In Review
Achievements of the USSR

In Memoriam
How Will Capitalism End?

In Anticipation
The Future of Eco-Socialism
A Man With Dreams Needs...

Here they are, in black and white and colour, at their battle stations as it were, Michael Lucas in full flight in Moscow at the 60th anniversary of the Great October Revolution. And Helen, the First Mate as it were, taking care of business: the finances, without which the ship sinks; taking care of communications; taking care of scheduling; taking care of Michael. And like most women even today, taking care of the family and household. These two have devoted countless hours and burned billions of calories in support of socialism and a better world. It’s hard to imagine that the International Council for Friendship and Solidarity with the Soviet People, and its predecessor organizations, could have existed without the heroic efforts of this couple.

... a Woman With Vision
ECONOMIC NECESSITY is the mother of print publications passing. It is also, however, the mother of opportunities for a better life online. Better for searching by subject, author or word, better for retrieving archives, better for copying and sharing. All while reducing one’s environmental footprint.

It’s a “necessary loss” then (to borrow the title of a Judith Viorst book) that after 26 years of print publishing under the leadership of Council Chairman Michael Lucas, Northstar Compass begins to leave trees undisturbed and turns to fully digital education and distribution.

Tangible proof of the transition: Michael Celik’s astute 15-page analysis, “The Soviet Union: Paradigm Lost?” It’s interrupted halfway through with a cliffhanger (involving Gold for Grains and the CIA). The reader is redirected (see page 34) to a link to finish the Gold for Grains story, and read Mike’s thoughtful conclusions. Finally, clickbait with a political purpose!

This keepsake Signature Edition looks back 100 years to the Great October Revolution and studies its legacy, highlights the achievements of the USSR and mourns and analyses its unnecessary disintegration, pays tribute to Michael and Helen Lucas and all those who contributed to Northstar Compass, reprints the front page of the first issue, publishes Greetings and salutations and looks forward to an Eco-Socialist future.

We live in a time of paradigm shift. Much will have happened in just the days before you read this—no matter what day you read this. An indicator of the shift is the acknowledged diminishment of the “leadership” of “the West” and the USA in particular.

But the shrinkage of the American Empire’s footprint—if indeed it is shrinking—is welcomed by those of us who value community, co-operation, peace and equality. Who yearn for freedom from dangerous wasteful militarism and the scourge of wars. Who bridle at serial false flag deceptions mounted to trigger these wars and foment global antagonism. Who need respite from the hubris, hypocrisy, organized greed, resource thievery and mass brainwashing of the Fourth Reich’s monopoly capitalist world domination project.

In other words all those who support socialism, and now, eco-socialism.

“The West” has never relented in its hostility against Bolshevism, the USSR, socialism and independence movements in any form anywhere except for the brief unintended mutual support between “the Allies” in the Second World War struggle against Nazism.

It will be difficult for the old order of capitalism, imperialism and militarism to hold sway much longer in a time of shrinking resources on a finite Earth facing scaled-up challenges in a speeded-up environment. The old order, no order, can rely on infinite growth. The obscene yet growing gap between the most wealthy, powerful and privileged few—much fewer than one per cent—is being found offensive even in “the West.” Such inequality has always, in the past, led to widespread unrest.

Whether enough people of goodwill can unite to form a new coalition of those willing to establish a world of peace, with increased equality and co-operativeness, is a key question.

Largest question of all: will Humanity survive physically for much as 100 years? To carve out a fighting chance for this, the value system of capitalism—with its twin pillars of profit (for the few) and growth (at the expense of the environment)—must be jettisoned, and soon.

First issue of Northstar Compass: Fidel, Media Criticism, Foresight

At a Leftwing Antiques Roadshow the first issue of this publication (reproduced below) might fetch a pretty penny as a rare keepsake. But its much greater value lies in the substance, wisdom and relevancy that it still holds today.

The late Ray Stevenson, first editor of NSC, chose for instance to publish within its 12 pages an excerpt from an interview with Comrade Fidel Castro.

“How does Fidel Castro see himself? Do you regret some of the things you have done in your life?” Fidel was asked by an interviewer with The Manchester Guardian.

Replied Fidel: “We have committed tactical errors; I can regret tactical errors. But I have a clear conscience that we haven’t committed a strategic error throughout the history of the revolution, that we haven’t committed a violation of principle. If I were born again, I would choose the same revolutionary path.”

The last line should remain an inspiration for Socialists today who continue to struggle to make a better world — with the major roadblock, if not the enemy of that better world, still the American Empire that Fidel knew so well and prevailed against with intelligence, courage and leadership.

Comrade Stevenson knew the power of the media and the great importance of analyzing the newspapers. In this inaugural edition, he took issue with the New York Times (five times!) in comments he appended to the excerpts. For instance, of a story the Times ran on the declining standing of the Soviet Olympic teams, Stevenson commented: “The unlimited appetite of capitalism for profits has no boundaries or restraints, whether ethical, moral, altruistic, religious—or of plain common sense. The pirates of the so-called ‘free market economy’ (read capitalism), Yeltsin & Company have meshed their drive for ‘privatization’ with Western capitalists’ insatiable thirst for unlimited profits, no matter the cost.” That this remains so, 25 years later, is sobering.
For this special issue...

...we asked for salutations and greetings for Michael Lucas and the Council and for Northstar Compass.

The sentiments below arrived, in a hand printed letter, from Clifford F. Roe of Winsford, Cheshire, England. They seem to us a distillation of the thoughts of many others. We publish Cliff’s letter here, almost unabridged, on behalf of all supporters. In a note accompanying his letter, Cliff writes: “Perhaps my letter is ‘old fashioned,’ but call me old fashioned too, as I will miss very much the excellent paper editions of Northstar Compass.”

1 Socialism when introduced by Lenin and the Bolsheviks to the Russian Tsarist Peasants and virtual slave-labour masses, turned them almost overnight into free citizens! The overriding achievement of socialism in the USSR was the emancipation and control of the people’s own destiny, together with the never-ending pursuit of World Peace!

2 The work and contribution of those involved at Friendship House is incalculable, the enormous effort and sheer dedication of the journal’s founding father Comrade Michael Lucas is so inspirational, and every single contributor past as well as present cannot be praised highly enough!

The standards set by Michael and Helen will stand the test of time, as the paper editions will re-ignite into the Internet Age!

3 Contributions from readers in former communist countries, relating their lives that were influenced by experiences growing up in un-exploited environments, in other words what was life like for them in socialist conditions, have been especially interesting and valuable.

I believe an acknowledgment is owed to not only Michael Lucas, but to all previous Comrades for getting our great Northstar Compass journal up and running. Sadly, several comrades who have contributed articles to NSC are no longer with us, but they must rightly be mentioned here. Special mention of the late Ray Stevenson, Felix Gorelik, Vic Ratsma, Irena Malenko, Prof. Herasymchuk, Ray O’Light and Galina Savchenko, whose long-standing articles to NSC, plus her tireless campaigning and up-to-date information on the troublesome events continually unfolding in Ukraine has contributed to our understanding.

The sheer grasp of political world events and the seamlessly fathomless knowledge of the great editor of NSC, Michael Lucas, cannot be bettered; he is truly inspirational and has without doubt inspired thousands of readers and people whose paths he has crossed. I personally am eternally grateful I first made contact with Michael when I was made aware of Northstar Compass thanks to a mention in Postmark Prague magazine by its late editor Ken Biggs to whom I am indebted for getting to know so many friends, who have become almost like family!

Cheers from Clifford F. Roe in his garden in Winsford, Cheshire, England

Best Wishes, Clifford F. Roe
A Special Greeting from a Special Friend on a Special Occasion Recalling a Special Project

March 2017

Dear Michael Lucas, My Dear Friend ~

We met with you when I came to Canada in 1981 with the idea to organize a Ski Expedition across the Arctic Ocean: from the USSR via the North Pole to Canada. Alexander Yakovlev, the Ambassador to the USSR to Canada, the writer Farley Mowat and you, my friend, Michael Lucas—three persons, who immediately became enthusiasts and patriots of this project.

And first of all today, at your happy day [Michael’s 91st birthday], I would like to express my gratitude to you for your support! I do remember very well the House of Soviet-Canadian friendship, where my friends and I felt to comfortable. I also remember very well a grandiose man Michael Lucas, extremely talented, and infinitely devoted to the development of friendship between the USSR and Canada.

It is known, that the USSR became a thing of the past. But a country is not just a political system, not only a state machine. First of all a country is — its people.

I am very proud that I was born in 1941 in a month after the start of the World War II in Moscow, the capital of the USSR. The people remain! And they are proud of their Motherland. That’s why thank you again that you still adhere to your theme, adhere to your ideals.

In 1988 we travelled on ski 2000 km in 91 days—nine soviet participants and four Canadians. This was the ski track of the sincere human friendship between two great countries. And when we travelled from the USSR to the North Pole there were two flags on our radio mast—the Soviet flag was above, and the Canadian below; and when we travelled from the North Pole to Canada, the maple leaf was above and the red one—below.

We all were enjoying equal rights and we were friends and cared for each other. Dear Michael, at the happy day of your birthday I wish you health and cheerfulness. You are surrounded by friends, you are occupied with your favourite business, and all this means that you are happy. But I wish you even more happiness and even more friends, and that our work and responsibilities remain vast and intensive.

My friend, I would like to hug you and shake hands. There is a strong Polar Bridge between you and me. This solid bridge is also between the wonderful Russia and the wonderful Canada.

Your faithful friend
Dmitry Shparo
Michael Lucas: I Don’t Rest on My Laurels

I’ve been both grateful and humbled for recognitions I have received over a lifetime of serving the best interests, as I understand them, of the Soviet people. The Soviet people forged remarkable achievements in and for the USSR, which deserves to be re-established. There have been setbacks as well for the Soviet people and for our International Council for Friendship and Solidarity With Soviet People, as I well know as Chairman. But we must keep moving. This is why I am buoyed by the spirit of the Council’s supporters past and present. It’s the train of the future that we board now.

This final print issue of Northstar Compass marks a double departure. The subject matter and layout, under guest editor Barrie Zwicker, are different from past issues. And NSC departs forever from the cellulose era and moves fully into the digital.

We’re especially pleased at the establishment of a collaboration with Connexions, a Toronto-based grassroots left-of-centre website founded in print originally in 1975. Connexions, as a glance at its website (www.connexions.org) shows, is a cornucopia of relevant, actionable socialist-oriented information. Connexions maintains a physical archive (including books, pamphlets, periodicals, posters, buttons and more) of progressive projects and an online archive—now including the mirror site NorthstarCompassNorth (NSCN). It was at Connexions that Zwicker found the article on eco-socialism that completes this issue. Connexions co-ordinator Ulli Diemer and Zwicker have been friends and colleagues since the 1960s. To carry on its work Connexions needs money (which now includes operating the new NorthstarCompassNorth mirror site) into the future, and welcomes donations, bequests, and even—dare one hope, asks Ulli—free or below-market-rate office space.

Donate page:  www.connexions.org/Donate.htm
Bequest page:  www.connexions.org/CxLibrary/Docs2/Bequests.htm

Zwicker made a bequest to Connexions in June 2016.

The close alignment of NSC and Connexions is made clear in just these four points in Connexions’ nine-point Statement of Values:

We believe in:

1. The value of preserving the history of grassroots movements for social justice...
5. The value of ... knowing that people have been working at the grassroots for a better world for many decades and of learning about the problems they faced and how they tried to deal with them.
6. The value of passing on the experience and knowledge of elders, and of people who have passed on, to the activists of today and tomorrow.
7. The importance of sharing ... the contents of the archive ... as widely as possible, in a variety of formats and languages.

The phone number of Connexions is 416-964-5735.
More Greetings to Michael Lucas and to the International
council for Friendship and Solidarity With the Soviet People

_March and May 1917_

To Michael Lucas, editor _Northstar Compass_; the editorial board of the magazine; dear friends of the Society of Canadian-Soviet Friendship and to the Society of Carpatho-Russian Canadians.

With great joy we congratulate you and in your person all Canadian workers on Victory Day, May 9! As Anton Kulchin, the Canadian veteran of the war, said in his speech on May 6, 2007: “It was a victory not only for the Soviet Union, but for the whole of mankind, in which the USSR played a huge role.” We will continue to strengthen our solidarity in the struggle for peace and socialism.

Members of the Executive Committee and the Public Council:
Lashin A.A., Kharlamenko A.V., Chechetsev V.N., Shevchenko V.T., Yatsunov N.A.

From _Iury Demin in Samara, Russia, on the occasion of Michael’s 91st birthday…_

Hello Canada! Hello Toronto! Hello friends!

My name is Iury Demin. I am 63 years old, 50 of them I have engaged in creativity. Dear Michael! I learned about you and your committee from my new friend, from Konstantin who lives in Toronto. I help him with arrangements to his beautiful music. Like you I am musician, poet and artist, therefore I feel that we are kindred spirits. I admire your life of total dedication to the struggle for the ideals inherited from your great-uncle.

I also want to express my great respect for the International Committee of Solidarity that you have managed for many years. Like you I cannot accept what is happening in the world. I wrote a lot of songs that encourage people to come around and not destroy a world created by god. Like you and your friends, I cannot condone all those who for their own selfish benefit unleash wars, who through vile lies and provocations sow fear and hatred between people.

Michael, please accept the most sincere congratulations on your birthday from a Russian musician! Years have no control over you and therefore you have not completed yet all that God has entrusted to you. We still need you!

Wishing you many years of good health and most importantly love and understanding of all those who walk in the same ranks with you. I still believe that good will win. Long live freedom! Let faith, hope, and love live forever in our hearts! Once again, Happy Birthday Michael! I raise my glass of wine and let my song that will sound be a humble gift for you!

Iury

(Listen to his song to the Ukraine at https://youtu.be/eaFTdg5151Q)

“Well, how is life under capitalism?”
Legacy of the Russian Revolution is lasting, universal, of the future more than the past

By Don Currie

Thanks to Michael and Helen Lucas and the editorial board of NSC for the invitation to contribute to the last print issue on the theme of the significance of the 100th Anniversary of the Great October Soviet Socialist Revolution.1

Among the left progressive organizations in Canada, *Northstar Compass* has been at the forefront, consistently presenting the truth to Canadians about the achievements of Soviet Socialism. The legacy of the Russian Revolution is lasting and universal and is of the future more than it is of the past. In the short span of 70 years its achievements continue to inspire the struggles of all of the oppressed of the world today.

