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Contents

	<u>Page</u>
1. Marxism and the Sino-Soviet Dispute, by Arne Swabek.	1
2. The Chinese Revolution and Future of Trotskyism -- A Criticism of the 1963 Draft Resolution, by James E. Boulton.	11
3. Some Answers to Warde's Articles in <u>The Militant</u> , by Al Johnson.	26
4. Who is Junking Leninism?, by I. Warwak.	30

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MARXISM AND THE SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE

by Arne Swaback

The ideological dispute between Peking and Moscow has now reached world shaking proportions; Communist parties everywhere feel its stirring impact. This dispute takes place in a period of revolutionary upturn of which it is an essential product -- a revolutionary upturn catalyzed by the proletarian and peasant victory in China. Involved are issues of immense magnitude; they concern the most vital interests of revolutionary mass movements and, in the final analysis, they concern the future course of human society itself.

Thirty-five years ago our Trotskyist movement arose out of such a great ideological dispute, the dispute between the Left Opposition headed by Trotsky and the Soviet bureaucracy headed by Stalin. That dispute shook the then existing Communist parties. It occurred amid the revolutionary retreats, internally in the Soviet Union and externally on the world arena, in which the Stalinist bureaucracy originated and found the means to establish its supremacy.

Trotsky's revolutionary position was then clearly distinguished from the Stalinist opportunist, and later degenerate, position. Though extremely unpopular and attracting only a minute minority, Trotsky's position contained the imperishable ideas that are equally imperative for a genuine socialist movement and for the fate of mankind. Hence we did not hesitate taking our place on the revolutionary side. Unpopular as this side was, we had to fight for our right to be heard, not to be heard as mere commentators but as active participants.

Today's ideological dispute between Peking and Moscow centers on the same basic issues, as stated in The Militant January 28 editorial: "These great issues -- war and peace, the road to socialism, are precisely what were involved in Trotsky's fight against the revolutionary degeneration... they are the life and death issues of our epoch." In the article series by Warde this is further amplified: "The dispute has raised for consideration many of the fundamental questions confronting the world struggle for socialism. Every partisan of socialism has a stake in this historical controversy..."

The contrast between the revolutionary stand on these issues taken by the Chinese and the opportunist, or revisionist, policies of the Kremlin is today also clearly delineated. That this makes an entirely new stage in world developments, in which the Chinese Communists are initiating a revolutionary reorientation leading inevitably to world wide regroupments in a living revolutionary mass movement, must be the obvious conclusion. And yet, after all that we have learned from Trotsky and our own rich experiences, we stand nowhere in this great dispute. Though as Warde says, "every partisan of socialism has a stake in this historical controversy," we are suspended in mid air so to speak. Our comment, a plague on both your houses. But for us the imperative question still remains; Are we going to be active participants in these great developments toward reorientation and regroupment in a living revolutionary mass movement, or are we to stand aside as mere critical commentators and let history pass us by?

To this question I will return, but first permit me some comments on how these developments have been treated in our press. At the outset I want to welcome the revolutionary service rendered in publishing a couple of the Peking declarations in *The Militant*. Party members had thus a chance to become at least partly familiar with the Chinese position. This presents a wholesome contrast to the actions of the British Trotskyist group (the SLL). Showing no concern about whether the membership knew the contents of the Peking declarations, the SLL leadership published a long statement giving its own evaluation of them. Needless to say, that evaluation was on the level of its rejection of the workers state concept for Cuba. However, the attempt here to lay down party policy on the Peking-Moscow dispute in the *Warde Militant* articles -- identical in general line with the P.C. draft resolution -- makes a mockery of the pre-convention discussion. It shows utter disregard of the membership whose will is supposed to be expressed at the convention.

One *Militant* editorial notices the omission in the Chinese document of any mention of Stalin or Stalinism. In other documents this omission has been patched over, but not in accord with our views. At certain points Stalin is quoted approvingly as a Marxist-Leninist, some of his opinions, including some of his slanders of Trotsky are accepted. The fact that these have reference to the early period in Stalin's career -- before the blood purges -- makes them no less objectionable to us. We reject them. These are the paradoxical aspects of the Chinese position whose main characteristic is the head-on attack on the basic pillars of Stalin's policies which still remain in full force in the Kremlin.

The Chinese position has found great receptivity among the oppressed masses of "the hungry bloc" who are fighting for national and social liberation in Asia, Africa and Latin America. This is symptomatic of the issues in dispute. As for me, I must admit that this has far greater significance, and it happens to indicate a far more accurate appraisal of the Chinese position than the smug, self-satisfied criticism contained in *The Militant* article series which bears the mistaken title, "A Marxist Evaluation."

Complaints are made in these articles about the "voluminous, overheated, political exchanges between Moscow and Peking. Charges go so far as to say: "Tiresome, tendentious quotations from Marx and Lenin appeal to the identical resolutions." This is formalistic indeed. But a dialectic examination will grant that anybody can quote Marx or Lenin; it all depends on how, for what objective, in what manner and in what context the quotations are used. Applying this method of thought we find that the quotations from ~~Marx~~ and Lenin used in the Chinese declarations are as fresh as ever, and they serve effectively in every case either to fortify the struggle of the Chinese against revisionism or to further clarify their own revolutionary position. In one of their important documents the Chinese refer to Lenin's reason for using quotations. In State and Revolution Lenin wrote:

"In view of the unprecedentedly widespread distortion of Marxism, our prime task is to re-establish what Marx really thought on the subject of the state. For this purpose it will be necessary to quote at length from the works of Marx and Engels themselves...All, or at any rate, all the most essential passages in the works of Marx and Engels on the subject of state must without fail be quoted as fully as possible, in order that the reader may form an independent opinion of the totality of the views of the

founders of scientific socialism and of the development of these views, and in order that their distortion by the now prevailing 'Kautskyism' may be documentarily proved and clearly demonstrated. "

Surely what Lenin had to say on using quotations presents a healthy contrast to the anaemic complaints in The Militant articles.

