Stalin anniversary celebrated

Occasions battle with Soviet Bukharinism

1979 is the 100th anniversary of the birth of Josef Stalin, and observers from most centers of political intelligence are watching closely to see how the event is marked in the Soviet Union. Already several items have appeared, among them a political calendar and a prominent journalist's novel, which hail Stalin's leadership of the Soviet state during, after, and before World War II.

These publications counter a campaign emanating from the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation for the rehabilitation of Nikolai Bukharin, one of Stalin's main factional opponents in the Bolshevik Party. Last summer, the Sunday Times of London proclaimed that a rehabilitation sweepstakes was on for 1979 between Stalin and Bukharin.

An open clash between "Stalinism" and "Bukharinism" in the Soviet Union will reveal the dynamic that underlies Soviet factional disputes on crucial current questions such as the European Monetary System or the situation in Iran.

Bukharin was the deep penetration agent of British intelligence and Royal Dutch Shell operations to break up the Russian Empire before World War I — the "Parvus Plan" named after Anglo-Dutch agent Alexander Helphand (Parvus) — and he continued his activities by opposing rapid industrialization and collectivization of agriculture in Soviet Russia, from within the Soviet leadership, from the Bolshevik Revolution until his conviction and execution as a spy in 1938, under Stalin. While his avowed allegiance repeatedly flipped from "left" to "right" and back again, Bukharin consistently opposed cooperation with industrial capitalist forces in the West, the "Rapallo" policy conceived by Lenin and his Foreign Affairs Commissar, the Americanist Chicherin. For Bukharin, capitalist industrialization was "the parasitism of the city towards the countryside,... the bloated development of industry, serving the ruling classes." He looked to the peasant masses of the "world countryside" to rise to final victory over the imperialist "world city."

The similarity of Bukharin's views with Bertrand Russell's perspective of a rural "Dark Ages," or the program of the Ayatollah Khomeini for Iran, is not accidental. Among visitors to Soviet Russia in the 1920s, the people most horrified by the Lenin-Chicherin foreign policy, as well as by the broad electrification and agroindustrial plans drawn up for Lenin by G.M. Krzhizhanovskii, were the ideologues of the new Dark Age: Bertrand Russell and H.G. Wells.

Bukharin's champions today, naturally, begin with the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation. They include such well-placed "liberals" as the Mexican writer and diplomat Carlos

Fuentes promotes Bukharin revival

In the Jan. 20 supplement to Uno Mas Uno, Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes, who has recently been associated with pro-British thinking in Mexico, promoted the rehabilitation of Viennese-trained "free-enterprise" advocate Nikolai Bukharin as something which is quietly looked on favorably by significant strata of Soviet officialdom. Excerpts from Fuentes's article follow.

One indicator of the fortune of illustrious communists will be this historical future ... of Nikolai Bukharin. This brilliant theoretician of Bolshevism, the "favorite son of the Party" after Lenin, and author of the 1936 constitution, was condemned to death by Stalin in 1938 during the terrible Moscow trials. The rehabilitation campaign initiated by his widow and his son did well during the Khrushchev regime, but was laid to rest by Brezhnev.

Today the figure of Bukharin is undergoing a secret resurgence, in the corridors of power, in the universities, in the streets — like the fantastical incarnation of an option within Russian communism. Bukharin, more so than Trotsky, represents for the Soviet party the lost alternative to Stalinism: cultural freedom, a market economy which is indispensable within socialism, and the limitation of the state by civil society. The enemy of what he called "the schemes of Genghis Kahn," Bukharin called on the Soviet party to overcome its "primitivism," broaden its internationalism, and relax its intellectual life. Today, albeit sotto voce, more than one Soviet functionary is propounding the cult of Bukharin as in order to counterpose to the slavic and orthodox* assault the proof that communism possesses other alternatives.

*Fuentes is referring to the "slavophile" texts of emigre Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and others as a serious tendency in Russian thinking.

Fuentes (whose recent predictions of a Bukharinite revival appear on p. 51). Numbers of "British communists" — both in the Communist Party of Great Britain and in the Italian and French parties — are avowed supporters of Bukharin. The Italian Communist Party daily Unita recently claimed that the coherence of Marxism and Russellism have been known to "communists" for a long time!