**Power of a New Type**

When socialism, brilliantly foretold by Marx and Engels in the 19th century, became a 20th century reality in 1917, the world changed. The Russian working class and its closest ally the poor peasantry took political power, creating a new type of state committed to protecting the labouring masses embarking on the uncharted path of building a socialist society.

The transitions from slavery to feudalism, from feudalism to capitalism were blind and anarchic, not fundamentally altering the relationship between a small privileged owner class appropriating the wealth of a large class of producers.

The transition from capitalism to socialism was different. The 1917 Russian Revolution for the first time in human history brought those without property, those with only their labour power to sell in a capitalist owned market, landless peasants forced to labour for landlords who owned all of the land—the labouring majority were now in power. The means of production passed from the hands of a few into the hands of the many. As Marx coined the phrase in Chapter 32 of *Capital*, “The expropriators were expropriated.”

The working class allied with the poor peasantry became a class for itself. It acted. The dream of all toilers from the rise of class society of a peaceful rewarding life of creative labour was at hand. The Bolshevik slogan of Peace, Bread and Land resonated with the Russian people uniting them in their overwhelming majority with the Communist program of building socialism in a single country.

**Socialism and Peace**

The first act of the new worker’s power was the Karl Marx

Decree on Peace proclaimed on November 7th 1917 by Vladimir Ilych Lenin (Ulyanov) the founder of the Soviet State on behalf of the workers, peasants and soldiers Soviets. The Decree calling for an unconditional peace without annexations, without changing borders and without indemnities was formalized in the Brest Litovsk Treaty of March 3, 1918 between the
Soviet government and Germany and its allies that ended Russia's participation in WWI.

The imperialist Entente, Britain, Czarist Russia, France, Italy and the USA were outraged. Russian youth, dispensable as cannon fodder in the inter-imperialist struggle with Germany the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empire were no longer available. Winston Churchill lamented the failure to "strangle Bolshevism in the cradle."

An armed intervention by a coalition of British led imperialist states including Canada bent on overthrowing Soviet power was repulsed by the young Red Army and by the large scale defection of White troops to the side of the Bolsheviks including some patriotic Czarist officers.

The imperialist intervention was followed by civil war launched by Czarist imperial forces and supported by western imperialism. The Red Army once again defeated the counter revolution and emerged even stronger as the defender of the Soviet people.

**Working Class Power and the Uncharted Path of Building Socialism**

The first years of Soviet power restored the war-ravaged economy to its pre-war level. Lenin, founder of the Soviet State, who died January 21, 1924, tirelessly counseled the Communists and their supporters that if socialism was to repulse the attacks of international finance capital, the socialist economy and its military defenses would have to be built rapidly.

Lenin convinced them to implement a New Economic Policy (NEP), a temporary revival of small capitalist production to re-establish trade between town and country and increase deliveries of food to the workers in the cities. The commanding heights of the economy, the banks, the large-scale industries, the mines, rail transportation and communication system, remained in the control of the socialist state. NEP revived agriculture and small industry providing breathing space for the government to concentrate on central planning and building the foundations of a socialist economy. Large-scale building of socialism beginning with basic industry commenced at breathtaking speed. First was the task of the electrification of the entire country as Lenin had advised. Energy was the foundation for a rapid growth of production in industry and agriculture over the vast territory of Russia, indispensible to the unity of all people, of all of its nations and autonomous regions in building socialism.

The Seven Year Plan of Electrification of the USSR

"We Will Fulfill in Time"

Central planning with the emphasis on heavy industry gained momentum. An extensive network of rail, land, river, sea and air transportation systems linked all regions of the country and opened up mining, petroleum and resource extraction. Ferrous and non-ferrous metal smelting and refining and production of structural materials of all types, including a rapid increase of cement production, rose to meet rising demand.

The Soviet government allocated large sums to machine building, producing tractors and combines, trucks and automobiles and heavy lift cranes. Aeronautical scientists and engineers created new design innovations in aircraft both civilian and military. To take advantage of river networks, canals were built and a surge in vessel production both inland and seagoing were the beginnings of what was to become advanced ice breaking technology. Collectivized and state agricultural methods rapidly eliminated the scourge of famine and the country became food self-sufficient. Rural life improved, bringing culture, education, recognition and prestige
to rural workers for their accomplishments. Innovations such as tractor stations, for joint collective and state farm improvements in efficiency in land cultivation, seeding, combining and delivery were rapidly mastered by agricultural workers. Private plots increased production for family consumption and sale at local markets. The agriculture sector both collectivized and state increased the volume and variety of agriculture production.

The pace of industrialization, scientifically and technologically based, required a rise in the educational standards of the entire population. Illiteracy was eradicated. Universal free primary and secondary education was instituted. Night schools permitted workers to upgrade qualifications and many became engineers, technologists and skilled workers. The surge in the economy brought a leap in the demand for higher education especially in the fields of science, engineering and technology, biology, chemistry, physics, medicine and the arts.

The demand for more and improved consumer goods grew with the rise in incomes. Light industry expanded rapidly in food production, textiles and clothing, furniture, radios and appliances. The health and education needs of the people were provided free, paid for out of state funds. Housing, in both urban and rural areas struggled to keep up with the growing demand of urban and rural workers and their families. Rents were subsidized and flats affordable. House building cooperatives appeared with the support and encouragement of the state. Pensioners and veterans were accorded respect and the care of the state and a grateful populace.

Women entered the work force in large numbers as day care and childcare improved. The children and youth were confident about the future, assured by the care and loving attention of Soviet teachers, providing the young generation with a socialist morality encouraging individual achievement to meet the needs of socialist society.

A network of state funded worker's cultural centres, gymnasiums, local amateur performers and art groups, many attached to work places, introduced millions to culture. Mass participation in art and culture created a new generation of accomplished world-renowned artists in ballet, opera, theatre and uniquely Soviet forms of circus performance, puppetry and satirical and humorous presentations of all types. Art and culture in all of its distinct national languages and forms flourished. Literary works, music compositions, paintings inspired by the people, their life and socialist achievement gained recognition. Classical forms of art, once the preserve of the rich, when artists were dependent on exclusive salons and wealthy patrons to survive, now was state-supported and brought into the lives of the Soviet people.
Soviet sport became available to all. Sportikades, friendly all-union competitions drew millions into health and fitness and campaigns were waged against alcoholism and anti-social behavior.

**Capitalist Mass Unemployment and Socialist Economic Victories**

To properly measure the peaceful achievements of Soviet socialism it is important to note that the initial stage of the large scale building socialism after the defeat of the counter-revolution up to the terrible consequences of the Nazi invasion of June 1941 was less than 20 years.

Socialism demonstrated its capacity for economic development providing full employment and steadily improving standards of living at the very time that capitalism had fallen into another devastating global depression 1929-1939. Soviet socialism was unaffected by the Great Depression.

In the brief period of pre-WW2 peace Soviet socialism stunned the world with its vast transforming economic and social accomplishments, the result of a series of five year plans. There was work for all who wanted it. The socialist principle from each according to his/her ability, to each according to his/her work was given practical meaning as the Soviet people undertook feats of mass labour heroism.

For the first time in working class history the correspondence between labour productivity and real wage gains was in the hands of the workers themselves. Wage increases factored into five year plans could be exceeded resulting from surpluses achieved in excess of its goals. Increases in productivity by improved methods of work and innovation in technique not only improved wages but contributed to the social funds of the state, a natural moral incentive to improve work methods.²

The health and safety of workers doing high risk work was a subject of constant attention by unions and government and health authorities. Work health and safety programs were evident in work places and state funded sanitariums for work related disease and injury began to develop as a new science of public health and wellness.

Pensions were guaranteed for those who worked and leisure time and holidays and spas began to be a normal part of work life. Young Pioneer and Young Communist League gatherings, outings, summer camps were organized and expanded, creating bonds of lasting friendships and enjoyment of life that is the right and natural expectation of the young.

Such is the briefest and inadequate sketch of a few of the progressive social processes underway inside the USSR in the brief span of two decades prior to WW2. The Soviet people having established the fundamentals of socialism were on the brink of another leap forward in peaceful development when they were treacherously attacked by Hitler's Germany June 1941.

**War, the Enemy of Socialism**

War is alien to socialist development. Socialism requires a lasting peace to demonstrate its full potential. Imperialism is the opposite. Imperialism arose out of violent competition among imperialist blocs for colonies, resources, markets and plunder of the achievements of other peoples’ and societies.

The oft-quoted aphorism of Carl von Clausewitz, a Prussian general who said: “War is the continuation of politics by other means,” must ever be kept in mind when considering the causes and outcome of WW2 and its impact on the future of socialism.

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New link to Northstar Compass Online: conexions.org/CxArchive/Northstar
This is a Soviet cultural delegation circa the early 1950s, signing the guest book at Fort William City Hall. On the far right is Hazel Irene Currie, late mother of the author of this article. She represented the Canada-USSR Society that organized the event.

The cynical western imperialist view of the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union is summed up in a statement by future U.S. president Harry Truman, quoted in *The New York Times* on June 24th 1941 [see page 28], repeated in 1945 (and quoted in *TIME* on July 2nd 1951). He said: “If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany, and that way let them kill as many as possible, although I don’t want to see Hitler victorious under any circumstances. Neither of them thinks anything of their pledged word.”

Truman’s statement bears close scrutiny. Its ambivalence masks the intent of US imperialism to take advantage of the outcome regardless of the consequences for the Soviet people. Such malevolence explains the deliberate late entry of the USA on the Western front in WW2 after the Soviet Union had swept the Nazi forces from their country at terrible cost to the Soviet people and their peaceful civilizing achievements.

What needs to be said further and pondered soberly is the fact that WW2 could have been avoided. Marshal Vasili I Chuikov, defender of Stalingrad and in command of Soviet forces in the battle for Berlin, in his vivid account of the Fall of Berlin observed that war is never a single event.

It is the result of a series of events presenting options to prevent war. Those who permitted WW2 to happen did so deliberately and were just as guilty as those who stood before the Nuremberg Tribunal to account for their Nazi crimes.

German fascism could have been stopped at several junctures of its rise to power. But it wasn’t because its avowed purpose was to destroy the Soviet Union and eradicate socialism.
The neutrality of the western powers in the Spanish Civil War and the appeasement policies of British Prime Minister Chamberlain were echoed in the memoirs of Prime Minister Mackenzie King. Admiration for Hitler typified the stance of imperialism at the time.

The anti-Soviet purpose of the Anglo-American alliance throughout the period leading up to the invasion of the USSR June 1941 is a sordid record of complicity in appeasement, refusing to honour joint defense treaties to confront German fascist aggression, and the deliberate stalling of the Second Front until June of 1944, when the Soviet Union had turned the tide at Moscow, Stalingrad and Kursk, lifted the siege of Leningrad, liberated Ukraine and Crimea and then drove out the Nazi occupiers from all of Eastern Europe to the heart of Germany itself, culminating in the Battle of Berlin.

The deliberate trivializing of the WW2 sacrifices of the Soviet people and the more than 20 million who perished assumes its grotesque proportions. So does conflating Nazism and Communism. It is hard to imagine a more cowardly perversion of the historical truth and callous ingratitude for the mass heroism of the Soviet people.

“...could not have won.”

The life and death struggle of the Soviet people and government led by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and its Supreme Commander Joseph Stalin is beyond the scope of this short commentary. General Georgy Konstantinovich Zhukov whose military career spanned the period from the defeat of the counter-revolutionary forces in 1917 to the end of WW2 when he was Chief of the General Staff, Minister of Defense and member of the Politburo of the CPSU working with Stalin on a day-to-day basis said of him: “Without his stern exactingness, we could not have won.”

**Anti-Sovietism: An Imperialist Construct**

Anti-Sovietism is the continuation of anti-communism extending from the Paris Commune to our day. Anti-communism can be defined in its essence as the world view of state monopoly capitalism, imperialism having no vision of the future other than the total complete domination of finance capital and its fundamental law, the pursuit of maximum profit.

The narrative of an existential Soviet threat was deliberately contrived and formally launched by wartime British Prime Minister Winston Churchill at Fulton Missouri on March 05, 1946 in his “Iron Curtain speech” that launched the cold war. The event was staged with the British Labour Party in power led by a right wing social democrat, Labour Party Prime Minster Clement Atlee, and the Democratic Party of the USA in power led by President Harry Truman.

Churchill’s speech took place when the Soviet Union was engaged in the daunting task of rebuilding and providing its people with the necessities of life and desperately in need of a respite from war and its aftermath.

The Churchill anti-Soviet salvo came a mere eight months after the USA dropped the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, August 6th and 9th 1945, a monstrous war crime and a clear violation of the Allied Yalta Agreements regarding a joint USSR and US collaboration to defeat Imperial Japan.

The Soviet Government, honouring its allied commitment, declared war on Japan and in a matter of a few weeks routed the Manchurian Japanese
Communist Party Canada (CPC) delegation to the 23rd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) on March 29th through April 8th, 1966. Left to right: Bill Kashtan, general secretary of the CPC; Soviet Cosmonaut Vladimir Komarov; Jeanette Walsh of the Communist Party of Quebec; Don Currie, Manitoba organizer of the CPC, and an unidentified person.

Kwantung Army. The Chinese Liberation Army led by Chu The and the Korean People’s Liberation forces led by Kim II Sung had rolled back the Japanese from their respective territories. The US forces in the Asian theatre were in the final stages of overcoming Japanese resistance. The Japanese high command entered secret talks with the US High Command.

There is ample evidence that President Truman authorized the atomic bombing of Japan, not to hasten its defeat but to demonstrate exclusive US possession of the atomic weapon and its preparedness to use it to reorder the post-WW2 world in accord with its global ambitions.6

The main obstacle to US hegemony was the prestige of the Soviet Union that had made the greatest sacrifices to defeat Hitler Germany and its valiant armed forces liberating most of Europe before the US entered the war on the western front in 1944.

The Communist parties of Western and Eastern Europe likewise earned mass popular support for their heroic sacrifices in organizing resistance to Nazi occupiers. Tens of thousands, among them the legendary and revered leader of the German Communists and working class, Ernst Thalmann, perished in Nazi concentration camps. Communist led resistance in France, Italy, Greece and Serbia won mass popular support at a terrible cost to its valiant combatants.

