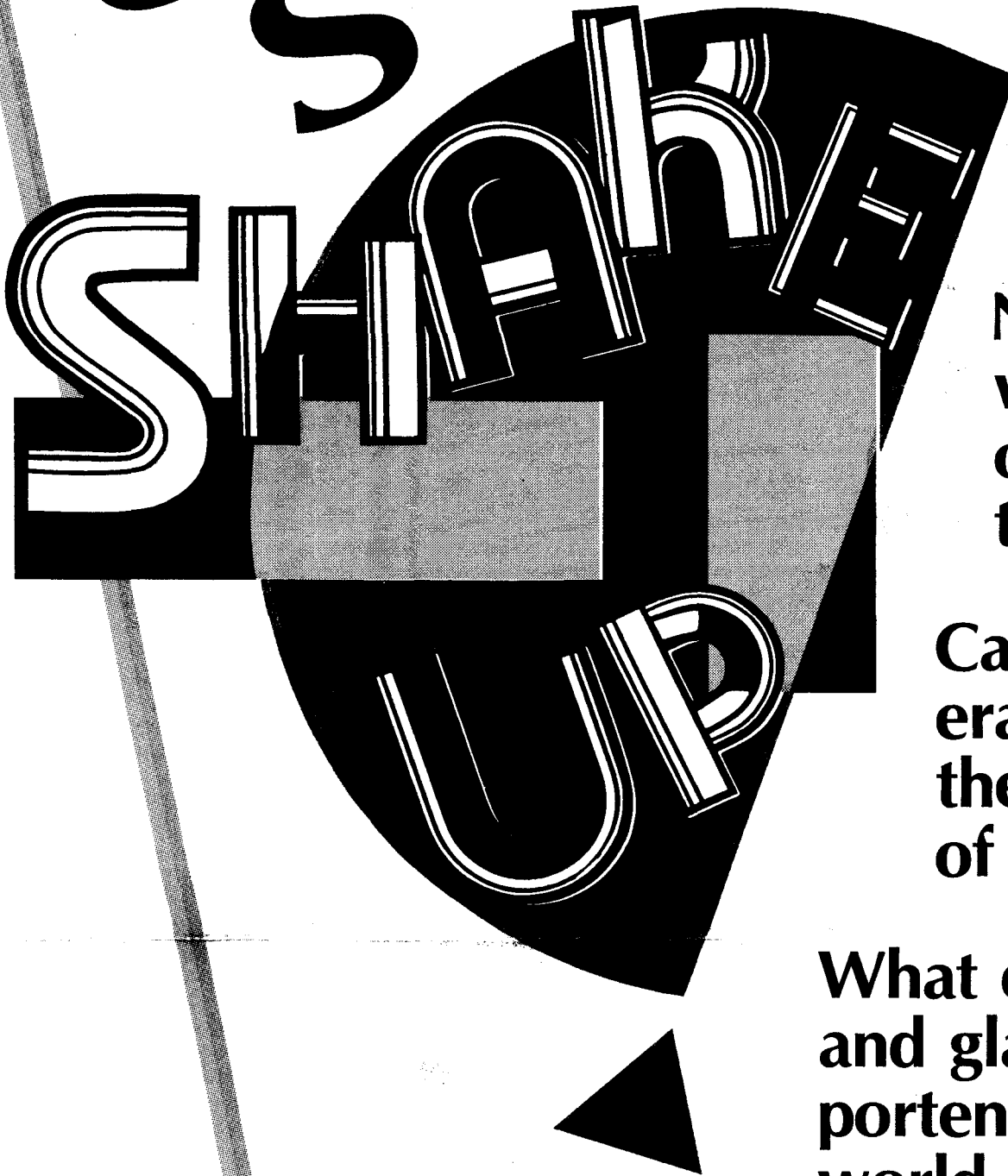


The
GREAT
SOVIET

New dawn for
workers' democracy
or regression
to capitalism?

Can Gorbachev
eradicate
the stubborn legacy
of Stalinism?

What do perestroika
and glasnost
portend for
world socialism?

Whither the USSR?

Can Mikhail Gorbachev's restructuring resuscitate Soviet "socialism"? Or will it restore capitalism, given that perestroika is throwing open Soviet industry to the vagaries and imperatives of market economics?

And what of glasnost—perestroika's battering ram against the lead-rumped bureaucratic conservatives? Will openness engender democratization—*socialist* democracy—so that the workers will at long last rule the state?

