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A letter by Ernest Mandel : "Three-Phase Stalinism"

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The article by Phil Hearse and Dave Packer ('The way out of a tangle on Stalinism') which appeared in SO 12 contains a distortion of my position. I have never asserted that the Chinese, Albanian and Vietnamese states, regimes, or ruling bureaucracies, are less authoritarian and manipulative than Khrushchev's, not to say Gorbachev's Russia. At the most I said that in spite of that authoritarianism, they enjoyed more mass support up to a certain period, because of the role they played in the revolution in their country (this applies to China and Vietnam, probably not to Albania). But that is neither a question of definition nor of theoretical analysis, but just a question of facts.

I could accept Hearse and Packer's position that a stalinist or neo-stalinist party is one which subordinates the interests of revolution (i.e. of the working class) in its country, to those of any state bureaucracy (defined as a hardened bureaucratic caste exercising state power in a workers state) – whether the Russian, Chinese, Yugoslav or Vietnamese one.

But such a definition reveals the contradictions in Hearse and Packer's assessments, not mine. To what ruling state bureaucracy did the Yugoslav Communist Party subordinate the interests of the Yugoslav revolution in 1942 ? Or the Chinese CP in the 1948 Chinese revolution ? Or the Vietnamese CP in the Vietnamese revolution in 1949 ? To the Russian bureaucracy ? Obviously not. To the Yugoslav, Chinese, Vietnamese state bureaucracies ? But these did not exist in the years cited !

So the correct definition involves a three-phase approach. The parties were Stalinist when they had an orientation of refusing to fight for the overthrow of the bourgeois-oligarchic (in Vietnam, colonial) state following the Moscow line. Then they subordinated the interests of the revolution to those of the Soviet bureaucracy.

They broke with stalinism when they took the conscious decision to change that strategic line and to fight for the overthrow of the bourgeois state. To this end they educated their cadres and mobilized huge masses (albeit in a manipulative way) for that revolutionary goal.

They became neo-stalinist parties when, after having destroyed the bourgeois state through their conquest of power, they started to subordinate the interests of the working class and the revolution to those of their own emerging national bureaucratic caste.

This is a more complex assessment than that of Hearse and Packer. It might even sound awkward. But we don't approach theory from the point of view of whether it is easily expressed or understood. We approach it from the point of view of whether it enables us to understand the moving reality in its totality, without losing theory's inner coherence. This, I believe, is the case with my definition of stalinism. It is not fully the case with Hearse and Packer's definition. [didim escort](#), [marmaris escort](#), [didim escort bayan](#), [marmaris escort bayan](#), [didim escort bayanlar](#), [marmaris escort bayanlar](#)