

STALIN, MARXISM-LENINISM AND THE LEFT*

by
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Stalin and Stalinism: as person, phenomena, and doctrine they are inseparable from the history of the left since the mid 1920's. Only here is there agreement. The parting of the ways starts with the evaluation of Stalin and Stalinism; instant dogmatization sets in. For a left this is a grave weakness; the task of developing a relevant theory and practice is paralyzed if it is cut off from the critical evaluation of the past. Too often, nowadays, this is the case. While the left increasingly reads the 'classic' texts of the past, it gives less attention to their historical context and significance.

To be sure this is a difficult project. Most of the literature about the left is either party or academic literature. The former pushes a particular line, e.g., *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course*, 1938; the latter tends to be expensive and inaccessible. It should be recalled that when Marx and Lenin wrote their major works, such as *Capital* and *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, they took full advantage of all existing literature, including government reports. To label and avoid this material as academic or intellectual is to remain utterly dependent on party literature. What is proposed here is not an ambitious reading program, but an openness to non-party sources.

Today this openness is eroding; there is a tendency to return uncritically to the "official" texts and programs of the 1930's and 1940's, more or less written and approved by the Communist Parties. Such a tendency is a direct result of the revival of Stalinism and the emergence of the "new" Marxist-Leninist parties and movement. The reasons for the resurgence of Stalinism are complicated and controversial; yet several should be mentioned insofar as they have a bearing on how parts of the left evaluate and receive the texts and lessons of the past. At least three elements should be mentioned: 1) the experience of the new left; 2) anti-anticommunism; and 3) the Chinese Revolution and the "success" of Marxism-Leninism.

1) The implicit and explicit judgment of both participants and nonparticipants is that the new left failed; it failed, in short, to revolutionize society. Various reasons are offered for this — lack

of organization, weak working class base, etc. The hasty conclusion drawn, too often, is the necessity to return to the theory, practice, and organization of the 'old' left, essentially the old Communist Parties, which are judged more viable and successful.

In two respects this is very superficial and self-defeating logic. It fails to understand the positive features of the new left and its historical significance as a response and reaction to the older left.

The positive characteristics of the new left cannot be discussed here; but it should at least be noted that the story of the new left is hardly one of utter disaster and defeat. It did help stop a war (Vietnam), it ignited a movement that nearly toppled a government (France, 1968), and in the U.S. and Europe it mobilized new strata of the population. Moreover it offered an alternative to the vanguard party, and opened up a whole series of concerns that the old left had ignored — questions of modes of living, culture, personal relationships, and so on.¹

The new left spanned a decade; and it is important for today's left not to simply drop this decade out of history. The emergence of the new left was no accident; and some of its roots are to be found in the decay of the old left by the early 1950's. This decay was not simply a product of state repression. There were *internal* reasons for the defeats and decline of the old Communist Parties. Any return to the theories and practices of the old left must confront its failures, and explore why the new left itself was an imperative. The point is not to resuscitate the new left — a hopeless task — but to come to terms with its relationship with the older left. The return to the old left without understanding its weaknesses will only yield the same dead end.

2) Anti-communism is as old as communism and bourgeois society; especially in the U.S., from the Palmer raids to McCarthyism in the 1950's, anti-communism was institutionalized, taught, worshipped. It was ingrained in the American consciousness. That the new left rejected anti-communism, then, was only natural and just.

So far, so good. The anti-communism program drew no distinctions within the left: anarchists, socialists, Bolsheviks were all part of a vast red conspiracy to subvert America. As the victims and crimes associated with Stalinism became widely

known, partly thanks to Khrushchev, these were added to the charges directed at the whole left. There is no doubt that this anti-communism was right-wing and reactionary; and the anti-anticommunism of the new left was a gut reaction to this propaganda.

The problem begins here — in this gut reaction. While this anti-anticommunism served the new left well, it has been transmitted unaltered and in more recent years has paralyzed criticism of the left *by the left*. There remains a deep, practically instinctual suspicion that any critical evaluation of Stalinism and the old left is anti-communist. In a sense, much of the left has bought the whole anti-communist package that Stalinism, Leninism, Marxism are all identical — only, of course, this is valued as a positive, not a negative. This gut reaction must be transcended. It must be enunciated that the critical evaluation of the old left has nothing to do with anti-communism; rather, the task, is to study this history, not simply defend it.

3) The preoccupation with Stalin and Stalinist literature has been inspired by the Chinese Revolution. More exactly, this inspiration has been filtered through the Chinese/Russian rift. This is a long and complicated story which will be discussed further below. For the moment: to Western observers it *appears* as if the Chinese are defending Stalin's policy, thought, and strategies against a Russian "revisionism" which began with Khrushchev. But there is more here than meets the eye. Several separate but simultaneous events have become inextricably tangled.

The most obvious event was the Khrushchev speech to the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (C.P.S.U.) (February, 1956), which was essentially a denunciation of Stalin. Because of this association of Khrushchev with opposition to Stalin, subsequent differences between the Russians and Chinese are often couched, and interpreted, in terms of attacks and defenses of Stalin — *even though they have little to do with Stalin*. Khrushchev, the denouncer of Stalin, became politically linked with doctrines such as "detente" with the West and peaceful transition to communism. More importantly, in these same years (1956-57), the Russians successfully tested the first ICBM and orbited the first earth satellite. For various reasons, the Russians refused to provide nuclear bomb "know-how" to the Chinese.

Differences over this and Russian foreign policy led to the Russian withdrawal of all economic aid to China — a potent blow to a weak economy.

The discord over these issues — foreign policy, nuclear bombs, and economic aid — ended up argued *in terms of Stalin*, though again Stalin is not the real question. First of all, the foreign policy of detente with the West is *not* new to Khrushchev, but has been a constant in Russian policy since the 1920's. Second, given Stalin's general distrust of the Chinese Revolution, it is most uncertain whether Stalin would have passed along nuclear technology. Finally, the withdrawal of economic aid was simply the result of the first two differences — plus Khrushchev's arbitrariness. But since Khrushchev was the denouncer of Stalin, it became convenient to appeal to Stalin. In fact, however, the official position of the Chinese is that Stalin made "serious errors," and one should be well aware how much is squeezed into the phrase "serious errors." For example, one of the Chinese "defenses" of Stalin states: "While defending Stalin, we do not defend his mistakes.... In the late twenties, the thirties, and the early and middle forties, the Chinese Marxist-Leninists represented by Comrades Mao Tse-Tung and Liu Shao-chi resisted the influence of Stalin's mistakes."² It need hardly be emphasized that here Stalin's mistakes span the entire history of the Chinese Revolution — as indeed they do.

The disintegration of the new left redoubled the attraction of the Chinese Revolution, and of a successful model of revolution in general. The left is in search of a successful theory of revolution and nothing seems more successful than Marxism-Leninism. The reasoning is this: in one form or other every successful revolution has been inspired by Marxism-Leninism, e.g., Cuba, China, Russia. The conclusion is simple: the remedy for the defeats of the North American left is these same doctrines.

Again — as always — this subject is complicated; the following must suffice. Even leaving aside the important question of what defines a "successful" revolution (seizure of state power? worker's control?) it is a half-truth that all revolutions have been "Marxist-Leninist." For example, the Cuban Revolution, though it has in recent years moved decisively into the Russian camp, was anything but a Marxist-Leninist revolution. Castro and the guerrillas were not Marxist-Leninists and the official Communist

Party had little or nothing to do with Castro's victory. K.S. Karol has directly addressed himself to this: "...In the past, critics [of the Marxist-Leninist formula for revolution] could be silenced with the argument that the only revolutions to triumph over capitalism were those led by Communist parties. This argument no longer applied. The Cuban Revolution had been the first to triumph *without* or even *against* Communists...."3

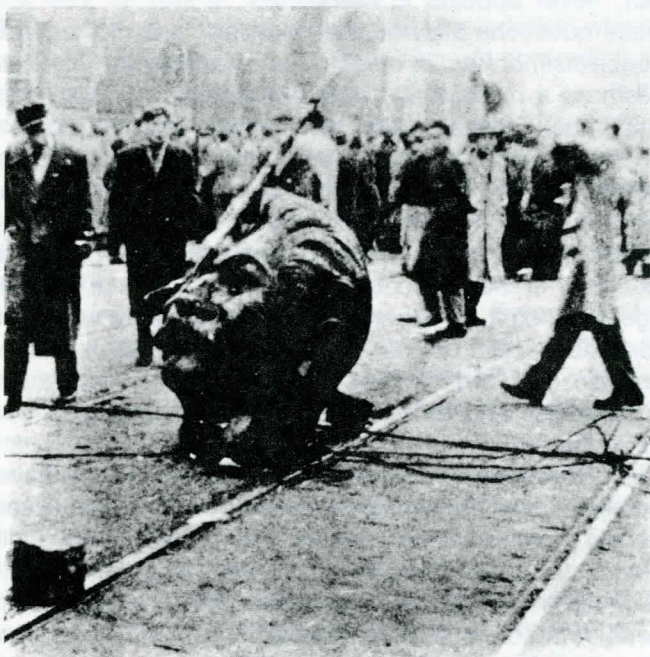
In any case, however, this is not the nub of the matter. The nub is that these Marxist-Leninist revolutions, notably Russia and China, have occurred in pre-industrial and peasant societies.4 Exactly these conditions are lacking in Western Europe and North America. This is fundamental: feudal conditions do not exist in the U.S. or Western Europe. Moreover, the Marxist-Leninist tradition cannot point to similar successes in the industrialized countries; if anything, the reverse. The success of Marxism-Leninism has been (so far) restricted to pre-industrialized societies.

This observation can quickly degenerate into the position that the industrialized countries are absolutely unique; or into a position of American "exceptionalism"; or in other words, into a position that the industrialized countries have nothing to learn from other revolutions. This conclusion is hardly necessary. There is evidently much to be learned from the Russian and Chinese Revolutions. The danger in the past and present, however, is adopting wholesale the theories and practices of the pre-industrial revolutions to the very different social and economic conditions of the urban countries. This tendency has marked and marred the Communist Parties since the mid-1920's. In recent years, the reasoning has not changed, only the object. Formerly, the notion was to fasten to the victorious Russian Revolution and adopt all its tactics. Now more often the object is the Chinese Revolution, but the reasoning is the same: what worked there will work here. But between there and here is a chasm as deep and wide as that dividing an industrial from a pre-industrial society.

To repeat, this is not to say there is nothing to be learned from Third World revolutions; there is. But historically the revolutionary left of the 'metropolis' (the citified and industrialized countries) has erred in the opposite direction. It has sought to apply uncritically the theories and practices of the Russian and Chinese Revolutions. If anything, the lack of success of revolutions in the metropolis — it could be argued — is due not to the failure to

follow Russian and Chinese models of revolution, but to adoption of these very models. This has been the bane of the official Communist parties. The adoption of these models — it could be said — has functioned as an escape for the left; the refusal or inability to comprehend what is different and difficult in the metropolis has taken refuge in models of revolution constructed for very dissimilar situations. (To be sure it is unclear to what extent even the most loyal admirers of the Chinese Revolution actually are able to apply Mao's teachings about a peasantry to an urban proletariat.)

The following will seek to point out, in very abridged terms, some of the problems and failings associated with Stalin and Stalinism. Only several topics will be explored: the hope is only to be suggestive, which includes mentioning relevant literature in passing.



Hungary 1956: The head of the Stalin monument in the street.

I. Marxism as a Method

Any discussion of contrasting interpretations of Marx can quickly degenerate into quotation-mongering. Quotations can obviously be mustered from Marx, Lenin, Stalin to justify any and all interpretations. The point is to grasp the essentials, the basic drift and emphasis; this necessitates a view of their writings as a whole.⁵ The charge that Stalin neglected an essential in Marx is not refuted by one or several quotations. The point is how the quotation fits in with the general direction of his writings.

The question "what is dialectical materialism" is already a problem. The texts which take up this and kindred questions are not Marx's; they are Engels' or Stalin's, or Communist Party (CP) publications. Marx is not consulted not simply because he is more difficult, but because this formulation already violates the meaning of his writings. The very term "dialectical materialism," in fact, never appears in Marx.

These questions assume that Marxism is a method, plan or approach *distinct from its object*: history and society. One studies Marxism as a *method* and *then* one applies it. This sequence suggests the weakness: first the method, then the application. Such an approach is attractive, because one imagines it to be the "scientific" way of understanding Marx. First one sharpens the method, then one applies it. But just this approach tends to be non-Marxist, since the sharp division between method and application, method and object, is the norm of liberal and bourgeois thought. In Marx they are inextricably wed; for that reason there can be no discussion of what is dialectical materialism divorced from its context and object: history, culture, labor, classes. And for this reason no such discussion in fact exists in Marx.⁶

Most of the discussions that take the form of "this is dialectical materialism" are not wrong in substance, but are essentially vapid and empty rules and instructions. As such few, including non-Marxists, could disagree with them. In other words, they don't grasp the essence of Marxism. The first three principal features of the dialectical method which Stalin lists are ones to which few could object: "a. dialectics...regards nature...as a connected and integral whole...; b. dialectics holds that nature is not a state of rest...but a state of continuous movement and

change . . . ; c.the dialectic method . . . holds that the process of development should be understood . . . as an onward and upward movement, as a transition from an old qualitative state to a new qualitative state . . .”⁷ These features simply do not touch the fundamentals of Marxism. The method here is vacant.

