SOCIALIST TRANSITION IN CHINA: SOME CONCEPTUAL ISSUES
by
Anthony Thomson
Department of Sociology
Acadia University
and
Herbert Gamberg
Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology
Dalhousie University
Presented for the 23rd Annual Meeting of the Atlantic Association of Sociologists and

This paper is based on several premises. Among these are the following: Socialist revolutions
have occurred. The seizure of state power is one step in the process of social transformation
through which a revolutionary society is propelled. The direction taken by this development, as
opposed to the potential alternative futures, is determined by struggles of a class character which
persist throughout this transition. The most crucial of these struggles is focussed primarily in the
polity. In a revolutionary socialist society struggles within the polity determine the character of
the social formation. In addition to the possibility of absolute counter-revolution, and the travails
of socialist development, a social formation based on state ownership can be created (state
capitalism) which is no longer revolutionary. While political struggles occur in state socialist
societies, the struggle which concludes in the transformation of a revolutionary regime into state
capitalism is qualitatively different.

Marxist analyses of the contradictions of state capitalism are not well developed; even less well
developed are Marxist explanations of the qualitative change which occurs between socialism
and state capitalism. The purpose of this essay, then, is to discuss some of the conceptual issues
which have been raised in this debate in the light of Chinese experience and the theorizing about
revisionism. Central to this essay is the notion that the index with which to judge the character of
a socialist regime is less the concrete policies pursued and more the theoretical elaboration
within which they are couched.

INTRODUCTION

Marx had been understandably reluctant to provide any specific blue-prints for the future
socialist society, the development of which could be understood only through the praxis of
revolution. The cumulative experience of this century would seem to suggest that the process is
far more complicated than had been foreseen. There has been a great deal of water--and some
cement--under the bridge since Lenin formulated the optimistic proposition that socialism
equaled electrification plus "soviet power".

Depending on how mechanically the concept "soviet" is interpreted, this formula arguably
embraced the positivistic bias of much nineteenth century Marxism, with its emphasis on natural
laws and the inevitability of historical processes. The relationship between degrees and modes of
structural determination, and conscious action, has been and will continue to be a theoretical and
practical problem for Marxism. In general, however, with the consolidation of state-directed
monopoly capitalism in the West, and even more with the significant attempts at a revolutionary break with capitalism, the conscious as opposed to the naturalistic element in social life has become increasingly important in determining history. The transition to the higher period of communism presupposes the ability of humans to take conscious control of their social existence. Revolutionary Marxism is central to this transformation in the nature of consciousness. The construction of socialism entails the conscious and directed alteration of natural and economic, as well as social, relations, within an objective conjuncture which presents certain limits and obstacles which must be grasped in theory and then progressively overcome in practice. As Lenin prophesized, "it will be more difficult for Western Europe to start a socialist revolution", but it will be even more difficult for Russia "to continue the revolution and bring it to its consummation". If, at the time, he referred primarily to the resistance of overthrown classes backed by powerful foreign capitalist nations, experience seems to suggest that the main danger to the consolidation of socialist society is internal: the engendering of a new dominant class.

Since its inception in 1917, there has been much controversy over the fate of the first attempt to build socialism. The critique developed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the 1960s and 1970s is especially significant because it was situated within the major precepts of the Bolshevik revolution. There were important differences between the revolutionary processes in Russia and China, going back at least as far as the move to the countryside following the Nanking uprising in the 1920s. Nevertheless, the Chinese revolution was grounded in the organizational principles of Leninism. The CCP held that a party, organized along democratic centralist lines, was an indispensable prerequisite for a successful socialist transformation. The dilemma of this transition period was that the process of centralization of party control, and then of state control, could increasingly take precedence over the process of democratization. The result would be construction of a dictatorship not of the proletariat but over the proletariat. The CCP concluded, in its polemics following the 20th Congress of the CPSU, that such a potential had been realized in the USSR.

Committed to the principle of a Communist Party of the Leninist type as the necessary instrument for winning and maintaining socialism, revolutionaries within the CCP were faced with the problem of devising mechanisms for preventing such a degeneration. It was in this context that rectification campaigns were launched, both internal to the party and through the directed use of public criticism. The Cultural Revolution, which was perhaps the most significant of these attempts, provided the theoretical basis for a new understanding of Soviet history. This re-interpretation in the 1960s and 1970s was fueled by the rosy sense that the Chinese Cultural Revolution represented a basic leap in understanding and transcending the problems of socialist transition. In the face of events in China since Mao's death, no such easy optimism exists anymore and the dilemma of transition seems all the more profound and recalcitrant.

The object of this paper is to reiterate some of the theoretical contributions in the CCP's original analysis of problems in the transition of socialist society in the light of the "new course in China". The significance of developments in China since 1949 is to be found in the attempts made to combat the potential ossification of the revolution and apparently the failure of such attempts. This paper, then, is a discussion of the analytical framework within which the CCP has, at least in the recent past, couched its summation of political and ideological lines and the contribution this has made to Marxist theory.
THE SOCIAL BASIS OF PARTICULARISM

If by particularism we mean the attempt to assert individual or group interests regardless of the wider social consequences, then it is clear that, although capitalism may be the model form, such orientations are not confined to social formations in which bourgeois relations are dominant. Within socialist society the material basis for the reproduction of particularistic ideas and practices is found in the continued existence of important structural inequalities, inherited from the past and daily reproduced, which are an inevitable component of the mode of production of socialism in transition.

The most important of these material contradictions and differences of interests are those which result from the juxtaposition of general and particular interests at the level of the ownership and control of productive property. Rather than resolving the question of ownership in favour of the state as a whole (which itself initiates new contradictions), various types of ownership co-exist in state socialist societies. The most fully developed form of state ownership in China has accounted for the bulk of heavy industrial production (although experience elsewhere reveals that the question of legal ownership and producer control are separable and problematic). The remainder of the industrial output and almost all agricultural production has occurred in more or less collectively owned sections of the economy. The recent trend is to make this ownership less collective, although even after the development of the rural Communes, fixed assets tended to be owned at the Team or Brigade level corresponding to lower stages of socialist ownership.

At each stage of the attempted transformation of agriculture, relatively privileged minorities arose whose objective short-term interest appeared to be to consolidate their position and thereby put a halt to the furthering of the social revolution. The original land reform in China had quickly led to a differentiation of owners, and to a polarization as some peasants who were least well placed for independent production lost their land and had to sell their labour power to others. At the same time, these social conditions fuelled the advance to co-operative ownership which was a progressive step. At each stage class struggle was intensified in order to push the revolution forward. The existence of formal ownership at different levels of socialization recreates in various forms and in a very direct way contradictions between various particularistic interests and those of the collective and society as a whole.

