

The logo for the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) is rendered in a stylized, white, sans-serif font against a dark red background. The letters 'S', 'W', and 'P' are interconnected, with the 'S' and 'W' sharing a vertical stroke and the 'P' being positioned to the right.

discussion bulletin

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BIASED "AUTHORITIES" ON THE CHINESE QUESTION

by Evelyn Reed

In Los Angeles we have a small group who are very unhappy with the position of the majority here (as well as nationally) in support of the Chinese revolution. We are too critical, it seems, of Mao Tse-tung and his cohorts in the leadership. According to their view, Mao Tse-tung has followed a consistently revolutionary path since 1929 and, despite a few minor and youthful mistakes, today represents the Lenin of the Chinese revolution. Those who do not agree with this appraisal of Mao are accused of giving only lip-service in support of the revolution itself. In fact, we are frequently lectured on our intellectual inertia, scolded for our inability or refusal to grasp the great "basic" questions involved, and urged to bestir ourselves to studying the matter more deeply and thoroughly.

To assist us on this course, Hilde Macleod in a discussion bulletin just off the press gives us no less than fifty books from which she has compiled her own massive documentation that Mao Tse-tung is a genuine Marxist and revolutionist. "In view of all this evidence, given by reporters with no axe of their own to grind," she winds up, the majority of the SWP should confess to being in serious and sad error on the Chinese question.

Curiously enough, not one of the authors is a Marxist, or even claims to be, and not one of the reports is presented from the Marxist point of view. A quick glance at the list indicates that some are liberals, some Stalinists, one existentialist, etc. -- but not a single Trotskyist. Whatever the value of each book -- and undoubtedly some are better than others -- as a mixed group of reporters these people are not in a position to advise Trotskyists on their analyses of the Chinese revolution. In fact, despite Hilde's assurances that these are all objective reports, many of them are hostile to Trotskyism and strongly biased toward Stalinism.

For example, the two authors heading the bibliography are Edgar Snow, with five books, and Agnes Smedley with three books. Both of these reporters are definitely anti-Trotskyist. This is not simply my view; their bias in favor of Stalin was explained to us long ago by Li Fu-Jen in his articles on Chinese affairs written for the Trotskyist press. To refer back to

his writings today is instructive not only with regard to the deficiencies of these journalists who allegedly had "no axe of their own to grind," but even more important, reveals the deficiencies of Mao Tse-tung himself.

In the March 1938 New Internationalist, Li Fu-Jen describes Agnes Smedley, the "sob-sister of the Chinese revolution with her China's Red Army Marches," as follows:

"This lady, who in recent years has developed into a vicious vilifier of the Fourth Internationalists ... gathered all the material for her book in her foreign-style apartment in Shanghai during the course of conversations with a functionary of the Communist party and the Red Army ... Neatly inserted into it, of course, were the usual slanderous diatribes against the Trotskyists, whom, in accordance with what her informant told her and without any effort to check, she labelled as spies, and provocateurs -- the 'A.B. (anti-Bolshevik) Group.'"

The major portion of Li Fu-Jen's article, however, is devoted to analyzing Edgar Snow and his book Red Star Over China. About Snow, he writes:

"The author is chief correspondent in the Far East of the London Daily Herald. His Red Star Over China is the first really factual piece of writing about the Chinese Soviets. As such it merits attention. Unlike Yakhontoff and Agnes Smedley, conscious Stalinist propagandists who strain at no falsehood big or small, Snow regards himself as a detached observer, an impartial investigator, who stands upon the Olympian heights of verifiable truth. He is a liberal anxious to maintain his liberal reputation."

However, even this lofty "non-partisan" turns out to be tarnished with the same Stalinist brush. Snow refused to enter the Stalin-Trotsky polemics, writes Li Fu-Jen. The only important thing for him was that "Stalin won, and his policy dominated the future activities of the Comintern in China." Thus, as Li Fu-Jen writes:

"Where actual facts are concerned, Snow's objectivity is not employed with any even-handedness as between the Stalinists and the revolutionary opposition. He seems to consider that his conversion to People's

Frontism gives him the license to slander willfully the Chinese section of the Fourth International. The Chinese 'Trotskyites' he writes, 'earned a very bad stigma as spies and traitors -- many of them were led by the logic of their position to join the Blue-shirts (Chiang Kai-shek's secret gangster organization) and betray former comrades to the police.' Where did Snow get this piece of slander? From the Stalinist leaders whom he interviewed, from persons who at this writing are carrying on, in Shanghai and elsewhere, a most vicious campaign of provocative vilification against the Chinese Trotskyites, charging them with being paid agents of the Japanese imperialists."

It was in 1936 that Snow spent several months in Soviet territory as the guest of the Chinese Soviet government, hobnobbing with the Soviet leaders -- among them Mao Tse-tung. This leadership was embarking upon its disastrous class-collaborationist "People's Front" policies to secure a bloc with Chiang Kai-shek in the war against Japan. There is no hint that Mao opposed in any way this capitulation of the Chinese CP to Stalin's directives.

Consequently, even if Mao had been an innocent dupe in the hands of Stalin in the betrayal of the 1927-29 Chinese revolution, he was in 1936, together with the rest of the capitulators, a full-fledged stooge of Stalin. And he continued to remain so for a long time thereafter -- at least in the opinion of Li Fu-Jen. In the February 1941 Fourth International he writes:

"Answering questions by Edgar Snow late in 1939 Chairman Mao Tse-Tung of the Border District referred to the continuance of the Kuomintang dictatorship in violation of the promises Chiang gave the Stalinists... Truly, it is hard to see how one can end a dictatorship without getting rid of the dictator. But the last thing Mao thinks of is getting rid of Chiang Kai-shek ...

'Mao asserted that the C.P. would be 'glad to participate' in a coalition government with Chiang Kai-shek if the offer were made. But why should Chiang share cabinet posts with the Stalinists when he can get their services more cheaply, when he is assured that they will keep their mouths shut and give silent endorsement to all his crimes ... did they not promise to be good boys and to abandon all thought of class struggle as long as Chiang continued resisting Japan...

Here is displayed for all to see the gross criminality of the Chinese Stalinist leaders ... Such a party, it is clear, is too corrupt ever to redeem itself."

Eventually, however, when the revolution unfolded, Mao adjusted his tactics and was swept to power along with the victory of the Chinese masses in revolutionary struggle. Breaking the grip of Stalin, he formed a regime of his own which Li Fu-Jen roughly compares with the Tito break in the Yugoslav revolution. But this still did not make Mao a genuine Marxist leader with a long history of uncompromising revolutionary struggle in line with Trotskyist policies and methods.

As Li Fu-Jen sums up in an article: "The Kuomintang Faces Its Doom" in the February 1949 Fourth International:

"The wartime class-collaborationist program of the Stalinists cut sharply across the objective realities of class-social and political relationships. Mao Tse-tung could and did proclaim the end of land seizures, but the rural toilers did not because of that cease hating the landlords. Mao could and did make the Communist Party the guardian of capitalist private property. But workers did not because of that become reconciled to capitalist exploitation. Mao could and did make a 'united front' with the murderous Chiang. But that in no way lessened the gulf which separated the masses from the Kuomintang regime. Mao and Chiang could and did enter into a compact whose aim was to exorcise the class struggle in the alleged interests of the war against Japan, but the class struggle, even though muted, continued nevertheless..."

In this same article, although Li Fu-Jen correctly points out that the Mao at the head of a victorious revolution, is not exactly the same Mao as the prostrate tool of Stalin, he refuses to rewrite the history of Mao or paint him in the glorified image of the biased reporters. As he states:

"We can readily admit, as one press commentator has put it, that Mao Tse-tung with his leading henchmen are 'stooges' of Moscow. With scrupulous fidelity they have geared their policies to every twist and turn of the Kremlin line for twenty years and more. In doing so, they have not hesitated to violate and betray the most elementary interests of the Chinese workers and peasants, not to speak of the fundamental interests of the Chinese revolution."

So much for the two leading authorities on the Chinese revolution listed by Hilde, Edgar Snow and Agnes Smedley. Far from having no axes of their own to grind, they turn out to be grinders of Stalinist axes against the Trotskyists. Further research would undoubtedly reveal similar bias among the rest of the authors on Hilde's "non-partisan" list.

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P.S. Wouldn't it have been in better balance for Comrade Hilde to have at least included the books by Trotsky and Harold Isaacs on the Chinese revolution in her extensive bibliography intended as a guide for younger comrades?

Los Angeles, Calif.
June 26, 1962

THE NATURE OF THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

by Milton Alvin

The traditional position on the nature of the Chinese Communist Party held by Trotskyists for a long time has been challenged by Arne Swabeck and John Liang. In their article, "The Peking Regime and Stalinism" (Discussion Bulletin of the SWP, Vol. 22, No. 5), their draft resolution entitled "The Chinese Revolution -- Its Character and Development," dated February 21, 1962, and elsewhere, they have elaborated a new appreciation of the CCP.