In Marx, on the other hand, the method is *saturated with content*. There can be no discussion of “dialectical materialism” apart from its object: bourgeois society, culture and thought. And in Marx there is no discussion of the method in isolation. Marx’s most philosophical expositions of dialectical thought are in the context of his criticisms of Hegel and the young Hegelians — that is, the most advanced philosophical thought of his day. This is the only authentic method of studying dialectical thought: simultaneously to study bourgeois society and thought. Otherwise “dialectical materialism” decays into abstract pronouncements and instructions, ceasing to be a living critique. Real history enters only by way of examples.⁸

The last principal feature of dialectical materialism which Stalin lists — “d. dialectics holds that internal contradictions are inherent in all things and phenomena of nature . . .” — is in some ways closest to Marxism, but it is also the most misleading and false; and it is most important to understand its deficiencies. It is necessary here to say a word about Engels, for Stalin cites him frequently and most neo-Stalinist texts lean heavily on Engels. Engels survived Marx by many years and wrote several shorter popularizations of Marx which enjoy widespread success. But from the turn of the century many of the European Marxists, especially Italian and German, noted that Engels’ more popular writings deviated in significant ways from Marx. It need not be sacrilege to state or examine this; Marx and Engels would of course have to be more than human if they did not differ in some respects. It seems clear that Engels was most distant from Marx in his “purely” philosophical writings, and closest in his economic and historical writings. Exactly this “non-Marxist” Engels is what Stalin and the Stalinists claim and inherit.⁹

What are the issues? Lukacs in *History and Class Consciousness* put it this way: “Engels [states in *Anti-Dühring* that] dialectics . . . is a continuous process of transition In consequence a one-sided and rigid causality must be replaced by interaction. But he [Engels] does not even mention the most vital

interaction, namely the *dialectical relation between subject and object in the historical process*, let alone give it the prominence it deserves. Yet without this factor dialectics ceases to be revolutionary, despite attempts...to retain 'fluid' concepts." [Emphasis in original.]¹⁰

To briefly expand: Marxism is an objective and economic analysis of society *and* a theory of revolution. As a theory of revolution, it is committed to the proposition that people — a class, the "subject" — make history by actively intervening in the historical process. For this reason Marxism is not simply a materialist doctrine. Why? A purely materialist doctrine cannot understand how people make history, how they act in history. A simple materialism derives everything mechanically from the material structure of society, and cannot fathom how people themselves understand this materialist structure so as to change it. That is, it forgets the crucial dialectical relation in Marx: humanity must understand reality before — or in the process of — changing it. If all understanding, all consciousness is strictly produced by the materialist structure, there can be nothing for revolutionaries to do till this structure changes. This turns Marxism into a mechanical evolutionary doctrine waiting passively for revolution.

Exactly for this reason, the usual poles of idealism and materialism, or, idealism and Marxism are insufficient. Marxism incorporates an important element of idealism: the notion of subjectivity and consciousness; or, in different terms, the idea that humanity makes history. And on this very point Marx would criticize simple materialism. He wrote, "The materialist doctrine that men are the products of circumstances and upbringing, and that, therefore, changed men are products of other circumstances and changed upbringing, forgets that it is men that change circumstances..." (Fourth Thesis on Feuerbach). In a fundamental way simple materialism is passive; this is what Marx called "the chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism" (First Thesis on Feuerbach). It neglects the dialectic of theory and practice.¹¹

The point is not that simple materialism does not have a theory of change; it does. But it is an evolutionary, mechanical and passive one. It omits or downgrades the category of consciousness and subjective action, and without these history becomes a

giant machine, unfolding according to certain laws. Obviously any revolutionary who in any way acts upon the world does not fully believe in a mechanical unfolding of the world. As noted earlier, however, in question is the whole drift and meaning of the texts on Marx — a drift which has political consequences. Hence the evolutionary interpretation of Marxism has been associated with pre-World War I social democracy. Evidently social democracy acted politically, but their schema was an evolutionary one: small reforms would slowly add up to a large one — revolution. This is the political perspective that emerges from this philosophical interpretation of Marx's dialectics.

A further complication: a vulgar materialism does not only issue into fatalism and passivity, but also yields the reverse: voluntarism. As Lukacs has explained, voluntarism and fatalism are complements, not opposites. Voluntarism is a subjective form of praxis which seeks to act upon, or direct and command, a revolutionary process. All will, consciousness and theory are collected into a single point, usually the vanguard party. Voluntarism does not understand the *self-activity of classes and people*, where the objects of history become the enlightened subjects. Hence the foundation of voluntarism is vulgar materialism because the "masses" always remain "masses" — to be commanded and directed. As with fatalism, a real dialectic of theory and practice, where classes *participate*, is lost.¹² While voluntarism is characterized by action, and even more by "calls to action," it remains ineffectual because of its inability to ground itself in historical forces.

All these same problems and questions emerge in something which at first sight may appear irrelevant or esoteric: the relationship of nature and history. This relationship, however, is fundamental to the understanding of dialectics. Stalin, and Russian Marxism in general, refer often to natural sciences and natural reality as examples of dialectical processes — again leaning heavily on Engels, not Marx. In this interpretation, natural reality illustrates dialectical and revolutionary changes. Stalin quotes Engels: "Nature is the test of dialectics...every change is a passing of quantity into quality...For example, the temperature of water has at first no effect on its liquid state; but as the temperature of water rises or falls, a moment arrives

when . . . the water is converted in one case into steam and in the other into ice" Stalin's own text is studded with inspirations from natural sciences: "The science of the history of society . . . can become as precise a science as, let us say, biology"

This kind of appeal to natural sciences has been and is quite common. However, it suffers from exactly the same deficiency as discussed above: the categories of consciousness and subjectivity drop out. In the processes of natural reality, these categories play no role. The transformation of liquids into steam or ice, or that of a bulb into a flower (another favorite example), etc., do not include conscious activity. Marxism is precisely concerned with a *social and historical* reality, not a natural one. "Human history," wrote Marx, "differs from natural history in . . . that we have made the former, but not the latter"13 For this reason historical materialism is not, as Stalin would have it, simply an application of dialectical materialism to history and society. It incorporates human activity, consciousness, subjectivity — all lacking in natural reality.14

For these reasons, all harping on the "science" of Marxism is suspect. Such an emphasis seeks to transfer the certainty, objectivity, measurements, quantification, etc. of the natural sciences to the "science" of Marxism. But Marxism is unique in dealing with social reality. It cannot be "scientific" in the same sense as the natural sciences. All attempts to make Marxism into a method like that of the natural sciences, which can be applied to any situation, fall victim to the same pitfalls discussed earlier.

To be sure, there is an area where social and natural reality intersect — an area proper for dialectical explorations.15 Outside of this, however, it is more than doubtful if the pure natural reality of chemical, biological or physical processes is "dialectical." These processes do not develop by way of contradiction. Thus there is no such activity as a Marxist physics or a Marxist astronomy; in the pure natural sciences there is only science, not a bourgeois or Marxist version.

The neo-Stalinist doctrine is wrong on two scores. On the one hand, it reduced a social reality to a natural one; on the other hand, it sought to fit natural reality into a dialectical schema of contradictions. An example of where this can lead is the infamous case of Lysenko in Russia. The theory of genetic inheritance was denounced as un-Marxist, bourgeois, idealist and Menshevik,

since it seemed to detach inheritance from the environment — that is, render it impervious to objective reality — and so was not dialectical. Instead, Lysenko, who was literally a charlatan, championed the view, in accord with Stalinism and allegedly with Marxism, that inheritability could be altered by treating species to different environments. This was his process of “vernalization” which entailed moistening and chilling seeds to increase their yields.

The point is not that Lysenko was a crank — he was — but that he was able to convince the Stalinist leadership that his was the dialectical and Marxist approach to inheritance. The followers of Mendelian and genetic theories were consequently considered bourgeois and idealist, and were suppressed. Mendelian genetics was denounced as “Menshevizing idealism,” “an expression of senile decay and degradation of bourgeois culture.” As one Lysenkoist put it: “The complete victory of Lysenko’s teaching was marked in our days by the crushing ideological rout of the supporters of the reactionary anti-scientific, Weismannist-Mendelist-Morganist trend in biology. This was one of the victories of socialism, of communism over capitalism.”¹⁶ This “complete victory” was a disaster for Soviet agriculture, as the seeds and processes of the Lysenkoists were worthless and even harmful. One of the charges leveled against Khrushchev by his successors was his (continuing) support for Lysenko and the resulting debacle of Soviet agriculture.¹⁷

● To reiterate: Marxism as a method or approach cannot be reduced to several instructions or propositions. In a precise sense, there is no “scientific” Marxist method which can be discussed apart from its object: society, labor, culture, history. All attempts to do this — such as Stalin’s — miss the essence of Marxism and end with a formal schema. They are usually inspired by the natural sciences and the “scientific method” of these natural sciences. It was and is a misconception that Marx did for society what Darwin did for nature, that is, to discover its laws of evolution — though even Engels stated this. But Marxism is not a simple materialism; it is a critique of society and ideology, and a theory of revolution. It is concerned with processes in social reality which do not exist in pure nature — processes of active human change. Nature is not conscious; and Marxism deems consciousness a vital and irreplaceable ingredient of the historical process.

II. Stalin and Lenin

There are two common ways of evaluating Stalin: 1) in every way he furthered and developed the work of Lenin, or 2) on every decisive question he departed from Lenin. There is no need to adopt either of these simplified positions; but it is worthwhile to examine briefly Lenin's last writings and thoughts on Stalin — and not simply for scholastic reasons. At issue here was the theoretical and practical problem that has come to be called the "national question." These writings, moreover, at least suggest the possibility of a *non-Stalinist Leninism*. If this is true, then "Marxism-Leninism" cannot simply be the combination of the writings and practices of Marx, Lenin, Stalin and Mao. Obviously there were differences among all of them, but these differences should not rule out the question of a certain break between Lenin and Stalin (to say nothing of the others). History is not simply a mechanical process which unravels according to certain laws. Just because Stalin did succeed Lenin is no reason to assume that it was necessary or inevitable.

Lenin died young at 54, in January 1924. For the last 10 months of his life he was paralyzed by a stroke and could not talk; prior to that period he was sick but could communicate by writing. Most of the key events bearing on the question of Lenin and Stalin cluster around the end of 1922 and the first three months of 1923. On doctor's orders, Lenin's access to political happenings and events was limited. It was Stalin who supervised Lenin's access to politics — a job he performed scrupulously. "Stalin asked," noted Lenin's secretary, "if I was not saying too much to Vladimir Illich [Lenin]. How does he manage to keep informed about current business?"¹⁸

The crucial issue was the "national question." The USSR is composed of several national minorities, such as the Georgians and Ukrainians, who are distinct by way of culture and history from the Russians proper. In 1922 the formal relationship between Russia and the various minorities was not established, and it was Stalin's task, as Commissar for the Nationalities (and himself a Georgian), to propose a solution. His plan, called the "autonomization plan," was most notably rejected by the Georgians. The Georgian Central Committee declared "premature the unification of the independent Republics on the basis of autonomi-

zation, proposed by Comrade Stalin's theses. We regard the unification of economic endeavor and of general policy indispensable, but with the *retention of all attributes of independence.*" [Emphasis added.]¹⁹ Lenin himself did not like the plan. "In my opinion, the question is of enormous importance. Stalin is in rather too much of a hurry." And Lenin had a whole series of recommended changes: essentially he was afraid of destroying the independence of the minorities, and wanted to establish a Federation with "equal rights." In general, Lenin was very alert to the problem of "Great Russian chauvinism," that is, political and cultural "imperialism" by the Russian nationals and government. "Scratch certain Communists," he once stated, "and you'll find a Great Russian chauvinist."²⁰ Stalin did not accept Lenin's recommendations — "in my opinion, Comrade Lenin himself 'hurried' a little" — but given Lenin's stature, his changes were accepted. Everything seemed settled. End of Act I.

The Georgians were not entirely pleased with the plan, however, or with its implementation by Stalin and his agent in Georgia, Ordzhonikidze. In their attempt to win Georgian mass support, the Georgian Communists did not want to appear — or be — subordinated to the huge Russian Federation; rather they wanted to enter on an *equal* basis. The continuing friction exasperated Stalin, who finally wired Ordzhonikidze: "We intend to put an end to the wrangle in Georgia and thoroughly punish the Georgian Central Committee.... In my opinion we have to take a decisive line and expel any and all remnants of nationalism from the Central Committee."²¹ With this hardening, the Georgian Central Committee collectively resigned.

The resistance of the Georgians to the government was no longer ordinary; the resignation of an entire Central Committee was not a usual event and required an investigation by the Politburo. But at this point, Lenin, from his sick bed, became suspicious. Having heard from private sources that all was not well in Georgia, and doubting the impartiality of the Politburo investigation, he sent a private agent. What he learned in the beginning of December 1922 changed his entire appraisal of the situation. He was upset to find out, for one thing, that one of Stalin's agents, Ordzhonikidze, had physically struck a Georgian Communist; moreover, he became aware that this was no simple case of friction or misunderstanding between Russians and

Georgians, but a case of Russian "imperialism" and authoritarianism, apparently led by Stalin.

In the middle and toward the end of December, Lenin suffered several more attacks; partially paralyzed, he was clearly a dying man. His doctors tried to stop him from working, but he in turn threatened to refuse cooperation with the doctors if he were not permitted to dictate some lines each day — a threat which did allow him several minutes a day for this activity. Under these conditions, Lenin's "Testament," as it is sometimes called (also known as his "Letter to the Congress"), was written. It dealt with several issues, most notably the problem of the political structure and Lenin's successors, and the national question. It begins this way: "I would urge strongly that at this Congress a number of changes be made in our political structure." He accurately anticipated a split between Stalin and Trotsky, and sought to avoid it by increasing the membership of the Central Committee and then — in a postscript — by removing Stalin. "Comrade Stalin, having become General Secretary, has unlimited authority concentrated in his hands, and I am not sure whether he will always be capable of using that authority with sufficient caution."

The postscript reads:

Stalin is too rude and this defect, although quite tolerable in our midst and in dealing among us Communists, becomes intolerable in a General Secretary. That is why I suggest that the comrades think about a way of removing Stalin from that post and appointing somebody else differing in all respects from Comrade Stalin in his superiority, that is, more tolerant, more loyal, more polite and more considerate to the comrades, less capricious, etc. This circumstance may appear to be a negligible detail. But I think that from the standpoint of what I wrote about the mutual relation between Stalin and Trotsky it is not a detail, or it is a detail which can assume decisive importance.²²

Other notes deal with the "national question" and Stalin's role in Georgia. Lenin begins with a self-criticism: "I suppose I have been very remiss with respect to the workers of Russia for not having intervened energetically and decisively enough in the

notorious question of autonomization” And he notes: “If matters had come to such a pass that Ordzhonikidze could go to the extreme of applying physical violence . . . we can imagine what a mire we got ourselves into. Obviously the whole business of ‘autonomization’ was radically wrong and badly timed.” Lenin declared that the plan was a mere “scrap of paper” which was “unable to defend the non-Russians from the onslaught of that really Russian man, the Great Russian chauvinist, in substance a rascal and lover of violence, such as the typical Russian bureaucrat is.” “I think that Stalin’s haste and his infatuation with pure administration together with his spite against the notorious ‘nationalist-socialism’ played a fatal role here. In politics spite generally plays the basest of roles.”