Or is glasnost yet another false dawn in the 65-year-long struggle for freedom from the deep-night horrors of Stalinism?

Gorbachev's initiatives, confined within his parameters, will shipwreck against bureaucratic shoals or pave the way for a capitalist counterrevolution in the first workers' state. But a third variant arouses worldwide hopes. Re-energized Soviet workers are not about to settle for the paltry limits of glasnost as dictated by Gorbachev.

"Enlightened" bureaucracy. The Soviet premier, like all his predecessors, is a believer in top-down rule. He aims to preserve, with necessary modifications, the system of bureaucratic, single-state "socialism" that has prevailed in the Soviet Union since Stalin usurped and consolidated power in the 1920s and '30s. He also hopes, like Stalin, to secure "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism.

The party conference at the end of June illu-

minated the possibilities latent in the current upheaval as well as the limits and dangers.

The televised debates and criticisms of party leaders by delegates, unthinkable since the Krushchev revelations of 1956, electrified the world, and whetted the appetite of Soviet workers for even more glasnost. Yet despite such innovations as the creation of a powerful executive presidency and removal of the CPSU from day-to-day management of the economy and government, the conference held firm against any direct challenge to the ruling strata's grip on state power.

The conference prohibited alternative political parties but made no provision for the organized clash of ideas and testing of policies that are the lifeblood of workers' democracy. Moreover, the reconstituted presidency and proposed parliament-style legislature are merely bourgeois-democratic forms of government, a negation in principle of the concept of workers' self-government. The "re-empowerment" of regional soviets—the workers' councils which were the true basis of state power in Lenin's time—is an empty gesture, since the Communist Party remains the sole maker of state policy.

Competitive elections to the legislature and soviets, and among party members for govern-

ment posts, are a mechanism for channeling discontent into the system and defusing it. Freer elections are also a handy means of unhorsing anti-reform bureaucrats.

Gorbachev, the mod, "enlightened" bureaucrat, wants "democratic" bureaucratic rule. But why bureaucratism at all in the "socialist motherland"?

Because socialist democracy in one country is economically and politically impossible. A lone "socialist" state is inevitably prey to bureaucratism and menaced by the threat of capitalist restoration.

Stalinism. Lenin and Trotsky, unlike Stalin and Gorbachev, insisted that socialism would be secure only when capitalism was supplanted internationally by workers' revolution. "Socialism in one country," they said, especially one so historically impoverished as Russia, could not compete with the West. The USSR, encircled, isolated, left to build socialism on what Trotsky called "a pre-capitalist inventory," would inevitably fall prey to bureaucratism—to a "policeman" standing over society to regulate the scramble of too many people for too few goods.

It happened. The general poverty engendered vast privilege for politically backward careerists—policemen who skimmed the cream

to page 4

Gigantic problems confront the Soviet Union today, age-old problems inherited by the Russian Revolution and congealed by Stalin's bureaucratic despotism and the throttling of workers' democracy and free political and cultural expression, social stagnation, repression of Soviet women, abasement of culture, military weakness as compared to imperialism. Compounding these problems and the notion that real socialism can be attained and consolidated entirely within Soviet boundaries.

All the profound questions of Soviet survival were addressed in the 1920s by Lenin and Trotsky, later by the Soviet Left Opposition movement. The heroic struggle against Stalinist counterrevolutionary tyranny has produced a mountain of corpses—and it has a

Lenin's and Trotsky's polemics against the Stalinization of the revolution and for a return to Soviet democracy and an international revolutionary perspective—the twin pillars which together can restore the promise of the October revolution—are startlingly apropos today, as are the anti-Stalinist writings of James P. Cannon, the founder of American Trotskyism. This trio of political geniuses provided the theoretical foundation for 70 years of resistance to the Stalinist counterrevolution.

"Socialism in one country"

[The theory of socialism in one country was first formulated by Stalin in the autumn of 1924]... [T]his re-evaluation of values was accomplished under the influence of the social needs of the Soviet bureaucracy, which became ever more conservative, strove for national order and demanded that the already-achieved revolution, which insured privileged positions to the bureaucracy, should now be considered adequate for the peaceful construction of socialism...

[However,] Marxism takes its point of departure from world economy...as a mighty and independent reality which has been created by the international division of labor and the world market... To aim at building a *nationally isolated* socialist society means...to pursue a reactionary utopia...

