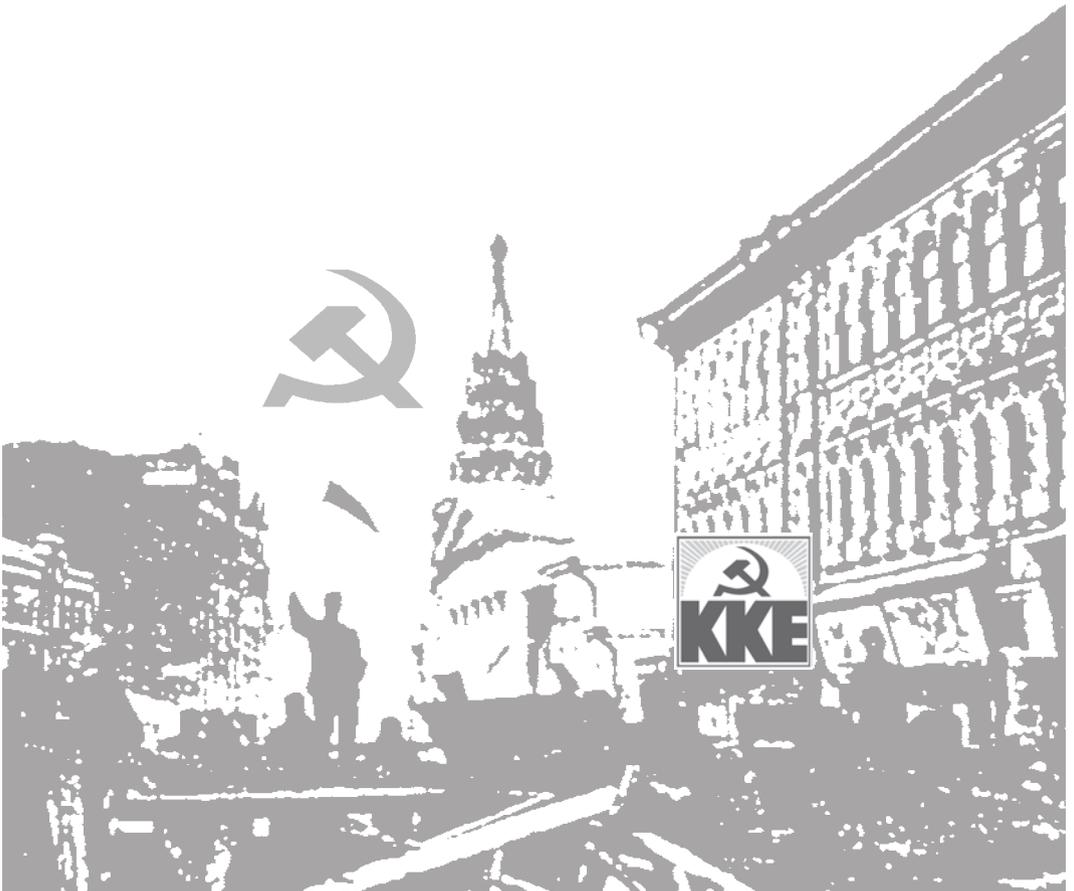
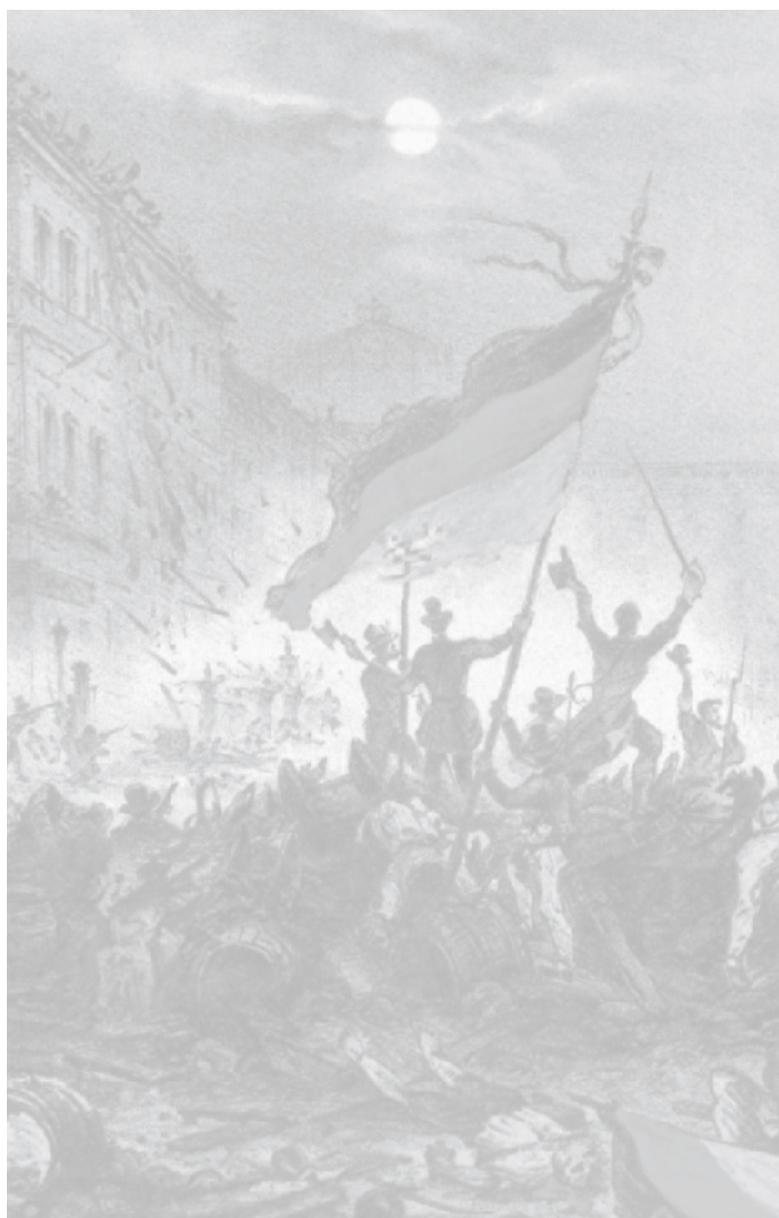


## RESOLUTION OF THE 18<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS OF KKE

Assessments & conclusions  
on socialist construction during  
the 20<sup>th</sup> century, focusing on the USSR.  
KKE's perception on socialism





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## ASSESSMENTS AND CONCLUSIONS ON SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION DURING THE 20TH CENTURY, FOCUSING ON THE USSR. KKE'S PERCEPTION ON SOCIALISM

The 18<sup>th</sup> Congress of KKE, fulfilling the task set forward by the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress four years ago, dwelled deeper into the causes of the victory of the counterrevolution and of capitalist restoration. This has been an imperative and timely obligation for our Party, as it is for every Communist Party. It was thus that we faced this task during all the years that have elapsed since the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress and the National Conference of 1995. It is a task interlinked with the revival of consciousness and of faith in socialism.

For more than a century now, bourgeois polemics against the communist movement, often assuming the form of an intellectual elitism, concentrate their fire on the revolutionary core of the workers' movement; they struggle, in general, against the necessity of revolution and its political offspring, the dictatorship of the proletariat that is the revolutionary working class power. In particular, they fight against the outcome of the first victorious revolution, of the October Revolution in Russia, fiercely opposing every phase where the Revolution exposed and repelled counterrevolutionary activities and opportunist barriers, which, in the final analysis, were weakening, directly or indirectly, the Revolution at a social and political level.

For more than a century now, every current negating, retreating or resigning from the necessity of revolutionary struggle is being promoted as "democratic socialism", in opposition to the so-called "totalitarian", "dictatorial", "putchist" communism. We are well aware of these po-

lemics and calumnies against scientific communism, against the class struggle. They pertain not only to the conditions under capitalism, but, under different forms and conditions, also to the process of formation of the new social relations, as well as their expansion and maturation into communist relations.

Today, international opportunism has regrouped itself through the "Party of the European Left", which has stepped up the tone of the "democratic socialism" rhetoric, under the conditions of a synchronous manifestation of the capitalist economic crisis.

It is for this reason that in the discussion on "socialist democracy" different weights and measures are being used to judge events taking place during one or the other period, with the explicit aim of erasing the contribution of socialist construction. In some instances they negate the entire 70-year history of the USSR, in others they specifically aim at the period during which its socialist foundation was erected. Whatever the case, they always support those political practices that constituted deviations from the socialist course.

KKE remains steadfast in the defense of the contribution of socialist construction in the USSR, in general of socialist construction during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, to the struggle for social progress, for the abolition of exploitation of man by man.

Today our Party is ideologically more steeled and politically experienced to rebut the ideological interventions of the bourgeois centers propagated through their periodicals and books or via the educational process. We are dealing here with interventions that may exert a certain influence in the immediate vicinity of the Party or even within the Party itself.

We are studying the ruthless course of the class struggle during the transition to the new society, for its foundation and development, for the expansion and deepening of the new relations of production and distribution, of all social relations and for the molding of the new man. We bring forward the contradictions, the mistakes and deviations under the pressure of the international correlation of forces, without resorting to blanket nihilism.

We examine things in a critical and self-critical manner so as to make KKE, as part of the international communist movement, stronger in the struggle for the overthrow of capitalism, for the construction of socialism. We are studying and judging the course of socialist construction in a self-critical manner, that is with full consciousness that our weaknesses, theoretical shortcomings and mistaken evaluations also constituted part of the problem.

We are forging ahead to additional assessments and conclusions, to the enrichment of our programmatic conception of socialism armed with a collective spirit, with a self-consciousness regarding the difficulties and deficiencies and with revolutionary determination. We are well aware that future historical studies, carried out by our Party and by the communist movement internationally, will undoubtedly illuminate further the issues regarding the experience of the USSR and of the other socialist countries. It is beyond any doubt that new issues requiring an improvement and deepening of certain of our assessments will come to the fore. The development of the theory of socialism-communism is a necessity, a living process, a challenge for our Party and for the international communist movement, today and in the future.



KKE has the experience to guarantee the continuation, the enrichment of knowledge and of a unitary perception, as it has done since its 14<sup>th</sup> Congress.

The pre-congress procedures have revealed the responsibility and maturity of Party members and cadre, in their ability to voice their opinions in the direction, with the criteria and along the main axes of the Theses of the C.C, which have been overwhelmingly approved.

The new C.C is being assigned the task of organizing further research on the specific subjects being pinpointed, of seeking the cooperation of other communist forces, particularly from the countries that were engaging in socialist construction in the past, of choosing the ways of participation of Party members in the final formulation of the conclusions that will be the end result of these specialized studies.

With the present decision of the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress, KKE enriches its programmatic conception of socialism.

Our Party is emerging more powerful and united, capable of inspiring and uniting new working class and popular forces, particularly of a younger age, in the struggle for socialism.

The 18<sup>th</sup> Congress expresses its revolutionary optimism that in the course of the years to come a regroupment of the international communist movement (of which KKE is a part) will become apparent, a regroupment on the basis of the development of its communist ideological and strategic unity.



## A. THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE SOCIALIST SYSTEM

{1} The development of capitalism and the class struggle inevitably brought communism to the historical limelight during the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first scientific communist programme is the “Communist Manifesto” written by K. Marx and Fr. Engels 160 years ago in 1848. The first proletarian revolution was the Paris Commune in 1871. With the 20<sup>th</sup> century came the success of the October Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917, which was a starting point for one of the greatest achievements of civilization in the History of humankind, the abolition of exploitation of man by man. Subsequently, after World War II, state power was conquered in a series of countries in Europe, Asia, as well as in the American continent, in Cuba, with the goal of socialist construction.

Despite the various problems of socialist countries, the socialist system of the 20<sup>th</sup> century proved the superiority of socialism over capitalism and the huge advantages that it provides for peoples’ lives and working conditions.

The Soviet Union and the world socialist system constituted the only real counterweight to imperialist aggression. The role of the Soviet Union in the Anti-fascist People’s victory, during World War II, was decisive. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) crushed the German and allied forces’ military machine who had invaded Soviet territory. It liberated a series of countries in Europe from the German occupation forces. More than 20 million Soviet citizens gave their lives for the socialist homeland, while 10 million were disabled or wounded. The extent of material devastation to Soviet territory was enormous.

The victories of the Red Army significantly propelled the development of national liberation and anti-fascist movements, which were led by Communist Parties. In many countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the anti-fascist struggle, with the decisive contribution of the USSR, was linked to the overthrow of bourgeois rule.

The socialist state provided historic examples of internationalist solidarity to peoples who were fighting against exploitation, foreign occupation and imperialist intervention. They contributed in a decisive manner to the dissolution of the colonial system and to the limitation of military confrontations and conflicts.

The achievements of workers in the socialist states were a point of reference for many decades and contributed to the gains won by the working class and the popular movement in capitalist societies. The international balance of forces that was formed after World War II forced capitalist states, to a certain degree, to back down and to manoeuvre in order to restrain the revolutionary line of struggle and to create conditions in which they could assimilate the working class movement.

The abolition of capitalist relations of production freed mankind from the bonds of wage slavery and opened the road for the production and development of the sciences with the goal of satisfying people's needs. In this way, everyone had guaranteed work, public free health care and education, the provision of cheap services from the state, housing, and access to intellectual and cultural creativity. The complete eradication of the terrible legacy of illiteracy, in combination with the increase in the general level of education and specialization and the abolition of unemployment, constitute unique achievements of socialism. In the Soviet Union, according to the 1970 census, more than 3/4 of the working population of the cities and 50% of workers in the rural areas had completed mid-level or higher education<sup>1</sup>.

The USSR, during its 24-year course prior to the Nazi assault, had made great leaps in its economic and social development, reducing the unevenness that it had inherited. The cultural revolution, as an inseparable element of socialist construction, gave working people the possibility of knowing and experiencing the achievements of human culture.

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1. Economic School of the University of Lomonosov, Moscow. "Political Economy", Vol. 4, Gutenberg Press, 1980, p. 150.

In the Soviet Union in 1975 it was guaranteed by law that the hours of work could not surpass 41 per week<sup>2</sup>, among the lowest in the world. All workers were guaranteed days for rest and relaxation and annual paid holidays. Non-working time was extended and its content was changed. It was transformed into time for the development of the cultural and educational level of the workers, for the enhancement of their participation in workers' power and in the control of the administration of productive units.

Social Security for working people was of outmost priority for the socialist state. A comprehensive system of retirement benefits, with the important achievement of low age limits for retirement (55 years for women, 60 for men), was created. Funding for the state retirement fund was guaranteed through the state budget fiscal appropriations and the insurance contributions of enterprises and institutions. Similar conditions prevailed in the rest of the European socialist states.

Socialist power laid the foundation for the abolition of inequality of women, overcoming the great difficulties that objectively existed. Socialism ensured in practice the social character of motherhood and socialized childcare. It instituted equal rights for women and men in the economic, political and cultural realm, although not all forms of unequal relations between the two genders, which had become entrenched over a long period of time, had been successfully eradicated.

The dictatorship of the proletariat, the revolutionary workers' power, as a state that expressed the interests of the social majority of exploited people, and not of the minority of exploiters, proved itself a superior form of democracy. For the first time in History the unit of production could become the nucleus of democracy, with the representative participation of working people in power and administration, the possibility to elect and recall representatives amongst themselves to participate in the higher levels of power. Workers' power de-marginalized the masses

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2. The Great Soviet Encyclopedia, Vol 31, p. 340, refers to the law with the title, "Principles of labour legislation in the USSR and the Union Republics".

and a vast number of mass organizations were developed: trade union, cultural, educational, women's, youth, where the majority of the population was organized.