Lenin went on to discuss how “big” nation oppression is the norm in history, and Communists in particular must be especially careful not to perpetuate it.

And I think that in the present instance, as far as the Georgian nation is concerned, we have a typical case in which a genuinely proletarian attitude makes profound caution, thoughtfulness and a readiness to compromise a matter of necessity for us. The Georgian [Stalin] who is neglectful of this aspect of the question, or who carelessly flings about accusations of ‘national socialism’ (whereas he himself is a real true ‘national socialist,’ and even a vulgar Great Russian), violates, in substance, the interests of proletarian class solidarity, for nothing holds up the development and strengthening of proletarian class solidarity so much as national injustice.²³

“The political responsibility for all this truly Great Russian nationalist campaign,” Lenin states toward the end of these notes, “must, of course, be laid on Stalin and Dzerzhinsky.”

Lenin’s health in fact improved slightly over the next weeks. He wrote several important articles, and continued to explore the Georgian situation. Moreover, he formed a private commission to study the problem, and dictated several guidelines and questions: “Three elements: 1)it is not permitted to strike someone; 2)concessions are indispensable; 3)one cannot compare a small state with a large one. Did Stalin know [of the incident]? Why didn’t he do something about it?”²⁴

Lenin's commission reported to him in the beginning of March, 1923. It apparently confirmed everything he had previously known and written about Stalin and the Georgian situation. Lenin's health was rapidly declining, and in a matter of days he would suffer a serious stroke which was to remove him from all communication and politics. After he learned of the report of his private commission, he wrote, on March 5, to Trotsky:

I earnestly ask you to undertake the defense of the Georgian affair at the Central Committee of the Party. That affair is now under "persecution" at the hands of Stalin and Dzerzhinsky and I cannot rely on their impartiality. Indeed, quite the contrary! If you would agree to undertake its defense, I could be at rest.

After receiving Trotsky's affirmation, Lenin wrote to Stalin. This letter refers to an incident from December, when Lenin had dictated another letter to Trotsky thanking him for his support in the foreign trade monopoly dispute, in which Lenin and Trotsky opposed Stalin. Again Stalin was entrusted with supervising Lenin's medical regime; and he was apparently fearful of a Lenin-Trotsky alliance against himself. Hence he was outraged that Lenin had kept abreast of political happenings and had openly supported Trotsky; and he was furious with Krupskaya, Lenin's wife, to whom the letter had been dictated. When he learned of the letter, Stalin called up Krupskaya, insulted her, and threatened to have her disciplined by the party for violating doctor's orders. Krupskaya did not want to upset Lenin with this threat and so wrote about it to Kamenev:

Because of a very short letter that I had written in words dictated to me by Vladimir Ilyich with the permission of doctors, Stalin yesterday permitted himself a most rude outburst against me. This is not my first day in the party. In thirty years I have not heard a single rude word from any comrade . . . I know better than any doctor what can and cannot be said to Ilyich, because I know — at any rate better than Stalin — what disturbs him and what doesn't. I am turning to you and to Grigori [Zinoviev] as much closer comrades of V.I. [Lenin] and I ask you to protect me from

rude interference in my personal life, unworthy abuse, and threats...

Apparently Lenin did not learn of Stalin's threat to Krupskaya until later, in March. On the day he wrote to Trotsky asking for help against Stalin, March 5, he began a letter to Stalin:

You had the rudeness to call my wife to the telephone and berate her. Although she expressed her willingness to forget what was said, the act nevertheless became known....I do not intend to forget so easily what was done against me, and there is no need to point out that what is done against my wife I consider to be against me also. Therefore I ask you to consider whether you agree to take back what you said and apologize, or whether you prefer to break relations between us.

The next day he wrote to the Georgian Communists who had resigned and had been removed: "I follow your affair with all my heart. I am outraged at the rudeness of Ordzhonikidze and the connivance of Stalin and Dzerzhinsky. I am preparing for you notes and a speech." When Krupskaya saw Lenin's March 5 letter to Stalin, she told Kamenev: "Vladimir has just dictated to his stenographer a letter to Stalin saying that he breaks off personal relations with him. He would never have decided to break off personal relations if he had not thought it necessary to crush Stalin politically." The very day following these letters Lenin had a stroke, and another, more serious one three days later; by March 10 he was paralyzed and could never speak or write again. End of Act II.

The rest of the story, Act III, is too long to be told here. At least it should be mentioned that none of these documents, nor Lenin's "Letter to Congress" with the command to remove Stalin, were published during Stalin's lifetime. Krupskaya, temporarily part of the anti-Stalin opposition, smuggled Lenin's "Testament" out of Russia, and it was published in the West.²⁶ But Stalin played his hand well: the split Lenin foresaw happened, only in this scenario Stalin was victorious and Trotsky defeated and murdered.

III. The Chinese Revolution

The interpretation of the Chinese revolution is exceedingly difficult; there is little agreement even among its historians. But there is *some* agreement. In general, an examination of the Chinese revolution shows that it diverged significantly from the Russian revolution and that, moreover, it succeeded *in spite of* Stalin's and the Comintern's directives. In other terms: there is a revolutionary process associated with Mao which is distinct from that associated with Stalin. As noted earlier, this means that *the Chinese defense of Stalin cannot be taken at face value*. The defense of Stalin, in fact, was due more to the events following Khrushchev's rise to power. Inasmuch as Khrushchev came to power as the denunciator of Stalin, the Chinese appeal to Stalin in their disputes with the Russian leader. This was the framework and terms of the difference, but not the substance: in fact the issues have nothing to do with Stalin. (The relevant events will be discussed below.) It is important to grasp this; for it is the failure to understand the extent to which the Chinese defense of Stalin is not real but tactical that has misled much of the left, in the sense of viewing Stalin *plus* Mao as upholders of a single revolutionary theory and practice against Russian "revisionism." Nothing is further from the truth. The remarks here intend only to be suggestive, not an exhaustive study of the Chinese revolution. It is only a question of opening up certain areas of discussion.

The Chinese revolution and Maoism can be seen as bucking, and diverging from, the Russian model and directions in at least three areas: (A) the role of peasants; (B) political organization; and (C) economic organization and industrialization. A glance at several periods of the history of the Chinese revolution will flesh out these divergences.

A. 1927 is a nodal point in the history of the Chinese Communist Party and Mao. Prior to that year a "united front" existed between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Kuomintang. Since China was not yet a unified country, and its proletariat was small and weak, it seemed logical for the CCP to unite with the Kuomintang — under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek — in order to achieve national unification and limited social reforms. Thus the Comintern decided in 1923: "Insofar as the working

class . . . is not yet differentiated as an absolutely independent force, the E.C.C.I. [Executive Committee of the Communist International] considers that it is necessary to co-ordinate the activities of the Kuomintang and of the young Communist Party of China."

As simple as this may appear, it is not. In the history of the Comintern, there have been many kinds of "united fronts" (this is discussed further in Section IV). The differences among them depend on the nature of the alliance or subordination involved: e.g., does the Communist Party mute its revolutionary program? disband its organizational integrity? etc. While the CCP did approve a coalition with the Kuomintang, it opposed the form demanded by the Comintern; according to one commentator, the CCP "profoundly distrusted the Kuomintang and was inclined to regard it as a collection of 'new warlords' and 'new bureaucrats.'" ²⁷

One chapter of the story can be quickly told. In 1926 Chiang began a major military swing, the "Northern Expedition," to rid China of warlords and unify the country. Advance work for this expedition was performed by the Communist Party. In Shanghai, for example, Communist-led labor unions revolted, seizing the city in anticipation of the arrival of Chiang and the Kuomintang. At this point, the official Comintern position still called for coalition with Chiang. Stalin announced days before Chiang's arrival in Shanghai: "At present, we need the Right. It has capable people, who still direct the army and lead it against the imperialists. Chiang Kai-shek has perhaps no sympathy for the revolution, but he is leading the army and cannot do otherwise than lead it against the imperialists."²⁸ In Shanghai, Chiang was greeted as a liberator; specific instructions from the Comintern directed workers to hide or bury their weapons. Chiang entered the city unopposed. Then, on April 12, 1927, he launched a counter-revolution — a coordinated and methodical massacre and execution of CCP members and sympathizers — which was literally a lethal blow to the CCP and Comintern policy.²⁹ This was, in short, a major defeat for the Chinese revolution and the Comintern policy of "united front."

The collapse of the CCP/Kuomintang alliance was a disaster for the CCP and for Stalin, who was in the midst of a struggle with Trotsky and needed victories in China to vindicate his position.

The usual course was adopted: it was decided that Comintern policy was not wrong, but that CCP leadership was, since it had been guilty of "right" errors — kowtowing to the Kuomintang. It was also decided that the Chinese revolution was now entering a new phase of revolt and insurrection. Under impossible conditions, the Comintern commanded uprisings by the CCP; Mao later characterized this period as one of "reckless action (adventurism)." Instead of organizing an "orderly retreat," party members and followers were commanded to "undertake local insurrections all over the country without the slightest hope of success."³⁰ The upshot of this policy was simple: the communist movement in the cities was annihilated. The urban proletariat never again played a role in the Chinese revolution — not until a victorious Mao entered the cities from the countryside in 1949. The total defeat of this policy, then, defined the uniqueness of the Chinese revolution: it shifted from city to countryside.

What was to become the Maoist strategy, peasant revolution, was formed these very same years, developed either in opposition to or in ignorance of Stalin and the Comintern. To preserve the Kuomintang/CCP alliance, in fact, Stalin had ordered that the radicalism of the peasantry be curbed — to "check the peasant's overzealous action with the power of the Party Headquarters."³¹ Mao's orientation was different.

Mao's field of activity was the countryside and the peasantry; he had played only a minor role in the events of the city. The betrayal, repression, and misleadership of the urban proletariat — a proletariat which in any case was small in China — meant that the only possibilities were now outside the cities. It cannot be pretended that a focus on the peasantry was utterly new to Marxism, to Lenin or to Stalin; but this is not the point. Hitherto Marxism had been essentially concerned with an urban proletariat, and only secondarily with the peasantry. With Mao this is reversed: the proletariat is minor, the peasants an entire theory and practice. This is Mao's contribution to Marxism: a theory of peasant revolution.

One of Mao's very first writings, "Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan," spells this out; it was written in 1927, the same year as the urban disasters. "To give credits where they are due, if we allot ten points to the accomplishments of the democratic revolution, then the achievements of the urban

dwellers and the military units rate only three points, while the remaining seven points would go to the peasants in their rural revolution."³² This may not seem so original or novel, but within the history of Marxist theory it reverses the relationship between the peasantry and the proletariat. The peasants here are the major force, and the urban proletariat an adjunct. The heresy of this doctrine in terms of traditional Marxism is implicitly admitted by the Maoists themselves; for *this sentence* — one of the most explicit in the role it assigns to the peasantry — *is omitted in recent Chinese editions of the Report*.³³

The remaining stages of the Chinese revolution can barely be mentioned here: the creation of rural soviets by Mao; the "wars of extermination" by Chiang which finally forced the CCP on the epic "long march" to Yenan; the Japanese invasion of China and the second "united front" between the CCP and Chiang; the defeat of the Japanese (and the end of World War II) and the recommencement of Communist/Chiang hostilities leading to Communist victory in 1949. Three points are worth emphasizing about the Chinese path to revolution: 1) the protracted military struggle (unlike the Russian Revolution, where the military phase was relatively brief); 2) the peasant and rural orientation; and 3) the important role of nationalism. The relative significance of rural revolution and peasant nationalism need not be discussed here; but it should be noted that much of the support for and success of the CCP stems from its assuming the mantle of nationalism following the invasion of China by Japan.³⁴

Stalin was not interested in aiding the Chinese revolution, and more often than not subordinated it to the imperatives of Russian foreign policy. The rural soviets organized by Mao did receive "official" recognition but were originally ignored or opposed by Stalin. In general, Stalin was concerned with Japanese imperialism as a threat to Russian integrity; for this reason he deemed that the Kuomintang could provide more of a buffer than what were to him some rural and slightly heretical Communists. Even after World War II, Stalin was advising the Chinese to shelve their revolution in favor of aiding Chiang. In 1945 he signed a treaty of "friendship and alliance" with Chiang, and pressed the Communists to come to terms. He stated then: "After the war we invited Chinese comrades to come to Moscow and we discussed the situation in China. We told them bluntly that we considered the

development of the uprising in China had no prospect, and that the Chinese comrades should seek a *modus vivendi* with Chiang Kai-shek, . . . and dissolve their army. The Chinese comrades agreed here with the views of the Soviet comrades, but went back to China and did otherwise."³⁵ (Note that this passage summarizes the difficulty of capturing the essence of Chinese Marxism. Theoretically, they pretended to toe the official Comintern and Stalin line; in practice, however, they diverged, simply ignoring the prevailing doctrine.)

Finally, it should be noted here that at the end of World War II the U.S.S.R. directly hindered the Chinese revolution, when they briefly occupied Manchuria, the most developed and industrialized region of China. At war's end they could have given it over to the Communists, which, according to one historian, "would have in effect decided the civil war without fighting, since the Communists, who already dominated the rural areas of north and eastern China, could with the Manchurian war potential at their command have overthrown the Kuomintang at will."³⁶ Rather the Russians systematically stripped Manchuria of all moveable equipment, carted it back to Russia, and surrendered the province to the Kuomintang.

