and valid factor in other considerations.

Having developed so far and lasted so long, the powerful influence on international proletarian thinking of the Soviet workers state's successes over 73 years will never die. Even now, in spite of the revisionist bureaucracy's subsequent self-liquidatory shame, it is invariably a hammer-and-sickle flag or symbol which most spontaneous revolutionaries like to associate themselves with -- and most bogus 'revolutionary' Trots choose to posture under.

And even though fai-

ling to wake the Soviet people up in time to realise what catastrophic harm Gorbachev's bureaucratic revisionist tinkering was unleashing, the living experience of socialist achievements in Russian people will speak up loudly soon.

Such anti-imperialist inspiration is still keeping major workers states going (in China, Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, etc), and still encouraging a steady increase in anti-Western revolt by both nationalist and revolutionary forces from the Philippines to Colombia.

And a possibly even bigger question is: how destroyed is the influence of 73 years of successful socialist state-building in Russia itself, where the implantation of market capitalism has mostly brought nothing but utter despair and demoralisation to the vast majority of the peoples of the former USSR, including the now 'free' national republics and minorities. The Communist Party, albeit still hopelessly revisionist, continues as the only stable and coherent political force in Russia and many other Soviet republics; and the CP in Mongolia has just been put back in office with a 90% majority after 10 years of locally experienced 'capitalist freedom'. All of Putin's public talk, confirming hopes in him as an ex KGB hardman, is of rebuilding the power and authority of the central state machinery. The EPSR's 1980s best guess that Leninism could never revive in Moscow until major communist revolutions had started ousting market imperialism in new parts of the world, could also now be invalidated by spontaneous working-class revolt in the ex-USSR. A return to a planned socialist economy there would certainly eliminate at a stroke the theoretical problem for international working-class understanding, of decades of still unresolved anti-communist and anti-Soviet brainwashing having been apparent-

ion crowned by Gorbachev's deliberate suicidal self-destruction.

29. The EPSR's 1988 attempts to summarise the long view of how the first workers-state epoch influenced the world and was influenced by it, have still retained some relevance although continuing to be speculative and unproven, in parts.

No 450, 29/6/88:

■ The horrifying philistine outpourings of anti-Leninism now swamping the Soviet Union (see ILWP Books vol 13) are no part of the Bolshevik 'revolution' at all but its exact opposite, - the re-enthronement of leaderless petty-bourgeois chaos which will fall easily manipulable to Western imperialism's ceaseless relentless crusade of anti-communist disinformation, black propaganda, dirty tricks, and outright subversion if Gorbachevism continues unchecked.

Although still badly handicapped prior to Gorbachev by Stalinist revisionism much as it had been since the mid-1920s, the Soviet socialist revolution was monolithic stability itself, and in no kind of crisis.

But just as the anti-Leninist oaf Dubcek succeeded in Prague in 1968 (assisted by enormous Western intervention), Gorbachev could quickly create dangerously unstable rudderless confusion if he is not stopped.

The massive financial power and subversive organisation of the CIA which has toppled countless regimes since 1945 (deemed to be "hostile to American interests", - from Mossadeq's Iran to Allende's Chile, from Lumumba's Belgian Congo (Zaire) to Arbenz's Guatemala, from Jagan's Guyana to Sankara's Burkina Faso, from the NJM's Grenada to Obote's Uganda, from Bosch's Dominican Republic to Diem's Vietnam etc, etc, plus scores more failed attempts in Poland, Hungary, Seychelles, Libya, Cuba, Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Nicaragua, etc (see the entire library of memoirs of

ex-CIA agents now available)), - is a history lesson obviously totally wasted on the anti-Marxist philistine Gorbachev.

And he is undoubtedly equally ignorant of the vast and impressive Lenin literature on the inevitability of "all the old crap reviving" if there is any weakening of the dictatorship of the proletariat's class rule during the long inter-regnum between the wholly imperialist-dominated epoch of the world (prior to 1917) and the eventual winning of a planned organised world of communist abundance built on the graveyards of inter-imperialist warmongering (by degenerate tyrannical monopoly capitalism).

By capitulating the Soviet workers state to now being waylaid and held up by every last manifestation of petty-bourgeois idealist bollocks that has ever been spawned by Western anti-communist philosophy and intrigue, Gorbachevism has now opened the door towards the total paralysis that Dubcek achieved before he was removed, in Czechoslovakia.

The contemptible demonstrations suggesting the closure of the Soviet state security services (the KGB) are one particularly degenerate example of the conceited small-mindedness of apolitical sceptics and individualists whose dislike of the international class struggle is only exceeded by their despicable ignorance of unignorable imperatives for freeing the world's proletarian masses from imperialist warmongering crisis.

The incorrect policies and tactics of the KGB (and its predecessor organisations) are the political errors of the party leadership, - nothing else. It is another instance of philistine hatred of Leninism causing childish irresponsibility of demands that the baby be thrown down the pan because the bathwater has become a bit mucky.

Lenin built up powerful state security as one of his first priorities against counter-revolution. It is an outrage that the party under Gorbachev sees no

need to immediately attack such confusing and destabilising drivel as 'Close down the KGB' as soon as it received worldwide publicity from Western TV broadcasts from Moscow.

And there are many other examples of similar politically ignorant complacency.

The nationalism unleashed in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Estonia, etc, is no joke, e.g.

And Gorbachev is already in grave danger of being too late now to halt the nonsense of small-minded national exclusivity by merely urging these rebellious republics to "Stop being silly" (which is about all Gorbachev is capable of.)

In the modern world, the track record of telling people to "Stop feeling so Armenian" or to "Stop this Azerbaijani conceit", etc, is a very poor one, - understandably, and to a limited extent, justifiably so. Imperialist exploitation has always either had to crush dissident nationalism (95% of the time), or else buy it off by granting some privileged colonial policing position or other (Ghurkas, etc).

The Soviet workers state can pursue neither of these paths.

The USSR has held together hitherto because there has always been sufficient momentum in the socialist revolution to easily win the allegiance of the mass of the proletariat in the more than 160 nations making up the Soviet Union, including all the 15 major republics.

That would also easily still be the case if the class-proletarian instincts of the masses were what was being appealed to, - against, say, manifestations of counter-revolutionary bourgeois nationalism of a separatist, individualist (anti-communist but not necessarily anti-capitalist) kind, - whether disguised or not (as will inevitably happen) as "multi-party democracy" or "parliamentary system" or "greater autonomy" or "less Russian influence", etc.

But at that point Gorbachev really would need a genuine "new revolution" with scient-

ific communist appeal to rally all the Soviet masses on a proletarian internationalist basis for such a delicate and difficult struggle against local petty-bourgeois nationalist exclusiveness (in the aftermath of all the demoralising demobilising idiocies that Stalinist defeatist-revisionism has paralysed the Soviet people with (in parts and from time to time) since the abandonment of Lenin's perspectives in the 1920s).

In response to the aimless "pull your socks up" vacuity of Gorbachevism which is in reality just a thin veneer covering rampant international class-collaboration, the Soviet masses may well not feel at all sufficiently proletarian-internationalist to take on Armenian or Estonian separatism, etc, when it begins to fall completely under the influence of worldwide bourgeois-imperialist reaction, and CIA subversion.

Whether or not the Afghanistan communists, etc, are to be totally abandoned (which remains to be seen), Gorbachevism is inflicting permanent massive ideological damage on the entire international proletariat (and inevitably on Soviet workers' enthusiasm and clarity for the further building of the socialist revolution) - by his philistine mental diarrhea on the all-important problem of imperialism.

Peaceful coexistence was a mere Leninist diplomatic tactic for causing splits in the warmongering imperialist camp and keeping the Soviet Union out of direct unequal confrontation for as long as possible, - nothing else.

The idea that it is a possible permanent condition between the socialist states and imperialism, or that it offers any kind of solution to the inherent catastrophe of incurable imperialist warmongering, - - is certifiable.

It is also a disarming ideological strait-jacket to handicap the proletariat with in its historic class-war to the finish with the ca-

pitalist bourgeoisie.

If the mortal conflict with imperialism has suddenly been glasnosted out of existence by the third rate muddleheadedness of Comrade Gorbachev, then what possible conviction can all the hysterical "pull your socks up" urgings from fat bureaucrats in Moscow carry?

Gorbachev will be in a similar mess when it comes to trying to rally public support to counter any of the other destabilising threats to Soviet order (which his small-minded ignorance of Leninism and bureaucratic-idealist hostility to the dialectical rigours of proletarian dictatorship (as the greatest guarantee of real democracy in history) have unleashed),—such as the eruption of individualist artistic mysticism, petty-bourgeois nationalism, and fascistic religiosity,—all biliously and vengefully hostile to the dialectical independent-mindedness of proletarian communist leadership epitomised by Leninism.

He will be even more vulnerable on difficult questions of CPSU history in a party growing increasingly remote from the rigorous discipline of Marxist-Leninist polemics on the international revolutionary struggle,—a party of creeping opportunist philistinism. One false move on the tightrope, and Gorbachev will be swallowed up without trace, just like so many of his predecessors,—or their reputations.

In fact there is very little stability in view for Gorbachevism in any direction. The planned socialist economy is likely to remain sturdy enough for Gorbachev to fiddle some industrial perestroika 'success' or other, but that will hardly fool the Soviet people any more. Most unlikely to be achieved in the wratched revisionist swamp atmosphere endemic to the retreat from Leninism is any renewal of wild production enthusiasm anywhere, (and almost as hard to fake).

Telling the Soviet people that US imperialism now represents ev-

erything that is 'friendly reasonableness' towards the USSR's interests around the world is giving hostages to fortune in a spectacularly big way. At any moment, the next piece of dirty filthy CIA subversion which might tread directly on Soviet toes could make Gorbachev look the biggest fool on earth.

And since it is coming anyway, — then the sooner the better. The longer Gorbachev's naive stupidity rules, the greater the damage to the socialist camp and to the Soviet revolutionary workers state.

Does it mean that the old sclerotic conservative bureaucracy,—half stifling the Soviet Union, was better,—and that no glasnost shake-up at all would have been preferable? It is an academic question. Leninists would have to agitate for Leninism, not Gorbachevism, which is totally opposed to Leninism. And the price that Gorbachevism is now asking the Soviet workers state to pay in terms of increased chaos and confusion from the idealist swamp being unleashed,—would have to be declared unacceptable, and fought against, under any circumstances.

This ideological paralysis could prove fatal,—and it is getting steadily worse, not better.

The latest outbursts from Vyshinsky, Gorbachev's deputy justice minister and reform adviser, has taken contentless formalism to even more exalted heights of stupidity than the 10-year-tenure rule examined earlier (Bulletin 446).

"We have to find the legal expression of the freedom of behaviour of an individual, of his choice to act at his own discretion." Mr Vyshinsky said. "Then the code of Soviet laws will be turned from a code of bans into a code of peoples' freedoms." It is necessary to divide by strict and enforceable laws the functions of the party, from those of the state and of the elected Soviets in the management of our society," he added.

A qualified lawyer, Mr Gorbachev has characterised the previous system as "lawless and arbitrary," seeing legal reforms and the emergence of an independent judiciary as essential to the success of perestroika.

Rather than interpret the var-

ious national disputes as a danger to the country's unity and superpower status, he is counting on the support of the radical delegates from the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Mass meetings with the delegates in all three republics have focused on popular demands for virtual economic and cultural autonomy, and the transformation of the USSR into a federation of sovereign republics.

The key to the Gorbachev reform will be the emergence of the professional Soviet politician, who need not be a party member, but who will make being an elected deputy into a full-time job, with the right to raise and spend and be answerable for locally-raised public money without having to depend on funds from central planners in Moscow.

Hitherto, party officials have held these reins of executive authority, but Mr Gorbachev will also propose that the economic departments within regional party buildings be closed down to end the party machine's traditional interference in the running of farms and factories.

Laws will not resolve the failure of leadership. Such an approach can only make things much worse and even more chaotic by presenting the difficulties of Soviet (and world socialist) development as though the phenomenon of 'leading' in itself were the problem, when in the Leninist real world it is the question of leading badly which in fact needs sorting out.

Yet again the crass philistine emptiness of mere symptoms (e.g. people feeling 'unfree' because badly led) quite uselessly getting all the treatment will leave the disease itself,—the failure to develop a comprehensive Leninist perspective as the only way back from Stalinist bureaucratic defeatism and paralysis (and the only future for the whole of mankind),—as painfully evident and debilitating as ever.

The contentless undialectical formalism is blatant in everything Gorbachev does, — revealing a profound ignorance of Marxist-Leninist science. Another crass example of shooting the pianist because someone didn't like the song, or of throwing the baby out with the bathwater, was the farcical anti-alcohol campaign,—virtually closing down the entire industry or pricing it out of existence just because some people didn't know, or didn't

care, when they had had too much to drink. Naturally a far greater number of people who like occasionally to handle a beer or two, or a bottle of wine, or a drop of vodka, without any wish to permanently injure themselves with the stuff, immediately started brewing their own, with obvious damage to the state's drinks-industry monopoly revenues, with a predictable fear of sugar shortages in the shops, and with probably slightly more drunkenness than usual as a result of all this manic behaviour.

Strong drinking is an ancient Russian — and now Soviet — tradition. It is a problem, of course. But the prat who dreamed up closing the breweries and distilleries, and putting the price up, as a way of dealing with the cultural, social, psychological, and political reasons why the ideals of Leninist objective science still exercise too weak an attraction or influence on too many Soviet citizens,— is as much in need of deeper education as they are.

The Soviet Union is a very modern-minded, technologically-capable and learning—oriented society, as well as already being very mature and enlightened. It is crying out for even better education, and above all for far more advanced revolutionary and political inspiration. In a word, it needs much, much, much, much more Leninism. From Gorbachev & Co, it is getting fatal, anti-Marxist idiocy, dictated by Gorbachev's petty-bourgeois philistine hatred of Lenin's international revolutionary perspective for the worldwide dictatorship of the proletariat as the only possible opening to the first fully international civilisation, — communism.