The revision of the former position goes back to 1927 when the Second Chinese Revolution was crushed. The authors inform us that as a result of the lessons learned in these events, the leadership and party experienced a fundamental change: from a Stalinized to a Bolshevik revolutionary leadership and party. In addition, Swabeck-Liang take the view that the Chinese Communist Party leadership could not have developed in the years from 1927 to 1949 as a bureaucratic one because they were engaged in a continuous civil war with the Kuomintang in that period.

Finally, the authors of the new position claim that because the period since the Second World War and the Third Chinese Revolution, that is from 1946 to the present, has been a profoundly revolutionary one, it has been impossible for a party to develop in a Stalinized direction. All this adds up to a fundamental revision of our previous position. In the following I will attempt to set the record straight on the history of the Chinese Communist Party and to refute the attempt to revise our fundamental position on its nature.

The central cadres of world Trotskyism were originally gathered together and organized into a movement on the basis of two main questions: (1) How to win revolutions (the Russian Revolution of 1917), and (2) How to lose revolutions, (the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27).

After his expulsion from the Soviet Union in 1929, Trotsky began to draw together scattered opponents of the Stalin regime by stating a programmatic basis for a new movement in which agreement on these two questions occupied the most prominent place.

Trotsky wrote extensively on China. In 1932 Pioneer Publishers printed his book, a collection of articles and speeches on the question under the title "Problems of the Chinese Revolution." This book is an exposition of Marxist policy and an exhaustive critique of the Stalinist course imposed upon the Chinese Communist Party in the 1925-27 revolution which led to a defeat of world historical proportions. Further, it contains analyses and programmatic proposals, as well as polemics, up to August 1930, that is, three years after the defeat of the 1927 days.

Without doubt Trotsky was the outstanding authority on the Chinese question. It is impossible to understand all that should be known about China, its revolutionary problems, the nature of the Chinese Communist Party and the relations between China and the Soviet Union, as well as the rest of the world, without studying Trotsky's views.

After the defeat of the revolution in 1927, the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party underwent several shake-ups and eventually came into the hands of Mao and his faction. Trotsky nowhere mentions, and neither did anyone else who can be described as a Marxist participant in the events or careful observer, that this new leadership was independent of the Stalin regime in the Soviet Union, that it followed a policy opposed to Stalin's. On the contrary, all the evidence shows that the Mao leadership followed the course set by the Communist International at every stage: a Third Period ultra-leftist course until the middle 1930's; a People's class-collaborationist course from that time on. Of course the policies followed were adapted to Chinese conditions, but they were clearly in line with the dicta of the Stalin regime.

Following Trotsky, others began to study and write on the Chinese question. A vast amount of material has been produced over the years which is published in American Trotskyist magazines, pamphlets and books. The principal writers of Trotskyist views on China have been Trotsky himself, Harold Isaacs and Li Fu-Jen.

In the Sept.-Oct. 1934 issue of The New International, (Vol. 1, No. 3), Isaacs publishes a letter addressed to the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. Detailing his relationships with the leaders of the party, Isaacs bitterly denounces them for their policies, their lies, especially about the Trotskyists in China and their conception that he should publish lies in his Shanghai paper, China Forum. He announces the end of his two-year period of "extra-organiza-

tional collaboration" with the party and his determination to continue to dedicate his energies to the struggle.

It is clear from the letter that the course pursued by the Chinese Communist Party in the period Isaacs deals with was one of ultra-leftist adventurism coupled with falsifications of the real positions of others. Isaacs is critical of the party's policy of taking communist workers out of the cities and industrial areas where they were influential and sending them to lead peasant movements that had been established in the countryside.

In 1938 at the Founding Conference of the Fourth (Trotskyist) International, a lengthy document entitled "The War in the Far East and the Revolutionary Perspectives," summarizing the entire history of the Chinese question and our policy on it, was adopted. Section XVI states:

"From the fatal opportunist policies which they pursued in 1925-27 during the upsurge of the revolutionary wave, the Chinese Communists veered to the opposite extreme of adventurism in the period of the Kuomintang counter-revolution. After precipitating disastrous and utterly futile uprisings which culminated in the tragic Canton putsch, and thereby cutting themselves away from their working class base, they transferred their activities to the rural interior ... Although proceeding under the slogan of Soviets, which the Communists had rejected during the high tide of the revolution, but which were later to be sanctified in 'Third Period' policies, the peasant war did not succeed in evoking responses among the workers ... Chiang Kai-shek, unhindered by the proletariat, was finally able, at the end of 1934, to crush the isolated peasant Soviets despite the many heroic battles fought by the peasant Red Armies."

In 1938, that is, 11 years after the defeat of the Second Chinese Revolution, it did not occur to anyone in our ranks to characterize the Chinese Communist Party as continuators of Bolshevism in the Lenin tradition, as Swabeck-Liang claim they were. The same document cited above, Section XIX, continues:

"The newest phase of Japan's colonial drive has coincided with the final degeneration of the Communist International. From instruments of the revolutionary class struggle, the Communist parties have

been converted into instruments of Stalinist diplomacy. Searching for 'allies' among the democratic capitalist powers in face of the growing war threat, the Stalinist bureaucracy ordered these parties to abandon their revolutionary program and support the bourgeoisie of their respective countries. Just as Stalin needed the bourgeois democracies of the West as 'allies' against Hitler's Germany, so in the Far East, in line with his Anglo-French-American orientation, he sought once more an alliance with the bourgeois Kuomintang -- this time against imperialist Japan. What remained of the Chinese Communist Party after Chiang Kai-shek's forceful liquidation of the peasant Soviets, has publicly surrendered the last remnants of its revolutionary policy in order to enter a 'People's Anti-Japanese Front' with the hangman of the Chinese Revolution. The Chinese Stalinists have formally liquidated 'Soviet China,' handed over to Chiang Kai-shek the remnants of the peasant Red armies, openly renounced the agrarian struggle, explicitly abandoned the class interests of the workers. Publicly embracing the petty-bourgeois doctrines of Sun Yat-sen, they have proclaimed themselves the gendarmes of private property and, in conformity with Stalinist practice everywhere, the enemies of revolution."

It is obvious from this account of the activities of the Chinese Communist Party that it was carrying out the line of People's Frontism in their country just as the Stalinist leaders did in every other country in the world. There is ample evidence that the Mao leadership carried out, or tried its best to carry out, the policies laid down by Stalin.

In the same document, Section XX states:

"It is the bounden duty of the international proletariat and above all of the revolutionary vanguard, to support the struggle of China against Japan. The crime of the Stalinists consists, not in supporting and participating in China's struggle, even while it remains under the leadership of the Kuomintang -- but in surrendering their class struggle policy, in abandoning the interests of the exploited masses, in capitulating politically to the Kuomintang, in abdicating the right of independent mobilization of the masses against Japanese invaders, in renouncing revolutionary criticism of the Kuomintang's conduct of the war, in fortifying Chiang Kai-shek's leadership, in supporting and

spreading the illusion that the Kuomintang and the national bourgeoisie can lead the war consistently and to a successful conclusion. By these traitorous actions they mislead, confuse and disorient the masses of China and obstruct a revolutionary mobilization."

This is a different appreciation of the role of the Mao leadership of the Chinese Communist Party from the one now given by Swabeck-Liang and their supporters who take as good coin the writings of the Edgar Snows and the Agnes Smedleys and omit the opinions of Trotsky and the Trotskyists.

In 1938, the same year the Trotskyists founded the Fourth International, Harold Isaacs published his book, Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution. The original edition contains an introduction written by Trotsky. This introduction has been omitted from a "revised" edition of the book published in 1951, after Isaacs had broken with Trotskyism, or, more accurately, simply departed without explaining why.

Trotsky wholeheartedly endorses the book, stating:

"To solve the tasks imposed upon it, the vanguard of the Chinese proletariat must thoroughly assimilate the lessons of the Chinese Revolution. Isaac's book can serve it in this sense as an irreplaceable aid. It remains to be hoped that the book will be translated into Chinese as well as other foreign languages."

The main parts of Isaac's book deal with the 1925-27 revolution and its defeat. In other sections of the book that deal with the post-1927 days, Isaacs describes the relations between the Chinese Communist Party and the Kremlin bureaucracy. These are the "Third Period" ultra-leftist days. The party leadership that had passed through the defeat had been deposed and a group around Li Li-san was in power.

The Comintern, sitting in Moscow, began to see new revolutionary upheavals in China every day or two. Isaacs states:

"Dazzled by the Comintern's commission to him to 'overthrow the power of the landlord-bourgeois bloc, to establish a worker-peasant dictatorship ... to unfold mass political strikes and demonstrations, to expand the partisan warfare ... and to turn the militarist war into a class civil war,' Li Li-san began

to perceive on all sides the shadows of coming upheavals. When Chiang Kai-shek and a northern coalition headed by Feng Yu-hsiang began a long and bitter civil war in 1930, Li was certain that the earth was ready to swallow up the Kuomintang and all its generals. 'Prepare for the establishment of the revolutionary power!' he cried in March. In June his Political Bureau adopted a resolution which saw the masses 'marching in seven-league boots toward the revolutionary high wave' and called for active preparation of a country-wide uprising. Taking the Comintern's prattle about the 'third period' of the final crisis of world capitalism quite seriously, Li envisaged the Russian Red Army marching in from Mongolia to support the resurgent Chinese Revolution."