Personally, I had the great opportunity to be an active participant in the Communist International when Lenin carried on the great debate with Kautsky and the other revisionists and opportunists in the Second International. In the present situation there are many similarities. Marxism then was outrageously adulterated. That is the case also today.

Opportunism and revisionism again runs rampant, but today it holds forth in the Kremlin and in most of the Communist parties. The Peking declarations may fall short of the brilliant analyses and the clarion calls then coming from revolutionary Moscow but their blows are aimed with as much force, determination and unmistakable meaning against Kautsky's present political offspring. And when Marxism-Leninism is today again outrageously adulterated, when distortions abound, it is necessary that the views of both Marx and Lenin be quoted as extensively as possible. Yes, and in view of the Chinese position being so often distorted in our party and elsewhere, it will be helpful also to quote some of their most significant declarations.

What the Chinese party leaders think of the dangers of nuclear war and their paper tiger concept is carefully explained in an important document not published in The Militant. These questions Comrade Warde treats rather cavalierly. He says:

"The Chinese statements consistently underrate the costs of nuclear war...this underestimation of the perils of nuclear war has helped the Kremlin and others to confuse the issues by playing up the 'nuclear teeth' of the imperialist 'paper tiger' as a cover for their opportunism." This is a strange type of logic. The Kremlin cover for its opportunism is blamed on the revolutionary position of the Chinese, and to do so their position is distorted.

More than once the Chinese have stated their view that a nuclear war unleashed by imperialism would for humanity be an unmitigated disaster. But they take particular care to warn the Communist parties against succumbing to imperialist nuclear blackmail, and against conciliation with imperialism because of such blackmail. Chiding the revisionists (Khrushchev, Togliatti and Co.) for doing exactly that the Chinese party leaders say about them: "They have allowed a kind of 'end of the world' feeling to take the place of cool reason." (emphasis added)

Being concerned above all with the overthrow of the imperialist system as the only real assurance against nuclear war, the Chinese insist: "The question of war and peace can never be understood unless it is seen in the light of social relations, of the social system, and of the laws of social development...in the final analysis atomic weapons cannot change the laws governing the historical developments of society...cannot save imperialism from its doom or prevent the proletariat and people of all countries and the oppressed nations from winning victory in their revolution... First mankind will destroy nuclear weapons, nuclear weapons will not destroy mankind. "

On the paper tiger concept the Chinese refer to Mao Tse-tung's explanation of how all imperialists and reactionaries are real tigers and at the same time paper tigers. (the law of the interpenetration of opposites). The ruling classes in all history, the slave owners of antiquity, the feudal lords and the bourgeoisie were progressive and real tigers in the early stages of their development and their rule. But as their opposites, the slaves, the peasants and the proletariat grew in strength, struggled against them and became more formidable, these ruling classes changed into paper tigers. Looked at from the long term point of view, such is the case of imperialism today. On this, said Mao, we should build our strategic thinking, but in our tactical thinking we recognize imperialism as a real tiger.

Tactics are subordinated to strategy, of course; tactics must serve strategic goals. This Mao amplified in the concept, "strategically we should despise all our enemies but tactically we should take them all seriously...in regard to each and every concrete question we must take them seriously."

Revolutionary socialists will find agreement with these concepts stated by Mao Tse-tung. We hold the capitalist imperialist system to be decrepit and corrupt, to be in decline and decay and incapable of solving its contradictions. Certainly, we despise this system but we are very well aware of its powers for damage and destruction. In every concrete question of the class struggle we take the capitalist enemy very seriously, and we act accordingly.

On this score we, who still have our really serious problems of struggle against capitalism ahead of us, can learn a few valuable lessons from the Chinese party leaders. They state correctly, that all successful revolutionaries in history have been successful "because on each particular question and each specific struggle they took the enemy seriously and adopted a prudent attitude." To this, however, the Chinese add the indispensable ingredient of revolutionary optimism. History shows, they say, that all revolutionaries came to be revolutionaries "because in the first place they dare to despise the enemy, dare to struggle and dare to seize victory. Those who fear the enemy and dare not struggle, dare not seize victory... can only be reformists and capitulationists."

"Historically, all true revolutionaries have dared to despise the reactionaries, to despise the reactionary ruling classes, to despise the enemy, because, in the historical conditions then obtaining which confronted the people with a new historical task, they had begun to be aware of the necessity of replacing the old system with a new one...But when the historical conditions have made a change necessary, revolutionaries and vanguard fighters of the people come forward who dare to denounce the reactionary ruling classes and dare to regard them as paper tigers. And in everything they do these revolutionaries always raise the people's spirits and puncture the enemy's arrogance...even if they meet with serious difficulties, setbacks and failures in the course of a revolution, all true revolutionaries will nevertheless dare to despise the enemy and will remain firm in their conviction that the revolution will triumph."

What the Chinese party leaders here present is, of course, a summary of their own struggles, their development and their revolution. It applies

with equal accuracy to the leadership of Castro and his collaborators in Cuba. Any reasonably objective observer will conclude that it comes far closer to the real problems of revolutionary strategy and tactics than does the sterile ritualistic criticism of the Militant articles. Far more wholesome it would be for us to make an attempt to learn from the summaries stated above; the Chinese CP articulate the experience of a great revolution; we do not.