In the eastern European countries Communists and other anti-fascists cooperated with advancing Soviet armies to defeat Nazi occupiers. They liberated those in Nazi death camps and attempted to bring Nazi criminals and their collaborators to justice. Popular Front anti-fascist governments, known as People’s Democracies, established friendly cooperative alliances with the Soviet Union, committed to building new societies and economies on socialist principles. What these states needed above all else to thrive and progress was a lasting stable peace.

In spite of the devastation and the losses in its population, the Soviet government gave moral and material support to the people of Eastern Europe that were taking the socialist path of development. The Anglo-American alliance was outraged that their plans to restore capitalism with its old discredited privileged classes throughout Europe were challenged. The US launched the Marshall Plan to prop up the western European states and pave the way for the consolidation of the power of finance capital over post-war Western European reconstruction.

Winston Churchill’s address erased all illusions of the possibility of Anglo-American post-war collaboration with the USSR to rebuild Europe. Instead an all-sided military, political, diplomatic and economic confrontation with a war-ravaged Soviet Union was launched. Preparations for WW3 were underway and nuclear war was planned to destroy
the Soviet Union and halt the advance of socialism in Europe and Asia.

The Cold War and Its Purpose

In the USA, anti-communist frenzy was organized by the House Un-American Committee (HUAC) of the US senate headed by Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy.

In clear violation of the free speech and association guarantees of the US Constitution thousands of American citizens were deprived of their employment and careers because of their beliefs.

McCarthyism gave rise to the professional anti-communists, servile, currying favour with established power to build political careers. Among such was an ambitious McCarthy assistant, Richard Nixon, a future US President. Both McCarthy and Nixon were later indicted for fraud and forced to resign.

The George Meany leadership of the AFL-CIO joined the anti-communist crusade using it as the pretext to withdraw from the World Federation of Trade Unions, (WFTU) that united socialist and capitalist workers in one federation.

The split carried the Cold War into the ranks of organized labour in capitalist states and led to the founding of the anti-communist International World Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU).

A campaign to destroy the most militant communist-led unions in the USA and Canada ensued and continued unabated into the late 1950’s. Supplanting the class struggle policies of militant communist-led unions was class collaboration business unionism.

Anti-communist frenzy set the stage for sensationalized atomic “spy” trials in Britain and Canada that unleashed an anti-Soviet witch hunt in Canada, in the frame up and jailing of Labour Progressive Party (LPP) MP Fred Rose, LPP Organizer Sam Carr and others. Atomic spy hysteria in the USA peaked with the frame up, arrest, trial and execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg in defiance of world-wide protests for clemency including appeals by the Pope and other world personalities.

NATO: Imperialist Gendarme

The de facto breakup of the WW2 anti-fascist alliance set the stage for preparations for a unilateral nuclear attack on the Soviet Union. These plans were crafted at the same time as the Anglo-US led attempt to undermine the collective security provisions of the United Nations Charter.

That Charter expressed the desire of the people of the world for a lasting peace and a means to collectively enforce it that included the vital veto provisions of the UN Security Council.

Not satisfied with a majority in the General Assembly and with the same veto power as the USSR, both the USA and Great Britain, supported by Canada on April 4th 1949 formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)—a western imperialist anti-USSR military alliance. NATO claimed to be a collective security treaty acting within the principles of the UN. The USSR promptly offered to join. Rebuffed, the Soviet Union and its allies formed the Warsaw Pact.

NATO effectively voided the Allied agreements to disarm Germany. NATO opened its command structure to Nazi generals and their staffs?
West Germany was rearmed. Nuclear missile bases established in Germany, Britain and Turkey. The missiles were aimed directly at the territory of the Soviet Union. Bomars with an eight minute flight time to Soviet territory were installed, accompanied by long range strategic bombing capability and several fleets of nuclear equipped war ships and submarine-launched rockets with nuclear warheads.

NATO was followed by a US containment policy in Asia, forming the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). The US embarked on its policy of establishing foreign military bases to all continents, designed to engage in regime change interventions as anti-imperialist movements rose in South America, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Today the number of such bases is more than 800. The US according to the Stockholm Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) spends more on its military budget than the next ten states combined. 8

The Soviet Union’s Policy of Nuclear Disarmament and the Future of Peace

The Soviet Union never used weapons of mass destruction against any other people. The military history and strategic doctrine of the USSR was based on defense. The Soviet Union was compelled to build its own nuclear defense capability taking into account the fact of the US atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the first strike use nuclear doctrine of the USA and NATO and the US strategic encirclement with nuclear weapons. 9

The era of the nuclear arms race and MAD, Mutual Assured Destruction, brought into motion a worldwide peace movement for nuclear disarmament which the Soviet government and its people gave fulsome support. The western imperialist states have no record of peace initiation, of basing foreign or military policy on a doctrine of peace. The imperialist states led by the USA base their military doctrine on demonstrating overwhelming military superiority and the threat to use it as the first option of G7 NATO foreign relations.

It is important to recall that the USSR was more than attuned to world public opinion on nuclear disarmament. It became its leading exponent. Soviet initiatives at the UN were to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and negotiate treaties to reduce and destroy nuclear arsenals and their means of delivery. The USSR initiated nuclear test cessation, promoted strategic arms limitation treaties, supported treaties to limit the spread of nuclear weapons, and supported the World Peace Council (WPC). Its peace campaigns will never be forgotten.

The Cold War canard of the two super power theory is a western imperialist historical revisionist lie often repeated by those seeking to appear to be for peace while at the same time ready to absolve the US-NATO alliance of its primary responsibility for global tensions and the threat of nuclear war.

Soviet Socialism Today

Lenin observed that state monopoly capitalism is imperialism, the last rung of capitalism beyond which there is only socialism. There are no intervening stages. We are still in the midst of that historical process. The events of 1990 and the violent counter revolutionary overthrow of the Soviet Union and the dissolution of the European system of socialist states is a tragic temporary reversal of the historical transition from capitalism to socialism begun in 1917. There is no such thing as an anti-communist anti-Soviet path to socialism.

As the international working class engages in more bitter struggles, as anti-imperialist forces continue to struggle for people’s sovereignty, as the peace movement struggles to prevent nuclear catastrophe, as the environmentalists, the mass movements for democracy and emancipation resist all forms of exploitation arising from corporate tyranny, the example of the Soviet Union, the experience of the Soviet people in daring to build a new world is an indispensable part of the victory of such causes.

That is what we celebrate on its 100th Anniversary.
Don Currie, born in 1934, is a lifelong supporter of socialism. He was National Organizer of the Communist Party of Canada from 1969 to 1972, after which he worked as a certified welder, then taught at the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) until his retirement in 1997. He’s the Editor of Focus On Socialism (FOS), Box 168, Slocan BC V0G 2C0.

July 24th 2017

FOOTNOTES

1 According to today’s calendar the date on which the Russian Revolution took place was November 7 1917. At the time Czarist Russia was still using the Julian calendar, 13 days behind our present day calendar. Thus, historically the Russian Bolshevik Revolution took place on October 25th 1917. It is important to note that in fact the October Revolution was preceded by a bourgeois revolution that overthrew the Czar Nicholas II, and was led by capitalists who were intent on continuing Russia’s participation in WW1. The Russian workers and soldiers at the front responded to the leadership of Vladimir Lenin and the Bolshevik party and took power creating a new worker peasant state that ended Russia’s participation in the imperialist war and began the task of building an entirely new socialist society.

2 In the capitalist work place techniques to improve productivity began with the hated time study methods of Taylorism. Under the guise of work efficiency, time study in practice meant speed up, fewer workers working harder and faster in a defined period of time. The goal was reduced work forces and more profits for owners and shareholders.


4 Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union Progress Books Moscow 1974

5 The Yalta meeting of the USA, Britain and the USSR agreed that as soon as the Nazis were defeated in Europe the USSR would declare war on Japan which it did on August 6th 1945 and commenced military operations August 9th.

6 Without illusions, the Soviet Government remained resolute that the agreements reached on disarming Germany must proceed as agreed. Confronting a USA prepared to use atomic weapons, the USSR maintained 3 million ground troops in Germany during the negotiations on the disarmament of Germany. When Churchill said to Stalin that Germany would be divided by negotiation Stalin calmly replied, “Germany will be decided by power.” The position of the USSR was that Germany should be disarmed but remain united. The US-Britain policy reneged on that agreement and Germany was divided ostensibly into occupation zones but a de facto West German capitalist state. There followed the founding of the GDR as a socialist state.

7 The USA and Great Britain promoted General Adolf Heusinger, Hans Speidel, and Johan-Adolf Count von Kielmansegg to the highest command posts in NATO including the command of European Ground Forces.


9 It is important to note that as a member of NATO the Canadian military is integrated with the first strike use of nuclear weapons. All Canadian governments have muted that fact. The history of the interoperability and integration of Canadian military doctrines with NORAD and NATO, arising from the anti-Soviet foreign policy of successive Canadian governments, far from a defense policy to protect Canada, is better understood as an abject capitulation to the strategic military doctrines of US military planners. Such were the decisions to construct at Canadian expense the DEW line, the attempt of the USA to station Bomarc missiles on Canadian soil, NATO German tank training exercises at Camp Shilo and Cruise Missile Testing over Canadian territory. Such violations, in practice, of a formal Canadian non-nuclear weapons policy conformed to the military policy of a foreign power—the USA—and adherence to the military doctrines of NORAD and NATO strategists based on the dispensability of Canadian territory and its people as the first line of defense of the USA in the event of nuclear war.
On the 100th anniversary of the greatest event in the history of humankind

The Truth I Know About the Soviet Union

By Kostya Parousis

During the 1946-49 civil war in Greece government troops, supported and armed by the British and Americans, defeated the Democratic Army. That Army’s remaining troops had to retreat into Albania, where they were loaded onto Soviet ships and sent to the USSR and other socialist countries. My parents were among those sent to Tashkent, the capital of Soviet Uzbekistan.

In the post-war period much was published in Greece about alleged atrocities committed by guerrillas among civilians. I refer to one alleged case.

In 1983 a book entitled Eleni was published in the USA. The book describes how during the civil war in Greece a woman named Eleni whose married name was Gazoyannis (maiden name Khaidis) was “executed by partisans.” The author’s claim was that she was put to death for arranging the escape of her children, so that they would not be "kidnapped and sent to communist countries."

The author is Eleni’s son, Nicholas Gage (altered name from Gazoyannis). After his mother’s death, he was sent along with his three sisters to America, where his father lived, where he later received journalistic education and subsequently worked as a correspondent for the New York Times in the Middle East. Nicholas Gage, as he claims in the book, was a distant cousin of my father. His mother, again according to him, during the German occupation had hidden my father along with other fighters in her storeroom.

In 1987, during the Cold War, Ronald Reagan in a speech on the USA-USSR Washington Summit told the Gage version of this story to the American people.

I read this book carefully and can say that only naive people would believe that a mother was killed because she arranged the escape of her children from a village around which battles were fought. But one thing is certain, that my distant relative was a victim of the consequences of World War II.

Back to my family’s experience after it migrated for its safety to the USSR, specifically to Uzbekistan. It was the same as that of all the Greek political emigrants and their children, who were born there and enjoyed all the benefits that all the people of the Soviet Union enjoyed. They worked in agriculture, industry and in the fields of culture and science.

Many came to occupy leading positions. They made an invaluable contribution to the national economy, to culture and sport. I mention here only two of my Greek compatriots from Tashkent. Vasilis Hadzipanagis excelled in sport, and Antula Tachuli in music.

Vasilis played for the Tashkent professional soccer club, Pakhtacor, that competed with other Soviet clubs. He also played for the USSR national team. In 1975 he repatriated to Greece with his parents, continuing his soccer career. He became a fan favourite. Further recognition came on June 22, 1984, when he was invited to join a World XI team featuring
other legends such as Franz Beckenbauer, Mario Kempes, Kevin Keegan, Dominique Rocheteau, Peter Shilton, Jean-Marie Pfaff, Hugo Sanchez, Ruud Krol, Felix Magath and his countryman Thomas Mavros for a match against New York Cosmos in New Jersey.

In November 2003 Vasilis was recognized by the Greek Football Federation as the best Greek player of the last half century. In interviews he attributed his success to the training he received in the USSR.

Antula enjoyed wide popularity in Tashkent as a singer with a remarkable voice. She participated in the central Greek ensemble, "Buzuki," known throughout the Soviet Union. After the repatriation of her family to Greece she won first prize in the annual Greek song contest in Salonika. These are just two of my Greek compatriots from Uzbekistan who achieved great successes in their careers.

We, the children of the Greek political emigrants, were very fortunate to be born in the Soviet Union. We saw how the Soviet system worked, how the welfare of the people improved day by day. We were pleased to feel part of the large Soviet family consisting of many nationalities, who lived in peace and harmony and who were always ready to help each other.

In 1966 Tashkent suffered a powerful earthquake. Many houses were damaged or destroyed. All brother republics immediately came to the rescue. The city was rebuilt in three years. During his 1971 visit to Tashkent Pierre Elliot Trudeau, speaking at a dinner in his honour, said: "The whole world has been keenly interested in the success of the people of Tashkent in rebuilding their city after the appalling earthquake. People had been amazed at the courage and endurance displayed by inhabitants of Tashkent after the calamity."

Like all Soviet people, we lived without stress, we had confidence in the future, we had everything that is necessary for normal human life, we were never afraid of losing our jobs, we all had equal opportunities, free education, the best health care in the world and a lot of free time that we dedicated to ourselves.

Thank you, Comrade Stalin, for our Happy Childhood (1936)
And here it is very appropriate to emphasize that we had a very happy childhood, because the Soviet state took care of it. For most of us, it started in kindergartens. I still clearly remember the impeccable cleanliness of its rooms, the whitened and ironed bed linen, the soft beds on which we indulged in daytime sleep, the delicious food, the playground in the large fragrant garden and the colorful New Year celebration! My memories of the kindergarten are the warmest. I think I will not be mistaken if I say that we lived a genuine instant on Earth that will never repeat itself again.

I consider it my duty to say a few words about the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, about the party of Lenin. The party led in all successes that the Soviet people achieved over the years.

At the same time, from the first day of their arrival in the USSR, our parents, like most Greek parents, lived with the hope of returning to their homeland, where fathers and mothers were waiting for them, and for some, their children.

The repatriation of the Greek political emigrants from Tashkent started in the beginning of 60’s, though in small numbers, when relations between Soviet Union and Greece started to improve. (In the post-war period, relations between the two countries became hostile, mainly because the Soviet Union assisted the Greek Communists in the civil war.