Beyond this contradiction of ownership, there were two other primary areas of contradiction in the social relations of production theorized within the CCP. The first involved the separation of control from execution, a question which has a distinct dimension from that of de jure ownership. This is expressed in the relationship between workers, technicians and cadres: to the extent that workers do not exercise increasing degrees of power over those in authority, and practices do not exist which begin the process of overcoming the differences between the two, then the separation of cadres and workers prepares the way for a contradiction of interests between them. Connected in part to this distinction in the work process is the separation of manual and mental labour. Manual work, when socialized, must be accompanied by an increasing responsibility for controlling production. On the other hand, mental work in general, involves an important element of autonomy in the work situation. The conditions of work of mental workers are conducive to the development of certain kinds of individualistic practices and the adoption of particularistic ideologies. Unlike those in positions of power over others,
however, relatively autonomous mental workers have less capacity for consolidating into a "social class" (a crystallized economic, social and political grouping) to pursue their own interests. This is in part because the performance of mental work, which differentiates them from the manual workers, also tends to isolate them from each other. However, as a heterogeneous social mass (a variegated "sack of potatoes"), they often provide support for those in authority who recognize their demands for specific kinds of individual rights and privileges. While "class formation", then, entails inequalities and the distinction between mental and manual work, the "state bourgeoisie" is a more distinct political and social entity than the bulk of "cadres and technicians".

Mental workers will have an ambivalent relationship with the Party and bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is a limitation on the fullest expression of their individualistic interests so there is a foundation for substantial conflict between mental workers and those in positions of authority above them. Such mental workers, particularly intellectuals, will predictably support individualistic ideologies. But bureaucracy, dominated by the Party, also expresses certain interests of mental workers. It can be seen as the mode of organization of specialities in which relative autonomy is accorded the experts to pursue their own interests in a careerist fashion.

The second major area of contradiction, largely derivative from the social relations of production existing in a transitional socialist society, concerns the issue of distribution, subject to commentary in Marx's Critique of the Gotha Programme. The socialist principle of distribution according to one's work, Marx pointed out, is an equal right in that only one standard--work--is used to measure performance and allocate scarce resources. In practice, however, this standard proves to be unequal because individuals, family units, enterprises and so on, are unequal. The inevitable result of distribution on this principle is to exacerbate inequalities. The CCP argued that allocation according to this "bourgeois right" is necessary in socialist societies, and that the socialist development of the productive forces provides a necessary economic basis for transcending it in the long run. "Bourgeois right" was to be exercised simultaneously with a recognition of its inequalities in practice, while progressively modifying it in favour of the principle of "distribution according to need" as conditions warranted. While it is necessary to reward relatively unequally in socialist society, most importantly on the practical grounds of the need to motivate hard, routine work, as well as to secure the relative support of experts, the CCP argued that the negative implications of the separation of the work process and the unequal distribution of resources must be recognized explicitly and social practices developed to overcome the spontaneous tendencies to reproduce particularistic interests which could become economically, socially and politically consolidated.

Under state ownership there is still a potential for exploitation which results not only when individuals are supported from the social surplus, but also when the direct producers are alienated by not having control over the allocation of this surplus increasing the probability that it could be used in ways opposed to their short or long term interests. On the other hand, relative autonomy at work may be empowering but it also increases the probability that individuals will serve their self-interest at the expense of collective interests. Bourgeois theory suggests that the greatest social good arises from the unfettered opportunity for each individual to pursue her or his self-interest. In a socialist society the relationship between state control and proletarian control is fraught with contradictions. Centralization appears to resolve the dilemma in favour of
an overall social plan capable of enforcing progressive inequality. But the central dilemma becomes: who is doing the enforcing, what prevents alienation from becoming exploitation, and what checks and balances are there? Decentralization appears to foster more direct proletarian control at local levels, but the object and outcome of local control can become problematic with respect to socialist transition. How is it possible to ensure that regional, local and individual control operates in the best interests of the socialist transition?

In addressing this dilemma, both the relationship between the party and the producers, and the class orientation of the party were regarded by the CCP as important factors. In China control had been centralized in the Communist Party. Within this type of leadership, concern for furthering the revolutionary movement implied developing and encouraging those practices which expanded proletarian control, particularly at the local level (neighbourhoods, workplaces) and simultaneously deepening theoretical understanding. That is, issues in the development of society and the socialist transition were raised to consciousness and to the level of debate in the society and policy alternatives were expected to be debated with respect to long term revolutionary goals. In theory, the mass line was to be the theoretical summation of the needs, aspirations and understandings of the majority of the people. In practice the alternatives themselves and the theoretical rationales were formulated by the leadership and the resulting educational campaigns reflected inner-party struggles more than the dialectic of the mass line.

In the political context of the Chinese revolution, the CCP theorized that a form of exploitation could emerge based on the distinction between town and countryside, between industry and agriculture. Socialist development, then, meant maintaining the alliance between rural and urban workers. In contrast to the experience of the Soviet Union in the late 1920s, the Chinese argued that they had been more successful in maintaining the worker-peasant alliance throughout the process of agricultural transformation, including the development of Communes (given the maintenance of lower forms of ownership within the larger rural units). The appropriate degree of social ownership (extent and form) is a concrete policy issue. What is crucial is the theoretical recognition of the consequences of social forms.

In Soviet Russia the concentrated development of heavy industry became a priority to the point at which the exchange between town and country became greatly unequal. In this circumstance a form of exploitation emerged based, most importantly, on the contradictions between the peasants and the urban classes. A political policy which went too far in meeting a particularistic interest prevailed, breaking the worker-peasant alliance, and hence contradicting the general interest. Investment requires a surplus, but the key element of exploitation concerns immediate control and the long-term implications of the utilization of this surplus.

In sum, there are degrees of contradiction between the short-term interests of teams and brigades, between rural communities and industrial towns, between industries, regions, provinces; between cadres and workers, the party and the people, mental and manual labour, and so on. As capital accumulation proceeds, some agricultural areas could reach a relatively advanced stage of development and relations between regions would become greatly unequal. Everywhere the law of uneven development prevails. Particular interests abound and exist in a complex and contradictory fashion with more general interests.
Left to themselves, these inequalities in socialist society lead to an inevitable differentiation and polariisation even if, initially, it is only the unequal distribution of the social product. During the socialist stage structural inequalities persist and provide the basis for the adoption and generation of forms of particularistic ideologies and practices not only among those who hold privileged positions, or held them in the past and perpetuate them through the family, but among those who aspire to them. The various relationships in socialist society manifest themselves in a plethora of particular interests whether of an individual, sectional or collective kind.