Tragically, this influence of Gorbachevism is now chiming-in disastrously with the nationalist rightwing revisionist nonsense which gripped Peking in the aftermath of Mao's bitter over-reaction to the Stalinist stupidities and insults from Moscow earlier. These latest quotes on capit-

alism sum up much of the revisionist 'new thinking' from many revisionist groups in the socialist camp.

They make insane reading in the depths of the Western world's most cataclysmic financial and trade crisis in its entire rotten imperialist-monopoly history,—the certain prelude to yet another catastrophic collapse into war and fascism at the end of the coming re-run of the 1930s decade of Depression, trade-war, and inter-imperialist warmongering arms-race.

Some people fear capitalism because "they don't realise the modern capitalism system is a great creation of human civilisation," says Xu Jia-tun, China's representative in Hong Kong.

The great marxist teachers had failed to envisage that workers' salaries would increase, social welfare improve or a capitalist shareholding system emerge, he argued. "The trend of people's capitalism has emerged and the difference between the classes has narrowed," Mr Shao said.

"Most of our understanding of capitalism is from the works of Marx and Lenin, who had little understanding of modern capitalism," the anonymous Guangming Daily writer said.

Marx and Engels erred in their assessment of the historical reality of 1848 (when the Communist Manifesto was written), theoretician Hong Zhao-long wrote in another article.

They are also grotesquely insensitive and criminally misleading comments to the world's proletarian masses who are daily suffering the most abysmal extremes of murderous sweatshop exploitation still involving much child-labour and virtual slavery all round the capitalist 'free market' world;—plus, even worse, the dictatorial tyranny of fascist terror under endless stooge military regimes propped up by US imperialism;—not to mention the wholesale starvation and poverty which massacres 40 million people every year prematurely around this "modern capitalist system".

It took the socialist revolution to end perpetual mass famines in China created by capitalism. A few more Leninist revolutions are now going to be needed on the planet to restore an international objective scientific atmosphere which will see

off the pea-brained revisionist oafs who have temporarily captured bureaucratic office in Moscow and Peking.

This total ignorance of Leninist revolutionary philosophy leaves the posturing Moscow opportunists incapable of grasping that the difficulties of powerful leadership positions in an imperfect world with very imperfect individuals — are precisely resolvable only by an even deeper understanding of Leninism itself and its crucial science of a strong leading class role for communists.

It was precisely when the Stalin group lost its confidence in leading and teaching a Leninist revolutionary perspective to the world proletariat that all the old crap of deliberate falsifications and 'letting people know only what we want them to know', etc, began to revive.

Not strong enough to explain their own appalling mistakes in the conduct of the Marxist-Leninist world revolution, the Stalin group simply retreated from the only reality (the dialectical materialist explanation of the necessity for world revolution) into the make-believe fantasies of defensive Soviet nationalism, bureaucratic vanity, routinism, and instructionalism,—degenerating later into all manner of arbitrary stupidity and viciousness,—anything rather than the leadership role of constant expansion of Leninist consciousness for the Soviet and international proletariat.

Where this kind of Leninist leadership applies, — willing the masses to ever higher levels of achievement in independently grasping (and acting upon, and innovating over) the demands for communist responsibility in society (in the USSR and in the world at large), — then there can hardly be a problem of leadership appearing to limit people's activities — (other than the dying counter-revolutionary relics of middle-class anti-communism,—in all its forms (religion, nationalism, profiteering,

opportunism, etc).)

Lenin's world revolutionary philosophy is precisely an invitation to every individual on earth to 'develop their freedoms' as far and mightily as possible,—the freedom from ignorance, from fear of bourgeois-idealist bullshit, from diffidence about demanding, and giving, a revolutionary communist lead to anyone in any part of the planet.

The idea for all this was still intact when the last Soviet volunteer force went to fight in Spain in 1936 against the imperialist axis-led fascists, but by that time, of course, Stalinist defeatism had already stifled the Leninist content out of the Soviet form, and the heroic efforts and sacrifices were all in vain because of the hopelessly doomed political perspectives of fighting only in support of the bourgeois republican government, (instead of fighting merely against Francoism, and with full opportunities and expectations preserved that a Spanish communist revolution would take over the leadership of anti-fascist Spain as soon as it was strong enough to hold onto power). This 'Popular Front' nonsense meant only the certain death both of the Republic, and of the independent communist movement.

This was one feature in a steady degeneration from Leninism from the late 1920s onwards. The philosophical inspiration of the Soviet Union and its people has been relentlessly deteriorating commensurately.

At this stage, the Soviet Union should be bursting with millions of young Bolsheviks thirsting to storm the world (bringing health, agricultural organisation, education, industrial science, etc, to the exploited and alienated and backward billions in the majority of the planet suffering from ex-colonialism and neo-colonialism), and in particular burning with indignation at the Western-backed fascist tyrannies (still slaughtering the proletarian ma-

sses from South Africa to Zionist-occupied Palestine, from the Philippines to Chile, from Guatemala to Pakistan, etc), and ready to help fight nazi reaction.

But the Soviet bureaucracy's retreat from Leninism has now degenerated so far that not even the formal idea of volunteering to combat fascist intervention (as against Spain) now has any echoes.

And one can only expect that it is with Gorbachev's encouragement that utterly spurious reformist mini-passions are being souped up around such dross as 'a monument for the victims of the terror' or for 'multi-party democracy to allow us to become social-democrats Scandinavian style' to act as a deliberate diversion from any possible real campaigns for a return to Leninism.

If a sick industry in pity, nostalgia, and bathos is suddenly thought (Polish Catholic-style) to be the best thing to do with the Soviet state of mind, then why are the prior claims of the vastly greater number of millions of victims of pre-1917 class conflict in Russia's bitter history being ignored? There is no especially-famous monument yet in the USSR to the victims of Tsarist terror.

And better still, why not combine two of the greatest current 'reforming' passions, and demand that the monument be to the victims of precisely the 'multi-party' period of Russian history when the capitalist-state terror continued unabated throughout the empty posturings of Liberals, Constitutional Democrats, Monarchists, and every variety possible of Social Democrat, who all went along with the slaughter of nearly 15 million Russian subjects in the Great War!,—the nationalist-imperialist holocaust of 1914-1918 which was only kept going by Russia's Social-Democratic parties in its final depraved year (until the Bolshevik revolutionaries put the entire sordid bourgeois

and petty-bourgeois 'multi-party' mess to the sword,—the only way it could be ended then, and the only way that imperialist warmongering has ever been ended since.)

The Leninist answer to these 'monument' and 'multi-party' ghoulies is stifled by the stench of Gorbachev's opportunist class-collaborationism.

The wretchedness of Stalinist degeneracy needs answering in the Soviet Union, but a barmy monument (feeding on sentimentality which is directly out of the very same idealist muddleheadedness,—distorting the real essence, importance, and perspective on events,—which Stalin ousted Leninism with in the first place),—is absolutely the most counter-revolutionary way of going about it.

Once again, it concentrates all the attention on personal tragedies symptomatic of what was going wrong, but away from the profound political causes in the international class war which were making things go wrong.

To return to the monument theme, if some eruption or other of sentimental impressionism cannot be avoided; then the best way of recalling the disasters of the revisionist Stalin era's defeatist retreat from world revolution might be to commemorate all the millions forced to continue to languish under imperialism because the 'peaceful road to socialism', the 'Popular Front', and other idiocies from Chile to Spain and Germany failed to organise a correct Leninist revolutionary answer to fascist reaction; or because class-collaborating illusions imposed Zionist colonialism on 5 million Palestinian people through a Soviet UN vote (and subsequent arms aid to the Zionists) in 1948; etc.

18 Commemorate the retreat from Leninism by commemorating the disasters which befell the international proletariat because of Stalinist bureaucracy's abandonment of Lenin's world socialist revolution-

nary perspectives.

And tack Gorbachev's stint onto this lamentable record of defeatist revisionist disasters. ♡

No 451, 6/7/88:

'The historical record is clear. The post-Lenin Bolshevik leadership,—trained in Leninism's world revolutionary perspectives,—brilliantly carried out certain aspects of Leninist science (building a strong socialist state of proletarian dictatorship; preserving party unity; reviving the economy through the paradoxical marketing aspects of NEP; conducting an international diplomatic offensive to end the USSR's isolation and trade embargoes against it, and to keep the potential imperialist counter-revolutionary aggressors divided amongst themselves instead of all united against the Soviet Union; developing the Third International; defeating Trotskyite pessimism and ultra-left posturing; etc, etc),—but became hopelessly baffled by the dialectical complications of strategy and tactics for further revolutionary advance in a period when the revolutionary tide was in fact receding in part (in general) and imperialist counter-revolution consolidating again,—particularly in the industrialised West where the most crucial new communist-revolt breakthroughs (Germany in particular) were originally supposed (and expected) to take place.

Failing to grasp Lenin's masterly understanding that the revolutionary advance could continue to be made through the East, and the colonised countries generally, while the revolutionary banners should be kept flying independently in the West against revisionist backsliding while simultaneously fighting a tactically defensive battle for a while against imperialism's (and reformism's) temporary consolidation,—the Stalinist leadership went into headlong retreat from Leninism itself,—falsifying its own record, and the Leninist record, as it did so,—and eventually

rationally rationalising away the continued international setbacks by effectively revising away all the conditions for continued revolutionary advance,—finally ending up suspicious of all 'revolutionary situations' because so fearful of more defeats, and substituting ultimately the class-collaborating nonsense of the 'Popular Front' abandonment of revolutionary leadership, and eventually the 'peaceful road to socialism' idiosyncrasy which tried to wipe out any notion at all of the inevitable future revolutionary advance of mankind (the only one open to it, in reality).

Stalinism as the management of the world's first socialist state had a choice of whether in its difficulties to just stick with running Soviet development, and keeping out of harm's way as much as possible from imperialist warmongering while preparing strictly for whatever defensive operations would be needed against direct imperialist intervention on the USSR. Or whether it should actively pursue Lenin's revolutionary internationalist line of triumphant profound analysis of revolutionary situations, strategy and tactics all round the planet,—coupled with preparations to take on imperialist counter-revolution wherever and whenever it was possible within the still-developing potentials of Soviet power.

Having found the first choice made far fewer difficulties in their lives as a leadership wishing to be regarded as at least successful in managing the Soviet Union's affairs even if the international problems appeared dauntingly dismal and difficult at times, and the embarrassing failures hard to explain and analyse (from their weakness in Leninist science),—the Stalin leadership increasingly distorted the historical record (of Leninism, and its own disasters), and increasingly withdrew into a 'fortress USSR' style of management,—eventually full of much subjective idealist ill-

usions, paranoia, and vicious arbitrariness. ♡

The contemporary Trot-anarchist resurrection of the anarchist age-old delusion of 'socialism without a state structure or bureaucracy', (effectively, the demand for 'rank-and-file democracy'), marks the desperate retreat by many groups of anti-communist fake-'lefts' into the realm of total academic abstractions because their critiques of the Soviet workers state ('state capitalism'; 'the new class'; 'bonapartism'; 'counter-revolutionary agents of imperialism'; etc, etc,) proved so ludicrously wrong when the USSR leadership did finally have to publicly and spectacularly, deliberately and messily, hack to pieces the virulently sturdy planned socialist economy and society, slowly killing it bit by painful bit. It couldn't and wouldn't just die by itself, and even 10 years later, it is still only half destroyed.

But this cynical dilettantism,—philistinically ignoring crucial historical lessons about the massive impact the workers states had on the whole history of the imperialist 20th century in order to score some petty points about how life was lived inside the USSR,—nevertheless does lead on to some basic diversionary delusions created by much 'democracy' nonsense.

Only in the dream-world of childish fantasies does present human society, still in the epoch of class-war as the structural political backbone of history's progress,—suddenly get transformed (by revolution or anything else) from a world of endless irreconcilable contradictions and conflicts, (which find their echo all the way down to the strife-torn minutiae of ethnic, racial, workplace, neighbourhood, and family squabbling, beyond the framework of class conflicts, religious, philosophical, and party political antagonism,—itself confusedly labouring under even vast national and international differences

which threaten the most serious trouble of all ultimately to people's security, well-being, and peace-of-mind, individually and collectively),---- suddenly into a completely calm world where quiet talking miraculously resolves all problems on earth, - with everyone on the planet scrupulously behaving themselves nicely, taking it in turns to speak, instantly accepting graciously every chairman's ruling with impeccable discipline, and generously listening seriously and fully to everyone else's point of view, and defending their right to say it, etc, etc, etc, etc, etc.

The petty-bourgeois anarchist mentality quickly got into its fake-'left' stride against the Bolshevik Revolution, challenging the Leninist movement (which had brilliantly led and consolidated the seizure of power, having for years theoretically fought (against all tendencies) to build just such an organised, scientifically-educated workers party exactly capable of giving successful leadership to the inevitably spontaneous revolutionary upsurge against Tsarist autocracy and imperialist war) - with the deliberate provocateur's hoax of demanding a 'dictatorship of the masses' to replace the Bolshevik Revolution's supposedly 'dictatorship of leaders'.

One Lenin reply appeared in May 1920 in 'LEFTWING COMMUNISM', AN INFANTILE DISORDER.

"Any Bolshevik will at once say 'What old and familiar rubbish. What 'left' childishness'....The mere presentation of the question 'dictatorship of the party OR dictatorship of the class; dictatorship party of the leaders OR dictatorship party of the class' testifies to the most incredible and hopeless confusion of mind. These people...in their efforts to be clever make themselves ridiculous.