This policy was carried out or attempted during a period when the revolutionary tide had ebbed to its lowest point. The ultra-leftist adventurism succeeded only in sacrificing many communist workers and demoralizing not only the party but the whole working class which had already passed through the terrible defeat of 1927. The results were so catastrophic that, as Isaacs states:

"It was no longer possible to preserve in Li Li-san the myth of infallible leadership. Accordingly all the heavy artillery was trundled out and turned on the hapless Li. All the hyphenated invective he had employed against his predecessors was now applied to him. A letter arriving from Moscow on November 16 ordered open warfare against him in the party. Under the personal supervision of Mif, (the Comintern representative - M.A.) Li Li-san was brusquely deposed. What was called the Fourth Plenum of the Central Committee met on Jan. 7, 1931, and Mif's own protege, Chen Shao-yu was elevated into the leadership of the Party on a program of 'unconditional devotion to the line of the Communist International.' The young men so abruptly enthroned as 'leaders' of the Communist Party had all been students in Moscow during the years of the revolution and had won their spurs conducting witch-hunts against Trotskyist sympathizers among the students at Sun Yat-sen University. To give them control Mif shouldered aside the group of old militants who had served not without opposition, under the leadership of Li Li-san. A group of these older Party members and trade-unionists, and some younger men, led by veteran Ho Mung-shung, met at Shanghai hotel on the night of January 17 to consider the new situation with which they

were confronted. In circumstances which are still a whispered scandal in the Party ranks, that meeting was betrayed to the British police of the International Settlement. Ho Mung-shrung and twenty-four others were arrested, handed over to the Kuomintang authorities and executed at Lunghua on February 7. Mif's docile young men became the undisputed leaders of the Party."

Isaacs continues:

"Other leaders of the Party won the right to remain in its ranks only by degrading themselves, by making the self-denying recantations that had already become a fixed feature of Stalinist Party methods and which ... later flowered into the 'confessions' of old Bolshevik leaders put on trial for their lives in Moscow. Chiu Chie-pei was compelled to denounce his own 'cowardly rotten opportunism.' Chou En-lai flagellated himself. 'I call upon the whole party to condemn my mistakes,' he cried. Li Li-san had already left for Moscow and once arrived there had hastily recanted of his sins."

Isaacs notes the positive side of the events of those times in the following tribute:

"No more brilliant pages have ever been written in the history of peasant wars than those which must record the exploits of the Chinese Red Armies engaged in a civil war against enemies five, six and seven times their number and a thousand times their superior in armaments. For more than five years the Red Armies out-maneuvered and defeated five successive Kuomintang campaigns against them."

This development is all the more remarkable when we consider the fatal political policies of the leaderships.

While the Chinese Communists were conducting their epic march and fighting a rear guard action against the Kuomintang armies, the Stalinists in Moscow were busy changing their line. Frightened by Hitler's victory in Germany, Stalin turned toward alliances with the bourgeois democracies, wooing America, England and France. These attempts ushered in the People's Front period.

The Chinese Stalinists abruptly turned in the direction indicated by Moscow. After ceremoniously blaming Chen Tu-hsiu for the 1927 defeat, which had become a ritual among

the Stalinists, Isaacs states:

"Early in 1936 Mao Tse-tung publicly offered 'the hand of friendship' to Chiang if he would take up arms against Japan. ... Scarcely a year later, Mao Tse-tung far outstripped the opportunism of Chen Tu-hsiu. He offered the Chinese bourgeoisie the same fatal reunciation of the revolutionary struggle and went one step further: he offered conscious and deliberate guarantees that should the forces of the revolution raise their heads once more, the Chinese Communist Party stood ready to play the role of executioner."

On August 25, 1936, the Communist Party addressed a letter to the Kuomintang which completely rewrote the history of the 1925-27 days. The letter says:

"We are prepared to form a strong revolutionary united front with you, as was the case during the ... great Chinese Revolution of 1925-7, when there existed a broad united front for struggle against national and feudal oppression, for that is the only proper way to save our country today. You ... have not yet forgotten the glorious history of collaboration between the Communist Party and the Kuomintang."
(Quoted by Isaacs, emphasis in original.)

This hardly squares with the contention of Swabeck-Liang that Mao is a genuine Leninist and was from 1927 on.

In 1936 when some younger officers captured Chiang and most of his top military staff and held them under house arrest, trying to force him to conduct a serious struggle against the Japanese invaders, it was the Stalinists who came forward to insist that he be freed and returned to the capital. Chow En-lai, entering the room where Chiang was held prisoner, saluted him and addressed him as Commander-in-Chief. This incident, which speaks volumes about the real policy of the Chinese Communist Party, led at that time by Mao and Chow, is related in full by Edgar Snow in Red Star Over China. (Part 12, Chapter 3).

Not long after his release by his captors, Chiang and the Kuomintang received the offer of the Communist Party to subordinate itself and its armies to their control, to stop land expropriations in their territories, etc. The Kuomintang, Isaacs tells us:

"..blandly announced that the Government would continue, as before, to safeguard the nation's sovereignty, and was determined, as before, to 'uproot the Communists.' It then laid down its formal terms for accepting the Communists' submission: (1) Abolition of the Red Army and its incorporation into the Government armies under the direct control of the Military Affairs Commission. (2) Dissolution of the 'Soviet Republic.' (3) Cessation of all Communist propaganda. (4) Suspension of the class struggle.

"To these terms the Communist Party formally acceded on March 15, protesting that it had already carried out the most important of them ..." (Isaacs, op. cit. p. 9, 448.)

In their Draft Resolution entitled, "The Chinese Revolution -- Its Character and Development," Swabeck and Liang have completely twisted the real history and nature of the Chinese Communist Party into an unrecognizable distortion that is idealized probably beyond what the leaders of that party would claim for themselves. They state:

"Though the party leaders for a time entertained illusions about a coalition government, which did not and could not materialize, they did not repeat the Stalinist policy of subordinating their party to the Kuomintang."

This bland assertion, completely at variance with the facts -- facts that the authors know well enough -- is challenged by Li Fu-jen in an article entitled "The End of the Chinese Soviets" published in The New International of January 1938. The author begins by stating:

"The historian who undertakes to trace and explain the abrupt about-face which projected the Communist International and its sections from the 'Third Period' of adventurism and irresponsible phrasemongering into the 'Fourth Period' of Popular Frontism, class collaboration and social-patriotic betrayal of the international proletariat, will encounter in his study of the Chinese political scene a record of what is probably the most crassly cynical treason ever to disgrace the pages of revolutionary history."

Strong words! -- but aptly put. Swabeck-Liang make no attempt to refute Li Fu-jen, to say nothing of Trotsky and Isaacs, endorsed by Trotsky, as well as the unanimous opinion of the world Trotskyist movement of 1938, the year the Fourth International was founded.

In the article cited above, Li Fu-jen gives a complete analysis of the about-face of the Chinese Stalinists and their capitulation to the Kuomintang. He cites official statements of the Communist Party leaders, Mao Tse-tung and Wang Ming to prove how they abandoned their Third Period Policy and embraced the Kremlin-ordered policy of the People's Front. This article is required reading for anyone wishing to learn the real history of the Chinese Communist Party. Far from finding any evidence that the Chinese CP leaders were even remotely related to Leninism, Li Fu-jen cites their approval of the Moscow Trials and warns that they may stage some of their own against alleged "Japano-Trotskyist fascist agents," as Wang Ming calls them.

In the March 1938 issue of The New Internationalist, Li Fu-jen returns again to the subject of China in reviewing Red Star Over China by Edgar Snow. In the course of the article, Li Fu-jen gives us a poignant picture of Agnes Smedley who is the author of two books on China listed in a recommended bibliography by Hilde Macleod in the SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 23, No. 3. Comrade Macleod, a supporter of the Swabeck-Liang position, seems to be mesmerized by Agnes Smedley, Edgar Snow and similar writers who are quoted approvingly by her at great length. However, in his review, Li Fu-jen states:

"Then came Agnes Smedley, the sob-sister of the Chinese Revolution, with her China's Red Army Marches. This lady, who in recent years has developed into a vicious vilifier of the Fourth International (the time of her development along this line coincided with a visit to Moscow, where she lived happily for about a year as a pensioner of the State Publishing House) gathered all the material for her book in her foreign-style apartment in Shanghai during the course of conversations with a functionary of the Communist Party and the Red Army."

