

# **The Significance of the 30th Anniversary of the Dissolution of the Soviet Union**

## **The slogan of the restoration of the Soviet Union today**

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### **Introduction**

December 25th 2021 marked the 30th anniversary of the formal dissolution of the Soviet Union. Mikhail Gorbachev on that day unceremoniously resigned from the Presidency of the Soviet Union, passing the nuclear launch codes to Yeltsin, the then President of the Russian Federation. The formal dissolution of the USSR was preceded by a momentous event. August 31st 1991 is remembered in the history of modern Russia as the day an alleged last attempt to preserve the Soviet Union failed in the form of coup d'état that did not come to fruition. While the process of disintegration had started years back, the failed coup indeed further accelerated the collapse of the Soviet Union as a unified state.

Much has been written and speculated about regarding the role of Gorbachev, Yeltsin, representatives of the nationalist movements and those that allegedly attempted to stop the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Patriotic and anti-Western sentiments are prevalent among today's Russian historians, where a lot of resentment is targeted towards the treacherous and duplicitous role of the Gorbachev-Yakovlev clique. Yakovlev had infamously followed through with Gorbachev's request to investigate the so-called secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. Spearheaded by the same nationalist movements that collaborated and fought alongside Nazi Germany and actively participated in the mass atrocities committed against Soviet citizens of all nationalities, including Slavic peoples, Jews and other groups, the so-called secret protocols served as a trigger to the disintegration process. Indeed, Gorbachev's dishonesty and chicanery have become more and more apparent to Russian historians and the Russian public in general. Despite his assurances to the contrary, Gorbachev played a pivotal role in the dismemberment of the State. It is mainly for this reason why Gorbachev has become a hateful figure in today's Russia. Here we will try to unpack the complexity of this sentiment in a broader historical context.

The new Union Treaty (Soiuznii Dogovor) was supposed to be signed on the 20th of August, as announced by Gorbachev on August 3rd on national TV. The text of this new agreement was officially published on August 15th.<sup>1</sup> According to this new agreement the Soviet Union would cease to exist and be replaced by Union of Soviet Sovereign Republics. This economic formation underlying this new union would no longer be considered socialist, according to Gorbachev's formulation, where open forms of market relations of the neo-liberal type would develop instead. These would replace the type of market relations adopted during the revisionist period. It is believed that the imminent adoption of the new Union Treaty prompted certain structures, such as the KGB and other institutions strongly tied to the Soviet federal government, to react in order to avert the adoption of the new Union Treaty. Individuals among the so called "conservatives", such as Yanaev, Kruchkov, Yazov, Pavlov and others, ventured to step forward alarmed by the potential consequences of the adoption of such a treaty. That said, it is important to note that these "conservatives" were not opposed to the liberalization of the market and their worldview had nothing to do with Marxism-Leninism.

Russian historians argue that the preparations for the state of emergency were already known to Gorbachev and others. Gorbachev appears to have left for holidays to Faros as a means to provoke a reaction from the so called “conservatives”. It is argued that by leaving on vacation at a critical time would be viewed as a sign of weakness leading some to believe that new political actors would have to come to the scene. This came at a time with the social, political and economic situation was at a critical juncture, where the “conservative” elements felt that resolute action was necessary to avert chaos and violence. The possibility of state of emergency had been discussed at different levels of the state. It was of common knowledge that economic slump had impelled various sectors of the working class to openly oppose the regime, where strikes had become commonplace in a country where such forms of expression were rare to say the least. It is believed that Gorbachev had instructed the chairman of the KGB, Kruchkov, to setup a plan to enact a state of emergency on account of the above-mentioned grounds.

It is reasonable to believe that those who participated in the coup had initially hoped for the support of Gorbachev on the grounds that the situation in the country was threatening the integrity of the Soviet Union as a State. Kruchkov, one of the leading instigators of the coup, multiple times stated that the state of emergency was supposed to be headed by Gorbachev and no one else. In retrospect, the proverbial lack of leadership displayed by the committee seems to confirm this interpretation.<sup>2</sup> However, Gorbachev did not appear to have supported the idea of a state of emergency with the intent of preventing the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Instead, he was of the belief that the new accord would bring a correlation of forces that would allow the central state to remain in some form. His views were not shared by many among the “conservatives” who saw their old privileges threatened in this new order.

It is now known that Gorbachev was never arrested, nor forcibly isolated, nor removed from power by the Emergency Committee. The latter sent a delegation to convince Gorbachev to join in, which he refused. For that, he was never retaliated against, leading many to speculate that he was aware of the plans, perhaps participated in conceiving them while remaining ambiguous and non-committal. When Gorbachev was requested to fly back to Moscow to take over the reins of the Emergency Committee, he refused to do so leaving it to its own devices and leaderless. It has also been argued that Yeltsin was also aware of the coup and that the coup had no chance to succeed, as it lacked the necessary support nor had the participants the political will to follow through. As such, he categorically refused the offer to get refuge at the American embassy, located within walking distance to the building of the Supreme Soviet of the then RSFSR (Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic) where he was entrenched. This and the poor coordination with the armed forces and elite forces dispatched to Moscow impel many to believe that the coup was rather a self-coup intended to neutralize any potential resistance to the dissolution of the USSR. This supports the hypothesis that the coup was planned or induced to accelerate the dissolution of the Soviet Union, as opposed to a being a genuine attempt to preserve it. The members of the State Committee of the State Emergency were eventually pardoned in 1994.

In this article the historical events of 1991 are placed in a broad historical perspective pertaining to the evolution of the revisionist system towards the neo-liberal model of market relations. It is in this context that the significance of the slogan of the restoration of the Soviet Union 30 years ago is evaluated and put in perspective. In this article a brief exposé of the historical evolution of the bourgeois dualism of the revisionist period is given. The emergence of bourgeois dualism in Soviet politics following the death of Stalin played a pivotal role in the destruction of the

socialist model of production in the second half of the 50s. The revisionist State that emerged and that survived till 1991 was heavily reliant on the bourgeois dualist tandem composed of the “conservatives” and the “liberals”. The conversation revolving around the preservation or dissolution of the Soviet Union in the late Perestroika period remained in the realm of this bourgeois dualism.