Bourgeois and opportunist propaganda, speaking of lack of freedom and anti-democratic regimes, projects the concepts of "democracy" and "freedom" in their bourgeois content, identifying democracy with bourgeois parliamentarism and freedom with bourgeois individualism and private capitalist ownership. The real essence of freedom and democracy under capitalism is the economic coercion of wage slavery and the dictatorship of capital, in society in general and especially inside capitalist enterprises. Our critical approach regarding workers' and people's control and participation has no relation whatsoever to the bourgeois and opportunist polemics regarding democracy and "rights" in the USSR.

The October Revolution launched a process of equality between nations and nationalities within the framework of a giant multinational state and provided the direction for the resolution of the national problem by abolishing national oppression in all its forms and manifestations. This process was undermined however, during the course of the erosion of socialist relations and was finally stopped with the counter-revolutionary developments in the 1980s.

The socialist states made serious efforts to develop forms of cooperation and economic relations based on the principle of proletarian internationalism. With the founding in 1949 of the Council of Mutual Assistance (CMA) an effort was made to form a new, unprecedented type of international relations that was based on principles of equality, of mutual interest and mutual aid between states that were building socialism. The level of development of socialism in each revolutionary worker's state was not the same. It depended to a large extent on the level of capitalist development that existed when power was conquered - an issue that must be taken under consideration when assessments and comparisons are made.

The gains that were undoubtedly achieved in the socialist states, in comparison to their starting point as well as in comparison to the living

standard of working people in the capitalist world, prove that socialism holds an intrinsic potential for a dramatic and continual elevation of social prosperity and for the wholesale development of men and women.

What was historically new, was that this development concerned the masses as a whole, in contrast to capitalist development which is intertwined with exploitation and social injustice, with great devastation such as that which occurred with the native populations in the American continent, in Australia, with the massive slavery system in the USA in the previous centuries, with colonial exploitation, with the anarchy of production and the ensuing destruction of the great economic crises, with imperialist wars, child labour and so much more.

The contribution and the superiority of socialist construction in the USSR should be judged in correlation with the imperialist strategy of encirclement that caused great destruction, continuous obstacles and threats.





## B. THEORETICAL POSITIONS ON SOCIALISM AS THE FIRST, LOWER STAGE OF COMMUNISM

{2} Socialism is the first stage of the communist socio-economic formation; it is not an independent socio-economic formation. It is an immature, undeveloped communism.

The complete establishment of communist relations requires the overcoming of the elements of immaturity that characterize its lower stage, socialism.

Immature communism signifies that communist relations in production and distribution have not yet fully prevailed. The basic law of the communist mode of production is valid: "*Proportional production for the extended satisfaction of social needs.*"

The concentrated means of production are socialized, but in the beginning there still remain forms of individual and group ownership that constitute the base for the existence of commodity-money relations. Forms of production cooperatives are set up, in those sectors where the level of the productive forces does not yet allow the socialization of the means of production. The forms of group property constitute a transitional form of ownership between private and social ownership, and not an immature form of communist relations.

Part of the social needs is covered in a universal, free fashion. However, a still significant part of the social product for individual consumption is distributed based on the principle, "*to each according to his labour, while each one works according to his abilities.*" Under conditions of developed communism the distribution of the social product is based on the principle: "*to each according to his needs.*"

Under socialism, on the basis of its economic immaturity, there still continue to exist social inequalities, social stratification, significant differences or even contradictions, such as those between city and country, between intellectual workers and manual labourers, between special-

ized and unskilled workers. All of these inequalities must be completely eradicated, gradually and in a planned way.

During the construction of socialism, the working class acquires progressively, not in a uniform fashion, the ability to have an integral knowledge of the different parts of the productive process, of supervisory work, a substantive role in the organization of labour. As a result of the difficulties in this process, it is still possible that workers with a managerial role in production, workers engaged in intellectual labour and possessing a high scientific specialization, would tend to isolate the individual interest and the interest of the production unit from the social interest, or would tend to lay claim to a larger share of the total social product, since the "communist attitude" towards labour has not yet prevailed.

The leap that takes place during the period of socialist construction, that is during the revolutionary period of the transition from capitalism to developed communism, is qualitatively superior from any previous one, since communist relations, which are not of an exploitative nature, are not shaped within the framework of capitalism. A struggle of the "seeds" of the new against the "vestiges" of the old system takes place in all spheres of social life. It is a struggle for the radical change of all economic relations and, by extension, of all social relations, into communist relations.

The social revolution cannot be restricted only to the conquest of power and the formation of the economic base for socialist development, but is extended during the entire socialist course; it includes the development of socialism for the attainment of the higher communist stage. During this long-term transition from the capitalist to the developed communist society, the policies of the revolutionary workers' power, with the Communist Party as the leading force, acquire priority in the formation, extension and deepening of the new social relations, in their full and irreversible supremacy, not in a subjectivist manner, but based on the laws of the communist mode of production.

It is thus that the class struggle of the working class continues – under new conditions, with other forms and means- not only during the

period when the foundations of socialism are being laid, but also during the development of socialism. It is an ongoing battle for the abolition of every form of group and individual ownership over the means and products of production, and of the petit-bourgeois consciousness that has deep historical roots. It is a struggle for the formation of an analogous social consciousness and attitude corresponding to the directly social character of labour. Consequently, the dictatorship of the proletariat, as an instrument of class domination and class struggle, is necessary, not only during the "transition period", for the consolidation of the new power, the realization of the measures for the development of the new economic relations and the abolition of the capitalist relations, but also during the development of socialism until its maturation into the higher, communist stage.

{ 3 } Socialist construction is an uninterrupted process, which starts with the conquest of power by the working class. In the beginning, the new mode of production is formed, essentially prevailing following the complete abolition of capitalist relations, of the relation of capital to wage labour. Subsequently, the new relations are extended and deepened, communist relations and the new type of man develop to a higher level that guarantees their irreversible supremacy, provided that capitalist relations have been abolished on a worldwide scale or at least in the developed and influential countries of the imperialist system.

The socialist course contains the possibility of a reversal and a retreat backwards to capitalism. Such a retreat is not a new phenomenon in social development and in any case it constitutes a temporary phenomenon in its history. It is an irrefutable fact that no socio-economic system has ever been immediately consolidated in the history of humankind. The transition from a lower phase of development to a higher one is not a straightforward ascending process. This is shown by the very history of the prevalence of capitalism.

{ 4 } The approach arguing for the existence of “transitional societies”, with distinct characteristics both in relation to capitalism, as well as in relation to socialism, is an incorrect one. Starting from this viewpoint the development of capitalist relations in China and Vietnam is mistakenly interpreted as representing transitional “*multi-sectoral societies*”.

We do not overlook the special characteristics of the period which in the Marxist bibliography is known as the “*transitional period*”, during which the socialist revolution is seeking victory, a possible civil war develops and the sharp struggle of the immature communist (socialist) relations that are just beginning to develop against capitalist exploitative relations, which have still not been abolished, is being waged. Historical experience has shown that this period cannot last for a long time. In the USSR this period was completed by the middle of the 1930s. The struggle with capitalist relations, the difficulties in the construction of a socialist base were sharpened due to the feudal and patriarchal inheritance in the former colonies of Tsarist Russia. Lenin, in his time, noted that the extent, the duration and the nature of the transitional measures would depend on the level of development of the productive forces that socialism inherits from capitalism.<sup>3</sup> He also stressed that for countries where industry is more developed, the transitional measures towards socialism become reduced or, in some cases, even completely unnecessary.

The transitional period is *not independent* from the process of socialist construction, since it is during its course that the basis is established for the development of a communist society in its first phase.

It is also a mistake to restrict exclusively to the transitional period social phenomena and contradictions that continue, up to a certain extent, to exist also during the immature (socialist) phase of communism (forms of individual and cooperative production, the existence of commodity-money relations, the difference between town and country).

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3. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, Greek edition (Synchroni Epohi), vol. 43, p. 57 and p.79, vol. 44, pp 191-200.

Such an approach perceives socialism as a classless society with the persistence of the contradiction between manual and intellectual labour being the only characteristic differentiating it from developed communism. Thus, according to this approach, it is during the socialist phase that the withering-away of the state is effected, that the dictatorship of the proletariat ceases to exist. This view distances itself from the class approach to the issue of the state and of the class struggle under socialism. It underestimates the role of the subjective factor in socialist development. In certain cases it leans towards a spontaneous decay of forms of individual – cooperative property, of commodity-money relations. It downplays the character of social ownership, on the basis of actual problems in the “mediation” between producers.

{ 5 } The formation of the communist mode of production begins with the socialization of the concentrated means of production, with Central Planning, with the allocation of the labour force in the different branches of the economy, with the planned distribution of the social product, with the formation of institutions of workers’ control. On the basis of these new economic relations, the productive forces, man and the means of production, develop with rapid rates; production and the entire society become organized. Socialist accumulation is achieved, as well as a new level of social prosperity.

This new level makes possible the gradual extension of new relations in the area of productive forces that previously were not mature enough to be included in the directly social production. The material prerequisites for the abolition of any differentiation in the distribution of the social product among the workers in the directly social production, in the social services, as well as for the continuous reduction of the necessary labour time are being continually expanded.

It is a mistake to argue that true socialization presupposes the complete abolition of the distinction between managerial and executive labour. The same holds true of the thesis that the “nationalisation”

(transformation into state property) of the means of production on behalf of the dictatorship of the proletariat is something distinct from their “socialization”. These arguments tend to question the role of the dictatorship of the proletariat as an instrument of the class struggle of the proletariat, which does not restrict itself to the duties of crushing the counter-revolutionary activities of the bourgeoisie, but also has the fundamental duty of constructing the new relations, of eradicating all social differences and inequalities.

Socialization under socialism, as well as the entire organization of the economy and the society, is effected through the state of the working class, under the guidance of the Communist Party, which depends on the mobilization of the working masses, on workers’ control.

The complete supremacy of communist relations, the transition to the higher phase of the new socio-economic formation presupposes the complete abolition of classes. It requires the abolition, not only of capitalist ownership, but also of every form of private and group ownership over the means of production and the social product, the complete eradication of the difference between town and country, between manual and intellectual labour, one of the most profound roots of social inequality, the complete extinction of national contradictions.<sup>4</sup>

In accordance with the universal social law of the correspondence of the relations of production with the level of development of the productive forces, each historically new level of development of productive forces that is initially achieved by socialist construction, demands a further “revolutionisation” of relations of production and of all economic relations, in the direction of their complete transformation into communist relations, by means of revolutionary policies. As was shown in practice, any delay or, even more importantly, any retreat in the development of socialist relations leads to a sharpening of the contradiction between productive forces and relations of productions. On this basis, social contradictions and differentiations may develop into social antagonisms and

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4. V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, SE, Athens, Vol 39, p. 15.

lead to a sharpening of the class struggle. Under socialism there exists an objective basis that contains the possibility for social forces to act, under certain conditions, as potential bearers of exploitative relations, as was witnessed in the USSR in the 1980s.

{6} The development of the communist mode of production in its first stage, socialism, is a process through which the distribution of the social product in monetary form becomes abolished. Communist production – even in its immature stage – is directly social production: the division of labour does not take place for exchange, it is not effected through the market, and the products of labour that are individually consumed are not commodities.

The division of labour in the socialized means of production is based on the plan that organizes production and determines its proportions, with the aim of satisfying the expanded social needs, and the distribution of products (use values). In other words, it is a centrally planned division of social labour and directly integrates - not via the market - individual labour, as part of the total social labour. Central Planning distributes the total societal working time, so that the different functions of labour are in correct proportions in order to satisfy different social needs.

Central Planning expresses the conscious mapping of the objective proportions of production and distribution, as well as the effort for the all-round development of the productive forces. It is for this reason that it should not be understood as a techno-economic instrument, but as a communist relation of production and distribution that links workers to the means of production, to socialist bodies. It includes a consciously planned choice of motives and goals for production, and it aims at the extended satisfaction of social needs (basic economic law of the communist mode of production). The guiding laws of Central Planning cannot be identified with the plan existing at any specific moment, which should reflect in a scientific way these objective proportions.

Among the problems of Central Planning is included the complex is-

sue of the determination of 'social needs', especially under international conditions, where capitalism shapes a rather warped conception of what social needs really are. Social needs are determined based on the level of development of the productive forces that have been achieved in the given historical period. These needs must be understood in their historical context, changing in relationship to the development of the productive forces. Likewise, the way in which the basic law of communism is realized must develop, with the goal of overcoming the inadequacies and differentiations that exist in the coverage of social needs.

{ 7 } A characteristic of the first stage of communist relations is the distribution of one part of the products "according to labour". A theoretical and political debate has arisen regarding the "measure" of labour. The distribution of part of socialist production "according to labour" (which in terms of form resembles commodity exchange<sup>5</sup>) is a vestige of capitalism. The new mode of production has not managed to discard it yet, because it has not developed all of the necessary human productive power and all the means of production in the necessary dimensions, through the broad use of new technology. Labour productivity does not yet allow a decisively large reduction of labour time, the abolition of heavy and one-sided labour, so that the social need for compulsory labour can be abolished.

The planned distribution of labour power and of the means of production entails the planned distribution of the social product. The distribution of the social product cannot be effected through the market, based on the laws and categories of commodity exchange. According to Marx, the mode of distribution will change when the particular mode of the social productive organism and the corresponding historical level of development of the productive forces change<sup>6</sup> (e.g. these were at a

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5. K. Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme", Greek edition (SE), p. 22.

6. K. Marx, "Capital", Volume 1, pp. 91-92 (Greek edition)

certain level in the USSR in the 1930s, yet at a different level in the USSR in the 1950s and 1960s).

Marxism clearly defines *labour time* as the measure of the individual participation of the producer to common labour. Consequently, the labour time of the producer is also defined as a measure of the share he deserves from the product that is destined for individual consumption and that is distributed based on labour.<sup>7</sup> Another part (education, health, medicines, heating, etc.) is already distributed based on needs. "Labour time"<sup>8</sup> under socialism is not the "socially necessary labour time" that constitutes the measure of value for the exchange of commodities in commodity production. "Labour time" is the measure of the individual contribution to social labour for the production of the total product. It is noted characteristically in "Capital": "*In socialized production money capital gets out of the picture. Society distributes labour power and the means of production to different branches of production. The producers would, if you so wish, receive paper vouchers with which they can take from the stock of consumption products of the society an amount analogous to the time they worked. These vouchers are not money. They do not circulate.*"<sup>9</sup>

Access to that part of the social product that is distributed "*according to labour*" is determined by the individual labour contribution of each person in the totality of social labour, without distinguishing between complex and simple, manual labour or otherwise. The measure of individual contribution is the labour time, which the plan determines based on the total needs of social production; the material conditions of the production process in which "individual" labour is included; the special needs of social production for the concentration of labour force

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[7] K. Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme", Greek edition, p. 21, 22, 23 and Fr. Engels, "Anti-Duhring", Greek edition, 2006, p. 328, 329, 330.

[8] K. Marx, "Capital", Volume 1, p 91-92. (Greek edition). « Time » as a measure of labour must be viewed "merely for the sake of a parallel with the production of commodities."