At every stage in its development socialist society necessarily generates relatively privileged sections for whom the immediate interest is the crystallization of the social structure at that given point. Existing inequalities are legitimated and the problem is presented as a mere question of quantity, of an increase in the forces of production to raise the level of society as a whole. Most primitively, this has been advanced as a theory which holds that since bourgeois right can only be transcended in an advanced industrial society, then the social transformation will inevitably be brought about by "advanced production". Alternatively, it may be argued that the social revolution can be held in abeyance for a time while the productive forces are built up at which time it will be appropriate to launch a new socialist revolution. According to this latter version, policies which meet the immediate needs of specific particularisms, which tend to increase the social polarization, are legitimated in terms of putative longer-range interests.

The theory that "productive forces" will inevitably bring in their train changed social relations has long been discredited in revolutionary Marxism. The alternative formulation, stressing the need to build up the necessary economic pre-conditions for transcending unequal social relations, sounds more plausible. Even assuming that the new theory is put forward in all sincerity, however, the essential problem is that the temporary halt to the social revolution will operate to strengthen and help consolidate privileged strata and reinforce particularistic ideas and practices. The fostering in China of particular interests in the short-term for supposed long-term pre-conditions, at best, seriously risks strengthening the forces of counter-revolution.

Since the 1930s the revolutionary trend within the Chinese leadership had attempted to continue the social revolution by mobilizing all those who stood to gain by a deepening of the revolutionary process. Nevertheless, another kind of "modernization" was on the political agenda, a process in which the type and rate of industrialization would be different. For example, the policy of linking remuneration with the success or failure of an enterprise, makes profit the preeminent goal rather than the redesigning of work to make it less alienating. Although the strict application of a time and money efficiency scale might allow for a rapid growth in some sectors, rather than reduce differentials it would increase inequalities and deepen class and social polarization. In itself, this outcome is not sufficient to characterize the policy as either promoting or not promoting socialism. What needs to be reiterated is the importance of analysing the various contradictions, making the implications explicit, and situating the whole in a theoretical framework of progressive stages. This highlights rather than simplifies the difficulties in defining and identifying the general interest and those particular interests which must be met in the short run. Given a tendency to polarization and the continued regeneration of privileged particularisms, the difficult task of the transition of socialism is to find a means to prevent these privileged strata from consolidating and becoming the dominant political force. The maintenance of revolutionary leadership is an essential factor in keeping the society
developing in a socialist direction. The dialectic of this process is that in the absence of genuine popular control, counter-revolution is inevitable.

On the one hand, then, the battle is an ideological one and is fought in the realm of theory. But a change in social practice must reinforce and regenerate ideological change. Hence, although we may be sceptical about their implementation, there appeared to be positive significance in policies which demanded that cadres participate in manual work, especially rural work in a country like China. Moreover, workers participating in management makes concrete working class leadership. These processes should not be seen as the fundamental means to generate equality--bourgeois right remains--but they help define the existing limits and help to shape the future with a practice which aims consciously to restrict inequalities. Their meaning was as much symbolic as practical.

It is by continuing the socialist revolution in ways determined by concrete circumstances that ossification can be prevented because the main spontaneous tendency is to revert to particularistic methods. This does not result from any supra-historical law such as, for example, the notion that bourgeois ideas and practices correspond to an unchanging human nature. But it does reflect the extent to which human beings are a product of their circumstances. The theory that the economic determines is not meant to connote a sense of time such that, ultimately in the future, a period will come when the economic, the material factor, is completely dominant--the opposite will be closer to the truth. Rather, it is the sense that society, the most significant aspect of which is the economic organization, sets concrete limits on what is practically possible in any given circumstance, not only materially but also ideologically. Within socialism, then, policy choices are made within the given circumstances and there is no necessary, pre-determined line of evolution. It is possible to consolidate the differentials, or work towards gradually dissolving them, based on changed material conditions and restrictions to overcome spontaneous tendencies towards new class formations and new class ideologies. It is also possible to deepen the revolution by apparently taking a backward step and restoring some of the conditions which generated older forms of inequality. The appropriate degree of economic differentials and the appropriate application of political processes, such as determining how to implement working class control in production, are variable and subject to change according to how well they advance both revolution and production—which are potentially contradictory if handled improperly. Consequently a certain amount of quantitative readjustment is always possible once such processes have been established. But both the objective and subjective aspects of the process should be made explicit: material conditions are important, but particularistic ideas must be exposed in the realm of ideology as well, with particular attention being paid to the content and style of this process, because ideas also transform material conditions.

It may be argued that since socialism is a period of transition following capitalism, it also ought to generate, spontaneously, socialist ideas as well as particularistic ones. However, varieties of feudalism and capitalism were actual historical stages and are manifest in the force of habit and the existence of remnants of backward classes and backward or particularistic ideas. The development towards higher stages of socialism is a conscious process requiring a constant struggle to resist these backward tendencies and those newly generated. That is one reason why a "peaceful transition" (or coup d'etat) from socialism to state capitalism is possible. Of course
social conditions create a spirit of cooperation and militancy among the working class which is essential for the further development of socialism, but this is different from saying that communist ideology develops spontaneously. The formulation of ideology in a socialist society occurs in the polity reflecting the centralized political system, but it must be based on a thorough praxis. It should reflect proletarian practices, but it can also reflect and stimulate the existence of particularistic practices and ideas -- what we will term "bourgeois" -- and, through these, reflect and strengthen the structural inequalities in socialist social formations.

**BOURGEOIS PRACTICES, IDEAS AND IDEOLOGY**

The most essential general characteristic of bourgeois ideas and practices is their individualistic orientation, an orientation which can be linked analytically with the capitalist class. Bourgeois-type ideologies amount to codifications of these ideas and practices into theories which legitimate bourgeois interests in particular and self-interests in general. In pre-capitalist social formations, legitimating ideologies frequently embodied some notion of collectivity, although they ultimately expressed the interests of dominant, exploitative classes. While forms of individualistic ideologies co-existed in such societies, the capitalist class codified individualism into its most explicit justifying ideology in competitive capitalism where the rights of the individual to pursue his own self-interest are accorded theoretical primacy as natural right. Bourgeois ideology comes the closest to acknowledging its essence in classical liberalism, although as Marx pointed out, it necessarily presented itself as the expression of the general interest, a trait common to all forms of particularistic theory.