The attitude of the Russian working class and toiling masses at large has changed considerably since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Growing discontent with neo-liberal reforms and the continued economic crisis that engulfs Putin’s regime have triggered the Russian people to revisit its history. Today Russia’s toiling masses are sympathetic to the Soviet past and have vindicated the role of Stalin in Russian history. This is a spontaneous process that has occurred despite the efforts to the contrary by Putin’s regime and the heirs of modern revisionism. Putin now uses neo-Soviet rhetoric to strengthen his grip on power in the context of prolonged economic crisis and steady decline of the standards of living of the Russian population in recent years. Putin is also using growing pro-Soviet sentiments among Russians to substantiate the invasion of Ukraine. The neo-fascist and racist Ukrainian regime discriminates against the Russian population and has committed atrocities, where thousands of civilians have been killed in the East of the country. Putin is opportunistically using the pro-Soviet sentiments and the atrocities committed by the Ukrainian Government to remove a regime that has sided with the West. The latter seriously threatens the domestic and international standing of Putin’s regime. Putin does not intend to help the Russians struggling against the neo-fascist regime of Kiev. In fact, deep down, Putin is also threatened by the pro-Soviet sentiments of Russians in Ukraine that have been radicalized in their struggle against Ukrainian fascism.

With the vindication of the Soviet past and the historical role of Stalin prevalent today among the Russian toiling masses and the crisis of neo-liberalism, several important questions emerge. What is the significance of the slogan of the restoration of the Soviet Union today? Does the slogan of the restoration of the Soviet Union today remain within the realm of bourgeois dualism? What should be the position of the Marxist-Leninist in Russia today with regards to this slogan? In this article, the position of the heirs of modern revisionism today vis-a-vis the restoration of the Soviet Union and socialist construction is succinctly summarized. The contradictions and weaknesses of today’s revisionism are outlined.

### **Bourgeois dualism in the revisionist USSR**

Shortly after the death of Stalin, the Soviet leadership embarked in a series of economic reforms that undermined the socialist character of the Soviet economy. Pro-market tendencies had emerged in the post-war period among many in the intellectual elite, in the army and had clearly taken stronghold in the upper echelons of the party. The publication of Stalin’s *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* exposed the right-wing character of the deviationism that emerged in the post-war period, in addition to constituting a classical work in Political Economy in its own right. Whether Stalin was assassinated, his demise induced, or whether he was simply left to die, it is of no real substance to the history of the construction of socialism and the subsequent liquidation of the socialist formation under Khrushchev. The reality is that the dismantlement of the socialist formation occurred because of a conscious effort to undermine the pillars that socialism rests upon by certain sectors of the Soviet elite.

The arrest and subsequent execution of Lavrentiy Beria has been portrayed in the West and the liberal media as palace infighting, as a fight for succession. In reality, Lavrentiy Beria with the

power vested in him went too far in the so-called political “liberalization” of the country.<sup>3</sup> This included reverting the policies in regard to the leading role of communist cadre, promoting nationalism in the republics, where it was suggested that the language of communication in production should be in the local languages; leading party and government cadre were systematically replaced with representatives of local nationalities, displacing reliable cadre of Russian ethnicity. Beria spoke in favour of a certain degree of decentralization, where the Republics would have more autonomy with respect to the central government. It is believed that Lavrentiy Beria advocated the reversal of socialist construction in Eastern Germany and for the unification of Germany on the basis of capitalism, as long as the German land remained a neutral buffer between the East and the West.<sup>4</sup> It was with Beria that a massive revision of incarceration policies and rehabilitations took place soon after Stalin’s passing, where a number of high-profile cases were summarily closed. It is also believed that Beria reached out to Tito through Rankovich in order to normalize relations with Yugoslavia, which had been seriously compromised due to the pro-market character of the economic development in that country.

Beria went too far too fast, or perhaps some in the upper echelons may have felt threatened by his powerful position as the Minister of Internal Affairs and his influence in the intelligence community. Much has been speculated regarding this relation with other colleagues in the Politburo<sup>5</sup> and why the different factions colluded to arrest and to eventually execute Beria, where much of the process leading to his indictment still remain under seal. That said, these circumstances are not of critical substance to the true nature of the political and economic reforms that followed Stalin’s passing.<sup>6</sup> It is important to note that many of the above-mentioned decisions, even if Beria is conceded as a main instigator, could not have taken place without the support and participation of the Politburo and other relevant stakeholders. These were not decisions that Beria adopted single-handedly or unilaterally, as he did not possess the power to do so. Much to the contrary, documental evidence indicates<sup>7</sup> that the Politburo as a whole did not have fundamental differences with some of the aspects of the reforms, in particular regarding socialist construction and the issue of political repression. It is factually incorrect to ascribe them to Beria alone. In particular, it is worth paying attention to the allegations regarding Beria’s disruptive attitude towards the effort of the Politburo and the Soviet Government to deal with deficiencies in agriculture and in particular with cattle. Several members of the Politburo seemed to indicate that Beria indeed played such a role. However, we cannot ignore the fact that those who exposed Beria were the same ones who used the need for remedial action in the countryside as a Trojan horse to slow down the growth of industrial production and with which to eventually revise the nature of the five-year plans. In fact, Khrushchev did not conceal his petty-bourgeois views vis-à-vis agriculture, which no one during the Plenum seemed to oppose. It is therefore problematic to argue that Beria was alone in his views and that removing him would have resolved the ills that afflicted the Soviet leadership at the time. Beria was not the source of the problem but rather a manifestation of a much bigger issue.

A significant fraction of the Presidium of the Central Committee, which included Molotov, Kaganovich, Malenkov and others, who were later expelled from the party in their struggle against Khrushchev in 1957, played a pivotal role in exposing the treacherous character of Beria’s reforms. Khrushchev also chimed in. What is, however, overlooked more often than not, is that Beria’s Perestroika did not come out of the blue. Much to the contrary, it incorporated the views of many in the upper echelons of the party and the state, which got the upper hand and eventually emerged victorious. As such, it is difficult to understand Khrushchevian reforms without scrutinizing Beria’s vision for the Soviet Union.