Inside the USSR, Bukharinism is not a question of open endorsement of Bukharin. As Fuentes observes, chances for an official rehabilitation of Bukharin rose only during the free-for-all unleashed by Nikita Khrushchev's 1956 "destalinization." In 1977, Bukharin's son Yuri Larin was rebuffed in an appeal to have Bukharin reinstated to membership in the Soviet Communist Party.

Bukharinism, however, does exist in the USSR. It is the outlook of a Soviet leadership current based on the carried-forward influence of Bukharin and his collaborators, amplified by the acceptance of "British communists" like Kim Philby and Donald Maclean — both spawned in the "Children of the Sun" circles of the British aristocracy — into Soviet intelligence and advisory positions as bona fide defectors from British intelligence. The Bukharinite profile combines an advocacy of "class struggle" militancy and destabilization for the Third World and the industrialized capitalist sector, with "liberalizing" preferences for modifying the domestic Soviet economy through "market" innovations. It is fundamentally opposed to the Brezhnev leadership's perspective — like Lenin and Chicherin's — of seeking both international stability and the perfection of the Soviet Union's planned industrial development through trade and scientific cooperation with Western nations; it has a chance against Brezhnev when Western, particularly the United States', leaderships threaten to break off the detente and move rapidly towards confrontation.

The Stalin campaign

A 1979 calendar of events, issued by the Politizdat publishing house in Moscow, marks Stalin's birthday with a portrait and 38-line biography. The entry not only praises Stalin's role in Russia's World War II victory, but turns to his prewar contributions. Stalin "contributed to the preparation and realization" of the Great October Revolution of 1917, it states, and "applied the ideas of Lenin in the field of foreign policy as well as in collectivization." The calendar upholds Stalin in his faction fights against "Trotskyists, right oppositionists (Bukharin — ed.) and bourgeois nationalists."

On Dec. 24 of last year, Pravda devoted a lengthy review, by the noted political commentator Yuri Zhukov, to Part I of a new political novel, Aleksandr Chakovskii's "Victory," in which Stalin's "rehabilitation" is furthered by a portrait of his leadership in 1945.

A Stalin revival proceeding on the lines set by these two examples is going to cause more than a headache for Bukharinists — in the West and in the East. Neither "British communists" nor British strategists like to see the Stalin era recalled in terms of how the USSR was industrialized, how Stalin hoped to revive the Lenin-Chicherin prodevelopment foreign policy, how Stalin hated the British and their efforts to destroy the Soviet Union (as Chakovskii makes clear in "Victory") — instead of its being remembered only for the great purges.

— Rachel Berthoff and Susan Welsh

New 'Stalinist' Soviet novel features 1945 Potsdam Conference

Aleksandr Chakovskii's "Victory" was serialized in the popular Soviet literary monthly "Znamya" at the end of last year. The author, who for over 15 years has been editor of the prestigious "Literaturnaya Gazeta," had already consolidated his reputation as a leading "neo-Stalinist" by making Stalin a leading character in his earlier novel, "Blockade," a five-volume work on World War II.

"Victory" continues in the same vein, portraying Stalin as the hero of the 1945 Potsdam conference. In dealing with this watershed between the Alliance and the Cold War, Chakovskii now delves into Stalin's perception of British and American policy at that time.

Chakovskii does not give as clear and unequivocal a statement as could be wished for on the decisive development of the late World War II and early postwar period: Britain's subversion of a potential Soviet-United States entente. But he approaches the question, making an effort to cut through the mental habits of 30 years of Cold War mythology about eternal and inevitable hostility between the United States and the USSR in order to recreate the wartime climate of friendship that did exist between the two countries.

Chakovskii does this most effectively through a second set of protagonists on another level of the novel than the "Big Three," Stalin, Churchill, and Truman. These are the journalists — again, Soviet, American and British — assigned to cover the Potsdam conference. The uneasy friendship between the Soviet journalist, Voronov, and an American, Bright, is intended to symbolize the relations between the "common people" of the two nations. This literary vehicle lends itself to all imaginable cliches, but does provide the opportunity for honest portrayals of relations between Americans, British and Russians.

For instance, besides the fact that Bright likes the Russians and Voronov is basically sympathetic to Americans, Bright can't stand the British. Chakovskii has Bright refer to Stalin as "Uncle Joe," to Truman rather indifferently as "the Boss," and to Churchill simply as "Fat Boy."

At another point, Voronov converses with a hard-boiled and skeptical comrade, General Karpov, deputy to Marshal