Liberalism, however, is only one form of bourgeois ideology. It is in the nature of individualistic ideologies to appear in greatly varied forms since they place the rights of the almost infinitely differentiating parts above the whole. The form of codification of self-interest in not unvarying but rather depends on the circumstances. Classical individualism was associated with the petty bourgeois origins of competitive capitalism. With the transition to monopoly capitalism the social basis of this ideology was to a large degree undermined; nevertheless it remained a potent weapon in the bourgeois ideological arsenal. It has been supplemented, not supplanted, by other ideologies which putatively reflect a more general interest (often defined in national terms). In the case of social democracy, for example, bourgeois ideology has to cover its essential basis behind the rhetoric and partial practice of social welfare--both restricted within the bounds of the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production. Bourgeois ideology, then, incorporates both old ideas and new legitimations specific to the given social structure. Such concepts as the primacy of rank, the notion of inherent superiority and inferiority, even cultural chauvinism, have antecedents in pre-capitalist times. But rather than supersede these ideologies, capitalism invested them with new theories; they were old ideas in new guises.

Within a socialist society the codification of particularistic ideologies must take even a more disguised form because they must be presented as new versions of revolutionary Marxism. Within such a society some of the historically generated forms of bourgeois and pre-bourgeois ideologies may be expected to wither away over time as they become increasingly out of step with changed conditions. Nevertheless the conditions which generate new forms of bourgeois ideas and practices are reproduced in the socialist social formation. The ideological form taken by these codifications and legitimations will be different from those current in capitalist society.
but they will retain the essential feature of subordinating general to particular interests within an ideology which proclaims the opposite. Given the necessity to couch ideologies under the rubric of Marxism, any policy must be shown to have "proletarian" interests. Legitimations are not mere fictions, not simply "false consciousness". But they distort reality and more fundamentally distort the longer-range implications of policies.

In so far as bourgeois tendencies permeate the practices of the members in a socialist society they can only ambivalently be characterized as "backward ideas"--those which do not reflect the potential inherent in the present and hence act to block the progressive transcendence of this present. They are backward in two senses. First they may reflect old ideas out of keeping with changed circumstances--they are survivals which must be uprooted. Second they may represent these old ideas in new forms which reflect the changed circumstances. In this sense they are not "backward" by definition; however the position which declares certain ideas as absolutely rather than relatively legitimate (such as bourgeois right in socialist society), risks consolidating these ideas. In general, ideas should be contrasted with the most advanced ideas which the social structure can generate and sustain, at the same time as the existing practices of the majority which are compatible with proletarian interests are given relative legitimacy. (The delicate balancing of immediate needs, demands and practices with the long-range goals of socialism is the essence of political leadership).

However bourgeois ideas are not backward in another sense. It is possible to simultaneously "move ahead" while the revolution is "drawn backwards". Given the nature of Chinese society and its underdeveloped, pre-capitalist elements, there is a sense in which bourgeois ideas are progressive. The freeing of individual initiative and the reliance on self-interest are not incompatible with the rapid development of some types of productive forces. The major problem arises when the necessity for bourgeois practices are not presented in direct and honest terms, as necessary, temporary, and bourgeois. What made the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in Soviet Russia in the 1920s a progressive policy in spite of its economic step backwards\textsuperscript{15} was the fundamentally straightforward presentation of this step by the Bolshevik Party at that time. It is the absence of such straightforwardness which makes recent Chinese policy, much of which may also be structurally necessary, so different and so ominous\textsuperscript{16}.

The proposition that the fundamental interest of the proletariat (and the people as a whole) entails the erasing of all class distinctions and the development of a communist society is the most abstract "common interest", and the social revolution takes theoretical precedence. In contrast to this determination to continue the revolution, other orientations, while claiming with a certain short-term logic to be up-holding common ends, will actually express those particular interests whose realization and consolidation in fact undermines the continuation of the social revolution and takes the society off the revolutionary path. The most fundamental of these interests concern those in positions of power--the development of a new ruling class at the top which converts the Communist Party into an instrument of class reproduction, a process which appears to develop more "spontaneously" in bourgeois societies through direct inheritance of property. The party may reproduce a "meritocracy", but the issues are what will be defined as "meritorious", and who will have unequal access to the institutional mechanisms of this selection\textsuperscript{17}. 
As with the distinction between immediate needs and long-term goals, this is not simply a question of particular versus common ends. It is a frequent political mistake to assume that the most abstractly advanced political slogan is the most appropriate in specific circumstances. Political leadership demands that real, concrete (and necessarily specific or particular) aims be met in a situation without sacrificing the long-range interests of the proletariat—in fact, those specific interests which actually express or are on the line of development with larger interests in the given time and place. This determination requires a thorough class analysis, a comprehensive understanding of all the important contradictions and their inter-connections, an analysis of all the contending forces, and so on. Stated as such, the goal is utopian and political practice must proceed on the basis of necessarily limited and incomplete knowledge. In fact, the only process by which such necessarily relative knowledge can be attained is the organized theoretical summation of practical activity—the two must dove-tail and each reflexively inform the other.

The problem is to determine which particular interests, when realized, will be progressive in a given conjuncture, realizing that as sectional aims they are by definition logically in ultimate contradiction with the long-term goals of the revolution. The peasant, for example, must ultimately be transformed into a worker with no exclusive possessive rights over productive property. But this cannot take place all at once. The formation of co-operatively owned productive units in agriculture at a specific time can be the correct stage even if it produces a myriad of new particularistic interests both in terms of the allocation of resources internal to the co-op and with respect to relations between units which, if consolidated, will inevitably contribute to the creation of a non-socialist mode of production.

What is essential is that the meeting of sectional ends be proclaimed as such, as a necessary transitional state but a transitional stage nonetheless. Not merely transitional in the abstract, on the "road to communism", as with the theory of productive forces in which current class struggle is de-emphasised in favour of supposed harmony while productive forces are built, but with a definite understanding of the new contradictions which will arise coupled with immediate measures to lessen the influence of particularisms and prepare for the next stage, already conceptualized.18

Social transformation is a process and the ideas and practices which emerge at one stage and are seen as highly progressive in that context, in time become obstacles to be overcome. This process of continual transcendence must entail struggle because at every stage the formerly progressive ideas represent the sectional interests of concrete social groups. What can be termed a "bourgeois idea", then, varies with social circumstances. Practices become fully bourgeois when they subordinate the general to the particular interest at the expense of the former. It is not a question of suppressing particular interests in general—only making them compatible with general ones; it is making the particular interest the means of realizing, at the time, the general interest.