[9] K. Marx, "Capital", Volume 2, p. 357. (Greek edition).

in certain areas, branches, etc.; special social needs, such as motherhood, individuals with special needs, etc.; the personal stance of each individual vis-a-vis the organization and the execution of the productive process. In other words, labour time must be linked to goals, such as the conservation of materials, the implementation of more productive technologies, a more rational organization of labour, workers' control of administration-management.

The planned development of the productive forces in the communist mode of production should increasingly free up more time from work, which should then be used to raise the educational-cultural level of working people; to allow for workers' participation in the carrying out of their duties regarding workers' power and administration of production, etc. The all-round development of man as the productive force in the building of the new type of society and of communist relations (including the communist attitude towards directly social labour) is a two-way relationship. Depending on the historical phase, either one or the other side will take precedence.

The development of Central Planning and the extension of social ownership in all areas make money gradually superfluous, removing its content as the form of value.

{ 8 } The product of individual and cooperative production, the greater part of which is derived from agriculture, is exchanged with the socialist product by means of commodity-money relations. Cooperative production is subordinated to some extent to Central Planning, which determines the part of the production that is allocated to the state and sets the state prices, as well as the maximum prices for that part of production that is allocated through the cooperative market.

The direction by which to resolve the differences between town and country, between industrial and agricultural production, consists of: the merging of the peasant-producers in the joint use of large tracts of land for the production of social product with the use of modern mechaniza-

tion and other means of scientific-technological progress, provided by the socialist state and belonging to it and for the enhancement of labour productivity; the creation of a strong infrastructure for the preservation of the product from unforeseen weather hazards; the subjection of the directly social labour for the production of agricultural raw materials and their industrial processing to unified socialist organizations. This direction serves to transform the entire agricultural production into a part of the directly social production.



## C. SOCIALISM IN THE USSR - CAUSES OF THE VICTORY OF THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION

{ 9 } We focus on the experience of the USSR, because it constituted the vanguard of socialist construction. The further study of the course of socialism in the rest of the European states, as well as of the course of socialist power in the Asian countries (China, Vietnam, DPR Korea) and in Cuba is necessary.

The socialist character of the USSR is grounded on the following: the abolition of capitalist relations of production, the existence of socialist ownership to which (despite various contradictions) cooperative ownership is subjugated, Central Planning, workers' power and the unprecedented gains benefiting all working people.

These cannot be negated by the fact that, following a certain period, the Party gradually lost its revolutionary guiding character and, as a result, counter-revolutionary forces were able to dominate the Party and the government in the 1980s.

We characterize the developments of 1989-1991 as a victory of the counter-revolution. They constituted the last act of the process that led to the strengthening of social inequalities and differences and of the forces of counterrevolution and social regression. It is not accidental that these developments were supported by international reaction, that socialist construction, especially during the period of the abolition of capitalist relations and of the founding of socialism, up until the Second World War, concentrates the ideological and political wrath of international imperialism. We reject the term "*collapse*", because it underestimates the extent of counter-revolutionary activity, the social base on which it can develop and predominate, due to the weaknesses and deviations of the subjective factor during socialist construction.

The victory of counter-revolution in 1989-1991 does not prove a lack of the basic level of development of the material prerequisites necessary to begin socialist construction in Russia.

Marx noted that mankind does not set itself but the problems that it can solve, because the problem itself arises only when the material conditions for its solution have been born. From the moment that the working class, the main productive force, struggles to carry out its historic mission, even more from the onset of the revolution, the productive forces have developed to the level of conflict with the relations of production, with the capitalist mode of production. In other words, the material prerequisites for socialism, upon which revolutionary conditions have been created, already exist.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks considered that problems of a relative backwardness in the development of the productive forces ("cultural level") would not be solved by any intermediate power between the bourgeois and proletarian powers, but by the dictatorship of the proletariat.<sup>10</sup>

Based on the statistical data of that period, capitalist relations of production at the monopoly stage of their development predominated in Russia. It was on this material basis that revolutionary power depended for the socialization of the concentrated means of production.<sup>11</sup> The working class of Russia, especially its industrial segment, founded

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10, V.I. Lenin, «Regarding our revolution», Collected Works, Greek edition (SE), vol. 45.

11, On the eve of World War I there was an important for that time development and concentration of the working class in Russia: the total number of workers was estimated at 15 million, out of which 4 million were workers in industry and railroads. In addition, it was estimated that 56.6% of industrial workers was concentrated in large industries with more than 500 workers. Russia was 5<sup>th</sup> in the world and 4<sup>th</sup> in Europe in terms of its share in the volume of international industrial production. Of course, the rise of industrial production had begun at the end of the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The branches of means of production increased their production by 83% during the period 1909-1913 (average annual increase of 13%). However, large capitalist industry was concentrated in six areas: Central, N-W (Petrograd), Baltic, South, Poland, Urals, which accounted for about 79% of industrial workers and 75% of industrial production. The profound unevenness that characterized the economy of the Russian Empire on the eve of WW I is reflected in the statistical data from that era, despite their various flaws. The working class only approached 20% of the total population (depending on the source it was variably cited from 17% to 19.5%). Small commodity producers (peasants, artisans, etc) accounted for 66.7% and the exploiting classes for 16.3%, out of which 12.3% were kulaks. National Academy of Sciences of USSR, "Political Economy", Cypraiou Publications, 1960, p.542 and "The Great Soviet Encyclopedia" Vol. 31, p.183-185.

the soviets as organizational nuclei of revolutionary action, under the guidance of the CP (b), in the struggle to conquer state power. The Bolshevik Party, under the leadership of Lenin, was theoretically prepared for the socialist revolution: analysis of the Russian society, the theory of the weak link in the imperialist chain, evaluation of the revolutionary situation, the theory for the dictatorship of the proletariat. It exhibited a characteristic ability to serve its strategy with the corresponding – at each stage of the development of the class struggle - tactics: alliances, slogans, manoeuvring, etc.

However, socialism faced additional specific difficulties, due to the fact that socialist construction began in a country with a lower level of development of the productive forces (medium-weak, as V. I. Lenin characterized it) compared to the advanced capitalist countries<sup>12</sup> and with a large degree of unevenness in its development, due to the extensive survival of pre-capitalist relations, particularly in the asiatic ex-colonies of the tsarist empire. Socialist construction began following the enormous destruction of WW I and in the midst of the civil war. Subsequently, it faced the immense destruction of WW II, while capitalist powers, like the USA, never experienced war within their borders. In contrast, they used war to overcome the big economic crisis of the 1930s.

The gigantic economic and social development that was accomplished under these conditions proves the superiority of the communist relations of production, even at their initial stage of development. The developments do not confirm the assessments of several opportunist and petit bourgeois currents. Social democratic viewpoints regarding the immaturity of the socialist revolution in Russia have not been confirmed. Neither have Trotskyite positions claiming that it was impossible to construct socialism in the USSR. The viewpoint that the society that emerged after the October Revolution was not socialist in character or that it quickly degenerated after the first years of its existence, and there-

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12. In 1913 the per capita GNP of Russia was 11.5% that of the USA. Approximately 2/3 of the population was completely illiterate.

fore that the interruption of the 70-year course of the history of the USSR was inevitable, is subjective and cannot be backed up by the facts.

We reject the theories that claim that these societies were some sort of “*a new exploitative system*” or a form of “*state capitalism*”, as various opportunist currents claim.

Furthermore, the developments do not validate the overall stance of the “Maoist” current vis-a-vis the construction of socialism in the USSR, the characterization of the USSR as social-imperialist, the rapprochement of China with the USA, as well as the inconsistencies in matters of socialist construction in China (e.g. the recognition of the national bourgeoisie as an ally in socialist construction, etc.).

Our own critical assessment considers as given the defence of the construction of socialism in the USSR and in the other countries.

{10} The counter-revolution in the USSR did not result from an imperialist military intervention, but rather from within and from the top, as a result of the opportunist mutation of the C.P and the corresponding political direction of Soviet power. We assign priority to the internal factors, to the socio-economic conditions that reproduce opportunism on the basis of socialist construction, without of course underestimating the long-term effect and the multi-faceted interference of imperialism in the development of opportunism and its evolution into a counterrevolutionary force.

Based on the theory of scientific communism we formulated a study along the following lines:

- The economy, that is, the developments in the relations of production and distribution during the foundation of the basis of socialism and its subsequent development, as the basis for the emergence and the resolution of social contradictions and differentiations.
- The operation of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the role of the CP under socialism, the lower stage of communism.
- The strategy of and the developments in the international communist movement.

{11} The course of building a new society in the Soviet Union was determined by the ability of the Bolshevik C.P to fulfill its revolutionary, guiding role. First and foremost, to process and formulate the requisite revolutionary strategy at each step; to confront opportunism and to provide a decisive response to the new, emerging demands and challenges of developing socialism-communism.

Up until World War II, the bases for the development of the new society were created. The class struggle which led to the abolition of capitalist relations and the supremacy of the socialized sector of production, on the basis of Central Planning, was being carried out with success. Impressive results were achieved concerning the growth of social prosperity.

Following World War II and the post-war reconstruction, socialist construction entered a new phase. The Party was faced with new demands and challenges regarding the development of socialism-communism. The 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU (1956) stands out as a turning point, since at that congress a series of opportunist positions were adopted on matters relating to the economy, the strategy of the communist movement and international relations.

The correlation of forces in the struggle being waged during the entire preceding period was altered, with a turn in favor of the revisionist-opportunist positions, with the result that the Party gradually began to lose its revolutionary characteristics. In the decade of the 1980s, with perestroika, opportunism fully developed



into a traitorous, counter-revolutionary force. The consistent communist forces that reacted during the final phase of the betrayal, at the 28<sup>th</sup> CPSU Congress, did not manage in a timely manner to expose it and to organize the revolutionary reaction of the working class.

## Assessments on the economy during the course of socialist construction in the USSR

{12} With the formulation of the first Plan of Central Planning, the following issues regarding the economy already came to the center of the theoretical debate and of political struggle: Is socialist production commodity production? What is the role of the law of value, of commodity-money relations under socialist construction?

It is incorrect to argue theoretically that the law of value is a law of motion of the communist mode of production in its first (socialist) stage. This approach became dominant since the decade of the 1950s in the USSR and in the majority of C.P.s. This position was strengthened due to the retention of commodity-money relations, during the planned transition from individual to cooperative production. This material base exacerbated theoretical shortcomings and political weaknesses in the formulation and implementation of Central Planning. During the subsequent decades opportunist policies further weakened Central Planning, eroded social ownership and strengthened counter-revolutionary forces.

{13} The first period of socialist construction up until World War II faced the basic, primary problem of abolishing capitalist ownership and of handling in a planned fashion the social and economic problems that had been inherited from capitalism and had been exacerbated by the imperialist encirclement and intervention. It was during this period that Soviet power reduced dramatically the deep unevenness that the revolution had inherited from the tsarist empire.

During the 1917-1940 period the Soviet power noted, for the most part, successes. It carried out the electrification and industrialization of production, the expansion of transport means, and the mechanization of a large part of agricultural production. It initiated planned production and achieved impressive rates in the development of socialist industrial production. It successfully developed domestic productive capacities

in all the industrial branches. Production cooperatives (kolkhozes) and state farms (sovkhozes) were created, and in this way the basis for the expansion and supremacy of socialist relations in agricultural production was established. The “*cultural revolution*” was realized. The formation of a new generation of communist specialists and scientists was begun. The most important achievement is the complete abolition of capitalist relations of production, with the abolition of hired labor power, thus laying the foundation for the new socio-economic formation.

{14} The implementation of certain “transitional measures”, within the perspective of the complete abolition of capitalist relations, was inevitable in a country like Russia of the years 1917-1921.

The factors that forced the Bolshevik C.P to implement a temporary policy of preservation, to a certain extent, of capitalist production relations were: the class composition, where the petit-bourgeois agrarian element was in the majority, the lack of a distribution, supply and monitoring mechanism, the large scale of the backward small-sized production and, mainly, the dramatic worsening of sustenance and living conditions, due to the destruction caused by the civil war and the imperialist intervention. All these factors made the development of medium-term Central Planning difficult at that point.

The New Economic Policy (NEP), which was implemented following the civil war, constituted a policy of temporary concessions to capitalism. It had the basic goal of restoring industry from the ravages of war and, on this basis, to build in the field of agricultural production relations that would “attract” farmers into the cooperatives. A number of enterprises were given over to capitalists for use (without them having ownership rights over them), trade was developed, the exchange between agricultural production and the socialized industry was regulated based on the concept of the “tax in kind”. The possibility was provided to the peasants to put on the market the remaining portion of their agricultural production.

The maneuverings and temporary concessions to capitalist relations that are demanded under certain circumstances and special conditions are not in any way an inevitable characteristic of the process of socialist construction. It is presumptuous and misleading to utilize NEP, as was done by the leadership of the CPSU with perestroika during the 1980s, to justify the turn towards private property and capitalist relations.

{15} The new phase of development of the productive forces at the end of the decade of the 1920s allowed the replacement of NEP by the policy of "*socialism's attack against capitalism*", that had as its main goal the complete abolition of capitalist relations. The concessions towards the capitalists were withdrawn and the policy of collectivization was developed, that is the complete cooperative organization of the agricultural economy, mainly in its developed form, the kolkhoz.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, the sovkhozes, the state-socialist units in agricultural production that were based on the mechanization of production and whose entire product was social property, were developed (albeit in a limited way).

The first five-year plan began in 1928, 7 years after the victory of revolution (the civil war ended in 1921). Soviet power experienced difficulty in formulating a central plan for the socialist economy from the very beginning, mainly due to the continuing existence of capitalist relations (NEP) and the exceptionally large number of individual commodity producers, mainly peasants. Weaknesses were also evident in the

13. An orientation that was laid out in the 15<sup>th</sup> Congress (1927). The AUCP (b) gave weight to the rise in productivity of small and medium-sized households and in providing technology and equipment. The nationalization of land did not come in conflict with the rights of land-usage of small and medium peasants. It benefited the small agricultural household and the forms of cooperation of the scattered agricultural households from the most simple, the "companionships", up to the "artel". The policy vis-a-vis the small agricultural household, the small production, was one of aid, not struggle. It rejected the destruction of lower forms of organization of production in the name of larger ones. At the same time, it promoted the advantages of the kolkhoz and the sovkhoz. In parallel, it aimed to defeat certain sections of the kulak in the villages and, subsequently, to eliminate the kulak class as a class.

subjective factor, the Party, which did not have cadre specialists to guide the organization of production and was thus obliged for a certain time to depend almost exclusively on bourgeois specialists.

The specific conditions (imperialist encirclement, the threat of war in combination with the extensive backwardness) forced the promotion of collectivization at accelerated rates, something which sharpened the class struggle, especially in the rural areas. There were of course mistakes and certain bureaucratic excesses in the development of the collectivization movement in agricultural production, that were pointed-out by the Party itself in its decisions of that period<sup>14</sup>. However, the orientation of Soviet power for the reinforcement and the generalization of this movement were in the correct direction. It aimed at the development of a transitional form of ownership (cooperative) that would contribute to the transformation of small individual commodity production into directly social production.