Obviously the Chinese are much concerned about turning the tendency to succumb to imperialist nuclear blackmail into the healthy channels of revolutionary optimism. How can we have any disagreement with that? Its necessity we understand very well. We are as aware as they are that several revolutions including the Chinese and the Cuban, together with a whole series of colonial upheavals have occurred since the imperialists acquired nuclear weapons. The very nature of the epoch demands that emphasis be placed on revolutionary optimism.

But there is no democracy in China -- so we are told by the Militant articles: "The Mao regime...has maintained rigid control over all domains of social and political activity...Views dissenting from the official line have not been authorized for publication in recent years." Well, well, one may ask, have views dissenting from the official line in the SWP been authorized for publication?

"The democratic regime is the most aristocratic way of ruling. It is possible only to a rich nation." So spoke Trotsky in Discussions on the Transitional Program (Fourth International, February, 1946). His rational view forms a healthy contrast to the abstract, idealized notions of democracy separate and apart from class relations and from economic conditions that one hears so often in regard to China.

In Russia the young Soviet Republic, after its long and devastating civil war, was obliged to introduce compulsory labor service because the fate of the revolution depended on the labor front. In the factories the principle of one-man management was strictly maintained. Democratic rights for the mass of the people were embodied in the proletarian rule, its program and its objectives. (See Trotsky's book, Dictatorship and Democracy)

In China, the civil war had been victoriously concluded before the launching of the new workers state. No compulsion was necessary, either for labor service or for collectivization. There also the democratic rights of the mass of the people -- with whose interests and needs the CCP leaders were always closely identified -- are embodied in the proletarian rule, its program and its objectives. That bureaucratic elements arise nevertheless is a fact there as it was in the Soviet Union in Lenin's day, and as it is in Cuba today. With special reference to this problem, President Osvaldo Dorticos said in his 1963 "State of the Union" report: Cuba must eliminate "all of the exceedingly dangerous manifestations of bureaucracy."

Conditions of internal party democracy in China can be best illustrated by one very concrete example. After the 1927 defeat the CCP experienced a period of leftist-adventurist policies, first under the Li-Li-san and later under the Wang Ming leadership. Mao Tse-tung fought against both and against their policies, and he replaced them in the leadership in 1935. Yet to this day, Li-Li-san and Wang Ming are both members of the CCP

Central Committee. Few parties can match this record of internal democracy.

To all the questions raised the Warde articles reply: "The best service Marxists can render in the Great Debate is to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about the views and conduct of the various participants." That sounds very commendable. Let us see how well it is carried out. Most of the examples here cited are repeated in the PC draft resolution on the Sino-Soviet dispute.

What Warde calls the reactionary attitude of the Chinese on de-Stalinization, he says, "is symbolized on the state level in Peking's unprincipled bloc with Hoxha's Albania, one of the most despicable Stalinist regimes in Europe." Who knows what the character of this regime is? A group of young Cubans are there now to work in, and to study Albanian agriculture; they may learn something about the regime. True, Khrushchev has already labelled it despicable Stalinist, but there is no reason for us to accept his verdict.

Continuing in the same vein the articles charge, "In the factional fight against Khrushchev the Chinese may also be giving aid and comfort to the discredited Stalinist die-hards in the Soviet Union headed by the desposed Molotov 'anti-party' group." Sad to say, this charge is one of those typical and slanderous speculations from the capitalist press that should not be permitted to disgrace The Militant columns.

But the Militant plea for Yugoslavia to be included in the fraternity of Communist parties was made in vain. Tito, who has been elected president for life, has now assured imperialist Washington that in the conflict between East and West Yugoslavia will remain neutral.

Among further somewhat similar assertions made in these articles two items must be mentioned. Firstly: "The Chinese take no exception to the line of the Japanese CP that the main task there is, not the fight for workers power and socialism, but to win national independence from U.S. imperialism." Secondly, the Chinese Communists "do not object to the craven support given by the Indonesian CP to the government of Soekarno who is Nehru's counterpart in that country."

But the question arises, how does anybody here know about these complaints one way or another? The Kremlin used to arrogate to itself the power of dictating policy to all other parties. In the present dispute the Chinese party leaders have stated more than once that they have criticized in public only those parties who had made open attacks upon them. What the actual relations are between the Chinese and the CPs of Japan and Indonesia nobody here is in a position to know. But we do know that we in the SWP find serious faults with the terribly sterile and sectarian attitude of the British Trotskyists to the Cuban revolution and their calling Castro an agent of capitalism. Publicly it may seem like we take no exception or we do not object to their line. We have made no criticism in public. The lesson should be a rule for revolutionary leaders: do not demand from others what you are not prepared to do yourself.

On the points mentioned above the truth did not fare so well, either in whole or in part. But truth becomes an even greater casualty in the discussion on how imperialism is to be disarmed. The Militant articles maintain

(the PC draft resolution repeats) that the Chinese "imply that the achievement of military preponderance by the 'socialist camp' plus the 'people's revolutionary struggle,' can pull the teeth of imperialism." We are told that: "This line of reasoning leaves out of account the paramount factor in the world situation: the class relations in the imperialist stronghold."

These conjectures are simply not true -- not a single one of them. In fact, they are a gross distortion, but to get at the truth let the Chinese speak for themselves.

In the Peking declaration published in *The Militant* the Chinese leaders say about Togliatti and Co., "In the place of international class struggle ~~they~~ advocate international class collaboration." Noting that "according to their theory...there is no need for present-day Italy to have a proletarian revolution" the Chinese insist: "Communists must not in the slightest degree relax their preparations for revolution. They must be prepared to repel the assaults of counter-revolution and to overthrow the bourgeoisie by armed force at the critical juncture of the revolution when the proletariat is seizing state power and the bourgeoisie resorts to armed force to suppress the revolution."