"Everyone knows that the masses are divided into classes; that....classes are led by political parties; that political parties...are directed by

more or less stable groups composed of the most authoritative, influential and experienced members who are elected to the most responsible positions and are called leaders. All this is elementary

....To contrast IN GENERAL dictatorship of the masses to dictatorship of the leaders is ridiculously absurd and stupid.... Repudiation of the party principle and of party discipline, - such is the opposition's net result. And this is tantamount to completely disarming the proletariat in the interests of the bourgeoisie. It is tantamount to that petty-bourgeois diffuseness; instability; incapacity for sustained effort, unity and organised action; which, if indulged in, must inevitably destroy every proletarian revolutionary movement.

"From the standpoint of communism, the repudiation of the party principle means trying to leap from the eve of the collapse of capitalism (in Germany), not to the lower or the intermediate but to the higher phase of communism. We in Russia, in the third year since the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, are going through the first steps in the transition from capitalism to socialism, or the lower stage of communism. Classes have remained, and will remain everywhere for years after the conquest of power by the proletariat....The abolition of classes means not only driving out the landlords and capitalists, - that we accomplished with comparative ease. It also means abolishing the small commodity producers, and they cannot be driven out or crushed; we must live in harmony with them; they can, and must, be remoulded and re-educated only by very prolonged, slow, cautious organisational work. They encircle the proletariat on every side with a petty-bourgeois atmosphere which permeates and corrupts the proletariat, and causes constant relapses among the proletariat into petty-bourgeois spinelessness, disunity, individual-

ism, and alternate moods of exaltation and dejection. The strictest centralisation and discipline are required within the political party of the proletariat in order to counteract this, in order that the organisational role of the proletariat (and that is its principal role) may be exercised correctly, successfully, victoriously. The dictatorship of the proletariat is a persistent struggle, bloody and bloodless, violent and peaceful, military and economic, educational and administrative, - against the forces and traditions of the old society. The force of habit of millions and tens of millions is a most terrible force. Without an iron party tempered in the struggle, without a party enjoying the confidence of all that is honest in the given class, without a party capable of watching and influencing the mood of the masses, it is impossible to conduct such a struggle successfully....Whoever weakens ever so little the iron discipline of the party of the proletariat, especially during the time of its dictatorship, actually aids the bourgeoisie against the proletariat."

State power in the USSR was led by the party of proletarian dictatorship, and not by a conversational free-for-all. And that it needed to remain so-led, was tragically instantly proved by capitalist counter-revolution engulfing the Soviet Union the moment that demented CPSU revisionist leadership decided to dismantle the dictatorship of the proletariat in order to encourage greater freedom of market forces.

But within that party leadership of the Soviet workers state, there were factions in open conflict representing vast sections of different working class and workers-state opinions, as the quoted current Trotsky-anarchists themselves now admit. Which raises the question of whether any faction could have found their way back to the

correct Leninist perspective of future revolutionary internationalism as the only context in which the Soviet workers state, as it then was, could have won majority party and class support for a more convinced and harmonious renewed socialist advance. With the benefit of hindsight, the EPSR's struggles for understanding in 1985-1988 might have been better to have added that in theory, the CPSU could find a constructive way forward for the Soviet workers state, while still doubting in practice that the massively-established revisionist tradition by then would let even a glimmer of Leninist understanding reshine its way through.

But either way, the speculation only once again demonstrates that, as with the 1920 attacks on Lenin, the 'democratic rights' line of (anti-revisionist) agitation can only hopelessly mislead workers into total confusion about the crucial role of workers states in history. Criticism of revisionism for making a wrong analysis of the world, on the other hand, remains the vital educational lesson for taking the anti-imperialist struggle forward as this new century of untamable economic crisis unfolds. Generations of millions of communist party members in the leadership of the Soviet workers state may or may not have included more or less 'bad people', whether measured by abstract idealist 'democratic' 'principles' or whatever other arbitrary moralistic impressionism is used. But what, tragically, those generations of millions of workers-state leaders collectively ended up being was wrong about the world and its further necessary revolutionary development.

The next expanded epoch of workers states is unlikely to regress anything like as far, if at all, after a further long period of taking civilisation forward under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Build Leninism.

4. The world may seem an increasingly modernised and rational place where steady reforms of backward bits are all that is needed, but in reality, all development takes place only through contradiction and conflict, and that means at this stage of history that revolutionary class war is the

30. On the surface of things as they stand in Britain at present, most people would think that any talk of the capitalist system collapsing in revolutionary crisis was unrealistic if not certifiable. Soap opera and semi-pornographic television; football chauvinism; shopping and fornicating; binge-drinking Ibiza-rave culture; etc, etc, manage to keep most people diverted, it would seem; and the ever-changing computerised technological wizardry of consumerism and work-prospects would seem to show that the many-sided revolutionariness of free-enterprise was the real business of life, - not the dull dusty 19th century delusions of Marxism, so-called, which can get dismissed as compensatory fantasies for those who failed to make it in the modern world, etc.

Imperialist politics is seen as ever-more-smartly successful with new gimmicks all the time (Clintonism, Blairism; Thatcherism and Reaganism before that, etc, etc); and the 'liberalising' ideology of the fast-moving and even more rapidly communicating present-day society is thought certain to continue driving racism, sexism, and every other backward prejudice out of social relations altogether, etc, etc.

20

31. The real delusion, of course, is this vision of a rational and ever-more-perfectable structure as the essence of the free market and as making increasingly reasonable human beings out of all who play the sys-

tem 'hard but fair'. This is a nice idea, naturally, and the inevitable growing sophistication and relentlessly modernising pressures of still-evolving market capitalism can persuade billions of people to easily believe in the basic respectability and reformability of how the current world is run.

But contradiction is the real catalyst for change, and antagonism has marked all civilisation's most significant turning points. It may seem to make sense that life just gets smoothly steadily better, and that working to improve it by reforms is the obvious way forward for everyone, instead of anticipating total breakdown and revolutionary upheaval. But it is an illusion. The dialectical-materialist science of how all things can and do change has the essential notion of contradiction at its core to start with; and secondly, the actual history of the world in the last 150 years has been the record of the most prolific sequence of the greatest warmongering and revolutionary upheavals there has ever been, - all with irreconcilable contradiction at their heart.

If the path of progress of civilisation has hitherto only had class war and revolutionary upheaval as its most significant landmarks, and if one look at the impoverished Third World is enough to convince all that imperialism remains a system of class conflict and exploitation, - then only Kautsky's daft notion of super-imperialism, - or anti-communist despair that the dictatorship of the proletariat (the

only conceivable way forward from the ever-mounting economic and social disfunctioning of the international imperialist system.

Single-issue reformist lobbies like feminism are the most self-defeating diversions, just helping capitalism maintain an ever-worsening society.

only alternative to capitalism) can never be anything but clumsily bad or even viciously evil, - can cloud the clear expectation that incurable class-conflict (at the root of capitalist production, distribution, and exchange) must mean that revolutionary crisis and conflict are firmly on the whole world's agenda no matter how super-modern and sophisticated the whole triumphant capitalist racket becomes.

32. One of the most seductive 'modernising' aspects of present-day capitalism which has helped to buttress the 'progressive evolution' delusion about bourgeois democracy (coupled with the abysmal failure of 'communist' revisionism which betrayed the epoch-making role that the workers states could have, and should have, played in giving the world a continuous lead in social improvement) - has been the role of aggressive single-issue reformisms such as feminism, black pride, gay pride, etc.

In the class-war longterm pattern of history which will need to see planned world socialism under the control of workers states everywhere replacing the 700-year international rule of the capitalist bourgeoisie (with its incurable built-in inevitability of exploitation, elitism, and repression, - and therefore of constantly-reviving prejudices and discrimination of all kinds), - before real equality and an end to injustice can become the natural way of life for all mankind, - these single-issue reformist pressures to make the imperialist 'democracies' look blemishless from a 'human rights' point of view will only end up being identified for what their real

essence is already, - petty-bourgeois class-collaboration.

While capitalist states, economies, and societies can be coerced by agitation (which might even earn the description 'revolutionary' by its bravery, skill, determination, and energy, etc, in forcing significant retreats in established prejudice) to appear to capitulate to 'human rights' pressure all the way down the line, - the fundamental reality of bourgeois society everywhere remains the same: - capitalist-class dictatorship.

The 'reforms' against racism and sexism, etc, essentially benefit middle-class individuals. Job promotions and professional appointments for women, blacks, and gays, etc, have made progress, and legal discrimination is being tackled. But how does basic class exploitation get affected???? Not at all.

Black individuals can become as prominent as they like in politics, show-business & the professions, etc, but black working-class youth continue to be disproportionately represented in the prison population, in children excluded from school, and generally in the most alienated or disadvantaged sectors of society, which by huge volumes easily outnumber the ranks of black lawyers, black schoolteachers, black foremen, black civil servants, etc. And the world community, which the United Nations and the G8 leading powers go on contentedly administering, has exploitation, poverty, starvation, and brutal death for its non-white population (the overwhelming majority) which puts the 'anti-racist' agitational achievement of a soft job in corrupt local government somewhere or other, gained by 'positive discrimination', some-

what in perspective. Good luck for the individual involved, and more power to the elbow for embarrassing the system's prejudices in all directions, - but at what price in the end are such localised successes gained here and there? At the price of a hopelessly exploitative and discriminatory world imperialist economic system continuing essentially unscathed by means of accepting a few more black middle-class promotions here and there. No discredit to the agitators involved. They are only doing what white petty-bourgeois reformist class-collaboration has always done. But discredit to all reformism which has never been anything else but a betrayal of revolutionary proletarian struggle to get rid of colonial-imperialist exploitation (the capitalist system) in its entirety, and which alone has struck the real blows against world bourgeois domination from 1871 onwards (the Paris Commune, echoed and even preceded or bettered by revolts in the colonies since capitalist-imperialism began) which have obliged the free-market ideology to steadily step-up its joke 'reformist' posture.

Reformists do the agitating, but it is only the long history of revolutionary blows against the capitalist system which has forced it to constantly pretend to be 'reasonable' about 'human rights', etc.

Feminism is an even bigger 'reformist' fraud. The sexexploitation of women today goes on more offensively than ever before in capitalism's history. There is not an advert, game-show, or comedy hour that does not have sexual flaunting or innuendo as a theme, - films and pop videos the same. The only 'equality' achieved is that toyboys and male escort agencies & prostitutes are now spoken of almost as openly as their female equivalents, and the reverse sex-exploitation of the Chippendales and the pub hen-parties has added male strippers

to capitalist culture.

Many would argue that such sexual 'liberation' is only to be welcomed after the stifling hypocrisy and 'universal prostitution by marriage' of the Victorian era, and some would even argue that the increasingly open expansion of prostitution/massage parlour industry is a good thing too. Trade-union, legal, and feminist protection of 'sex workers', plus feminist champions of pornography as potentially 'liberating' for women as well as men, - all now conflict with other feminists, just as adamant that the whole scene is merely a continuation of men's degradation of women, with a patriarchal world having conned many females into collaborating in their own sexexploitation, etc.

The reality is that no one can be sure of the route to 'sexual freedom' or what it should mean, either in this still-evolving society or in the post-capitalist future, because there are less and less quantities of stable mature community existence on earth where considered judgments over time can be made on such matters. Rational judgment is not what the fast-moving capitalist entertainment industry is guided by, and the huge profitability from exploiting sex-as-entertainment now flooding the internet, Channel 5, car adverts, pop music and the cinema, - basically providing endless sexual-arousal/masturbatory material, - has audience-share and monopoly balance sheets in mind, not the wellbeing of society. In one sense, it is a scale of sexexploitation of the whole world population infinitely greater and more serious than the most patriarchal degradation of Victorian prostitutes (or 'worthwhile sex-industry employment requiring better pay and conditions' if viewed from that 'liberated' feminist angle) that can be imagined, - a prostitution trade which, of course, itself now runs on a far vaster scale than ever before, despite (or

'happily because of', depending on viewpoint) the total revolution in sexual 'liberation' that modern capitalism has brought.

An attempted Marxist analysis of what all this means, and where it is heading for, is obviously demanded, but the point being made here is that feminism, as a reformist political ideology pretending to 'solve' women's problems in the modern world, is not just out of its depth on these questions, but is itself clearly part of the problem, and not remotely part of any solution.

Since its arrival on the scene as a major political force, feminism has unquestionably class-collaborated with the capitalist system as such, pretending to 'reform' it out of all recognition by challenging its patriarchal bias, etc, etc. But as seen above on the issue closest of all to the feminists, the matter of sexexploitation itself, - capitalism is profiteering out of human need, confusion, and difficulty in this area more than ever before in history, and leaving society with less general contentment or future stability and security than it has ever known. Feminists' class-collaboration with the powers-that-be - pushing to get their share of the ruling-class spoils, rather than pushing to end a whole system run on exploitation, - have helped to prolong this 'free-market' way of life, - i.e. capitalist domination, which screws everybody in the end.

And away from the sexual-politics frontline in the handful of sophisticated Western countries, how has the lot of the overwhelming mass of women fared on earth, - working-class women? Throughout the Third World, it faces more relative deprivation, hardship, and suffering than ever before in the 40 years since 'feminism' began making its mark on middle-class minds. In the West itself, the female proletariat feels

as well or as badly off as the rest of the working class feels, battling against poor schooling for the children, against patchy health-service care, demanding massive environmental improvement, and putting up with work-exploitation drudgery. In other words, no real change at all. And when the post-war trade boom finally collapses, and slump takes over again, the working class will see itself as worse off than ever before, men and women alike, - and will see that the class-collaborating feminist middle-class folly has helped to put them there by its anti-patriarch agitation enabling the other 99% of the capitalist system's real harmfulness to carry on just as before, or, if anything, even better concealed and better protected than ever before because of feminism's huge posturing about incidental aspects of bourgeois-imperialist rule, - the 'reform' of which changes nothing about the system's continuing essential class-domination which exploits everybody, in countless worse ways than any individual feminist ever suffered.