**{16}** The policy of “*socialism’s attack against capitalism*” was carried out under conditions of intense class struggle. The kulaks (the bourgeoisie in the village), social strata that benefited from the NEP (NEPmen) and sections of the intelligentsia that originated from the old exploiting classes reacted in many ways, including acts of sabotage against industry (e.g. the “Shakhty affair”<sup>15</sup>) and counter-revolutionary

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14. Decision of the CC, 15.3.1930 and personal article of I.V. Stalin (“Dizzy from success”, I.V. Stalin, Collected Works, V.12, pg. 218-227, Greek edition), where mistakes which aggravated the stabilization of the worker-peasant alliance were noted and positions were taken in favour of recognizing errors and correcting them, in as many areas and circumstances as possible, where the mistakes had not created irreversible facts from deviations or an incorrect course.

15. The “Shakhty” affair concerns the sabotage carried out in the coal mining industry of the Donbas area by bourgeois specialists, cadre of industry who had been employed by the soviet power in the organization and administration of production. During the trial that took place in 1928, it was proven that these executives had connections to the old capitalist coal mine owners who had left for abroad. The sabotage was part of an overall plan to undermine socialist industry and soviet power.

activities in the villages. These class-based, anti-socialist interests were reflected within the C.P. where opportunist currents developed.

The two basic "opposition" tendencies (Trotsky – Bukharin), that operated during that period, had a common base in absolutizing the elements of backwardness in Soviet society. During the 1930s their views converged to the thesis that the overcoming of capitalist relations in the USSR was premature. Their positions were rejected by the AUCP (Bolshevik) and were not confirmed by reality.

Along the way, several opportunist forces established contacts with openly counter-revolutionary forces that were organizing plans to overthrow Soviet power in cooperation with secret services from imperialist countries.

The prevailing conditions dictated the direct and resolute confrontation of these centers with the trials of 1936 and 1937, trials that revealed conspiracies with elements in the army (the Tukhachevsky case, who was rehabilitated following the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress), as well as with the secret services of foreign countries, particularly of Germany.

The fact that some leading cadre of the Party and of Soviet power spearheaded opportunist currents proves that it is possible even for vanguard cadre to deviate, to bend when faced with the sharpness of the class struggle and to finally sever their ties with the communist movement and pass over to the side of the counter-revolution.



{17} Following World War II, the debate on the laws of socialist economy, a debate that had subsided due to the war, was intensified once again. A confrontation developed around specific problems<sup>16</sup> between two basic theoretical and political currents, the «marketeters» and the «anti-marketeters» (tovarniki and anti-tovarniki), a confrontation that involved Party cadre and economists.

I.V. Stalin, as General Secretary of the C.C of the Party, was in the forefront of the organized intra-party discussion and supported the anti-market direction. He contributed to the formulation of political directives in that direction, for example the merging of kolkhozes, the dissolution of «auxiliary enterprises» in the kolkhozes (production of building materials). He confronted the current that pushed for the strengthening of commodity-money relations<sup>17</sup>, rejecting proposals to hand-over means of mechanized production to the kolkhozes. He recognized that socialist production is not commodity production and, thus, that the law of value cannot be reconciled with its fundamental laws. He highlighted the role of Central Planning in the socialist economy. He argued that the means of production are not commodities, despite the fact that they appear as commodities “*in form, but not in content.*” They become com-

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16. Despite the successes that were achieved in the fulfillment of the 4<sup>th</sup> 5-year plan (1946-1950), the CPSU leadership noted the following problems during that period: Slow rates in the introduction of new scientific and technological achievements in a series of branches of industry and in agricultural production. Factories with old technical equipment and low productivity, production of tool machinery and machines of outdated technology. Phenomena of slowing down, routine, inertia in factory administration, indifference concerning the introduction of technical progress as a constant stimulus for the development of the productive forces. Delay in the restoration of agricultural production, low productivity per acre in wheat cultivation, low productivity in livestock production, the total production of which had not even reached pre-war levels, with the result that there were shortages of meat, milk, butter, fruits and vegetables that affected the general goal of raising the level of social prosperity.

Source: G. Malenkov, “Report of the CC of the CP (Bolshevik) of the USSR at the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Party”, CC KKE publication, p 48-64.

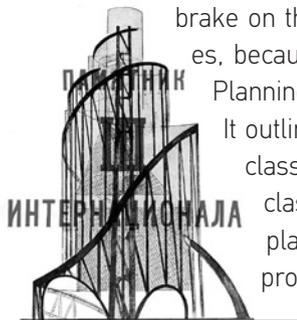
17. G. Malenkov, “Report of the CC of the CP (Bolshevik) of the USSR at the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Party”, CC KKE publication, p 60.

modities only in external trade<sup>18</sup>. He also recognized that the operation of the law of value (of commodity-money relations) in the USSR had its roots in cooperative and individual agricultural production, that the law of value does not regulate socialist production and its distribution.

Polemics were waged against "*market*" economists and political leaders who argued that the law of value is in general a law of the socialist economy as well. A correct criticism was also raised against those economists who supported the complete abolition of distribution in monetary form, without taking into account the objective limitations still placed by the productive base of the society at the time.

A weak spot in this approach was the thesis that the means of consumption are produced and distributed as commodities<sup>19</sup>. This thesis was correct only to the extent that it concerned the products of socialist production that were destined for the external trade, as well as the exchange of products between the socialist industry and cooperative and individual production. It was incorrect as far as it concerned the remaining means of consumption of socialist production, which are not commodities, even though they are not distributed freely.

This approach estimated correctly that in the USSR cooperative ownership (kolkhoz) and the circulation of products of individual consumption in the form of commodities had begun to act as a brake on the powerful development of the productive forces, because they blocked the full development of Central Planning in the full spectrum of production–distribution. It outlined the differences between the two cooperating classes, the working class and the kolkhoz agrarian class, but also the need to abolish them through the planned abolition of commodification of agricultural production and the transformation of the kolkhozes



18. I.V. Stalin, "Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR". Synchroni Epochi Publications, 1988, pp. 77-78 (Greek edition).

19. I.V. Stalin, "Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR". Synchroni Epochi Publications, 1988, pg. 44 (Greek edition).

into social property<sup>20</sup>. At the beginning of the 1950's, the Soviet leadership estimated correctly that the problems at the economic level were an expression of the sharpening of the contradiction between the productive forces that were developing and the relations of production that were lagging behind. The development of the productive forces had reached a new level after the post-war reconstruction of the economy. A new dynamic push for the further development of the productive forces demanded a deepening and extension of the socialist (immature communist) relations. The delay of the later concerned: the Central Planning, the deepening of the communist character of the relations of distribution, a more energetic and conscious workers' participation in the organization of labour and in the control of its administration from the bottom up, the eradication of all forms of individual commodity production, the subordination of the more developed cooperatives to the directly social production.

The need had matured for communist relations to be expanded, consciously, in a well-planned manner, that is theoretically and politically

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20. *"Undoubtedly, with the abolition of capitalism and the exploiting system in our country, and with the consolidation of the socialist system, the antagonism of interests between town and country, between industry and agriculture, was also bound to disappear. And that is what happened.... Of course, the workers and the collective-farm peasantry do represent two classes differing from one another in status. But this difference does not weaken their friendship in any way. On the contrary, their interests lie along one common line, that of strengthening the socialist system and attaining the victory of communism.... Take, for instance, the distinction between agriculture and industry. In our country it consists not only in the fact that the conditions of labour in agriculture differ from those in industry, but, mainly and chiefly, in the fact that whereas in industry we have public ownership of the means of production and of the product of industry, in agriculture we have not public, but group, collective-farm ownership. It has already been said that this fact leads to the preservation of commodity circulation, and that only when this distinction between industry and agriculture disappears, can commodity production with all its attendant consequences also disappear. It therefore cannot be denied that the disappearance of this essential distinction between agriculture and industry must be a matter of paramount importance for us".*

I.V. Stalin, "Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR," Synchroni Epochi Publications, 1988, p. 50-52 (Greek edition).

prepared, and to gain supremacy in those fields of social production where, in the previous period, their full dominance was still not possible (from the point of view of their material maturity, the productivity of labour).

The maturity of the expansion of communist relations in agricultural production concerns to a significant extent the capacity of industry to provide corresponding machinery, the capacity of Central Planning to carry out works for the amelioration of agricultural productivity, protection from weather calamities, etc. Despite the fact that at the beginning of the 1950's there still existed unevenness in the USSR, important pre-conditions of mechanization and infrastructure had been created that provided the opportunity to move in such a direction. The Progress Report of the C.C of the C.P (b) to the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress mentions a number of data that prove the aforementioned conclusion – the existence of 8,939 Machine Tractor Stations, the increase in tractor pulling power by 59% relative to the pre-war level, the implementation of irrigation and land reclamation projects during the post-war reconstruction period, the advances in the merging of kolkhozes into bigger ones during the 1950-1952 period (97,000 kolkhozes in 1952 compared to 254,000 in 1950), etc. <sup>21</sup>

However, there still remained small kolkhozes<sup>22</sup> which had to merge into bigger ones in the direction of the socialization of agricultural production, as was supported by the leadership of the Bolshevik C.P. The goal was set of excluding the left-overs of the production of kolkhozes from market distribution and their transition to the system of exchange between the state industry and the kolkhozes. A discussion was also initiated on the prospects of creating a unified economic body, which would contribute in the direction of an «all-embracing production sec-

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21. G. Malenkov, "Report of the CC of the CP (Bolshevik) of the USSR at the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Party", CC KKE publication.

22. There were many small kolkhozes with 10-30 households on small plots of land, where the technological means were not fully utilized and the administrative managerial costs were very high.

tor» that would have the responsibility of allocating the entire production of consumer products.

The party and state leadership took a clear stand in the debate regarding the issue of the necessary proportions between Department I of social production (production of the means of production) and Department II (production of means of consumption). It correctly stood for the essential priority of Department I in the planned proportional distribution of labour and of production among the different branches of socialist industry. Expanded reproduction and socialist accumulation (social wealth), necessary for the future expansion of social prosperity, are dependent on this category of production (Department I).

The correct positions and directives of Stalin and the «anti-market» economists and cadre of the C.P did not manage to lead to the elaboration of a comprehensive theoretical plan and a corresponding political line, capable of confronting the market-oriented theoretical positions and political choices that were being strengthened. Powerful social pressures, as well as discrepancies, deficiencies and fluctuations that existed within the «anti-market» current, contributed to this.

{18} Social resistance (by kolkhoz peasants, executives in agricultural production and in industry) to the need for an expansion and deepening of the socialist relations of production was expressed, at an ideological and political level, through an internal party struggle at the beginning of the 1950's. The sharpened debate, which ended with the theoretical acceptance of the law of value as a law of socialism, signified political choices with more immediate and powerful consequences on the course of socialist development, in comparison with the pre-war period, when the material backwardness made the effect of these theoretical positions less painful.

These forces were expressed politically through the positions adopted in the decisions of the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU, a congress which proved to be one of supremacy of the right opportunist deviation. Politi-

cal choices were gradually adopted that expanded commodity-money (potentially capitalist) relations, in the name of correcting weaknesses in Central Planning and in the administration of the socialist productive units.

In order to solve the problems that arose in the economy, ways and means that belonged to the past were used. With the promotion of "market" policies, instead of reinforcing social ownership and Central Planning, the homogenization of the working class (with the widening of the abilities and capacities for multi-specialization, for alternation in the technical division of labour), workers' participation in the organization of labour, workers' control from the bottom up, the reverse trend began to strengthen itself. In such a setting the level of social consciousness gradually backslided. The previous experience and the effectiveness of the factory soviet, of the Stakhanovite movement in quality control, in the more effective organization and administration, in inventions for the conservation of material and labour time, were lost.

The "market-oriented" economists (Lieberman, Nemtsinov, Trapeznikov, etc.) mistakenly interpreted the existing problems of the economy, not as subjective weaknesses in planning<sup>23</sup>, but as consequences stemming from the objective weakness of Central Planning to respond to the development of the volume of production, to the variety of sectors and the variegation of products required for the fulfillment of new social needs.

They claimed that the theoretical cause was the voluntarist denial of the commodity character of production under socialism, the underestimation of the development of agriculture, the overestimation of the possibility of subjective intervention in economic administration.

They maintained that it was not possible for the central organs to determine the quality, technology and prices of all commodities, the level of salaries, but that the use of market mechanisms was also required to facilitate the goals of a planned economy.

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23. Delay in the development of a mechanism that would reflect in Central Planning the real necessary proportions between branches and sectors of the economy.

It was in such a way that, at a theoretical level, theories of “socialist commodity production” or “socialism with a market”, the acceptance of the law of value as a law of the socialist (immature communist) mode of production, which operates even in the phase of socialist development, prevailed. These theories constituted the basis for the formulation of economic policies<sup>24</sup>.

{19} The policy of weakening Central Planning and social ownership escalated after the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress. In 1957, the branch ministries that directed industrial production across the entire USSR and at each republic were dissolved and the Organs of Regional Administration “*Sovnarkhoz*” (Regional Economic Councils) were formed. In this way the central direction of planning was weakened<sup>25</sup>. Instead of planning the transformation of the kolkhozes into sovkhozes, and especially instead of initiating the planned transfer of the entire production of the kolkhozes to state control, in 1958 the tractors and other machinery<sup>26</sup> passed into the ownership of the kolkhoz<sup>27</sup>, a policy that had been rejected in the past. These changes not only did not solve the problems, but, on the contrary, they brought new problems to the surface or cre-

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24. It is important to note how bourgeois forces characterized at that point the reforms of 1965:

1.) Bourgeois economic thought characterized them as a return to capitalism (published material in the “Economist”, “Financial Times”)

2.) They had the support of Western bourgeois economists of the Keynesian school and social democracy, who characterized the ‘reforms’ as an improvement in planning with a battle against bureaucracy.

25. The *Sovnarkhoz* were abolished in 1965 and the separate Ministries per sector were re-instated.

26. The tractors etc until then had been state ownership. They were concentrated in stations (machine-tractor stations - MTS) and were operated by workers.

27. In February 1958 a plenary session of the Central Committee of CPSU decided the dissolution of the MTS and the selling of their technical means to the kolkhozes. This policy resulted in a big expansion of the kolkhoz ownership at the expense of the social ownership.

ated additional ones, such as a shortage in animal feed and a regression in the technological renewal in the kolkhoz.

In the mid 1960s, mistakes of a subjective nature in the administration of the agricultural sector of the economy were pinpointed as the cause of the problems<sup>28</sup>. Subsequent reforms included: The reduction in the state procurement quotas from the kolkhozes<sup>29</sup>, the possibility of selling the surplus output at higher prices, the lifting of the restrictions on the transactions of the individual peasant households and the elimination of the tax on private ownership of animals. Debts of the kolkhozes to the State Bank were erased, the deadlines to pay off debt from monetary advances were extended, the direct sale of animal feed to private animal owners was permitted. Thus, the portion of agricultural production which originated from individual households and the kolkhozes and which was freely sold on the market<sup>30</sup> was preserved and increased, while the lagging behind of livestock production deepened, the unevenness in the satisfaction of the needs for agricultural products between the various regions and Republics of the USSR increased.

A similar policy of reinforcing the commodity (at the expense of the directly social) character of production was implemented in industry,

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28. Plenum of the CC of CPSU in March 1965, with a report of L. Brezhnev on the subject: "Urgent measures for the further development of the agricultural economy of the USSR".