Some have ventured to characterize Beria as the father of Perestroika. In fact, modern Russian historians have argued that Gorbachev's Perestroika, to a certain degree, was borrowed from Beria's playbook, even though the ideologists of Perestroika chose to demonize him as a Stalin's right hand, as one of the lead perpetrators of political repressions in the Soviet Union. Anti-Stalinism was central to Gorbachev's Perestroika, as the core of its anti-Soviet rhetoric. As such, we cannot understand Perestroika without the political and economic reforms of the 1950s. The so-called process of de-Stalinization in the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies was a top-down undertaking, instigated and forced upon the rank-and-file members of the parties, the working class and toiling masses. The process was inherently and viciously anti-democratic; Democratic centralism was subverted together with the Dictatorship of the Proletariat in favour of the dictatorship of the elite. Stalin's leadership was tremendously popular among the working class and the toiling masses in general, both domestically and abroad. His leadership inspired the progressive-minded world, where not only fascism was annihilated, but most of the colonial system came crumbling down and socialist construction spread throughout the world. Stalin's leadership became a beacon for the struggle for justice and national liberation. As a result, Stalin's leadership was undermined and overthrown from above by means of insidious political and economic reforms. While Khrushchev was defaming Stalin at the XXth Congress, rank-and-file Soviet citizens were proudly holding portraits. It took years for Khrushchev to dare to remove Stalin's body from the mausoleum, as he was concerned about popular backlash. The fact of the matter is that anti-Stalinism in the Soviet Union and the former People's Democracies has been unequivocally linked to attacks on socialism, the rights and the standing of the working class and the toiling masses.

At this juncture it is important to introduce the concept of bourgeois dualism in Soviet politics of the revisionist period. The Beria-Politburo tandem, eventually followed by Brezhnev and ultimately Gorbachev in 1985, encapsulates the dissolution of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat as the engine of socialist and communist construction by bourgeois dualism that dismantled the socialist mode of production. The most far-reaching consequences of the brief, but momentous three and a half months between the passing of Stalin and Beria's arrest, is the emergence of bourgeois dualism leading to the liquidation of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Whereas formerly the Soviet State carried out the functions of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, where the proponents of socialist construction were in constant strife with foreign and domestic enemies in all possible incarnations, Beria's reforms shifted the political spectrum towards a qualitatively different plane. Bourgeois dualism emerges, where more radical and less radical proponents of reform dominate the conversation, where adhering to the socialist principles of economic development are left behind. The need for political and economic "reforms" was no longer questioned as a matter of principle. That consensus led to the radical transformation of the Soviet economy, from a thriving planned economy with growing restrictions on commodity-money relations, preeminence of heavy industry and machinery, growing productivity of labour, systematic lowering of consumer prices, a system of material incentives for those that produced and innovated. Instead, the socialist principle of planning is obliterated and replaced by loose central coordination (rather poor, one might add), where factories now operate as independent productive units, the socialist principle of remuneration and incentives are subverted, growth of labour productivity and technological innovation are seriously hampered, crumbling infrastructure, growth of consumer prices and hidden inflation coupled with growing income inequality between manual and intellectual labour, the city and the countryside, the centre and the periphery.

By the early 1960s, the Soviet economy was in crisis, where the rates of growth were but a shadow of what they used to be.<sup>8</sup> Poor economic performance, mismanagement and growing social discontent triggered Khrushchev's irreverent and disloyal removal by his peers and many among those that he himself promoted. However, Khrushchev's removal did not result in the reversal of the political and economic reforms that led to the crisis in the first place. Brezhnev did not fundamentally deviate from Khrushchev's reforms, where the dominance of commodity-money relations in the Soviet economy was never questioned and remained the directional vector of economic development. In fact, the literature of that time in political economy further emphasized the commodity character of the Soviet economy. Brezhnev, while he distanced himself from Khrushchev's neo-Trotskyism, made every possible effort not to rehabilitate Stalin in any form or shape.<sup>9</sup> Paradoxically, today's regime in Russia is far more liberal towards Stalin than Brezhnev ever was. Under Brezhnev, Stalin became some sort of tabu, the mention of whom was essentially censored.

At this point it is important to make a clarification as to when the Soviet economy ceased to operate as a socialist mode of production, and how this is so important in this conversation. As pointed out above, Beria plays a pivotal role in triggering anti-socialist reforms even if he found himself politically isolated and was eventually executed. Without Beria's vision it is not possible to comprehend the tandem composed by Khrushchev on the one side and Malenkov-Kaganovich-Molotov, on the other. The essence of the economic reforms implemented in 1953 is in the spirit of Beria's thinking. These were blessed by all parties involved and not just Khrushchev. This is decisive in understanding the emergence and evolution of bourgeois dualism in the history of the Soviet Union. Eventually, Khrushchev emerges victorious, where he accelerates the economic reforms that destroy socialist planning and institute commodity-money relations as the vector of economic development. Khrushchev is deposed in the wake of poor economic performance, where the leading arguments put forward to the Soviet people were not a matter of principle, as we understand in Marxism-Leninism. Instead, arguments were put forward regarding shortcomings of this leadership, such as the erratic character of his decisions. Brezhnev's leadership did not question the essence of the new economic relations that emerged as a result of the economic reforms of the 1950s, as the "corrections" implemented were not of fundamental character. It is here where the dividing line between the heirs of modern revisionism and Marxist-Leninism lies. This is far from a question of ideological purity. It speaks to the core of the economic theory of revisionism and how today's heirs of Brezhnevism articulate their political and economic programme for today's Russia. By defending the thesis that the Soviet Union remained a socialist formation under Brezhnev, even if caveats are conceded, today's revisionists stand by the defence of the market. They stand by the anti-Marxist thesis that the transition to higher forms of socialization goes through the development of the market. The need to expand the market plays a fundamental role in the economic theories of modern revisionism.

Why is it so important in this debate to set the record straight regarding when the Soviet Economy eased to be socialist? Why do the revisionist forces, from Nina Andreeva to Gennady Ziuganov going through many others over the past 30 years adamantly insist that the Soviet Union remained socialist till its demise in 1991? The economic programme of today's revisionists revolves around the development of capitalist relations under some form of state control and the political patronage of the revisionist communist party, which will be discussed further below.

Brezhnev brought about a form of bourgeois dualism that will endure till the dissolution of the Soviet Union: the tandem of the so-called “conservatives” and the “liberals”. The former appear opposed to the liberalization of the market, while the latter advocate further liberalization of the market. That said, both tendencies operate under economic relations defined by market relations, which defined the essence of the economic relations in the Soviet Union. Brezhnev’s rule brings a balance to both tendencies in the Soviet government, where “liberal” and more “conservative” reforms would alternate, ultimately leading to economic collapse. The so called “conservatives” or hard-liners are as essential as the “liberal” reformers to the political super-structure that emerged after Stalin’s passing. Their level of influence alternates over time, similar to the politics of Western bourgeois “democracies”, where the “left” and the “right” change places as appropriate. The so-called “left” in the bourgeois system does not question the fundamentals of capitalist exploitation nor the need for private property of land and the means of production. The so-called “conservatives” did not question the commodity character of the Soviet economy and became as relevant as the “liberals” in destroying socialist planning and the socialist essence of the Soviet economy. One has to be cognizant that the “liberals” and the “conservatives” became the two sides of the same coin, both necessary for further liberalization of the market.