The very least that we feel we are entitled to is a refutation of either the dubious credentials of Agnes Smedley -- or those of Li Fu-jen.

In his comments on Snow's book, Li Fu-jen completely refutes Snow's slanders of the Chinese Trotskyists (who were

described as traitors who joined the Kuomintang), the shallowness of the author's outlook, his lack of any real understanding of the problems of the Chinese Revolution, while at the same time acknowledging the information Snow brought out as a result of his stay in the Communist territories.

In the light of this review, it is pertinent to ask of Swabeck-Liang and of Hilde Macleod, who recommends no less than five books by Edgar Snow on China in the above-mentioned bibliography, who is right-- they or Li Fu-jen? For our part, we prefer the opinion of Li Fu-jen, who stayed in the Trotskyist tradition in his writings on China.

We are indebted, again, to Li Fu-jen for his article in the January 1939 New Internationalist which reveals the depths of opportunist betrayals of the Chinese Stalinists. Despite the "arrangement" entered into between the latter and Chiang Kai-shek, Li Fu-jen reveals the completely unprincipled concessions granted to Chiang. The policy of the Chinese Communist Party, led by Mao Tse-tung, was to give up everything and anything for the sake of firming up a struggle against the Japanese. This coincided with the Stalin position of those days, that is, to keep the Japanese occupied in China so that they could not attack Siberia.

Despite all the Chinese Stalinists did, the Japanese over-ran the country's main cities and seaports, took over control of the main railroad lines and by the end of 1938 were in a fair way of reducing the Kuomintang regime to control over a portion of the interior of China.

In spite of the overwhelming defeats of the Kuomintang armies, whose surrender of one principal city after another revealed the bankruptcy of the ruling regime, in spite of the heroic efforts of the Chinese soldiers to stem the advance of the imperialist Japanese, an advance whose success was guaranteed in advance by the reactionary policies of the Kuomintang regime, the Chinese Stalinists completely endorsed the latter.

This statement is quoted by Li Fu-jen from a United Press dispatch from Chungking, made by Chin Pu-ko, Communist Party representative on the so-called People's Political Council:

"China needs Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's leadership more urgently than ever today when the

national crisis has reached a life and death stage. His remaining in office and his valuable services to the Chinese nation are essential and imperative in the struggle leading to final victory. The Chinese Communist Party has placed unquestioning confidence in Chiang Kai-shek's fixed policy of conducting a war of resistance. No one else can lead this war except Generalissimo Chiang.'"

Li Fu-jen's article goes on to describe the People's Political Council as the form in which the collaboration of the Chinese CP with the Kuomintang was worked out. He says:

"The Council includes three 'Communists' and three 'National Socialists,' while the remaining members, numbering upwards of 150, are all members or supporters of the Kuomintang."

The article then goes on to explain that despite the overwhelming majority of hand-picked, not elected, Chiang supporters on it, it had no powers whatsoever. It could only consider, ask questions, ask for reports, etc.

This sham was palmed off as some sort of "democratic parliament," and, of course, by their participating in it, endorsed by the Chinese Stalinists. From Li Fu-jen's account it is sickening to read about some of the proceedings of this body. Among other things, it passed a resolution enabling men to purchase exemption from military service which, of course, only the rich could do.

It is almost unbelievable that in our own ranks in the year 1962, Swabeck-Liang are trying to instruct us:

"For 22 years, from the time of the 1927 defeat until the great victory of 1949, the party fought in a civil war against the Chiang Kai-shek dictatorship." (From article, "The Peking Regime and Stalinism," Discussion Bulletin of the SWP, Vol. 22, No. 5).

One can only conclude that Swabeck-Liang have forgotten what they learned in the past.

The abominations of the Chiang regime, while it was losing most of the eastern part of China to the Japanese, would fill many volumes. There is hardly a crime that was not committed by the bourgeois elements, from plunder of every kind of its own people to outright treachery by selling the

Japanese fuel in areas that they had not yet entered. Generals and their staffs, including Chiang and his staff, frequently abandoned areas without the troops in the line knowing anything about it. The latter were often left without leaders and were slaughtered along with the wounded that the Japanese did not take prisoners. That many leading military elements of Chiang's staff were in league with the Japanese, there can be no doubt. Despite all these crimes, the Stalinists uttered not a peep. Everything was subordinated to the alliance with Chiang Kai-shek, the "indispensable" leader.

Swabeck-Liang are today silent on these betrayals by the Stalinists. Nowhere do they say a word on the Trotskyist policy in the war which explained that the struggle against imperialists had to be tied to the great social questions that were still unresolved, that is, the problem of land ownership by the peasantry, of national unification and of democratic rights for the people.

In the February 1941 issue of Fourth International, Li Fu-jen once again analyzed the entire picture in an article entitled "Lessons and Perspectives of the Sino-Japanese War." After a careful review of the war up to that time, including an assessment of the role of the various classes in China, a lengthy "Note on the Chinese Stalinists" follows. Although friction between the CP elements and Chiang Kai-shek, including the outbreak of hostilities between their respective armed forces in certain regions, was constantly arising, the political line of the Stalinists continued to be what it had been before. Li Fu-jen writes:

"Answering questions by Edgar Snow late in 1939, Chairman Mao Tse-tung of the Border District referred to the continuance of the Kuomintang dictatorship in violation of the promises Chiang gave the Stalinists. He asserted that unless this 'archaic political system' were changed to 'democracy' China would lose the war with Japan. The problem, he added, was to change the political system without endangering the resistance to Japan. Truly, it is hard to see how one can end a dictatorship without getting rid of the dictator. But the last thing Mao thinks of is getting rid of Chiang Kai-shek."

This is an accurate description of the real attitude of the Chinese Stalinist leaders toward the Kuomintang, as all the evidence carefully gathered by Li Fu-jen proves. The article continues:

"In the same interview with Snow, Mao asserted that the Communist Party would be 'glad to participate' in a coalition government with Chiang Kai-shek if the offer were made."

This is a particularly important point, revealed not by someone opposed to the Chinese CP, but rather by one of its good friends and publicists, Edgar Snow. It is essential to keep this statement by Mao in mind, for it is an expression of his real policy, carried out for the entire next period of the Second World War and continuing into the post-war period.

In the July 1946 Fourth International, Li Fu-jen once more reveals that, despite the outbreak of a large-scale civil war between the Kuomintang forces and those controlled by the Communist Party, the Stalinists were still trying to follow the same policy that had distinguished them for 18 years. He says:

"The end purpose of this policy, which will complement the class-collaborationist line of the Stalinists in the villages (the reference is to the policy in the cities -- M.A.) is a coalition government with the 'National' bourgeoisie. Whether such a coalition is ever realized or not, the traitorous role of the Stalinists is apparent. They head the popular movement in order to behead it, in order to lead the rebellious masses back into the stultifying miasma of class-collaboration. In China as throughout the world, Stalinism is the deadly foe of the toilers, the greatest obstacle in the path of the revolutionary movement."

This judgment of the Chinese Communist Party hardly squares with the recent discoveries by Swabeck-Liang that the Chinese CP was a "continuator of Bolshevism," followed a Leninist policy, etc.

Finally, from Li Fu-jen we have an article in the Feb. 1949 Fourth International entitled "The Kuomintang Faces Its Doom." As the title indicates, it was written on the eve of the final military victory of the Communist Party armies over those of Chiang Kai-shek. In the years following the end of the Second World War, the civil war had become more intense and the Kuomintang continued to commit unspeakable crimes against the Chinese masses, crimes which compare in scope only with Hitler's. Having succeeded in turning the entire population

of the country against them, with the exception of a small layer of rich capitalists and landlords, Chiang now saw his armies suffer one defeat after another. In their wholesale surrenders, entire armies went over to the CP side with all their arms and equipment.

Chiang had banked upon American military aid to defeat his enemies, but all he got were supplies and money. The United States was in no position to help with armies because of the widespread "go home" demonstrations among its troops stationed overseas at the end of the war in 1945.

In contrast to the ravaging policy of the Kuomintang, the Chinese CP inaugurated modest reforms and instituted a clean government in the areas they occupied. Even these small concessions to the masses' desires was enough to win them enthusiastic support everywhere they went.

Nevertheless, Li Fu-jen writes:

"With scrupulous fidelity they (the C.P. - M.A.) have geared their policies to every twist and turn of the Kremlin line for twenty years and more. In doing so, they have not hesitated to violate and betray the most elementary interests of the Chinese workers and peasants, not to speak of the fundamental interests of the Chinese Revolution."

Li then explains why the Chinese CP forces, despite their false policies, would win the war. He says:

"In addition to being Stalin's agents, Mao and his cohorts are the leaders of a mighty indigenous mass movement, the rebellious peasantry which constitutes more than 80 per cent of the Chinese nation. .. It is this gigantic mass of rural toilers which is the source of the impressive power which the Stalinists have been translating into massive military victories."

This is an entirely different evaluation of the events in China, and of the nature of the Communist Party than the one presently espoused by Swabeck-Liang.

