

APPENDIX III: Report of a Recent Visit to the USSR

Editor's note: the following is a report of a member of the Revolutionary Union who visited the Soviet Union for three weeks in June, 1974 as part of a delegation of political economists from the United States.

When our delegation met with officials or university economists at the various "Friendship Houses" or elsewhere, we always introduced ourselves as radical political economists, including communists and Marxist-Leninists and also other progressive people united in the work of making revolutionary change in the U.S. We said we had come to the Soviet Union to learn what we could about the economy and the society more generally, to bring back what lessons we could. NOT ONCE DID ANYONE PICK UP ON THIS. No one asked, "How's it going?" or "What problems do you face?" or in any way indicate interest in that conception of what we were about.

On the contrary, we met cynicism. Two particular examples stand out. In Moscow, some of us had a long discussion with Alexander Bikov, a high level government economist specializing in trade relations and development in South Asia. After he described the Soviet view of peaceful coexistence and East-West trade, he was asked how the crisis of imperialism and prospects for revolutionary movements in the U.S. entered into the Soviet picture. *He laughed.* He said we were being simplistic, that the Soviet Union was "not dealing with a corpse", and that it was idle to "speculate" about when revolutionary changes might develop. "Will it be next week? In fifty years? Tell me, when do you think it will be?" he grinned.

Meeting with members of the Armenian Academy of Sciences in Yerevan, the Armenian capital, the question of impeachment of Nixon came up, as it did in most discussions. The Soviets said that Nixon would not be successfully impeached. We laid out a view of the crisis of imperialism and the consequent political and ideological crisis which requires a restoration of confidence in the bourgeois state among the U.S. people. They said it was a "good class analysis", and added that "the bourgeoisie will surely win. The bourgeoisie will surely fool the American people."

This cynicism was matched by a widespread

careerism with respect to the Party. We asked students and others we met why they wanted to join the Communist Party, and the answer invariably had to do with a desire to "be the director", "be a professor instead of an assistant so that I can do the work I'm interested in", be in positions of power, make more money or travel abroad. Party members also said the same thing. One sociologist openly said that he joined the Party because "if you're smart you know what way the wind is blowing and you play the game. I want security when I get older, and being a professor will give me that."

A group of children 12-15 years old was at a beach we visited in Kiev. We asked them what they wanted to do when they grew up, and they all answered doctor, engineer, director, etc. No one wanted to drive a truck, build housing projects, or anything like that. We learned that anyone with advanced training, in engineering or other fields, is not *allowed* to be a production worker because that would be a "waste" of the State resources that went into the training.

Everyone complains about the bureaucracy, including Party people, who acknowledge the problem. Stories of bribery and corruption are regular, but not specific. We heard that Georgia and Armenia are particularly well-known for shady deals. Land for a private dacha (country home) can evidently be purchased for a 3% bribe to a local official. Our delegation had no direct dealings with the bureaucracy because our tour guide was the go-between, but we learned that we got tickets for the circus which was "sold out" after a ball point pen and a U.S. political button were given to the box-office clerk, together with the money for the tickets. In Kiev, I was told that for a large bribe, nationality on passports can be changed to something other than Jewish.

Pilfering and appropriation of State resources for private use came to our attention as well. Late at night, buses (a kind not used for regular public transportation) can be hailed on the street, and the driver will take you across town for a ruble (1.34), which he keeps. We were told that someone had picked a bed of tulips and sold the flowers, was arrested and sentenced to five years

in jail. The same person who told us this was proud of the stereo he had built for his apartment, using components stolen by himself and his wife from the electronics enterprises where they work as engineers. He said that kind of thing is common. (He played Carole King, Simon and Garfunkle and Aretha Franklin records, as well as some Russian folk dances and Russian rock 'n' roll and "big band" music.)

Western influence in music is great, even in Armenia. Young people are very interested in a variety of U.S. and British groups—Creedence Clearwater, Kris Kristofferson, the Beatles and others. The radio stations play a lot of rock and pop music, either U.S. or Russian imitations. In the evening on Yerevan's Lenin Square, loudspeakers play "Billy Joe McAllister Jumped Off the Tallahatchie Bridge", and in the morning a hideous arrangement of "Hernando's Hideaway", for organ and 1001 Strings, comes over the hotel loudspeaker.