But it is not the alternation, or the more or less improper balance of power struck between the “liberals” and the “conservatives”, or the particulars of the implementations of the pro-market reforms that determined the demise of the revisionist system. It is the objective laws of the market that eventually run their course that led to the demise of the revisionist system. The revisionism system has nothing to do with socialism in terms of the nature of the economic relations and political system: it retains some appearances through certain external attributes. This includes retaining Soviet symbolism, which is strongly tied to a victorious past, the memory of which was (and still remains) heavily entrenched in the psyche of the Soviet people. This also includes retaining social benefits that the socialist past provided to the Soviet people: free universal health care, education at all levels, housing, full employment, guaranteed retirement funds and several other social benefits. While over the years these would certainly degrade and the real purchasing power of the Soviet toiling masses would steadily decline, these remain serious constraints to the development of the market. The elites were no longer content with certain type of privileges, they strive to get more than that.

Under Gorbachev, the liberalization of the market was taken to a whole new level. Here, the accumulation of wealth in few hands served as the basis of private capital accumulation in the post-Soviet space. The forceful privatization of state assets in the early 1990s was performed on the basis of the economic reforms of Perestroika and were intimately connected with them. The liberalization of the market under Gorbachov’s Perestroika was in fact its most important core function, where the talk about democratization, Glasnost, intrigues with other political figures were but decoys. Without Gorbachov’s economic reforms one cannot understand the nature of Glasnost and Perestroika.

This exposition is hardly new in the Marxist-Leninist literature. That said, what concerns us now is the role of the bourgeois dualism prevalent in the revisionist period, its importance to the revisionist superstructure and its relevance to understanding the politics of the past 30 years. This will help us understand the essence and relevance of the slogan of the restoration of the Soviet Union back in the 1990s compared to today.

The discussion pertaining to the preservation or dissolution of the Soviet Union in the early 90s was not revolving around whether its peoples should choose between socialism and capitalism.<sup>10</sup>

The discussion was rather about the form of government that will preside over the transition to neo-liberal forms of market relations: should the country follow along the Chinese path, or should the Soviet Union disintegrate into independent states. Gorbachev's clique chose the second path, despite his assurances to the contrary. The "conservatives" would have preferred the former. The "conservatives" were not more progressive than Gorbachev in the big scheme of things, nor did they have the interests of the Soviet toiling masses at heart. The "conservatives" advocated the preservation of the Soviet Union as a centralized state with the intention to follow a path close to that of China. The one-party system would have probably been preserved together with centralized armed forces, intelligence and other functions. The market would have been further liberalized with the creation of private corporations, similar to the Chinese path of development.

One has to recognize that the slogan of the preservation or the restoration of the Soviet Union under the leadership of the "conservative" elites, had nothing to do with socialism, nor with the defence of the class interests of the working class and the toiling masses. The same applies to the so-called "left"-wing parties in the bourgeois system, where the social-democratic narrative is intended at ensuring that the working class acknowledges the need to retain the private character of the property of the means of production, that capitalist exploitation is necessary, as it is inherent to economic relations, and for that reason socialism was bound to irrevocably fail.

Lastly, it is in this light that one has to review the events of October 1993, when certain political forces once loyal to Yeltsin got in conflict with the regime. Following the dissolution by Yeltsin of the Congress of People's Deputies Supreme Soviet of Russia, a standoff culminated with the assault by the Kantemirovskaya and Taman divisions on the so-called Russian White House on Yeltsin's order. Hundreds of people, mostly anti-Yeltsin activists many of whom genuinely opposed the character of the economic reforms, were killed and wounded. As a result of the so-called "shock therapy" embodied in the economic reforms launched in early 1992, the economic standing of the Russian toiling masses suffered a catastrophic blow. Yeltsin's popularity and the whole notion of privatization of state assets and the liberalization of the market were loathed by many. This sentiment was capitalized by political figures, such as Alexander Rutskoi, Ruslan Khasbulatov, Viktor Barannikov, Vladislav Achalov and others, to challenge Yeltsin's rule. These quickly gained the support of grass-roots political activists many of whom were sincere communists who genuinely fought for the restoration of the Soviet Union. That said, the leadership and the political character of the anti-Yeltsin opposition in 1993 had no intention of reversing the liberalization of the market, let alone restoring the Soviet Union, even in its revisionist form. This speaks one more time to the treacherous role of the so-called "conservatives", which calls for an independent mass movement lead by the Marxist-Leninists as opposed to revisionist political organizations.

### **The slogan of the restoration of the Soviet Union today**

As discussed above, it is essential to bear in mind the bourgeois duality in Soviet revisionist politics to understand the pivotal role of the "conservatives" in enabling the dismantlement of the socialist formation and in advancing course towards liberalizing the market in the revisionist system. The so-called "conservatives" were necessary to keep up with the appearances and to disarm the working class ideologically. Just as in the West, the so-called "left" presents itself as the sponsor of the interests of the toiling masses against the attacks of the bourgeoisie, allegedly represented by the "right". The "conservatives" in the Soviet Union presented themselves as the guarantor of the socialist order, when in reality their role was to ensure that the working class

and the toiling masses did not revolt as market relations gradually deteriorated their standards of living in favour of a selected minority. As the economic position of the toiling masses deteriorated, the “conservatives” were essential in ensuring that the appropriate response to economic decline should be to further liberalize the market, as opposed to challenging the premises of the revisionist political economy. It was essential to make sure that the response was ultimately to further liberalize the market, not to question the market.

The “conservatives” safeguarded the sanctity of the revisionist principles that replaced the Marxist-Leninist system of thought. At no point during the economic decline of the revisionist Soviet Union, did the “conservative” establishment question the need to revise the theoretical premises that established themselves during the second half of the 1950s and the 1960s pertaining to the role of planning and commodity-relations. A scrutiny of the literature of the revisionist period bears witness as to how the revisionist establishment doubled down on the theories of the so-called “market socialism”. “Conservatives” remain as adamant anti-Stalinists in questions of political economy as the “liberals”.

