

RADIO FREE EUROPE *Research*

USSR/56
COMMUNIST AREA

• USSR: Ideology

22 April 1969

SOVIET SCHOLARS DEBATE PROBLEMS OF CONTEMPORARY MARXISM

Summary: Neo-Stalinist forces in the Soviet leadership circles are not content with ideological "conversation": they wish to shore up their position with "scientific facts." University professors and academy members are suddenly being pushed to the forefront of this effort. It is however questionable whether their contributions measure up to the demands of scientific and historic criteria.

It appears to have been decided, in the context of the preparations for the anniversary celebrations of Lenin's 100th birthday, that Soviet scholars and university professors should make their contributions. It will be their task to prove that "the concepts of the social reformers and of the right and 'left' revisionists" are hostile to science. They are also to uncover all forms of "anti-communist divergencies." Vestnik Akademii Nauk SSSR is a serious scholarly journal; yet in the service of this Party line it must open its pages to demagogery and polemics. In the last issue of this academic publication there are two articles of this sort.

The corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, T.T. Timofeev, tries to establish a relationship between the "present ideological battle and Lenin's teaching." (1) The primary targets of his attack are the American Sovietologists. What irritates the Russian ideologists the most is the so-called "anti-Communist" thesis that Lenin was a "typically Russian phenomenon." Timofeev asserts that this opinion can be traced to Otto Bauer and social democratic circles which, during the directly after the October Revolution, claimed that Lenin's teachings were not applicable to Western Europe. Unfortunately, the author here has made a mistake, for it was not only the "social reformers"

(1) T.T. Timofeev, "Leninizm i nekotoria voprosy sovremennoi ideologicheskoi borbu" in Vestnik Akademii Nauk SSSR, No. 3/1969 p. 9 ff.

but also the Marxist historian M.N. Pokrovsky (in the meantime rehabilitated) who developed a concept according to which Lenin and his teachings were primarily "the consummation of the Russian Revolution." Pokrovsky even surpassed Otto Bauer in that he regarded Lenin not only as a product of a "retarded" Russia, but saw in him and his teachings the continuation and completion of the revolutionary currents in the history of the Russian people. The writings of Pokrovsky on this subject were not, however, included in the recently published four-volume edition of his works. The "Russian character" of Leninism is, however, a complex problem, much more so than many Soviet Party ideologists and professors wish to admit.

A second point of irritation for Soviet ideologists is the alleged attempt of Western authors "to speculate about new phenomena of social life in order to prove that Lenin's conclusions have proven themselves invalid. For example, the statistics on the present scientific-technical revolution are presented in such a manner that they contradict the Leninist theory of class warfare and of the proletarian revolution."

The author also disagrees with "the enemies of Leninism" on the nationalities question. According to Timofeev's article, Western research claims "the internationalism of the proletarian organizations" is an anachronism. Timofeev sees here a misunderstanding, an improper interpretation of internationalism supported first of all by a distorted interpretation of the Comintern's work.

Target: Zbigniew Brzezinski

Zbigniew Brzezinski, director of the Research Institute on Communist Affairs at Columbia University, has never been a favorite of Soviet ideologists. Presently, he is under attack by numerous polemical articles. The Party ideologists have relegated his theory of the "erosion of Communism" to the background; what bothers them now are his prognoses on the development of modern societies.

Timofeev is most disturbed about Brzezinski's thesis that in 2000 A.D. Robespierre and Lenin will be seen by many as "moderate reformers." As he put it:

In this way the artificial attempt is made ... to contrast ... the scientific-technical revolution of the 20th century with the consequences of the great October Revolution, with the victories of Leninism. Bourgeois ideologists interpret in a distorted manner the questions of the leading forces of social progress in our age. Making reference to the consequences of the new scientific-technical revolution ... the enemies of scientific socialism prophesy the "dissolution" or even the "disappearance" of the working class and the "weakening" of the influences of Leninism. (2)

(2) Ibid., p. 12.