In a more comprehensive document not published in *The Militant*, the Chinese point to developments in the present epoch in which "the mighty working class of Europe and America is experiencing a new awakening." For the benefit of Togliatti and Co. they stress the necessity to understand the contradictions "between the imperialist powers and the oppressed nations, and between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and other working people in each imperialist country, in order to chart the right course for the proletariat in their own country."

The dialectical relations between the Soviet world, the colonial revolution and the tasks of the workers in the capitalist nations are explained in the same document as follows: "The firmer the unity of the socialist camp the more vigorous the struggle of the proletariat and the oppressed people in the capitalist countries, then the greater the possibility...of preventing a new world war and preserving world peace."

Referring to the fights for liberation in Asia, Africa and Latin America, the Chinese declare: "This struggle renders most vital support to the struggle of the working class in Western Europe and North America." Lenin's stress on "the great significance of the unity between the proletariat in the capitalist countries and the oppressed nations for the victory of the proletarian revolution" is recalled. And the Chinese add to this: "The proletariat has very many allies in the anti-imperialist struggle in these regions. Therefore, in order to lead the struggle step by step to victory and to guarantee victory in each struggle, the proletariat and its vanguard in the countries of these regions must march in the van."

To make sure that these basic principles are clearly comprehended the Chinese party leaders sum up their message in these words: "The proletariat in the capitalist countries in Europe and America, too, must stand in the forefront of those supporting the revolutionary struggles of the oppressed nations and the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America. In fact, such support simultaneously helps the cause of the emancipation of the proletariat in Europe and America. Without support from the revolutionary

struggles of the oppressed nations and the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America, it will be impossible for the proletariat and the people of capitalist Europe and America to free themselves from the calamities of capitalist oppression and of the menace of imperialist war. Therefore, the proletarian parties of the metropolitan imperialist countries are duty bound to heed the voice of the revolutionary people in these regions, study their experience, respect their revolutionary feelings, and support their revolutionary struggles."

These quotations are sufficient refutation of the charges made in the Militant articles and the P.C. draft resolution. The Chinese certainly do take fully into account the class relations in the imperialist strongholds; they have portrayed correctly the interrelations between the struggle of the people in the colonial world and those of the proletariat in capitalist countries. From the latter they demand full support to colonial revolutions and explain that these will, in turn, become an indispensable aid to the working class struggle in the imperialist strongholds. Implicitly and explicitly, in words and deeds, they have demonstrated their aim to extend the socialist revolution to the advanced capitalist countries. With this the Chinese party leaders verify their often stated acceptance of the theory of permanent (or uninterrupted) revolution as a guide to action. With this also, the revolutionary position of the Chinese Communist Party in its dispute with the opportunist outlook and practices of the Kremlin is clearly and distinctly marked out.

Upon us, who have the duty of educating the coming generation of revolutionaries in the most powerful imperialist stronghold, this imposes a serious responsibility. In the first place we need to discard the deep seated prejudices which have inspired the distortions about the Chinese -- their revolution and their present position. Those well worn prejudices are the most unreliable type of political guide. In their place we should offer our active collaboration with the Chinese in the efforts to extend the socialist revolution to the capitalist world. But, alas, instead of accepting this duty we continue as mere critical commentators.

The Militant articles declare: "Most reprehensible is the refusal of the Chinese to favor the de-Stalinization moves taken in the Soviet bloc since 1956." What is really meant by this? Is it based on the fact that the Chinese have quoted Stalin approvingly, or that Stalin's picture has been displayed in demonstrations? For serious revolutionists this could hardly be an adequate criterion. The real situation is that the Chinese with the mighty voice of a great and powerful revolution, challenge the Kremlin and all its puppet CP leaders on the basic pillars of Stalin's policies. That challenge is carried into the field of action in relation to revolutionary developments everywhere. And not less important, that mighty voice rings out in constant defiance of imperialist domination. We should greet this as an abundant source of new inspiration; it is in harmony with our own best efforts. But we don't. Instead our attitude is illogically derisive and hostile as toward a dangerous rival.

Though it is not so long ago that our press publicly labelled the Peking regime as Stalinist, that does not occur in the PC draft resolution on the Sino-Soviet dispute. While this can be noted as progress, another look shows the draft resolution characterizing China as "a deformed workers state where the revolution is still vital and vigorous." What kind of

jabberwocky is this? Here it is admitted that the revolution is still vital and vigorous; and yet, we are committed to a shamefaced agnostic disbelief in its power to prevent a deformity 14 years after its initial victory. With such nonsense we are not going to get very close to "the CP dissidents favoring the Chinese views."

In the draft resolution the dispute is said to be "between two bureaucratic formations, both of Stalinist schooling." For the Chinese such alleged schooling would present a strange relationship between teacher and pupils. Stalin consistently recognized and supported Chiang Kai-shek as the legitimate ruler of China; the CCP consistently carried on civil war against Chiang. This was interrupted during the war of 1937 to 1945 to repel the Japanese imperialist invasion of China -- an action that assumed the character of a war of national liberation. To repel this invasion the CCP made a united front with Chiang. Both in theory and practice this united front remained as originally conceived by Lenin and the Bolsheviks, who initiated it, a continuation of the struggle by other means. After the Japanese defeat the CCP carried on the struggle for power against Chiang through the victorious civil war in defiance of Stalin's policy of support to Chiang. This is the reality of that much misinterpreted relationship.