29. Up until 1958, in the USSR, forms of procurement of agricultural products from the kolkhozes were being used that limited the market element or retained it in form, but not in content; obligatory procurements at low supply prices, which had the force of a tax, contracts, i.e. selling of products by the kolkhozes on the basis of a contract with the supply organizations, payment in kind for the work of the MTS, purchases of products above the obligatory procurements at prices slightly higher than the procurement prices. The procurement system was instituted in 1932-1933. The contract made its appearance earlier and was extended to the supply of technical crops.

30. In 1970 the supplementary household in the USSR produced 38% of vegetables, 35% of meat and 53% of eggs. In all, the supplementary household produced 12% of all agricultural products which were sold on the market (8% of the commodity produce of agriculture and 14% of animal breeding)

Source: Economic School of Lomonosov University, Moscow: "Political Economy", Gutenberg. Athens 1984. Volume 4, p. 319.

known as the “*Kosygin Reforms*”<sup>31</sup>(the system of “economic accounting” – “*khozrchet*”- of enterprises, having a substantive and not formal character). It was argued that this would combat the reduction in the annual rate of increase of labour productivity and of annual production in industry, that were observed during the first years of the 1960s, as a result of the measures which undermined Central Planning in the direction of the industrial sectors (Sovnarkhoz-1957).

The first wave of reforms was pushed forward in the period between the 23<sup>rd</sup> (1966) and 24<sup>th</sup> (1971) Congresses. According to the New System, the supplementary payments (bonuses) of the directors would be calculated not on the basis of the overfulfilment of the plan in terms of volume of production<sup>32</sup>, but rather on the basis of the overfulfilment of the sales plan and would be dependent on the rate of profit of the enterprise. A part of the additional payments of the workers would also come from profit, as would the further satisfaction of housing needs etc. In this way, profit was adopted as a motive for production. The wage differentials increased. The possibility was provided for horizontal commodity-money transactions between enterprises, for direct agreements with

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31. Plenum of the CC of the CPSU, September 1965 on the subject “For the improvement of the management of industry, for the perfection of planning and the strengthening of the economic drive of industrial production”. The “*Kosygin reforms*” climaxed in the 1970s.

32. In industry, the reforms were applied experimentally in 1962, in the operation of two clothing production enterprises, according to a system of administration proposed by professor Liebermann (known as the Kharkov System).

Lieberman argued that the calculation of bonuses to directors in proportion with the over-fulfillment of the Plan, introduced a contradiction between the interests of the directors and the interest of Soviet society as a whole. This was because the directors concealed the real productive capacity of the enterprises, created stockpiles of raw materials and goods and were indifferent to the discontinuation of the production of ‘useless goods’. They blocked the application of new technology in order not to alter the “norms”, that is the indexes of social production, based on which the plans’ coverage was measured. In this way, e.g. they produced thick paper, instead of thin, because the norms were measured by weight. He made some correct observations, but proposed mistaken policies. It was on this basis that communists and workers were persuaded of the necessity of these measures

'consumer units and commercial organizations', for price-fixing, for the formation of profits on the basis of such transactions, etc. The Central Plan would determine the total level of production and investments only for new enterprises. Modernisation of old enterprises had to be financed out of the profits of the enterprises.

These reforms concerned the entire sector of the so-called «property of the whole people», i.e. including the operation of the sovkhozes (state farms) themselves. With a decision of the C.C of the CPSU and of the Council of Ministers of the USSR (April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1967), the sovkhozes began to pass into a regime of full economic accounting. By 1975 all the sovkhozes were operating «under full economic accounting»<sup>33</sup>.

The theoretical sliding and the corresponding political retreat in the USSR occurred during a new phase, when the productive forces had developed at a higher level and necessitated a corresponding development of Central Planning. In other words, the need for a deepening of socialist relations had matured.

The market reforms that were chosen were not a one-way street. The confrontation of the economic problems required the elaboration of more effective incentives and indices of Central Planning, as well as of its sectoral, cross-sectoral and enterprise - level implementation. At the same time, proposals and plans for the use of computers and information technology<sup>34</sup>, which could have contributed to improvements in the technical processing of data, in order to improve the observation and control of the production of use values through quantity and quality indicators, were rejected.

Through the market reforms, through the detachment of the socialist production unit from Central Planning, the socialist character of ownership over the means of production was weakened. The principle of distribution "according to labour" was violated.

The 24<sup>th</sup> CPSU Congress (1971), with its directives on the formula-

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33. The Great Soviet Encyclopedia, Vol 30, p. 607, entry "Sovkhoz" (Greek edition).

34. See articles of V.M Glushkov [published in KOMEP (Communist Review) 1/2005] and N.D. Pikhorovich in KOMEP 3/2005.

tion of the 9<sup>th</sup> 5-Year plan (1971-1975), reversed the proportional priority of Department I over Department II. The reversal of this proportion had been proposed at the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress, but had not been accepted. This modification was rationalized as a choice reinforcing the level of popular consumption. In reality, it was a choice that violated socialist law and had negative consequences on the growth of labour productivity. The development of labour productivity – a fundamental element for the growth of social wealth, the satisfaction of social needs and the all-round development of man – presupposes the development of the means of production. Planning should have dealt with greater efficacy with the following need: the introduction of modern technology in industry, in transport services, storage and distribution of products.

The choice to overturn the proportions did not help to deal with contradictions that had been expressed (e.g. the excess income in monetary form and the lack of an adequate amount of consumer goods, such as electronic household appliances, colour TVs). On the contrary, it moved Central Planning away from its basic goal of the rise of social prosperity. It further aggravated the contradiction between the level of development of the productive forces and the level of the communist relations of production-distribution.

During the 1980's, at the political level, the decisions of the 27th Congress (1986) constituted a further opportunist choice. Subsequently, the counterrevolution was also promoted through the passing of the law (1987), which institutionally legitimised capitalist economic relations, under the guise of the acceptance of the multiplicity of forms of ownership.

At the beginning of the 1990's, the social democratic approach of "the planned market economy" (the platform of the CC of the CPSU at the 28th Congress) was speedily abandoned in favour of the position of the "regulated market economy" and this was further replaced by the "free market economy".



{20} The direction that became dominant should not be judged today only from a theoretical perspective, but also by its practical results. After two decades of the application of these reforms, the problems had clearly sharpened. Stagnation reared its head for the first time in the history of socialist construction. Technological backwardness continued to be a reality for the large majority of enterprises. Shortages appeared in many consumer products, as well as other problems in the "market", because enterprises were causing an artificial rise in prices, by hoarding commodities in warehouses or by supplying them in controlled quantities.

An important index of the retreat of the Soviet economy during the 1970's was the decline in the USSR's share in the world production of industrial raw materials and in manufacturing.

The ever increasing involvement of market elements in the directly social production of socialism was weakening it. It led to a decline in the dynamics of socialist development. The short-term individual and group interests (with an increase in income differentiation among the workers in each enterprise, between the workers and the managerial apparatus, between different enterprises) were strengthened vis-a-vis the overall interests of society. As time passed, the social conditions were created for the counterrevolution to flourish and to finally prevail using perestroika as its vehicle.

Through these reforms the possibility was created for monetary amounts which had been accumulated, primarily through illegal means (smuggling, etc), to be invested in the "black" (illegal) market. These opportunities concerned primarily officials in the management layers of enterprises and sectors, the cadre of the kolkhozes and of foreign trade. Data regarding the so-called "Para-economy" (parallel economy) were also provided by the Procurator General of the USSR. According to these statistics, a significant proportion of the cooperative or state agricultural production was also channelled to the consumers by illegal means.

The income differentiation among the individual agricultural producers, the kolkhozniks, widened, as well as their opposition to the tenden-

cy to strengthen the directly social character of agricultural production. A portion of the peasants and of the managerial cadre of the kolkhozes who were getting rich was strengthened as a social layer hampering socialist construction. The social differentiation in industry was even more pronounced through the concentration of "enterprise profits". The so-called "shadow capital", the result not only of enrichment through enterprise profits, but also of the black market, of criminal acts of embezzlement of the social product, sought its legal functioning as capital in production, i.e. the privatisation of the means of production, the restoration of capitalism. The owners of this capital constituted the driving social force of the counterrevolution. They utilised their position in the state and party mechanisms. They found support in sectors of the population which were more vulnerable, due to their objective position, to the influence of bourgeois ideology and to wavering, e.g. a significant part of the intelligentsia, sections of the youth, such as the university students<sup>35</sup>. These forces, directly or indirectly, influenced the Party, strengthening its opportunist erosion and its counterrevolutionary degeneration, which was expressed through the policies of "perestroika" and sought the institutional consolidation of capitalist relations. This was achieved after perestroika, with the overthrow of socialism.

## Conclusions on the role of the Communist Party in the process of socialist construction

{ 21 } The indispensable role of the Party in the process of socialist foundation and development is expressed in its leadership of working class state-power, in the mobilisation of the masses to participate in this process.

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35. See Documents of the National (Pan-Hellenic) Conference of KKE (1995) "Thoughts on the factors that determined the overthrow of the socialist system in Europe. The necessity and relevance of socialism", pages 23-24.

The working class is formed as the leading force of this new state power, first and foremost through its Party.

The struggle for the foundation and development of the new society is carried out by the revolutionary workers' power, with the Communist Party, which acts consciously on the basis of the laws of motion of socialist-communist society, as its guiding nucleus. The human being, becoming the master of the social processes, passes gradually from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of freedom. From this flows the higher role of the subjective factor, relative to all previous socio-economic formations, where human activity was dominated by the spontaneous enforcement of social laws on the basis of the spontaneous development of the relations of production.

Consequently, the scientific and class nature of the policies of the CP is a crucial precondition for socialist construction. To the extent that these features become lost, opportunism grows and, if it is not dealt with, it gradually develops into a counterrevolutionary force.

The duty to develop the communist relations of production - distribution pre-supposes the development of the theory of scientific communism by the C.P, through the understanding of the laws of motion of the communist socio-economic formation with the utilisation of scientific study for class oriented purposes. Experience has shown that the governing parties, in the USSR and in the other socialist states, did not fulfil this task successfully.

Class consciousness in the working class as a whole does not develop spontaneously and in a unified manner. The rise of the communist consciousness of the masses of the working class is determined above all by the strengthening of the communist relations of production and by the level of working class participation, with the leadership of the CP, which is the main vehicle for the penetration of revolutionary consciousness amongst the masses. It is on this material basis that ideological work, as well as the impact of the revolutionary party which consolidates its leading role to the extent that it mobilises the working class to construct socialism, must become rooted.

The consciousness of the vanguard must always be ahead of the consciousness shaped on a mass scale within the working class by the economic relations. From this arises the necessity for the Party to have a high theoretical-ideological level and tenacity, to be unwavering in the struggle against opportunism, not only under the conditions of capitalism, but even more so under the conditions of socialist construction.

{ 22 } The opportunist turn which held sway since the 1950's, the gradual loss of the revolutionary character of the Party, confirm that in socialist society the danger for the development of deviations never disappears. Beyond the imperialist surroundings and their undoubted negative impact, the social base of opportunism remains, as long as forms of private and group ownership, commodity-money relations and social differentiations remain. The material basis of opportunism will continue to exist for the entire duration of socialist construction and as long as capitalism, particularly in the more powerful capitalist states, continues to exist on earth.

The new phase, following World War II, found the Party weakened ideologically and in class terms, with massive losses of cadre experienced and hardened in the class struggle, with theoretical weaknesses vis-a-vis the new problems which were sharpening. It found itself vulnerable to the inner-party struggle which reflected the existing social differences. Under these conditions, the scales tipped in favour of the adoption of opportunist and revisionist positions, many of which had been defeated during previous phases of the inner-party struggle.

The adoption of revisionist and opportunist positions by the leadership of the CPSU and of the other CPs in power, in the end transformed these parties into vehicles which led the counterrevolution in the 1980's.

The 19<sup>th</sup> Congress (1952) highlighted the underestimation of and other serious problems in the development of the ideological work of the

Party<sup>36</sup>. The official data reveal changes in the number and the composition of the Party membership. At the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress (March 1939) the C.P (b) numbered 1,588,852 full members and 888,814 candidate members. During the course of World War II, the full members exceeded 3,615,000 and the candidate members 5,319,000<sup>37</sup>. In the course of the war, the C.P lost 3 million members<sup>38</sup>. At the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress in 1952, the CPSU numbered 6,013,259 full members and 868,886 candidate members<sup>39</sup>.

The opportunist turn which took place during the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU (1956) and the subsequent gradual loss of the revolutionary characteristics of the Party, a governing party which was, at the same time, the target of imperialist aggression, made the awakening and mobilization of consistent communists more difficult. A struggle was waged within the ranks of the CPSU before, during<sup>40</sup> and after the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress. The period when Andropov was the GS of the CC of the CPSU

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36. G. Malenkov, "Report of the CC of the CP (Bolshevik) of the USSR at the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Party", excerpts re-published in KOMEP (Communist Review) 2/1995.

37. Ibid

38. The Great Soviet Encyclopedia. Vol 17, p. 671, entry "CPSU" (Greek edition).

39. G. Malenkov, "Report of the CC of the CP (Bolshevik) of the USSR at the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Party", excerpts re-published in KOMEP (Communist Review) 2/1995.

40. As it can be deduced from the history of the CPSU, there was a sharp struggle in the Presidium of the CC in June 1957, one year after the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress. The members of the Presidium of the C.C. Malenkov, Kaganovitch and Molotov, opposed the line of the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress on both internal and external policies: against expansion of the powers of the union republics in economic and cultural construction, against measures restricting the state mechanism and reorganizing the administration of Industry and Construction, against the measure of increasing material incentives for the kolkhoz farmers, against the abolition of obligatory procurements of agricultural products from the supplementary households of the kolkhozniks. Molotov also opposed the expansion to virgin lands. All three took a stand against the international political line of the Party. Finally, Malenkov, Kaganovitch, Molotov and Shepilov were stripped of their rank in the CC and the Presidium of the CC at the Plenary Session of the C.C in June. Bulganin was given a severe reprimand with a warning. Other members were also penalized. Pervukhin was downgraded from regular to substitute member of the Presidium of the CC. Saburov was removed as substitute member of the Presidium. In October 1957, the Presidium and the Secretariat were enlarged with new members.

"History of the CPSU", Political and Literary Editions, 1960, pp. 861-865.

(November 1982-February 1984), which preceded the period of perestroika, is too brief to be definitively judged. Nevertheless, in articles and documents of the CPSU of this period, references are being made to the need to intensify the struggle against bourgeois and reformist views regarding the construction of socialism, as well as to the need for vigilance vis-a-vis the subversive activities of imperialism.

The consistent communist forces that existed within the CPSU were not able to reveal in time the treacherous counterrevolutionary character of the line which got the upper hand at the Plenum of the C.C of April 1985 and at the 27<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU (1986). History has shown that at the 28<sup>th</sup> Congress (1990), on the eve of the final assault of the counterrevolution, there co-existed within the CPSU bourgeois, opportunist and communist forces. The communist forces did not have the strength to prevail, to prevent the victory of the counterrevolution, although they offered resistance during the 28<sup>th</sup> Congress and later on. They grouped themselves around the «United Front of the Working People of Russia», they put up candidates for the positions of president and vice-president of Russia. Through the actions of the «Movement for a Communist Initiative» in the ranks of the CPSU they tried to achieve the expulsion of Gorbachev from the Party for anti-communist activities<sup>41</sup>.