Later in the same article, Li makes what is perhaps his most cogent observation, one which throws some light, I might add, on the current dispute between Moscow and Peiping. He says:

"Having long since abandoned Lenin's concept of the defense of the Soviet Union through the extension of the socialist revolution, Stalin is replying to the American threat in kind. (The reference is to the post-World War II imperialist arrogance of the Washington government - M.A.) Between America's Far Eastern bases and the Soviet borders he plans to interpose a Stalinist dominated China. The conjuncture of the Kremlin's strategic plans and the internal dynamics of Chinese political development furnishes the basic explanation for the current Stalinist policy in China, for the shift from People's Frontism to renewed class struggle." (Emphasis in original.)

The foregoing should indicate to any careful observer what the true nature of the Chinese Communist Party was in the period from 1927, when the Second Revolution was crushed, until 1949, when the armies led by the party were triumphant over those led by Chiang Kai-shek.

The question that arises most naturally is: If the Communist Party was as thoroughly Stalinized and opportunist as the evidence shows, how did they manage, nevertheless, to win the civil war? The answer lies in an objective analysis of the two sides. On the one side the Kuomintang regime had ravaged the country for 22 years. It had oppressed, exploited, murdered, conscripted and stolen from virtually everyone except a thin layer of capitalists and landlords.

The abominations of the Chiang Kai-shek regime were carried out on a colossal scale. The number of peoples involved as victims of one kind or another of this regime ran literally into the hundreds of millions. By the time open military hostilities had taken on the character of a widespread civil war that could not be compromised by concessions, even those urged upon the leaders of both sides by numerous emissaries from Washington, the Kuomintang regime had virtually no support left among the people. In these circumstances the Communist Party leading an insurgent peasantry won the military victory and opened the period of the Third Revolution.

History teaches that the party which stands at the head of the insurgent masses does not necessarily have to be a Marxist party. A similar development took place in Yugoslavia, yet no one in our ranks has seen fit to revise the history of the Tito party to fit the later events.

Swabeck-Liang state in their article entitled "The Peking Regime and Stalinism" (SWP Internal Bulletin, Vol. 22, No. 5, March 1961) that:

"...there is considerable evidence to show that in the ensuing period (after 1927 -- M.A.) the leadership learned from its experiences and became better prepared for its future role. For 22 years, from the time of the 1927 defeat until the great victory of 1949, the party fought in a civil war against the Chiang Kai-shek dictatorship."

Just what this "considerable evidence" consists of we are not told by the authors. This is not surprising since they would be hard put to concoct any. The truth is that there is no evidence that the Mao leadership had learned anything at all from the 1927 defeat. On the contrary, there is a mountain of evidence to prove, as we have done from the writings of authentic analysts, that the new leaderships, including Mao, remained politically in the camp of the Stalinists and followed his fatal policies throughout the entire period. Even after the Second World War, in keeping with Moscow's policy, Mao tried to form a coalition government with Chiang. That no such government was formed was not for lack of trying by the CP leaders; the simple reason is that Chiang would not go along even though pressed to do so by both the U.S. government and Stalin. Thereafter followed the civil war and the defeat of Chiang.

The many betrayals of the Stalinists who have ruled the Soviet Union since the middle 1920's can be traced to their theory of "Socialism in One Country." This theory, first enunciated by Stalin in the struggle with Trotsky in the Soviet Union, holds out the possibility of building a Socialist society in a single country alone, as against the Trotskyist theory of the international character of the Socialist revolution and the building of socialism as a world system. Stalin's theory was derived from the necessity to find justification for the new, economically privileged grouping in the Soviet Union that was interested in furthering its own social aims and not in aiding the world proletariat to overthrow capitalism.

The theory of socialism in one country versus the theory of Trotsky became the dividing line among communists on a world scale. Every Communist Party that remained affiliated to the Stalinist-controlled Third International had to accept the Stalin theory and everything that flowed from it. Primarily this meant following policies that converted them into defenders of the Soviet Union of a certain kind -- that is, the kind that sought alliances with their own capitalists in exchange for deals with Stalin.

In this way the revolutionary heritage of the Leninist Third International was destroyed and disappeared with hardly a trace. What was the role of the Chinese CP in this respect? According to Swabeck-Liang, writing in the same article quoted above:

"The truth of the matter is that history has left Stalin's theory far behind. It could not take root, much less sprout, in the Chinese reality of uninterrupted revolution. While Stalin proclaimed and sanctified the theory, the Chinese leaders never accepted it or gave it credence."

One would think, from reading this broad endorsement of the theoretical purity of the Chinese Communist Party leaders that there would follow some evidence that they had somewhere, somehow, expressed disagreement with this theory, and, more important, that they had acted not in consonance with it but in another manner. But we get nothing of the sort from our impressionable authors. They prefer to skip the 22 year period or longer when the Chinese Stalinists followed or tried to follow every turn and twist of the Stalin regime which was guided completely by the conception of the reactionary theory.

Instead, our authors give us some quotations out of "Long Live Leninism," a theoretical statement by the Chinese CP of recent vintage. This document contains many correct ideas adopted by the CCP in their polemics with Khrushchev. However, it hardly "breathes the revolutionary spirit of Marxism-Leninism" as Swabeck-Liang claim.

Among other things, the document completely endorses Stalin as having carried out Lenin's aims in the Soviet Union. Undoubtedly the authors had in mind, among other things, the purges, frame-up trials and other abominations of the Stalin regime or they would have dissociated themselves from these. In addition, their representative at the 22nd Soviet Congress went out of his way to lay a wreath on Stalin's tomb -- just before the body was removed to a less distinguished place. Further, at celebrations of principal holidays in China, Stalin's picture is carried along with Lenin's, Marx's and others.

All this is going on in China while in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe a campaign of de-Stalinization has been forced upon the regimes and has already compelled the re-naming of many cities, streets, factories and other things

that formerly carried some version of the hated tyrant's name. It would seem that some explanation of the devotion of the Chinese CP leaders to the memory of Stalin is in order.

Since Swabeck-Liang have chosen to ignore this side of the question, although they have turned out reams of other material, we will attempt to do it for them. It is no accident that the Chinese CP leaders feel affinity to Stalin and tend to confuse him with Lenin. Their whole history proves that this is the school they were brought up in -- the school that made it a crime not to believe that Stalin was Lenin's successor and continuator. They look upon Khrushchev as a defector from Leninism and upon Stalin as the genuine article.

Swabeck-Liang are enamoured of the record made by the Chinese regime in discharging its international obligations. They report that the Chinese supported the North Koreans in the war against the U.S., in Viet Nam and the Algerians. Without doubt this is to their credit. But strangely enough we see no mention of the role played by the same people in the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Up to this time, the Hungarian uprising has been the high point of struggle in any of the Soviet bloc countries against their bureaucracies and entirely in line with the Trotskyist position that a political revolution is required to overthrow the bureaucracies and regenerate the revolutions. The Hungarian insurgents struggled to overthrow their regime and to keep the socialized basis of their economy, a correct program.

After the uprising had been crushed by Soviet troops, the wave of opposition to bureaucratic rule did not die out in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union. Khrushchev had to take further steps to dam up the insurgency, unmistakable signs of which appeared. Using the prestige of the Chinese revolution, Chou En-lai, the Number Two man in the regime, toured the countries of Eastern Europe speaking against those who sought in one way or another to curb the excesses of the Stalinist regimes. He did the Soviet Stalinists a big favor by making this tour. But it should be kept in mind that this was a case of one bureaucrat lending a hand to another who found himself in a tough spot -- just as we might in this country expect Reuther to give some aid to Carey if the latter were seriously challenged by a left-wing grouping in his union.

In the 1930's we approved of John L. Lewis' aid to the unorganized industrial workers and supported the CIO which he formed and headed. But it never occurred to anyone in our ranks to urge the miners to approve of Lewis' dictatorship

in his own union or to approve his political support of Roosevelt. We supported the CIO without becoming Lewisites, just as we supported the Soviet Union without becoming Stalinists and just as we now support, unconditionally, the Chinese revolution without becoming Maoists.

In the earlier days of our movement the Stalinists used to bait us with the phony argument that if we were serious in our support of the Soviet Union we should support the ruling Stalin regime as they were doing. Some of them would admit, in private, that the regime was not all it should be. But, they declared, if you want the Soviet Union you have to take Stalin along with it. We rejected this argument -- just as we reject its echo in our ranks today with regard to China and the Mao regime. For the Chinese revolution -- yes! For the Mao regime -- no! -- if I may paraphrase Trotsky.

* * *

Despite all the attempts by the Mao leadership, Stalin and the U.S. government to patch up a coalition government in China following the end of the Second World War, Chiang Kai-shek would not go along and the civil war rolled over the country, powered by the huge peasant armies at whose head stood the Communist Party. That they led the war and won the victory is, of course, to their credit. And to the extent that the Chinese Communist Party followed a class struggle policy -- and it was compelled to do so in seeing the civil war to a victorious conclusion -- it broke with the Stalinist policy of the time.