In turn, Perestroika used “conservatism” as the scapegoat for the economic decline, corruption, and mismanagement that the destruction of the socialist formation and subsequent liberalization of the market ensued during the revisionist period. The working class has no ally in the “conservatives”. However, it is the “conservatives” that monopolize the sanctity of the Soviet statehood and its institutions and act as its guarantors.

A similar situation emerged in Eastern Europe, where the Soviet revisionist elite actively interfered in the internal affairs of other countries to ensure that power would shift to individuals loyal to the Soviet Union as much as the revisionist principles of economic management. In some of these countries the process of collectivization was liquidated or reversed, where different levels of liberalism towards private enterprise were allowed.

The slogan of the restoration of the Soviet Union (or the revisionist system in the countries of Eastern Europe for that matter) in the early 1990s needs to be viewed in the corresponding historical context and correlation of political forces at the time. While this appears an obvious statement, it is essential to recognize that the debate around the preservation or liquidation of the Soviet Union was entrenched in the politics of bourgeois dualism of the revisionist period. The defence of the Soviet Union in this context remained within the realm of the evolution of the revisionist system, whether the transition to classical forms of capitalist exploitation and market relations should happen under the leadership of the communist party and with the assistance of Soviet symbolism as a superstructural attribute.

The defence of the Soviet Union, whether in the form that Gorbachov envisioned or that of the “conservatives”, has nothing to do with the defence of the socialist formation. Socialism was essentially off the table and out of the question, even though Perestroika’s anti-communist core presented the revisionist Soviet economic structure as that of a “socialist command economy”. The working class was confronted with two choices, both of which remained within the boundaries of bourgeois dualism: either open anti-Sovietism or Soviet revisionism presiding over a dysfunctional economic system, where the working class had no or little say. Whereas the communist party of the Soviet Union had ceased to be the party of the working class decades prior and the revisionist economic system was unsustainable, the Soviet working class finds itself ideologically disarmed and deprived of a political organization. The official revisionist ideology subverted Marxism-Leninism in favour of petty-bourgeois ideology embellished with bourgeois

academicism and hollow references to Marx, Engels and Lenin, where Stalin's contribution to the development of Marxism-Leninism was surgically removed.

In this context, one also must recognize the powerful role played by Soviet symbolism and the state of social welfare (even if crumbling) to provide social stability during the revisionist period. This is essential to understand why the revisionist system lasted for so long after the liquidation of the socialist form of production was formalized in the second half of the 1950s. And this is despite protracted economic crisis and systemic shortages, both in production and in consumption. This speaks to the stupendous prestige that the notion of Soviet patriotism had gained in the psyche of vast layers of the Soviet people. The vindication of Stalin's role in history and the nostalgia for the Soviet past that is now prevalent in today's Russia is yet another demonstration of the same phenomenon. It is at this point that it is consequential for the purposes of the thesis advocated here that one views the importance of Soviet symbolism in the context of the dialectics of form and content. In order to preserve social stability modern revisionism ventured to preserve Soviet symbolism, which represents the form that enclosed political and economic relations of a fundamentally different type compared to the socialist period. Eventually, the tension between form that is constituted by the Soviet symbolism and the pro-market economic reforms will be resolved in favour of the latter. Nevertheless, the preservation of this tension played a pivotal role in enabling the liberalization of the market within the revisionist system.

Fast forward thirty years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, one now needs to look at the position taken by the heirs of these "conservatives". One realizes that these have also evolved together with the development of commodity relations. Organizations such as the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, which continues to be led by the incombustible Gennady Zyuganov, have evolved into more classical positions of modern social-democracy and they have de facto embraced the neo-liberal paradigm. Whereas they praise the Soviet past and even glorify the historical figure of Stalin, they do not seriously consider the nationalization of the main means of production, as advocated by Marxism-Leninism. Their minimum programme envisions "the nationalization of natural resources of Russia and strategic sectors of the economy, use the income of these sectors in the interests of all citizens". The CPRF does not put forward a clear plan for the industrialization of the country led by the state. Its economic programme does not entail a serious deviation from the current state of affairs of the Russian economy, nor its neo-liberal character.

It is important to note that this attitude is consistent with their overall assessment of the economic history of the Soviet Union.<sup>11</sup> While they praise Stalin's leadership, they adopt a Brezhnevite (intrinsicly anti-Stalin) position regarding the need to revise the principles of Marxism-Leninist political economy pertaining to socialist industrialization and planning. In their view, the economic policies under Stalin incurred in excessive "nationalization and centralization". This is in sync with the vision of Khruchev and Brezhnev regarding the need to "reform" the Soviet economy. The CPRF does not dispute the commodity character of the economy that presides over the transition to communism. This core thesis has been proven wrong time and again, in that the development commodity-money relations are in fundamental contradiction with the transition to higher forms of socialization, both theoretically and in practice.<sup>12</sup> The expansion of commodity-money relations inevitably results in economic crisis and low growth rates and the disintegration of socialist relations of production and distribution. The historical material available in this respect is insurmountable. Yet the CPRF, as today's heirs

of the “conservative” wing of modern revisionism double down on these anti-Marxist and pro-capitalist theses. Why would they insist on something that is known to fail? The reason is simple: the role of the heirs of revisionism is to uphold the interest of capital should their time come to take over the Russian government.

Needless to say, the CPRF is also critical of the post-Stalin period. In their view the Soviet leadership of the post-Stalin period also failed to act on the deficiencies of the “old” economic system. This is not a principled critique of the post-Stalin period, as it follows the principle that they were wrong because the revisionist Soviet economy failed. As a matter of fact, CPRF’s criticism of the post-Stalin period implicitly carries within itself a criticism of the Stalin period. It is implicitly argued that the Soviet leadership of the post-Stalin period was unable to properly reform

The CPRF considers China as a socialist country. This unequivocally speaks to their notion of socialism, which is subverted to serve the interests of big capital. This in essence entails the use of the red flag to cover up for the neo-liberal model of economic development.<sup>13</sup> This is essential to understand the economic content of their policies should they attain power as a result of Putin’s eventual political downfall. The CPRF in its programme envisions a three-stage approach to political and economic transformation. The CPRF, as the Communist Party of China, advocate for a lengthy period of economic development where capitalist relations are allowed to blossom under the patronage of the one-party system.<sup>14</sup> In this neo-liberal model, the role of the State is to provide the necessary conditions for these economic relations to further develop, where concentration of capital becomes inevitable, a question naturally emerges: how is does the one-party government plan to turn around an economy driven by monopolistic capital embodied by large corporations to serve the purposes of the transition to higher forms of socialization. That question is never answered theoretically. The transition to higher forms of socialization is pushed far into the future as a distant perspective.