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41. Victor Tiulkin, first secretary of the CC of the RCWP-RCP, in his speech at the International Conference on the 80th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Moscow, notes that:

- > The 19th Conference of the CPSU declared political pluralism.
- > The road to market policies was opened at the 28th Congress of the CPSU.
- > The Plenum of the CC of CPSU (April 1991) opened the way for privatization policies.
- > The policy of national "independence" (cessation from the USSR) was followed by the group of communists in the congresses of Soviets.
- > The dissolution of the USSR was rubber-stamped by the so-called communist majority in the Supreme Soviet.

In an article in 2000, on the 10th anniversary of the convocation of the 28<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU, Tiulkin mentions that, in the All-Russia Conference which created the Communist party of the Russian Federation (within the framework of the CPSU) appeared for the first time the faction "Movement of the Communist Initiative" which, together with others, voted against the decisions of the 28th Congress of the CPSU.

Despite such resistance, a revolutionary communist vanguard, with ideological political clarity and cohesion, capable of leading the working class, ideologically, politically and organisationally against the developing counterrevolution, was not formed in time. Even if this development could not have been stopped, especially by the 1980's, it is certain that a powerful resistance, both within the governing parties and within the international communist movement, could have contributed so that today's struggle for the reconstruction of the international movement would be taking place under better conditions. It could have created the preconditions for the overcoming of its deep crisis.

The development and prevalence of revisionist ideological positions and opportunist policies, the gradual opportunist erosion of the CPSU, and of the other governing C.P.'s, the degeneration of the revolutionary character of state-power and the full-fledged development and victory of the counterrevolution were not inevitable.

We are continuing the investigation of all the factors which contributed to this development. The following factors can be included:

## a

- The decline in the level of political Marxist education in the leadership of the C.P.'s and overall in the Party, because of the specific conditions of the war, the extensive casualties and the sudden increase in the number of party members, which had among its results the delayed development of the Political Economy of Socialism.
- The relative dependence which communist state-power in the USSR had, from its very outset, on administrative and scientific cadre of a bourgeois origin.
- The historical inheritance of the USSR, from the point of view of the breadth of pre-capitalist backwardness and its uneven capitalist development.
- The changes in the class composition of the Party, in its structure and functioning and their impact on the ideological level and the

revolutionary characteristics of the Party, its members and cadre need further investigation.

- The massive losses during World War II and the sacrifices at the level of social prosperity required by the post-war reconstruction, under the conditions of competition with the capitalist reconstruction in Western Europe which was supported, to a significant extent, by the capacity and the need of the USA to export capital.
- Problems and contradictions during the course of assimilation of the countries of Eastern and Central Europe into the socialist system.
- The fear of a new war, due to the imperialist interventions in Korea etc, the Cold war, the Holstein dogma of West Germany (the non-recognition of the GDR, and its characterization as a «zone of soviet occupation»).

## b

Imperialist strategy adapted itself in form during the different periods of the revolutionary workers' power (direct imperialist assault in 1918 and 1941, proclamation of the "cold war" in 1946), including a differentiated policy of diplomatic relations and commercial transactions with certain states of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as a more direct ideological and political pressure on the USSR. The interventionist policy of international imperialism towards the countries of socialist construction utilized the subversive role of international social democracy.

The international correlation of forces during World War II favoured the strengthening of opportunism, which finally prevailed during the 1950's. The multi-faceted external pressure from the beginning of the 1940's took the following forms:

- German imperialist occupation of a significant part of the USSR
- Imperialist encirclement of the USSR through its forced alliance with the USA and Great Britain

- Problems in the strategic line of the international communist movement, particularly in the C.P's of the USA and Great Britain, that is in the C.P's of the main imperialist powers, which became allies when a significant part of the USSR was under German occupation.
- Pressure from petit-bourgeois forces in the liberation fronts and their governments in the states newly allied to the USSR.

The external pressure intermingled with the internal pressure from petit-bourgeois forces (or even from cadre of a bourgeois origin in the economy and the administration). The private (individual) commodity production became stronger in the USSR with the incorporation of new territories following World War II.

All of the above constitute factors for the development of opportunism, conditions under which a large growth of the Party's ranks and a loss of cadre and members of the Revolution took place.

The evolution of the social composition of the Party, of the structures and of the internal Party procedures (the reasons for the long delay in holding a congress) and their influence on the ideological level and on the revolutionary characteristics of the Party as a whole, of its members and cadre, are objects of further study.

## C

The problems of strategy and the split in the international communist movement

## The course of Soviet power

{ 23 } The theoretical foundation for the analysis of the course of Soviet power is that state-power under socialism is the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is the power of the working class which is not shared with anyone, as is the case in all forms of state-power. The dictatorship of the proletariat is the instrument of the working class in the class struggle which continues by other means and forms.

The working class, as the bearer of the communist relations which are being formed, as the collective owner of the socialised means of production, is the only class which can lead the struggle for the total supremacy of communist relations, for the "eradication" of classes and the withering away of the state. Through its revolutionary state-power, the working class as the ruling class implements its alliance with other popular strata (e.g. the cooperative small owners of town and country, the self-employed in the service sector), as well as with scientists-intellectuals and technicians originating from the upper-middle strata who are not yet workers in directly social (socialist) production. Through this alliance, the working class seeks to lead these strata in the foundation and development of socialism, towards the total supremacy of communist relations.

Such an alliance contains of course compromises, as well as struggle, since there exist objective contradictions between these social forces, since this alliance groups together common, as well as distinct, potentially competitive interests. Contradictions which, if they are not solved in the direction of expanding and deepening socialist relations, are liable to sharpen into antagonistic contradictions<sup>42</sup>.



42. Lenin notes: "Agreement between the working class and the peasantry may be

The dictatorship of the proletariat is retained until all social relations become communist, i.e. as long as there is a need for the state as a mechanism of political domination. Its necessity is also the result of the continuation of class struggle internationally.

{ 24 } The political choices concerning the superstructure, the institutions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, workers' control, etc are closely connected with the political choices at the level of the economy, since the most essential duty of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the formation of the new social relations.

In the first Constitution of the RSFSR<sup>43</sup> and in the first Constitution of the USSR of 1924 (as well as in the constitutions of the Republics of 1925), the relationship between the masses and the state machine was effected through the indirect electoral representation of the workers, with the production unit being the electoral unit. The right to vote was ensured only for working people (not generally for the citizens). The bourgeoisie, the landowners, anyone who exploited another's labour power, priests and monks, counterrevolutionary elements were denied the right to vote. The concessions towards the capitalists during the NEP period did not include political rights.

In the Constitution of 1936 direct electoral representation was established through geographical electoral wards (the region became the

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taken to mean anything. If one does not take into consideration the fact that, from the working-class standpoint, an agreement is permissible, correct and possible in principle, only if it supports the dictatorship of the working class and is one of the measures aimed at the abolition of classes (...)" (V.I. Lenin, "Report on the tax-in-kind", Collected Works, Vol. 43, p.301, Greek edition).

Elsewhere in the same discussion, Lenin noted: "What does it mean to lead the peasantry? It means, first, pursuing a course towards the abolition of classes, and not the course of the small producer. If we strayed from this bedrock course, we would cease to be socialists and would find ourselves in the camp of the petty bourgeoisie, in the camp of the Mensheviks and the Socialist-Revolutionaries..." (V.I. Lenin, "Concluding speech on the tax-in-kind report", Collected Works, Vol. 43, p.318, Greek edition).

43. Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic.

electoral unit and representation was proportional to the number of residents). The holding of elections in electoral assemblies was abolished, replaced by their holding through electoral wards. The right to vote was granted to all via the generalized secret ballot.

The changes in the Constitution of 1936 aimed at solving certain problems<sup>44</sup>, such as the lack of direct communication of party and soviet officials with the base and with the operation of the Soviets, bureaucratic attitudes, etc. as well as at guaranteeing the stability of Soviet power in the face of the coming war.

The critical approach to these changes focuses on the need to study further the functional downgrading of the production unit as the nucleus of organisation of workers' power, due to the abolition of the production unit principle and of the indirect election of delegates through congresses and assemblies. We need to study its negative impact on the class composition of the higher state organs and on the application of the right of recall of delegates (which according to Lenin constitutes a basic element of democratism in the dictatorship of the proletariat).



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44. The report of A. Zhdanov at the session of the Plenum of the CC of the AUCP (b) (February-March 1937) refers to the following problems which the new electoral system sought to solve: *"we must overcome the harmful psychology, which certain of our party and soviet cadre have, who suppose that they can easily win the trust of the people and sleep quietly, waiting to be offered their deputy positions at home, with thundering applause, for their previous services. Through the secret ballot you can't take the people's trust for granted... We have an important layer of cadre in party and soviet organizations, who think that their task finishes when they are elected to the soviet. This is witnessed by the large number of cadre who do not attend the sessions of the Soviets, the deputies' groups and soviet departments, who avoid fulfilling basic parliamentary duties... many of our cadre in soviets tend to acquire bureaucratic features and have many weaknesses in their work, they are ready to answer for their work 10 times before the party bureau in a close "family" environment, rather than appear in a session of the soviet plenum and criticize themselves and listen to the criticism of the masses. I think you know this as well as I do"*

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{ 25 } Following the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress (1956) the powers of the local soviets on questions which concerned “economic accounting” and “self-management” of socialist enterprises were strengthened. In this way, democratic centralism at the political level receded to bring it to par with the retreat of Central Planning at the economic level. Measures were adopted which strengthened the “permanence” of officials in the soviets, through the gradual increase of the terms of office of their organs and an expansion of the possibility for the exemption of delegates from their duties in production.

At the 22<sup>nd</sup> Congress of the CPSU (1961) mistaken assessments and approaches concerning “*developed socialism*” and the “*end of class struggle*” were adopted. In the name of “*non-antagonistic contradictions*” between social classes and groups, the thesis that the USSR was a “*state of the whole people*” (consolidated in the constitutional revision of 1977) and the CPSU a “*party of the whole people*” was adopted. This development contributed to the adulteration of the characteristics of the revolutionary workers’ state, to the deterioration of the social composition of the Party and its cadre, to the loss of revolutionary vigilance, which was theorised with the thesis for the “irreversibility” of the socialist course.

Through perestroika and the reform of the political system in 1988, the Soviet system degenerated into a bourgeois parliamentary organ with a division of the executive and legislative functions, a permanence of office holders, an undermining of the right to recall, high remuneration, etc.

{ 26 } Practical experience reveals the gradual distancing of the masses from participation in the soviet system, which – particularly during the 1980s – had attained a purely formal character. This distancing cannot be attributed exclusively or primarily to the changes in the functioning of the Soviets, but to the social differentiations which were becoming stronger through the economic policies being followed, to the sharpening of contradictions between individual and group interests on the one hand, and the collective social interest on the other. It

was in this fashion that the criteria of workers' control were degenerating or were adopting a formal character.

So long as the leadership of the CPSU adopted policies which weakened the social character of ownership and strengthened narrow individual and group interests, a feeling of alienation from social ownership was created and consciousness was eroded. The road to passivity, indifference and individualism was opened, as practice was becoming more and more removed from the official pronouncements, as the rates of the expanded industrial and agricultural reproduction declined, in tandem with the rates of satisfaction of the ever increasing social needs.

The working class, the popular masses in general, did not reject socialism. It is notable that the slogans used by perestroika were "*revolution within the revolution*", "*more democracy*", "*more socialism*", "*socialism with a human face*", "*return to the Leninist principles*", because a large section of the people, who saw the problems, wanted changes within the framework of socialism. Both the measures which initially weakened communist relations while strengthening commodity-money relations, as well as those which later paved the way for the return of private ownership over the means of production were promoted as measures that would strengthen socialism.



## The strategy of the international communist movement and developments within it

{27} Developments within the international communist movement and the issues of its strategy played an important role in the worldwide class struggle and in the configuration of the correlation of forces<sup>45</sup>.

Problems of ideological and strategic unity were expressed during the entire course of the Communist International (CI), regarding the character of the revolution, the nature of the coming war following the rise of fascism in Germany<sup>46</sup> and the attitude vis-a-vis Social democracy.

The opportunist groups within the Bolshevik CP (Trotskyites - Bukharinites) were also connected to the ongoing struggle within the CI concerning the strategy of the international communist movement. At the end of the 1920s, during the 6<sup>th</sup> Congress of the C.I, Bukharin, as president of the CI, supported forces in the C.P's and the CI which exaggerated the "stabilisation of capitalism" and the unlikelihood of a new revolutionary upsurge, and expressed a spirit of rapprochement with social democracy, especially its "left wing", etc.

A relaxation in the functioning of the CI as a unitary centre had appeared many years before its self-dissolution (1943)<sup>47</sup>. The dissolution of the C.I (May 1943), despite the problems of unity it had and irrespective of whether it could be retained or not, deprived the international communist movement of the centre and the capacity for the coordinated elaboration of a revolutionary strategy for the transformation of the struggle against imperialist war or foreign occupation into a struggle for

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45. For assessments and conclusions on this issue see the "Theses of the CC of KKE on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Anti-fascist victory of the People", April 2005.

46. Initially the Secretariat of the EC of the CI, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September, 1939, characterized the war as imperialist and predatory on both sides, calling on the sections of the CI in countries involved in the war to struggle against it.

47. See "History of the 3<sup>rd</sup> International", Academy of Sciences of the USSR, p. 428 (Greek edition).

state-power, as a common duty concerning every CP in the conditions of its own country<sup>48</sup>.

Irrespective of the reasons which led to the dissolution of the CI, there is an objective need for the international communist movement to formulate a unified revolutionary strategy, to plan and coordinate its activity. A deeper study concerning the dissolution of the CI must take into consideration a series of developments<sup>49</sup>, such as: the cessation of the activities of the Red Trade Union International, in 1937, because the majority of its sections merged with the mass reformist unions, or joined these unions. The decision of the 6<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Young Communist International (1935), according to which the struggle against fascism and war demanded a change in the character of the communist youth organizations, which led in some cases to their unification with socialist youth organizations (e.g. in Spain, in Latvia, etc).

While the war created a sharpening of the class contradictions inside many countries, the antifascist struggle led to the overthrow of bour-

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48. It should be noted that at the 7th Congress of the KKE (1945) a decision concerning "the international political unity of the working class" was voted, which mentioned amongst other things: "*The 7th Congress of the KKE... expresses the wish that all the workers' parties in the world, which believe in socialism, irrespective of differences, should be incorporated as quickly as possible in a unified international political organization of the working class*".

Source: "The KKE. Official Documents", S.E. vol. 6, p.113.

49. Already, in 1935, the 7<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CI "recommended to the EC of the CI to shift the center of weight of its activity to the elaboration of basic political theses and theses concerning the tactics of the world labour movement, taking into consideration the specific conditions and peculiarities of each country" and at the same time advised the EC of the CI to "avoid as a rule direct involvement in the internal organizational affairs of the communist parties". After the 7th Congress the so-called reorganization of the mechanism of the Communist International started, by means of which "the operational leadership of the parties, passed into the hands of the parties themselves... regional secretariats, which up to a point exercised some operational guidance, were abolished, ... In place of the departments of the Executive Committee of the CI only two organs were created; the cadre department and the department for propaganda and mass organizations."