But is it true that the Chinese Leaders fail to examine the historical roots of the Kremlin position which leads back to Stalin and Stalinism. This failure arises out of their false evaluation of the historical role of Trotsky's struggle against the Stalinist degeneration. Our task in setting this historical record straight is both obvious and essential. But this cannot obviate in the slightest degree our duty to the problems of the living historical process today. These are far more immediate, far more direct, and far more pressing. Only hide-bound sectarians will ignore them.

On this question one Militant editorial (April 15) acknowledges the Peking-Moscow dispute to be a reflection "of the crisis of the world workers' movement." Very true. But the editorial draws no other conclusion than to say: "It is difficult at this stage of the developing discussion to see on what terms Moscow and Peking can reach a durable reconciliation."

This one can read any day in the capitalist press -- can that possibly express our position or our interest in the matter? On the contrary, I think our aim must be victory for the revolutionary principles involved in the dispute; and to that end we should be active participants. There need be no doubt that this dispute will go on to its logical conclusion of a revolutionary reorientation. Just as surely, this will result also in world wide regroupment in a living revolutionary movement on a mass scale, with the possibility of restoration of a genuine Communist International.

Under no conditions can this be brushed aside as a remote question. The leftward movement is already a fact in various parts of the world. Signs of controversy, and in some cases open division, have appeared in a number of CPs formally on Moscow's side both in Europe and Latin America. In broad terms Peking and Havana speak the same language and defend identical programs. Among young communists in Europe and Latin America the ideological principles enunciated by Peking are reported to have special attraction. This last point recalls to me the great debates, divisions and splits in the Socialist parties arising out of the Russian revolution and the formation of the Comintern. The young Socialists, pretty well everywhere,

I among them, quickly entered to take part in this new development.

Trotskyists have always been alert even to much more modest leftward developments. Comrades will remember the "French Turn" initiated by Trotsky in 1934. The victory of Hitler's storm troopers in Germany had stimulated the rise of fascist elements in France. As a result pronounced leftward tendencies appeared in the French Socialist Party. Trotsky sounded the tocsin: he proposed that our section there should enter the socialist Party to aid the leftward development. Arguing for this position Trotsky warned the comrades in "appraising the socialist party," not to "operate with the ready-made formulas of yesterday." Let us be mindful of this today.

Trotsky did not conceive of the Fourth International being built exclusively of Trotskyists. To emphasize this view he urged that Chen Tu-hsiu be invited to the founding conference even though we then had serious differences with Chen Tu-hsiu.

Here in the United States, shortly after we had fused with the Muste group, certain leftward tendencies developed in the Socialist Party. We did not hesitate in 1936 to take the necessary steps to aid this development. We made a "French Turn" here and entered the Socialist Party; we even gave up our press to make entry possible. The inevitable separation followed later, but we have since remained convinced that our movement gained from this action.

These experiences have become an important part of our tradition. Small as our forces were, we have never been satisfied sitting on the sidelines as mere commentators failing to see the real significance of revolutionary opportunities and failing to partake in them. The present developments arising out of the Peking-Moscow dispute are many times greater than the examples cited from our history; they are immensely more important; they hold out promise of a virtual revolutionary renaissance. They present to us a clear mandate. We cannot enter into membership, but we can and must become active participants in these profound developments. The first requirement, however, is to take our stand on the revolutionary side of the Chinese -- in critical support, of course. Not to become Maoists, but to participate with our Trotskyist principles as our guide.

May 11, 1963

THE CHINESE REVOLUTION AND FUTURE OF TROTSKYISM

A Criticism of the 1963 Draft Resolution

by James E. Boulton

"No one will lead it, and no one will guide it, but Bolshevik-Leninists" - L. Trotsky, Tenth Anniversary Speech

I. Two Resolutions - A Methodological Distinction

THE DIABOLICAL isolation of the Trotskyist parties from the internal development and practical life of the Chinese Revolution is the very root cause of the protracted paralysis in the SWP over the past decade. Even as the October Revolution supplied the impulse and experience for a reconstruction of the international workers' movement on incomparably deeper theoretical foundations - so does the Chinese Revolution now provide the dynamic force for re-alignment of all revolutionary parties and a new theoretical endowment. At the very heart of the raging civil war between Moscow and Peking is the program of Marxist internationalism.

It is precisely this isolation, both theoretically and practically, of the Trotskyists from the gigantic revolution in Asia that reduced the deep-sounding Regroupment Policy of 1957 to the booming of a hollow drum. It was not solidarity with the living revolution that motivated the "long march" of 1957-58, but a search for disillusioned middle-class radicals in the Stalinist cesspools of despair.

In the midst of the civil war that has erupted between the massive camp of Maoism and the refurbished anti-bomb Menshevik camp of Khrushchev, the authors of a Political Committee declaration of the SWP call for "building new revolutionary Marxist mass parties capable of leading the working class." (On Reunification of the World Trotskyist Movement - Para. 3)

This same statement implements the fiction of a "tremendous victory in China which changed the relationship of class forces on an international scale" without the decisive role of a revolutionary Marxist vanguard party! If the Maoist Party has failed to earn our Good Housekeeping stamp of approval, we must seek for the origin of the Chinese Revolution outside of the reciprocal relations between party and class!

We have turned history upside down in a menage of theoretical gymnastics: We have propelled the Chinese Revolution by external forces, by the decisive role of American imperialism; we have invested the theory of permanent revolution with automatism; and we have put the class at the head of the leadership! This is the formula for isolation.

Between the formal description of arbitrarily selected historical realities, as terminal products, and that method which cognates the living revolution in terms of its unity, as process, lies the gulf that separates two Party resolutions on the question of China.