Should the CPRF seize power as the correlation of political forces requires further restoration of Soviet symbolism to preserve social stability, another question emerges. As the CPRF remains an orthodox advocate of the market, what would it be able to achieve under the economic conditions of Russia that Putin has not be able to achieve? Under the conditions of fierce economic competition, severe crises of over-production, the overall technological backwardness of the Russian economy and the lack of investment in industry, let alone heavy industry, it is unscientific to believe that the perpetuation of the neo-liberal model will resolve the economic contradictions that afflict the country. Here lies one of the major structural contradictions of modern revisionism in Russia today. As they are unwilling and/or unable to forge ahead with the socialist path of development, modern revisionism finds itself in a quandary: how to resolve the contradictions of the neo-liberal model that is in deep crisis in Russia while refusing to nationalize the main means of production and turn the State into the engine of economic development based on socialist industrialization. By contrast, the CPRF in line with the neo-liberal doctrine views the role of the state very differently from Marxism-Leninism. In their view, the role of the State is to create conducive conditions for the development of the national producer based on the private character of the ownership of the means of production. Here the State does no longer participate directly in production, but rather through indirect market mechanisms.<sup>15</sup>

In this light, it is necessary to delve into the nature of the process that has led to the vindication of the Soviet Union and Stalin in recent years. This process has not been instigated by Putin’s

regime nor is it a gain made by the CPRF and similar organizations. Putin had made it abundantly clear back in the day that he stood and continues to stand on solid anti-Stalinist positions of the type that had become prevalent during the times of Perestroika. The CPRF and its leaders also stood at some point on open anti-Stalinist positions, as they are the true heirs of modern revisionism. Today they praise Stalin superficially and continue to adhere to anti-Marxist positions in questions of socialist construction. Stalin's vindication has been the result of a spontaneous process, where the Russian toiling masses have gradually become disenchanted with the economic disenfranchisement and social exclusion that is prevalent today. It has been the toiling masses of Russia and other former republics of the Soviet Union, not the representatives of the economic oligarchies, that have cleared the name of Stalin in history. Putin and the CPRF have opportunistically used this spontaneous process for their own political purposes. Here, Stalin, the Marxist-Leninist, the continuator of Lenin's endeavor, is instead portrayed as the great statesman and general among generals. The Marxist-Leninist essence of Stalin's contribution to history is replaced with whatever is convenient to the regime and the heirs of modern revisionism to maintain the social status quo prevalent today. The regime tantalizes the toiling masses of Russia with its ambiguous and tepid support of Stalin's legacy and the gains of the Soviet Union. Here Stalin is used to spur patriotic and anti-Western sentiments in view of the growing contradictions with American imperialism. It goes without saying that the growing confrontation with the US and the conflict in Ukraine is no more than a means to divert the toiling masses' attention from the economic failure of neo-liberalism in Russia.

Several very important questions emerge. What should be the position of the Marxist-Leninists here, why is the slogan of the restoration of the Soviet Union so relevant today and how should it be articulated. In order to answer these questions, one needs to adhere to the dialectics of form and content in politics. Modern revisionism was able to adapt Soviet symbolism and the external attributes of the Soviet system to their political needs, where the economic relations that were concealed under them were no longer of socialist nature. Modern revisionism succeeded in concealing market relations under the disguise of Soviet symbolism. This, however, should not prevent today's Marxist-Leninists from championing the slogan of the restoration of the Soviet Union by injecting revolutionary content into it. It would be a mistake of a neo-Trotskyite nature to reject the slogan of the restoration of the Soviet Union altogether on the grounds that modern revisionism used Soviet symbolism for their own purposes. Indeed, this slogan can be misconstrued and re-directed by today's revisionists with the purpose of defending the interests of capitalists. One can also argue that the nostalgia for the Soviet past in today's Russia revolves around people's longing for social stability, prosperity, and strong statehood, as opposed well-defined class consciousness. However, this does not preclude the Marxist-Leninists from taking charge of the slogan for the purposes of socialist transformation and liquidation of capitalist relations of production. The fact of the matter is that the popular support for Stalin today is primarily due to the success of socialist construction in the Soviet Union. It would be suicidal not to recognize the momentous significance of this statement. This is an invaluable asset that other revolutionaries in many countries do not have: the historical memory of a socialist past entrenched among the exploited, which is associated with prosperity, equal opportunity, peace, stability, and strong statehood. As stated above, the task of the Marxist-Leninists, the heirs of the Bolshevik traditions, is to fill with revolutionary content the slogan of the restoration of the Soviet Union. One needs to forward the positive enclosed in the nostalgic sentiments among the toiling masses for the creation of a popular movement under the leadership of the working class

towards the restoration of socialism. Now we need to hone in on this important question. In order to do so let us focus on two main aspects of the slogan and how these are intrinsically linked with structural weaknesses of revisionism:

- \* The inability of revisionism to link the slogan of the restoration of the Soviet Union with the social and economic demands of the Russian working class and toiling masses.
- \* The inability of revisionism to enact economic policy with which to satisfy the basic economic aspirations of the Russian toiling masses. Revisionism rejects socialist industrialization.

The CPRF is unwilling and unable to connect the slogan of the restoration of the Soviet Union with the immediate political aspirations of the exploited. Revisionism does not associate the economic struggle of the exploited with the political demand of the restoration of the Soviet Union. This is central to understand how the Marxist-Leninists should position themselves as a political alternative to revisionism. The Marxist-Leninists propose socialism as the socio-economic construction that will resolve the economic contradictions that generate poverty and suffering, where the working class remains that social stratum that leads the toiling masses towards that goal. It is therefore, essential that the Marxist-Leninists connect the slogan with today's social struggles through its different manifestations. For as much as the memory of the Soviet Union is now vindicated broadly, the socialist Soviet Union will not be restored spontaneously. It requires a sustained political effort through social struggle with a clear vision for political action. In contrast with the revisionists, the Marxist-Leninists are in position to own the slogan by consistently embracing and owning the Soviet past through social struggle. It is only the Marxist-Leninists who can elevate the slogan of the restoration of the Soviet Union to the level of political demand and build a mass movement around this discourse.