...The strength of the Soviet economy lies in the nationalization of the means of production and their planned direction. The weakness of Soviet economy, in addition to the backwardness inherited from the past, lies...in its inability to gain access to the resources of world economy...in the shape of...international credits and 'financing' in general, which plays so decisive a role for backward countries...

A realistic program...cannot set itself the goal of achieving 'independence' from world economy... The task is [to]...[strengthen] the position of the proletariat, [prepare] the national elements of the future international socialist society, and...systematically [improve] the living standards of the proletariat... This prospect must remain in force...until the victorious revolution in the advanced countries liberates the Soviet Union from its present isolated position.

—Leon Trotsky, *Introductions to the First (Russian) and German Editions of The Permanent Revolution*

...The "theory" of socialism in one country...already signal[ed] the effort to liberate Soviet foreign policy from the program of international revolution...

...It is sufficient to recall that the defeat of the Chinese revolution in 1925-27, which untied the hands of Japanese militarism in the East, and the shattering of the German proletariat which led to the triumph of Hitler...are alike the fruits of the policy of the Communist International.

Having betrayed the world revolution...the bureaucracy has directed its chief efforts to "neutralizing" the bourgeoisie... Thus, retreating step by step before the consequences of its own mistakes, the bureaucracy...arrived at the idea of insuring the inviolability of the Soviet Union by including it in the system of the *status quo*. What could be finer, when all is said and done, than an eternal pact of non-aggression between socialism and capitalism?...

[However, it] is not under the banner of the *status quo* that the European workers and the colonial peoples can rise against imperialism...

—Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*

Two years before the Communist Manifesto, young Marx wrote: "A development of the productive forces is the absolutely necessary practical premise [of Communism], because without it want is generalized, and with want the struggle for necessities begins again, and that means that all the old crap must revive..."

The basis of bureaucratic rule is the poverty of society in the objects of consumption, with the resulting struggle of each against all. When there is enough goods in a store, the purchasers can come whenever they want to. When there is little goods, the purchasers are compelled to stand in line. When the lines are very long, it is necessary to appoint a policeman to keep order. Such is the starting point of the power of the Soviet bureaucracy. It "knows" who is to get something and who has to wait.

...Alongside the economic factor...there operates a parallel political factor in the person of the bureaucracy itself. In its very essence it is the planter and protector of inequality... In establishing and defending the advantages of a minority, it of course draws off the cream for its own use. Nobody who has wealth to distribute ever omits himself...

...And thus...there came a long period of weariness, decline and sheer disappointment in the results of the revolution. The ebb of... "plebeian pride" made room for a flood of pusillanimity and careerism. The new commanding caste rose to its place upon this wave.

...[T]he continual defeats of the revolution in Europe and Asia, while

Women do the work of Soviet society, from cleaning to medicine to plastering walls. Yet most are confined to unskilled, least-paying jobs. Long-simmering feminist outrage will lead in the fight to restore workers' democracy.



Vladimir Zotov, *Another Russia*

weakening the international position have vastly strengthened the Soviet...

...The masses lacked faith that the situation was permanently and irrevocably changed by a new struggle. They asserted: "For the sake of an improvement we propose to drag us into a position of shake-ups! We have earned the right to live in a socialist society at home. R..."

In the last analysis [Stalinism] is the result of the backwardness of the world revolution. But in capitalist countries the same cause

Women and the family

The October revolution honestly fulfilled its obligations to the woman... [It] not only gave her all political and legal rights but, what is more important, did all that it could, and...incomparable to any other government ever did, actually to secure her access to economic and cultural work... The revolution made a heroic effort to create a "family hearth"—that archaic, stuffy and stagnant institution of the bourgeois woman of the toiling classes performs galley labor from child to child. The forty million Soviet families remain nests of...female slavery...

...The marriage and family laws established by the October revolution being made over and mutilated by vast borrowings from the bourgeois countries... [T]he same arguments which were earlier in favor of unconditional freedom of divorce and abortion—"the women," "defense of the rights of personality," "protection of the family"—are repeated now in favor of their limitation and complete preservation...

...The most compelling motive of the present cult of the family is the need of the bureaucracy for a stable hierarchy of relations, and for the youth by means of 40,000,000 points of support for authority...

—Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*

The question of culture

In the process of struggle against the party Opposition, the party was strangled one after the other... The process of extermination of all ideological spheres... The present ruling stratum considers it not only to control spiritual creation politically, but also to preserve it for development. The method of command-without-appeal extended to the concentration camps, to scientific agriculture and to music...

...the epoch...will go into the history of artistic creation as an epoch of mediocrities, laureates and toadies. Spiritual creativeness demands freedom... [Communism] must be free finally and once for all the creative forces of mankind from all limitations and humiliating dependence. Personal relations, not know any externally imposed "plan," nor even any shadow of it. To what degree spiritual creativeness shall be individual or collective depend entirely upon its creators.

—Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*

Reading List

The Revolution Betrayed: What Is the Soviet Union and Where Is It Going?

by Leon Trotsky.
New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972. Paperback, \$9.95.

Classic analysis of the Soviet state under Stalin.

The Permanent Revolution and Results and Prospects

by Leon Trotsky.
New York: Pathfinder Press, 1969. Paperback, \$9.95.

Refutation of Stalin's notion of "socialism in one country" lays bare the necessity for international workers' revolution.

National Liberation, Socialism and Imperialism

by V.I. Lenin.
New York: International Publishers, 1968. Cloth, \$4.50.

Basic theoretical essays on nationalism and the right of nations to self-determination.

Lenin's Fight Against Stalinism

by V.I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky.

New York: Pathfinder Press, 1975. Paperback, \$4.95.

Documentation of Lenin's efforts before his death to expose and smash growing Soviet bureaucratism.

The Third International After Lenin

by Leon Trotsky.
New York: Pathfinder Press, 1970. Paperback, \$9.95.

Criticism of the 1928 draft program of the Communist International addresses the Chinese revolution and socialist strategy in the imperialist epoch.

The Challenge of the Left Opposition (3 volumes)

by Leon Trotsky.
New York: Pathfinder Press, 1975, 1980, 1981. Paperback, \$11.95 each.

History and ideas of the Communist Left Opposition, which coalesced to combat the rise of Stalinism in the Soviet Union, from 1923 to 1929.

The Stalin School of Falsification

by Leon Trotsky.
New York: Pathfinder Press, 1972. Paperback, \$9.95.

Marxist analysis of the Stalin regime's systematic lying.

The First Ten Years of American Communism: Report of a Participant

by James P. Cannon.
New York: Pathfinder Press, 1974. Paperback, \$9.95.

Examination of the Stalinization of the American Communist Party by one of its founding leaders.

American Stalinism and Anti-Stalinism

by James P. Cannon.

New York: Pioneer Publishers, 1947. Pamphlet available from the FSP in xerox form for \$1.10 plus \$.50 postage.

Review of the bitter fruits of class collaboration as practiced by the Communist Party USA.

To order any of the titles above, send the amount listed, plus \$1.00 shipping for first book, \$.50 each additional book, to: Freedom Socialist Party, New Freeway Hall, 5018 Rainier Ave. S., Seattle, WA, 98118.

linism: economic backwardness, oppression of national minorities, subordinating them insoluble is the absurd

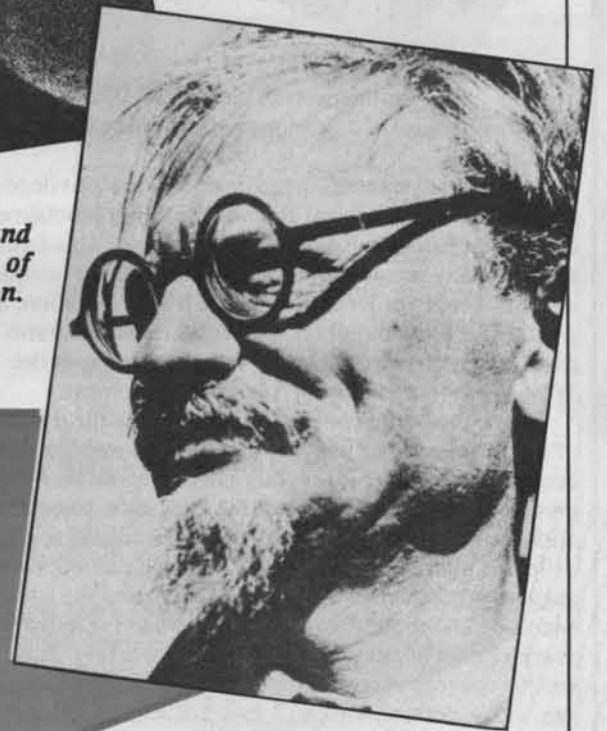
on and the international Trotskyist so engendered glasnost and perestroika.