33. On capitalism's continued crude sexexploitation of the world population, in general, as with so many other things, it will not be until it is possible to restore life with any meaningful sense of community aspect to it that these and many other problems will get the chance to resume positive evolutionary progress. Even some versions of 'communist' futurism have relegated the family to being a casualty of 'patriarchy-exploitation' history; but for as long as a primary instinct of all children's spontaneous play remains variations on a nest-building theme, and for as long as a primary spontaneous instinct in all little girls' play remains dressing up to look as attractive as possible, it seems likely that the decisive role of women, whose most powerful sexual urges

retain clear physical and emotional connection to the procreative cycle, will mean family life, in one form or another, remaining central to human society for the foreseeable future.

It remains to be seen what happens to all the group rowdiness and sexual exhibitionism that current youth are attracted to; but that 'most people settle down' contains truth as well as a cliché designed to cover-up and dismiss legitimate youthful anxieties. For the rest of rebellious youth's problems, look no further than the crisis of capitalist society itself. Nothing can be judged in advance about what post-capitalist generational relationships will be like once real human communities are restored, - mankind rationally and reasonably working out all social and personal problems towards the point where the free development of every individual becomes the condition registering the free development of society itself. What is certain is that if the present total ideological confusion on the planet throws up a 'youthism' movement to imitate the reformist agitation of feminism and other single-issue individualist panaceas, then the class-collaboration involved will guarantee capitalism a yet further prolonged lease of life, ensuring 'youth problems' (like all other problems) will only get worse and be further from any solution than ever before.

34. Some anti-communist fake 'lefts' are now attempting a philosophical ambush on Lenin on the question of 'freedom' in order to rationalise their counter-revolutionary betrayal of the Soviet workers state (resting on state-capitalist and Trotskyite 'Revolution Betrayed' lies and delusions which went up in smoke in 1991 when the real counter-revolution finally made its move).

22 In painful abstract-theorising rigmaroles seeking to split the 'humanist' Marx from

the 'brutalist' Lenin, these academics hope to cash in on the universal assumption (examined earlier) ludicrously accusing the workers states of seeking the deliberate destruction of large sections of their own populations. As throughout the USSR's existence, any garbage will do as long as these petty-bourgeois can keep up 'left' appearances while maintaining an anti-Soviet position.

But in time, the actual sacrifices and achievements of the socialist camp in helping the Third World escape from colonial subjugation, and building powerful revolutionary workers states from one end of the world to the other to challenge imperialist aggression, - will live on, and the ridiculous myths about 'deliberate, murderous tyranny' will be discredited.

Cuba sensibly refused to follow Gorbachev revisionism's insane path of dismantling the dictatorship of the proletariat in order to curry favour with the West by embracing its market forces, and thereby it has evaded counter-revolutionary overthrow so far.

Now, despite having been an undeveloped backward island, typical of the worst of Latin American poverty and as corrupt and hopeless a country as any victim on earth of past Western colonial subjugation (next-door Haiti is officially still the world's poorest country), Cuba is poised for possibly one of the greatest socialist propaganda triumphs of all time.

In the teeth of 40 years non-stop US imperialist blockade, sabotage, subversion, and relentless brainwashing propaganda onslaught (which the fake 'lefts' all ignored, and ascribed all the consequent difficulties for Cuba down to 'Stalinist tyranny' and 'lack of basic freedom', etc, etc), the dictatorship of the proletariat under Castro's party leadership is on the verge of ridiculing the American embargo, stilling the sneers that

'totalitarianism destroys human freedom and ingenuity', and getting inter-imperialist trade-war to disrupt the blockade around Cuba as a result of creatively outperforming in medical research the very best that the entire wealthy West can produce, and coming close to the holy grails of international commercial science.

The communist-hating capitalist press itself reports the following:

Clinical trials of a cancer therapy genetically engineered by the Cuban biotechnology industry are due to begin in London next month. It may prove to be a landmark both for medicine's struggle with the disease and Fidel Castro's attempts to break out of Cuba's US-imposed isolation.

Despite a stark lack of resources, laboratories in the impoverished suburbs of the capital Havana have made startling strides in developing revolutionary vaccines and antibodies against meningitis, hepatitis, and lung, breast, head and neck cancers.

But their use in other parts of the world has been hindered up to now by the Helms-Burton Act, the US measure which penalises foreign companies for dealing with Cuba.

That hitherto impenetrable wall is now beginning to crumble in the more general thaw in US-Cuban relations, and western investors have found that Cuban scientists, subsisting on scarcely £10 a month, are ahead in some fields of their colleagues in the US and western Europe in the race to produce genetically engineered medicines.

After months of intensive lobbying, the British pharmaceutical company Smith Kline Beecham succeeded a year ago in persuading Washington to give it an exemption from the act, allowing it to develop and market a Cuban vaccine against the child-killing disease meningitis B. It is the only such vaccine in the world, and is undergoing trials prior to being launched in Europe.

In the past few weeks, as international investors have grown less afraid of US retaliation, a Canadian venture capital firm, York Medical, has secured funds for clinical trials of Cuban cancer vaccines and antibodies.

Its director, David Allan, said that trials of a cancer vaccine would begin in Britain "in the next few weeks" on cancer patients who were not responding to conventional treatment. The hospitals involved

cannot be named for contractual reasons.

"We already know it is effective," Mr Allan said. "What we are doing is confirming clinical trials. We all know the answer."

The vaccine does not prevent cancer in a healthy person, but it prevents existing tumours spreading. It works by provoking the immune system into making antibodies against epidermal growth factor (EGF), a naturally occurring protein which plays an important role in childhood development but seems to have no function in adults other than nourishing tumours.

The problem in reducing its supply was to find a way to provoke the immune system into fighting a substance normally found in the body.

The Cubans found a way by bonding EGF with a bacterial protein known as P64k, which promotes an immune response to both and thus mops up the supply of EGF.

York Medical says that the vaccine has already produced impressive results in Cuban tests, increasing the average survival time by 200%.

"There's a certain degree of inventiveness in Cuba, of thinking outside the box," Mr Allan said. "We all learn the same words, the same things in medical school, but the Cubans are not bound by what has been in the past."

They have also developed an antibody which could provide a second line of attack against certain tumours. It works by blocking EGF receptors on cancer cells and prevents them connecting with and being nourished by the protein.

The strategy, first laid out by a Cuban scientist, Rolando Perez, in a scientific paper in 1984, not only stops the tumour growing but weakens the cancer, making it far more vulnerable to chemo- and radiotherapy.

To Cuba the success of these trials is essential. In the last 10 years, President Castro has ploughed an estimated \$1bn into its cluster of biotech institutes, capitalising on a long-term investment in medical expertise which has given Cuba more doctors per capita than any other country in the world.

Mark Rasenick, a University of Illinois physiology professor who watches Cuba's progress, said: "Because they have a surfeit of physicians, they are able to allow the best and the brightest to engage in work which supports a system of biomedical research. It's considered a national priority."

The investment also represents, in the words of a diplomat in Havana, "Fidel's moonshot" - a bid for national greatness and an impudent

challenge to the US monolith in the great scientific race of the era.

But Jose Suarez, whose job it is to find foreigners to invest in Cuban scientific discoveries, points out that the country's achievements save lives. It is not national vanity, he argues, but "a national necessity".

"The world is not interested in paying to cure the diseases of poor countries," he said in his office in the Finlay Institute. "The existing cholera vaccine is for tourists. It works for 30 days, but if you live in a poor country there is no vaccine for you. We are testing a cholera vaccine for people who live in the third world."

The meningitis B vaccine was developed as an emergency response to an epidemic in the 1970s. The government gave 15 researchers the task of finding a solution in a hurry. They tested the prototypes on their own bodies, and finally came up with a vaccine that was 84% effective.

By 1990 meningitis was no longer a serious threat in Cuba. In blocking its international use until last year, Mr Suarez said, Washington was striking at Cuba but harming the world's poor and young.

The licence given to Smith Kline Beecham last July is the only one of its kind, and it is hedged with restrictions which deny Cuba the right to cash royalties but allow it limited amounts of US medicines as a barter payment. It is a grudging exemption.

Mr Allan thinks that if the cancer trials prove successful it will be politically impossible for Washington to suppress the Cuban vaccines.

Two months ago, York Medical was on a knife-edge. It had bought the rights to the Cuban vaccines and antibodies but potential investors were wary of putting money into a project that would be ultimately strangled by Washington's embargo. The funds for trials, mostly from British and European investors, have only come in in the last few weeks.

Mr Allan believes that investors have drawn the same conclusion he has: that the US embargo is "headed for the ash-can where it belongs".

The measure which is currently before the US Congress does not kill the Helms-Burton legislation but will leave it vulnerable. And it is almost unthinkable that the American public will continue to tolerate the act if it becomes a barrier to importing effective cancer treatments.

Mr Rasenick believes that Cuban biotechnology will help to bring down the sanctions. "As a scientist, I would never continue the same failed experiment for 38 years," he said.

The anti-communist fake 'lefts' (SWP, SP, AWL, OP, CPGB, etc) will still sneer and dismiss Cuba's success in this as some kind of 'one-off exception due to special circumstances', etc, but still leaving the regime 'doomed for lack of democracy', etc, - which is, of course, exactly the lying crap which the imperialist bourgeoisie spread around the world for these little petty bourgeois to pick up on.

But yet another recent capitalist press admission importantly gave the lie to this as well, confirming the analysis of Ellman and Kontorovich (see 16a and 17) which frustrated its own Western anticipation and found, in spite of itself, that the planned Soviet economy was potentially as productive and creative as ever in 1990 but that Gorbachev's mismanagement and deliberate political destruction of the dictatorship of the proletariat alone wrecked it. This report concedes that Soviet science was phenomenally creative, comically describing these achievements as being in part produced 'despite being locked up', which pays homage to the myths bourgeois propaganda finds it necessary to keep going, but simultaneously makes a mockery of them by juxtaposing the very antitheses which rule each other out, - being 'denied freedom', and producing pioneering creative science for mankind. Like Cuba, like the USSR:

Beneath the streets of Akademgorodok a maze of tunnels links key buildings so that academics in Russia's science town never need emerge into the harsh Siberian temperatures outside.

For the first 30 years the town - with its 37 institutes and thousands of researchers working together to push back the boundaries of knowledge - was a symbol of the grandiose intellectual ambition of the Soviet regime.

Scientists were treated with deference in the USSR. Lenin began to promote their interests immediately after the revolution, aware of their importance in the creation of a powerful new society. In the lean years they received extra rations.

Later, under Stalin, a sense of national insecurity boosted the state's devotion to science. Most scientists escaped the repressions because they were needed to develop the country's ability to make weapons. Even those who were imprisoned continued to work in specially de-

veloped research camps.

"We were slaves to the totalitarian state, but we didn't mind because we were doing interesting work and we felt that the state needed and respected us," said Vitaly Ginzburg, a physics professor, who worked during the 1940s to develop the Soviet atom bomb.

Science was not a mere adjunct of Soviet life - it was at its core, the key to transforming Russia from a backward agricultural country into an industrialised mighty world power, equipped to defend itself against the capitalist enemy.

The government poured large measures of the budget into cultivating this scientific base, squeezing ideological pride from internationally acclaimed - and feared - advances: pioneering aeroplanes, and later rocket technology; the first man in space; the first atomic-power station; the hydrogen superbomb.

For most of the 20th century the Soviet Union raced on, matching the achievements of America.

Akademgorodok - meaning small town of academics - was part of that tradition. Sophisticated space technology was developed in one institute, while down the road mathematicians pioneered computer technology and biologists wrestled to make Russia's crops sturdier, using new genetic engineering techniques.

But in the past 10 years it has come to symbolise the disastrous decline of Russia's academic tradition.

It is generally accepted that there are two reasons why Russians move to Siberia - either they are romantics or they come as prisoners. The scientists who founded Akademgorodok in 1957 were romantics. Many who remain see themselves as the prisoners of their own shattered project.

No one has forgotten the early optimism. Towards the end of the 50s it had become obvious that Siberia had massive natural resources: petroleum, gas, coal, timber, diamonds and minerals. But with the country's brainpower concentrated in Moscow and Leningrad - now St Petersburg - there was nobody to exploit its potential, so President Nikita Khrushchev backed a scheme to move leading scientists and research students from western Russia to the Siberian wilderness.

Just 12 years after the ravages of the second world war, the state somehow found enough money to establish the science oasis. The scale of the project was phenomenal. The main street, Lavrentiev Prospect, named after the town's founder Mikhail Lavrentiev, was once listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as "the most scientific street in the world", because of its high concentration of institutes.

As well as undertaking research aimed at developing Russia's conventional and nuclear military potential, scientists were encouraged to focus on pure science, to find answers to the big questions, simply for the sake of academic advancement.

Today the institutes - physics, chemistry, genetics, biochemistry, mathematics, electronics and more - all remain. A few, run by energetic directors, have transformed themselves into profitable enterprises by winning lucrative research contracts from western companies.

But they are a minority. As their funding dwindles, the rest have had to abandon research projects and survive on a fraction of their former income. Many are dusty shells, virtually abandoned by their scientists, some of whom have been forced to turn to manual labour to supplement their miserly or non-existent income. Meanwhile the most talented of the younger generation have slipped abroad and students, disheartened by poor job and salary prospects, stay away.

With a shortage of money for laboratory equipment, there is no question of even attempting to keep up with developments in Europe and America. And with the influx of rich commuting businessmen, many young scientists can no longer afford the rents.