In every city we visited, we were approached by young people wanting to buy blue jeans, other clothing or chewing gum. I was offered 12 rubles for a pair of jeans, which I later learned often sell on the street for as much as 70 rubles. Occasional offers for currency exchange (two rubles for a dollar, and sometimes as high as four rubles) came along or in connection with interest in blue jeans. Some young Australian tourists told me that they had been offered hashish for sale on four different occasions on the Nevsky Prospekt, one of the main streets of Leningrad. In Moscow, the going price for prostitution is 5 rubles a trick, with business centered at the posh downtown hotels.

Western currency gains special importance in connection with the so-called "hard currency shops." These stores carry Soviet and imported goods, principally for tourists, but also for any Soviet citizen with Western "hard" currency. Prices are given in rubles, but rubles are not accepted as currency in these stores. The price is converted into whatever currency one has, at official exchange rates. Most of the displayed goods are gift-type things, but one can also buy shoes, clothing, television sets and other appliances and even automobiles.

Although almost all of the goods in these shops are available in regular Soviet stores, there is often a big price advantage, especially on alcohol and expensive goods. For example, our guide was preparing to buy a car in a hard currency shop for 1000 rubles which costs 5500 rubles to a person without hard currency. Television sets sell for about 40% of the regular cost. Soviet citizens have legal access to foreign currency if they work abroad and are paid in foreign currency, if money is sent to them by relatives abroad, if they receive royalties from sale of publications abroad, and possibly in some other ways. Our guide, for example, worked for two years in the Soviet embassy in Washington and brought back a considerable amount of dollars, which he was allowed to keep as hard

currency in a special type of bank account.

Before leaving for the USSR, the delegation decided not to change money except through official banks and exchanges. Towards the end of the trip, it came out that several delegates had been exchanging money with our guide, sometimes at the official rate, sometimes 1:1. Some of us felt that these transactions should stop, and raised the issue at a group meeting.

The three CPUSA members of the delegation took the lead in opposing reversal. They made several interesting arguments. "Did you come here to teach morality?" "It's not a lot of money" (\$100-200). "Those of you who exchanged money are already guilty so you better keep quiet." "The only time you need receipts to get out of the country is if you have more money leaving than you had coming in." "What's the matter, didn't you ever do anything illegal in the U.S.?" "It wasn't illegal because the guide says guides are authorized to change money in emergencies outside of banking hours." In a narrow vote, it was decided "not to make waves."

Everywhere in the Soviet Union memory of WW 2 is kept alive. There are monuments, museums, movies and TV shows (documentary and fictional drama). In each restored room of the Summer Palace, there is a photograph of the room as it was left by the retreating Nazis. Older people who fought in the war are proud of their participation and the role of the USSR. A bus driver in Kiev told me that he had fought in Brno, Dresden and Berlin, and an old man some of us met in a small village on the edge of Moscow said he fought in the Leningrad Blockade and took off his shirt to show the scars.

The Soviet people certainly have cause for pride and remembrance. Over 20 million Soviet people died during the war. When the Western capitalist powers finally got around to opening a second front in Europe in 1944, five out of every six German divisions were on the Eastern front, and the invasion was still very nearly thrown back. Leningrad was under siege for 900 days, and over 500,000 people there died in that period, mostly of starvation. Kiev was 80% destroyed, but resistance was never-ending, as in Stalingrad and all over the country.

Out of all this, the war is preserved by the social-imperialists only to put forth the line that "war is hell", that only madmen want war (covering over the difference between just and unjust wars), that war must be avoided at all costs, etc. All the political and military lessons are gutted out, and pacifism is upheld. This, of course, is necessary to bolster the revisionist line on peaceful coexistence, peaceful transition to socialism, and Stalin.

Stalin is not mentioned, even in the most ob-

vious opportunities. For example, Armenia now has an extensive system of irrigation and hydro-electric plants along the Razdan River, utilizing the resources of the large Sevan Lake. Our Armenian guide told us that the projects were begun in 1939 and completed in 1950, but never mentioned Stalin. Instead, the guide mentioned a telegram Lenin sent in 1920 to the Central Committee of the Armenian Party recommending the development of Lake Sevan for irrigation and hydro-electric power. Stalin's role in building socialism and conducting class struggle in the 1920s and 1930s is also never discussed.