The depth and significance of the antagonism between Stalin and the Chinese revolution should not be minimized by adopting the formula of Stalin's "mistakes." These "mistakes" cover the entire Chinese revolution. As noted earlier, the Chinese themselves state in matter-of-fact fashion: "We do not defend his [Stalin's] mistakes In the late twenties, the thirties, and the early and middle forties, the Chinese Marxist-Leninists . . . resisted the influence of Stalin's mistakes." The recent Russian attacks on Mao and Maoism — be they "revisionist" or whatnot — may be on target in that they confirm an old Stalin/Mao opposition. They can be accepted, that is, but with an important qualification: what the Russians attack as a negative feature can be accepted as a positive one. One recent Russian attack states: "The frequent appeals Mao makes in his writings to the authority of Stalin and citations from him were also intended simply to create the impression of adherence to [Russian] Marxism-Leninism In actual fact, Mao makes hypocritical use of Stalin's name A collection of Mao's speeches at closed meetings . . . reveals that Mao called Stalin a metaphysician and accused him of being opposed to the Chinese revolution."³⁷

B. Along political and economic dimensions, the Chinese effort is the history of the departure — openly or implicitly — from the Stalinist and Soviet models. In the political dimension, to use the most general terms, there has been a continuous Chinese attempt, from the early “rectification” campaigns of the 1940’s through the Cultural Revolution of the 1960’s, to treat political differences, culture, consciousness and subjectivity in a democratic and non-authoritarian manner — at least as contrasted to the Soviet Union.

A glance at the Rectification Campaign of 1942-44, which in many ways prefigured the Cultural Revolution, may illuminate this. The Rectification Campaign was a struggle over power, and theory, by an embattled Chinese revolution; it was an attempt to resolve the imperatives arising from a renewed Japanese offensive, isolation by the Kuomintang, *and* the necessity to direct guerilla warfare and revolution over a wide and decentralized area with a mass of new and unschooled party members.³⁸ As such, it was an educational and political effort to interpret and apply a received Soviet Marxism — the only Marxism with which the Chinese were familiar — to very unique Chinese conditions. Hence it was directed against a dogmatic and formal Marxism, associated with the Soviet Union, which was irrelevant to specific Chinese conditions. It called, in short, for a *Chinese* Marxism: “If a Chinese communist, who is a part of the great Chinese people, bound to his people by his very flesh and blood, talks about Marxism apart from Chinese peculiarities, this Marxism is merely an empty abstraction. Consequently, the Sinification of Marxism — that is to say, making certain that in all its manifestations it is imbued with Chinese peculiarities, using it according to these peculiarities — becomes a problem....We must put an end to writing eight-legged essays on foreign models....”³⁹

The campaign sought to replace a formal and irrelevant Marxism with a Chinese Marxism; in doing this Mao championed elements which later became distinctive to Chinese Marxism-Leninism, notably decentralization and the “mass line,” both of which were lacking from Soviet Marxism. A corollary to this was the handling of political differences within the party in a non-violent manner.

The direct target of this Reform Movement was the Comintern and Stalin’s agents in China, especially Wang Ming. These agents

were known as the "Returned Students," since they had studied Marx in the Soviet Union for a number of years and had been sent by the Comintern to more or less direct the Chinese revolution. Needless to say, those who had been on the scene for a long period, and in the thick of the battles (such as Mao), were none too pleased with the returned students' Soviet solutions (from Stalin) to Chinese problems. All the specifics of the reform movement must be seen as efforts to diverge from and undercut the Soviet models represented by the returned students. The mass line itself sought to show the irrelevance of the "foreign" Marxists: to judge whether someone is a "false Marxist or a true one, we need only to find out about his relations with the broad masses of workers and peasants."⁴⁰

Political differences in the party were also treated in a way which sharply diverged from the Russian model. Stalin had acquired the habit of arresting and murdering his opponents, but Mao stated quite openly in the reform documents: "No matter with whom you are dealing, a false show of authority to instill terror is in all cases uncalled for. This strategy of terror is not of the slightest use against the enemy; against our comrades it only does harm The Chinese Communist Party does not rely on terror for nourishment; it relies on truth" ⁴¹ All analyses of the reform movement conclude that it was not a purge of the Soviet type: no one was imprisoned or "disappeared."⁴²

More recent writings by both the Soviets and Chinese make it clear that the Soviet model and authority were at issue in the 1940's Rectification Campaign. The official Chinese account of the history of the CCP states that the campaign was directed against "doctrinaires as represented by Comrade Wang Ming," who were "ignorant of the Party's historical experience" and could "only quote words or phrases from Marxist writings."⁴³ Wang Ming himself, leader of the returned students, later moved to the Soviet Union, siding with it in the Sino-Soviet split. What he has written recently about the Rectification Campaign is obviously distorted, but probably only partially so. According to Wang, Mao charged in the campaign that "Russian Marxism [was] suitable only for leading the Russian revolution and unsuitable for leading the world and the Chinese revolution . . . [and] that the leadership and assistance of the Communist International to the Chinese Communist Party was entirely wrong . . . not only 'invalid' and

'ineffective' but even 'harmful.' "44

More recently both the brief "100 Flowers" campaign of 1956 and the Cultural Revolution of the later 1960's can be considered in broad outline as "rectification campaigns." Both were efforts to educate and free the party from Soviet models, revamp authority relations, and in general deal with internal conflict and bureaucracy in a specifically non-Soviet manner. This was openly stated in the "100 Flowers" campaign and in Mao's important work, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People." These were responses to the Hungarian revolution of 1956, which (along with unrest in Poland) pointed to some basic failing in the Stalinist system and bureaucracy. At the very minimum, this failing, which finally led to an explosive situation — as in Hungary — was the inability to receive dissent and conflict without terror and repression. Mao stated: "If we persist in using methods of terror to solve internal antagonisms, it may lead to the transformation of these antagonisms into antagonisms of a nation-enemy type, as happened in Hungary."45

The notion of "non-antagonistic contradictions" was not originated by Mao but he centered his thought around it. This idea at once meant that conflicts persisted in a socialist society — China — and that insofar as they were non-antagonistic, they could be resolved without violence. This was a sharp rejoinder to the regular use of terror by Stalinism to suppress conflicts. According to Mao, "All attempts to use administrative orders or coercive measures to settle ideological questions or questions of right and wrong are not only ineffective but harmful. We cannot abolish religion by administrative decree or force people not to believe in it. We cannot compel people to give up idealism, any more than we can force them to believe in Marxism. The only way to settle questions of an ideological nature or controversial issues among the people is by the democratic method, the method of discussion of criticism, of persuasion and education, and not by the method of coercion or repression."46

The Cultural Revolution is too recent, too complex, and too obscure to discuss at length here. It can be said, however, that in a broad sense it was patterned on the previous rectification campaigns: a vast educational effort directed at transforming ingrained habits, authority relations, culture, and so on. "We must overcome the wrong tendency of some comrades to slight

the ideological, cultural and educational front.”⁴⁷ Such a program is loyal to a major concern of Mao, a concern with culture and consciousness — everything which the bureaucratic approach neglected or suppressed. “To look at things and not people is to do an ineffective job,” stated Mao.⁴⁸ The point was to undo revisionism not from above but from below, by refashioning the ideas and consciousness of the masses. “This great task of transforming customs and habits is without any precedent in human history.”⁴⁹ Evidently the Cultural Revolution was also much more than this — it was a struggle over political and economic power.

The deification of Mao Tse-tung in this struggle, perhaps, can be considered a *tactic*. On this last point, note what Edgar Snow attributed to Mao: the cult had been necessary so as to stimulate the masses to dismantle an encrusted bureaucracy. “Of course the personality cult had been overdone [according to Mao] It was hard, the Chairman said, to overcome the habits of three thousand years of emperor-worshipping tradition. The so-called ‘Four Greats’ — those epithets applied to Mao himself: Great Teacher, Great Leader, Great Supreme Commander, Great Helmsman — what a nuisance. They would all be eliminated sooner or later.”⁵⁰ This remains to be seen.

C. In its economic organization and approach to industrialization, China has significantly departed from the Stalinist model. This is a widely documented fact. Insofar as the economic structure has an impact on social and political organization, the latter will also depart from the Stalinist model. K.S. Karol, a journalist schooled in Russia who toured China, observes: “Undeniably the Maoists, like all other Communists, have been conditioned by thirty long years of Stalinism. It imposed on them ways of thought, a language, methods of analysis and interpretation” But, he notes, this is more facade than reality, insofar as their economic policy is non-Stalinist. “It is impossible for us to believe that — even in China — a hybrid Stalinism can be erected on economic bases radically different from those Stalin wanted to establish.”⁵¹

The Soviet and Stalinist model of economic organization is associated with the concentration of resources in heavy industry,

more or less patterned on heavy industry in capitalism. This includes a replication of the features integral to capitalist manufacture: lack of participation by workers, hierarchy, strata of experts, etc. In 1949-50 accords, on the morrow of the Chinese victory, Russia agreed to construct industrial units in China from top to bottom — units which would figure in China's first Five-Year Plan. The Soviet model was the goal and the means.

Dissatisfaction with the Soviet model dates back as early as 1953 and opposition to Kao Kang and "one-man management." The "one-man management" idea stems from Stalin, who adopted it from capitalism: "Our combines," Stalin stated, "must substitute one-man management for collegium management. The position at present is that there are from ten to fifteen men on the board of a combine We cannot go on managing this way"52 One-man management was established most emphatically in Manchuria, the center of China's heavy industry and of Russia's greatest influence, and the domain of Kao Kang. The opposition to Kao, which finally unseated him, was — in the words of one analyst — "that he had been too zealous in promoting the Soviet model of economic development which featured concentration on heavy industry and relative autonomy for professional management."53

Already in these years, then, an open attack was launched on the Soviet model of industrialization with its commitment to heavy industry, experts, hierarchy, etc.; and the search began for an alternate route, one which stressed participation, decentralization, light industry, the human factor, etc. Mao's writings from the mid-1950's, such as "Ten Great Relationships," suggest dissatisfaction with Soviet industrialization. "We have not repeated the mistakes of some socialist countries which attached excessive importance to heavy industries at the expense of light industries and agriculture."54 According to Jack Gray, there were "two roads" during the first Five-Year Plan: "On the one hand, the orthodox road, giving the greatest possible priority to modern heavy industry as the main engine of growth. This was a variant of the Soviet road. On the other hand, there was the alternative, represented in China by Mao's ideas, . . . which . . . sought to put the development of heavy industry in the context of, and responding to, the attempt to increase and diversify production in agriculture; to mobilize local savings and labor; to

diversify the rural economy . . . ; to create intermediate technologies . . . "55

It would be too simple to claim that later developments, notably the Great Leap Forward, the Communes, and the Cultural Revolution, were only logical progressions of these first departures from Soviet models of industrialization. It is true, however, that they followed the same contours: emphasis away from heavy industry and towards intermediate technology, efforts to overcome expert/worker division, "politics in command," etc. In short, they steered China on a course distinct from that prescribed by Stalin's program for industrialization. For example, one of the important "instructions" of the Cultural Revolution, "Along the Socialist or the Capitalist Road" (1967), denounced "rightists" for making a fetish of physical investment and technology, while neglecting the role of extra-technical factors — ideology, enthusiasm, human beings themselves. "The people and the people alone make history." This statement also called for the replacement of managers and technicians by revolutionary committees, participation by shop floor workers, etc.⁵⁶

Some recently published writings of Mao are extremely explicit in the critique of the Soviet model of industrialization, placing the responsibility squarely on Stalin. These writings are "reading notes," apparently from the late 1950's, and are comments on various Soviet publications, including Stalin's *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* (1952). Running through them is a constant reiteration of Stalin's over-emphasis on heavy industry. These notes confirm that Mao was a sharp critic of Stalin and Stalinism: Mao comments, for instance, that Stalin "understood dialectics, but not very much." The notes include some very suggestive remarks about the Soviet Union:

In dealing with the contradictions between the state, the collective, and the individual, Stalin over-stressed the public interest at the expense of the individual interest, and thereby planted the seeds for the subsequent excessive emphasis on individual interest, in the form of material incentives which his successors are said to have implemented. As a result of these and other errors and despite talk to the contrary, the Soviet Union never realized even a true collective ownership system.

Or he noted:

This book by Stalin [*Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*] has not a word on the superstructure from the beginning to the end. It never touches on man. We read of things but not man The viewpoint of Stalin's last letter is completely wrong. His basic error is his distrust of the people In regard to the law of value we want planning and politics in command, but the Soviets pay attention to production relationship only and ignore superstructure, politics, and the role of the people. Without a communist movement it is impossible to attain communism.⁵⁷

These remarks give the lie to the notion of an unbroken Stalin/Mao continuity and refute simplistic notions that Russian "revisionism" begins with Khrushchev.

Finally, it is necessary to say something about the Sino-Soviet break itself. As has been argued here, in some very fundamental respects the Chinese revolution both openly and implicitly diverged from the Russian revolution and pattern of development. It is a fact, however, that in the Sino-Soviet rift the Chinese have defended Stalin; but as noted earlier, this is the *vocabulary* of the Soviet/Chinese difference, not its essence. The present differences the Chinese have with the Russians are not grounded in any Russian break with Stalin's policy or past — a break which has not occurred — but rather stem from a combination of internal economic imperatives and new developments in foreign affairs.

To recapitulate the standard half-true Marxist-Leninist interpretation: Stalin dies in 1953, and Khrushchev manages to secure his power base with a violent denunciation of Stalin at the Twentieth Congress in 1956. At the same time Khrushchev champions foreign policies betraying the revolutionary Russian (and Chinese) past, such as "detente" with the West, peaceful transition to communism, and agreements with the West on nuclear bombs. All of this smacks of revisionism to the Chinese, who begin by defending Stalin's revolutionary honor and past, then advance alternative positions: imperialism is a paper tiger, the wind is from the east, nuclear war is a bogey, etc.

The real story is somewhat more complex. As noted earlier

several times, the antagonism between Mao and Stalin was founded in Stalin's efforts to control and (mis-) command the Chinese revolution. As Mao said to Edgar Snow in 1936: "Although the Communist party of China is a member of the Comintern, still this in no sense means that Soviet China is ruled by Moscow or by the Comintern. We are certainly not fighting for an emancipated China to turn the country over to Moscow!"⁵⁸ However, it does seem that this was Stalin's aim; hence his aid to Manchuria and Kao Kang following the victory of the Chinese revolution was directed at bringing China to a subservient position.