The privations suffered by scientists in this town echo the hardships of col-

leagues throughout the country since the collapse of the Soviet Union. In real terms Russian science now receives a seventh of the government funding it did in 1990, leaving hundreds of institutions struggling to survive.

Genady Kulipanov, vice-chairman of Akademgorodok's governing body and a professor of nuclear physics, said: "In the late 1980s I found it hard to explain to friends in the west what the process of perestroika [rebuilding] really meant. Now I tell them perestroika - it was destroyka. We didn't really rebuild anything, we just destroyed a great deal."

"The government stopped funding projects. There were no new institutes. A lot of the more energetic and best-qualified people left and went abroad or went into business. The spirit of the town changed."

Scientists here remember the lean years from 1991 to 1996 with horror, preferring graphs with drooping curves - testimony to the funding collapse and - charts with soaring curves to demonstrate the flow of scientists abroad.

"It is impossible to go on like this. If the process of the last 10 years continues for another 10 years then there will be total collapse," said Professor Vladimir Likhobov, deputy director of one of Akademgorodok's more successful institutes, the Institute of Catalysis.

But for men such as the founder of the town's medical institute, Professor Vlai Kaznacheev, 75, who devoted their lives to developing the Soviet scientific dream, the changes have come too late. Sitting in the bare lobby of the House of Scientists Mr Kaznacheev is despairing about the events of the last 15 years.

"Our salaries have dropped radically, but we've lost everything else too. We used to get money for animals, laboratories, materials, equipment, expeditions and flats," he said.

"Without expeditions and new equipment, we can't continue the research. The process has been devastating."

This demolition of Trotsky's anti-communist fake-'left' myth of the CPSU's 'destructive dictatorial rule', supposedly by 1936 ('The Revolution Betrayed') making all further creative productive economic progress by the Soviet workers state impossible, - will nevertheless make no impression on the swamp of petty-bourgeois opinion demanding 'democracy' as the only way forward, who will argue (echoing latter-day Trotskys in Moscow, see above) that "maybe individual genius still worked in places", but there was 'no social development or distribution of these gains so that living standards and ordinary people could benefit', etc, etc. 25

So, the pretence is that despite having to overcome appalling initial economic backwardness and even worse imperialist destruction, disruption, and sabotage non-stop, first the Soviet Union and then Cuba can nevertheless organise the political and ec-

onomic resources, and the philosophical enlightenment to go with it, to take civilisation forward in science where the entire fabulous wealth and bullying might of the whole Western world was incapable of following, - - yet could not manage to get simple consumer goods mass-produced and into shops.

Pure nonsense. A self-contradiction. If the very very complicated and difficult was achieved in science-research organisation, - despite the constant huge obstacles caused by imperialist hostility, encirclement, and war threats, - then simpler production, organisation, and distribution tasks were even more easily achievable. Which is precisely how routine Soviet existence worked, - providing constant adequate basic supplies of everything essential to life, to the whole population, and at minimal cost, thereby providing for the colossal workers-state achievements of the USSR in the realms of public housing, state education, science research, public transport, national health service, popular culture (symphony orchestras and live theatre everywhere, huge film output, massive sporting activities, colossal cheap editions of world and Soviet literature; massive newspaper and magazine readership, etc, etc), generous holiday and tourism facilities; etc.

The mad pursuit of consumerism for its own sake was not encouraged or provided for. Everything considered worth supplying was supplied in quantities so that it would all be taken up, and not left as waste to be thrown away, or dumped on foreign markets, or declared obsolete, in the way that Western commercial industry runs its affairs, with built-in obsolescence.

So a successful Soviet consumer industry was one where everything was bought up, leaving the shelves empty. Under capitalism, the shop windows are always crammed with attractive

goods, which most people looking in from outside, only wish they could afford.

The USSR's supply industry saw it outperform capitalism's then most inventive and productive country, Germany, in efficiency under the most testing conditions imaginable, - World War II. It sustained a constantly growing population for 74 years and one of the healthiest and physically fittest in the world. Only since 'free-market' supply systems and industries started flooding Russian shops to make them look like the West since 1991 have population and life-expectations started to plummet, and the national health with it. Life expectancy for men in Russia has now dropped to the low fifties, a drop of more than 10 years.

People who believe this garbage about the USSR dying through lack of consumer goods are not thinking seriously. Despite its endless obvious bureaucratic failings, the Soviet workers state nevertheless fell into no incurable stagnation, or any terminal reversal of normal progress. The planned economy was destroyed by revisionism via dismantling the party-led proletarian-dictatorship control of the economy in pursuit of 'faster growth in order to catch up with the Western way of life via market forces', - an utterly insane and suicidal aim for socialism at that stage of world history.

But the anti-communist fake 'left' will argue that whatever the theoretical angle on Cuba or the Soviet Union, - in practice Western propaganda has rendered them harmless, and the USSR even self-destructed because of it, so what difference does it make? As John Lennon sang, 'If you go carrying pictures of Chairman Mao, you ain't going to make it with anyone anyhow' etc, etc.

These philistine delusions, based on the West's complacent 'superiority', can be evaluated as part of

fake-'left' philosophical armoury through the anti-communists' occasional condescending assessment of other anti-imperialist struggles beyond the immediate pro-Soviet socialist camp (as was)

All the Trots, revisionists, and state-caps have consistently belittled the worth of Ireland's national-liberation struggle, e.g. on the grounds that it was 'not the real socialist revolution that we would have conducted', etc, etc.

One short answer to such lunatic humbug could be: 'So start a socialist revolution yourselves, and show us how'. Provisional Sinn Fein & IRA after all, only started with mere hundreds of supporters, far less than Militant or the SWP had, for example. And the anti-imperialist war they started was against the same UK government, UK armed forces, and UK police service that ruled just the same over Militant and the SWP. Both, indeed, had sections operating in the Occupied Zone of Ireland (so-called 'Northern Ireland'). So if socialist revolution is so easy, then why did not the Trots start one, instead of merely sneeringly telling Sinn Fein and the IRA what they 'ought' to be doing.??? The same with Scargill's sneers from the SLP. He had over 100,000 of the best-organised potential socialist revolutionaries behind him, - plus virtually the whole of the working class in sympathy, - when the miners fought reactionary persecution (in the 1984-85 strike) just as vicious as the colonial war against Sinn Fein and the IRA in Occupied Ireland. So why does Scargillism still sneer at the national-liberation struggle's achievements for 'not going far enough', or for 'capitulating to a failed peace process' as was disgustingly alleged, when the NUM's own struggle was called off well short of a fullscale revolt against the imperialist system???

The answer, of course, is defeatism. These fake 'lefts', sn-

eering from the sidelines about how the Sinn Fein & IRA effort 'falls short', only adopt this academic ultra-leftism about 'socialist revolution' being the thing, because it best covers their total defeatism (in reality) that anyone is going to win anything against imperialism. They constantly denigrate the national-liberation struggle's efforts because these anti-communist brainwashed stooges of Western ideological confusion don't really believe that imperialism is going to be defeated at all, - and least of all by a backward-looking handful of Irish nationalists. 'If we great leaders of socialism cannot do it, how can this Irish provincial movement do it???' etc, etc, etc. Little Engländer chauvinism, - the curse of the workers movement in Britain, to the last.

With total anti-theory philistinism, the entire fake 'left' parroted each other with the certifiable delusion that the imperialist 'new world order' was 'imposing' peace settlements on one 'hot spot' after another, all round the globe, Ireland included, - in spite of all the evidence to the contrary (Iraq, Somalia, Palestine, Colombia, Mexico, etc) that imperialist will was not being imposed nearly as completely or easily as Western propaganda (and anti-communist defeatism) was content to pretend, - and especially so in Ireland, on their very own doorstep of the fake 'left'. There are none so blind as those who do not wish to see.

As the EPSR has spelled out week-by-week in enormous detail for over 20 years, for clear historical reasons, British imperial-

ism has gradually been accepting the need for a snail's-pace withdrawal from Ireland for a long time, and also the implication that the illegitimate 'Northern Ireland' colonial statelet, as it existed after enforced Partition at bayonet-point in 1921, was doomed as well. Which clearly implies that Ireland's eventual reunification as a single independent republic is also inevitable in due course.

Which all amounted to an acceptance that British imperialism was no longer the world power it once was, that the world was no longer quite the place of imperialist domination it once was, and that the Sinn Fein and IRA determined and skilful national-liberation struggle was not going to be beaten.

All that was possible were rearguard-action delaying tactics to frustrate Irish self-determination for as long as possible; to undermine Ulster Unionism's Orange-loyalism as much as possible to reduce the dangers of UDI 'protestant' violence to as little as possible; and to create a propaganda smokescreen as large as possible to hide the fact that essentially, British imperialism and colonialism was capitulating to Sinn Fein and the IRA's national-liberation guerrilla war, - their formidable weaponry and organisation still at hand, and undecommissioned.

Only the most determined and incorrigible anti-Marxists could fail to see in this an outstanding, epoch-making anti-imperialist triumph, - colossally significant for Ireland; importantly defining, for the world, the current period of imperialist decline; and priceless for the fight for anti-imperialist consciousness in Britain, now that triumphalist anti-Irish chauvinism has had its foul supremacism punctured ('No surrender to the IRA'. Really?). Only the poisoned defeatist petty-bourgeois mentality of Trotskyism could, under the empty posturing ultra-left

banner of 'socialist revolution now', jeer at the genuine anti-imperialist triumphs of the Irish national-liberation guerrilla war as contemptible 'green nationalist terrorism, no better than Orange nationalist terrorism', etc.

Only the most cynical academic dilettantes posing as 'communists', could launch ultra-reactionary agitation (like the CPGB) for allowing the defeated Orange colonial fascists to be granted a reduced four-county Partitioned hell-hole of the same old 'Northern Ireland' tyranny in which to strut their racist bullying stuff and persecute whatever wretched nationalist Irish were forced to suffer within yet another enforced artificial barrier of 'British-Occupied Ireland'.

Nor do these incurable middle-class anti-communists stop their fake-'left' gibberish with Ireland. The whole Trot and revisionist swamp was at the same backward nonsense over Yugoslavia, the Trots playing into imperialism's hands for the NATO-Nazi blitzkrieg destruction of Serbia's workers-state remnants by falling for the CIA's long-prepared gimmick of 'Kosovo self-determination' behind the notorious regional Albanian drugs-mafia; and the revisionists doing the same with the hopeless social-pacifist posture of 'No to war', or the equally confusing nonsense of 'victory to the Milosevic regime', as bankrupt and demoralising a revisionist-nationalist mess as could be imagined. The workers-state remnants NATO was so keen to destroy, with premeditated longterm cunning, remained in the Serbian state in spite of Milosevic's rotten politics, not because of them. 'For an imperialist defeat' was the only way that workers internationally could possibly understand the priorities in this foul confused stew involving corrupt stooge 'nationalism', bogus 'anti-imperialism', but dominated by vicious Western intrigue, boding nothing but longterm disaster for

all concerned. And defeat for imperialism by any means, it makes no difference. Exactly the same evaluation applies to the West's tussle with Saddam's dubious regime in Iraq. A defeat for string-pulling imperialism is the only initial way forward and the only possible way forward for the moment.

35, The fake 'left' remains just as confused by its 'pro-democracy' anti-communism on the Palestine question, claiming now that 'history cannot be undone', nor the Zionist-imperialist colonisation and annexation of Palestine brought to an end (Weekly Worker). A war to reverse Zionism's wars of conquest would mean 'too much destruction'. A two-state 'solution' (but not even back to the infamous 1948 UN demarcation which first drove the Palestinian nation off its homeland, but which subsequent Zionist aggression has long since overrun) with 'full rights' for any Jews or Arabs left behind new state boundaries, plus massive compensation for the millions of Palestinians who would still remain exiled from their own lands, - is the Trot-defeatist recommendation. Fake-'lefts' everywhere are doubtless contemplating the imperialist 'new world order' once again 'imposing' a 'peace-process' defeat on an unhappy but impotent anti-imperialist struggle.

This is the most hopelessly static way of allowing defeatist petty-bourgeois subjectivism to paint 'communist' perspectives which calculate things not so much in ignorance of Marxist historical materialism but in conscious revolt against all its proven scientific understanding. British imperialism established its military-conquest 'right' to govern Ireland over 800 years ago. Its Orange colonial plantation was first imposed on Ulster more than 350 years ago, making the northeast corner of Ireland 'British for ever more'.

This blatant Zionist colonial conquest of Palestine, driving out a settled nation four

million strong (now five million) from its homeland, was completed only 33 years ago. It was imposed in a period of world monopoly-capitalist boom when US imperialism could finance and militarily supply every reaction possible, and when the great anti-imperialist epoch of world history was still just in its infancy but already temporarily hobbled by class-collaborationist revisionist stupidity and defeatism in Moscow.

These conditions will pass. And five million Palestinian people will not forget, - nor 250 million humiliated Arab people beyond that; nor a billion humiliated Muslim people beyond that; - nor several billion humiliated anti-imperialist proletarians of the world beyond that. This imperialist-Zionist colonisation, conquest, and annexation of the Palestinian nation's homeland in living memory is one of the most ludicrous, intolerable, and unstable monstrosities of colonial tyranny ever perpetrated, bringing millions of Zionist fanatics from every city of Europe and America to usurp the lands of the Palestinian people and then subject them to the most unbridled savagery and violent prejudiced persecution that any nation has ever suffered in history, doing exactly to innocent Palestinians what German imperialism (and other imperialists) did to the Jews (and far more others) which brought the deserved destruction of that imperialist aggression not long after. That 'unbeatable' thousand-year reich lasted 12 years. This one will have a longer run as Third World revolutionary might continues its incubation in the wake of revisionism's self-destruction and imperialism's unprecedented economic world-boom. But not that much longer. These fake 'lefts' are nothing but a confusing defeatist menace to the working class. Build the EPSR's struggle for Marxist-Leninist science.