An Armenian historian I spoke to explained that Stalin is not discussed because "it would be very disruptive," and that it is now irrelevant to have the whole debate over Stalin because it doesn't bear on the immediate tasks of building socialism through the increase in productive forces. He said that on the one hand, the Chinese are using the question of Stalin to attack the current Soviet leadership and divide them from the development of socialism in the USSR, and on the other hand the Western powers use Stalin to generate anti-communism. I asked why a principled defense of Stalin was not the best response in this situation, and he repeated that it would be irrelevant and "very disruptive." He added that many people in the Soviet Union are more favorable to Stalin than the official line, as he himself seemed to be. When pushed further on Stalin, the historian repeated that it would be disruptive and irrelevant to have the debate, since the 20th Congress documents had already been discussed, and there was no sense repeating the whole thing now.

The outrageous and distorted Soviet view of China came out in a number of conversations and publications. Although it was never laid out fully all at once, the main points amount to this: China was doing well and developing under the guidance of the Soviet Union until 1960. Then, the Chinese leadership expelled Soviet technicians and embarked on the petty-bourgeois course of self-reliance. This had its root in the national chauvinism of China, which wants to dominate the world and the socialist camp in particular. Self-reliance divorced China from aid from the Soviet Union and from "guaranteed markets" for Chinese goods in the Soviet Union. Without Soviet aid and markets, China has stagnated economically and is incapable of developing productive forces as the basis of building socialism and moving to communism.

Being cut off from the real basis for socialist construction (growing productive forces), the Chinese have been forced to concoct "metaphysical solutions" to socialist construction, such as stress on the subjective factor (the slogan "men are decisive, not machines" is a prime example in the revisionists' view of Chinese "metaphysics") and a deepening stress on

self-reliance. To divert the Chinese people from the hardships of life, the CPC leadership has embarked on international adventurism, stirring up trouble on the Soviet border and meddling in European Security Conference preparations of the USSR.

These "metaphysical approaches" are creating worsening conditions in China and leading the Chinese leadership to make wilder and wilder attacks on the USSR and Marxism-Leninism. These "left deviations" from Marxism-Leninism stem from the national chauvinism of the Chinese, and from the petty-bourgeois peasant base of the CPC. Hopefully in the future, the Chinese will come to their senses and realize the correct Marxist-Leninist path, especially after the current leadership dies.

The Soviet revisionists' line on China is drawn out further in their comparison of the prospects for India and China. A. Bikov, the "expert" on Asia who laughed at our question about revolutionary developments in the U.S., declared that India clearly had better chances for development and progress for its people than China. After explaining that China had cut itself off from Soviet aid and markets, making it impossible for China to develop productive capacity, he said that India had chances for progress because it was "open to American and Soviet influence."

I was surprised by the openly reactionary character of this line, having expected more subtlety than an equation of U.S. and Soviet influence as progressive forces in the Third World.

The Soviet revisionists try to justify their entire line with the "theory of productive forces." This theory says basically that social relations cannot change until the material basis for these changes has been laid in the organization and level of production, and severely downgrades the role social relations play in socialist construction. The CPSU cannot totally ignore social relations and their importance as a basis for development of productive forces. But they restrict their attention to the most narrow possible interpretation, saying only that socialist relations of production already exist in the Soviet Union because there is no private capital, no privately employed labor, and therefore no bourgeoisie. What remains, they claim, is to take advantage of the opportunities now opening up for expanding production. *The present emphasis is entirely on increasing productivity, expanding enterprise profit, and reorganizing and consolidating (concentrating) productive capacity to expand output as rapidly as possible. They say that it will be possible to advance the socialist consciousness of the Soviet people only when material production advances, especially in the consumer goods industries.*

These ideas came out most clearly in a long discussion we had with one CP member, the only one we met who seemed to be seriously interested in figuring out how to make socialism and communism in the Soviet Union. He said that at the present time, the Soviet people do not con-

trol the social institutions. This, he said, was the other side of the problem of bureaucracy and careerism, which he saw as major problems in Soviet society holding back the development of communism and "Soviet socialist man." To solve the problem, he said, it is necessary to improve the people's living standards and to educate people to Marxism-Leninism so they will learn the socialist and communist ideology of cooperation and sharing.

Ideological study, he continued, becomes sloganeering and empty in the absence of material advances for the people. Moral incentives amount to exhortation, which can be used effectively for only a limited period of "revolutionary enthusiasm" long since passed in the Soviet Union. In the long run, one must return to the material basis of progress, production itself. Material incentives for workers (bonuses, opportunities for vacations at special resorts, etc.) should be emphasized, but there is an important role for moral incentives in the form of "socialist emulation."