About Stalin's aid to Manchuria and Kao, Franz Schurmann has stated: "...As the Sino-Soviet conflict intensified, one of the most vehement and persistent allegations hurled by the Chinese against the Russians was that they constantly tried to interfere in internal Chinese affairs....In other words, the Russians were attempting to turn China into a satellite. From what is known of Stalin's behavior in Eastern Europe during the postwar period, it is quite likely that he tried to bring China into the same kind of operational control."⁵⁹ This was the Stalinist legacy.

Moreover the allegedly revisionist policy of Khrushchev, detente with the West, was not new but a constant from the Russian revolution through the Stalin years. From the early days, Russia sought agreements with hostile capitalist neighbors. E.H. Carr has noted that "the Anglo-Soviet trade treaty of March 1921 ...[and] the Rapallo Treaty with Germany in the spring of 1922 marked the beginning of a period of diplomatic activity in which peaceful co-existence with potentially hostile capitalist countries was accepted as the immediate goal of Soviet foreign policy."⁶⁰ The position most closely associated with Stalin, "socialism in one country," was in fact a recognition that revolution was not on the world's agenda.

China's policy itself, in particular during the years of 1953-55, was one of non-antagonism towards bourgeois nations: in 1954 it signed a treaty of peaceful co-existence with India, and in 1955 the Bandung Conference set forth the principles of neutralism. About this period Schurmann states, "Like the Russians, the Chinese accepted neutralism as a valid stance and sought a range of agreements with countries willing to accept it."⁶¹ The outbreak of polemics with the Russians in the post-1956 period about

"detente" with the West was, for these reasons, no simple return to some pure "unrevisionist" Stalinist (or Chinese) foreign policy; rather it was an appraisal of a new situation. This new situation was defined by the fact that the Russians had orbited the first earth satellite and developed the ICBM — a missile capable of delivering nuclear bombs over long distances.

It is important to note that foreign policy considerations were *not* the immediate cause of Chinese dissatisfactions with Khrushchev and with Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin. Initially, in fact, the Chinese supported limited opposition to Stalin's legacy within the Communist movement. This policy emerged following Khrushchev's speech, when the Communist world was rocked with internal conflict which included a revolution in Hungary and riots in Poland: China and Mao seemed receptive to some of the attempts to break away from a Russian-dominated Communist movement, and initially supported Gomulka and the notion of equality among socialist nations.⁶² Internally China reflected this same policy: this was the period of Mao's "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions," which explicitly mentioned Hungary and implicitly referred to the failure of Stalin to deal with conflict; as well as the period of the (brief) "100 Flowers," where some dissent and discussion was encouraged.

In late 1957, however, there was what can be called a "left turn" in Chinese policy, both internally and externally. Internally the situation seemed to be one of economic necessity. Russian financial aid had never been large, and the Russian model of industrialization did not seem to be serving China well. Industrialization was proceeding too slowly; as Mao stated, "...we are an outstanding people with a very long history, yet our steel output is low...we must catch up. We shall catch up with Britain in fifteen years."⁶³ This instituted the Great Leap Forward, which sought on the basis of a deliberately non-Soviet approach — labor-intensive projects, decentralization, intermediate technology — rapidly and furiously to industrialize.

More or less at the same time, there is a "left turn" in foreign policy, inaugurated by Mao's famous speech that the East wind prevails over the West wind. As noted above, this was inspired by the new weapons, especially the ICBM, which Russia had just tested — and which altered the balance of forces. "I am of the opinion that the international situation has now reached a new

turning point. There are two winds in the world today . . . The East wind prevail(s) over the West wind."64 Mao slighted the dangers of a nuclear holocaust — exactly the concern of Khrushchev and the Russians. According to Mao, a foreign statesman had told him that "if an atomic war was fought, the whole of mankind would be annihilated. I said that if the worst came to the worst and half of mankind died, the other half would remain while imperialism would be razed to the ground and the whole world would become socialist."65

The rest of this story cannot be told here; but evidently a collision course was set. Khrushchev was anxious to work out a detente with the West and an agreement on nuclear weapons; this, as noted earlier, was no real shift from Stalin's foreign policy. The Chinese were anxious to acquire nuclear weapons from the Soviet Union, and in both internal and external policy were moving left. An initial agreement on sharing nuclear technology between Russia and China had been signed; but given the increasingly militant Chinese pronouncements on war with the West, and their apparent indifference to the human cost of nuclear war, there was obvious reluctance on the Russian part to carry through. Moreover, it was a prerequisite of detente with the West that the spread of nuclear capability be stopped or, more exactly, that Russia deny nuclear aid to China. So, as Schurmann states, "The great blow that sparked the split between China and Russia came in June 1959. Khrushchev suddenly informed the Chinese that, as a condition of detente with America, he was unilaterally abrogating the nuclear sharing agreement of October 1957."66 Naturally this was regarded as a great betrayal by the Chinese: the selling out of a socialist country so as to come to terms with an enemy.

It should at least be noted, however, that this Russian action was not completely unfounded. At the time, it seems, the danger was that the USA would provide nuclear weapons to West Germany. Russia feared most of all the remilitarization of Germany, which, it should be recalled, invaded Russia in both World Wars. There was little the Russians wanted less than nuclear bombs under West German control. It *seems* this may have been the "trade-off" with the USA: nuclear arms would stay out of West Germany and China. Moreover, Mao's loose talk about the possible consequences of nuclear war obviously did not

endear him to those who genuinely feared it. Mao stated that the result of a nuclear war could mean that on "the debris of imperialism, the victorious people would create . . . a truly beautiful future for themselves."⁶⁷ The Russians may have thought, not without reason, that after the nuclear war there would be no such "beautiful future."

In any case, this issue formed the root of the Sino-Soviet rift, which was completed several years later when Khrushchev suddenly and without notice withdrew all the Russian economic advisors from China. The debate, of course, did not remain on this single point of detente and nuclear agreement with the West; but this was the starting point and did infuse many of the other issues. From the Chinese point of view, the Russians in pursuit of detente renounced support for revolutionary movements, including China itself. In this sense, the Russians were the "revisionists," championing peaceful co-existence rather than armed struggle. No matter how this conflict is appraised, it seems clear that neither side could legitimately appeal to some Stalinist policy, since the situation with nuclear weapons was essentially new. But if anything, it was the "revisionist" Russia that was most loyal to Stalin's legacy in foreign policy.

This is not to say that there were *no* legitimate reasons for the Chinese to appeal to Stalin's past; there were. Mao and the Chinese were genuinely shocked at the Khrushchev denunciation of Stalin; not so much because they defended Stalin, however, as because they had not been notified in advance. They considered his actions a violation of Communist solidarity, and one of their charges against Khrushchev was "failure to consult with the fraternal parties in advance." Moreover, it seems that Mao felt somewhat vulnerable to the charges of "cult of the personality" and one-man rule, of which Khrushchev had accused Stalin. A reflection of this was the deletion of "The Thought of Mao Tse-tung," as the official party ideology, from the party constitution in 1956.⁶⁸ There was another, nearly personal, edge to the conflict: Mao and the Chinese rightly felt that with the death of Stalin they were the oldest and most important Communists; they were the veterans from the 1920's while this generation had passed from the scene in Russia. Yet Khrushchev — essentially a nobody with no real revolutionary past, who was only a subordinate of Stalin — denounces Stalin and completely

exempts himself. This to the Chinese appeared as the height of dishonesty — as it was — and a complete violation of the guidelines of criticism/self-criticism. Moreover, this nobody very soon begins to treat the Chinese shabbily by insulting the communes of the Great Leap Forward, exerting economic pressure, and reneging on a nuclear agreement so as to sign one with a capitalist country. With all this it is understandable that Stalin began to look good to the Chinese and that their own criticism of him became muted. To those unfamiliar with the history of the Comintern and the Chinese revolution, China's qualified defense of Stalin is unfortunately taken at face value.

Finally, it should be noted that recent developments in Chinese foreign policy put in doubt the meaning of the Soviet/Chinese rift, or at least its current meaning. It no longer seems that the Russian "revisionists" are the only ones championing detente and searching for alliances. Of course, no single act of foreign policy can be judged in isolation, nor do any one or two necessarily constitute a trend; but it does seem that a series of Chinese actions had marked a clear retreat from the "purity" of an anti-imperialist position. This is symbolized by the Chinese continuing celebration of Nixon.

Other actions can be added that suggest a change in foreign policy; for example, the Chinese support for Pakistan against the rebellion in Bangladesh. No matter how this is sliced, it seems that the Chinese preferred a united Pakistan as a buffer against a hostile India. In different terms, they supported a dictator over an insurrection, and that this may have been a confused and contradictory revolt does not decisively change the story. Chinese aid to the Ceylon government is also consistent with this modified foreign policy; in the Ceylonese rebellion they joined with the USA, USSR and Britain, all of whom had their own reasons for helping to put down the revolt. Chou En-Lai's message to Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Ceylon smacks of the language of the establishment: "We are glad to see that thanks to the efforts of Your Excellency and the Ceylon government, the chaotic situation created by a handful of persons who style themselves 'Guevarists' and into whose ranks foreign spies have sneaked has been brought under control."⁶⁹ The denunciation of "Guevarists" is a long way from "imperialism is a paper tiger."

This list of recent Chinese foreign policy shifts can be extended

— e.g., Angola. It does not necessarily mean that China has betrayed its revolutionary responsibilities. It does suggest, however, that the terms of the Soviet/Chinese dispute were more a smokescreen than a reality; or, at the very least, were particular to the post-1956 years but have lost their meaning in the 1970's. The Soviet-Chinese conflict must be re-evaluated: it simply cannot be maintained that the Chinese always and everywhere support revolutionary struggles, and the Russians do not. To interpret the Nixon visit to China as a blow for liberation, and Nixon's visit to Moscow as proof of Soviet "revisionism," is not dialectical but confused thinking. In the past, much of the paralysis of the Communist parties was due to their mindless defense of the Soviet Union; this paralysis is not reversed by the mindless defense of China.



Photo: Mao Tse-tung at 27

"Stalin understood dialectics, but not very much." *Mao Tse-tung*

IV. Stalin and the Comintern

In many ways a discussion in this paper of Stalin's Russia and the Comintern (The Communist International) is least important, and most impossible. It is least important because the information, the texts, the accounts are available and accessible to those who are willing to hear and weigh the evidence. If this willingness is absent, as it often is, any presentation of information and evidence is hopeless. And the task is impossible because of the complexity of the story.

A word must be said about the attitude underlying the unwillingness mentioned above. As noted earlier, it is grounded in a fundamental anti-anticommunism. Because of the savagery and force of anti-communism both within and outside the American left through the 1950's, the new left resolutely and wisely rejected it — a position which has persisted throughout all phases of the new left up to the present. The problem arises because this theoretical position turned into a psychological one, losing any distinction between anti-communism and anti-Stalinism and responding to the latter as if it were the former. To be sure, for a long period of time these were practically identical. But this is itself part of the ideology of anti-communism, and the refusal of a left to draw the distinction between Marxism and Stalinism shows capitulation to this ideology, not resistance.

The result is boredom, a shrug of the shoulders, or suspicion when the question of evaluating Stalin is raised. The general, if unvocalized, attitude considers a critique of Stalin to be just a legacy of anti-communism: as communists and leftists, so the reasoning goes, we know that errors, mistakes and violence will be committed in any revolutionary process. There is nothing more to be said.

There *is* something more to be said. Anti-Stalinism and anti-communism are not identical; to accept the equation that Stalin = communism is to accept a large chunk of bourgeois ideology. Of course, they are not utterly distinct, and this is precisely the problem: where Stalinism and Marxism converge and where they diverge. All this raises special difficulties for Marxists, for whom the usual opposing interpretations are unacceptable. One position saddles Stalin himself with responsibility for the ills of Stalinism, and considers all the violence and

repression in the Soviet Union to be the product of Stalin's personality. This in fact was Khrushchev's tactic; without doubt, it is superficial and simplistic. Any understanding of Stalinism must include social and economic forces: the economic backwardness of the Soviet Union, its encirclement by hostile capitalist countries, etc.

The other position is just as unacceptable. This places Stalin within the framework of necessity, reasoning that because of the objective political and economic situation of the Soviet Union, there was no alternative to Stalin. Such logic is based on a mechanical and deterministic theory foreign to authentic Marxism: what happens has to happen. Many Marxists, however, adopt variants of this logic, which in fact are shared by many liberal interpretations of Stalin. In this connection, Medvedev comments: "Bourgeois historians typically see Stalin as the greatest leader of the world Communist movement after Lenin While acknowledging and to some degree condemning Stalin's crimes, the typical bourgeois historian tries to prove that socialism could not have been built in the USSR without such crimes"70

As Medvedev indicates, the belief that Stalin-was-a-great-leader-who-committed-some-mistakes is just another variant of fatalist Marxism. It absolves all mistakes in advance by chalking them up to the social costs of socialism. "Genuine Communists cannot pose the question in such a way: 'Which were greater, Stalin's accomplishments or crimes?' Such a formulation contains a hidden suggestion, that great merits give someone the right to commit certain crimes While the Soviet Union made progress in the years of Stalin's rule, it does not follow that Stalin was a staunch Communist and a great Marxist-Leninist."71

Both these contrasting interpretations eliminate any notion of historic options and choices: one by saddling Stalin himself with responsibility for all the ailments of Stalinism, the other by rendering Stalinism an invariant reflex to the social and political situation. Another variant has been proposed more recently by leftists inspired by the Chinese "defense" of Stalin: this seeks to explain Russian "revisionism" — since Khrushchev — without indicting Stalin himself.⁷² Of course this raises certain difficulties. Insofar as Stalin's power lasted some 25 years, it is not easy to exempt him from what emerged shortly after his death; that is,

for Marxists to explain Russian "revisionism" (accepting the term for the moment) as due to some sudden events after Stalin's death is to violate all the canons of a Marxist understanding of history.