Academy of Sciences of the USSR "History of the Third international" pp 433-434.

geois power, with the decisive support of the popular movements by the Red Army, only in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

In the capitalist West, the C.P's did not elaborate a strategy for the transformation of the imperialist war or of the national liberation struggle into a struggle for the conquest of state-power. The strategy of the communist movement did not utilise the fact that the contradiction between capital and labour was an integral component of the antifascist-national liberation character of the armed struggle in a number of countries, in order to raise the question of state-power, since socialism and the prospect of communism are the only alternative solution to capitalist barbarity.

The lack of such a strategy in the C.P's cannot be justified by the negative correlation of forces, due to the military presence of American and British troops in a series of Western European countries. The C.P's are obliged to elaborate their strategy irrespective of the correlation of forces. There was a gradual retreat from the concept that between capitalism and socialism there can exist no intermediate social system, and thus no intermediate political power between bourgeois and working class state-power.

This thesis holds true, irrespective of the correlation of forces, independently of the problems which can act as a catalyst for the speeding up of developments e.g. the sharpening of inter-imperialist contradictions, an imperialist war, changes in the form of bourgeois state power which can take place.

{ 28 } Following the end of World War II, alliances were restructured. The capitalist states and the bourgeois and opportunist forces which participated in the national liberation struggle in each country (e.g. social democratic forces) united against the communist movement and the socialist states.

Under these conditions, the negative results of the increasing opportunist erosion of some sections of the international communist move-

ment became even clearer. The seriously damaged ideological unity and the lack of an organisational connection between the CPs, after the dissolution of the CI, did not allow the elaboration of an independent unified strategy of the international communist movement vis-a-vis the strategy of international imperialism.

The "Information Bureau" of the Communist Parties<sup>50</sup>, which was established in 1947 and was dissolved in 1956, as well as the international meetings of the C.P's which followed, could not adequately deal with these problems.

The international imperialist system remained strong after the war, despite the undoubted strengthening of the forces of socialism. Immediately after the end of the war, imperialism, under the U.S hegemony, started the "Cold War". It was a carefully elaborated strategy for undermining the socialist system.

The "*Cold War*" included the organization of psychological warfare, the intensification of military spending to exhaust the USSR economically, networks of subversion and erosion of the socialist system from within, open provocations and the incitement of counterrevolutionary developments (e.g. in Yugoslavia 1947-48, in the GDR 1953, in Hungary in 1956, in Czechoslovakia in 1968 etc). A differentiated economic and diplomatic strategy was followed vis-a-vis the new socialist states in order to break their alliance with the USSR, to strengthen the conditions for their opportunist erosion.

At the same time, the imperialist system, with the USA at its helm, created a series of military, political, economic alliances and international lending organisations (NATO, EC, IMF, World Bank, international trade agreements). These ensured the coordination of capitalist states, and bridged some of the contradictions amongst them, in order to serve the common strategic goal of a multi-pronged pressure on the socialist system. They organised imperialist interventions, systematic and

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50. In the COMINFORM (Information Bureau of the CPs) the following Communist and Workers' parties were represented: Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, USSR, Czechoslovakia and France.

multi-faceted provocations and anti-communist campaigns. They used the most up-to-date ideological weapons to manipulate the peoples, to create a hostile climate against the socialist states and the communist movement in general. They utilised the opportunist deviations and the problems of ideological unity of the communist movement. They supported economically, politically, and morally every form of discontent or disagreement with the CPSU and the USSR. They made billions of dollars available from their state budgets for this purpose.

{ 29 } The line of “peaceful co-existence”, as was developed in the post-war period, to some extent at the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress (October 1952)<sup>51</sup> and primarily at the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU (1956)<sup>52</sup>, acknowledged the capitalist barbarity and aggression of the USA and Britain, and of certain sections of the bourgeoisie and its respective political forces in the western European capitalist states, but not as an integral element of monopoly capitalism, of imperialism. In this way, it allowed the nurturing of utopian perceptions, such as that it is possible for imperialism to accept on long term basis its co-existence with forces that have broken its worldwide domination.

Since the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPSU (February 1956) and its thesis for a “variety of forms of transition to socialism, under certain conditions”, the line of “peaceful co-existence” was also linked to the possibility of a parliamentary transition to socialism in Europe, a strategy that already existed in a number of Communist Parties and ended up gaining the upper hand in most of them. This thesis constituted in essence a revision of the lessons of the Soviet revolutionary experience and a reformist social democratic strategy. The united strategy of capitalism against the socialist states and the labour movement in the capitalist countries was underestimated. The contradictions between the capitalist states, which

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51. Report of the CC of CP (b) to the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress, p. 28 of the edition of the CC of KKE.

52. “The 20<sup>th</sup> Congress of CPSU”, Zogia editions, 1965, page 8.

of course contained the element of dependency, as is inevitable within the imperialist pyramid, were not correctly analysed. The assessment that there was a relationship of "subordination and dependency" of every capitalist country from the USA gained the upper hand<sup>53</sup>. The strategy of the "anti-monopoly government", as a sort of stage between socialism and capitalism, that would solve problems of "dependency" from the USA, was adopted. This line was adopted even by the CPUSA, i.e. the C.P of the country which was at the top of the imperialist pyramid. In political practice it found expression in the participation of C.P's in governments which managed capitalism in alliance with social democracy.

It was thus that C.Ps chose a policy of alliances that included bourgeois forces, those defined as "nationally thinking" as opposed to those which were deemed as servile to foreign imperialism. Such views also held sway in that section of the communist movement which, during the split of the 1960's, oriented itself towards the CP of China and constituted the Maoist current.

The attitude of many C.P's towards social democracy was part of this strategy. The view that social democracy could be distinguished into a "left" and a "right" wing became dominant in the C.P's, seriously weakening the ideological struggle against it. In the name of the unity

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53. *"The preparation of a new war is integrally connected with the subordination of the countries of Europe and of other continents to US imperialism. The Marshall plan, the Western Union, NATO, all these links in the chain of a criminal conspiracy against peace are at the same time links of the chain which the overseas monopolies are tying around peoples' necks. The duty of the communist and workers' parties in the capitalist countries is to unite the struggle for national independence with the struggle for peace, to reveal the anti-national, traitorous character of the policies of the bourgeois governments which have been transformed into open lackeys of US imperialism, to unite and rally all democratic patriotic forces in every country around slogans calling for an end to their wretched subordination to the Americans, for a transition to an independent foreign and domestic policy which will meet the national interests of the peoples. The communist and workers' parties must hold high the flag of the defense of national independence and the sovereignty of the peoples".*

(Archive of the KKE; Resolutions of the Information Bureau of the Communist and Workers' parties, meeting of November 1949. Athens. Ps73-74)

of the working class, the C.P.'s made a series of ideological and political concessions, while the proclamations of unity from the side of social democracy did not aim at the overthrow of the capitalist system, but at the detachment of the working class from the influence of communist ideas and at its alienation as a class.

In Western Europe, in the ranks of many CPs, under the pretext of the national peculiarities of each country, the opportunist current known as "*Euro-communism*" held sway, a current which denied the scientific laws of the socialist revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat and revolutionary struggle in general.

Both sections of the communist movement (in power or not) overestimated the strength of the socialist system and underestimated the dynamic of the post-war reconstruction of capitalism. At the same time, the crisis in the international communist movement, which was initially expressed with the complete rupture of relations between the CPSU and the CPC and later with the creation of the current known as "*Euro-communism*", deepened.

The mutual interaction of contemporary opportunism between the CPs of the capitalist countries and the governing CPs was strengthened in the conditions of a fear of a nuclear strike against the socialist countries, of the sharpening of class struggle inside the socialist states (Central and Eastern Europe) and of new imperialist wars (against Vietnam, Korea). The flexible tactics of imperialism had an impact on the development of opportunism in the CPs of the socialist states, on the undermining of socialist construction, and of the revolutionary struggle in capitalist Europe and worldwide. Thus, directly or indirectly, imperialist pressure on the socialist states was strengthened, utilizing, among others, both the euro communist current, as well as the Trotskyite and Maoist currents which, to a greater or lesser extent, supported the imperialist attacks against the USSR and the other socialist countries.



## An evaluation of the stance of KKE

{30} The 14<sup>th</sup> Congress of the KKE (1991) and the National Conference (1995) evaluated in a self-critical manner the following: we did not avoid as a party the idealisation and the embellishment of socialism, as it was constructed during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We underestimated the problems that we observed, attributing them mainly to objective factors. We justified them as problems in the development of socialism, something which has proven not to correspond to reality. We underestimated the complexity of the struggle with the inherited remnants of the past; we overestimated the course of socialist development, while underestimating the tenacity of the international imperialist system.

Our self criticism concerns our mistaken perception regarding the causalities of socialism and the nature of the contradictions in the process of formation and development of the new society. The stance adopted by our Party constituted part of the problem. Our ability to arrive at the correct conclusions was restricted by the fact that our Party did not pay the necessary attention to the need to acquire theoretical sufficiency, to promote the creative study and assimilation of our theory, to utilise the rich experience of the class, revolutionary struggle, to contribute with its own forces to the creative development of ideological and political positions, based on the developing conditions. To a great extent, as a party, we adopted mistaken theoretical assessments and political choices of the CPSU.

Our attitude was influenced to a significant extent by the formality of relations which appeared between the communist parties, by the uncritical adoption of CPSU's positions concerning questions of theory and ideology. From our experience the conclusion emerges that the respect for the experience of other parties must be combined with an objective judgement of their policies and practices, with comradely criticism concerning mistakes and with opposition to deviations.

The Conference of 1995 criticised the fact that our party uncritically accepted the policy of perestroika, assessing it as a reform policy which would benefit socialism. This fact reflected the strengthening of opportunism within the ranks of our Party during this period.

This critical treatment of the stance of KKE vis-à-vis socialist construction does not denigrate the fact that our Party throughout its history, true to its internationalist character, defended the process of the construction of socialism-communism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, even with the lives of thousands of its members and cadre. It militantly propagandised the contribution of socialism. The militant defence of the contribution of socialism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was and is a conscious choice of our Party.

KKE did not join the side of those forces which, originating in the communist movement and in the name of criticism of the USSR and the other countries, were led to utter rejection, to the denial of the socialist character of these countries, to the adoption of the propaganda of imperialism; neither did it revise its defence of socialism, despite its weaknesses.



## Issues for further study

{31} On the basis of the preceding evaluations and directives, the new C.C should organize the deeper study and extraction of conclusions on a series of issues:

- The forms of organisation of workers' participation, their rights and duties, during different periods of Soviet Power, such as the Workers' Committees and the Production Councils in the 1920's, the Stakhanovite movement in the 1930's, in contrast to the "self-management councils" under perestroika. Their relationship to Central Planning and the realisation of the social character of ownership over the means of production.
- The development of the Soviets as a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. How was the relationship "Party – Soviet – working class and popular forces" realized during the different phases of socialist construction in the USSR. Issues concerning the functional downgrading of the production unit as the nucleus of organisation of workers' power, with the abolition of the principle of the production unit being the electoral unit and of the indirect election of delegates through congresses and assemblies. The negative impact on the class composition of the higher state organs and on the application of the right of recall of delegates.
- The development of the wage policy which was followed during the socialist course of the USSR. The evolution of the working class structure. Further study of the relationship between individual and social in the production and distribution of the product of socialist production.
- The development of relations of ownership and distribution in the agricultural production of the USSR. The differentiations among workers in the socialist production units and services

and the stratification within private and cooperative agricultural producers.

- The developments in the class composition of the Party, in its structure and functioning and their impact on the ideological level and the revolutionary characteristics of the Party, its members and cadre.
- The evolution of relations between the member states of the CMA, as well as the economic relations between the member states of the CMA and the capitalist states, especially during the period when socialist construction began to retreat.
- How the form (People's Democracy) of working class state-power was expressed in the other socialist states, the alliance of the working class with the petit bourgeois strata and the struggle between them. The bourgeois nationalist influences in certain policies of the C.P's in power, e.g. CPC, the Union of Yugoslav Communists. How the unification after 1945 with sections of social democracy affected the character of the C.P's in power, e.g. the Polish United Workers' Party, the Socialist Unity Party in Germany, the CP of Czechoslovakia, the Hungarian Workers' Party.
- The course of the Communist International and of the evolution of the strategy of the international communist movement.
- The development of the international correlation of forces and its influence on the growth of opportunism in the CPSU. The elucidation of the factors that led to the supremacy of opportunism in the CPSU.



## D. THE NECESSITY AND TIMELINESS OF SOCIALISM. ENRICHMENT OF OUR PROGRAMMATIC CONCEPTION OF SOCIALISM



### The necessity and timeliness of socialism

{ 32 } The Programme of the Party states: “*The counterrevolutionary overthrows do not change the character of the epoch. The 21<sup>st</sup> century will be the century of a new upsurge of the world revolutionary movement and of a new series of social revolutions*”. Those struggles which limit themselves to defending some gains, despite the fact that they are necessary, cannot provide substantive solutions. The only way out and the inevitable perspective remains socialism, despite the defeat at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The necessity of socialism emerges from the sharpening of the contradictions of the contemporary capitalist world, of the imperialist system. It flows from the fact that in the imperialist stage of development of capitalism, which is characterised by the domination of the monopolies, the material preconditions that necessitate the transition to a superior socio-economic system have fully matured.

Capitalism has socialised production to an unprecedented level. However, the means of production, the products of social labour constitute private, capitalist property. This contradiction is the source of all the crisis phenomena of contemporary capitalist societies: unemployment and poverty, which reach explosive levels during economic crises. The extended daily working time, despite the large increase of labour productivity, and a simultaneous expansion of partial employment. The failure to satisfy the contemporary social needs for education and professional specialisation, for healthcare prevention and rehabilitation, based

on the modern scientific and technological breakthroughs. The provocative destruction of the environment with severe consequences for public health and the health of the workers, the lack of protection from natural disasters despite the new technological possibilities. The destruction of imperialist wars, the drug trade and trade in human organs, etc.

At the same time, this contradiction of capitalism points to the way out: The alignment of the relations of production with the level of development of the productive forces. The abolition of private property over the means of production, starting with the most concentrated, their socialisation, their planned use in social production with the aim of satisfying social needs. Central Planning of the economy by the revolutionary workers' socialist power, workers' control. The socialist aim is realistic, because it is rooted in the development of capitalism itself. Its designation is not dependent on the correlation of forces, that is on the conditions under which revolutionary action develops and which can speed up or slow down developments.

The victory of the socialist revolution, initially in one country or in a group of countries, springs from the operation of the law of uneven economic and political development of capitalism.<sup>54</sup> The preconditions that bring socialist revolution to the agenda do not mature simultaneously worldwide. The imperialist chain will break at its weakest link.

The specific "national" duty of each CP is the realisation of the socialist revolution and of socialist construction in its own country, as a part of the world revolutionary process. This will contribute to the creation of a "*fully consummated socialism*" within the framework of the "*revolutionary collaboration of the proletarians of all countries*".<sup>55</sup>

The Leninist thesis concerning the weak link does not overlook the dialectic relationship of the national with the international in the revo-

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54. V.I Lenin: "On the Slogan for a United States of Europe", Collected Works, Vol. 26, pp. 359-363 (Greek edition) and "The military program of the proletarian revolution", Collected Works, Vol. 30, pp. 131-143 (Greek edition).

55. V.I. Lenin "Left-Wing Childishness and the Petty-Bourgeois Mentality", Collected Works, Vol. 36, p.306 (Greek edition).

lutionary process, which is expressed by the fact that the transition to the highest phase of communism presupposes the worldwide predominance of socialism, or at least, its victory in the developed and most influential countries in the imperialist system.

