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Cynicism about the possibility of change, of creating a revolution in our everyday lives is common now and one of the biggest obstacles that anarchists have to fight. The State Communist bureaucracy in the Soviet Union destroyed the possibility of true freedom and liberty and we would do well to remind ourselves just how perceptive anarchist criticisms of this monolith were. Maximoff's article is pungent and precise in its critique with his final paragraph sadly not yet realised. 63 years on and still a lot to do!

Until recently it was held that the Great French Revolution of 1789–93 gave us a classical example of revolution and counter-revolution. Even now many are of the opinion that the period of the Jacobin rule was a revolutionary period, notwithstanding the series of counter- revolutionary measures adopted by the Convent, and that the fall of the Jacobins signified the beginning of the counter- revolution. Hence, it is inferred that there can be no counter-revolution as long as the party brought forward by the revolution is still in power. Counter-revolution sets in, we are told, with the downfall of the party and the class leading the revolution, with the triumph of a more moderate party, with the liquidation of the revolutionary conquests. And the latter is generally associated with the downfall of the ruling party such as the overthrow of the Jacobin rule.

This outdated yardstick is still being applied to the evaluation of the trends and tendencies of Russian life. The state socialists, the "learned" liberal professors and just plain "educated" people, though sharply opposed to bolshevism, hold that a revolution is still taking place in Soviet Russia. Thinking by mere analogy with the French Revolution, they do not want to admit the idea that a revolutionary party can be transformed into a counter-revolutionary one. They believe that the so-called "excesses of the bolshevik policies" are due to the difficulties incidental in the building up of socialism, that in the long run they may slow down the tempo of the revolution but not stop it altogether. It is this fallacy that is being exposed so rapidly by the march of events in Soviet Russia that very soon only simple minded people will adhere to it.

For, what is a revolution? A revolution is the overthrow of the existing political and economic order based upon exploitation. It means the building up of a new order which raises to the highest level the welfare of the great masses of people, which gives the utmost extension of human

rights and freedom, which substitutes for the master morality of the church and state one that is based upon freedom, equality and solidarity.

The Russian Revolution at its beginning was a revolution in that sense. In the year 1917–18 Russia was the freest country in the world. Freedom of speech, press, assembly, propaganda, freedom in the field of scientific research, education, individual self-assertion- there was unlimited freedom in almost every domain of life. Spontaneous activity and free initiative took the place of law; local self-government flourished in the form of Soviets, the state as represented by appointed officialdom was vanishing like smoke.

Economic slavery was toppling down: capitalism was being destroyed, being gradually replaced by the organisation of industry in the interests of consumers. Workers became active participants of the industrial process; economic life, represented by factory committees and similar organisations, was shaping itself along the line of free industrial federations, along the lines of a national commune of producers and consumers.

Such were the great undying conquests of that genuinely revolutionary period. But what is counter-revolution?

Is it just the attempt to bring the country back to the pre- revolutionary state, to restore the privileges of the old classes and parties? Such is the classical definition of counter-revolution, but it is not a full or precise definition since in Soviet Russia we have no revolution against revolution, no restoration of the power of former classes and parties. And nevertheless we have there a real counter- revolution.

In Soviet Russia all liberties have been wiped out. The defenders of freedom are being exiled, imprisoned and even executed. Local self- government has been done away with. The arbitrary rule of the "bureaucrat" is again restored to life. What of the passport system introduced by way of copying the old system of police rule and regimentation? What of the ban placed upon any sort of political activity digressing from "the general line" of the dictator, the dissolution of the Society of Old Bolsheviks, the imprisonment of outstanding members of the party for the slightest manifestation of independence of thought? Isn't that counter-revolution in the real sense of the word?

In no other country is the death penalty applied as widely as in Soviet Russia: larceny, embezzlement, graft, thuggery — ordinary crimes are

punished with medieval cruelty. Even children are not exempt from the application of the highest penalty. Isn't that counter-revolution in its most naked form?

In Soviet Russia industrial democracy gave way to a hierarchy modelled on the type of capitalist organisations. A new privileged ruling class came to life- a bureaucracy which, not having property of its own, has the unchecked control of management in its hands.

All that is the very essence of counter-revolution, although it hardly fits the classical definition thereof. We have here a new feature: a revolutionary party crystallising into a bureaucratic class. While paying lip service to revolutionary slogans, the newly formed class gradually entrenches its class functions, its rule and privileges.

All that is not just a mere incident in the march of the revolution. Such distortions of the revolution, producing as they did in Soviet Russia a vicious form of counter-revolution, are not rooted in "historic necessity", but in the very concept of state socialism, and especially of dictatorial marxism. To uphold dictatorship is to be against revolution, against freedom, against human progress.

The process of disillusionment in respect to Soviet Russia, so much in evidence on the part of many an honest revolutionist, is but in its beginnings. Soon it will grow into a powerful tide directed toward new aims and objectives. Those will be the aims of libertarian communism, the aims of a new movement, reviving the hopes of the international proletariat and leading to a resolute struggle against dictatorships of all variety- red, black or brown — and for the fullest freedom based on economic equality.