The Draft Resolution of the PC on "The Sino-Soviet Dispute" is summarized most succinctly by Myra Weiss:

"It (the Revolution) was made by Mao Tse-tung and his rotten bureaucratic Communist Party of China. They made a revolution and This was a great event" (Int. Bul. Vol. 23, No. 6, p. 52)

It is this generous view of the potentialities of Stalinism, flowing from the terminal fact of a mighty workers' state in China, that abandons the dialectic comprehension of revolutionary events in the reciprocal relationship between the objective and subjective factors in history.

The Draft Resolution submitted by Arne Swabek and John Liang - "The Chinese Revolution - Its Character and Development" - (Vol. 23, No. 2) is initially summarized in Section IV: "A revolution is a process, not an event." An entire history of Party leadership is described in the mobilization of a revolutionary class through to the fulfillment of its strategic task in the armed insurrectionary act and the establishment of state power in civil war.

Any attempt to construct the Chinese Revolution in terms of the action of external events upon the Chinese CP to invest it with a revolutionary function in conflict with its genetic characteristics destroys the unity of the revolutionary process, i.e. the decisive and indispensable role of the Marxist leadership party. The dualistic view of events, i.e. idealism, which conceives of development as the action of external forces in place of internal contradiction, is the distinguishing feature of all mechanistic thought. And "the mechanistic materialism is essentially the methodology of the right deviation." (L. Trotsky - Learn To Think)

It is this method which, embodied in the Resolution of 1955, divorced the reality of a workers' state in China from the Party of Revolution. From this point on "the cultural crisis of mankind had ceased to be the crisis of the leadership of the working-class." The resolution surrendered to historical automatism.

The inevitable result of such methodological abandonment is the reduction of Trotskyist parties to liquidationist tendencies, to abstentionism, to literary salons arrogating the function of retainers for the "Good Housekeeping" stamp of approval.

Disorientation would eventually give rise to a Shane Mage, even as it rapidly absorbed Bert Cochran in a tail-endist Menshevik formula for liquidationism. Shane demands of the Cuban Revolution (which, moreover, must be distinguished in its process of development from the Chinese Revolution) precisely what the PC authors demand of the latter. With the logical consistency of formal thought, Shane denies in turn the existence of a definitive revolutionary party in Cuba, the formation of a workers' state in Cuba, the Revolution itself, and the internal conditions for the further advance of Cuban socialism. And he manages this without reference to the impossibility of building socialism on one island.

Equipped with the formula for denying the unity of the world revolutionary process, Shane proceeds to deny the alteration of world relations in favor of proletarian socialist revolution. And he is only a step behind Arnold Pedersen. Besides the imperialist sector of world economies there now exist "Stalinist States." For James Burnham in 1940 the task was much more difficult; It was necessary to erase the revolution in order to equate the bureaucratic workers' states to the capitalist social structures in the period of fascist counter-revolutionary dictatorships. We were treated to an experiment with managerial revolutions and managerial societies.

II. The DeLeonist Model Plus October

The Socialist Industrial Union of Daniel De Leon, formally consecrated and divested of all revolutionary usefulness by Arnold Pedersen & Co. (literally, proprietors for the Dietzgen Co. patents) of the Socialist Labor Party, remains the model for transition to modern socialist societies. The arbitrary election of the maximum conditions for its emergence upon the terrain of advanced industrial capitalist societies deprived, for this school of formalists, the October Revolution of its historic *raison d'etre*. The concrete revolution, and its form in the investment of soviet state power by the Bolshevik Party, is torn from the world revolutionary process. Yet De Leon's heirs will not be the last to concoct history in an abstractionist's hothouse.

But is this not the method of the PC authors? What is the essential function of Pedersen's deformed De Leonism if not the construction of arbitrary criterion for the transition to socialist societies? And it offers a seductive trap for that social strata divorced from the realities for the proletarians of the West and for the transformed peasants of China.

The Socialist Industrial Union has the unique virtue of guaranteeing the democratic administration of things in that brief transitional society for which it is at once the Party of Revolution, the indispensable form for conclusive class action, and the form of state power. As an idealist abstraction it is an incomparable brake upon revolutionary thought and action. But alas, even the Havana Pines take their own Castroist shade of green.

The Chinese Revolution left no other road open to those "Marxists" who enforce a model, cut from the whole cloth of October, upon the further course of world proletarian revolution. In accordance with this schema the Chinese Bolsheviks are divested of their historic role as revolutionists 15 years after the conquest of state power. They have failed to meet the specifications for a model "Trotskyist" party of transition to socialism and the formation of a workers' state. Therewith an entire book is sealed.

What remains? The counter-revolutionary party with a built-in revolutionary role, guided by the messes under conditions described in the automatic collapse of imperialism, and - of course - "Stalinist States." Well, where do workers' states originate in the epoch of modern socialist revolutions? Are they "born" along the automatic road of the

mechanists (now chiefly Khrushchevists) or do they reside in the unity of the objective laws of social development and their reciprocal relations with the subjective factor in history, i.e. the vanguard Party of Marxism. Already, on the Eve of October, the experience of the Trotskyist Internationalists demonstrated the indispensability of a correct class orientation, vested in the Bolshevik Party of Lenin.

Are these "workers' states," which we have come by, the product of the world revolutionary process and the evolution of proletarian parties; or are these only conditionally "workers' states," by virtue of assignment of socialist revolutions to the maximum conditions for democratic societies upon the terrain of European-American industrial capitalism, where a protracted indulgence in parliamentary institutions is sporadically cancelled by the bourgeoisie and its petty-bourgeois allies in the workers' movement?