Old Masters
fatal legacy of

Stalinism



V. I. Lenin (above) and Leon Trotsky, co-leaders of the Russian Revolution.



tion of the Soviet Union, Soviet bureaucracy... at the situation could be seri- e. Meantime the bureaucracy international revolution, the Op- to a revolutionary war. Enough he right to rest. We will build rely upon us, your leaders!"... owes it birth to the belated- at in the

gave rise to fascism... A victorious revolutionary movement in Europe would shake not only fascism, but Soviet Bonapartism. In turning its back to the international revolution, the Stalinist bureaucracy was, from its own point of view, right. It was merely obeying the voice of self-preservation.
—Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*



Armenians demonstrate for union with Nagorno-Karabakh, the predominantly Armenian territory inside Azerbaijan. Soviet nationalities' demands, for greater autonomy and democratization, so far pose the sharpest challenge to Moscow's bureaucratic hegemony.

Reform or revolution?

...The present regime...provokes protest at every step... The very existence of a greedy, lying and cynical caste of rulers inevitably creates a hidden indignation. The improvement of the material situation of the workers does not reconcile them with the authorities; on the contrary, by increasing their self-respect and freeing their thought for the general problems of politics, it prepares the way for an open conflict with the bureaucracy.

...If...the workers have almost never come out on the road of open struggle...this is not only because of the repressions. The workers fear lest, in throwing out the bureaucracy, they will open the way for a capitalist restoration... Without a planned economy the Soviet Union would be thrown back decades. In that sense the bureaucracy continues to fulfill a necessary function... Without deceiving themselves with regard to the ruling caste...[the workers] see in it the watchman...of their own conquests. They will inevitably drive out the...watchman as soon as they see another possibility. For this it is necessary that in the West or the East another revolutionary dawn arise.

...[T]he further course of development must inevitably lead to a clash... There is no peaceful outcome for this crisis. No devil ever voluntarily cut off his own claws. The Soviet bureaucracy will not give up its positions without a fight...

—Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*

U.S. Stalinism and anti-Stalinism

...Trotsky warned that the theory of "socialism in one country"...could only lead to social-patriotism in the capitalist countries. His warning...had a tragic verification...

...When Stalin began to seek a bloc with the bourgeois democratic imperialists after Hitler came to power...the American Communist Party immediately followed suit with its infamous policy of the "People's Front"... The good and correct slogan of the united front of the workers was replaced by the slogan of an all-class political combination. The movement for an independent labor party, which had gained such a wide response in the progressive labor movement, was sabotaged and strangled.

...The CP bureaucrats did everything to dragoon the workers into supporting the capitalist Democratic Party, by hypocritical indirection in 1936, openly and directly in 1944.

...The American Stalinists...jumped onto the democratic imperialist bandwagon with the start of the Soviet-Nazi war. And after the entry of American imperialism, they became the most blatant jingoes in the American war camp...

They were the loudest shouters for the no-strike pledge which shackled the workers... They became militant advocates of "incentive pay" plans by which the workers could be speeded up more efficiently, while their solidarity in the shops was undermined. They became the most unabashed finks and strikebreakers in every labor dispute...they put the stool-pigeon's finger on every revolutionist and every militant...

The main strength and danger of American Stalinism lies...in its demagogical capacity to deceive, demoralize and disorient the more radical elements who have attained a conscious anti-capitalist attitude, or are awakening to it...

The American workers will turn toward communism, and they will move swiftly and massively once they start... If we explain things correctly and work with the necessary energy, the American workers will embrace communism in its genuine form and reject the Stalinist counterfeit... Stalinism will be defeated by its revolutionary nemesis—Trotskyism.

The Russian Revolution was not an end of itself and could not build "socialism" by itself... It was only a beginning...

—James P. Cannon, *American Stalinism and Anti-Stalinism*

Soviet nationalities: a time bomb ticking away

...Socialist parties which did not show by all their activity, both now, during the revolution, and after its victory, that they would liberate the enslaved nations and build up relations with them on the basis of a free union—and free union is a false phrase without the right to secede—these parties would be betraying socialism.