"Socialist emulation" campaigns operate all the time. In factories and universities, one sees pictures of the best workers and students prominently displayed, and it is considered an honor to be chosen. But even the socialist emulation boils down to productivity, since the "best" students are the ones with the highest grades in their courses, and the "best" workers are the ones who produce the most or most contribute to production through innovative ideas about technique. This is the direct result of the idea that building socialism amounts to increasing production, which sets the terms of the "moral" as well as the material incentives.

Some of us in the delegation disagreed with this "strategy" for developing "Soviet socialist man" by pointing out that socialism and socialist consciousness develop in struggle against capitalism and bourgeois consciousness, not in a mechanical development of production plus "education." We said that it would be more useful to look at the bureaucracy and careerism in the Soviet Union as reflections of the fact that capitalism has been restored there.

A fundamental law of development and dialectics is that change and progress occur through the struggle of opposites, and that society develops through class struggle. This way of looking at the question seemed to mystify the CPSU member (it was certainly not a problem of translation or some other purely language problem), who responded that there was no bourgeoisie in the Soviet Union, and therefore there was no class struggle of an antagonistic nature. He agreed that in capitalist countries, communists developed in the class struggle, but that in a socialist country, where there was no privately employed labor and therefore no bourgeoisie and no material basis for bourgeois ideology or class struggle, new forms of developing communism had to be discovered.

When one divorces the building of socialism from class struggle, many problems arise. Take, for example, the question of incentives. The problem is traditionally posed as a choice between material and moral incentives. But this is a misleading way of posing the differences. Socialist incentives involve the application of *class consciousness* to production and every other problem, whereas bourgeois incentives involve competition and division among people, each striving for individual attention or advancement.

Class consciousness is not a moral question. Class conscious solutions to production *do* advance the needs and interests of working people, but the individual grasps the solution not principally because of his or her *particular individual* interest, but because of the interest of the class as a whole, through which the individual's interests are best served. It is certainly a good thing for class conscious activity to guide the development of society, but that doesn't make it a "moral" question. It is a question of scientifically and correctly assessing the needs of the period, summed up out of the experiences and needs of the people, preparing a plan or program to meet those needs *in a way which will advance the class consciousness of the people so that they themselves will be more effective instruments of socialist construction*, and then winning people politically and ideologically to the plan or program.

Socialism certainly involves the expansion of production and the development of productive forces. But this is the result of revolutionizing the relations of production through the ever-deepening class conscious control of the working class over production (and all other aspects of society).

The theory of productive forces has led to the separation of ideology and class consciousness from the everyday work of production and social organization. By reserving ideology for the narrowest and most general statements (socialism is good, co-operation is good), the actual planning and carrying out of production in the Soviet Union is based on pragmatism and the principles of efficiency and profit. This is reflected further in the attitude of many Soviet students that political education is a separate subject, removed from the "practical" methods required for the solution to the pressing problems of the society. It has also led to the generally low level of political and ideological awareness.

The political and ideological leadership of the Soviet Union, the CPSU, through the theory of productive forces, effectively belittles class consciousness by restricting class antagonism to the narrowest conception of legal property relations. This denies the material force of ideas and bourgeois ideology, denies the great variety of ways in which capitalist relations can be introduced to contradict socialist relations, and denies the richness and generality of class struggle which is the essence of socialist construction.

The CPSU agrees (reluctantly) that China is a socialist country and that India is a capitalist country. But the theory of productive forces justifies the CPSU position that a capitalist country, India, has greater potential for progress and development than a socialist country, China. This abandonment of class struggle and acceptance of capitalism is further reflected in the CPSU policies towards India, which is to support the ruling (and ruling class) Congress Party, while maintaining the Communist Party of India (CPI) as an instrument to sidetrack and even denounce class struggle, as for example in the recent strike of railroad workers in India, in which over 7000 militants were arrested.

National chauvinism and racism show up in a number of ways in Soviet society. At a fancy Georgian restaurant in Moscow, there is a mural showing a prince and a soldier standing on a palace patio, with two brawny, shirtless Black men in the foreground running away. Under the arm of one of the Black men is a wan, terrified white woman.

We were told (by CPUSA members in our delegation) that this was not racist because it depicts a story of slaves of one prince kidnaping the woman from the prince in the mural, and so the Black men are not going to rape her, but are only doing their job. Besides, it is widely known that such slaves were eunuchs, so the mural doesn't carry the racist connotations it would in the U.S. Still, African men studying in the Soviet Union are discouraged from dating white Soviet women, and are sometimes called in for discussion if they do.