Literaturnaya Gazeta devotes a longer article to Mr. Brzezinski, dealing with his "anti-communist theory of evolution." (3) It is the goal of this article to provide the Soviet public with a portrait of one of the "most important stars in the American sky":

Brzezinski is without doubt well-read, up-to-date and wily. He writes, and this is true, dryly and without ornamentation. He is also unfamiliar with the fanatic's severity of principle. He most surely is making fun secretly of the present bad luck of Walt Rostow, the chief advisor to the former president, who has gone into retreat in Texas with the latter. Rostow beat the anti-Soviet drum. Brzezinski plays the anti-socialist fiddle, "so tenderly, nearly breathlessly."

The author of this so-called "portrait," Alexander Krivichky, has actually created a satire. "Erosion," "transformation," "pluralism," and "liberalization" are said to be nothing more than Brzezinski's attempt to look for better-sounding formulas in the battle against the socialist camp. Krivichky says:

Therefore the "theory of evolution" fulfills a very practical goal: it serves as "ideal" support for the CIA ... from the tiny window of liberalism's hut of virtue, the face of the bogeyman looks out.

Decades go by, but the old hate [still] chokes its new enemies. Just as before they cannot confront it with anything but seances in the presence of the ghosts of Prudhonnism, Louis Blanc; behind their ... profiles are revealed the not too "otherworldly" mugs of police, provocateurs and "green berets."

Socialists Discuss "Bourgeois" Trends

A session of the Scientific Council for Problems of Foreign Ideological Currents in the Section for Social Sciences of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR met in Leningrad from 6 - 10 January 1969. The topic of discussions was "Leninism and the Battle Against Bourgeois Ideology and Anti-Communism in the Present Phase." A report on this session recently appeared. (4)

In his introductory speech, the Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, A.M. Rymyantsev, said "the battle for the purity of Marxist-Leninist theory against bourgeois ideology,

(3) Literaturnaya Gazeta, No. 13, 26 March 1969.

(4) Nauchnaya kritika sovremnoi burzhoaznoi ideologii-Sessiya obshchestvovedov v Leningrade" in Vestnik Akademii Nauk SSSR, No. 3/1969, p. 16 ff.

revisionism and dogmatism is, especially under present conditions, of great moment." He added:

"The reactionary bourgeoisie, in order to hold off the victorious socialist movement, uses especially often ideological deviations, it attempts to shake the ideological foundations of the world of socialism and to slander the Marxist-Leninist philosophy. In the capitalist countries, hundreds of institutes and other organizations were founded whose goal is the propagation of bourgeois ideas.

Well-known Soviet scientists took part in this meeting, among them M.B. Mitin (Chairman of the Scientific Council), V.M. Chikvadse (Director of the Institute for State and Law at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR), and the well-known philosopher C.A. Stepanyan. It was no accident that the major speech on Maoism was held by the Director of the Institute for the Far East at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, M.I. Sladkovsky. Here is not the place to attempt a detailed review of the meeting; rather, it must suffice to indicate the direction in which Soviet scholars are presently moving.

At the end of the meeting, M.B. Mitin stressed that Soviet ideologists must differentiate between anti-Communism and non-Communism, and between anti-Marxism and non-Marxism. In addition, "one should differentiate between direct enemies and opponents from the people who are mistaken, who seek the truth but are unable, under the complex terms of the present ideological battle in the entire world, to grasp the conditions."

When analyzing this document, it becomes apparent that the professors and scholars are using a good deal of demagogery and propaganda. Instead of only polemicizing, they attempt to discriminate personally against their opponents. They list dozens of Western scholars to whom they attribute all sorts of "crimes." Yet in the process, their slipshod manner becomes evident and they cannot hide the fact that, with all their fine phrases, they are only taking a detour around the real problem.

(3) Literaturnaya Gazeta, No. 12, 28 March 1959.

(4) Nauchnaya literatura, No. 12, 28 March 1959.
"Opasnost' revolyutsionnoy ideologii" in Vestnik Akademii Nauk SSSR, No. 12, 1959, p. 15-17.