Also the Soviet Union did not recognize the outcome of the referendum held in Greece in 1946, by which it was decided to preserve the monarchy. The Greek ambassador was recalled from the USSR. Bilateral relations at the ambassadorial level were restored only in 1953.)

When in 1967 the military junta seized the power in Greece the repatriation of Greek emigrants from Uzbekistan was interrupted. It resumed again in 1974 after junta's fall.

By that time our family had already been twice refused repatriation by Greek authorities and my parents decided to go to Canada, where my mother's father and sister lived, with the hope to move to Greece from there. Subsequently, in Canada, we were told, the registration of documents for permanent residence in Greece will take a lot of time. Naturally, my father did not wait, he was impatient to see his mother after a 30 years separation from her, and he himself visited Greece in 1975.

Unfortunately, he did not return back with very good impressions of what he saw there. Maybe that's why after this trip he never again insisted on moving to Greece.

As for all the rest of our family, we did not oppose to staying in Canada, especially since in this country we found a lot of friends and acquaintances—people close to us in spirit.

Our arrival to Canada came at a time when its economic cooperation with Soviet Union, that had started in mid ‘50s, continued to gain momentum. It was a time when these two northern neighbors had fruitful cooperation in many areas and their leaders were making joint statements about the importance of preserving peace and security on Earth.

After the departure of P.E. Trudeau from the political scene, relations between Canada and the Soviet Union deteriorated. A few more years passed, and the Soviet Union ceased to exist. But its achievements will continue to serve all the peoples of our planet as a lighthouse on their way to a better life.

Konstantin Parousis is a long-term member of the board of the Toronto branch of the Canada-USSR Friendship Association.
Achievements of the Soviet People Within
The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

By Barrie Zwicker

Of course it’s more than bittersweet to reflect on the achievements listed below, reflect on the vision and bravery, the dedication, the hard work, the blood, sweat, tears, courage and forbearance of millions of Soviet people who contributed to these achievements, with the knowledge that the USSR is no more.

Elsewhere in this issue we print more than one article attempting to explain how such a magnificent train was derailed.

But this space is devoted to accentuating the positive, celebrating gains that can never be taken away. This is inner space to take pride in these. Outer space exploits, of course, are major Soviet achievements. You may have forgotten a few of these, listed below. (Only 14 of 30 we’d identified are included due to space considerations. No pun intended.) This pays tribute to those who made Soviet dreams reality, a partial list of what Soviets attained within their socialist system:

**Social Benefits**

- ✔ Right to eight-hour work day. First time in human history.
- ✔ Right to annual paid vacation. First time in human history.
- ✔ Right to work, to earn a living. First time in law.
- ✔ Right to free general, vocational, secondary and higher education. World first.
- ✔ Right to free pre-school facilities: nurseries, kindergartens, Young Pioneer camps. World firsts.
- ✔ Right to free health services. World first.
- ✔ Right to free housing. World first.
- ✔ Right to free transportation to places of work or study using state-paid travel documents. World first.

**Women’s Rights**

In addition, women were entitled to a number of privileges:

- ✔ Right to 56 days fully paid maternity, 1½ years of paid childcare pay, no interruption in the period of service for three years and a ban on dismissals of mothers by administrations.
- ✔ Right to free visiting nurse care for the babies up to first birthday.
Right to free dairy products for babies up to the age of three.

Right to free medical and sanatorium and spa treatment for pediatric disorders.

When bestowed, these rights were not even in sight in any other country. It was only after World Wars I and II, especially after World War II, that some serious social legislation was introduced in “the West.”

Similarly workers’ rights, union rights, pensions, medicare and so on were introduced in “the West,” after World War II. That such rights already had long been enjoyed in the USSR could not be ignored by the capitalist “West” but was seen as a dangerous “threat of a good example.”

In Vol. 22 and 23 (November-December 2012) of Northstar Compass the Hispano-Soviet Friendship Association contributed a guest editorial on Soviet achievements. In the earlier part of that, the compilers noted that the USSR was the first country to:

- Completely eliminate hunger, something the USA and even Canada have yet to achieve.
- Make the entire population literate.
- Establish free evening university classes for workers.
- Make water, electricity, heating and most transport free.

Not to be overlooked was the high ratio of doctors and hospitals to the population, or that the USSR was:

- Free of major ethnic, cultural and religious conflicts.

The effectiveness of the Five Year Plans was noted, enabling for instance the ambitious:

- Old age pension system.
- For decades the USSR had the best system of physical and sport training in the world.

**National Reconstruction**

Even while citizens’ rights were being elevated in the USSR, and without any outside help, the USSR restored its national economy destroyed after World War I and the Civil War and again after the Great Patriotic War. It’s hard to find a parallel in human history for such feats.

Germany’s recuperation after World War II was aided substantially by the Marshall Plan. No such plan was offered to the Soviet people, even though they had suffered more dead (military and civilian) in that terrible war than had Germany. The Soviets’ death toll was at a minimum 20 million; estimates range up to double that; a 1993 study by the Russian Academy of Sciences put it at 26.6 million. Germany, by the highest estimates, lost a total of 5 million.

**Inventions**

History shows that Russians have been more inventive than most, going back to pre-USSR times. Things [sic], a new online resource, shows the achievements of Russian science over the last 200 years from the collection of the Polytechnic Museum in Moscow. ([https://in.rbth.com/articles/2012/03/16/12_top_russian_inventions_that_changed_the_world_15164](https://in.rbth.com/articles/2012/03/16/12_top_russian_inventions_that_changed_the_world_15164)) One that spans the pre-Soviet and Soviet eras is:

**Wireless transmission:**

Alexander Popov, a professor of physics, announced the invention of a system for wireless communications at a lecture at St Petersburg University in April 1885 and displayed the world’s first radio set. Italian Guglielmo Marconi conducted similar experiments at about the same time. But it was not until 1894 that Marconi succeeded in sending a radio signal, over a distance of 1.5 miles.

Wireless transmission (that uses Morse Code) is not the same as wireless voice transmission, popularly known as radio. Popov did not invent radio, therefore. That breakthrough was by a Canadian, Reginald Fessenden.

But it was in Soviet times that wireless transmission including radio was built upon. For instance in 1959 an advance in telemetry was registered—the first Earth-space communication, by the USSR’s Luna 1 (also the first human-made object to leave Earth’s orbit).
First all-wheel drive passenger sedan

Designed and manufactured by Vitaly Grachev in 1938, it was called the GAZ-61. It could climb angles up to 38 degrees.

The first version, produced from 1940 to 1941, was a 5-seated 4-door phaeton. It was powered by a 6-cylinder 4-stroke engine with 85 hp and a top speed of 100 km/h (62 mph). Many supreme commanders of the Red Army headquarters used this car in 1941. The GAZ-61 had cross-country tread tires.


World's first mobile phone

It's widely believed that the first mobile phone was American. There's a story about the director of the Motorola mobile phone department, Martin Cooper, walking around Manhattan and pulling out of his pocket a weighty oblong box resembling a brick and making a call, which mightily surprised passers-by. This was in 1973.

Few people know that what people today call a cellphone was invented in the USSR 16 years earlier. Young Soviet radio engineer Leonid Kupriyanovich was the inventor.

In 1957 he patented the LK-1 phone. It weighed three kilograms, operated within a radius of 20-30 km and could work without recharging 30 hours. His first description of the device was published in 1955 in the Soviet amateur radio magazine Radio, as spelled out clearly in Wikipedia.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leonid_Kupriyanovich

In 1961 Kupriyanovich developed a model that fit into his pocket, weighing only 70 grams. It was demonstrated to correspondents Y. Rybcinsky and Yu. Shcherbakov of APN (Agentstwo Petschati Nowosti Russian news agency).

They wrote that the new model was prepared for wide production at one of the USSR's state enterprises. This did not happen. There must be a story there. —Adapted from an article by Artem Shapovalov.

Outer Space

The Hispano-Soviet Friendship Association assembled a list of 30 Soviet firsts in outer space. Here's a selection of 14:

1957: Sputnik 1, first Earth orbiting satellite.
1957: The dog Laika, first living creature in Earth's outer space.
1959: Luna 1, first object to orbit the moon.
1959: Luna 3 provides first images of the dark side of the moon.
1961: Yuri Gagarin is the first person to orbit the Earth, in Vostok 1.

1963: Valentina Tereshkova is the first woman in space, in Vostok 6.

1965: Venera 3 is the first probe of another planet, Venus.

1969: Soyus 4 and Soyus 5 accomplish the first docking and crew exchange in orbit.

1970: Venera 7 sends the first data by a probe from another planet (Venus).

1971: Salyut 1 is the first space station.

1971: First satellite orbit around Mars and landing (March 2).

1984: Svetlana Savitskaja in Salyut 7 is first woman to walk in space.


1987: Vladimir Titov and Musa Manarov become first team to live more than a year in space, aboard MIR.

It occurred to this writer that he could not recall these accomplishments receiving much, if any, prominence in the Western media.

Military Hardware

The USSR did not want to compete in military hardware, or militarily at all, anywhere in the world. The Soviet Union sincerely and tirelessly promoted general and complete disarmament, détente, peaceful co-existence.

Russians had experienced the full horrors of war; few in “The West” had. When’s the last time anyone heard, or saw in print, the phrase “general and complete disarmament?”

On the other hand “the West” promoted the bogeyman of “the Red Menace” and embarked on 
*general and complete armament*, to the extent on January 17, 1961 in his Farewell Address to
the Nation U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower warned: “We must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex.”

The so-called “arms race” really was an “arms chase” in which the USA aggressed in all armaments at all times starting in 1945. The USA initiated deployment of propeller bombers, jet bombers, intercontinental ballistic missiles, MIRVed missiles and counterforce systems—all equipped with nuclear weapons—from 1945 through 1990. It’s been the same since.

The USSR’s advances, and Russia’s advances in weaponry, since the collapse of the USSR, by and large have been defensive, even as the USA, NATO and “the West” now have threateningly advanced in a long-term pincer strategy to ring Russia with offensive missiles and conduct provocative military exercises right up to Russia’s borders. Whereas the US media freak out if so much as a Russian sub is spotted miles off the US coast.

Russia has every historic and contemporary reason and right to maintain military defences, having failed after decades of effort to achieve true national and international security through the best, by far, and most permanent route—disarmament and peace.

Had the Soviet Union somehow persuaded the world to achieve those twin goals, the world today would be one in which all people could breathe a permanent sigh of relief, free from anxiety and taxation for militarization, and be able to devote themselves to personal and professional fulfilment and national development in harmony with other nations, the citizens of Earth and the Earth herself.

Those who understand the peaceful vision the USSR pursued know Soviet citizens can proudly quote the words of Bolshevik Poet Vladimir Mayakovsky (1893-1930): “Read this and envy, I am a citizen of the Soviet Socialist Union!”

In 1964 The Monument to the Conquerors of Space was erected in Moscow to commemorate the achievements of the Soviet people in the exploration of outer space. The main part of the monument is a giant obelisk topped by a rocket and resembling in shape the exhaust plume of the rocket. It is 107 meters (350 feet) tall and, on the suggestion of Sergei Korolev, covered with titanium cladding. Korolev is considered by many as the father of practical astronautics. He was involved in the development of the R-7 Booster Rocket, Sputnik, and launching Laika and the first human being, Yuri Gagarin, into space.
THE SOVIET UNION: PARADIGM LOST?

By Michael Celik

Perhaps the two most enduring truths that Lenin has left us are those that eventually became fateful to his country. The first was that capitalism will never give up the idea of destroying socialism and the second one is the inevitability of advanced capitalism degenerating into imperialism. The Soviet Union succumbed to the first one and Russia now is trying to hang on for dear life against the second one.

This article attempts to deal with some causes of the Soviet Union’s demise. This should not be considered a final and comprehensive pronouncement on this topic. The collapse of the Soviet Union has given rise to a perpetual ongoing speculation as to who or what has caused such a powerful, rich and colossal country to lower its flag and throw in the towel. Those in search of short and simplistic answers will be disappointed to find that the answer is rather broad and complex. One cannot even broach this subject without noticing that the USSR was sentenced to destruction right at the time of its birth and that this death sentence was never lifted or commuted.

Foreign interventions and occupation, civil war and chaotic situations plagued the country and robbed it of its potential up to 1924. The Soviet Union had to struggle with illiteracy of its population and its transformation to cultural and economic modernity. This was followed by denial of legitimacy abroad, economic blackmail and geographic containment. The United States of America refused to recognize the USSR until 1933, long after the Russian whites ceased to be a factor in the scheme of things. In the end, the US government recognized the USSR because of its own Great Depression and concerns over Japanese expansion in Manchuria. The American recognition by itself did not end hostility towards the Soviets; it just reformulated those efforts.

Whatever antipathy and hatred towards the Soviet Union existed anywhere in the capitalist world, they paled by comparison to what was being cooked up in the German political kitchen. With American capital and domestic German grievances aplenty, nationalism and racism were tailor made to be the antidote to Soviet socialism. (Wall Street and the Rise of Hitler, Sutton, Anthony, Seal Beach, California 1976) On September 30, 1938 the British conservative Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain signed the Munich Agreement with Hitler, giving him the green light to invade Czechoslovakia and train his guns to the east.

Neville Chamberlain

Not to be outdone by their Conservative government, in 1939 the British Labour Party offered Germany a deal of mutual non interference in matters of each empire, and a sphere of influence for the German Reich in eastern and southeastern Europe. (Документы и Материалы Кануна Второй Мировой Войны Том II, Министерство Иностранных
Moreover, Chamberlain was determined that his deal with Hitler must stand against all foreign detractors.

On March 17, the Soviet Government had proposed a conference of powers, within or without the League of Nations, to consider means of seeing that there was no further German aggression. Chamberlain took a chilly view of any such meeting and on March 24, in the House of Commons, publicly rejected it. (The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich, Shirer, William L., Fawcet Publications, Greenwich, Conn., 1962. p. 480)

This appeasement opened the door to Hitler’s launching World War II. The scope of this paper does not allow mentioning numerous details of Soviet WWII losses. The country was devastated and suffered some 25-million citizens killed with many more wounded. Industrial and human resources for reconstruction were severely set back. The USSR bore the brunt of the German war machine. The United States entered the war in earnest only when it was clear the Soviets were going to win. The American attitude to this continental tragedy is perhaps best understood from the statement of Democratic Senator and future US president Harry S. Truman on June 24, 1941.