The usual course in this Chinese-inspired interpretation is sharply to separate Stalin from the counter-revolutionary forces and classes. In this account, Stalin was in lifelong battle with these forces, which, so it is said, increased in power over the years. With Stalin's death, the balance tipped the other way, and the counter-revolutionary forces seized control. According to one version, Stalin's method of industrialization relied on a "group of educated, privileged, petty-bourgeois administrators, specialists and technicians. This group became increasingly adept at entrenching itself in its privileged position, and at increasingly dominating the educational system, and thereby instilling bourgeois and petty bourgeois ideology into even the children of workers and peasants. These elements were able to insinuate their way into the Communist Party at all levels, and grew into the social base through which a new bourgeoisie was built up, which, soon after the death of Stalin, was able to take hold of the state and economy, and direct them toward state capitalism"73

This is hocus-pocus, at best a conspiracy theory — the notion of a small group of bourgeois who are able to sneak around (even create a "social base"!) spreading capitalism and infecting the working class. In fact, those theories that want to (1) explain Russian "revisionism" which emerged after Stalin by objective developments and (2) deny that Stalin's actions over 25 years were fundamentally embedded in this revisionism (except for some "mistakes") — such theories are hopeless. The notion that "revisionism" popped up after Stalin's lifelong opposition is mythology, seeking to divide up history neatly between Stalin and "revisionism," the good guys and the bad. Any authentic Marxist analysis must, on the contrary, confront the *continuity* between the Stalin and post-Stalin era; and trace "revisionism" to the very system that Stalin did so much to create. The "mistakes" cannot be separated from the "correct" line.

Here are two other versions that split Stalin off, neatly and cleanly, from "revisionism"; they need no comment. "With Stalin's death, the capitalist roaders in the party surfaced, consolidated their control of the superstructure and the party, and proceeded to transform the socialist relations of production to

capitalist relations of production.” “In about one decade, from the death of Stalin in 1953 through the mid-1960’s, capitalism had been fully restored in the Soviet Union, through a period of intense counter-revolutionary reaction and fascist rule.”⁷⁴ Or: “. . . As long as Stalin himself was alive, the newly engendered bourgeois forces in Soviet society and their incognito representatives in the party and the government dared not take a decisive step As long as he was alive, one thing was certain: the newly engendered bourgeoisie and the capitalist roaders knew beyond a doubt that they were living under the dictatorship of the proletariat.” “Even before the late leader’s body had been placed in its coffin, however, a struggle broke out among his potential successors that was to transform the USSR . . . from proletarian internationalism to social imperialism.”⁷⁵

If one is to argue with any rigor or honesty that capitalism has been restored to the USSR, then the Stalinist system itself must be profoundly, not tangentially, implicated; if all the achievements of the Soviet Union are allegedly undone in the years following Stalin’s death, then this is a statement about the essence of Stalinism.

In these pages Stalin and Stalinism can provisionally serve as shorthand for a structure, be it bureaucratic, social or economic. Both superficial and non-Marxist analyses are rejected, the individual analysis (Stalin himself was responsible for all of Stalinism) and the fatalist analysis (Stalin, with or without mistakes, was historically necessary). Here only several problems raised by Stalin can be suggested.

Violence is associated with Stalinism, violence against the Communist Party and against those outside the Party. For revolutionaries engaged in restructuring a society of blatant violence, it is important to examine the violence of Stalinism. The “to-make-an-omelet-you-have-to-break-an-egg” logic is an insufficient response. The question here is not pacifism; rather leftists involved in a revolutionary process must examine the “amount,” nature and object of violence. The point at which the left refuses to do this — when it takes the attitude that any violence committed by a left is permissible — is the point at which the left ceases to be a left; when the left begins to forget that its project is to end violence, not perpetuate it.

The simple listing of the victims of Stalin’s violence is already

the indictment of Stalinism; for example, the fate of the original members of the Politburo, the highest Party organ. These were the so-called "old Bolsheviks" who had been through the thick and thin of the revolution. Their fate (excepting Lenin and Stalin) is as follows:

Kamenev	shot 1936
Trotsky	1940 (assassinated)
Krestinsky	shot 1938
Rykov (added in 1922)	shot 1938
Tomsky (added in 1922)	suicide 1936

This only includes members from the early years (1919-24), those who served with and knew Lenin. Most of the later members were either shot, died in prison, or committed suicide — with some notable exceptions, e.g. Molotov.⁷⁶

To move down the Party ladder is to increase the casualty list. Take the Seventeenth Party Congress: this was the Congress held in 1934 at the end of the first Five-Year Plan, a plan which had been billed as a complete success. According to Stalin, "the victory of Socialism in all branches of the national economy had abolished the exploitation of man by man." "The Congress," states the official version, "reviewed the work of the Party.... It noted the decisive results achieved by Socialism in all branches of economic and cultural life and placed on record that the general line of the Party had triumphed along the whole front. The Seventeenth Party Congress is known in history as the 'Congress of Victors.'"⁷⁷ (The official "non-revisionist" Party history, or *Short Course*.)

Khrushchev reports on the fate of the Congress of 'Victors': "It was determined that of the 139 members and candidates of the Party's Central Committee who were elected at the Seventeenth Congress, 98 persons, i.e., 70 per cent, were arrested and shot (mostly in 1937-1938).... The same fate met not only the Central Committee members but also the majority of the delegates to the Seventeenth Party Congress. Of 1,966 delegates with either voting or advisory rights, 1,108 persons were arrested on charges of revolutionary crimes, i.e. decidedly more than a majority."⁷⁸

(A note here on using Khrushchev's speech as a source: much of what has been said against it is accurate; it is self-serving,

blames everything on Stalin, exempts others involved — such as Khrushchev himself — and of course makes no social analysis of Stalinism. *As far as it goes*, however, it is accurate and useful.)

The arrests and shootings of the highest officials are easiest to document, since records were kept. Medvedev lists 700 names from a two-year period, 1937-38.⁷⁹ Conquest notes: "Over the period 1937-38, Yezhov sent in to Stalin 383 lists, containing thousands of names of figures important enough to require his personal approval for their execution.... Stalin got such a list rather more often than every other day.... We can envisage Stalin, on arrival at his office, as often as not finding in his In-tray a list of thirty or forty names for death, looking through them, as part of the ordinary Kremlin day."⁸⁰ Of rank-and-file Party members, there was a loss of some 400,000 members between 1934 and 1939, a period when there should have been a natural gain in membership; these members had been arrested.⁸¹

The figures jump when one moves outside the party membership. The focus of violence, but not its limits, was the kulaks, who were the richer peasants. In 1930, Stalin commenced a crash industrialization and collectivization program, entailing the elimination of private farming and its conversion to collectives. As the official *Short Course* recounts, "the Bolshevik Party was able [in 1930] to proceed from the policy of *restricting* the kulaks to a new policy, the policy of *eliminating them as a class*...." This is to be understood literally. Here was one of the most violent social collisions in recent history, involving some ten million peasants. The peasants resisted tooth and nail their violent collectivization: one-third to one-half (five million) were deported to labor camps, many dying en route, others during incarceration. This is the process that the *Short Course* candidly calls the "revolution... *from above*, on the initiative of the state...."⁸² "Dekulakization," writes M. Lewin, "was not a mass movement initiated by the peasant population. The masses were never consulted at any stage of the operation, either when the decision was taken, when the policy was elaborated, or when the time came to put it into effect."⁸³

Total figures of those arrested, deported, shot, sentenced to labor camps, etc., are benumbing; they include Party members accused of being counter-revolutionaries, Trotskyists, Gestapo

agents, Menshevik wreckers, as well as non-Party members, kulaks and so on. Estimates run something like: 1 million Party members arrested; 1 million executions; total labor camp populations 8 million with a 10% death rate each year.⁸⁴

"In 1936-39, on the most cautious estimates, four to five million people were subjected to repression for political reasons. At least four to five hundred thousand of them — above all the high officials — were summarily shot; the rest were given long terms of confinement. In 1937-38 there were days when up to a thousand people were shot in Moscow alone. These were not streams, these were rivers of blood, the blood of honest Soviet people."⁸⁵

Of course there are reasons and justifications offered for this violence and repression. The justifications usually encompass two categories: Stalin and the Stalinist system managed to (1) defend and preserve Russia from external enemies, notably capitalist and fascist countries, and (2) industrialize. Following this reasoning, the violence was directed against two groups: those who were agents of foreign powers or enemies of the people, and those who were obstructing industrialization such as the kulaks.

Even to concede this argument, and to grant the most generous "quota" of violence required by its premises, does not come close to balancing the equation. "The liquidation of the kulaks as a class" was more the product of policy and decision than economic necessity. The immediate background was the grain crisis of 1928, which led to emergency decrees — partial forced expropriation of grain. One cause of the grain crisis was the policy which Stalin himself (and Bukharin) had championed successfully against the "left" (essentially centered on Trotsky). This was a policy of slowing industrialization so as to preserve the alliance with the peasants, who necessarily would have to bear the costs of industrialization. By the late 1920's this tactic had backfired: the policy exacerbated the divergence between manufactured products, which lagged, and agricultural production. There was a lack of manufactured goods for the peasants to buy, and the government purchasing price was low; in this situation, the peasants either did not produce, did not sell, or sold on the free and private market.⁸⁶

The state's response was "the liquidation of the kulaks as a

class," "the revolution from above," or dekulakization. Insofar as the emphasis was now on crash industrialization, which was more a left than a right program, Stalin moved against Bukharin as the right. This was one of the most famous of Stalin's "zigzags." In the early '20's he defeated the left program of industrialization with the help of the right, and in the late '20's he adopted a version of the left program and defeated the right. The forced collectivization and liquidation was a violent social upheaval of the first magnitude. Concern about the violence, however, was shrugged aside. "It is ridiculous and foolish to discourse at length on dekulakization," stated Stalin. "When the head is off, one does not mourn for the hair."87

The justification of the purges of Party members included an assortment of charges — essentially that the purged were enemies of the Party and the Soviet State. Some of these charges were spelled out in public in the famous Moscow Trials, which culminated in the trial of Bukharin in 1938, officially known as the trial of the "Right-Trotskyite Center." Of course in most cases there were no trials, only arrests followed by executions or deportations. The "Right-Trotskyite Center" was accused — to follow the *Short Course* — of setting out to "destroy the Party and the Soviet State, to undermine the defensive power of the country, to assist foreign military intervention, to prepare the way for the defeat of the Red Army, to bring about dismemberment of the USSR . . . , " etc., etc.88

No real evidence, then or now, has emerged to substantiate these allegations. What did happen, however, is that (in general terms) the accused all confessed, causing endless controversy outside the USSR. Neither psychological nor philosophical reasons may be necessary to explain the confessions; it seems that most of the accused were tortured, or their immediate families were threatened with torture. As Bukharin himself stated during the trial: "The confession of the accused is a medieval principle of jurisprudence."

The very language of the official charges, and the account in the *Short Course*, provide small clues as to the violence and virulence of the Stalinist system — and how far that system had departed from Marxism. Obviously Bukharin represented in the late 1920's a partial political alternative to Stalin. Under Stalinism, however, these *political* differences were treated as primordial

crimes. As Vyshinsky, the prosecutor, summed up: the accused "must be shot like dirty dogs! Our people are demanding one thing: crush the accursed reptile!...Over the road cleared of the last scum and filth of the past, we, our people, with our beloved leader and teacher, the great Stalin, at our head will march as before onwards and onwards towards Communism!"⁸⁹ The *Short Course* calls the accused "Whiteguard pygmies," "Whiteguard insects." "These contemptible lackeys of the fascists," it goes on, "forget that the Soviet people had only to move a finger, and not a trace of them would be left."

The Soviet court sentenced the Bukharin-Trotsky fiends to be shot. The People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs carried out the sentence. The Soviet people approved the annihilation of the Bukharin-Trotsky gang and passed on to the next business.⁹⁰

All of this transcends mere "errors"; and none of it can be justified by the ends that were allegedly achieved: the industrialization of Russia and its defense. In some ways the agricultural system of Russia has yet to recover from forced collectivization; in both agricultural and industrial sectors, moreover, there seems to be very low morale, dedication and efficiency. This is hardly a by-product of the post-Stalin "revisionists"; rather it is a yield of crash collectivization and industrialization. The indifference towards the people involved takes its revenge. As has been discussed earlier, moreover, the Chinese have pursued an alternative route towards industrialization. And the military defense of Russia was, if anything, hindered by the purges and arrests. In his speech Khrushchev expands at length on this, referring to Stalin's decimation of military ranks and his blunders in the conduct of the war.

Of course this is not the official version. As Khrushchev recounts, Stalin was always portrayed as a military genius. "Let us recall the film 'The Fall of Berlin.' Here only Stalin acts; he issues orders in the hall in which there are many empty chairs.... And where is the military command? Where is the Political Bureau? Where is the Government?...There is nothing about them in the film. Stalin acts for everybody."⁹¹

Khrushchev relates how far the "cult of the personality" under

Stalin was carried. Khrushchev read from a draft copy of a "Short Biography" of Stalin published in 1948 that contained some additions in Stalin's handwriting. One such addition reads: "Although he performed this task of leader of the party and the people with consummate skill and enjoyed the unreserved support of the entire Soviet people, Stalin never allowed his work to be marred by the slightest hint of vanity, conceit or self-adulation." This Stalin himself wrote!

"Or let us take the matter of the Stalin prizes," Khrushchev continues. "Not even the tsars created prizes which they named after themselves. Stalin recognized as the best a text of the national anthem of the Soviet Union which contains not a word about the Communist Party; it contains, however, the following unprecedented praise of Stalin: 'Stalin brought us up in loyalty to the people, He inspired us to great toil and acts.'"92

One final incident, as told by Solzhenitzyn, gives the flavor of the Stalin years.

A district Party conference was under way in Moscow Province. It was presided over by a new secretary of the District Party Committee, replacing one recently *arrested*. At the conclusion of the conference, a tribute to Comrade Stalin was called for. Of course, everyone stood up.... The small hall echoed with "stormy applause, rising to an ovation." For three minutes, four minutes, five minutes, the "stormy applause, rising to an ovation," continued. But palms were getting sore and raised arms were already aching. And the older people were panting from exhaustion. It was becoming insufferably silly even to those who really adored Stalin. However, who would dare be the *first* to stop? The secretary of the District Party Committee could have done it...but he was a newcomer. He had taken the place of a man who'd been arrested. He was afraid! After all, NKVD men were standing in the hall applauding and watching to see *who* quit first! And in that obscure, small hall, unknown to the Leader, the applause went on — six, seven, eight minutes! They were done for! Their goose was cooked! They couldn't stop now till they collapsed with heart attacks! At the rear of the hall, which was crowded, they could of course cheat a bit...but up there with the presidium

where everyone could see them? The director of the local paper factory assumed a businesslike expression and sat down in his seat To a man, everyone else stopped dead and sat down. They had been saved! . . . That same night the factory director was arrested.⁹³

Outside the Soviet Union, the vehicle for Stalinism was the Comintern, or Third International, which directed and instructed Communist Parties till it was dissolved during World War II. Emphasized here is only one aspect of this history: under Stalin the Comintern became an instrument of Russian foreign policy. This was accentuated by the very process undergone by the Russian Communist Party — purges, fear, arrests. The result was parties with no independent thinking, able only to adjust themselves to the latest Russian instructions. Needless to say, the requirements of Russian foreign policy and those of the national Communist Parties were not necessarily identical.