—V.I. Lenin, *National Liberation, Socialism and Imperialism*

...The bureaucratic degeneration of the state has rested like a millstone on the national policy...

The cultural demands of the nations aroused by the revolution require the widest possible autonomy. At the same time, industry can successfully develop only by subjecting all parts of the Union to a general centralized plan... The tendencies of cultural autonomy and economic centralism come naturally from time to time into conflict. The contradiction between them is, however, far from irreconcilable. Although there can be no once-and-for-all prepared formula to resolve the problem, still there is the resilient will of the interested masses themselves. Only their actual participation in the administration of their own destinies can at each new stage draw the necessary lines between the legitimate demands of economic centralism and the living gravitations of national culture. The trouble is, however, that the will of the population...is now wholly replaced by the will of a bureaucracy which approaches both economy and culture from the point of view of...administration and the specific interests of the ruling stratum.

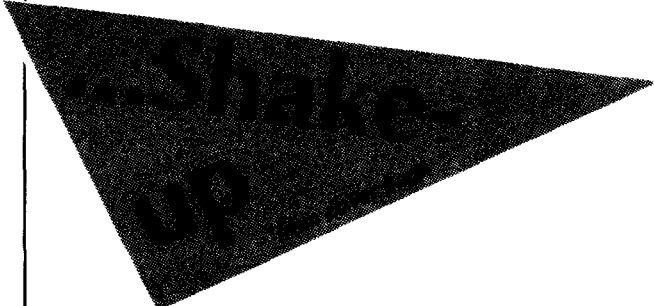
...[S]ince the Kremlin is the residence of the authorities, and the outlying territories are compelled to keep step with the center, bureaucratism inevitably takes the color of an autocratic Russification...

—Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*

Quality control

...It is possible to build gigantic factories according to a ready-made Western pattern by bureaucratic command—although, to be sure, at triple the normal cost. But the farther you go, the more the economy runs into the problem of quality, which slips out of the hands of a bureaucracy like a shadow. The Soviet products are as though branded with the gray label of indifference. Under a nationalized economy, quality demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative—conditions incompatible with a totalitarian regime of fear, lies and flattery.

—Leon Trotsky, *The Revolution Betrayed*



for themselves. Soviet isolation spawned the consolidation of a new, parasitical ruling caste, the bureaucracy.

Stalin, that supreme caretaker of the new privileged ones, who were his social base, accordingly proclaimed that "socialism in one country" had arrived. This freed him from any greater domestic or international commitments. Then, in order to cement the Soviet isolation, and provide for the tranquil consolidation of bureaucratic power, he mandated "peaceful coexistence" with the West as the framework for Soviet development.

But he could not coexist peacefully with the dynamic of the Russian Revolution itself. He was forced in due course to eradicate his revolutionary antagonists, by suppression of the Left Opposition in the 1920s, the extermination of millions of peasants and dissidents, and the exile and murder of Trotsky. He crassly falsified history, gagged writers, artists and critics, decimated the soviets and trade unions, and terrorized the country. Destroying every vestige of democracy in the first workers' state, he and his minions erected a gimcrack caricature of socialism, a degenerated workers' state that was an economic, cultural, and social abomination—a police state resting on a nationalized economy!

What a legacy Stalin left! The Soviet Union today is still backward, still vulnerable to the West. Its economy is a bureaucratic nightmare of rotten planning, endemic mismanagement, and corruption. Alcoholism, absenteeism, and cynicism are rampant among the politically disenfranchised workers. Long lines and scarce and shoddy merchandise plague the weary consumers.

Add to this the ruinous arms race, imperialist control of the bulk of the world's labor, resources and technology, and the single-minded aim of the USA to destroy communism, and it is clear just how desperately the USSR needs restructuring.

But it is also clear that perestroika's market imperatives and Gorbachev's pursuit of illusory coexistence could destroy rather than build the workers' state.

Is pro-socialist change ruled out? Not by a long shot. Glasnost has loosened the gag that has choked Soviet society. The currents of dissent already unleashed could enkindle a restructuring beyond anything Gorbachev envisions—a *political revolution* by the workers against the long-entrenched bureaucracy.