The chauvinist attitude toward China is apparent in the assertion that China can't develop without Soviet aid. It is also carried in the culture, as for example in Yevtushenko's poetry about "yellow hordes." This theme is also carried into Soviet anti-China propaganda. In defending peaceful coexistence and "detente" against Chinese criticism, the CPSU says that China wants another world war because China knows that when it is over, China will have 400 million people left and can take over the world.

An outstanding example of blatant racism was a cartoon showing on an outdoor movie screen in downtown Moscow. Loudspeakers on the broad sidewalk played the sound-track, which was only music, so the images on the screen were the entire substance. There were two casts of characters. One set was white-skinned, had blond or red hair and small facial features. The other set had large, bulbous red noses, bushy hair, thick features, and red skin shading periodically into black.

The bulbous-nosed people were total incompetents and buffoons. They couldn't play soccer, they couldn't cook (on their jungle pot), they didn't understand about medical care and freaked out at injections. The other set of characters were there to set the primitives straight and

show them how to do these things. But the whole thing was a cartoon, designed to be funny, and the butt of the jokes and slapstick were the bushy-haired people. The cartoon ran for 10-15 minutes, and then after a pause of a couple of minutes was repeated in a kind of continuous showing for evening shoppers, tourists and others out for the evening.

Within the Soviet Union, we had limited contact with minority nationalities, visiting Kiev in the Ukraine and Yerevan in Armenia. Each of the fifteen Soviet Republics has its own language, and schools are generally conducted in that language, with Russian as a voluntary second language. The everyday language of commerce and cultural life is the local language, although Russian is the official language everywhere. Local art and handicraft, dance, song and music are preserved in the schools and in popular culture.

The language of instruction through the university level is the local language, but the language of the most important and prestigious Soviet institutes and universities, concentrated in Moscow and Leningrad, is Russian. Admission to these institutions is done according to competitive examination, which must be taken in Russian. While visiting Moscow University, we had a special guide who spoke no English, and so our regular guide translated our questions and her answers. When we asked about the proportion of students enrolled from minority nationalities, our regular guide told us that was too technical a question, and refused even to translate it.

During Stalin's time, there was a policy of favoring poorer regions and republics, where there was a large concentration of minority nationalities, with compensatory investment funds to aid in national development and diversify the economic base of the country as a whole. We did not get a clear sense of current policy in this regard on our tour, and got no new data on investment trends by region or republic. But two articles in a recent issue of *Slavic Review* (Vol. 31, No. 3, September 1973) give some information.

David Hooson writes that "The doctrine of equalization of economic development retains much of the ideological appeal of fifty years ago, but is being applied largely to the outlying parts of the Russian Republic (Siberia) rather than to other peripheral republics." (p.553)

In "Some Aspects of Regional Development in Soviet Central Asia", Ann Sheehy reports that "the development gap between the Central Asian, and also Azerbaijan and Kazakh, republics and the rest of the country expressed in national income produced per capita increased throughout the decade" of the 1960s, reversing the historical trend towards equalization. She says that in 1965, per capita income in the Central Asian republics was 62% of the all-union average. These reversals are occurring despite *planned* targets of

more equalization.

Sheehy relies on Soviet newspapers and journals to document increasing frictions between the people of the minority republics and Russia itself. In the 1960s, Uzbeks challenged the rapacious Russian use of Uzbek natural gas, and insisted on retaining more for local development. Disputes over training of technical workers have increased as "the development of industry has outstripped the training of local workers" in recent years. When a factory is set up in a minority republic, Russian workers are imported to take the skilled and even unskilled jobs. Sheehy provides the following data on the influx of Russian population in selected areas of economic development:

**1959-1970 Increase in Russian Population
in Selected Areas**

Area	Increase in Russian Population	% Increase
Bukhara Oblast (natural gas, gold)	60,000	124
Kzyl-Orda Oblast (Tiuratum Space Complex)	42,000	83
Guriev Oblast (oil)	77,000	128
Russian population increase in entire country		13

The factories are run in the Russian language, which greatly limits the number of local workers who can get jobs in them. "At the 1970 census only some 15-20% of Uzbeks, Tadzhiks, Turkmens, and Kirghiz claimed to have a good command of the language." (p. 561) Local people do not want to move out of the countryside into "Russianized" towns and factories.