In sum, we are dealing with two analytically separate questions. One is the generation of bourgeois ideas and practices in the society as a whole and the other is the codification of these into new ideologies which justify them and attempt to cover them with political legitimations, which in a socialist society must be cast in a Marxist form. Bourgeois ideas (in China feudal ideas as well) permeate the population and take the form of what Mao termed "contradictions among the people"19.
TWO ROADS

The necessary conditions for advancing along the revolutionary road entail the dove-tailing processes of ideological struggle and technical development. Socialist society spontaneously reproduces both bourgeois ideas and practices. Given a tendency towards polarization, a continual struggle must be mounted on the ideological level. The elimination of backward class practices and ideas depends on material transformation. But change is inevitable and the proletarian or bourgeois form of this transformation depends in turn on maintaining revolutionary leadership. While the tendency towards spontaneous class formation in socialist society at the level of the relations of production indicates that classes will develop over time and that a new exploitative social class in embryo is generated in socialist society, the consolidation of this latter grouping into a class will not be a centuries-long process. The immediate prerequisite is political power and the outcome is determined by the relationship between revolutionaries in the party and the people. That is, continuing the revolution entails maintaining popular participation and strengthening the ties between revolutionaries and the people. Counter-revolution does not require such a link because it is determined solely at the top and, as Mao continually stressed, the representatives of the bourgeoisie are in the Party. In general abstract tendencies derivable from an analysis of material forces never proceed mechanically but are mediated by class forces and ideology. Everything hinges on the outcome of the two-line struggle in the party, for at this stage, despite the level of socialist consciousness achieved by the people from their past experience, in the short run backward leadership will be decisive. In fact the whole notion of popular socialist consciousness cannot be separated from the ideological and political line propagated by the leadership. Socialist consciousness can be present, to a degree, among a people, but unless the people have the opportunity to translate this consciousness into power, their consciousness will not amount to very much in terms of preventing counter-revolution.

The summation of the Soviet experience was the cornerstone of the revolutionary direction taken domestically by China after the Sino-Soviet split. Widely regarded in the past as the model for socialist development, the Chinese concluded in the 1960s that the recent form of development in the USSR is a degeneration towards an increasingly capitalistic system in which a new dominant exploitative class had emerged. Rather than being a socialist state the USSR was considered to have restored capitalism and to be "social-imperialist". The Chinese at the time pointed to a web of interconnected policies, theories, economic relations, ideologies and international activities which supported their conclusion, although the theoretical implications and reinterpretation were only sketched in broad outlines. The short term as well as the long term interests of the proletariat and peasantry were being sacrificed in the interests of the new "bureaucratic" state bourgeoisie.

While the thesis of an actual "restoration of capitalism" may be problematic, the essential point was the claim that the theory and practice in the Soviet Union had deviated substantially from socialism. Given this analysis some members of the Chinese Communist Party sought to learn from negative example. It followed that those policies pursued by the Soviet leadership, as well as their theoretical foundation, had proven to be in the interests of a new exploiting class rather than the proletariat: they amounted to an ultimately capitalist form of development, a capitalist road. The theoretical and practical changes which occurred in the USSR in the middle 1950s--
and perhaps more fundamentally the policies which had been pursued previously and had created the indispensable foundation for the changes--defined the practice and theory of the cadres in the CCP at the time.

It was quite understandable that the Chinese Party had looked to Soviet theories and methods as guides. But if these amounted to a capitalist road, then a major rectification was in order, based on the new understanding which emerged from the analysis of the first unsuccessful attempt to construct socialism. It was essential to sum up Soviet experience, and correct it, so that the Chinese revolution could maintain itself on the revolutionary road. Until the differences were made clear, at best, the cadres would be operating with a faulty theory. Since the ultimate outcome of these policies was to consolidate a new privileged class based in the first instance in the Party itself, then the capitalist road actually expressed their own particularistic interests. The immediate task was to expose the nature and ultimate outcome of the capitalist road. But many cadres would predictably resist the new theoretical conclusions and the changed practices which they would initiate; the capitalist road would have powerful adherents in the Party.

Not only did the capitalist road express the self-interest of the new bourgeoisie in embryo in the CCP, as well as elsewhere in society, but it also expressed the interests of the most privileged sections of society in the short run. There was a substantial basis in the society for the consolidation of the social revolution at the given stage and the furtherance of a quasi-capitalistic form of development. Social support could be gained, in the beginning, by pandering to privileged classes and sections and allowing self-interest to drive the economy. The contradictions of a former socialist state degenerating in a capitalist direction would not necessarily be immediately apparent.

**BOURGEOIS_IDEOLOGY_AND_THE_CAPITALIST_ROAD**

The history of the CCP was one of persistent internal struggle which was at some times more or less dormant and at other times sharpened into explicit conflict. This conflict was presented as manifestations of two-line struggle. Generally speaking, they should not be seen as merely "factional disputes" or as remnants of "a feudal heritage which has disrupted China's progress towards modernization". Given the recent consolidation of Chinese ideology into an economistic mode, the whole history of CCP two-line struggle needs re-analysis. The reason for this need is the obvious fact that present developments must have their roots in a heretofore taken for granted past.

A line does not correspond to the plethora of conceptions or policies which can be conceived in a concrete instance. Rather the term "two-lines" is a conceptual issue referring to the two holistic and contradictory bodies of theoretical analysis and concrete policy determination which reflect the principal contradiction in socialist society between continuing the revolution or consolidating a new ruling class. Essentially the revolutionary line involves the determination, in the concrete instance, of the policy which reflects the reconciliation of the long term and short term interests of the progressive classes. These interests are both economic and political: they entail production as well as actual working class collective control. In contrast the alternative policy proposals ultimately express sectional interests which in the long run express the interests of the new bourgeoisie. The outcome of the two-line struggle is crucial for determining the road.
Contradictory relations of production give rise to contradictory ideas and practices embodied in specific groups and individuals. Through the agency of specific individuals these contradictions are expressed in an ideological struggle within the party, affecting the relationship between the people and the party. The outcome of these struggles shapes the direction of social development.