Was it possible to describe the emergence of workers' states along the road of automatic collapse in the backward half, say Russia and China, i.e. the imperialist dependencies; while excluding this theoretical and practical impossibility in the industrial bastions of parliamentary capitalism?

It is worth noting, again, Trotsky's discussion of this facet to the question of reform or revolution in "The Only Road," put out by Pioneer Publishers in 1933 for the Communist League of America:

"The Bernsteinians outlined two perspectives: one, unreal, allegedly orthodox-"Marxian", according to which, in the long run, under the influence of the internal antagonisms of capitalism its mechanical collapse was supposed to take place; and a second, "realistic", according to which a gradual evolution from capitalism to socialism was to be accomplished. Antithetical as these two schemas may be at first glance, they are nevertheless united by a common trait: the absence of the revolutionary factor. (My emphasis - J.E.B.) While they disavowed the caricature of the automatic collapse of capitalism, attributed to them, the Marxists demonstrated that under the influence of the sharpening class struggle, the proletariat would carry through the revolutions much sooner than the objective contradictions of capitalism could lead to its automatic collapse."

"This dispute was carried on as long ago as the end of the past century. It must however be acknowledged that the capitalist reality since the war, approached, in a certain respect, much closer to the Bernsteinian caricature of Marxism than anyone might ever have assumed, (again my emphasis - J.E.B.) above all - the revisionists themselves: for they had only portrayed the spectre of the collapse in order to bring out its unreality. Nevertheless, capitalism proves in actuality to be closer to automatic decay the more delayed is the revolutionary intervention of the proletariat in the destiny of society."

"Of course, one may speak only conditionally of a realization of the revisionist caricature of Marxism, applicable to a definite historical period. The way out of decaying capitalism, however, will be found, even if after a great delay, not upon the road of the automatic collapse but upon the revolutionary road."

"But socialist transformations, the speedy as well as the slow, are possible only if at the summits of society stands a class interested in socialism, and at the head of this class a party which does not dupe the exploited, and which is always ready to suppress the resistance of the exploiters. We must explain to the workers that precisely in that consists the regime of the dictatorship of the proletariat." (The Road to Socialism, pp 77-80)

In what does the regime of the dictatorship of the proletariat consist in China, since 1949? Did the automatic collapse of imperialism in China deposit the counter-revolutionary monster in the lap of society - only to afford the Maoists with a sinister insight into the programmatic essentials of Marxism with which to conduct their "bureaucratic dispute" with Moscow? This is a caricature of history and we cannot live with it!

The methodological abandonment on the Chinese question not only deprives Trotskyism of historical confirmation for its essential prognosis; it favors the imminent isolation of valuable Marxist cadres from the dynamic struggle unfolding within the international workers' movement. It poses the danger of sterility and death.

No mere expedient, nor even a conditionally correct orientation upon the especial terrain of American capitalist politics, can suffice for long in the face of theoretical anarchy and uninterrupted division and splits within our world movement, can absolve Leninist-Trotskyists of their indispensable duty as internationalists to elaborate a methodologically consistent appreciation of the Chinese Revolution and the tasks it poses. Short of this, one might still wind-up with an American model, the Socialist Industrial Union with its inestimable superiority over the organic model of October, in anticipation of the day of automatic collapse!

III. Trotskyism and Maoism on the Nuclear Danger

Speak of the devil and behold! The capitulation to mechanistic theory on the origin of the Chinese communes and workers' states finds a complementary expression in the adaptation of the P.C. authors to Khrushchevism on the nuclear danger. For at the very heart of the party civil war is the Stalinist credit to the Chinese that they are not pacifists. The P.C. authors of the SWP Draft Resolution merely express alarm that the Maoists underrate the "bomb." Presumably "the bomb" has some existence apart from the class-struggle. The following statement is frankly put forward on page 9 of the P.C. Draft:

"NEVERTHELESS, the Chinese statements consistently underrate the frightful costs of nuclear war and do not adequately take into account the changes (!!!) introduced by the unprecedented destructive power of the new weapons. The grim fact is that nuclear war would be the greatest of all defeats suffered by the working people, even if humanity should somehow survive its terrible effects."

What purpose can such pacifist bogeys serve apart from frightening the oppressed classes? How deficient is the Chinese Marxist perspective on this crucial question? This weed in the garden of every dispute between the revisionists and revolutionists is as perennial as geraniums in Southern California.

Once again Trotsky summed-up this matter in "The Only Road": "The reformists sought for a long time to shift the responsibility for the present state of society upon the shoulders of war. But in the first place, the war did not create the destructive tendencies of capitalism, but only brought them to the surface and accelerated them; secondly, the war would have been unable to accomplish its work of destruction without the political support of reformism; thirdly, the hopeless contradictions of capitalism are preparing new wars from various sides. Reformism will be unable to shift the historical responsibility from itself. By paralyzing and curbing the revolutionary energy of the proletariat, the international social democracy invests the process of the capitalist collapse with the blindest, unruliest, most catastrophic and bloodiest forms." (My emphasis - J.E.B.)

Nowhere has the Maoist leadership demonstrated greater clarity and understanding than in its rejoinder to the Kremlin's demagogy on the nuclear danger:

"In the eyes of modern revisionists, any revolution and any action that supports revolutions runs counter to the "logic of survival", now that atomic and nuclear weapons exist. In fact what they call the "logic of survival" is the logic of slaves, a logic that would paralyze the revolutionary will of the people of all countries. . . . The Marxist-Leninists are firmly against this slave logic and maintains that the people should emancipate themselves. This is a law of social development which no one can resist." (Leninism and Modern Revisionism, RED FLAG, No. 1, 1963)

This entire section from Red Flag would necessarily be incorporated into a serious Trotskyist resolution on "War and the Nuclear Danger," despite the display of Stalin's ugly face at the May Day celebrations in Peking. The problem is not one of burying Stalin's face, however edifying, but of burying Stalin's revisionism and pacifism. And we search in vain in the literature of Peking for support in the theoretical heritage of Stalin.