The Bolshevization of the national Communist Parties, as it was termed, sought to turn them into defenders of the Soviet Union. The mark of the Communist Parties was then — and remained until extremely recently — their total and uncritical support of the Soviet Union. Stalin stated that the tasks of the foreign Communist Parties were “to support the Soviet power and defeat the machinations of imperialism against the Soviet Union, remembering that the Soviet Union is the bulwark of the revolutionary movements of all countries, that the preservation and strengthening of the Soviet Union means the hastening of the victory of the working class over the world bourgeoisie.”⁹⁴

Stalin dissolved the Comintern in 1943 by fiat. The official resolution of its dissolution sought to summarize the achievements of the Comintern. Fernando Claudin, in a book that should be fundamental reading for today's left, *The Communist Movement from Comintern to Cominform*, exhaustively examines this resolution and the surrounding events. He notes that the Comintern could claim few victories, and the resolution ignores the innumerable defeats and failings.

No mention is made of the fact that the great majority of the working class of the capitalist countries was still, twenty-five years after the creation of the Comintern, under the influence of reformism, and that, in the principal fortress

of capitalism [Europe and North America], the influence of Marxism upon the proletariat was practically nil. Nothing is said of the fact that, in most of the advanced capitalist countries, the Communist parties were a political factor of little weight or none at all; that, where they had played a role of importance, they had suffered severe defeats, and that the strongest of them, the 'model' party [German Communist Party] in the capitalist world, had proved incapable of effectively resisting Fascism. The resolution also avoids dealing with a fundamental fact: in the quarter-century of the Comintern's existence, capitalism had undergone the gravest economic crisis in its history, followed soon after by the Second World War, and yet the Comintern had been incapable in any country of finding a revolutionary way out of the great economic crisis, and at the moment of its dissolution, when the war was already moving towards the defeat of Fascism, it was bequeathing to the Communist parties the prospect of re-establishing or defending bourgeois democracy. The resolution was silent on the defeat of the Chinese revolution of 1926-27, the defeat of the Spanish revolution, the frustration of the People's Front in France, and so on.⁹⁵

Two illustrations of the Comintern under Stalin:

1. In 1928 the Comintern inaugurated a new policy based on a new appraisal of the world situation. This was the beginning of the "third period" and is characterized by a "left" turn. (The first period was the immediate revolutionary situation following the end of World War I. The second period was the middle 1920's, when capitalism had stabilized, which required the politics of reform. The third period was characterized by the end of the stabilization of capitalism and the commencement of a new revolutionary period.) In accordance with the new world situation, two new doctrines were set, crystallizing in the slogans "class against class" and "social fascism."⁹⁶

These policies dictated the end of collaboration and united fronts with the Social Democrats, who were now deemed "social fascists," i.e., simply another form of fascism. In fact, the Social Democrats were considered to be a more dangerous enemy than the fascists, since the former deceived the working class. For this

reason, the "main blow" of the Communist Party was now to be directed against the Social Democrats.⁹⁷ It is important to note that this new policy coincided with the beginning of the first Five-Year Plan — that is, the program of crash industrialization and forced collectivization — and the onslaught against the kulaks. In other words, there was a "left" turn inside the Soviet Union paralleling that in the Comintern.

In Germany this policy was disastrous. In the face of an increasing fascist menace and growth, which culminated in Hitler in 1933, the Communist Party refused anti-fascist alliances with the Social Democrats, whom they considered social fascists, twins of the fascists. To avoid oversimplification, it must be pointed out that the Social Democrats were themselves not unwavering anti-fascists and feared the Communist Party. But at decisive points they sought an anti-fascist alliance with the Communist Party, only to be adamantly refused. "We shall not be able to strike and destroy the class-enemy of the workers, the bourgeoisie, unless our main attack is directed against Social Democracy, the chief prop of the bourgeoisie."⁹⁸ This was the position of the Comintern and the Communist Party.

It should be noted that during this period Trotsky's analysis was indisputably correct. Against the Comintern line, he called for a united front of Communists and Social Democrats; and he justly attacked the Communist analysis as one of fatalism and passivity, a policy leading to the destruction of the German proletariat. "The whole misfortune lies in the fact that the policy of the Central Committee of the German Communist Party . . . proceeds from the recognition of the inevitability of a fascist victory . . . [It] proceeds from the idea that it is impossible to defeat fascism without first defeating the Social Democracy . . . Can we expect that in the course of the next few months the Communist Party will defeat both the Social Democracy and fascism? No normal-thinking person . . . would risk such a contention." Hence Trotsky called for the end of the expression "social fascism" and a united front with the Social Democrats; he insisted that there was a difference between bourgeois democracy and fascism, and that fascism would be a tragedy for the proletariat. "The decisive hour is very close . . . The coming to power of the National Socialists would mean first of all the extermination of the flower of the German proletariat, the destruction of its organization, the

eradication of its belief in itself and its future."99 So stated Trotsky in 1931.

The end of this particular chapter is well known. Hitler came to power in 1933, and immediately outlawed the Social Democratic and Communist Parties, arresting their leaders. Both parties went into exile. Though this was obviously not in accord with the Communist Party's analysis, which considered the Social Democrats to be allies of the fascists, the Party — even in defeat — continued to repeat the line that (a)fascism would aid the Communists and (b)the Social Democrats were identical to the fascists. The Communist International stated: "The establishment of an open Fascist dictatorship, which is destroying all democratic illusions among the masses and freeing them from the influence of the Social Democrats, will speed up Germany's progress towards the proletarian revolution." And the Central Committee of the German Communist Party stated: "The total removal of Social-Fascists from the state machine, and the brutal suppression of Social Democratic organizations and their press, can do nothing to change the fact that the Social Democrats were, and still remain, the chief prop of the capitalist dictatorship."100

This madness ended in 1935 when the Comintern changed its line. Dimitroff was the spokesman for the new line of united front; the tune had now changed. "The powerful urge towards the united front in all the capitalist countries shows that lessons of defeat have not been in vain. The working class is beginning to act in a *new way* The first thing that must be done, the thing with which to commence, is to form a united front" And this was to include not only Social Democrats but also "Catholic, anarchist and unorganized workers." Now there was a difference between fascism and social democracy. "In the capitalist countries we defend and shall continue to defend every inch of bourgeois-democratic liberties which are being attacked by fascism and bourgeois reaction."101 In broad terms, the united front tactic has been Communist Party strategy from this point till the present.

(To those who want to wade through and evaluate the polemics of the period, a note of caution: this discussion is obviously a simplification. One of the complexities involves the definition and meaning of "united front." Following the victory of fascism, the Communist Party began to justify its previous position by maintaining that it had always called for united fronts, but that the

Social Democrats had turned them down. To a certain degree this was true; but there are several kinds of united fronts. In general they can be characterized as united fronts "from below" or "from above." The united front "from below" — or "red" united front — was in fact the norm for the "third period": this entailed a united front with the workers of other and opposing parties, but *not with their leadership*. In practice, therefore, this meant very little; for it involved calling for a united front with Social Democratic workers while *simultaneously* denouncing their leaders as revisionists and social fascists. Obviously few Social Democratic workers would be interested in such a united front, which was essentially a recruiting tactic for the Communist Party. What was new — or revived — in 1935 consisted of the united front "from above": this entailed working out agreements and alliances with the *leadership* of non-Communist parties. This leadership, in turn, could inform and mobilize its own membership. This was a different species of united front, and with entirely different results.)¹⁰²

The "class against class"/social fascism policy had been a disaster for the Communist Parties not only in Germany but elsewhere, such as in France. The new united front policy or popular front, on the other hand, issued in the period of the Communist Parties' greatest success in Western Europe and North America; this was the period of broad-based anti-fascist organizations and activities. Moreover, it should be noted that the shift to anti-fascism coincided with a shift in Soviet foreign policy towards anti-fascism. As Hitler's stated goal was the destruction of communism, the Soviet Union got the message and began actively searching for alliances — most notably with France, where the united front "from above" had been given the first go-ahead.¹⁰³ The order of the day was the union of progressive people in the struggle against fascism . . . till 1939.

2. In 1939 Russia signed a Non-Aggression and Friendship Pact with Nazi Germany. There is no need to discuss the merits of that agreement; cogent arguments have been made that it was necessary for Soviet defense.¹⁰⁴ More important here is that it signalled a complete reversal of the Comintern position on fascism. Practically overnight, the slogans and tactics set in 1935 were scrapped; no longer were fascists the enemy. Now it was

the imperialists. All Communist Parties were directed to cease anti-fascist propaganda, and begin attacks on Anglo-French "imperialism." Dimitroff again sent out the directives. One of the new statements read: "The reactionary imperialists of Britain and France . . . are not now fighting, as they maintain, for democracy against Fascism or for peace against aggression, but for imperialist aims Nazi aggression has been checked and limited by the Soviet Union, and today the Nazi leader is suing for peace"105

Needless to say, this complete turnaround sent shock waves through Communist Parties and their supporters. Those who had joined or looked to the Communist Party as the leader of anti-fascism found that yesterday's enemy was today's friend. Those who for years organized against the fascist menace discovered that the menace had evaporated. Not so much the Nazi-Soviet pact as the Comintern directives were the betrayal. 106 The Comintern logic was ruthless; exiled German and Austrian Communists now pretended that Nazism was no longer their opponent. When Hitler invaded and defeated France during this same period, the French Communist Party officially considered it a victory for the French working class. The realpolitik of Stalin and the Comintern, then, turned out to be Alice-in-Wonderland for the national Communist Parties. Witness the French Communist Party's statement about the Nazi victory: "The working class of France and the world must see this event as a victory and understand it means one enemy less."107

The period following the Friendship Pact with Germany was a dark one for Communists. Silent in the face of the Nazi onslaught into Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium and France, they found their support dwindling. Claudin summarizes:

Overnight, the Communists found themselves isolated from the masses, deprived of any ally. In the countries of Fascist dictatorship, the Communists were the representatives of a party whose supreme head had made a pact with Hitler. In the countries threatened by Hitlerite aggression, the Communists were the representatives of a party whose supreme head had made a pact with the national enemy The most deadly aspect of the blow suffered by the Comintern was that it had given up the anti-Fascist struggle at the very

moment when this was becoming most necessary, the very moment when the Hitlerite legions were marching out to enslave Europe. Renouncing the anti-Fascist platform in this situation meant not only throwing away the prestige and influence won since 1934, despite all the opportunist mistakes made: it meant committing suicide as a revolutionary force "108

One other incident from these years should be considered by those who celebrate Stalin; it requires no comment. Medvedev relates: "After the friendship pact with Germany was signed in September 1939, . . . a large group of German anti-fascists and Jews, who had fled from the Gestapo to the USSR, were handed over to Nazi Germany."109

In 1941 Germany attacked Russia. The Communist Party line changed in a flash: it was no longer an "imperialist" war, but again a war against fascism. "The struggle for the defeat and destruction of the German Fascist war machine is therefore the common cause of all peoples."110 For many Communists, the invasion of Russia and the return to anti-fascism was experienced as a relief.111

Enough has been said here to suggest why the Communist Parties generally, not only in the Soviet Union, became paralyzed. The dramatic zigzags in lines, the shifting policy and reversals put a premium only on those adept at justifying anything. Communist Party leadership and loyal members became skilled at surviving, and at little else. The only constant was the defense of Stalin and the Soviet Union. Independent people became demoralized by the fluctuating imperatives: attack the Social Fascists, unite with the Social Democrats, cease attacks on the Fascists, etc., etc. The attempt to build a revolutionary movement around the defense of the Soviet Union was, and is, impossible. Many instructions from the Comintern proved to be literally lethal for Communists. This is not only hindsight: there were those then and there who decried the instructions from afar. The command to the Chinese Communist Party to form a united front with the Kuomintang, like the command to the German Communist Party to refuse one, ended in a bloodbath. Evidence suggests that Stalin was more interested in securing his internal position, as well as the defense of Russia, than in advancing the world revolution. The cost was high.

Moreover the dissolution of the Comintern in 1943, as well as the politics of the national Communist parties at the end of World War II were dictated by Stalin's foreign policy. The Comintern was dissolved not so to aid the international revolution but to aid Stalin's dealings with Roosevelt and Churchill. Stalin willingly sacrificed revolutionary movements so as to gain territory in post-World War II negotiations. The perpetuation of Franco after the war, as well as the sacrifice of the Greek resistance to the British, are only two of the deals that Stalin worked out. Claudin, a member of the Spanish Communist Party till 1965, states: Stalin "made not the slightest attempt to ensure that the victory over Fascism would also benefit one of the peoples which had shed the most blood for it. The maintenance in power of the Fascist dictatorship in Spain after the Second World War is one of the clearest results of Stalin's policy"112

There is no conclusion here, nor can there be. History passes into the present. The legacy of Stalinism is too recent, long and complex to summarize; nor is it over. There is no reason to accept and defend it wholesale; nor is there reason to write it off. The celebration of Stalin and Stalinism — with or without mistakes — has nothing to do with revolutionary theory and practice. It is a by-product of failure, the failure to study the history of Marxism and communism. "The spectre of a left without memory haunts the class struggle."113 The suspicion that any critical evaluation of the past and of Stalinism is anti-communist — or the weakness of academics, intellectuals and others — is suspicion secretly afraid of itself and the past; it fears that the history of communism cannot withstand critical scrutiny. The whitewash of the past in the name of a red future conspires to perpetuate the past. Marx wrote that the proletarian revolution "cannot draw its poetry from the past, but from the future." But he also said that it can do this only when "it has stripped off all superstition in regard to the past."114 This remains the task.