5. Analysing the necessary revolutionary future of progress is not guesswork but the essential reliable sci-

ence about society without which there will be no transformation to workers running their own lives.

Grotesque imperialist rivalry at the heart of 'Euroland', plus the conspiracy to defraud the vote in the 'world greatest democracy', - puts pressure on bogus 'socialists' to say when and how this 'free world' farce will be ended. Phantom 'popularity' is as big a hoax on the petty-bourgeois 'left' as it is around the regular representatives of parliamentary capitalist opportunism. Mass movements unlikely until some worthwhile revolutionary perspectives are outlined. Empty 'Marxist' posturing which cannot explain its revisionist or anti-communist history will not be believed. Hindsight lessons from the past, such as Spain, are crucial for building scientific socialist consciousness. An accurate analysis of Third International revisionist disasters is now vital for routing Stalinist and Trotskyist sectarian defeatists. Stalin's 'peace' theory was just a catastrophe, doing 60 years damage to the Soviet workers state and the socialist camp cause, - and still unresolved to this day.

The crisis sharpens for fake 'lefts' in Britain (and elsewhere) to come off the fence and tell the international proletariat how the fight against monopoly-imperialist world domination is going to end. From the 'electoral reform' opportunism of the 'Socialist Alliance' Trotskyists to the anti-theory museum-Stalinist philistinism of the CPB/SLP/Lalkar sects, - the working class is denied all leadership on the utterly crucial question of exactly how the class war for socialism is to be won.

The ever-increasing signs of the Western monopoly-capitalist system falling apart everywhere, - economically, politically, and socially, - make this an issue of growing urgency. These 57 varieties of fake 'lefts' can pretend all they like about getting 'increased following' on the way towards 'mass support' but there is not one word of truth in it, - and there will be no serious worthwhile socialist movement until millions of workers start to hear an explanation of capitalist chaos, - and how it will end, - that begins to make sense.

The largest fake-'left' group, the SWP, notoriously refuses ever to commit itself to detailed perspectives about how imperialism is ultimately to be toppled. Other groups in the anti-communist Trot spectrum may formally acknowledge the desperate need for a scientific programme for a non-capitalist future (before any serious socialist consciousness can be successfully fought for in the workers movement), but it invariably remains a purely sketchy academic offering wh-

ich never gets elaborated in the course of immediate 'practical' agitation and struggle; - which is, of course, the only place where the necessary theory can begin to be made real for the working class. In their sectarian journals, there is endless reportage about Palestine, Kosovo, Third World poverty, Ireland, inter-imperialist strife, etc, etc (i.e. on good days: when not filled with shallow propaganda about tedious manoeuvring for opportunist advantage against each other from among the 57 varieties, within the arenas of joint activity they share (union disputes, election campaigns, membership poaching, etc)), - - - but almost never any conclusions drawn about how these new developments on some frontline anti-imperialist struggle or other, demonstrate the truth or otherwise for whichever particular theory is held-to for achieving the socialist revolution on earth.

Passionate arguments are put forward for or against Kosovo Albanian self-determination rights versus Serbian self-determination rights, to a background of Western imperialist subversion, intervention, and generally reactionary skulduggery which is going to continue to screw everybody, - - but little is ever said, if anything at all, about how the whole monstrous Balkanisation war-mongering nonsense ends. How is any obvious way forward for socialism for mankind being illustrated by the steadily-growing mess in the Balkans? Or in Occupied Palestine? Or in Blairism's crisis (petrol blockade; Peckham youth anarchy; European Union unending conflict; etc, etc)? Or in everything else that is happening and getting discussed?

There is either zero

inspiration for the working class towards socialist consciousness; or there is even only a reactionary education, when the only perspectives being worked into the debates are limited to 'Get out of Europe'; or 'Keep the pound'; or 'Peaceful coexistence between a Zionist and a Palestinian state would be nicer'; or 'Back 'left' Labour candidates or TUC office candidates if they accept a minimum 'reformist' programme'; etc, etc, etc.

None of this remotely addresses the crucial role that revolutionary theory is inevitably going to have to play before working-class socialist consciousness shortly becomes the decisive political force on earth. Every variety of revisionism and Trotskyism spouts about its 'Marxist-Leninist' credentials ceaselessly; but every vital lesson is in reality ignored, - especially the key understanding that without revolutionary theory, there will never be lasting successful revolutionary practice.

How, for example, is the defence of the abstract 'right to self-determination' for the Kosovo Albanian pro-American mafia-separatists going to help the cause of the international proletariat for defeating US imperialist domination worldwide??? The Trots simply ignore the question. So how or why is the confused and frustrated working class in Britain (or anywhere else) supposed to become passionately involved in this issue one way or the other?

Or how, for example, is the 'defence of Yugoslavia' (when it amounted to a defence of the crooked, mercenary, anti-communist Milosevic regime) going to inspire an international fight to build dedicated workers-state regimes, building socialism??? The museum-Stalinists and other revisionists did not say when calling for support for the Belgrade regime; and delicately forget about the previous slogan now that these

wretched mercenary Milosevic losers have halfway abandoned their joke 'anti-imperialist' fight altogether.

The working class is never going to respond in vast revolutionary-fighting numbers to this endless fence-sitting mealy-mouthed 'left' posturing by all 57 varieties of Trotskyism and revisionism, whether bogusly 'united' in phony (anti-theory) 'alliances' or not. Only the serious perspectives for the eventually inevitable worldwide victory over the rapidly decaying imperialist market-anarchy system will inspire workers to the revolutionary front-line again, fighting for socialism.

Making a caricature of this as a demand for "instant revolution, now, immediately, on every issue", etc, etc, will not make the problem go away. The working class will remain uninspired by just re-runs of electoral 'left reformist promises' nearly 100 years after they first failed with Labour, (as the 'Socialist Alliances' are trying). Or by re-runs of revisionism's equally-vague 'left pressure' and 'anti-monopoly fronts' nearly 70 years after their first failure under the already-theoretically-bankrupt Stalinist Third International.

A believable, verifiable scientific analysis of incurable imperialist economic crisis and inter-imperialist conflict inevitability, - plus verifiable evidence of spontaneous revolutionary struggle breaking out all over the world, - which will precisely be looking for exactly such an overall revolutionary perspective on the collapse and defeat of the imperialist system in due course, - - - is what the international proletariat desperately needs, and will alone respond to in vast unbeatable movements ever again.

The crucial requirement to draw out correct revolutionary theory is even more pressing and unanswered

able on vexed historical questions than anywhere else. Nothing could be sicker or sadder than getting into an argumentative lather about the Stalinist Popular Front policy in the Spanish Civil War if "being smarter with hindsight" was not precisely the whole purpose of re-examining such issues in the first place. Only some utterly sterile tradition of self-regarding subjectivism (i.e. the long-doomed CP/Third International/Moscow loyalist/revisionist tradition) could possibly wish to rake over these past significant lessons solely in order to justify their previous partisan positions on such moribund disasters.

It is precisely the utterly decisive nature of the absence of, or confusion about, the longterm socialist perspective to justify immediate policies, that makes the tragic situation in Spain in the 1930s so valuable and important to re-examine. It is almost the classic lesson explaining, well in advance, the ultimate self-liquidation catastrophe which revisionist theoretical muddle eventually destroyed the world's first workers state with.

The Popular Front, - or more particularly the propaganda illusions which developed alongside this policy in Spain, - first most prominently established the later totally-dominant understanding around the Third International (especially in the West) that protecting the USSR from all-imperialist annihilation; agitating for world peace against fascist aggression; and applying constant 'left pressure' in every capitalist country; - would finally all add up to the steady development of the socialist camp eventually proving its superiority to the world colonial-imperialist system.

In the end, this all amounted to completely disarming nonsense, pushing the Third Int-

ernational European parties, for example, down the 'peaceful road to socialism' blind alley where the only final achievement was more and more revisionist illusions, eventually resulting in open hostility to the dictatorship of the proletariat of the Soviet workers state, (including by the CPSU leadership itself in due course), and self-liquidation all-round as remotely serious 'communist parties' any more. If the huge revolutionary tasks facing mankind were not going to be specifically spelled out but were going to be deliberately ignored, then the quietist complacency of this implied world view (as to the best way to socialist-state salvation of human civilisation) was going to be bound to relentlessly breed utterly disabling revisionist confusion and nonsense henceforth, post-1930s.

Stalin's report to the 18th CPSU Congress was delivered in March 1939. Despite correctly describing the war-mongering world imperialist crisis, then in almost full momentum, the report disastrously fails to even mention socialist revolution as the best (and only final) answer to imperialist warmongering; or discuss its prospects at all. Quite the contrary, Stalin yawns out the most breathtakingly complacent drivel so as to go through the bureaucratic motions of his 'world communist leader' report, and earn his standing ovation.

Here is the best of all that Stalin had to say for inspiring the world communist revolutionary movement with, at this infamously foul and explosive moment in imperialist history which was about to plunge the planet into its most appallingly murderous bloodbath ever (and had already started in the Far East, in Spain, in Central Europe, etc, as Stalin records). It is littered with such barmy complacencies as describing British and French imperialism, for

example, as "the non-aggressive countries"; and while aware of the Western conspiracy to provoke a German invasion of the USSR, treats the threat almost as a casual joke. After hearing this address, the world revolutionary movement would have turned over for another long com-

fortable sleep. The amazing heartbreaking tragedy in Spain does not even get any report at all, apart from mentioning the ruthlessness of the German-Italian "seizure of Spain" and the rank hypocrisy of the rest of the West's bogus "non-intervention policy"; almost in passing:

In its foreign policy the Soviet Union relies upon:

1. Its growing economic, political and cultural might;
2. The moral and political unity of our Soviet society;
3. The mutual friendship of the nations of our country;
4. Its Red Army and Red Navy;
5. Its policy of peace;
6. The moral support of the working people of all countries, who are vitally concerned in the preservation of peace;
7. The good sense of the countries which for one reason or another have no interest in the violation of peace.

* * *

The tasks of the Party in the sphere of foreign policy are:

1. To continue the policy of peace and of strengthening business relations with all countries;
2. To be cautious and not allow our country to be drawn into conflicts by warmongers who are accustomed to have others pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them;
3. To strengthen the might of our Red Army and Red Navy to the utmost;
4. To strengthen the international bonds of friendship with the working people of all countries, who are interested in peace and friendship among nations.

At the same time, in order to strengthen its international position, the Soviet Union decided to take certain other steps. At the end of 1934 our country joined the League of Nations, considering that despite its weakness the League might nevertheless serve as a place where aggressors could be exposed, and as a certain instrument of peace, however feeble, that might hinder the outbreak of war. The Soviet Union considers that in alarming times like these even so weak an international organization as the League of Nations should not be ignored. In May 1935 a treaty of mutual assistance against possible attack by aggressors was signed between France and the Soviet Union. A similar treaty was simultaneously concluded with Czechoslovakia. In March 1936 the Soviet Union concluded a treaty of mutual assistance with the Mongolian People's Republic. In August 1937 the Soviet Union concluded a pact of nonaggression with the Chinese Republic.

It was in such difficult international conditions that the Soviet Union pursued its foreign policy of upholding the cause of peace.

Or take Germany, for instance. They let her have Austria, despite the undertaking to defend her independence; they let her have the Sudeten region; they abandoned Czechoslovakia to her fate, thereby violating all their obligations; and then they began to lie vociferously in the press about "the weakness of the Russian army," "the demoralization of the Russian air force," and "riots" in the Soviet Union, egging on the Germans to march farther east, promising them easy pickings, and prompting them: "Just start war on the Bolsheviks, and everything will be all right." It must be admitted that this too looks very much like egging on and encouraging the aggressor.

The hullabaloo raised by the British, French and American press over the Soviet Ukraine is characteristic. The gentlemen of the press there shouted until they were hoarse that the Germans were marching on the Soviet Ukraine, that they now had what is called the Carpathian Ukraine, with a population of some seven hundred thousand, and that not later than this spring the Germans would annex the Soviet Ukraine, which has a population of over thirty million, to this so-called Carpathian Ukraine. It looks as if the object of this suspicious hullabaloo was to incense the Soviet Union against Germany, to poison the atmosphere and

to provoke a conflict with Germany without any visible grounds.

It is quite possible, of course, that there are madmen in Germany who dream of annexing the elephant, that is, the Soviet Ukraine, to the gnat, namely, the so-called Carpathian Ukraine. If there really are such lunatics in Germany, rest assured that we shall find enough strait jackets for them in our country. (*Thunderous applause.*) But if we ignore the madmen and turn to normal people, is it not clearly absurd and foolish seriously to talk of annexing the Soviet Ukraine to this so-called Carpathian Ukraine? Imagine: the gnat comes to the elephant and says perkily: "Ah, brother, how sorry I am for you. . . . Here you are without any landlords, without any capitalists, with no national oppression, without any fascist bosses. Is that a way to live? . . . I look at you and I can't help thinking that there is no hope for you unless you annex yourself to me. . . . (*General laughter.*)

Not 'absurd' at all, of course; but Stalin (allegedly) was to repeat this complacency in (supposedly) denying the reality of German invasion plans right up to the last minute in June 1941 when the greatest land-war in history was finally unleashed against the USSR, - thereby unnecessarily undermining the Soviet defence capabilities enormously in the first instance, (it is said).

Avoiding giving the imperialists the slightest provocation for unleashing invasion is one thing (e.g. by refusing to rise to Western alarmist propaganda, deliberately trying to humiliate the Soviet Union). Signing the USSR-German non-aggression pact in August 1939 in order to split the growing forces of Western imperialist aggression into two camps was sound tactics. But the complacency about how dangerous the imperialist war threat might be to the Soviet workers state is a piece of infamous nonsense, inextricably tied up with Stalin's by-then utterly static attitude to world developments.