Twenty to 30 Hiroshimas would be genocide well beyond Hitler’s Holocaust.

What was not achievable through sheer application of military force against the Soviets was to be augmented with economic measures. On March 19, 1947 animosity toward the Soviet Union was on full display. “The western Allies rejected a Soviet demand for $10-billion in war reparations from Germany” as reported in The Globe and Mail. (March 19, 1997 “Moment in Time”)

In the seven years since Neville Chamberlain sent Hitler marching east, that project boomeranged. The East was now in Berlin, Vienna, Prague, Warsaw and Budapest as well as in the Far East of Asia. Where there was only one socialist country in the world at the outset, there were now 12 and not a single fascist one remained.

Destroying socialism henceforth became American obsession and raison d’être. Everything was mobilized to achieve that objective, employing both covert and overt methods, and the CIA and NATO were created to see that process through. The degree of despair and trepidation in the imperialist camp rang alarm bells in the citadels of the capitalist world because socialism began to be seen as a
viable option in post-war Europe. Resistance to Nazi occupation of Europe had been led by Communists and they emerged as a political force in countries such as Italy, Greece and France. This was while Great Britain began shedding her colonies in Africa and Asia.

Italian Communists and Socialists won a majority of seats in the parliament and were poised to take control. In January 1947 Christian Democrat Premier de Gasperi dissolved his cabinet—three days after returning from the USA, and the new cabinet had all communists removed.

A CIA-organized “letter writing camp” for American Italians that flooded Italy with 10-million letters and cards with prepaid postage. A typical letter:

*We implore you not to throw our beautiful Italy into the arms of that cruel despot communism. ... If the forces of true democracy should lose in the Italian election, the American Government will not send any more money to Italy and we won’t send any more money to you, our relatives. ...*


Other themes emphasized were Russian domination of Italy, loss of religion and the church.

These threats were backed up by the US Secretary of State George Marshall, *Voice of America* broadcasts, and all state-to-state communication. Variants of the Italian scheme were used to achieve similar political results in France and Greece. In Greece communists were massacred.

To understand this American quest to destroy communism and the Soviet Union, it is instructive to read a book by Annabelle Bucar who was an American diplomat with previous intelligence assignments. Posted to the American embassy in Moscow, Bucar was uniquely able to reveal what was going on under the guise of diplomacy. In her book, *The Truth About American Diplomats* (Russian version) she explains, as an eye and ear witness, how American policies towards the USSR were formulated by George Kennan who had been handpicked by Secretary of State George Marshall to redefine US foreign policy.

In a nutshell, Kennan’s idea was to shift American policies from “what we can do with the Soviets” to “what we can do against them.” His confrontational approach saw little modification until the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Bucar wrote: “Kennan proclaims that war between the USA and the Soviet Union is inevitable. He considers that the USA cannot allow successful socialism in the form of the Soviet Union” *(Правда об американских дипломатах, Бюкар, Анабелла, Издание Литературной Газеты, Москва, 1949 [p. 31] (Translation mine)).* Bucar further wrote that Kennan’s policy of containment of the USSR extended to conquering the whole world. Kennan saw a great promise in the atomic bomb, which he hoped would be used against Soviet cities. Promoted in the West simply as “containment,” his private view, therefore, was beyond hawkish, to genocidal.

Bucar names many other “Soviet Experts” expounding similar sadistic ideology. In a short space of time, the American Embassy in Moscow was transformed into a spying lair and a minder would control all information going to the State Department so that nothing positive about the country could pass embassy censorship. No detail of life in the Soviet Union was left out as irrelevant. Anyone obstructing this covert ambassadorial regime would risk his or her career in US diplomacy. Soviet applicants for American visas who wanted to visit their relatives would be tormented with questions about life in the USSR, completely irrelevant to the visa application.

Anabelle Bucar’s revelations have been corroborated by other writers. British journalist Ralph Parker, who knew Kennan well, shares an eye-opening anecdote in his book *Conspiracy Against Peace* [Russian version used here]. While watching throngs of Muscovites on the way to the 1945 Victory Day Celebrations from the window of the
American Embassy, Kennan remarked: “They are cheering...they think the war is over but it is only just beginning.” (Заговор против мира Пакер, Ральф, Издание Литературной Газеты, Москва, 1949, стр. 4. Translation mine).

**Soviet Security Concerns**

As the world’s only socialist country, the Soviet Union was savagely attacked by Nazi Germany with which it has had a non-aggression agreement. Hitler hated not only Jews and Communism; his hatred for the Slavs was equally fanatical. He saw Slavic countries as space for the Germans to expand into and the first Slavs to experience this were the Western and South Slavs who were not even communists at the time of Nazi attack. Hitler attacked the USSR with five million soldiers, ten times the numbers Napoleon used for his war on Russia. The Second World War was thus not only about preservation of a socialist state. It was a struggle for sheer survival of the Eastern Slavs and smaller peoples sharing the same homeland. They had to prevail and they did, chasing the enemy right to the top of the Reichstag in Berlin.

In the post WWI years, the USSR has emerged with a vastly improved geopolitical position agreed to with her wartime allies at Yalta. But the allies chose to become adversaries instead.

Once again, the country had to address the emerging foreign menace and retool its military machinery for new threats. In light of the horrific experiences of WWII, the USSR could ill afford to be caught unprepared again, especially when the adversary had nuclear weapons and elaborate plans to use them.

Whether the enemy feigned friendship or expressed hostility did not matter. The Soviet military had to be ready to meet any challenge or threat. This required a major redirection of economic resources at a time when rebuilding a ravaged country was an unavoidable must.

But security had to come first and it always did. Soviet armed forces succeeded in making war unpalatable to the other side by showing resolve, military skill, professionalism and readiness. In order to do so the country had to supply its forces with the best military tools, all produced domestically. This was only possible due to the high standards of free education the USSR achieved for its people, and the resultant superb level of state funded scientific research. At the 24th Party Congress in 1971, Premier Kosygin declared:

On the basis of the latest achievements of science and technology, many new types of modern armaments have been devised and are being produced and the combat and technical qualities of weapons have been increased. We can report to the congress that the Soviet armed forces are equipped with the latest combat equipment of the highest class. (Science and Technology as an Instrument of Soviet Policy, Harvey, Mose L., Goure, Leon, Prokofieff, Vladimir, Center for Advanced International Studies, University of Miami, 1972 [p. 16])

In the words of Henry Kissinger, 1967 was a landmark year of strategic significance. “The decisive American superiority, which had characterized the entire postwar period, had ended by 1967.”

No matter what the imperialists dreamed of or wanted badly, Soviet might was always there to bring them to sobriety and that remained so to the very end. For the Soviets, postwar complications soon arose. Yugoslavia and Albania became cultist dictatorships. The former did not like Stalin and the latter one missed him. In 1956, CIA broadcasts convinced many Hungarians to rise against their government in a false belief that the US army is coming to help them.

The same trick worked in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The deceived had to flee to their foreign master who was nowhere to be seen in their hour of need. But what the enemy did not dare do to socialist states with their military forces, they more than made up for in cowardly underhanded methods. They were big in spying, subversion, infiltration and sabotage. A 1963 Soviet book claims that the total American espionage force numbered about 100,000. (Caught in the Act—Facts about US. Espionage and Subversion Against the U.S.S.R, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1963 [p. 14])

Western intelligence operatives had close contacts with fanatical Nazi and anti-communist émigrés among whom they found willing recruits. One of their conferences was held in Toronto where demands were made on the governments for anti-Soviet aggression:

The proposals presented at the meeting, attended by Canadian and British members of Parliament and political analysts from the United States included: Providing assistance in the form of military training, transport and arms as well as other political, material and technical means of support. A similar set of proposals was presented to the US Administration in June, calling for the “integration of national anti-Soviet liberation movements into U.S. military and political strategy.”
A Word About Spying

One of the more bizarre cases successfully undertaken by American spy operatives was a 460 meters tunnel dug from West Berlin into East Berlin to tap into the Soviet military cable system. It is believed that this operation was not used a long time before it was discovered and the equipment seized by the Soviets. Facts about such operations can be seen in *Caught in the Act: Facts about US Espionage and Subversion Against the USSR* (Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow).

According to a CBS news story of March 4, 2001 ([http://www.cbsnews.com/news/a-not-so-secret-tunnel/](http://www.cbsnews.com/news/a-not-so-secret-tunnel/)) a tunnel was also dug deep underground below the Soviet Embassy in Washington where listening devices were attached to sewer pipes under the embassy. Spying continued even after Russia changed to capitalism.

Oblivious to the cost of the project, the CIA undertook to raise a sunken Soviet navy submarine armed with nuclear warheads from the bottom of the Pacific that the Soviet Navy had been unable to locate. The CIA did it clandestinely to recover secret communication equipment and codes on board. This story was later made public and documentaries were shown on TV.

The Economy

Soviet economic development and transformation were the envy the world. As Roger Keeran and Thomas Kenny (*Socialism Betrayed: Behind the Collapse of the Soviet Union*, Keeran, Roger and Kenny, Thomas, International Publishers, New York, 2004 [p. 52]) wrote:

“The peasantry represented 83 percent of the population in 1926, but 20 percent in 1975. The workers in industry, building and transportation represented 5 million people in 1926 and 62 million in 1975.”

In 1950s the Soviet Union developed at twice the rate of most advanced countries. Between 1950 and 1975, the Soviet industrial production index increased 9.85 times (according to Soviet figures) or 6.77 times (according to CIA figures), while the US industrial production index increased 2.62 times. Soviet trade relations with the outside world depended on many factors. The USSR often engaged in barter where a trade partner lacked financial resources. The Soviets however, needed foreign currencies with which to buy goods needed for their domestic needs. Their most voluminous exports earning foreign currency came from exports of oil, gas and armaments. All three being much in demand, there was little the Americans could do to prevent that. Weapons were mainly sold to countries in fear of American aggression and that were friendly to the Soviets.

Socialist economies provided stability unknown in the capitalist world. There was no inflation, unemployment or enrichment through manipulation. The Soviet rouble was a currency backed by gold, precisely 0.987412 gram of gold for one rouble until 1992. ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_ruble](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soviet_ruble))

The postwar Soviet economy was consistently the second largest economy in the world, superseded only by the United States, but it was not a close second.

American Economic Aggression

The Americans, however, tried to thwart or wreck all Soviet efforts to improve its economy. While preaching free trade as a mantra of their system, they apportioned
prosperity to countries as a reward for submissive behaviour to US interests. The political and military needs of the American Empire were the uppermost considerations. South Korea, Japan, Taiwan and West Germany enjoyed a special status.

The USSR had no choice, because of the hostility and aggressive actions on all fronts of the American Empire to spend a significant portion of its budget on defence. It was US strategy, actually enunciated by President Reagan at one point, to “bankrupt” the Soviet economy by forcing the expense of an arms chase on it. All possible means were employed by the Americans to deny the Soviets freedom to realize their economic potentials.

One tactic was preventing the Soviets from selling their technology internationally. No matter what the Soviet leaders tried, their initiatives encountered roadblocks. Even when the Soviets offered substantial benefits to a foreign business partner, the undertaking was sabotaged in infancy by various, usually secretive means. By some bizarre logic, even railway technology was considered as a defence asset to be denied them. “The Japanese Government has tightened its restrictions on railway technology transfer to the Soviet Union, allegedly for fear that Moscow may use such technology for military purposes, the economic newspaper Nihon Keizai wrote.” (The Globe and Mail, Technology Shift, July 7, 1982.)

The Americans also took extraordinary measures to prevent any new technology from falling into Soviet hands. They introduced severe penalties for anyone taking these orders lightly and used their spies to block every possibility. Fibre optics and computers were particularly guarded but also consumer items like video cameras which had some similar technology. Such items were confiscated from unsuspecting western travelers at home airports. (The Globe and Mail, “Computer users run into snag at customs,” October 29, 1986, p. B9)


Capital availability was also used to prevent Soviet economic projects from starting even though the Soviet Union had an impeccable record of compliance with terms of economic agreements and there was no danger of bankruptcy or default. “Economic spokesmen for both Vice-President George Bush and Mr. Dukakis have already expressed concerns about linkage between the credits and Western security,” read a story in The Globe and Mail headlined “Foreign bank lending to Soviets upsets the U.S.” on October 25, 1988 (p. B 32).

In an earlier instance a loan of 20 billion yen was refused. “The Soviet Union sought a Euroyen loan from Japanese banks but the negotiations were not successful, according to a spokesman for Sumitomo Bank Ltd. He declined to provide details.” (The Globe and Mail, “Soviet loan,” May 24, 1985.)

Lucrative business deals were scrapped just to please the Americans. But this did not always sit well with countries that missed out, sometimes after protracted efforts to reach an agreement. (The Globe and Mail, “Japanese want sanctions lifted,” June 23, 1982, p. B2.) These examples show us that the Americans were exercising veto power over their capitalist satellites and by extension ultimately also over Soviet economy. The Soviets were angry about these deceptions. They demanded penalties from companies which fail to honour their contracts. In one such case for a gas pipeline project German and Italian companies were unable to pursue due to American objections:

French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson said in an interview published yesterday that France was surprised the Reagan Administration extended the sanctions so soon after agreement was apparently reached on the pipeline issue at the recent Versailles summit of Western economic powers.

We were, therefore, very surprised that as soon as the American delegation got back home they took unilaterally, without consulting us, a decision that really is a decision of war, economic war,” he said. (The Globe and Mail, “Moscow threatens pipeline penalties,” July 7, 1982.)

In addition to those regular, customary, and on the spur of the moment economic hits against Soviet external economic activity, the Americans needed a permanent cattle prod to keep the USSR on its side of the economic iron curtain. They created a vile and sinister piece of legislation, the Jackson-Vanik Amendment which, once in place, would tie the hands of all future elected American governments to deal rationally with the Soviet Union.

It was all about institutionalized sadism against a country that had never done anything to provoke it. For lack of better analogy, it could be called economic McCarthyism. The Jackson-Vanik Amendment became law in 1974 and
targeted countries with “improper” economic systems as interpreted by the USA as well as countries that did not—in American eyes—permit “free emigration.” This law remained in force even after USSR was dissolved and Russia became capitalist and allowed free travel to all.

Time after time, American behaviour has proven that those lofty American pronouncements on market economy, free enterprise and democracy are hypocritical instruments for achieving economic and political advantage over others. American bans on Soviet business deals with foreign countries were actually attempts to make the Soviet Union accept American hegemony, start behaving in a submissive fashion and get used to it. The Soviets would have none of it.