Why does the CPSU raise the bourgeois theory of productive forces to a principle in their polemics against China's socialism? Why does the Soviet Union propagate national chauvinism and racism?

These wrong and bourgeois ideas are reflections of the essentially capitalist nature of present Soviet society. Bourgeois ideas also exist in socialist countries, preserved by those who want to restore capitalism and defeat the working class. In socialist China today, the class struggle against bourgeois ideas and methods of organization continues under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, which expects the struggle to continue for many decades.

But while bourgeois ideas have existed in the Soviet Union throughout its history, the situation today is qualitatively different from the period of socialism in the USSR. Today, bourgeois ideas are official policy, and open struggle against them is not allowed. Revisionism, the interpreta-

tion of Marxism-Leninism which denies class antagonism and class struggle, has in recent years become official doctrine, in line with the recent restoration of capitalist relations of production in the Soviet Union.

The Soviet revisionists, of course, hotly deny that the Soviet Union is a capitalist country, and many people don't see how it is possible that the first socialist country could now be capitalist. The Soviet Union is capitalist because the class that produces things in the Soviet Union does not control what it produces, does not control how it will produce, and does not control how the product should be distributed. Instead, this control is effectively in the hands of state planners and managers in factories and farms, aided by technical experts and the trade union leadership.

We are used to thinking of capitalism in terms of individual capitalists, competing to one degree or another and each owning individual means of production. In the Soviet Union, there are examples of individual private entrepreneurs, as reported in a number of quotes from *Pravda* given in the pamphlet "Khrushchev's Phoney Communism", published by the Foreign Languages Press in Peking. But this form of capitalism is not the chief feature of modern Soviet capitalism, because capitalism was recently restored after the means of production had already basically been completely centralized under socialist state control. In these particular historical circumstances, bourgeois rule takes the form of *state capitalism*.

The planning apparatus still exists, and some of the decentralization tried under Khrushchev has recently been reversed. But in our discussions with enterprise managers, two important features of the planning process came out. First, all plans originate at the enterprise level, and are then submitted to higher authorities for review. In no case were we told of an example where higher authorities altered the submitted plan in any important respect.

Secondly, enterprises are allowed to keep one-third of their after-tax profits for reinvestment *outside the plan*; i.e., managers are free to invest profits in expanding capacity or buying up other plants in the same branch of industry (conglomerates are not allowed) in any way that seems most profitable. Any productive capacity built or acquired then comes under the plan for production, but these plans again originate with the enterprise. So even with the planning apparatus inherited from socialism, some essential features of capitalism have emerged as part of the process of expanding capital.

Within the Soviet Union, there are a number of social conditions which are well advanced over the U.S. and many other capitalist countries. Housing is relatively cheap, costing less than 10% of the minimum wage for a new apartment. Mass transit is in general very good within cities, although inter-urban travel is more backward.

The cities are clean, and medical care is free and generally available. Supporters of the Soviet Union often point to these accomplishments as proof of the existence of socialism.

There are two problems with this. First, much of the transportation, housing, and medical programs were established while the USSR was still a socialist country, and their continued existence is a reflection of that history and not necessarily a result of current initiative. Secondly, and more important, the conditions of housing, etc., are not the *decisive* characteristic of socialism. Many capitalist countries have good subway systems (France, England, Canada), and a number have well developed social welfare programs to subsidize housing, medical care, etc. Socialism is distinct from capitalism on the basis of production relations, whether or not the working class controls production and all aspects of society, exercising dictatorship over the remnants of exploiting classes and waging relentless class struggle against them.

On this ground, the Soviet Union fails the test. Enterprise managers can hire and fire labor in response to profit requirements at their own discretion. There are "joint production conferences" in which labor and management representatives sit down to determine the method of plan implementation, but it is indicative of the power relations that we never were allowed to talk with workers in any factory. Instead, we always met with the enterprise director and a trade union official.

The director was always in charge of the meeting, answered almost all of the questions, and set the tone of the interview. In our contacts with workers on the street and informally, we asked what role ordinary workers had in formulating plans and building socialism. We heard a variety of answers, but they all boiled down to what one transport mechanic said in Kiev: "It's very simple. The workers work." The work force is told what the production targets are by the management, and encouraged to accomplish the goal by the management and the trade union officials.