Even though the CPRF does not shy away from glorifying the Soviet past, it does not elevate this discourse to the level of a political slogan. Instead, they resort to some sort of emasculated rhetoric, where the past is a thing of the past, but the past cannot be brought back to fruition. One must recognize that the CPRF does not uphold the slogan, as it does not intend to restore a Soviet Union of the Brezhnevite type. Today's revisionism does not see the need to restrict market relations in the same way that modern revisionism of the Brezhnevite type was forced to implement because of concrete historical conditions. Instead, today's revisionism advocates for open market relations within the framework of the neo-liberal doctrine, and as such it is unable to bring relief to the toiling masses. The political and economic programme revolves around the use of some of the Soviet symbolism to appease the toiling masses and with which to ultimately protect the interests of the Russian bourgeoisie. This is central to understand the window of opportunity that lies in front of the Marxist-Leninists.

It has been established that, once in power, the CPRF will not nationalize the main means of production.<sup>16</sup> Fast economic growth, full employment, and the sustainability of a state of social welfare heavily rely on socialist industrialization driven by the State. Socialist industrialization in turn cannot come to fruition without the nationalization of the main means of production through the State. The core of the Marxist-Leninist economic programme will be the nationalization of the main means of production, of large capital, as a pre-requisite necessary to alleviate the economic hardships of vast layers of the toiling masses. Nationalization will be essential for the Soviet State to meet the aspirations of broad layers of the toiling masses that today's neo-liberal Russia is not able to honour.

Russia remains today one of the weakest links of imperialism similar to the times preceding the October revolution. Capitalism is undergoing a severe crisis of overproduction and debt (both public and private), where inter-imperialistic confrontations are on the rise. The collapse of the neo-liberal political system in Russia will likely take place under the pressure of social discontent<sup>17</sup> coupled with strong pro-Soviet sentiments. The CPRF, just like the Kerenskys, social revolutionaries, the Mensheviks, and the likes, will emerge to save the capitalist mode of production in Russia. However, just as Kerensky was not able to provide peace and land, today's revisionists will not be able to provide the social, economic, and political goals that the Russian toiling masses are longing for. It is only the Marxist-Leninists, the heirs of the traditions of the party of Lenin and Stalin, that will be able to bring to fruition the slogan of the restoration of the Soviet Union on the basis of the nationalization of the main means of production leading to socialist industrialization. The Marxist-Leninists are the only ones capable of articulating and implementing the necessary socio-economic changes that are consistent with the pro-Soviet and pro-Stalin sentiments of broad layers of the Russian toiling masses today. Contrary to 30 years ago, the slogan of the restoration of the Soviet Union has shifted away from the realm of bourgeois dualism.

#### **Endnotes:**

1. The text of the new Union Treaty can be found at <https://doc.histrf.ru/20/dogovor-o-soyuze-sovetskikh-suverennykh-respublik/>. One of the founding principles of this new State reads: "Each republic – a party to the treaty – is a sovereign state. The Union of Soviet Sovereign Republics (USSR) is a sovereign federal democratic state formed as a result of the unification of equal republics and exercising state power within the powers that the parties to the treaty voluntarily vest in it... The states that form the Union have full political power, independently determine their national-state and administrative-territorial structure, the system of authorities and administration. They may delegate some of their powers to other States parties to the treaty, of which they are members. The parties to the treaty recognize democracy based on popular representation and the direct expression of the will of peoples as a common fundamental principle, and strive to create a rule of law state that would serve as a guarantor against any tendencies towards totalitarianism and arbitrariness." The draft suggested a federal state composed of sovereign states, where the federal government would retain some of the functions of the old Soviet Union, such as the "Protection of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Union and its subjects; declaration of war and conclusion of peace; ensuring defence and leadership of the Armed Forces, border, special (government communications, engineering and other), internal, railway troops of the Union; organization of the development and production of weapons and military equipment." Needless to say the very notion of a federal state comprised of sovereign states is so self-contradictory and unsustainable politically that many interpreted it as a blatant attempt to dismember the USSR.
2. Upon the temporary removal of Gorbachev as head of the state, the Vice President Gennady Yanayev assumed the post of the President of the USSR. At the press conference of August 19th Yanaev was visibly distressed, where his hands were trembling and his demeanour was shaky. This gave the impression to many that whatever was unfolding was more a charade rather than a proper coup.
3. Reliable archival sources have been availed to the public, e.g. "Lavrentiy Beria. 1953. CC of the CPSU and other documents", Moscow Mezhdunarodniy fond "Demokratia" 1999.

4. It is important to note that the Plenum of the CC of the CPSU did point to capitulationism in regard to Beria's position vis a vis the GDR. That said, the Soviet of Ministers of the USSR under Malenkov's chairmanship determined that the course towards the construction of socialism adopted by the Socialist Unity Party of Germany in 1952 was wrong, where the rates of growth of heavy industry need to be reduced, the five-year plan need to be revised correspondingly and that the collectivization of the countryside should not be accelerated. The Soviet leadership accused the German party of leftism. This sentiment is also echoed by Molotov. The spirit of the Soviet of Minister's position with regards to the GDR is eventually incorporated into the economic reforms in the USSR, which was not under the political pressure that the government of the GDR was subjected to at that juncture. The Soviet leadership, Molotov included, at the time considered the so-called accelerated construction of socialism in Germany as erroneous although it argued that Beria's position was that of not pursuing socialism altogether, in contrast to the position of the Politburo. What is relevant here is that a fundamental tenet of the construction of socialism, that of the precedence of heavy industry, is undermined by both parties. Accusations towards Beria from the side of the party leadership at the time in this regard are not particularly consistent.

5. In principle, the Politburo (Political Bureau) of the Central Committee of the party was renamed into Presidium during the XIXth Congress, October 1952.

6. Some historians have speculated that most of the political maneuvering that during Stalin's illness and subsequent demise revolved around sidelining Molotov, a staunch supporter of Stalin's leadership with Malenkov playing a significant role here. It is speculated that Khrushchev and Beria were working closely together to enact some of the above-mentioned reforms. For example, it is believed that Khrushchev was behind the appointment of the first Secretary of the Party in the Ukraine.

7. The minutes of the Plenum of the CC of the CPSU of July 2nd-7th 1953, where Beria was subjected to devastating criticism are available online at [http:// istmat.info/node/26522](http://istmat.info/node/26522).