{ 33 } The degree of maturation of the material preconditions for socialism differs between the various capitalist societies as a result of the law of unequal development of capitalism. The basic yardstick for the development of capitalist relations is the extent and concentration of salaried labour.



Under the conditions of imperialism, the relative capitalist backwardness can flame a sudden sharpening of contradictions, hence a revolutionary crisis and the possibility of victory. However, the degree of socio-economic backwardness will correspondingly make more difficult the future socialist construction, the struggle of the new against the old. The speed of socialist construction is influenced by what it inherits.<sup>56</sup>

Whatever the case, the level of the capitalist past that the revolutionary workers' power inherits does not justify the questioning of the basic laws of socialist revolution and construction. These laws have general applicability in all capitalist countries, irrespective of their historically conditioned peculiarities, which undoubtedly existed during the course of socialist construction in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They will definitely also exist during a future socialist construction, which will however begin on the basis of a capitalist development far more advanced than that of 1917 Russia.

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56. Lenin in his time defended the position that in the countries with a "weak-intermediate" level of capitalist development it is "easier to begin, more difficult to continue" the socialist revolution.

## Enrichment of our programmatic conception concerning socialism

{ 34 } The 15<sup>th</sup> Congress of KKE defined the coming revolution in Greece as socialist. It also defined the anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly and democratic character of the Front as the socio-political alliance of the working class with the other popular strata, which, under certain preconditions and under the leadership of KKE, may evolve into a revolutionary front for the realization of the socialist revolution. Subsequent Congresses, especially the 16<sup>th</sup>, enriched the programmatic content of the Front.

In KKE's Programme our basic theses concerning socialism have been expounded, which today we can enrich and develop, utilising the conclusions concerning socialist construction in the USSR during the 20th century, based on the Marxist-Leninist theses which were developed in the 2nd chapter.

{ 35 } The high level of monopolisation which has occurred, especially in recent years, is the material pre-condition for the immediate socialisation of the means of production in industry, in concentrated trade and tourism, so that the wealth which is being produced can become social property. On the basis of socialization, every form of private-business activity in the areas of health, welfare, social security, education, culture and sports should be immediately abolished.

Social ownership and Central Planning will create the possibility for the disappearance of unemployment.

Central Planning of the economy, based on the social ownership of the concentrated means of production, is a communist relation of production. Central Planning should guarantee the precedence of Department I relative to Department II, the proportional expanded reproduction. The state plans will cover long-term, intermediate and short-term goals in the planning of socialist construction and social prosperity.

The implementation of Central Planning will be organised by sector, through a single unified state authority, with regional and industry-level branches. Planning will be based on a totality of goals and criteria such as:

- In Energy: the development of infrastructure to meet the needs of centrally planned production, the reduction of the level of energy dependency of the country, the safeguarding of adequate and cheap popular consumption, the safety of workers of the sector and of residential areas, the protection of public health and the environment. In this direction, energy policies will have the following pillars: the utilisation of all domestic energy sources (lignite, hydro-electric, wind etc), systematic research and discovery of new sources, the pursuit of mutually beneficial interstate collaborations.
- In Transport priority will be given to mass rather than individual transport, to rail transport on the mainland of the country. Planning will be carried out based on the criterion of having all forms of transport operate in an interlinked and complementary way and with the goals of cheap and fast transport of people and goods, the saving of energy and the protection of the environment, the planned development for the obliteration of uneven regional development, the full control of national security and defence of the socialist state. A precondition for the realisation of these goals in the development of transport is the planning of the relevant infrastructure- ports, airports, railway stations, roads- and of an industry for the production of means of transportation. The same applies to telecommunications, to the processing of raw materials, to manufacturing, especially machine-production, with the aim of a self-reliant economy (to the extent possible), reducing the dependency on external trade and transactions with capitalist economies in these crucial sectors.
- The land will be socialised, as will the large capitalist agricultural businesses. State productive units for the production and

processing of agricultural products as raw materials or as articles of consumption will be set up.

- Production cooperatives of the small and medium peasants will be promoted, having the right of the use of land as a productive medium. Small and medium peasants will participate taking initially into account, for the purposes of distribution, the amount of land and the number of animals by which each of them was integrated into the cooperative. The measure of the socialization of the land precludes, on the one hand, the possibility for land concentration inside or outside the cooperative and, on the other hand, changes in the utilization of the land and its commodification. Greek reality does not require land redistribution. Land tillers possessing no property will be employed in the state-organized agricultural units. The production cooperative for small commodity production in the cities will be promoted along similar lines.

Production cooperatives will create the preconditions for the extension of communist relations in all sectors of the economy through the concentration of small commodity production, its organisation, the division of labour within the cooperatives, the increase in labour productivity, and the utilisation of new technology. A system for the distribution of cooperative products through state and cooperative shops will be created. Central Planning will determine the proportions between the product that is distributed through the cooperative market (and their prices) and the product that is distributed through the state mechanism. The aim is that eventually all the produce of the cooperatives will be distributed through a unified state mechanism. The production cooperatives are linked to Central Planning through set production targets and plans for the consumption of raw materials, energy, new machines and services.

The new achievements in technology and science will be used, with the aim of reducing labour time, the increase of free time, which can be

used for the upgrading of the educational-cultural level, for the acquisition of the abilities to fully participate in the control of management, and in the institutions of state-power.

- Scientific research will be organised through state institutions - higher education bodies, institutes, etc- and will serve Central Planning, the administration of social production and social services, in order to develop social prosperity.

{ 36 } A part of the social product will be distributed according to need, fulfilling in an equal fashion public and free services- healthcare, education, social security, leisure, protection of children and the aged, cheap (and in some cases free) transport, telecommunications services, energy and water supply for popular consumption, etc.

A state social infrastructure will be created which will provide high quality social services in order to meet needs which are being tackled today by the individual or family households (e.g. restaurants in the workplace, in schools).

- All children of pre-school age will be provided with free, public and compulsory pre-school education. The exclusively public, free, general (basic) 12-year school education will be ensured for all through a school with a unified structure, programme, administration and functioning, technical infrastructure, trained specialised staff. Exclusively public and free professional education will be ensured after the completion of the compulsory basic education. Through a unified system of free public higher education, scientific personnel will be formed, capable of teaching in the educational institutions and of providing the specialised staff in areas of research, socialised production and state services.
- An exclusively public and free health and welfare system will be established. The directly social production (socialised means of

production, Central Planning, workers' control) creates the material preconditions, so that a developing socialist economy - in accordance with its level of development- can ensure equally, to all its members, the conditions for health care and welfare as social goods. They are being provided as a precondition for physical and psychological well-being, for the intellectual and cultural development of every person, which depend on the living and working conditions, the overall environmental and social conditions affecting each person's ability for labour and social activity.

{37} With the elaboration and implementation of the first state plan, the operation of commodity-money relations will already become restricted. Their continual restriction, with the prospect of their complete disappearance, is linked to the planned extension of communist relations in the whole of production and distribution, with the expansion of social services to satisfy an ever larger part of the needs of individual consumption. Money gradually loses its content as a form of value, its function as a means of commodity exchange and is transformed into a certificate of labour, by which workers can have access to that part of the social product that is distributed in accordance to their labour.

Access to these products is determined by the individual's labour contribution in total social labour. The measure of an individual's contribution is labour time, which is determined by the Plan and is coupled to the following goals: savings in raw materials, the application of more productive technologies, the more rational organization of labour, the performance of control functions in administration – management.

Labour time also takes into consideration the overall needs of social production, the material conditions of the production process in which "individual" labour is incorporated, the particular needs of social production (e.g. the transfer of labour force to specific regions, or priority sec-

tors), as well as other special social needs (e.g. maternity, individuals with special needs). Incentives will be created for the development of a vanguard communist attitude vis-a-vis the organization and execution of labour, the overall increase in the efficacy of the collective in the production unit or social service, as a result of the different combined particular labours. The incentives will aim at the decrease of purely unskilled and manual labours, at the decrease of labour time, in parallel with access to educational programmes, leisure and cultural services, participation in workers' control. We reject the monetary form of incentives.

The policy dictating the monetary income from labour will be elaborated based on the above-mentioned principles, with a tendency towards softening and subsequently eliminating monetary income differentials. Whatever temporary deviations exist, aiming at the recruitment of experts in certain sectors of the economy, will be dealt with in a planned way, giving priority to raising the income of the lowest paid sections of the workers.

Central Planning aims, in the medium and long term, to develop, in a generalized way, the ability to perform specialised labour, as well as shifts in the technical division of labour, to achieve the all-round development of labour productivity and the reduction of labour time, in the perspective of eliminating the differences between executive and administrative labour, between manual and intellectual labour.

- The role and the function of the Central Bank will change. The regulation of the function of money, as a means of commodity circulation, will be restricted to the exchange between socialist production and the production of agricultural cooperatives, in general the commodity production of that portion of consumer goods that are not produced by the socialist production units, until the final elimination of commodity production. On this basis, the respective functions of certain specialised state credit organisms for agricultural and other productive cooperatives and certain small commodity producers will be controlled.

The same will hold true for international-interstate transactions (trade, tourism), as long as capitalist states exist on earth. Consequently, as a department of Central Planning it will regulate gold reserves or reserves of other commodities which operate as world money. The new role of the Central Bank in the exercise of general social accounting will be shaped and it will be connected with the organs and goals of Central Planning.

{ 38 } Socialist construction is not compatible with participation of the country in imperialist formations, such as the EU and NATO. Revolutionary state-power, depending on the international and regional situation, will seek to develop inter-state relations, with mutual benefit, between Greece and other countries, especially with countries whose level of development, problems and immediate interests can ensure such a beneficial cooperation. The socialist state will seek cooperation with countries and peoples who have objectively a direct interest in resisting the economic, political and military centres of imperialism, first and foremost with the peoples who are constructing socialism. It will seek to utilize every available rupture which might exist in the imperialist front due to inter-imperialist contradictions, in order to defend and strengthen the revolution and socialism. A socialist Greece, loyal to the principles of proletarian internationalism, will be, to the extent of its capacities, a bulwark for the world anti-imperialist, revolutionary and communist movement.

{ 39 } Revolutionary working class state power, the dictatorship of the proletariat, has the duty to obstruct the attempts of the bourgeoisie and international reaction to restore the rule of capital. It has the duty to create a new society, with the abolition of the exploitation of man by man. Its function is not only repressive – organizational. It is also constructive - political, cultural, educational and defensive

– under the guidance of the Party. It will express a higher form of democracy, with the energetic participation of the working class, of the people, in solving the basic problems in the construction of socialist society and in the control over state-power and its organs, being its basic characteristic. It is an instrument of the class struggle of the working class, which continues through other forms and under new conditions.

Democratic centralism is a fundamental principle in the formation and functioning of the socialist state, in the development of socialist democracy, in the administration of the productive unit, of every social service.

The revolutionary workers' power will be based on the institutions that will be borne by the revolutionary struggle of the working class and its allies. The bourgeois parliamentary institutions will be replaced by the new institutions of workers' power.

The nuclei of working class state-power will be the units of production, workplaces, through which working class and social control of the administration will be exercised. The workers' representatives to the organs of state-power will be elected (and when necessary recalled) from these "communities of production". Young people that are not engaged in production (e.g. students in higher education) will take part in the election of representatives through the educational units. The participation of non-working women and retirees will take place in a special fashion, utilizing mass organization and the units providing special services.

The exercise of workers' and social control will be institutionalised and safeguarded in practice, as will the unhindered criticism of decisions and practices which obstruct socialist construction, the unhindered denunciation of subjective arbitrariness and bureaucratic behaviour of officials, and other negative phenomena and deviations from socialist-communist principles.

The representation of the cooperative farmers and small commodity producers safeguards their alliance with the working class. The com-



position of the highest organs is made up of delegates elected from the lower ones through corresponding bodies. It will be ensured that the majority of the representatives to these organs will be made up of workers from the units of socialist production and the public social services.

The highest organ of state-power is a working body- it both legislates and governs at the same time- within the framework of which the allocation of executive and legislative powers is made. It is not a parliament, the representatives are not permanent, they can be recalled, they are not cut off from production, but are on leave from their work for the duration of their term, according to the requirements of their functions as representatives. They have no special economic privilege from their participation in the organs of state-power. The government, the heads of the various executive authorities (ministries, administrations, committees etc) are chosen by the highest body.

A revolutionary constitution and revolutionary legislation will be enacted, which will be in accordance with the new social relations-social ownership, Central Planning, workers' control- and which will defend

revolutionary legality. On this basis, Labour law, Family law and all the legal consolidation of the new social relations will be shaped. A new judicial system will be set up, which will be based on revolutionary popular institutions for the bestowal of justice. The new judicial authorities will be under the direct supervision of the organs of state-power. The judicial corps will be made up of elected and recallable people's lay judges, as well as of permanent staff, answerable to the institutions of working class state power.

Among the duties of revolutionary working class state power will be the replacement of all administrative mechanisms with new ones corresponding to the character of the proletarian state. The utilization of structures and personnel originating from the old state mechanism presupposes their revolutionary re-education. Working time, the rights and duties of the workers will be regulated according to Revolutionary Law. The party's leadership, without any privileges, will safeguard the carrying out of the aforementioned directives.

The new organs of revolutionary security and defence will be based on the participation of the workers and the people, but will also have permanent specialised staff.

In the place of the bourgeois army and repressive organs, which will be completely dissolved, new institutions will be created, based on the armed revolutionary struggle for the destruction of the resistance of the exploiters and for the defence of the Revolution. The leading role of the Party in the military units and in the forces for the defence of the revolution will be ensured. Their cadre will be shaped on the basis of their stance vis-à-vis the Revolution.

Gradually, via new military schools, a new corps will be created, chosen mainly out of youth from working class background. It will be educated in the principles of the new state-power. The positive experience of socialist construction, where the duties for the defence of the revolutionary achievements were carried out not only by the special permanent bodies, but also via the responsibility of the people through workers' committees on shifts etc, will be utilised.

{40} KKE, as the vanguard of the working class, has the duty to lead the struggle for the full transformation of all social relations into communist ones.

Its vanguard revolutionary role is consolidated through the constant effort to further assimilate and develop Marxist-Leninist theory, scientific communism, with the assimilation of contemporary scientific achievements and the class-based interpretation of the problems which rear their heads during the process of foundation and development of the communist socio-economic formation.

In every phase, it is important to guarantee the proletarian composition of the Party, as socialist society is not homogenous and has social contradictions.

The revolutionary leading role of the party is borne out by its ability to energize workers' participation and control, above all in the production unit and in the social services.

The role of the Party is not simply ideological-educational. It is the party of the class which has state power, with a leading role in it. Consequently, the CP must have a direct leading organizational relationship with all the structures of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It provides the strategic direction. It must be concerned with all the important political questions which have to do with the exercise of state-power; it must mobilize the working class in the control of state-power and of the administration of production.



## EPILOGUE

**Our** Party will continue study and research, towards a better codification of our conclusions, including issues which have not been fully dealt with. Equally important is the assimilation of our present elaborations on socialism-communism by all the members of the Party and of the Communist Youth, by the friends of the Party.

It is this duty that will determine the ability of the Party to fully connect its strategy with the everyday struggle, to formulate goals for the immediate problems of the working people in connection with the strategy for the conquest of revolutionary workers' power and for socialist construction

February 2009  
The 18th Congress of KKE