The determination of policy with reference to line, indeed the further elaboration of line, are very problematic processes. Social practice, for example, can vary considerably from the official line. This is so in general for obvious reasons such as a lack of complete information or problems of communication. More fundamentally, however, are those problems posed by the existence of the interrelated realms of policy making, implementation and evaluation, of both the representatives of wider social particularisms as well as individual ones. Revolutionary Marxism is a body of theory which necessarily changes over time in relation to new experiences. All situations are to a degree distinct and consequently theory must change in relation to them. Specific elements of theory will be elaborated over time, and the new implications for strategy and tactics will have to be worked out. Since theory is an abstraction from reality, and since reality itself is constantly changing, this elaboration is extremely complex. But what makes the process most difficult is the existence of classes and contradictory class interests. In a socialist society the bourgeoisie presents its interests not only as the interests of society as a whole, but it does so largely in terms of Marxist ideology.

The Communist Party of a socialist state, as the apex of political praxis, will necessarily reflect all the major contradictions in society. Consequently bourgeois ideas will become relatively consolidated into ideological forms adapted to the specific conditions of existence, under the explicit cloak of Marxism. Within a Communist Party the capitalist road will reflect the theoretical codification of that combination of abstract line and concrete policies which reflect the ultimate interests of the party bureaucracy and the sectional interests of specific privileged groups. The form that this codification takes will vary with circumstances. For example, the theory that there are economic "laws" under socialism has served in the USSR to rationalize new hierarchies and inequalities.23

Within the CCP the term "capitalist road" was restricted to an orientation which reflected the aspirations of a comfortable or aspiring privileged social stratum seeking to consolidate its position. In this sense it is appropriate to describe it as bourgeois. The complete solidification of the new theory into the ideology of a nominally Marxist party signifies that, despite its verbal proclamations to the contrary, the party is no longer revolutionary24.

Chinese economic development up until the Cultural Revolution had not been based simply on a copy of the Soviet model. In many respects the Party had analysed the contradictions of Chinese society correctly and had developed distinct policies. Nevertheless there were significant examples of Soviet influence. In response to ultra-left mistakes during the Great Leap Forward and the years of natural disasters, there was a pronounced rightist shift in policy which, based on the analysis of the Soviet experience, amounted to a capitalist road. The power of this tendency in the Party was apparently very strong, to the point where it commanded a majority of the cadres. Class divisions were deepening and a new state bourgeoisie was beginning to congeal. Throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s major theoretical struggles took place in the CCP. The entrenched position and substantial power base of the capitalist roaders proved to be too
strong for the normal mechanisms of party democratic centralism, insofar as they were operative, to overcome.

It was in this situation, when the capitalist roaders had a substantial power base, that the Cultural Revolution was proclaimed. This Revolution was not a movement to smash the party--although it sometimes took the appearance of doing so--but was conceived to be a rectification campaign from below and a "revolution" to take power back from the capitalist roaders. Throughout its history the Party had conducted rectification campaigns which were meant to instill the Yenan spirit in a Party which had recruited vast numbers of cadres with limited experience both in practical class struggle and Marxist theory. The Cultural Revolution was a considerable gamble--almost an act of desperation--and it has undergone considerable analysis. Much of the concern in the west has been with what went wrong. Our concern here is with the principle of the revolution and, indeed, its necessity.

Revolutionaries in the CCP apparently believed that not only were the Chinese people, through the experience of the previous decades, in a position to understand the issues--especially as they were manifest in practice--and reestablish the revolutionary direction, but more fundamentally that the Party was no longer capable of a thorough self-rectification. The Cultural Revolution may be thought to have been the last trump for a Party already steeped in bourgeois ideology, aimed to restore power to the revolutionaries in the Party. The Cultural Revolution, then, had a dual nature, and campaigns which do not amount to mass supervision of the Party--while they are necessary and must be continuous--do not amount to "cultural revolutions" which, Mao indicated, will be necessary again in the future and for the same reason.

**MISTAKEN PRACTICE AND OPPORTUNIST PRACTICE**

The structural genesis of bourgeois ideas and their concentrated political expression in a socialist society are the keys to understanding why such large scale mass movements are necessary. The CCP both inherited and developed mechanisms to rectify its style of work and policies. Given its preeminent position, it is inevitable that individual careerists would seek entry into the Party or that some revolutionaries would come in time to desire to consolidate their privileges. Hence purges are endemic to a properly functioning party, and since the Party focuses all social contradictions the struggle internally will be very intense.

By opportunistic practices and ideas is meant those actions and conceptions which amount to putting individual or sectional interests ahead of collective ones, to the detriment of the latter. The masking of self-interest behind a rhetoric of moral high-mindedness--a general definition of opportunism as ideology--is a fundamental characteristic of all class societies. These orientations, while having their primary locus in ruling circles and ruling ideas, inevitably affect the thinking of subordinate classes.

Since bourgeois ideologies are bred in socialist soil, they will continually be regenerated, albeit in newer, more sophisticated forms. As the revolutionary process deepens, various manifestations of bourgeois ideology become exposed and bourgeois ideas become increasingly subtle. Not only are various policies and applications of line exposed in struggle as representing the capitalist road, but as the revolution proceeds the context of bourgeois ideas changes. The
ideas which express the interests of the middle peasants or small shopkeepers are different from the ideas which express the interests of the newer privileged groups. For example, official encouragement of private farms in China has now emerged as a new policy, which could only come after considerable degeneration of earlier forms of socialist ownership. This means that new modes of bourgeois theory have been generated.

While the objective line analysis is primary, individuals are not the passive spokesmen of disembodied ideas—mere representatives of social forces. The policy is put forward by concrete individuals who represent particular interests as their own. It is the elaboration of the concept of opportunism which brings the analysis down from the level of abstract line and concrete objective policy to the level of the individual promotion of bourgeois ideology in the Party. It is the link which ties the objective existence of contradictory interests to the representatives of these interests. As an individual characterization, such a judgement is based first on the understanding of the actual outcome and long-term implications of the practice, either advocated in theory or concretely implemented, which gives expression to detrimental sectional interests. Second is the process of criticism and self-criticism, the analysis of the justifications advanced and the rejoinders -- the mode of self-criticism. Opportunism, in general, is not reducible to specific individuals such that if you eliminate them you eliminate opportunism -- that is metaphysical. But neither must the question be left at the level of objective line analysis. In any particular case it has individual manifestations and these must be identified.