The rise of modern Soviet state capitalism is very different from the history of other capitalist countries. It has emerged with highly developed and centralized productive capacity and the need for markets and raw materials on a large scale. Because the USSR was the first socialist country, it also had close economic, political and military ties with a number of countries in East Europe and the Third World, and enjoyed great prestige among progressive people all over the world. When socialism was reversed and capitalism restored, these ties and prestige were the basis for extensive foreign interventions which amount to a very powerful imperialism.

Like any imperialist power, the USSR seeks to integrate the political and economic life of other countries around its own needs, placing itself at the hub of an international network of markets,

treaties, and trade agreements. It seeks hegemony in its own "sphere of influence", treats its "allies" as secondary and dependent states, and tries to expand its "sphere of influence" at the expense of other imperialist powers, especially the U.S.

But Soviet imperialism is conducted under the guise of socialist ideology, with talk of international solidarity and the responsibilities of one socialist country to the peoples of other countries. Soviet imperialism is socialist in words, but it is capitalist and imperialist in essence, which is why it is called "social-imperialism."

The particulars of Soviet social-imperialism are varied and require more detailed study, although information gained on the trip confirmed and somewhat elaborated the general outline of Soviet control. It is clear, for example, that the countries of East Europe, the COMECON and Warsaw Pact countries, are linked in a subordinate way to the hub of the Soviet economy under the cover-up slogan "international socialist division of labor."

The Soviet Union seeks to integrate the plans of the East European economies into its own import and export requirements. The manufacture of buses and other transportation equipment in Hungary, for example, is directly tied to Soviet needs and markets, and changes in those needs have been reflected in a redirection of Hungary's output. This was "explained" to us in the Soviet Union with the view that it would be senseless, after all, for the Hungarians to produce things for which there was no market.

When Czechoslovakia sought to expand its trade relations with West Europe and the U.S. in 1967 and 1968, in an attempt to diversify its international contacts and become less dependent upon the Soviet Union, the country was openly invaded and militarily suppressed. At the time, the USSR did not try to hide its displeasure at the proposed reduction in trade and economic integration between the USSR and Czechoslovakia, and this attitude was repeated again in discussions with trade officials and economists on the trip. At the same time, the Soviet Union seeks *for itself* much greater trade ties and markets with the West.

The method of providing "foreign aid" to underdeveloped countries is again indicative of social-imperialism. In India, for example, the Soviet Union enters into contracts with the Indian government to aid in constructing productive facilities. In negotiating the contracts, the Soviet Union agrees to supply from its own production a certain amount of materials needed for construction in India. In return, India will repay the loan (with interest) by shipping to the Soviet Union a part of the output of the new facility, together with shipments of traditional Indian products. The prices at which these material goods are valued are sometimes world prices, sometimes prices specially negotiated in the contract.

For example, if the Soviet Union aids in the construction of a cement factory, it will ship to India some steel and other goods used in building the factory, and in return India will ship cement to the Soviet Union. In negotiating the contracts and deciding what kinds of projects to support, the Soviet officials pay attention to the export requirements of Soviet production, and also to the import needs anticipated for future growth. It finances those projects in underdeveloped countries which "fit" into the Soviet economy. Soviet officials quickly add that these projects also materially aid the underdeveloped country by providing jobs and a more advanced level of productive forces, a view remarkably similar to what Gulf Oil Co. says about its operations in Angola.

Many people concede that the Soviet Union has raised revisionism to a principle, but still see the USSR as a progressive anti-imperialist force in the world because it "aids" Cuba and provides arms to certain Third World national liberation struggles. The Soviet Union provided no aid at all to the Cuban war against Batista, and struck up relations with Castro only after the U.S. imposed an embargo and economic boycott. These relations quickly resulted in the positioning of military bases and Soviet-controlled missiles in Cuba in 1962, and in an economic dependence of Cuba on the USSR. Cuba remains today a basically one-crop economy (sugar), which the USSR buys up in exchange for political and ideological support from Castro and the possibility of extending its influence throughout Latin America. The Soviet Union may not need all the sugar it buys from Cuba, but it certainly needs Castro's voice in defense of social-imperialism at international conferences of Third World countries, such as the recent meeting in Algiers.

We know from our experience with U.S. imperialism that foreign relations and economic ties are complex and often cannot be analyzed in strict dollar terms for any particular country. U.S. involvement in Vietnam had more to do with global strategies for containing national liberation movements and China than it had to do with particular resources available in Vietnam. Social-imperialism also has a broad strategy, that of "peaceful transition", "peaceful coexistence", "peaceful competition", and "international division of labor." All of these things gut class struggle out of national and international affairs, deny the "relevance" of revolution, and seek to place countries throughout the world at the disposal of the USSR.