The Golden Rule, American Style

The American dollar was linked to gold as part of the Bretton Woods Agreement. On Aug. 15, 1971 President Nixon delinked it, the Globe and Mail reported, “because of a rash of spending on the military and foreign aid during the Vietnam War; there wasn’t enough gold to cover the amount of dollars in circulation.” And the Americans have been printing fictitious currency ever since. By 1981, President Reagan was presiding over a deficit of $100 billion or more. He spent recklessly on the military as no president before him had, in order to bankrupt the Soviets and enrich capitalist arms corporations. By 1985, the USA had officially become world’s biggest debtor nation and has remained so to this day, adding trillions to that title. There was the possibility that the US economy would have collapsed if the Soviet Union had not been deceived by Gorbachev. But Reagan spared no expense to finish off the USSR. [http://www.nytimes.com/1985/09/17/business/us-turns-into-debtor-nation.html]

Always looking for an opportunity to do economic damage to the Soviet Union, the CIA glommed onto the fact that, as an article in The New York Times reported, the USSR had to sell 300 tons of gold worth $3.5 billion because of low oil prices and its need to import food. The CIA thought in 1982 that it was on to something.

This was after a third consecutive bad Soviet harvest. But the assessment of civilian economic experts mainly differed from that of the CIA. The situation was indeed unpleasant to Moscow but not threatening. Major points reported on March 15, 1982 in The New York Times and reprinted in The Globe and Mail included:

~Civilian economists say Moscow has well over $30-billion in gold reserves and hard currency deposits in the West, more than enough to pay off its total Western debt of $20-billion.

~US bankers say the problem for the West in applying economic pressure there is that the West itself can be hurt economically.

~Government specialists say Moscow still has a strong credit rating. Its debt is “peanuts” in relation to its $1.5-trillion economy, one specialist said, and debt service is equivalent to only about 12 per cent of its annual trade in hard currencies, a lower ratio than in Canada for example.

~Soviet watchers doubt that the Soviet economy can be pressed to the point of collapse from outside.

Gold for Grains

The planned socialist economy of the Soviet Union had no problem determining how much steel, cement or other materials the economy was going to consume. There was no problem, either, in deciding how many thousands of hectares of crops to plant.

However, the unpredictability of weather conditions played havoc with food production. Farmers of all countries have to gamble with this phenomenon and they owe their survival to good weather.

What was different in the Soviet Union, unlike under capitalism, was that there was no bankruptcy and individual farm workers were permanent employees. Whatever the weather conditions, citizens in all corners of the Soviet Union had guaranteed staple foods at low prices. Even though Soviet agriculture occasionally under-performed, nobody in the country suffered from lack of food. In years of inadequate harvests, the Soviet
Shocking, eh?

We Interrupt Regular Programming to Bring You This Important Announcement...

If you’ve read Mike Celik’s article this far, you’ll see its relevance in general and particularly on the occasion of the final print issue of *Northstar Compass*. So why the interruption? Two reasons. Your guest editor encouraged Mike to write “what he must” and “leave the editing to the editor.” The resulting 9,600 words (15 pages) were worth his time, and will reward every reader’s time. But there wasn’t room for it on paper without sacrificing seven pages of other already carefully-selected material.

Yet this is a case of less here, more totally. Specifically, the article you’ve read thus far enjoys the honour of being the first post on the new *NorthstarCompassNorth (NCN)* mirror website. (Read on page 7 of the new collaboration established between *Northstar Compass* and *Connexions*.) To resume reading, enter this in your browser:

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connexions.org/CxArchive/Northstar/nsc1709/PARADIGMLOST.htm
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A more or less typical link nowadays. Also its parts make sense. Note that “Cx” is an abbreviation for Connexions. The fragment “nsc1709” is linkese. All else is straightforward language.

An even shorter link to Cx, that puts you on the *NorthstarCompassNorth* site:

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connexions.org/CxArchive/Northstar/
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*But remember, using the longer link is faster.* It flies you DIRECTLY to Mike’s article. It saves you the time of going to the *Cx* site and navigating (although navigating has been made as simple as possible).

You’ll read of the continued meddling by the CIA in Gold for Grain transactions, about the vast anti-Soviet propaganda machine of the USA, of Gorbachev’s role in the dissolution of the Soviet Union, about what factors did NOT contribute to that dissolution and Mike’s conclusions overall.

Soon another article will be posted on *NCN* by your guest editor, a condensation to 2700 words of three brilliant articles by Aleksandr Zinoviev that appeared in the print *Northstar Compass*, originally totaling almost 7,000 words. The title is “It’s Conscious-Volitional, My Dear Watson.” Zinoviev lays out how the “Global Suprasociety” now determines history more than do “elemental” (elementary, that is) natural or spontaneous human events.

Watch *NorthstarCompassNorth* at *Cx* for more posts after that. Now log on, if you haven’t already, to read the rest of “The Soviet Union: Paradigm Lost.”
Socialist Revolution Core Issue: Dictatorship of Proletariat

The Great Soviet October Socialist Revolution’s 100th Anniversary (1917-2017) is being commemorated around the globe by the working class and by Marxist-Leninists.

By Himalayan

IT WAS IN RUSSIA that such a Revolution was achieved for the very first time in world history. This historic event led to many and rapid changes. During the Second World War, Lenin’s successor Comrade Joseph Stalin led the Red Army in defeating Hitler’s Fascism and liberated the East European countries.

But later, two successive renegades laid the foundation for further political changes. Former Premier Nikita Khrushchev introduced a type of revisionism in the early 60’s that led to capitalism in its infant stage. This was continued under former President Mikhail Gorbachev and was completed in 1990. Now there is a capitalist government in power.

The working class and Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries must learn from this history of, first, Socialist Revolution and the counter-revolutionary coup. Understanding this is celebrating the October Revolution in a meaningful way.

We shall continue to travel in this world based on the teachings of our great teachers Marx and Engels. We should not have confusion or conflicts about their lofty principles.

A number of research projects have been completed about the deviation from accepted principles in socialist countries. But more research needs to be done into counter-revolution.

It is vital not to let down the socialist economic method and not to ignore the proletarian dictatorship. There is no doubt that these two are very significant. The second is considerably more important than the first.

When the proletarian dictatorship is abandoned in a socialist country, the capitalist forces make use of the situation and are able to secure power. The Soviet Union, regretfully, is a classic example. During the leadership of comrades Lenin and Stalin it was maintained with strict regulation. As a result, counter-revolution was stillborn. Lenin and Stalin often pointed out that even in a socialist structure, the class struggle continues within the party and state. There could even be more struggle within the party and the state than from the outside.

After the demise of Comrade Stalin, a group of the party leaders under the guidance of Khrushchev and colleagues deceitfully captured political power, abandoned the proletarian dictatorship and labelled Comrade Stalin a cruel dictator. In doing so, they succeeded in burying the socialist structure of USSR.

In order to introduce capitalist policies both within the party and state, they declared the revisionist political structure as an “all people’s party and all people’s state.” They were thus able to transform a party and government led by the working class into a capitalistic party and government.

Proletariat dictatorship originated during the Paris Commune Revolution. On March 18th, 1871 the working class in Paris led a rebellion against the cruel reactionary
rule of the government in power and succeeded in overthrowing it.

However, the reactionary ruling class in power responded with heavy armed force and was able to crush the uprising. As a result, this rebellion lasted only 72 days.

Karl Marx, who compiled the experience gathered from the Paris Commune Revolution, pointed out that the lack of an organized revolutionary army within the working class was the root cause for their failure. Marx wrote that if such an army had existed, the working class of Paris would have obliged their army protect the Paris Commune power.

After the Soviet Revolution, Comrades Lenin and Stalin rigidly followed Marx's teachings, hence there was no opportunity for the resurgence of capitalism during their period.

After the success of Chinese Revolution in 1949, a socialist structure was established and a similar problem arose. Comrade Mao Zedong, who led the Chinese Revolution, frequently pointed this out. In order to protect China from capitalist forces, the party and the government initiated the "great proletarian cultural revolution" in 1966. But opposing reactionary forces infiltrated the revolutionary movement, and misdirected it, causing its downfall. After the demise of Comrade Mao Zedong, the proletarian dictatorship was abandoned and a semi-capitalist system emerged.

It can be summarised this way: the dictatorship of the proletariat must be won and then continuously applied. This is indicated by experiences ranging from Paris Commune up to those in ex-socialist countries.

Therefore the main issue is not so much the working class capturing power, arising from capitalist situations within a country.

Rather the main issue is preserving, protecting and moving forward with the captured power.

It is suicide to abandon the principles of proletarian dictatorship. It is "throwing away the child with the bath water."

There must be a clear idea about proletarian dictatorship. Without this fundamental thinking, all other revolutionary activities will go to waste, firing arrows without a target, as it were.

Therefore the proletarian revolutionaries must concentrate on their target and apply Marxism and Leninism in a revolutionary way.

Himalayan is an ex-member of the Marxist-Leninist party of Sri Lanka.

People always have been the foolish victims of deception and self-deception in politics, and they always will be, until they have learned to seek out the interests of some class or other behind all moral, religious, political and social phrases, declarations and promises.

— Vladimir Lenin —
How Will Capitalism End? and What is the Future of Socialism?

There is no depth of cruelty, perfidy or brutality that [the capitalist rulers in Europe and America] would shrink from in order to protect capitalism.

– Bertrand Russell

By Barrie Zwicker

British philosopher, mathematician and political activist Bertrand Russell is one of the greatest minds and hearts of all time, ranked with the likes of Karl Marx and Albert Einstein.

Russell and Einstein—each intellectually brilliant, multi-faceted and politically progressive—teamed up in 1955 during the Cold War when Russell was 83, to issue the Russell–Einstein Manifesto. It highlighted the dangers posed by nuclear weapons and called for world leaders to seek peaceful resolutions to international conflict.

July 9, 2017 marked the 62nd anniversary of the Manifesto. David Krieger of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation (NAPF) calls it "one of the greatest documents of the 20th century."

Russell was a practicing socialist all his life. At 21, taking his cue from "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his work" he walked the talk, giving away most of his large inherited fortune. He was a lifelong campaigner for peace, serving jail time more than once in its pursuit. His insistence on equality for women brought him into repeated conflict with "the authorities."

The year 2017 is the 97th anniversary of publication of Russell’s 1920 book The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism. Written two years before the founding of the Soviet Union, the book is based in part on Russell’s personal interviews with Lenin, Trotsky and Maxim Gorky. Russell reissued the book in 1948, writing in the preface that his views on Russian communism had not changed “in all major respects.”

What were those views? In the Spring 2017 issue of the Bertrand Russell Society’s publication Bulletin there’s a five-page review of part 1 of The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism by Russell scholar Thomas Riggins. Retired from government service, Riggins is Adjunct Assistant Professor of Humanities at NYU School of Professional Studies. In this article I quote Riggins’ review extensively (well, embarrassingly much), add references from Wolfgang Streeck’s 2016 book How Will Capitalism End?, and from the book The Great Conspiracy: The Secret War Against Soviet Russia and contemporary evidence from mainstream and alternative media sources.

That Russell was a socialist hardly can be argued. But was he a Bolshevik? Riggins says yes, writing: "It is worth noting that Russell considers himself to be ideologically..."
a political Bolshevik himself!” Riggins quotes Russell: “I criticize them only when their methods seem to involve a departure from their own ideals.” This is quite an admission for the future third Earl Russell, Riggins notes, “as it entails belief in a collectivist society based on central economic planning and an abolition of private property in the means of production and distribution and most other areas of economic life.”

It is perhaps a tribute to the perverse power of “Western” propaganda that, as Riggins said in an introduction to a talk he gave in June 2017 in Connecticut about The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism: “This book has long been considered a ‘classic’ of anti-communism and a statement of Russell’s rejection of Soviet Marxism. A close reading, however, shows that it is actually an endorsement of what later became known as Leninism.”

The Russell of 1920 wrote, according to Riggins, that Bolshevism “is a radically new political movement which is a combination of characteristics of the French Revolution with those of the rise of Islam.” That Islam today is named or accepted as an existential threat by so many—particularly in the USA, replacing communism as a bogeyman—is not lost on Riggins. Probably another book right there.

He writes that Russell considered the most important fact about the Russian Revolution was its “attempt to realize socialism.” Quoting Russell: “Bolshevism deserves the gratitude and admiration of all the progressive part of mankind.”

Riggins writes that Russell “saw three possible trajectories that the Russia of 1920 would be faced with, due to the hostility of the capitalist world.” The first was defeat by the capitalists, the second victory by the Bolsheviks, and third “a prolonged world war” which would destroy civilization.

**The Long Western Capitalist War Against Socialism**

In effect, there has been a 100-year war by capitalism against socialism. The brief interlude of 1939 to 1945 when “the Allies” made common cause with the Soviet Union against Nazi Germany was an unplanned and unwelcome anomaly in capitalism’s otherwise unrelied enmity to communism and socialism. And for that matter any government, people or group choosing independence over colonialism and other than a capitalist socio-economic system.

WikiLeaks, a great source of anti-imperialist facts, provides chapter and verse on U.S. involvement in overt and covert "regime change," usually involving violence. Starting in 1846 with the Mexican-American War (instigated with a false flag operation) through currently to Syria, Wikipedia lists at least 36 cases of U.S. unilateral illegal interventions over 171 years. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Sates_involvement_in_regime_change)

Back to Riggins: he credits Russell with seeing "something through a glass darkly." He writes: “The major capitalist assault (by the Nazis) to defeat the Bolsheviks was repelled, but the effort both in preparing for it and executing it did lead to a regime which sullied the ideals for which it stood and which history refers to as ‘Stalinist’ rather than ‘Napoleonic.’”

Riggins might have dated the “major capitalist assault on socialism” back to the very beginnings of Bolshevism. There’s plenty of damning evidence of this in the simplicity of Winston Churchill’s declaration “We must strangle the Bolshevik baby in its cradle,” whether that meant “direct imperialist invasion or the sponsoring of terrorism.”