The CCP defined an "opportunist" as a person in a leading position in a Party (or revolutionary organization) who guides his objectively anti-revolutionary activity ultimately for personal interests. The means used to pursue this goal will be consistent only in the interest which they express. The analysis should link the individual manifestation of opportunism with the two-line struggle, with the particularistic interests which are expressed directly and indirectly (complete with an analysis of their long and short-term implications), and ultimately with the principal contradiction of socialist society. While recognizing that an individual opportunist will adopt any form calculated to gain an advantage, the CCP held that it was still important analytically to distinguish between two basic types of opportunism, although in specific cases individuals (and groups) would swing between them. Not only can two abstract types be identified, but frequently individuals or groups will tend to exhibit one or the other predominantly.

Writing in On Practice, Mao illustrated the types of opportunist orientations which arise when individuals are separated from the class struggle. Right opportunism, according to Mao, has been the historical manifestation of those "whose thinking fails to advance with changing objective circumstances". The knowledge of these people "has stopped at the old stage" while history has moved forward. This occurs because the practice of the individual is divorced from that of the people.

A second form of isolation from the people gives rise to what Mao termed "adventurism", which he associated with mechanical materialism. In this formulation, it is distinct from "opportunism", although elsewhere Mao claimed both were forms of opportunism. These adventurists are "'Left' phrase mongers" whose thinking "out-strips a given stage of development of the objective process", either developing fantasies which they regard as truth or attempting to realize an ideal for which objective conditions have not developed. "They alienate themselves from the practice
of the majority of the people and from the realities of the day, and show themselves adventurist in their actions". "Idealism and mechanical materialism, opportunism and adventurism, are all characterized by the breach between the subjective and the objective, by the separation of knowledge from practice".

This formulation is incisive in linking the forms of opportunist practice to the separation of individuals from the class struggle. It is not a complete statement of opportunism, however, although it expresses one of its main characteristics. The practices of the majority are by no means unitary. On the contrary, socialist society is divided into numerous economically-based particular interests. The practices of the people consist of contradictory elements, and the isolation of the opportunists from the "people" need not imply an isolation from specific minorities (in fact, the opposite is the case, and it is important to specify the social base). In addition, there are general opportunistic-type practices among the people, partly the result of thousands of years of class rule, and partly the result of the class contradictions of socialist society itself. In socialist society the Party is expected to handle these contradictions among the people by exercising effective, real leadership in mass organizations. In capitalist society it is easier to be sustained in these petty self-interested practices since this is the fundamental ethical basis of the social order.

Rather than being totally divorced from knowledge and social practices, right opportunism often expresses the knowledge derived from specific social groupings including those which have largely been superseded by the objective development of socialist society, or those newly emerged. Furthermore, since the practice of the majority itself contains both relatively progressive and backward tendencies, then right opportunists can unite with manifestations of the latter.

Second, this formulation in On Practice is incomplete because, out of context, it might imply that only the rightists are opportunists--that the ultra-leftists are genuine revolutionaries, albeit prone to mistaken excesses. It is necessary to distinguish mistakes from opportunism, and to recognize that ultra-leftism is opportunist (that is, self-interested) albeit in an apparently opposite fashion. "Left opportunism" is as problematic and is equally a manifestation of bourgeois ideology. In the end there is an essential unity between the two. But left opportunism contains certain unique elements in theory and practice which are crucial to spell out. Right opportunism may be the most pervasive threat, but in certain periods left opportunism can become the principal short-term danger. The threats posed by ultra-leftism have emerged as a major lesson of revolutionary experience.

Marxism arose in the nineteenth century in the context of many variants of socialism, and he engaged in ideological debate with what Lenin would term both rightists and ultra-leftists. While rightist doctrines were consolidated in forms of social democracy, "leftism" is less easily institutionalized. As Marxism developed, and diversified, various versions of a rightist or leftist nature proliferated within it. So, while party divisions may occur on a three-fold basis, there is, analytically, no "three-line struggle". The same individualistic and self-seeking orientation which counsels the right opportunist to trail behind the progressive tendencies and seek individual interest largely in a careerist fashion, is manifest in the left opportunists bombastic egoism, in a "mountain-top" world view. While right opportunism consolidates into a form of bourgeois
theory which is stable and internally coherent, ultra-leftism does not so easily congeal into a stable body of theory, although one of its characteristics is a form of dogmatism which more easily masks itself as being revolutionary.

The most pervasive long-term threat to the revolution is right opportunism, which can take two seemingly opposite forms: liberalism and bureaucratism. The latter implies separation from the majority in a basic elitism along with the consolidation of an in-group which monopolizes access to power and distributes privileges. With respect to its internal relations, there is both liberalism and authoritarianism, the former generally applied within the hierarchy of supporters and the latter applied to opponents. Similarly, both elements co-exist with respect to relations with the people. While the bureaucracy opposes, by administrative fiat, those practices among the majority of the people which threaten its hegemony, in its style of work and liberal acceptance of petty practices, right opportunism can often appear close to the people. Liberalism makes right opportunist tendencies especially dangerous, even though they may be temporary, especially in those situations in which the right opportunist is trying to gain allies among some sectors of the people, particularly privileged ones. Its elitism and bureaucratic inflexibility may be held in check momentarily because of its temporary willingness to smother contradictions in liberalism. The question entails the issue of the two lines in the Party and involves the struggle to identify and combat consolidating forms of bourgeois ideology. As an identifiable social group the new ruling class will congeal theoretically and socially in the Communist Party. At the same time this new, emerging state bourgeoisie encourages the development of bourgeois practices among the people insofar as they are consistent with its own particularistic aims.

It is our contention that the abstraction of two-line struggle is crucial for analysing a society undergoing revolutionary transformation, and that the description, analysis and isolation of the proponents of "economistic" directions is crucial for continuing class struggle. Given a one-party state, and the existence of fundamental economic and social contradictions, particularistic interests will always be represented. However, once a bourgeois line triumphs in this struggle and achieves preeminence in the Party, then "two-line" struggle is effectively over. It is the modification of line which is the first indication of a reversal of the revolution; social practice will inevitably follow and generate not a furthering of proletarian control and democracy, nor increasing equality, but rather the opposite of these. If a revolutionary element and "line" continues to exist, it is external to the official apparatuses and subject to witch-hunting and co-optation. It was Mao's recognition and analysis of the problem which demonstrates his continuity with the central difficulties facing an underdeveloped society in socialist transition.