But did the victory lead to a qualitative change in the character of the party? Concrete events following the defeat of Chiang answer in the negative. The party immediately set out to form a coalition government with capitalist forces that had remained in the country. Repressive measures were taken against the workers and their movement quickly brought under the control of the bureaucracy.

Later development, of a historically progressive nature, likewise failed to bring about a change in the kind of party it was. It remained a bureaucratically organized party, allowing no real democratic rights either to its own members or to the toilers as a whole. Here a comparison with the experience in the Soviet Union after the 1917 revolution will throw some light on the question.

For about ten years, up to 1929, the Russian party went through fierce factional struggles. Three factions, representing the interests of three distinct social groupings, fought a bitter battle against one another.

In circumstances where a single party remains the only organized political body in a given country, the interests of various social forces must be refracted through that party. In the Soviet Union the Bukharin faction reflected the pressure of the neo-capitalist elements, the so-called NEP-men and the Kulaks, the richer peasants; the Stalin faction the interests of the growing bureaucracy that was hungry for economic privileges; and the Trotskyist faction represented the interests of the workers and poor peasants.

These three factions fought it out for about ten years -- in a struggle to the death. That the Stalin faction won the victory, first in alliance with the Bukharinists against the Trotskyists and then against the Bukharin right wing, has been explained in great detail by our movement. It has recently been developed in even greater detail by Isaac Deutscher in his biography of Trotsky. In brief, with the isolation of the Soviet Union in a hostile imperialist world the strength of the new bureaucracy proved to be greater than either that of the workers or of the neo-capitalist elements.

Can anyone imagine for a moment that in China, which began its revolutionary development in 1949 on an even lower level than Russia in 1917, there are no social groupings with special interests of their own or that these interests are not represented by tendencies in the CCP? It would be completely unscientific, un-Marxist, to believe that within a party which enforces a political monopoly everything is in harmony and at peace.

It is far more likely that divergent social forces in China do find their expression in the party but are suppressed by a ruling faction which represents the interests of a bureaucracy. One thing is sure; unlike the Soviet Union where the issues in dispute were documented so that revolutionists could learn from them -- we have nothing, absolutely nothing on this score from the Chinese. This can only lead to the conclusion that the party is still led by a Stalin-type faction.

Two of the most important questions that decide whether or not a party is entitled to be regarded as Marxist, revolutionary, Bolshevik, Leninist are: (1) Internationalism;

(2) Proletarian democracy. The Chinese Communist Party has a low score on the first, and a zero on the second.

The record of the Chinese CP up to 1949, in the years between the Second and Third revolutions, indicates that it was a Stalinist type organization. After winning the power, certain progressive steps were taken by the party including unification of the country, transforming property relationships on the land, nationalization of the principal industries, introduction of economic planning and securing the independence of the nation. Naturally, our party has supported these steps and opposed all attempts of the imperialists to isolate and destroy the conquests of the Third revolution.

However, the Chinese CP remains bureaucratically organized and the top leaders monopolize the right to make all important political decisions. Differences are carefully concealed and not debated in the party ranks. Those who disagree are simply removed from their posts and swept aside. The world knows nothing of what takes place among the leaders, it knows only the decisions arrived at. There is no basis for making a judgment by anyone who is not in the top group.

Since the party is said to have some 14 million members some differences of opinion must arise from time to time. What these may be we do not know; there is no record. After the experience of some 30 years of Stalinism in the Soviet Union, with its "unanimity" which was forced upon everyone at the point of a gun, it is necessary for scientific observers of, and participants in revolutionary politics, to be wary of ruling bureaucracies in the entire Soviet bloc and their claims, to say nothing about their apologists.

The kind of procedure followed by the Chinese CP leaders is not in the tradition of Lenin, in whose party before and after taking power, members had the democratic right to disagree and to convince others without reprisals. The Chinese CP isn't even in the example set by Cuba up to now, where the tradition of making the revolution a school of unfettered thought, as Castro put it, is in effect. The only conclusion we can come to, as a result of all the evidence, is that the Chinese CP is still a Stalin-type organization, run pretty much in accordance with the precedents established in the Soviet Union, where the leaders have a monopoly of the important political decisions and the ranks and toiling population little or no way to make their wants and wishes put into effect.

The new position worked out by Swabeck-Liang, and given to us with no concrete evidence to support it, should be firmly rejected by the party.

Los Angeles, Calif. - July 10, 1962.

AFTER THREE YEARS -- THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS RETURN

Part I -- by Moi Yi

In the second half of 1958, the unions affiliated to the Hong Kong Union Association made a great effort to encourage experienced industrial workers in every field to return to China in order to help the Chinese Communist Party's program of the "great leap forward." About ten thousand persons, including workers and their families, responded. The terms offered to the returning workers were as follows: pay according to the wage rates in Hong Kong; loans before returning -- to be deducted from the salaries received later; free shipment of such personal belongings as clocks, clothes, bicycles, sewing machines and the like to be handled by the Chinese Traveling Agency. The pro-CCP newspaper in Hong Kong, Ta Kung Pao and Wen Wei Pao, reported many enthusiastic farewell meetings as the workers returned to China group by group.

However, after three years, the workers have come back to Hong Kong group by group. Were they not full of enthusiasm about contributing to the mother country? Why did they now come back to this colonial life? It is evident that the dampening of the workers' enthusiasm for socialism resulted from bureaucratic rule in China.

We learned that soon after they arrived in China the returned workers began making application to be sent back to Hong Kong. When they received no answer, some of them stayed out quite often from work and strolled the streets the whole day long. (As a matter of fact, the factories open only irregularly because of shortages of raw materials). Other returned workers carrying dried food with them went by train to see the responsible people in Peking. A number of workers' families, taking their children with them, went to the Canton Provincial Committee and asked for an interview with Chen Yuch. In general, they raised a big hue and cry. Last July, the Central government realized that the matter was out of hand and decreed that those workers who wanted to return to Hong Kong could file applications to do so. As of now, ninety per cent of the workers who went to China have come back to Hong Kong.

I have visited three of these returned workers with whom I am well acquainted.

They went to China in November, 1958, with the help of the Hong Kong Porcelain Union. As soon as they reached

Canton, they rested at the Overseas Reception Building for a week. There the meals were very good -- three dishes and one soup, with an unlimited supply of rice. The cadres in charge of the Reception Building told them that these meals cost twelve yuan a month. [At the official rate of exchange the yuan equals half an American dollar.] But the meals they had later on in the factory were not like this. They got worse and worse until the workers finally had only one dish -- turnips.

S. was sent to work in the Metallurgical Department of Public Works in Shao Kang. His job was carrying loads of earth and sand, and his salary was eighteen yuan a month. (His salary in Hong Kong was 200 H.K. dollars before he went to China and is about 250 H.K. dollars now. One H.K. dollar equals 0.427 yuan, or about twenty-two cents in American currency.) When he first arrived at his place of work, he saw only a bare site with a wooden sign stating that this factory would be completed at the end of December. How can a factory be built in a little more than a month? he wondered. His surprise vanished after he started to work. All workers were putting in fifteen to sixteen hours a day. The night work was without pay, except for a free snack. They were supposed to work until one o'clock in the morning and then take the following day off. But the cadres ordered the workers to quit at eleven o'clock at night and to begin work at the regular hour the next morning -- thus depriving the workers of their rest. "You people are fools to come back here," S. now said to new arrivals from Hong Kong. This is what he had been told, too, when he arrived.

Shortages of Daily Necessities

Beginning in March 1958, the shortage of daily necessities became manifest in Shao Kung. (It became evident in Canton in June.) The food card provided for thirty-five jinh per month. [One jinh equals about one pound a.d.p.], which was enough to keep from starving but not enough to fill one's stomach, and, of course, not enough to buy the other daily necessities.

At that time S. applied for permission to return to Hong Kong, but it was not granted. Once he tried to sail illegally to Hong Kong from the territory opposite Yuen Long and failed because of a miscalculation of time. After that he deserted from his place of work to go to Canton, where he sold his watch and his clothes in order to stay alive. Once, driven by hunger, he bought and ate nine bowls of rice in one meal. Finally, being unable to keep up in this way, he

went back to his place of work, where he received only a minor scolding from the cadres. On one occasion, on a last day of the month, having spent his entire food card, he stayed on the bed the whole day without anything to eat. Even the cadres had to leave him alone. The work progressed slowly because the workers took many rest periods as they did not have enough to eat. Each rest period lasted longer than half an hour.

At the end of last year and again last spring, a cake made of the sweepings of rice-straw and rice was sometimes served as a substitute for rice. It was very bad for those with a weak digestive system. But even this shoddy product had to be bought with a food coupon. The factory's mess hall served no salt fish or green vegetables and served pork only on New Year's and on festival days. Because of undernourishment liver ailments and swellings of the body are common diseases among the people.