Then there’s the historical fact, of the Allied Expeditionary Force of mid-1918, comprised of soldiers from the USA (15,000 troops), Canada (13,000), Great Britain, Australia, India, Japan (70,000) and Italy. Romania, Greece, Poland, China and Serbia also sent contingents in support of the intervention that illegally but unsuccessfully invaded Russia.
The most ideological of the three reasons put forward for the intervention by the British and French governments was to “resurrect the Eastern Front by defeating the Bolshevik army with help from the Czechoslovak Legions and an expanded anti-Bolshevik force of local citizens and stop the spread of communism and the Bolshevik cause in Russia.”

A great deal of detail about the attempted strangulation of the infant Communism can be found in the 1946 book The Great Conspiracy: The Secret War Against Soviet Russia by Michael Sayers and Albert E. Kahn. Just a fragment of their report on events of the summer of 1917:

What [U.S.] Ambassador [David] Francis lacked in knowledge of Russian politics he made up for in the strength of his convictions. These he derived mostly from the lurid gossip of the Czarist generals and millionaires who flocked around the American embassy in Petrograd. On April 21, 1917, Francis sent a secret telegram to Robert Lansing, the U.S. Secretary of State: “EXTREME SOCIALIST OR ANARCHIST NAMED LENIN MAKING VIOLENT SPEECHES AND THEREBY STRENGTHENING THE GOVERNMENT; DESIGNEDLY GIVING HIM LEWWAY AND WILL DEPORT OPPORTUNELY.”

This kind of presumptive arrogance has been a hallmark of US imperialism from the beginning. “The strain of the Second World War and Cold War,” writes Riggins, “did finally defeat ‘Bolshevism’ (now in quotes) and led to the demise not of civilization itself but of the new socialist civilization that the Russians had dreamed of founding.”

Nevertheless, Russell’s views indicate that the attempt of the Bolsheviks “was a noble one which will inspire future generations to struggle on for the construction of a socialist world.” The inspiration of this final print issue of Northstar Compass is a small proof of Russell’s prescience.

Elsewhere in this issue we reprint Gemma Weedall’s essay in which she states that eco-socialism—a blending of planetary and social responsibility—promises to be the most hopeful successor to communism.

**On Russell, Religion and Fanaticism**

While Russell, Riggins writes, “shares the political idealism of Bolshevism, there is another side to it that he vehemently rejects. He thinks that they act like religious fanatics (fundamentalists) in the way they defend their basic philosophical ideals. He gives their adherence to philosophic materialism as an example. Russell says ‘materialism ‘may be true’ but the dogmatic way Bolsheviks proclaim it is off putting to one who thinks that it cannot be scientifically proven to be true.” He (Russell) writes:

“This habit of militant certainty about objectively doubtful matters is one from which, since the Renaissance, the world has been gradually emerging, into that temper of constructive and fruitful skepticism which constitutes the scientific outlook.

But Russell, Riggins continues, “must have surely known that those at the onset of a ‘splendid attempt’ to build a brave new world could ill afford to indulge in skepticism—that would come in a more settled time.”

Then Riggins states: “But no sooner does he say this than he basically takes it back and mitigates the charges against the Bolsheviks on this count. Speaking of the capitalist rulers in Europe and America in 1920 Russell says ‘there is no depth of cruelty, perfidy or brutality’ that they would shrink from in order to protect capitalism and if the Bolsheviks act like religious fanatics it is the actions of the capitalist powers that ‘are the prime sources of the resultant evil.’ If that is what it takes to get rid of capitalism, Russell seems to say ‘So be it.’ Anyway he hopes that when capitalism falls the fanaticism of the communists will fade away ‘as other fanaticisms have faded in the past.’”

Unlike Marx who did not necessarily hold individuals guilty for the roles they play in the economic history of mankind, Russell, Riggins states, “is full of moral indignation when it comes to the capitalist rulers of his day.” He quotes Russell: “The present holders of power are evil men, and the present manner of life is doomed.” Riggins goes on: "Let us hope this present economic crisis
which began in 2008, and from which we have yet to recover, is the heralding of that long awaited doom and that the election of Donald Trump as US president is a sign of decay rather than a resurgence of the power of ‘evil men.’”

Communism and Christianity

I grew up in a United Church manse, a son of a very progressive, that is to say leftwing, clergyman father. I learned from an early age that the lesson of the Sermon on the Mount was in line with socialism or Communism in its basics.

Later I learned that if there were an historical Jesus (a matter of legitimate theological debate) “He” was a radical, in the best sense. Why else would the powers-that-be put “Him” to death? His casting out of the money changers from the temple is not lost on socialists who agree with the drift of the New Testament. Later I became, to use my own self-labelling, an atheist Christian socialist humanist and one who arrived at the opinion that Russell was the greatest human—that I know of.

That Russell informs us that communism inspires people with hopes “as admirable” as those of the Sermon on the Mount did not surprise me. As Riggins writes: “So Christians at least should be willing allies of Communist movements if they only knew their own ideals (if Russell is right that is).”

Riggins adds, however, that Russell says Communists hold their ideals just as fanatically as Christians “and since ‘cruelty lurks in our instincts’ and ‘fanaticism is a camouflage for cruelty’ Communism is ‘likely to do as much harm’ as Christianity has done.”

It’s an interesting comparison of two belief systems Russell says overlap, because he suggests, as I read it, that the common denominator for the ills of each system is human nature. That Soviet communism recognized this common denominator is shown, it seems to me, in its goal of developing “a new Soviet man.” Author and philosopher Bernard Byhovsky, Ph.D. wrote: "The new man is endowed, first of all, with a new ethical outlook." (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Soviet_man)

My view is that if the mistakes of communism about equal those of capitalism (to me a questionable thesis), and for that matter if the mistakes of communism about equal those of Christianity (also questionable) it remains that communism and Christianity have more in common with each other than do either have in common with capitalism.

Communists and socialists at least have the aim of social and economic equality, whereas capitalists not only do not even try for these, they aim for inequality in a Hobbsian dog-eat-dog jungle where might is right and the 99% are “losers.” Regrettably, most professing Christians do not see Christianity the way my father did, nor do most see Jesus as a radical, or his overturning the tables of the money changers in the temple as highly significant. With noble exceptions such as Archbishop Romero, Dorothy Day and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Christians don’t seek radical changes toward economic justice.

Is Capitalism Doomed?

“Russell says capitalism is doomed,” according to Riggins, “because it so bad, so unjust that working people will not put up with it much longer. Indeed ‘only ignorance and tradition’ keep it going. Well, ‘ignorance and tradition’ still seem to have a lot of steam left.” Here I would take issue with Riggins: ignorance and tradition, as words and concepts, do not begin to suggest the immense propaganda and wealth power of capitalism—exercised through its stranglehold on the educational system, the mass media, the state’s surveillance resources and the corruption of all classes and sub-classes, such as the careerists and academics dependent on the national military surveillance state.

“According to this,” says Riggins of Russell’s prediction, “the game should have been over in the 1970s. Russell may have been off by 30 years. It is still possible that the world crisis ignited in 2008 will lead to a general collapse or least to further destabilization.”

… Christians at least should be willing allies of Communist movements if they only knew their own ideals (if Russell is right that is). —Riggins
Here the writing of Wolfgang Streeck in his recent book *How Will Capitalism End? Essays on a Failing System* (Verso, 6 Meard Street, London W1F 0EG) becomes germane. Streeck notes that leading thinkers repeatedly have predicted the doom, even the imminent doom, of capitalism but so far none of these prophecies has been borne out. Capitalism is a resilient steamroller that survives crises the way cats reputedly have nine lives.

On page 68 he writes about “plutonomy,” or “oligarchic redistribution.” Under it, says Streeck:

...the Keynesian bond which tied the profits of the rich to the wages of the poor is severed, cutting the fate of economic elites loose from that of the masses.

This was anticipated in the infamous “plutonomy” memorandums distributed by Citibank in 2005 and 2006 to a select circle of its richest clients, to assure them their prosperity no longer depended on that of wage earners.

Oligarchic redistribution and the trend toward plutonomy, even in countries that are still considered democracies, conjure up the nightmare of elites confident that they will outlive the social system that is making them rich. Plutonomic capitalists may no longer have to worry about national economic growth because their transnational fortunes grow without it; hence the exit of the super-rich from countries like Russia or Greece, who take their money—or that of their fellow citizens—and run, preferably to Switzerland, Britain or the United States. The possibility, as provided by a global capital market, of rescuing yourself and your family by exiting together with your possessions offers the strongest possible temptation for the rich to move into endgame mode—cash in, burn bridges, and leave nothing behind but scorched earth.

While he is surgically critical of capitalism, Streek’s not willing to become the latest false prophet of its doom.

Rather he writes: “Ours has become a world defined by declining growth, oligarchic rule, a shrinking public sphere, institutional corruption and international anarchy, and no cure to these ills is at hand.”

This is a sober analysis but also its own sort of prophesy: no immediate hope. This can be taken as a challenge by those of us who see as our only or best hope a (fairly rapid) switch from the *Cancer Stage of Capitalism* (as Canadian John McMurtry calls it in his book with that title) to Eco-Socialism, as Gemma Weedall and Canadian Naomi Klein would pose it.

**Capitalism’s “Fear Economy” and Need for Perpetual War**

Personally I doubt that the victory of Eco-Socialism can be achieved without outing the dirtiest secrets of monopoly capitalist hegemony: the colossal serial false flag decep-
tions of the so-called “war on terror,” starting most iconically with 9/11. These non-stop decep-
tions—London 7/7, Bali 1 and Bali 2, Spanish train bombings, Charlie Hebdo, Brussels, Paris and on and on—have created a world of illusion, a world of perpetual alarm, enmity and perpetual war that can only be maintained by perpetual systemic multi-faceted psychological warfare against domestic publics, to keep them in a permanent state of bogus anxiety, ignorance and fear. The Fear Economy, as Rick Salutin calls it. The public is mesmerized into silence in the face of announcements of multi-billion arms expenditures even in Canada.

The word “threat” is totally overused. Not incidental is the continuing increase in con-
sumption of opiates. Big Arms, Big Oil and Big Pharma are linked, now using Big Data, in a deep and wide-ranging conspiracy against humanity in order to achieve their psychopathic short-term satisfactions of greed and power. Streek is suggesting that the human experiment may not end well. I fear he offers considerable evidence pointing in that direction.

**The War on Taxation**

From Streek’s book there’s only room here for one aspect,
extreme antagonism to taxation through capitalism’s think tanks, penetration of academia and manipulation of the public through controlled mass media. In a sub-section of chapter 4, entitled “A New Regime,” he writes:

Closely related to this [oligarchic redistribution] is the third disorder, the plundering of the public domain through underfunding and privatization. I have elsewhere traced its origin to the twofold transition since the 1970s from the tax state to the debt state to, finally, the consolidation or austerity state. Foremost among the causes of this shift were the new opportunities offered by global capital markets since the 1980s for tax flight, tax evasion, tax-regime shopping and extortion of tax cuts from governments by corporations and earners of high incomes. Attempts to close public deficits relied almost exclusively on cuts in government spending—both to social security and to investment in physical infrastructures and human capital. As income gains accrued increasingly to the top 1 per cent, the public domain in capitalist economies shrank, often dramatically, starved in favour of internationally mobile oligarchic wealth.

A recent development that runs counter to Streeck’s pointing to cuts to public infrastructure is the essentially privatized funding of large infrastructure projects through the unnecessary new Canadian Infrastructure Bank. (The Bank of Canada can loan to government at low rates of interest.)

So roads, bridges, public transit, airports, seaports and more become profit centres for the corporate sector but with citizens being corralled into taking the ultimate risks.

In a Toronto Star column on July 6, 2017 headlined “In praise of the income tax, on its 100th birthday,” Linda McQuaig puts the federal income tax in a deservedly positive light. Suitably for Canada’s 150th birthday, she writes: “The establishment of an income tax should be regarded as a nation-building event – ultimately as important as what was achieved on the battlefield at Vimy or the conference room in Charlottetown.”

The progressive income tax is the fairest of taxes, she writes, and “made it possible for Canada to develop into the advanced society that we are today, enabling us to raise the revenue to fight the Second World War and then create strong public programs in health care, education and social insurance that have pushed us toward the top of every global index of human development.”

This explains “why collectively we can create an excellent public health care system for all, while the US, abandoning its citizens to the marketplace, ends up with a far more costly system that leaves tens of millions uninsured.”

The origins of the income tax reflect very badly on capitalism. “Pressure for the tax arose among working people who were risking their lives in the trenches of the First World War, while back home Canada’s elite grew wildly rich in the revved-up war economy.

The establishment of an income tax should be regarded as a nation-building event – ultimately as important as what was achieved on the battlefield at Vimy or the conference room in Charlottetown.”

As the Conservative government considered imposing conscription, a rallying cry arose from labour and farm organizations: ‘No conscription of men without conscription of wealth!”

Russell and Looking Back and Forward

Relating all this back to his review of Russell’s The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism Riggins, although admiring of Russell, finds many instances where Russell contradicts himself, makes illogical statements and inserts opinions that even for the time were questionable.

All this said, Riggins writes finally in his review of part 1 of the book:

[Russell] concludes part one of his book by saying, quite rightly I think,
that the Bolsheviks "are neither angels to be worshiped nor devils to be exterminated, but merely bold and able men [he should have added "and women"] attempting with great skill an almost impossible task."

One hopeful straw in the wind to this writer is capitalism's overreach. The overly-rich, overly-privileged and overly-powerful tend not to have a regulator alarm that will flash "enough is enough." Australian millionaire Rupert Murdoch once was asked on TV when he would consider he had enough wealth. He replied you can never have enough.

The business pages of the bourgeois press have always carried detailed telling information about capitalism. For instance, "shareholder value" is the holy of holies. If a company with high shareholder value is corrupt, is fined millions for polluting or for fraud, produces dangerous drugs or nuclear weapons, that’s just fine with the "investment community." So long as shareholders—a minuscule fraction of humanity—profit.

But lately the excesses of capitalism have emerged as mentionables in, for instance, the Report on Business section of The Globe and Mail. Just one example is a column on May 14, 2017 by Carl Mortished, a Canadian financial journalist based in London, England. The headline is "The totalitarian capitalism of tech giants should trump your fears of populism."

Mortished begins:

Of all the worrying things about populism, the most disturbing of all is that it doesn’t really exist. This terrifying anti-intellectual, anti-immigrant, protectionist ideology that is sucking up votes like a giant vacuum cleaner is merely a phantom that obscures our view of the new corporate tyrants that govern our world.

