

on a historic scale with other possessing classes. Previous ruling classes have had their bureaucracies and in contemporary bourgeois society the labor movement has been led and victimized by a labor bureaucracy. While a bureaucracy attains a relative independence from the class it represents, and appropriates, or rather misappropriates, a share of the social income for its own selfish interests, it is nevertheless rooted in the class it represents.

In this sense the Soviet bureaucracy does not differ fundamentally from the bureaucracies in prior epochs. The Soviet bureaucracy is rooted in nationalized property, public ownership of the means of production, centralized planning. It cannot undo these progressive social achievements without undoing itself. It doesn't mean that there is not a neo-restorationist wing of the bureaucracy, but it by no means signifies that the latter has completely triumphed.

A "new class" must have a historic mission

In attributing a new sociological character to the USSR, these theoreticians have unwittingly crowned the Soviet bureaucracy with a great new historic mission. If a new class governs the USSR then the evidence of all previous class societies compels us to conclude that such a class could only come into existence by historic necessity and, as a corollary to that, that it has a historic mission which no effort by the proletariat can successfully nullify until that mission is exhausted.

Why were the proletarian revolutions of 1848 and 1871 overcome? When all is said and done, when all the political mistakes, false policies by workers' organizations, the machinations and conspiracy of the bourgeoisie, etc., etc., are taken into account, was it not because the bourgeoisie had not yet exhausted its historic mission? Capitalism still had plenty of room for development. It took some decades before competitive capitalism turned to monopoly capitalism: imperialism.

What follows from the theories of capitalist restoration is that the proletarian revolution in the USSR, the seizure of power by the proletariat, was premature. Therefore, not only were the political policies of the leaders of the revolution and their successors erroneous, but they were utopian. Marxism, even in the hands of the genius of Lenin, merely served as an ideological garb, as a cover to objectively pave the way, smooth the path, for

the bourgeoisie. In other words, Marxism as a doctrine is really comparable to the teachings of the men of the Great Enlightenment in the period preceding the French Revolution. It served to rally the masses, ultimately gave them slogans, such as Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, but in the end it turned out to be an ideological cover for a new ruling class.

Have these theoreticians of the new ruling class in the USSR thought these matters through to the end?

Pragmatic origins of their thesis

On the contrary, it is not objective thought which has impelled them to move in this direction. It is not objective, independent thinking which has resulted in this theory which is so favorable to the imperialist bourgeoisie. It is born out of subjectivist and politically tendentious trends in contemporary politics. This theory began to come in vogue here not when the presumed transformation took place, but in 1968 and 1969, after Czechoslovakia. And what impelled its exponents to take that position was that they had turned their face to the Chinese leadership, who abruptly proclaimed the theory of "social imperialism" and left it to the foreign theoreticians to theorize what in effect was a political cuss word pronounced by one faction in the international communist movement against another.

Important as the Czechoslovak intervention was, it could under no circumstances be the starting point for a new sociological appraisal of the USSR. If the Czechoslovak intervention was such an enormously regressive action, how about Hungary? And wasn't Georgia forcibly Sovietized under Lenin? Indeed, none of these interventions could possibly serve as a starting point for a reevaluation of the class character of the USSR. It is interesting that none of these theoreticians was prompted to pronounce an anathema on the class character of the USSR for the previous interventions.

None of the interventions flow from a transformation in Soviet property relations. (In Georgia, the intervention was of course wholly progressive.) The Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia (as well as in Hungary, which was approved and encouraged by Mao), was launched to stave off bourgeois counter-revolution, which in part was the result of reactionary policies pursued by the Soviet leaders and approved by the Chinese leaders.

Had these counter-revolutions succeeded, had the Soviet Union