The cotton ration was two feet, one inch per person for the first half of 1961. A sock takes up eight inches of the cotton ration; a face towel, one foot and seven inches; a sleeveless underwear, one foot, five inches; and a full-sleeve underwear, two feet.

Political Study

Because of the lack of raw materials, there was a three-month halt in the work and this was turned into a study period for the workers. The theory of public works building was taught as well as politics. The political studies consisted mainly of learning about the Yuen Yon period, of Mao's revolutionary stories and of the explanation for the food shortages. When the instructor asked the workers for their opinions about the food shortage, some of them stood up and repeated his explanations. Others stood up and said they had no opinions.

S.'s greatest dissatisfaction with the CCP is over thought control. A "reconstruction" movement is carried on each year, first among the cadres then among the mass of the workers. Nobody dares to express himself freely. The first condition for a worker to be promoted is that he have "red" in his thinking; his skill is considered secondly. In general, the workers don't want to be promoted; they want to remain in the "middle."

S. met a college student who had quit school and who now worked as a temporary longshoreman. The reason he had quit was that, in the school, the party secretary dictated

everything, depriving students of their freedom of speech and making the intellectual atmosphere unbearable. The same situation exists in the factory meetings. Nobody dares challenge the opinions of the party secretary and of the factory head, but each one gets up after the other and claps enthusiastically.

If you dare oppose party opinion, the party will investigate your background and your family's background. It will convict you of "tired persuasion," order you to criticize yourself publicly, and demand that you write down your self-criticism for the higher officials of the party. If the written criticism is not considered "deep enough," it has to be rewritten. As the educational level of the workers is very low, said S. only a few of them can write long self-criticisms.

T. was sent to the Yi Fong Porcelain Factory in Canton. He was paid the salary of a third-degree skilled worker, or 55.7 yuan per month. (He received 150 H.K. dollars before he went to China and now gets 220 H.K. dollars.) At the beginning of 1959, he received forty-two food coupons. During the period of the "great leap forward," the factory worked three shifts. However, during the last year, two shifts were the rule because of insufficient supplies of raw materials. Each shift lasted eight hours, with a day off on Sunday. Those who were laid off were sent to the rural areas.

Because the coal it burned was sometimes of such poor quality, the factory worked much more slowly than its counterpart in Hong Kong. Also, the lack of raw materials, prevented it from using the single enamel powder used in Hong Kong.

Furnace tending was done mostly by male workers, whereas women did the light work. A woman with T.B. worked four hours a day. The furnace tenders received extra monthly rations such as half a jinh of pork, seven ounces of sugar, less than a jinh of fish, and half a piece of soap. The soap was not enough for bathing nor for washing clothes. In addition, they were given one pair of rubber shoes and two uniforms.

Most workers ate in the factory mess hall, where each received a small serving of what was called a "healthy vegetable." After meals, everyone took care of his own chopsticks and bowl. The cooking oil ration in the city was two ounces per person per month. A family used up its oil ration during the first week of each month. In order not to spend time queuing up for rations, the workers preferred to have

their families eat in the mess hall, although there was hardly any oil in the dishes served there.

W. was assigned to a light-industry factory in Canton as an apprentice. His salary was a little more than twenty yuan. (He earned 150 H.K. dollars before he went to China and now earns 220 H.K. dollars.) When he started work he showed a great deal of enthusiasm and this won him a thirty-yuan bonus. But after a long period of bitter battle, of meetings and of the scarcity of daily necessities, his enthusiasm waned. In 1959, he asked to be sent back to Hong Kong, but his request was turned down. In desperation, he wrote a few words on a piece of paper and pasted it on a wall. The paper said, "Everywhere it is as dark as crows." When officials rebuked him he retorted that they hadn't lived up to their promises. He told them that, first, his pay was not calculated according to his salary in Hong Kong; second, there was no yearly traveling vacation for him and for other former Hong Kong workers to visit their families; and third, there was not enough food to eat. He also said that if only he could get enough to eat, he would not think of going back to Hong Kong.

Conditions Prevailing in Production

Although the government had a five-year plan, the factory did not even have a one-year plan. All it had was a one-month task. Production was slow during the first half of each month, then was speeded up in the second half in order to fulfill the task. As a result the quota was met as far as quantity, but not as far as quality was concerned.

When the factory was suddenly told to support an agricultural plan, a great deal of tools and necessities were made in a rush. The pig iron needed as raw material was not supplied with the order. The factory was forced to get it through its own devices. Immediately after they were molded, castings were sent to the machines for additional work. Because the castings lacked a cooling-off period, the machines were easily damaged and the castings themselves wound up mostly out of shape. The people in charge were mainly concerned with turning out the products on time, despite the abnormal conditions that prevailed and despite the fact that the workers called their attention to the harmful results.

However, the factories were not always in a rush. In some of them, the workers were told to slow down the machines when they only had a few orders in order to avoid complete work stoppages. Such stoppages would have caused embarrassing situations and, if prolonged, might even have raised the danger

of the workers being sent to the rural areas.

Meetings were usually held after work, but once in a while the factory head ordered everybody to stop work to attend a meeting. The workers were glad to have a rest.

Workers in W.'s factory could obtain three hours' leave to visit the factory clinic, and some workers went even when they weren't sick. The boarding house was inspected for cleanliness once a week. Electricity cost sixty cents per person per month. Despite repeated calls for thrift, workers left their lights burning during the day. Occasionally inspectors would turn the lights off.

Sometimes during a work stoppage caused by the depletion of raw-material supplies, workers were sent to a rural area to help a well-known brigade to repair its tools. In exchange, the brigade would send the workers some meat whenever it killed cows or pigs. Private dealings between factories also existed to some extent. One factory repaired machines for a rubber factory, which sent rubber shoes in return.

After three years of the "great leap forward," raw material is in short supply everywhere. Workers whose employment by the factory began in 1958, were sent to rural areas to support the first line of agricultural production. As the enthusiasm of the workers dwindled, the CCP put forward the slogan of "more work, more pay" and quit making references to communism.

At the end of 1960 and again last spring, the central government ordered that overtime and unpaid labor be eliminated. (Two kinds of unpaid labor were prevalent: one was unpaid overtime work in the factories; the other, participation in collective public works outside the factories.) The government also ordered a return to the eight-hour day with Sundays off.

On weekends or holidays, the transportation lines in Canton were always jammed. It was difficult to get a ticket. When eating in a restaurant, one had to yield up food coupons. A small dish of spare ribs or chicken cost three to four yuan. All kinds of alcoholic beverages were served in the high-class restaurants at the price of one yuan per ounce. A meal with liquor cost eight to ten yuan -- the equivalent of one week's or even one-half month's salary for a worker. No workingman could afford to eat there.

The Free Market

Ever since the free market was restored, its prices for commodities have diverged sharply from the official prices. The seller fixes the price of his products at will. Some prices are five to ten times as high as the official quotations, thus indicating the degree of money inflation. The following is a table comparing the official, free-market and Hong Kong rate of prices for given commodities.

| <u>Name of Commodity</u> | <u>Unit</u> | <u>Official Price (in yuan)</u> | <u>Free-Market Price (in yuan)</u> | <u>Hong-Kong Price (H.K. dollars)</u> |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Young chicken | 1 jinh | .90 | 7.00 | 3.80 |
| Pork | 1 jinh | .70 | 8.00 | 4.00 |
| Duck | 1 jinh | .90 | 3.50-6.00 | 1.40-2.00 (for each duck) |
| Egg | each | -- | .40-.50 | .25 |
| Duck egg | each | -- | .70-.80 | .25 |
| Peanut oil | one jinh | 2.00 | 1.40-2.60 | 1.60 |
| Potatoes | one jinh | -- | .60-1.20 | .30-.40 |
| Fresh milk with sugar | small bowl | .50 | -- | .60 (for ½ pound) |
| Green-leaf vegetable | one jinh | .03 | .30 | .20 |
| Banana | one jinh | .20 | .90 | .40-.50 |
| Sugar | one jinh | .50 | 3.00 | .40-.45 |
| Matches | one box | .02 (bad quality) | .15 | .03 |
| Bicycle (Pigeon brand) | each | 164.80 | -- | 115.00 |
| Food coupon | allowance of one jinh | -- | 1.50-3.00 (illegal sale) | -- |

Note: The mainland jinh is heavier than the Hong Kong jinh. The ratio is as 16 to 13.3. The mainland jinh is about one pound a.d.p. The official rate of exchange is one H.K. dollar equals 0.427 yuan. The yuan in turn is worth half an American dollar.

Gambling, Prostitution and Robbery

The kind of vice and crime which is carried on in the vicinity of Sea Pond Park or Young Cheng Theater in Hong Kong has come to life again [in China] during the last few years. Gamblers play poker for food coupons, not for money. People who have lost a whole month's allowance of food coupons have had to replace them by trading commodities in the rural areas. The peasants have some food coupons for exchange because a part of their food supply consists of products grown on the small plots they are allowed to cultivate individually.