But the greatest crime of all is this failure to address a single word to the international revolutionary movement of the working class at such a decisive turning point in anti-imperialist history and colonial-liberation struggle, which was to see the world virtually transformed within another decade by such momentous developments as the Chinese revolution, and the start to the enforced (by revolt) dismantling of the physical Western colonial

empires. Such non-consideration of the crucial role in world history to be played by the proletariat's own revolutions all round the world, leaves no doubt as to the prime source of the self-liquidating revisionist gibberish which, for example, had pushed the British CP into the 'peaceful road to socialism' nonsense by 1950 (Moscow-approved, and Stalin still with three years to go in charge, before dying in office), and had transformed the whole world movement into not much more than a ludicrous campaign for nuclear-disarmament and peaceful coexistence.

This "upholding the cause of peace" (JVS) is the most sick and deceitful twaddle imaginable. There is only one scientific Marxist message for mankind, and that is that there will be no peace for mankind for as long as the imperialist system continues to hold sway on earth.

And only truly monstrous sophistry would try pretending that this 'world peace' perspective, which obliterated all else from large parts of the international communist movement for the next 50 years, was just a 'temporary tactic to avoid giving imperialist aggression cause for provocation'. It failed to disarm imperialism from the worldwide holocaust of World War II, and was bound to fail. It failed to disarm imperialism from more wars since 1945 than in any other period of history, together cumulatively dwarfing by far the massive destructiveness of

WWII. It succeeded only in temporarily disarming Soviet defenses for 1941; and in permanently disarming large parts of the world communist-led workers movement from any understanding of the revolutionary socialist future for mankind for the following 50 years.

It was no "clever, temporary tactic". It was total revisionist degeneration.

It could truly have been argued about Spain, - (against the lightminded imbecilities of Trot ultra-left academism that the socialist revolution was there for the taking, and that it was deliberately counter-revolutionarily sabotaged by Comintern agents, etc) - that the USSR could not even think about intervening on the scale of German and Italian imperialist support for Franco, - and Western hypocrisy that this amounted to 'non-intervention', - because it would have been fingered and isolated instantly by the entire imperialist camp as the sole 'trouble-making international aggressor', and invaded accordingly by the entire might of Britain, France, USA, Germany, Italy, and Japan combined, - there and then in 1936, without waiting for the eventual blitzkrieg in 1941.

And it could be further argued that the Soviet Union alone seriously stood by the beleaguered Spanish Republic, providing arms, other aid, and volunteers at enormous risk, overcoming huge logistical difficulties, and at a time when it was still dirt-poor itself. It was a heroic effort.

And it could also theoretically be added that there was nothing to stop the Spanish anti-fascist movement from carrying out the socialist revolution itself, which would obviously have been the only serious way of stopping Franco's victory.

Except that in reality, a lot was stopping the Spanish anti-fascist movement from its one real hope of

triumph, - and that was the policy of the CPSU, the Third International, and the Spanish CP. Their policy was not for a socialist revolution to defeat fascism, but for a Popular Front of every brand of petty-bourgeois parliamentary democracy in sight to all band together to "bar the way to fascism"; and internationally to combine to "uphold the cause of peace".

But the permanently confused nonsense of every brand of petty-bourgeois parliamentary democracy in the face of warmongering imperialist aggression is the very guarantee of the victory of 'fascism' for getting the guns and police-dictatorship out, - plus the diversion of aggressive foreign wars, - as soon as the world imperialist economic anarchy-system runs into uncontrollable international crisis. It was the weak confusion of the German parliament of petty-bourgeois democracy which actually elected Hitler to be the Chancellor and head a new coalition government. It was the weak confusion of the Spanish parliament of petty-bourgeois democracy which abysmally failed to rally Spain to defeat Franco's fascist coup, - despite the heroic individual efforts of the communist contingents and others in the civil war.

The only call which might possibly have succeeded in rallying sufficient class forces to defeat the fascist-imperialist lumpen/petty bourgeois nationalism of Franco would have been that for a socialist state under the dictatorship of the proletariat, rallying the working class and the poorest peasants, the majority of the population. The communist movement went down to bitter defeat never having supported it or tried it, - thanks to the miserable revisionist corruption of Third International theory by this time.

This theoretical bankruptcy was to get worse and worse and worse. So-called 'fascism' - (in reality only

the imperialist bourgeois system, in crisis and needing to bang aggressive chauvinist-war drums and dictatorial internal scapegoating of 'the enemy within', in order to divert the working class from socialist revolution as a better answer to capitalist collapse & slump mess) - was further demonised to the insane point of differentiating 'bad' imperialists (Germany, etc) from 'good' imperialists (the USA, etc) that reliable alliances could be developed with. The worst 'fascist' crimes in history (the US imperialist brutal destruction and mass-murder inflicted on Korea and Vietnam while McCarthyist persecution and witch-hunts drove people to suicide in the USA just for opposing the warmongering), - committed by the 'good' Western imperialists and repeated more than 400 times since 1945 in endless counter-revolutionary bullying, coups, interventions, and sabotage, all round the world, - failed to erase this revisionist theoretical nonsense. The world communist movement was still resolutely led to continue "upholding the cause of world peace" alongside these 'good imperialist' warmongering monsters throughout every brutal counter-revolutionary crime imaginable, imposed on a worldwide scale.

Tactical caution was always needed, undoubtedly. No one revolutionary cause was worth the nuclear annihilation of the Soviet Union - or anywhere else, come to that. But corrupted revisionist theory had nothing whatever to do with tactical caution to avoid giving US imperialism cause to 'go to war'. It went to war as often as it liked, and it was only fear of destruction by Soviet missiles that held Washington back from even nastier counter-revolutionary bullying and devastation around the planet than was actually murderously committed. The universal CP 'upholding world peace' played no part whatever in restraining US imperialism at any time,

on any aggressive-chauvinist-warmongering outrage.

All that 'tactical caution' achieved was to blind the international communist movement to mistake after mistake, to retreat after retreat, to cowardly betrayal after cowardly betrayal as Moscow's revisionist-corrupted perspectives advised or approved CPs everywhere into one 'left pressure' or 'reformist' dead end after another, - ending in anti-revolutionary positions or self-liquidation in party after party.

And the common theme throughout was always this total failure. To invite the working class to fight, but without remotely providing a believable perspective for socialism which would make fighting worthwhile.

All the differences which ever split the socialist-camp party leaderships into damaging feuds (Moscow-Belgrade; Moscow-Beijing; Beijing-Hanoi; etc, etc) almost certainly flowed, among other things, from an inability to work out a convincing world-perspective on the defeat of imperialism which could meet everyone's particular problems with imperialism, or put some confidence behind the hopes for longterm communist unity. Moscow's confused unreliability on anti-imperialist matters long predates Stalin's demise. Having pumped out wrong understandings of critical class-war situations and international developments since even before the 1930s, Moscow's theoretical revisionist disasters should no longer even be an issue. Trying to blame the catastrophic degeneration of the CPSU on some allegedly cranky marketing theories of those who came after Stalin is just bizarre dogma, fitting for a moribund petty-bourgeois sect of museum-Stalinists. Trying to wriggle Stalin's grossest work "Economic Problems of Socialism" (1952) out of the firing line, is just nuts.

Like some weird mental condition, museum-Stalinism is still try-

ing to deny that the plain revisionist nonsense declared by Stalin, was ever in fact stated.

For the umpteenth

time, just read the words which follow the boast about how rapidly the East European socialist-camp economies are developing:

It may be confidently said that, with this pace of industrial development, it will soon come to pass that these countries will not only be in no need of imports from capitalist countries, but will themselves feel the necessity of finding an outside market for their surplus products.

But it follows from this that the sphere of exploitation of the world's resources by the major capitalist countries (U.S.A., Britain, France) will not expand, but contract; that their opportunities for sale in the world market will deteriorate, and that their industries will be operating more and more below capacity. That, in fact, is what is meant by the deepening of the general crisis of the world capitalist system in connection with the disintegration of the world market.

This is felt by the capitalists themselves, for it would be difficult for them not to feel the loss of such markets as the U.S.S.R. and China. They are trying to offset these difficulties with the "Marshall plan," the war in Korea, frantic rearmament, and industrial militarization. But that is very much like a drowning man clutching at a straw.

This state of affairs has confronted the economists with two questions:

a) Can it be affirmed that the thesis expounded by Stalin before the Second World War regarding the relative stability of markets in the period of the general crisis of capitalism is still valid?

b) Can it be affirmed that the thesis expounded by Lenin in the spring of 1916 — namely, that, in spite of the decay of capitalism, "on the whole, capitalism is growing far more rapidly than before"⁵ — is still valid?

I think that it cannot. In view of the new conditions to which the Second World War has given rise, both these theses must be regarded as having lost their validity.

This insane idea was repeated in Soviet economic textbook after Soviet economic textbook. Not a single young Russian grew up not believing that the West was economically crumbling. It was a confirmed article of faith in the Higher Party School in Moscow, no matter how vigorously some visitors tried to warn them off such a distorted understanding of the essential harm to mankind of Western

imperialist economics.

Did it matter? It was crucially needed to bolster up the long-standing Stalinist complacency that socialist economic achievements were outstripping the best that the West could achieve, and therefore "upholding world peace" was all that was now needed to bring about world socialism in due course. (Even in the 1939 Congress report, Stalin was declaring:

Our agriculture, consequently, is not only run on the largest scale, is not only the most mechanized in the world, and therefore produces the largest surplus for the market, but is also more fully equipped with modern machinery than the agriculture of any other country.

It was gibberish, but it justified the steady retreat from having to grapple with the difficulties of completing the world socialist revolution

by revolutionary means. Keep sowing the idiocy that the 'peaceful road to socialism' can solve all problems, — and the complications evaporate.)

Stalin then declares that, correctly, inter-imperialist wars are still a possibility, even inevitable where the peace movement fails to prevent belligerence. But in making the point, Stalin adds (incorrectly) that another world war (generalised war) can be prevented by the peace movement; that far from the soc-

ialist overthrow of imperialism being the only final way to guarantee this world peace, world peace and socialist revolution are two separate things entirely; and the outbreak of non-globalised inter-imperialist war is placed in view without the slightest thought or hint that further socialist revolution might be the compensatory outcome:

The object of the present-day peace movement is to rouse the masses of the people to fight for the preservation of peace and for the prevention of another world war. Consequently, the aim of this movement is not to overthrow capitalism and establish socialism — it confines itself to the democratic aim of preserving peace. In this respect, the present-day peace movement differs from the movement of the time of the First World War for the conversion of the imperialist war into civil war, since the latter movement went farther and pursued socialist aims.

It is possible that in a definite conjuncture of circumstances the fight for peace will develop here or there into a fight for socialism. But then it will no longer be the present-day peace movement; it will be a movement for the overthrow of capitalism.

It is said that the contradictions between capitalism and socialism are stronger than the contradictions among the capitalist countries. Theoretically, of course, that is true. It is not only true now, today; it was true before the Second World War. And it was more or less realized by the leaders of the capitalist countries. Yet the Second World War began not as a war with the U.S.S.R., but as a war between capitalist countries. Why? Firstly, because war with the U.S.S.R., as a socialist land, is more dangerous to capitalism than war between capitalist countries; for whereas war between capitalist countries puts in question only the supremacy of certain capitalist countries over others, war with the U.S.S.R. must certainly put in question the existence of capitalism itself.

But reality most famously was exactly the other way about. The most important events in world history, the Russian and Chinese socialist revolutions, flourished exactly in the aftermath of inter-imperialist wars. It was precisely the outcome of inter-imperialist wars which "put in question the existence of capitalism itself".

And precisely the contrary of Stalin's assertions was the truth about the third greatest event in world history, the survival of the Soviet workers state of the second great imperialist onslaught to crush it. It was "war with the USSR", but far from "putting in question the existence of capitalism itself", Mos-

cow signed a 'spheres of influence' anti-revolutionary agreement with the imperialist system which precisely preserved capitalism in a number of countries where it might have been toppled (Greece, for example). And while East Europe fell to workers-state takeovers, these played as much a part (under Moscow guidance) in the preservation of peaceful co-existence with imperialism as they did in furthering the movement for the international revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

The real point is that Stalin's judgement of the importance of rival world perspectives is all wrong. The revolutions in China, Vietnam, Cuba,

etc., were the only worthwhile future for mankind. Denying US imperialism war-provocations opportunities with the USSR (which the US did not really fancy anyway) was as much a diversion from the real fascist evil imperialism got on with everywhere anyway, - frequently ignored by Moscow (such as the cold-blooded massacre of 1 million members of the Indonesian Communist Party in 1965, and scores more similar international fascist outrages).

And what use was it in the long run in any case??? The USSR is not there now. US imperialism could now nuclear-blitzkrieg most of the world anyway, and no one would do anything about it.

So where has all the holding back from socialist revolution got the world since 1945??? It has just made US imperialism more aggressively arrogant, and more fascistically brutal, than any imperialist war-mongering threat that has ever existed, - thanks to the utterly useless revisionist gibberish which virtually wiped out the world revolutionary communist movement, and largely thanks to Stalin's own hopeless theoretical confusion.

Fake-'left' leadership of all kinds perpetually postures mightily about this and that issue in the anti-imperialist movement, but routine opportunist philistinism never commits itself to stating in what longterm context of completing the world socialist revolution is the 'advice' being dispensed.