May 1976

Footnotes

1. The best collection of New Left texts is *The New Left: A Documentary History*, ed. M. Teodori (Bobbs-Merrill, 1969). The best account of its rise and fall is K. Sale, *SDS* (Vintage, 1974).
2. "On the Question of Stalin," in W. Griffith, *The Sino-Soviet Rift* (M.I.T. Press, 1969), p.421.
3. K.S. Karol, *Guerillas in Power* (Hill & Wang, 1970), p.156.
4. This is obviously a simplification, especially for Russia, where the urban proletariat played a vital role. For a survey of peasant revolutions, see E. Wolf, *Peasant Wars of the Twentieth Century* (Harper and Row, 1969).
5. Nowhere is this truer than for Lenin. Too often those who want to study Lenin's philosophy read only his *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. But his *Philosophical Notebooks*, in *Collected Works*, vol. 38 (Foreign Language Publishing House, Moscow, 1963), as incomplete as they are, suggest a rather different Lenin. For a discussion of this see, R. Dunayevskaya, *Philosophy and Revolution*, Chapter 3 (Delta, 1973); P. Piccone, "Towards an Understanding of Lenin's Philosophy" and R. Jacoby "Lenin and Luxemburg," both in *Radical America* (September-October, 1970).
6. One of the best accounts of Marxist dialectical thought remains H. Marcuse, *Reason and Revolution* (Beacon, 1960). See also S. Avineri, *The Social and Political Thought of Marx* (Cambridge Univ. Press, 1968).
7. J. Stalin, *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* (International Publishers, 1940), p.7 ff. This is identical to Part 2, Chapter 4 of the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) (Short Course)* (1938).
8. Two good non-Stalinist discussions of Marxism and dialectics are G. Petrovic, "Marxism vs. Stalinism," in *Marx in the mid-Twentieth Century* (Doubleday, 1967), and H. Fleischer, *Marxism and History* (Harper & Row, 1973). The books by Maurice Cornforth stand squarely in a Stalinist philosophic tradition.

9. For a discussion of Engels' divergence from Marx, see G. Lichtheim, *Marxism* (Praeger, 1965).
10. G. Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness* (M.I.T. Press, 1971), p.3.
11. "Theses on Feuerbach" are included in many anthologies and collections of Marx's writings.
12. For the historical evolution of the Marxist dialectic, see H. Marcuse, *Soviet Marxism* (Vintage, 1961); also K. Korsch, *Marxism and Philosophy* (Monthly Review Press, 1970).
13. K. Marx, *Capital I* (Foreign Language Pub., Moscow, 1961), p.372.
14. See R. Jacoby, "Towards a Critique of Automatic Marxism," *Telos*, No. 10 (Winter, 1971).
15. See Marx's remarks on population: "An abstract law of population exists for plants and animals only, and only insofar as man has not interfered with them." *Capital*, p.632.
16. Zhores A. Medvedev, *The Rise and Fall of Lysenko* (Vintage, 1971), pp.116-119.
17. See D. Jorovsky, *The Lysenko Affair* (Harvard Univ. Press, 1970), p.176.
18. M. Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle* (Vintage, 1970), p.72. This is by far the best account. Where no citations are given here, the reference is to Lewin.
19. Lewin, p.48.
20. R.C. Tucker, *Stalin As Revolutionary* (Norton, 1974), p.245.
21. Tucker, p.259.
22. "Letter to the Congress," *Lenin's Last Letters and Articles* (Progress Publ.), pp.5-8, and Lewin, p.84. The translations are slightly variant.

23. "The Question of Nationalities or Autonomisation," in *Lenin's Last Letters*, p.19.
24. Lewin, p.96.
25. Tucker, p.269.
26. For Krupskaya's role as opponent of Stalin, see R. McNeal, *Bride of the Revolution* (Univ. of Michigan Press, 1972). For another account of the Lenin/Stalin split of these years, see R.V. Daniels, *The Conscience of the Revolution* (Simon & Schuster, 1969). For a readable account of Lenin's life, see L. Fischer, *Life of Lenin* (Harper & Row, 1965).
27. B. Schwartz, *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao* (Harper & Row, 1967), p.63. This is an old (1951) but still one of the best and most lucid accounts of the earlier years. The best survey of the whole revolution may be L. Bianco, *Origins of the Chinese Revolution* (Stanford U.P., 1971).
28. R. North, *Moscow and Chinese Communism* (Stanford U.P., 1963), p.96.
29. The best account of this defeat is in H. Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* (Stanford U.P., 1961). (First edition, 1938.) When this book was written, Isaacs was sympathetic to Trotsky. For another account, which includes a critique of Trotsky's position, see C. Brandt, *Stalin's Failure in China* (Norton, 1966).
30. J. Ch'en, *Mao and the Chinese Revolution* (Oxford U.P., 1965), p.134.
31. Ch'en, p.121.
32. *A Documentary History of Chinese Communism*, ed. C. Brandt et al. (Atheneum, 1966), p.83.
33. Compare the edition cited in *A Documentary History* with that used in *Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tse-Tung* (Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1971), p.28.
34. For the role of nationalism in the Chinese revolution,

- see C.A. Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power* (Stanford U.P., 1962). For a partial rebuttal, see M. Selden, *The Yen-an Way* (Harvard U.P., 1971).
35. North, *Moscow and Chinese Communism*, p.22.
 36. C.P. Fitzgerald, *The Birth of Communist China* (Penguin, 1964), p.97.
 37. M. Altaisky, V. Georgiyev, *The Philosophical Views of Mao Tse-tung* (Progress Pub., Moscow, 1971), pp.64-65.
 38. See Selden, *The Yen-an Way*, p.190 ff.
 39. *The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung*, ed. S. Schram (Praeger, 1969), p.112. This is an excellent collection which is based on original texts, *i.e.*, not the official censored versions. Anything by Schram is worth reading: see his biography *Mao Tse-tung* (Penguin, 1968), and (written with H. Carriere d'Encausse) *Marxism and Asia* (Allen Lane, 1969).
 40. Cited in J.P. Harrison, *The Long March to Power* (Praeger, 1972), p.346.
 41. *Mao's China: Party Reform Documents 1942-44*, ed. B. Compton (Univ. of Washington Press, 1966). This is a very useful volume.
 42. See the discussion in the Introduction to *Mao's China*. Cf. Selden, *The Yen-an Way*, p.96 ff.
 43. Schram, *Mao*, p.222.
 44. Wang Ming, *China: Cultural Revolution or Counter-Revolutionary Coup?* (Novost Press Agency, Moscow), pp.46-47.
 45. Cited in M. Goldman, *Literary Dissent in Communist China* (Harvard U.P., 1967), p.188.
 46. "On Correct Handling . . . , " *Selected Readings*, p.438.
 47. *Important Documents on the Great Proletarian Cultural*

Revolution in China (Foreign Language Press, Peking, 1970), p.51.

48. S. Schram, "The Cultural Revolution in Historical Perspective," in *Authority, Participation and Cultural Change in China*, ed. S. Schram (Cambridge U.P., 1973), p.79. This is an excellent account.
49. *People's Daily*, cited in R. Solomon, *Mao's Revolution and the Chinese Political Culture* (Univ. of Calif. Press, 1972), p.489.
50. K. Mehnert, *China Returns* (Signet, 1972), p.197.
51. K.S. Karol, *China: The Other Communism* (Hill & Wang, 1967), p.21. Karol is one of the few China visitors to pursue actively the question of China's defense of Stalin.
52. F. Schurmann, *Ideology and Organization in Communist China* (Univ. of Calif. Press, 1971), p.279.
53. P. Bridgham, "Factionalism in the Central Committee," in *Party Leadership and Revolutionary Power in China*, ed. J. Lewis (Cambridge U.P., 1970), p.209.
54. J. Gray, "The Chinese Model," in *Socialist Economics*, ed. A. Nove (Penguin, 1972), p.499.
55. J. Gray, "The Two Roads," in *Authority, Participation and Cultural Change in China*, p.144. Cf. H. Magdoff, "China: Contrasts with the USSR," *Monthly Review* (July-August, 1975).
56. E.L. Wheelwright, B. McFarlane, *The Chinese Road to Socialism* (Monthly Review Press, 1970), p.126 ff.
57. The first quotations are cited in R. Levy, "New Light on Mao," *China Quarterly*, No. 61 (March, 1975). The latter is found in *Monthly Review*, vol, 27, No. 10 (March, 1976), p.24.
58. *Political Thought of Mao*, p.419.
59. F. Schurmann, *The Logic of World Power* (Pantheon, 1974), p.244.

60. E.H. Carr, *The October Revolution* (Vintage, 1971), p.83.
61. F. Schurmann, *The Logic of World Power*, p.337.
62. See D. Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict 1956-61* (Athenum, 1964), p.56 ff. See also, for analysis and documents, W. Griffith, *The Sino-Soviet Rift* (M.I.T. Press, 1964) and *Sino-Soviet Relations* (M.I.T. Press, 1967).
63. Schram, "Cultural Revolution," in *Authority, Participation . . .*, p.52.
64. Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict*, p.160.
65. Schram, *Mao*, p.291.
66. Schurmann, *The Logic of World Power*, p.302.
67. Schram, *Mao*, p. 302.
68. Schram, "Cultural Revolution," in *Authority, Participation . . .*, p.45.
69. Chou En-lai, letter to Sirimavo Bandaranaike, *New Left Review*, No. 69 (Sept.-Oct., 1971), p.91.
70. R.A. Medvedev, *Let History Judge* (Vintage, 1973), p.559. Medvedev, a "left" Soviet dissident, is an essential source.
71. Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, p.563.
72. For an excellent critique of some other recent apologetics, see P. Breines' review of B. Franklin, *The Essential Stalin*, in *Telos*, No. 15 (Spring, 1973); cf. R. Miliband, "Bettelheim and the USSR," *New Left Review*, No. 91 (May-June, 1975).
73. *The Red Papers: Selections* (Revolutionary Union), p.16.
74. *Communist Line*, No. 1 (Oct., 1975) (Marxist-Leninist Organizing Committee), p.8.
75. M. Nicolaus, *Restoration of Capitalism in the USSR* (Liberator Press, Chicago, 1975), pp.54-55, 57.

76. See the list in R. Conquest, *The Great Terror* (Macmillan, 1968), p.538.
77. *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) (Short Course)* (1938) (National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1968), p.297.
78. "Khrushchev's Secret Report to the Twentieth Congress," in *Khrushchev and Stalin's Ghost* (Praeger, 1957), p.124. It is perhaps illustrative of the left's "social amnesia" that Khrushchev's speech, once accessible in cheap editions, is today virtually unobtainable.
79. Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, p.192.
80. Conquest, *The Great Terror*, p.260.
81. Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, p.234.
82. *Short Course*, pp.283-84.
83. M. Lewin, *Russian Peasants and Soviet Power* (Norton, 1975), p.508.
84. Conquest, *The Great Terror*, p.525 ff.
85. Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, p.239.
86. See A. Nove, *An Economic History of the USSR* (Penguin, 1972), p.152 ff.
87. Nove, p.166.
88. *Short Course*, p.323.
89. Conquest, *The Great Terror*, p.419.
90. *Short Course*, p.322. On Bukharin, see S.F. Cohen, *Bukharin and the Bolshevik Revolution* (Vintage, 1975).
91. "Khrushchev's Speech," p.186.
92. "Khrushchev's Speech," pp.216, 222.

93. A.I. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago I-II* (Harper & Row, 1975), pp. 69-70. That Solzhenitsyn has proffered many reactionary statements and opinions is not sufficient reason to dismiss his work; he is to be judged as a historian of Stalin's repression. See R. Medvedev, "On Gulag Archipelago," *New Left Review*, No. 85 (May-June, 1974).
94. E.H. Carr, *Socialism in One Country, Vol. III Part 1* (Macmillan, 1964), p.302.
95. F. Claudin, *The Communist Movement from Comintern to Cominform* (Penguin, 1975), p.37. This book is essential reading. It became available to me only in the final stages of this paper.
96. See H. Gruber, *Soviet Russia Masters the Comintern* (Doubleday, 1974), p.175ff., and K. McKenzie, *Comintern and World Revolution* (Columbia U.P., 1964), p.113ff.
97. McKenzie, *Comintern and World Revolution*, p.133.
98. J. Braunthal, *History of the International, Vol. II* (Praeger, 1967), p.377.
99. L. Trotsky, "For a Worker's United Front Against Fascism" and "Germany," in *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany* (Pathfinder, 1971), pp. 135, 122-25.
100. Braunthal, *History*, p.395.
101. G. Dimitroff, *The United Front Against War and Fascism* (Worlds Library Publishers, 1935), pp. 27, 29, 32.
102. McKenzie, *Comintern and World Revolution*, p.132 ff.
103. See D.R. Brower, *The New Jacobins: The French Communist Party and the Popular Front* (Cornell U.P., 1968), p.50 ff.

104. I. Deutscher, *Stalin* (Oxford U.P., 1967), p.434 ff.
105. Braunthal, *History*, p.307.
106. The comparison with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk is instructive: see J. W. Wheeler-Bennet, *Brest-Litovsk: The Forgotten Peace* (London, 1938).
107. Braunthal, *History*, p.513.
108. Claudin, *The Communist Movement*, p.302.
109. Medvedev, *Let History Judge*, p.222; see also Braunthal, *History*, pp. 503-04.
110. Braunthal, *History*, p.526.
111. For example, see A. Richmond, *A Long View from the Left* (Delta, 1972), p.285.
112. Claudin, *The Communist Movement*, p.410.
113. See my "Postscript" to M. Horkheimer's "The Authoritarian State," in *Telos*, No. 15 (Spring, 1973). Cf. my *Social Amnesia* (Beacon Press, 1975).
114. K. Marx, *18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (International Pub., 1963), p.18.

"Those who regard Marxism-Leninism as religious dogma show this type of blind ignorance. We must tell them openly, 'your dogma is of no use,' or, to use an impolite formulation, 'your dogma is less useful than shit.' We see that dog shit can fertilize the fields and man's can feed the dog. And dogmas? They can't fertilize the fields, nor can they feed a dog. Of what use are they?"

Mao Tse-tung

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