A clandestine prostitute costs four coupons. A shirt or pair of trousers is obtained in the following way: when you see someone tug a few times at his clothes you know they are for sale, and you can approach the owner and bargain over the price.

Since last spring, many incidents of robbery have occurred in Lovers' Lane as couples walk at night. Good clothes hanging on the line to dry, or chicken cages parked by the doors, invariably disappear if they are not watched. Thefts also occur on the docks and at railroad stations. An automobile thief will tear down the whole car and sell the parts piece by piece.

Bribery is prevalent. Those who have money bribe their way to Hong Kong with the help of the militia guarding the border.

When crimes such as these are uncovered by the police, they publish accounts of them on the bulletin board outside the police station, but the stories never appear in the newspapers.

November 30, 1961

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AFTER THREE YEARS -- THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS RETURN

Part II -- by Moi Yi

I visited A. and B. who were also among the industrial workers who recently returned from Hong Kong.

A., a truck driver, lived quite comfortably in Canton. He earned 160 yuan a month at the Canton First Steel Factory -- the highest salary earned in that city. However, a truck driver's job is a difficult one in Canton. First, a driver must have driven 5,000 miles without an accident before he can qualify for a licence. (During the high-tide of the "great leap forward" drivers were so scarce that they were accepted without a licence.)

Secondly, the rugged mountain highways cause much engine trouble. When this happens the driver must repair the truck himself. He can expect no help from passers-by who have tasks of their own to fulfill. In the mountains, a driver also faces the danger of attack from wild animals.

At the same time, overloaded trucks and overworked drivers caused many accidents on the highway. A few male and female workers, supervised by the driver, helped unload the trucks. At first A. tried to speed them up when they worked too slowly. They told him simply, "Brother, why are you so eager while we are paid at such low wages?" After that A. just left them alone.

When the government called for additional help in the agricultural areas a little more than a year ago, all the workers who had entered A.'s factory in 1958, or 60 per cent of the total work force, were sent to the rural areas. This left many trucks lying idle and the drivers played poker to pass away the time.

When parades are organized the participants are members of the party and of its youth group, and the active elements are singled out by the upper cadres. Although on these occasions newspapers report the participation of several hundreds of thousands, in reality only four or five thousand appear.

The cadres and the workers are supposed to have the same food rations. But the cadres in the factory have their own small kitchen where they enjoy special food privileges. When the workers expressed their resentment of this unfair practice

by posting leaflets on the walls the cadres retaliated and nobody dared express further criticism.

At first 70 to 80 workers enrolled in the factory's "Red and Expert School." In time, however, they began to drop out of the classes. They lost interest because what they learned was too remote from reality. Finally the school was closed. In general the workers were not concerned with politics and few read the newspapers. They showed no enthusiasm for paying union dues.

When A.'s wife gave birth to a baby, she received no special food from the hospital. A. had to find some way of getting it from the rural area. Recently, after many complaints from the workers to the government, food rations, such as chicken and several jinhs of pork, were supplied to new mothers.

After daily necessities -- rice, cotton, oil, sugar, medicine, etc. -- are obtained with ration coupons/as well as with money/. One has to queue up on line for everything. Even then there is no guarantee that these items will be available. Coupons can only be used in your own district. For instance, coupons from the White Pigeon District cannot be used in the South River District. On Sundays, A. had to help his wife shop by waiting on line. Sometimes when he came home empty handed the family quarrelled. Sometimes, when they had no rice, porridge was served and the children refused to eat. When fuel rations gave out, the children were sent to pick up leaves from trees and grass straws from the streets. Only the boarding houses, where the workers' families live, are inexpensive and cost a few yuan a month.

Because of the tensions, relations among men are cold. Even conversations between couples are carried on in whispers for fear that some informer might hear.

In 1958, more than one thousand people worked in B.'s factory. This included new recruits -- some 14 or 15 years old. The workers filled all the available space in the boarding house. Now the number of workers has been reduced to a little more than five hundred.

Many of the cadres in charge of the factory are veterans. They ordered the workers to attend an army drill before going to work in the morning. Because of hunger the workers were naturally loath to use up their energy in such activities.

There were permanent and temporary workers. Some permanent workers preferred to give up their pensions and become temporary workers because the latter had more time to themselves. They were not compelled to attend meetings that took place in the evening. Amusement gatherings, at which dramas, motion pictures, etc., were presented had completely disappeared.

Now everybody was busy finding things to eat and wear. People buy food in the free market and cook it on little stoves in the boarding house. But prices in the free market are sky high: beef is 7 to 8 yuans a jinh; edible frog, 4 yuan; a pack (20) of Happy Family brand cigarettes, 1.50 to 1.70 yuan (official price is 0.22 yuan); pomegranates, 0.30 a jinh (official price 0.03 a yuan); green leaf vegetables, 0.30 to 0.50 a jinh depending on the supply from the rural areas.

Nobody has ever organized a cleanliness movement in the boarding house where every bed is full of bedbugs.

The workers in B.'s factory participated in the side-products movement. The government had called for this since 1960. Everybody fought for empty space to plant vegetables, potatoes and raise chickens, rabbits, pigs, etc. Lacking fertilizer the plants would not grow. So many workers waited at the lavatories before dawn for the night-soil.

The unions and library are located inside the factory. Hardly anybody has time to spend in the library which is open only during working hours from 9 A.M. to 4 P.M. There are no newspaper stands in the city. The newspapers are in the library. Whenever they contain important news, the workers take the newspapers home with them. It is very difficult for an individual to subscribe to a newspaper in Canton. First, you have to have a high intellectual rating; second, you have to pass an on-the-spot test concerning your viewpoint on current events; third, you have to be a permanent subscriber -- that is, if for some financial reason you are unable to subscribe for one month, you are automatically and permanently taken off the subscribers list.

Important news like reports of the 22nd Congress and the dispute between the Soviet Union and Albania were published in the Southern Daily, Canton Daily and Young Cheng Evening paper (the only newspapers in Canton) only after they had been published in the Peking Daily. Some workers thought Khrushchev shrewd. Thus far the CCP has never clearly explained the cause or the facts about the dispute between Russia and Albania.

Some cadres secretly admitted that Stalin had committed many errors in the past. Although the CCP has been advocating the need for unity between the socialist countries, the workers feel that China is isolated. They feel that only Albania, North Korea and North Vietnam support China while all the Eastern European countries stand with Russia.

As the conflict between China and Russia deepened, the cadres urged the workers to depend on their own resources and consciousness in order to be able to return to the 1956 productive level.

Athletics has become a special profession. Athletes are well treated by the state. They receive 40 yuan a month for food expenses. Since they pay only the official prices, this enables them to have nourishing dishes at every meal. In case an athlete loses his appetite he receives a thorough check-up by a doctor.

B. liked swimming very much. Last year, however, after he had gone swimming once, he quit. It only made him more hungry.

It is not unusual for people to complain openly about hunger and their inability to buy food with money. When the cadres hear these complaints they can't do anything but leave the people alone, because the complaints are based on fact.

As dissatisfaction among the workers mounted the party organized "speak bitterness meetings" about the old society and the new society. Active participants in the meetings were allowed to leave the production line for a week. At the meeting the party secretary admitted that some people were starving in certain places in the North. This was caused, he said, by mismanagement on the part of some cadres who were severely punished and even shot.

At present, by paying taxes, merchants can operate second-hand clothing stores. This has replaced the buying and selling of old clothing on the street (as described in my previous article.) In these stores one can buy a second-hand, navy-blue student jacket for 40 yuan, a second-hand pilot jacket with a zipper for 30-40 yuan. Those that are imported cost more.

The government supplies private restaurants with rice and noodles only. These are sold to the customers for food

coupons. The rest of the food, such as meat and vegetables are bought from the free market. Food served at restaurants is expensive. One cup of black coffee is 0.30 yuan; Chingtao beer, 0.80 yuan a bottle; beef or pork and noodles, 0.60 to 1.00 yuan an order.

Smuggling has revived. Some people smuggle cigarette leaves from Honan and sell them in Canton. In return they smuggle old clothing from Canton and sell them in Honan. Thus they make a living by traveling.

During the first few years after the liberation the newspapers praised the improved manners exhibited by the people in the new society such as giving a seat to the old or to young pregnant women. Now these manners have disappeared. Everybody, driven by hunger and fatigue, fights for his seat as soon as he gets on a bus or train. But the conductors still exhort the riders to give up their seats to the old and infirm. So some experienced riders prefer to sit at the back in order to avoid an argument with the conductors.

Just before B. left for Hong Kong the government ordered the factory to make more than ten 4,000-watt motors which were to be sent to North Vietnam. After the order was completed, it was discovered that the wrong designs were used. Thus all the work and materials had been wasted. Lower technicians and workers had noticed the mistake in the process of production but had remained silent. In this way they expressed their passive resistance to the bureaucracy.

January, 1962.

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