He continues:

The stock market tells us that the world’s most powerful economic assets are a couple of media businesses (Google and Facebook) and Amazon, a retailer. Beneath the cozy veneer lies an amoral world of ruthless exploitation, political manipulation and gargantuan personal vanity.

Later, the centrality of tax avoidance, tax evasion (what’s the difference, my socialist friend Terry O’Connor asks) and wholesale distortion of the economy by the powerful “disruptors” of techdom is spelled out by Mortished:

The sheer scale of Amazon’s market power over retailing would not be possible without political collusion. [...] Jeff Bezos, Amazon’s founder, was able to secure – through intense lobbying of Republican senators – the passage of the Internet Tax Freedom Act, a bill that prevents any government body from imposing Internet-specific taxes. It enables Amazon to leapfrog state sales taxes by avoiding a bricks and mortar presence on the ground while precluding any attempt to tax the firm in its disembodied state in the ether.¹

"In the political climate of the United States today," writes Mortished, "monopoly per se is not a sin. He cites PayPal boss Peter Thiel as saying that "technology disruption is not just about money, but changing the way society is organized."

It’s a “perverse glorification of entrepreneurship as the solution to all the world’s problems,” says Mortished. He concludes: "It's not populism that we should fear; it is totalitarian capitalism and it's coming to a website near you."

So both likely and unlikely voices are providing criticism and inspiration for a much fairer and peaceful world.

To answer the questions in the headline of this essay, "How Will Capitalism End?" and "What is the Future of Socialism?" it appears to this writer that the first question perhaps should be: "Will capitalism end, at least in our lifetimes?" and that the answer to the second question is that the future of socialism is in our collective hands. Both questions and both answers are complicated because of the ever more challenging world we face—technologically, environmentally and otherwise—and because of speed-up and scale-up. It’s no time to be sanguine and all hands are needed on board.

Barrie Zwicker, a former mainstream newspaper, radio and TV journalist, is a member of the Bertrand Russell Society.

FOOTNOTE
1 Riggins, in an email discussion with the author, correctly notes that sales taxes are regressive and anti-working class. At the same time, as per Mortished, corporations seek—and by and large succeed—in defeating or evading all kinds of taxes, and by any measure do not pay their fair share. Riggins agrees that the benefit working people receive by not having to pay sales taxes on purchases from Amazon “is an accidental by-product of Amazon’s profit-seeking,” adding, “Nevertheless it is a benefit.”

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Capitalism is failing the planet.

Climate change is a wake-up call for widespread democratic action.

Photo: Zeb Parkes
Climate change is the biggest and most urgent threat facing humanity today.

Global temperatures rise at an unprecedented rate. Earth’s 2016 surface temperatures were the warmest since modern record keeping began in 1880, according to independent analyses by NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The year 2016 was the warmest year on record globally, for the third year in a row.

In Australia in 2014, more than 150 weather records were broken, including that country’s hottest day, week, month and year on record. On January 31st, 2017 the Australian Broadcast Corporation reported: “Sydney’s Observatory Hill, at The Rocks, has recorded nine days of temperatures 35C and above, equalling the previous record set more than 120 years ago in the summer of 1895–96.”
(http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-01-31/hottest-summer-ever-and-it-is-only-january/8225840)

These records and other such records worldwide are unlikely to be long-standing.

Carbon dioxide levels recently reached 400ppm for the first time in recorded history – what NASA climate scientist Dr Michael Gunson says should be a “psychological tripwire for everyone.”

Carbon dioxide and methane levels in the atmosphere are higher than at any time in the last 650,000 years, according to a February 2008 report, “Climate Change: Meeting the Challenge to 2050,” in Policy Brief, issued by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). (https://www.oecd.org/env/39762914.pdf)

According to two independent studies by climate scientists, the collapse of much of the West Antarctic Ice Sheet may now be irreversible. That could ultimately mean 10 feet of sea level rise. The world’s coastal cities would face inundation. Not enough sea walls could be built to stop the seas.

According to the daily Environmental News Service: “In terms of the overall cost of damages, they are: Miami, which is at greatest risk, followed by New York, New Orleans, Tampa and Boston.

Miami, Florida is built right at sea level. (Photo courtesy NOAA)

“The other five are: Guangzhou, China; Mumbai, India; Nagoya, Japan; Shenzhen, China; Osaka, Japan. (http://ens-newswire.com/2013/09/03/10-coastal-cities-at-greatest-flood-risk-as-sea-levels-rise/) As a result of these drastic changes in the Earth’s weather patterns, caused by rising greenhouse gas emissions, we see an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events around the world. From bushfires and droughts, to floods and cyclones, these disasters are devastating communities, hitting the poor the hardest.
On the other hand, the OECD report states: “Reducing GHG emissions can create a ‘virtuous circle’ that has significant co-benefits in other areas as well.

“Measures taken to significantly reduce GHG emissions would likely also reduce air pollution and improve human health. These pollutants cause acid rain, and act as precursors to ozone formation, which affects respiratory systems and aggravates asthma.”

**AUSTRALIA’S ROLE**

Australia is one of the highest carbon emitters per capita in the world. But it is our role as a global exporter of fossil fuels that is most notable; Australia is the world’s largest exporter of coal, and home to the world’s largest coal port in Newcastle. Australia continues to play an imperialist and exploitative role in the region, and take virtually no responsibly globally for its significant contributions to the climate crisis.

The emissions from this export industry are never included in official measurements of national emissions. Fossil fuel companies in Australia are subsidised with billions of dollars a year, and have aggressively fought back against any policy proposals to tax their super-profits.

If the proposed Adani “mega” coal mine in Queensland’s Galilee Basin goes ahead, it will be the largest in Australia’s history, and will produce more than 705 million tonnes of carbon dioxide each year, more than doubling the nation’s current emissions.

**CANADA’S ROLE**

Canada also plays an outsized role in producing greenhouse gases. Alberta tar sands extraction activities contributed about 9.3 percent of Canada's total GHG emissions in 2014, equal to approximately 0.1 percent of global emissions. Since then that amount has increased and is projected to increase for years to come. Most of the fossil fuels extracted are for export. Large pipeline projects have become politically controversial to a growing percentage of the population.

As the OECD’s report, “Climate Change: Meeting the Challenge to 2050,” already referred to, continues: “It is expected that oil- and gas-producing countries (including Russia) would suffer the biggest GDP loss from efforts to curb climate change, whichever model is used, because of their economic vulnerability to taxing the carbon content of fossil fuels and their products. The losses would be particularly large in oil-exporting countries which subsidise national energy consumption.”

PHOTO: Alex MacLean’s New Photos of Canada’s tar sands are Shocking (DeSmog Canada)

The Trudeau government’s decision is to push back new methane gas regulations by three years. And this government promotes itself as a leader in the fight against global climate change.

OTTAWA—The Liberal government’s decision to delay its new methane gas regulations by three years is being attacked by environmental activists as a blow to Canada’s climate commitments and a possible capitulation to the oil industry. Dale Marshall, national program manager with Environmental Defence, told the Star that curbing methane gas is one of the easiest ways to reduce emissions that cause climate change. The fact that the government is putting off action on this low-hanging fruit in the climate fight demonstrates a “total” lack of leadership, Marshall said.—The Toronto Star

As the Canadian Arctic continues to warm—exponentially—trillions of cubic metres of methane will be released into Earth’s atmosphere. It’s already started.
A Florida climate scientist, speaking on *CBC Radio One’s* program *The Sunday Edition*, said that by 2050 methane levels could reach a point of suffocation for human beings. That would include babies born in 2017. They will be age 33 when possibly they along with everyone else, suffocate to death. It happened back in the day to children who climbed into abandoned refrigerators and closed the doors behind them.

If the human species follows their example globally there will be no one to come and rescue us, no refrigerator door to open.

But if Canada adopted a wartime approach in switching to alternative sources of energy, it would produce many jobs to soften or even erase the blow to the tar sands workforce.

**CAPITALISM VS THE CLIMATE**

If we continue with capitalist business as usual, there will be disastrous consequences for humanity.

As 350.org founder Bill McKibben puts it, “if they carry out their business plans, the planet tanks.” We need to rewrite this script and go down a different path.

Capitalism is in unavoidable conflict with environmental sustainability because of three key features that are inherent to the system:

*Profit motive:* The motivating force of capitalism is the never-ending quest for profits and accumulation; all other areas suffer as result.

*Unfettered growth:* Capitalist economies must continually expand, which is incompatible with the Earth’s defined boundaries and finite resources. Marx called this the “treadmill of production” and it was one of his most valuable ecological insights.

*Externalities:* Social and environmental costs are externalised and unable to be accounted for in capitalist economics.

In reality, the environment is not something “external” to the human economy as capitalism tells us; it constitutes the essential life support systems for all living creatures.

A system that is unable to take this into account is not “rational” and “efficient,” but paving the way for its own destruction.
Marx and Engels’ conception of the Earth as a dynamic and complex whole demonstrates that their views constituted some of the most advanced environmental thinking of the nineteenth century.

This advanced view also saw humans as a part of this ecosystem structure, rather than above it, and derided the view that humans could exploit nature as they wished without consequences. In *Dialectics of Nature* Engels wrote: “Let us not, however, flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human victories over nature. For each victory nature takes its revenge on us...

“Thus at every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside nature – but that we, with flesh, blood and brain, belong to nature, and exist in its midst.”

Marx and Engels may not be well known for their ecological thinking, but in fact, they have a lot to teach us in this field. They argued that capitalism’s exploitation of working people and the unsustainable exploitation of nature were linked and part of the same process.

Friedrich Engels wrote: “At every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside of nature.” On the other hand, “we have the advantage of all other creatures of being able to learn its laws and apply them correctly.” That is, we can organize society in step with nature’s limits.”
Marx’s two most important ecological insights were “the treadmill of production” (previously mentioned) and the “ecological (or metabolic) rift.”

The Metabolic Rift states that the capitalist mode of production causes a sharp break in the metabolism (two way relationship) between nature and humans, which Marx sees as mediated by process of human labour. This occurs on dual levels; at the local level where industrial production reduces soil fertility, depriving both soil and workers of nourishment and sustenance, and on the global scale through exploitation of the resources of the Global South by the imperialist countries of the Global North.

THE ECO-SOCIALIST ALTERNATIVE

It is evident that we cannot just reform the system or shift to “green capitalism.”

This is because ecological destruction is built into the inner nature and logic of our present system of production and distribution.

As socialists, we know there can be no lasting solution to the world’s environmental crises as long as capitalism remains the dominant economic and social system on this planet. Eco-socialism or Barbarism, there is no third way.
Eco-socialism aims to combine the best aspects of green and red—of ecology and Marxism. It takes from ecology an understanding of nature as interrelated, integrated eco-systems and essential insights into humanity’s impact on the environment. Marxism provides the materialist analysis of why the capitalist social order has been so destructive and shows that another kind of society is both possible and necessary.

It compels us to learn from the mistakes of many 20th century Marxists who ignored ecological issues at their own (and others’) peril. The lesson we must learn is that ecology must have a central place in socialist theory, and the activity of socialist movements.

It is not enough for the socialist left to just criticise neoliberal and liberal responses to the climate crisis. We have to actively support and be involved in movements that directly confront the problem.

**OPPORTUNITIES AND HOPE**

In Canadian Naomi Klein’s book *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*, she asserts that climate change is not just a disaster but also a one-of-a-kind opportunity that can serve as a wake-up call for widespread democratic action. She says, “I began to see all kinds of ways that climate change could become a catalysing force for positive change – how it could be the best argument progressives have ever had” to build the fair and just society we’ve always fought for.

The book provides a vision for how we can collectively use this crisis to create a world that is actually a big improvement for the majority of the world’s people; creating societies that are not just safer from extreme weather, but also safer and fairer in many other ways.

“If there has ever been a moment to advance a plan to heal the planet that also heals our broken economies and our shattered communities, this is it.”
She makes the argument that given that the current capitalist economic model is failing the majority of people on this planet, being forced to change in order to address climate change might not be such a bad thing.

Indeed, the structural, economic and social changes necessary to address the climate crisis could simultaneously address many of society’s ills and the inequalities of capitalism.

Of course, the ruling class will try to use this situation to further entrench inequality and uneven control, as they have done in response to countless natural disasters, as Klein outlines in one of her other books, *The Shock Doctrine*.

But we can also flip this around, and create what she calls a “people’s shock,” using this opportunity to disperse power, extend democracy and redistribute wealth.

There is no doubt that the reality of the climate crisis is incredibly daunting and scary. But *This Changes Everything* provides some real hope that we can use this impending crisis to build a better world, and that it is possible.
There is plenty of evidence that free market ideology is losing its persuasive power amongst the general population, and no shortage of signs of hope that the tide is changing.

The take-home message from Klein is “We can’t sit this one out, not [just] because we have too much to lose, but because we have too much to gain ... for a great many people, climate action is their best hope for a better present, and a future far more exciting than anything else currently on offer.”

Originally published in November 2014 in the publication Green Left Weekly, this article has been updated, expanded and somewhat “Canadianized” by its author Gemma Weedall in co-operation with the editor of this special edition. The original article—found on the Connexions website (see page 7 for news about the new collaboration between Northstar Compass and Connexions) was based on a presentation Weedall gave to Socialism 2014, a conference organized by the Socialist Party of Malaysia. Weedall is a Socialist Alliance activist living in Adelaide. Permission to reprint is provided by Green Left (https://www.greenleft.org.au).
TIMELESS IMAGES. Below: In this undated photo taken in Odessa, each young Russian is fully engaged by an exhibit of Canadian children’s art. Above: When the Soviet ship Andrei Andreev visited Toronto on October 7th, 1977 the captain, first mate and second mate meticulously signed this photo with the greeting: “Happy Sailing to the Canada-USSR Association.”
TWO HUNDRED AND EIGHTY QUEEN STREET WEST in Toronto, Canada, built in 1881 in the Queen Anne style, was declared an historic building in 2000. Beginning in 1949 it has been the proud headquarters of four organizations dedicated to East-West friendship. First was the Society of Carpatho-Russian Canadians, still a staunch supporter of peace and opponent of global imperialism. The Canada-USSR Friendship Society was next, followed by the Canada-USSR Travel Agency in 1980. Finally and currently this beautiful structure houses the International Council for Friendship and Solidarity With the Soviet People, publisher of this final print issue of Northstar Compass. The progressive tradition continues undiminished, honouring the achievements of the USSR and following the paths of truth, justice and peace toward the goal of Eco-Socialism for all on Earth.