8. A number of deficiencies in agricultural production were used opportunistically by Khrushchev to forward his petty bourgeois vision for the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc. Boosting agricultural production at the cost of growth and investment in heavy industry was one of the key triggers for the economic reforms that were initiated the second half of 1953. Paradoxically, it was in the countryside where pro-market economic reforms of the 1950s failed most vividly. Non-Marxist authors attribute this failure to the so-called "corn experiment" and other bizarre attempts to "creatively" deal with the problem of agricultural production. Marxist analysis indicates that the factors that contributed to the outcome are of fundamental nature, where socialist economic relations and the process of gradual socialization of the collective economy were radically disrupted. As a result of Khrushchev's reforms, the Soviet Union towards the beginning of the 1960s resorted to importing grain. The Soviet Union never really recovered from this crisis, where import of grain became endemic reaching a peak in the 1980s.

9. Suslov, one of the instigators of Khrushchev's removal, was considered one of the leading ideologists of the party. He has been portrayed as the epitome of "conservative", "dogmatic" Marxist-Leninist, as opposed to the "liberals" of the Kosygin-Liberman type. It was in fact the "conservative" Suslov that stood against attempts made at the top to rehabilitate Stalin, even if partially.

10. A referendum took place on March 17th 1991, where following question was put forward: Do you consider necessary the preservation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a renewed federation of equal sovereign republics in which the rights and freedom of an individual of any ethnicity will be fully guaranteed? The referendum took place in 9 of the Republics with 80% turnout, where 77.85% of the vote was positive.

11. The CPRF is unequivocal in their programme regarding the economic policies of the Stalin period. While acknowledging the spectacular gains of socialism during Stalin's period, it is stated: "However, the task of developing forces of production that correspond to the socialist mode of production was far from fulfilled. The mobilization economy [mobilizatsionnaya ekonomika], which had taken root in the country, led to extremely strict nationalization [ogosudarstvlenie] and centralization of many spheres of public life. The economic management was not promptly brought into sync with the needs of the productive forces. Bureaucracy grew, self-organization of the people was restrained, social energy and the initiative of the working people were hampered. There were serious deviations from one of the key principles of socialism, 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his work.' The achievements of the scientific and technological revolution were not fully combined with the advantages of socialism." (<https://kprf.ru/party/program>)

12. The CPRF writes in its programme "As the level of real socialization of labour and production gradually increases so does its role in the economy". One of the theses put forward to challenge centralization is to establish a rift between nationalization (ogosudarstvlenie) and socialization (obobshchestvlenie). In Marxism nationalization is a necessary condition to achieve socialization of labour and production in the conditions of the transition to communism, where the state will become obsolete as communism is gradually achieved. This statement is turned upside-down by revisionism by arguing that nationalization is not a sufficient condition for socialization. It is argued that nationalization is not enough to establish "real socialization" and that the latter is achieved when the forces of production are advanced enough. Nationalization in this context is downgraded to the level of a juridical relationship, where nationalization would be equated to "formal socialization", which would remain deficient as it is not "real socialization". The economic history of the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies have demonstrated that the socialization of labour and the means of production through nationalization are pivotal for socialist construction. The socialist state attains the means to manage the economy as a whole through planning while amassing vast resources to achieve economic growth and satisfy the growing needs of society. This is in stark contrast with the market theories of modern revisionism that got the upper hand right after Stalin's passing. The CPRF stands on the same positions of modern revisionism and as such it opposes the nationalization of the main means of production as a means to transition to higher forms of socialization.

13. The Chinese Communist Party states in its Constitution: "China is currently in the primary stage of socialism and will remain so for a long time to come. This is a stage of history that cannot be bypassed as China, which used to be economically and culturally lagging, makes progress in socialist modernization; it will take over a century." In the Constitution of the Communist Party of China (2017), [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Constitution\\_of\\_the\\_Communist\\_Party\\_of\\_China.pdf](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/download/Constitution_of_the_Communist_Party_of_China.pdf)

14. It is probably appropriate to note that the CPRF does not advocate for a one-party system. The CPRF envisions to achieve power through open elections in a multi-party system. One can

concede that given the strong popular support for the restoration of the Soviet Union the CPRF could attain a large fraction of the vote. While on the surface the CPRF advocates for the restoration of the Soviet system of representation for the whole people, the notion of dictatorship of the proletariat is solidly excluded from the political landscape.

15. The CPRF envisions a three-phased approach for the economic development of the country. Once gaining power and after nationalizing the strategic sectors of the economy (natural resources and those sectors that provide revenue through export) the CPRF would set to protect the interests of the “petty producer against large capital, bureaucrats and corrupt structures”. In a second phase “the economic diversity [monoukladnost or different forms of property of the means of production, including private, our note], determined by the level of productive forces, will still be preserved. ... the State will establish planning of the main indexes of economic development, will formulate a full-fledged budget and will become the most important customer of products from domestic manufacturers. People’s power with the help of planning and market mechanisms will actively regulate the development of the economy and the social sphere.” These phrases encapsulate the neo-liberal character of the CPRF’s economic programme. Two are important aspects of this vision. Firstly, planning in this context has nothing to do with socialist planning. The latter pertains to the organisation and distribution of material resources and live labour in the socialist sector and the relations of the socialist sector with other forms of production. In the CPRF’s view, planning revolves around influencing the economy of private independent producers through market mechanisms to achieve certain economic goals quantified through economic indexes. Secondly, the State is not the main producer of goods, but rather the private sector, where the State is suggested as the leading purchaser of these goods. In essence, the State becomes an asset to capitalist accumulation. It is therefore preposterous to argue that this system of economic relations may eventually lead to higher forms of socialisation of labour and production.

16. The nationalization of the main means of production does not necessarily apply to the petty producer. Depending on the concrete historical conditions and the levels of development of socialist industrialization certain forms of petty production may be retained over certain periods of time. That said, the CPRF’s concept of national producer is much broader than that and it includes large-scale capitalist production and financial institutions.

17. The recent events in Kazakhstan are a wake-up call for the anti-popular regimes that emerged in the post-Soviet space. The Kazakh regime is an epitome in its own right. The popular revolt that followed the sharp increase of gasoline prices was spontaneous in nature and was driven by unemployment, high commodity prices, economic exclusion and poverty. The revolt was not particularly tied to nationalist and anti-Russian sentiment characteristic to the Euromaidan movement in Ukraine. Neither the Western nor the Russian media gave a voice to the local population and those who participated directly in the riots. Most of the coverage was about pundits speculating about the possible causes underpinning the crisis.