Once opportunist power is achieved within a Communist Party and state, then the bureaucratic element comes to predominate and the triumph of opportunism becomes solidified in theory with the abandonment of revolutionary principles. Right opportunism can be considered the main practical expression of the spontaneous bourgeois tendencies endemic to socialist society, the major forms in which representatives of the new social class will emerge.

**CONCLUSION**

The worst has come to pass. All the dire prognostications made by Mao about the potential restoration of a counter revolutionary regime in China have become taken for granted practice.
The theory of productive forces, the theory that class struggle is no longer necessary in a society with formal public ownership of the means of production, the theory that inequality under socialism is only a vestige of economic backwardness—all these theories are now official ideology of the Chinese regime. The Cultural revolution is negated not because it failed, but because it happened at all (significantly now called the "ten lost years"). Although Soviet and Chinese foreign policy demonstrates major differences and conflicts due mainly to usual considerations of national power and national expansion, there is little that differentiates these countries in their presentation of Marxist theory. In short, Marxism has suffered its second major setback in this century.

In the face of the impasse presented by this great catastrophe in China, we have seen it necessary to outline what we consider the theoretical advances in Marxism made by the Chinese Revolution. This reiteration of basic principles becomes all the more necessary given the official distortions of Marxism in established state socialist regimes and the general disarray of Marxism elsewhere. None of the foregoing analysis of the healthy strains of the Chinese Cultural Revolution is meant to paper over the mistakes and errors committed by Chinese revolutionaries during that period. The real difficulties they faced and the mistaken alternatives which they chose and which were probably central to the failure of that Revolution are still to be known and analysed. This will not be an easy task since such an analysis has yet to be done for Soviet experience. Without this new understanding, however, it is highly likely that even the best of the new revolutions of the future will recapitulate the later sins of history's first two great socialist revolutions.

**FOOTNOTES**


5. Mandel accepts this wider definition of class as opposed to Sweezy's formula that the industrial-Party elite form a new ruling class. If Mandel is correct it implies that a reversion to socialism is a relatively simple process of reviving working class leadership within the existing social institutions. We accept the new ruling class thesis which suggests the Soviet Union has a new mode of production and that another socialist revolution is required, entailing both a new theory of the contradictions of state capitalism and a new revolutionary organization. See Ernest Mandel, "Why the Soviet bureaucracy is not a new ruling class", *Monthly Review*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (July- August 1979):63-76.
6 According to Lenin, technicians and specialists form a special social stratum requiring better conditions of life, more work satisfaction, and so on.


10. The "national interest", for example, is still a particularism; hence the importance of a principled application of internationalism by a national Communist Party. It is frequently in relation to the national interest and the failure to implement internationalism appropriately that a Party signals its early deviations.

11. While there may be a contradiction in the short run between the goal of transforming humanity and "some economic growth", as Gurley argues, Maoism theorized that it would eventually pay off not only by creating a new type of human being, but by raising productivity in the long run. See "Maoist economic development: The new man in the new China", Mimeo, n.d., pp. 27, 19.

12. A crucial point about the importance of feudalism is that bourgeois ideas are also progressive, in the sense of developing the productive forces. This makes two-line struggle even more important, but emphasizes more the spontaneous tendency to bourgeois methods.

13. It is this same type of "right opportunism" which assumes that socialist ideology will develop automatically from the brow of the working class in capitalist societies.


16. The assertion of the importance of economic laws in socialism, which supposedly implied the necessity for the use of market criteria and learning from capitalist management, was presented without consideration of the social consequences. Equally significant may be the apparent absence of theory, the dominance of so-called pragmatism. At best this is bourgeois theory by default.

17. As Joan Robinson has argued, "the natural tendency of education [is] to provide the basis for the promotion of a new class" (p. 55). Equally as fundamental, however, is the failure to implement the slogan "red and expert". Robinson lauds the supposed closing of the back door to
educational opportunities and claims that the main problem in education will be "cramming". This neglects the importance of political education and identifies hard work in the national modernization drive as being sufficiently "red". See Joan Robinson, "Comment on China_Since_Mao, Monthly Review, Vol. 31, No. 1 (May 1979): 54-55. The red and expert emphasis in Chinese education is discussed in Ruth Gamberg, Red and Expert: Education in the People's Republic of China, Schocken, 1977.

18. It is not sufficient for outsiders to argue that in order to correct one deviation it is necessary to bend the twig too far in the other direction. With the "bending" comes theoretical elaborations which must be made explicit. The failure is to distinguish between moments of the revolutionary process and what amounts to counter-revolution within the general formula of "modernization".

19. Mao Tse-tung, On Contradiction, (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1967). Contradictions which exist only conceptually in the beginning (as differential relationships) eventually develop into sharp differences which must be resolved. The struggle over non-antagonistic contradictions is still class struggle because, analytically, the concrete problematic orientation can be related to the illegitimate pursuit of particular interests which have both immediate and observable consequences, as well as historical and theoretical implications. All levels of society will manifest levels of individualistic practices but in general it will be in the immediate interests of those sectors with material privileges, high degrees of autonomy, or positions of authority vis-a-vis others who will predictably be more likely to seek to codify their privileges ideologically.


24. The everyday manifestation of bourgeois ideas and practices among the people--so-called garden-variety opportunism--is not, strictly speaking, opportunism in this limited political sense, and is certainly not revisionist. Nevertheless it provides a basis upon which revisionist ideology feeds and which in turn it encourages.
25. Lenin, "At the 8th Congress of the Russian Communist Party-Bolsheviks" (March 1919), Collected Works.


27. It is important to differentiate between these particularistic practices which appear to have self-interested motives, and "opportunism" which should be confined to leadership. It is an ultra-left mistake to inflate bourgeois practices among the majority to the level of fully-fledged opportunism, a condition which fosters their isolation from this majority.


29. The "victorious political counter-revolution" (Mandel, "Why the Soviet bureaucracy is not a new ruling class", p. 70; see note 6) is more than the triumph of a bureaucracy. It establishes a new state bourgeoisie with command over political, ideological and military apparatuses. Political power is crucial to the consolidation of this class, which congeals as a self-conscious, organized entity. See Moshe Lewin, "Society and the Stalinist state", Social History, (May 1976).

30. This emphasis on theory is not "idealist", as MacEwan claims. Rather it reflects the dominant position of the political process in the socialist social formation. See Arthur MacEwan, "Comment on China Since Mao", Monthly Review, Vol. 31, No. 1 (May 1979): 47.