

Amendments to Draft on BUREAUCRATIC COLLECTIVISM

-- Mike P.

Amendment I

Delete section on Russia, pp. 5-7 and replace with sections from Dave F. amendment beginning his page 1 (The Russian Revolution), through and including " (Note: At this point...) on page 8

except delete from these sections of the Dave F. amendment his:

- full paragraph 6, page 3
- <sup>2</sup> full paragraph 6, 7, page 4
- Last part of full paragraph 1, page 7 beginning "But as originally formulated..."
- full paragraph 2, page 7

Amendment II

Delete Section II, p. 9, paragraph 3, 4, 5 and substitute

(24)  
Bureaucratic Collectivism as a new social system has its social origins in the contradictions of a capitalist world, which has sufficiently developed the productive forces and is ripe for socialist revolution but where the working class has failed to make that revolution. These contradictions focused through capitalist imperialism on the underdeveloped countries alters the relative social power and objective interests of the social classes in these countries. This greatly increases the possibility for pre-class elements to take and use state power to consolidate themselves as a ruling class by control of the means of production, extraction and disposal of the surplus product through collective control of the state. The Bureaucratic Collectivist class is unique in that its coming to be as a class coincides with its taking state power.

Once a Bureaucratic Collectivist class was consolidated in Russia its existence and its policies then became new objective conditions in the world. These interact with the underlying social process which tend to give rise historically to Bureaucratic Collectivism and both speeds and distorts the process in other countries. Additional independent Bureaucratic Collectivist countries as well as the social struggle with capitalism further distorts the process.

Prior to taking state power, the elements which provide the basis of a Bureaucratic Collectivist ruling class are not, taken together, a class in the sense of a common relation to the process of production in the given country. Some of these elements, however, through political and/or organizational ties to developed Bureaucratic Collectivist states or even independently through an anti-capitalist movement which seeks to substitute a disciplined party apparatus for the working class, represent the Bureaucratic Collectivist class forces on a world scale.

Considering only the social forces within a given country, elements or incipient Bureaucratic Collectivist classes have little social power and tend to vacillate between bourgeoisie and working class which do have social power. Without social power provided from the outside, these elements can only take state power and consolidate into a class if the bourgeoisie and working class are extremely weak. This can happen as a result of an isolated workers revolution where the working class exhausts

itself and cannot industrialize the society as in Russia, or it can happen under a variety of conditions brought about by imperialism.

Strong internal conditions for the successful Bureaucratic Collectivist conquest of state power are more typical of underdeveloped economies where the contradictions of imperialism are most sharply focused. Bureaucratic Collectivist elements within an advanced capitalist nation are not likely to vanquish the relatively strong capitalist class or working class without significant outside social power such as military force, or strong economic action provided by a developed bureaucratic collectivist state. (An exception to this would probably require catastrophic events such as war which physically devastates both the bourgeoisie and working class.)

### Motivation

The first amendment essentially substitutes Dave's much better and longer description of the Russian Revolution and degeneration for my own. I am deleting several of his paragraphs not for political reasons but because I do not feel that they are adequate here and belong expanded in other sections. The portions on his treatment of socialism in one country that I deleted I will explain below.

The second amendment is an attempt to clarify some of my own formulations and to correct some inadequacies pointed out to me by Dave and others.

There is, however, a significant political difference between Dave and myself. I believe that Dave's substitute essentially represents one theme in the Workers Party analysis of Stalinism, a theme which was developed early and gradually shifted away from. That is the notion that Stalinism had to be understood as a rising from the unique situation of the Russian Revolution or more generally as the result of a workers revolution which degenerated. In a trivial sense, it is of course true -- Stalinism did first take state power in Russia. But the question is whether the social origins of Stalinism are in the specific Russian situation or whether the origins lie in the social process of developing world capitalism and took the particular form of the events in Russia.

To give an analogy. We understand the social origins of capitalism in the development of Feudalism. In England this was all tied up to religious struggles. We understand that the puritan revolution was a form that the struggle of the bourgeoisie took but was not the essential feature of bourgeois revolution generally.

I have tried in my draft to provide a theory of Stalinism and place its appearance on the world scene primarily as a result of the contradiction of capitalism as expressed in the development (or lack thereof) of social classes and their material environment. (I believe that this conception has more in common with the theory as later developed by the Workers Party -- I.S.L. -- as Stalinism developed in Yugoslavia and China -- But who gets to wear the mantle is a debate of dubious value).

Dave's proposed substitution of a description of the events in Russia for my analysis of the social origins of Stalinism is because those events are his analysis. He confirms this when he states and underlines that "...the class origins of Stalinism lie in this unique historic situation."

This is reflected in the way he analyzes specific events. In his discussion of socialism in one country he gets so involved with the specific political struggles that he fails to see the important political point. In my analysis, the consequences of "socialism in one country." (giving up on world revolution) were inevitably (in that

(historical situation) rapid industrialization, state control and totalitarianism. That the Stalinist bureaucracy for political reasons had to maneuver for a few years to sufficiently consolidate itself before it could fully implement the consequences of "socialism in one country" is a secondary point or even a footnote in an overview of the developments of Stalinism. The important point here is what the policy of giving up on world revolution meant not what Stalin claimed or even wanted it to mean.

Developing a theory of the social origins of Stalinism underlying or behind the specific events in Russia is not an abstract exercise. The existence and intervention of Russia is a good explanation for the defeat of a workers revolution in China. It is a weak or only-partial explanation for the rise of Mao and the victory of Stalinism in 1949. The theory I have outlined focuses us on social classes and their social power derived from their relation to the process of production. It is only once we understand these in non-stalinist countries that we can then understand the impact of the Stalinist states. Yes there is a three cornered struggle in the world. But saying this does not mean that the social forces of each corner are the same or equal in all countries.

Dave is most concerned about my conclusion that the social power for Stalinist victory in advanced capitalist countries will likely have to come from outside. But in opposing this he has nothing to say about the source of Stalinist social power internally in advanced capitalist nations.

There is a tendency toward voluntarism in Dave's analysis of Stalinism in the advanced capitalist countries. Lacking a developed theory of the social forces which give rise to Stalinism there is a tendency to understand Stalinist movements primarily by their consciousness and aspirations rather than by examining the social forces which have produced them and also limit the.

Finally, in arguing against my analysis of the key social process in underdeveloped countries Dave makes a curious formulation.

"First of all, the underdeveloped countries, whether capitalist or Stalinist, have no decisive independent role in the world. If the potential rise of Stalinism were considered to be only a phenomenon of underdeveloped countries, the Stalinist bureaucracy could no longer be considered a basic contender for power in the world." (p.12)

Russia, China and Vietnam, each in its own way, have proven just the opposite. Besides, our theories of Imperialism and permanent revolution point to the critical nature of struggles in the underdeveloped world. Although I nowhere said that Stalinism is "only a phenomenon of underdeveloped countries," even if it were true, given the current development of Russia and China that would certainly make Stalinism a contender for world power.