Special Speaking Tour

Eyewitness to Glasnost: a Trotskyist in Moscow

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- Oct. 23 Portland, OR Koinonia House, PSU Campus Christian Ministry, 633 S.W. Montgomery, 97201. 503-249-8067.
- Nov. 6 Los Angeles, CA Westlake Hall, 1918 W. 7th St. #204, 90057. 213-413-1350.
- Nov. 13 San Francisco, CA Valencia Hall, 523-A Valencia St., 94110. 415-864-1278.
- Nov. 19 New York City, NY Brecht Auditorium, 79 Leonard St., 10013. 212-677-7002.
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Coming storms. Gorbachev's moment of truth will come, explosively, when perestroika and glasnost meet head on and conflict irrepressibly in Soviet life. Glasnost offers hope of political freedom, but perestroika beckons capitalist-style exploitation.

Pursuit of profits is now a life-or-death matter for over 48,000 state enterprises, and the cost-cutting, production-bolstering mechanisms of profiteering make themselves felt. Piecework, speedups, wage cuts and mass layoffs abound as "solutions" to industrial sluggishness and anemic revenues.

Soviet workers are taking advantage of glasnost to express their deep antipathy to wage cuts and factory discipline campaigns. Mass protests and strikes are breaking out, and disaffection will harden as perestroika deepens and worker resistance swiftly grows over into open struggle to retain the planned economy.

Under perestroika, enterprises must seek profits within the broad framework of state planning. **But planning is antithetical to market anarchy!** Nationalization will be undone if perestroika is pushed too far—and profits would provide a powerful stimulus to free industry totally from planning imperatives.

The pressures will build as Western capitalists leap to buy up to 49 percent of Soviet enterprises, and as the state's monopoly of foreign trade—a cornerstone of nationalization and planning—is eroded by state enterprises that contract independently with Western firms.

The dismantling of planning would usher in capitalism, with all its attendant anti-worker evils.

Blind alley. Since Stalin, Soviet economic policy has oscillated between top-down over-centralization, and the use of market incentives to overcome the resulting stagnation. It's a vicious circle, stemming fundamentally from the USSR's poverty vis-à-vis imperialism, the bureaucratic stupidity which confines the building of socialism to one country, and the bureaucracy's inability to accept Soviet democracy.

History testifies to the impossibility of lasting reform imposed from above in the Soviet Union. Soviet "socialism" is ever vulnerable to capitalist pressures, and Gorbachev's detente initiatives strikingly illustrate this. His withdrawal of assistance to Nicaragua facilitates U.S. intervention there. His rapprochement with Israel sells out the Palestinians and buttresses U.S. imperialism throughout the Mideast. His withholding of arms from the African National Congress props up racist Pretoria throughout Southern Africa.

Go, go, glasnost! Soviet workers didn't take power in 1917 just to have it handed back on a platter to capitalism. They see far more astutely than many Western leftists that Gorbachev is no friend of the working class.

His "peace" efforts and capitalist-style economic reforms imperil the Soviet Union.

Yet, the exercise of glasnost may prevent a debacle.

Soviet citizens want the promise of the Russian Revolution fulfilled. It's no accident that the ideas of Leon Trotsky, the greatest foe of the bureaucracy, are resurfacing. And the demand for workers' control over production and for democracy—indispensable prerequisites for successful management of a socialist economy—is being raised with increasing insistence.

The workers can win their demands through political revolution, as Trotsky predicted.

Forward! Socialists in other countries, meanwhile, have a mighty role to play in spurring this political revolution forward. It is high time that internationalist radicals—Trotskyists, independent Marxists, erstwhile Stalinists—discuss and analyze together the meaning of the tumultuous Soviet present and shrouded past. To expose the machinations of the bureaucracy, and to restore to social memory the shining promise of the Russian Revolution, is to serve the future of humankind.

Stalinism betrayed, retarded and crushed the Russian and international revolutions for six decades. It engendered a vast, worldwide cynicism, especially in the West, about the prospects and viability and nature of socialism. Soviet workers and socialists everywhere now have a golden opportunity, born of glasnost, to settle accounts with the bureaucrats, drive them from power, and restore to the world movement the shining concepts of revolutionary democracy and internationalism.

These were the grand ideas that powered the Russian Revolution in 1917, that will carry it forward today, that will make the promise of socialism in all countries a living reality.

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Key Topics

- The impact of perestroika and revolt in the Soviet Union
- The future of the Nicaraguan state
- Imperialist power vs. irrepressible revolt
- The economic of capitalism in convulsions
- The role of feminism in the labor social issue