'Popular Front government'; 'Uphold world peace'; 'Defend Yugoslavia'; 'Kosovo-Albanian self-determination'; 'Coexisting Zionist and Palestinian states'; etc, etc, etc. But where does the socialist revolution, the only thing that can be expected to seriously arouse the working class, fit into all this posturing??? There is no answer, just more acres of reportage about how wickedly imperialism always behaves. And in the massive Lalkar

rigmarole (see Review 1068) on Palestine, reporting on everything except the vital necessity to reinstate the perspective of socialist revolution to the anti-imperialist fight, - this museum-Stalinist structure for the conscious prolongation of philistinism in the workers movement, even has the brass neck to leave out of its historical resumé any reference at all to Stalinist revisionism's role in agreeing to the setting up of the Zionist colonisation of Palestine in the first place in 1947-48, - let alone any analysis of that disastrous lunacy, or even any traditional revisionist 'apologetics' for this counter-revolutionary imbecility.

Trot and revisionist anti-theory philistinism are as rotten as each other, - and as anti-communist.

But imperialist crisis goes on deepening relentlessly. Posturing in front of the working class about this and that but without committing one word or thought about where socialist revolution fits into the scheme of things in order to give a serious worthwhile perspective to anti-imperialist struggle, will be unlikely to inspire mass workers movements henceforth.

"But we have heard it all before about capitalist crisis" cynics will say. "Let us get on with something practical". What, like "upholding world peace". Or 1997 SWP-style "making sure the Tories get defeated (i.e. by voting Labour!!!)". The working class is learning contempt for all this fake 'left' posturing.

So how bankrupt is the capitalist system? Any week, the capitalist press itself will give the answer, - exactly as the EPSR regularly re-presents it (as below).

The Observer discovered that Harris's office had ordered the elimination of 8,000 Florida voters on the grounds that they had committed felonies in other states. None had. Harris bought the bum list from a company called

ChoicePoint, a firm whose Atlanta executive suite and boardroom are filled with Republican funders. ChoicePoint, we have learned, picked up the list of faux felons from state officials in - ahem - Texas. In fact, it was a roster of people who, like their Governor, George W, had committed nothing more than misdemeanours.

For Harris, Florida Governor Jeb Bush and his brother, the Texas blacklist was a mistake made in Heaven. Most of those targeted to have their names 'scrubbed' from the voter rolls were African-Americans, Hispanics and poor white folk, likely voters for Vice-President Gore.

ChoicePoint, which has gamely 'fessed-up to the Texas-sized error, produced a new list of 58,000 felons. Sleuthing around county offices with a team of researchers from internet newspaper Salon.com, we discovered that the 'correct' list wasn't so correct.

One elections supervisor, Linda Howell of Madison County, was so upset by the errors that she refused to use the Harris/ChoicePoint list. How could she be so sure the new list identified innocent people as felons? Because her own name was on it, 'and I assure you, I am not a felon'.

Our 10-county review suggests a minimum 15 per cent misidentification rate. That makes another 7,000 innocent people accused of crimes and stripped of their citizenship rights in the run-up to the presidential race.

Now our team, diving deeper into the swamps, has discovered yet a third group whose voting rights were stripped. The ChoicePoint-generated list includes 1,704 names of people who, earlier in their lives, were convicted of felonies in Illinois and Ohio.

Florida strips those convicted in its own courts of voting rights for life. But Harris's office concedes, and county officials concur, that the state of Florida has no right to impose this penalty on people who have moved in from these other states.

The tide of human suffering left by Japan's limping economy is unlikely to end soon. Bankruptcies are rising and so are suicides. Now economists warn the economy is lurching towards recession - the fourth big slowdown in a decade.

Robbie Feldman at Morgan Stanley Dean Witter in Tokyo says: "We expect negative

growth this quarter and, perhaps, next quarter.

A hard landing of the American economy would add to Japan's mounting problems.

Since the collapse of the "bubble economy" 10 years ago, Japan has spent vast sums on public-works programmes and bank bail-outs. But these efforts, which have driven the national debt to a record 130% of gross domestic product (GDP), have failed to reflate the economy and produce sustained growth. Further government spending is likely to lift the deficit to an extraordinary 220% of GDP by 2006, according to David Asher at the American Enterprise Institute in Washington.

Worse still, many of the economic reforms that foreigners had been counting on to revive the economy could be abandoned as the weak and unpopular government of Yoshiro Mori struggles to stay in power and tries to win favour with conservative politicians.

Last month the head of the Financial Reconstruction Committee (FRC), which was created in 1998 to reform the banking sector, took a big backward step when he asked banks to refrain from selling their vast portfolios of shares.

The FRC had earlier encouraged banks to sell their cross-shareholdings in corporate clients to free them from their ties to customers and enable them to write off bad loans. Although the banks' sales of shares have been blamed for a 30% collapse of the Nikkei index, foreign investors have been bigger sellers and the collapse of new internet stocks such as Softbank and Hikari Tsushin have accounted for most of the market's decline.

Bad loans continue to rise, despite the government's £100 billion attempt to clean up the banking sector. The amount owed by companies that failed in the first half of this year rose nearly 50% year-on-year to a record £70 billion.

One of the biggest failures in that period was Sogo, a department-store chain, which collapsed with £8 billion of debts. A plan to save Sogo with government funds was abandoned after a public outcry. Two of Sogo's senior executives have since committed suicide.

In October, Kyoei Life and Chiyoda Mutual Life, two large insurance companies, collapsed with liabilities of £47 billion, the largest bankruptcies since the second world war. They were brought down by their inability to earn more than they were paying out.

Obligated to pay an average 4% on insurance policies sold a decade ago, they were making less than 1% on current interest rates.

Kiichi Miyazawa, the 81-year-old finance minister, says he will look for ways next

year to boost personal consumption. In the meantime the government is preparing its 10th supplementary budget or "stimulus package" since 1992.

Most of the money will go to construction projects of dubious value — such as the 10 gigantic bridges connecting Honshu and Shikoku islands.

The construction companies form an important constituency for the ruling Liberal Democratic party. Their debts are often written off and they are frequently involved in corrupt deals. Earlier this year a former construction minister was arrested on charges of accepting bribes. Yet most of the 10,000 construction companies — employing about 10% of the workforce — are unprofitable and on the brink of insolvency.

Ron Bevacqua at Commerz Securities in Tokyo says: "There is no sign that things are any better than they were two years ago. The government deficit is running at 10% of GDP, when growth is 2%. That is not sustainable. It still looks a pretty bleak picture."

The United Nations secretary general has recommended withdrawing its mission to Haiti after more than five years, warning that attempts to strengthen democracy are failing in the face of mounting violence aimed at the international community.

In a highly critical report, Kofi Annan effectively accused the country's dominant political party, Fanmi Lavalas, and its founder, the former priest and one-time president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, of drifting towards international isolation and violating democracy by refusing to recount the results from May's disputed parliamentary elections.

Mr Annan's written comments, dated November 9, were released this week after Sunday's presidential election — boycotted by the opposition.

"A combination of rampant crime, violent street protests and incidents of violence targeted at the international community could severely limit the ability of [the international civilian support mission in Haiti] to fulfil its mandate," Mr Annan wrote. He recommended "with regret" that the mission be terminated when its current mandate expires on February 6.

The UN mission has been substantially scaled down in recent years — almost all the US troops who arrived in 1994 left 18 months ago.

32 This month, UN vehicles were fired upon and some international aid donors have suspended projects in protest at the political crisis, although Britain's Department of International Development still channels £45,000 a year to

wards aid schemes in Haiti, the poorest country in the western hemisphere.

In ten years Russia has gone from having a tiny fraction of HIV cases compared with Western countries to last year, when it had recorded the steepest rise in HIV in the world; in Moscow the rate of HIV infection quadrupled in 1999; by August this year it had doubled again.

There's denial of a different sort going on nightly in Moscow's burgeoning club world. While the city around them crumbles, anything goes in the neon heart of town. Approaching Studio, one of Moscow's trendiest clubs, I watched women in Lacroix and men in Armani step out of the latest Land Cruisers and Mercedes. These "New Russians" are the new elite; they have plenty of money and are attracted to the clubs like moths to a flame.

Misha a "male actress" had once been a biology teacher but is now a performer and make-up artist and is an example of how times have changed since the break-up of the USSR. "Now I can be myself. Before perestroika I could only work in an office as a clerk, or for a Youth League organising matinees for Young Pioneers. That was all communism was offering me."

After Misha's show, he took me to Chameleon, once a gay venue, but now a club where young men and women who have never been introduced are picked out of the crowd to strip on stage and simulate sex. In another room simulation gives way to the real thing. Moscow has reinvented itself from a grey, drab landscape to a city where anything is possible.

Most of Misha's friends are grappling with survival in the new Russia where there are no longer guarantees of jobs, education, pensions and medical care.

Some of Misha's friends have, in despair, turned to vodka and drugs. Misha is now frightened to visit them: "We keep in touch, though I realise that when I visit them I run the risk of being caught in a police round-up."

She lived alone with a rat that was kept in a glass bookshelf below books by Eric Maria Remarque, Dostoevsky and Dickens. Above her bed was a trade union flag with Lenin's face embroidered on its crimson background and text in gold lettering, glorifying the values of Marxism and Leninism. Sveta's friends arrived alone or in twos, and this is how I came to be at a "shooting party" in the late afternoon with the setting sun invisible behind the permanently closed blinds.

Sveta once worked for the Russian railways as an engineer, and Dima, her friend, was a ballet dancer with the Bolshoi until a fall ended his career. If they thought they had once been hemmed in by the four walls of the Soviet Union they were now falling off the edge of the capitalist world.

As her group of friends injected the red solution they stepped into another dimension. "I can see a cigarette box in the bush metres away, I can hear what happens five floors above me," explained Maxime. For a moment in their hard lives despair turned to peace.

However, in the starkness of the bare lightbulb they soon looked broken and exhausted and in need of another fix. Most of them were emaciated, and given that only Sveta (the healthiest looking of the group)

had had an HIV test, it was possible that they, like thousands of Moscow's intravenous drug users, were also HIV-positive.

Sergei summed up the prevailing attitude among the high-risk groups: "I think a Russian, unless he sees danger with his own eyes, will not understand how dangerous it is. We are wise after the event." Indeed, for just weeks after I left, Sveta herself died.

Lena is 21 years old, dresses in suits, and always looks smart. She could be anyone's sister, with a ready smile and an infectious laugh. She had worked as a florist until the company went bust. "I couldn't find a job and I soon went through my savings. What could I do? I went out on the streets. I used to be sent to men who were responding to a newspaper advertisement. The police controlled the business and then they decided to replace a lot of Moscovite girls with girls from Belarus and the Ukraine. Now I work on my own without the police or a pimp."

Lena now lives with her grandmother on the eighteenth floor of an apartment block that is as functional as it gets — concrete and wood. Most of the block's doors are fortified as they are in the rougher districts of New York. We sat in their cramped kitchen and as we drank tea, the sounds of the cockroachy plumbing played in the background.

"Do you know what your granddaughter does for a living?"

"Yes, but she is not very good at it; other girls make a lot of money, they have their own apartments. She's too honest. I am very sad I can't help her, but I am the only person who stayed with her. Do you know how much rent and services are? 400 roubles [£10], which is half of my pension. How can I live? And Lena cannot find a job. Sometimes I am crying, I can't fall asleep. I ask Lena: 'How will we live?' I am suffering so much. Now I don't know what God to pray to for help. Look, she is so beautiful now."

On the boulevard where she stands, there are so many prostitutes that they line up in the cars' headlights waiting for the owners to make a choice.

"Usually, I ask clients to use a condom. But sometimes he says he doesn't like them. In such a case I serve him without a condom." It is easy to see how quickly the virus can spread; an average night for Lena is to have sex with five or six clients.

When I next caught up with Lena I found her on "Aids street".

"Welcome, you managed to find us!" said Lamine as his head appeared above the parapet of a manhole. "Be careful ► how you climb down." I gripped the rungs and descended into Moscow's sewer system. With blankets and cardboard laid out across a platform above the water being carried beneath the city, this is where Lamine, three other Africans and their Russian girlfriends had made home.

Lena and I then walked through wasteland to an adjacent condemned building where she introduced me to Andrew, a Ghanaian with a PhD in Engineering, "Italiano", a refugee and former captain in the Somali navy, and to her Nigerian boy-

friend, JC. All these Africans had one dream — to return home, but all had been stranded by the break-up of the Soviet Union; their bur-saries had dried up and with them any hope of getting an airline ticket home. JC told me, "No one will employ us because we are black, so for some of us the only way to survive is to sell heroin." On the second floor of the condemned building, we sat on breeze blocks drinking vodka while mainly women, and a few men, came to buy their 200-rouble fix.

Misha had explained to me that prior to the break-up of the USSR, life had been very different. Under communism the propaganda put out by the state was that there was no drug addiction and no prostitution — those that were caught were immediately packed away to hospital, prison or sent into exile.

Russia now has to contend with a crumbling health service, doctors who are badly paid and feel resentful about treating drug addicts and prostitutes, and a criminal justice system that inhibits harm-reduction programmes run by charities

and NGOs, believing that they encourage drug use.

Officially there are 69,120 people infected with HIV/Aids in Russia, but it is estimated the figure could be ten times that. Ninety per cent of HIV/Aids cases are drug addicts, and 90 per cent of those are under 30. The region is estimated to have three million drug addicts. If the infection rate cannot be controlled, the impact will be felt in the rest of Europe.

No wonder they want to bring back the Soviet national anthem. At some stage, a return to the full workers state is inevitable. The unstoppable monopolistic course of the imperialist system means that Third World conditions, Haiti-style, are a steadily increasing phenomenon, and not disappearing at all. The West's begrudging and purely cosmetic 'debt reprieve' posturing will not change the intolerable exploitation relationship between the First and Third worlds one bit. And that £45,000 a year aid for the entire country of Haiti (6 million population) is less than this country pays some of its footballers for just one week's kicking a ball about. As Russia plunges towards Third World conditions, more than music will go Soviet. Build Leninism. EPSR