The Soviet Union provides arms to some national liberation movements, *once those revolutionary struggles are well underway* and can no longer be ignored by a country claiming to be socialist. But the arms are sold, not given, and wherever possible the USSR uses its political influence to mute the struggle. This can be seen in its policies of peaceful transition in Chile, and its program for negotiation with Portugal in Mozam-

bique and Angola, combined with the strike-breaking activity of the Communist Party in Portugal itself.

The social-imperialism of the USSR comes into conflict with the imperialism of the U.S. and other monopoly capitalist countries. The search for markets, raw materials and political control—the extension of Soviet spheres of influence—is colliding with U.S. interests in Asia, Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. This rivalry is not at all about the independence of other countries, but concerns which big power will have supremacy in the world.

When the U.S. replaced England as the major power in Iran or Egypt, the change did not give those countries independence. Soviet attempts to replace the U.S. as the major power in India hold no promise of independence for India. For the Indian people, the USSR does not represent a path to national liberation, even though Soviet activity there does weaken U.S. and British imperialism. Only the Indian people, organized and united around the Indian working class and consciously opposed to all imperialism, can win independence and build socialism, relying first and foremost on themselves.

The Soviet Union holds out the hope for peace. In a pamphlet entitled "Why We Need Disarmament" (by Igor Glagalev, Novosti Press, 1973), the backward notion that "the danger of war remains since the imperialist powers persist in their arms drive" (p. 54) is advanced to support the idea that peace can come through disarmament. If only we can get the imperialists to give up their weapons, then there will be no war. Wonderful. We are that "A number of measures to limit arms and bring about disarmament have been taken by some countries since the 24th CPSU Congress. This shows that the forces of peace are stronger than those of war and aggression." (p. 52)

For all this talk, the Soviet military budget, and that of the U.S. and other imperialist countries, continues to grow each year. And this must be, because military power and wars arise out of imperialist rivalries for markets and political hegemony, not out of the evil minds of some munitions makers and legislators who can be outvoted by an aroused people. Stalin said, "To eliminate the inevitability of war, it is necessary to abolish imperialism." But of course Stalin is out of favor now, and this quote and the class stand it represents do not appear any longer in the official line of the CPSU.

The danger of world war is in fact increasing, not decreasing. The rivalries among imperialists, especially between the U.S. and USSR, are growing deeper. Whether in the Middle East, in the Mediterranean, India/Pakistan, or Latin America, these two superpowers are involved behind the scenes in military adventures, coups, and all-out war. These conflicts in turn come from the difficulties and near-panic of U.S. imperialism, challenged everywhere by rising national move-

ments, increased competition from Europe and Japan, and also from the recent appearance of the Soviet Union as a major imperialist power hungry for markets and hegemony of its own. Both WW 1 and WW 2 grew out of similar conditions of rapid realignment and attempts by newly emerging imperialist powers (especially Germany) for world power.

One of the most important lessons of Marxism is that capitalism operates according to laws which function independently of people's wills. We find our freedom and make progress within the bounds of these laws of social development, not by making up fantasies and trying to realize them. No amount of resolutions for peace can change the basis of imperialist wars, or remove the reality of current growing rivalries among imperialist powers, especially between the U.S. and USSR. As the Chinese point out, either revolution will prevent world war, or world war will give rise to revolution.

Within the Soviet Union itself, the situation is extremely difficult for the working class and its

allies. Internal control over media, political organization, trade unions, etc. is very great, and opposition is a difficult task. As visitors, we didn't get any direct sense of organized opposition, although in some cases there was indication that people opposed current policies. The writings of Marx and Lenin (but not Mao) are freely available, and many older people remember socialism first hand. These conditions provide the basis of progress against capitalism. But Marx and Lenin are claimed by the Soviet capitalists and turned around to justify capitalist restoration, national chauvinism, etc.

The difficulty this poses for communist forces is reflected in an exchange some of us had with an older bus driver in Kiev, who pretty much summed up the whole impression we got in the USSR. He was telling us proudly about how he fought to defeat the fascists in WW 2, naming all the major battles he was in. We asked him if he was a communist, a member of the CPSU. He roared with laughter and said, "No! I'm not a communist. I'm a *worker!*"