Sharing the discomfort of Khrushchev, the authors of the P.C. Draft, and the passionate liberals of the West over the "frightful costs" of a nuclear defeat for humanity, are the more perceptive bourgeois thinkers and journalists. They are stacking their chips on the politics of "peaceful co-existence."

Edward Crankshaw for Atlantic Monthly, May, 1963, interprets the "Split Between Russia and China", with a studied dose of slander against the Chinese, describing their friends at the Moscow Conference of 1960 in favor of "violence" while Khrushchev and his Swedish-Italian allies favor "peace." Crankshaw puts down a big stack for the Menshevik orientation of Khrushchev whom he finds "in a thoroughly heretical and experimental state of mind." And it is characteristic of all those given to a "thoroughly heretical and experimental state of mind" that they research the garbage heaps of history, only to come up with a chemically treated compost. What flowers would it fertilize?

"It meant that the Communist parties of Italy and Sweden had embraced, with Khrushchev's approval and in face of the wrathful scorn of the

Chinese, the great anti-Bolshevik heresy, reformism. Reformism means working directly and immediately for the amelioration of the poor, the downtrodden, the underprivileged (sic!) even if this involves cooperating intimately and indefinitely with the bourgeois. It means putting social reform first and doctrine a bad second. It means turning one's back on the class-struggle and working for class cooperation, leading to class fusion. Bolshevism, Leninism, Stalinism (sic!) mean the reverse of this; they mean working to exacerbate the relations between capital and labor, to reach the better through the worse, so that one day the workers, in desperation, will rise up and over-throw their masters by violent means. . . . The Chinese thus are better Bolsheviks than the Italians and the Khrushchevite Russians."

It means the entire methodological and strategical work demarcating the Marxists from the counter-revolutionary revisionists. Does Menshevism without a bomb (and Khrushchev could have a secret cache) alter or modify the essentially counter-revolutionary character of the Soviet regime? Does it not become the more dangerous for its demagogic turn to the West on the nuclear danger? Does Maoist class-struggle internationalism become more anti-Trotskyist by parading a portrait of Stalin? Can Marxists afford to appraise the content of a strategical line with the emotional paraphanelia of past battle-wounds?

IV. A Counter Revolutionary Party With a Civil War Line

The authors of the FC Draft on the "Sino-Soviet Dispute" have not as yet advanced the proposition that the Chinese masses might "push" the Kremlin epigones into carrying out a revolutionary line of action; but even as day and night are reduced to a mere matter of time from the vantage point of empty space, it follows inexorably from the concept of a revolution without a revolutionary leadership. In any event the Chinese CP will be deprived of its Bolshevik role in intensifying the internal antagonisms within the Soviet bureaucracy and between the Party and class. The "dispute" evidently arises in an historical vacuum filled in by the Chinese bureaucrats, Stalinists at heart, with needs separate from those of the Kremlin, if the construction of the FC Draft means anything. All of this leads to the exercise of an option by the less than astute Maoists whose "Stalinist practices at home not only offends powerful progressive currents (? Crankshaw again? - J.E.B.) in the Soviet bloc but runs counter to its own conduct in the dispute with Moscow." So they spite themselves with a line that "comes closer to correct Leninist positions" and, if you please, damned close to Trotskyist internationalism. But it is all a ruse in the bureaucratic game.

Recording the unavoidably clear fact on page 8 that the "Chinese Communists have thereby moved closer to correct Leninist positions on these points. . . it must be noted that on a number of crucial questions the Chinese CP has far from cast-off its bureaucratic character and Stalinist heritage either in its principles or practices", declare the FC authors.

And in brief, 15 years after the conquest of power by revolutionary means, the "Chinese CP has far from cast off its bureaucratic character and Stalinist, etcetera." What moves it "closer to correct Leninist positions"? Trotskyists have always attributed a revolutionary, or even near

revolutionary line, to a Party whose social composition schools the leadership in revolutionary duty to its class. Is it possible to strike down this gigantic struggle by characterizing it as a bureaucratic exigency? How did they come by the Revolution anyway? Was the strategy of executing the bourgeois-democratic tasks or revolution before entering the purely proletarian socialist stage of revolution dictated by expediency? Can modern revolutions develop along the road of expediency? Pretty shaky for a land mass embracing 700 million head, not to mention the Asiatic sub-continent.

Clearly the Draft Resolution seeks to circumvent the origin of the fundamental antagonisms in the "dispute" (sic!) that derive exclusively from the Chinese Revolution and the incompatibility of its regime with the bonapartist function of the Kremlin bureaucracy. Moreover, the PC Draft now seeks to ratify and solidify 15 years of tail-endism on the Chinese Question.

The hasty harvest of the "Hundred Flowers" in bloom by the Maoist command constitutes the base criterion for the PC Draft. And this for a revolution in a hungry land hemmed in by the Kremlin on one end and imperialism on the other. The Trotskyists will do well to join the Revolution as friends to bury the Maoist hatchet in the Kremlin's head.

Point by point the resolution is designed to certify the crystallization of a Stalinist Party in a Stalinist Regime in the saddle of a bureaucratically deformed workers' state. Whence the Revolution and along what road? Has Shane Mage described anything less for the Cuban party, state, and regime?

The eruption of CIVIL WAR in what has been called a "dispute" between the state parties of world socialism goes far beyond a mere "manifestation of the death agony of Stalinism." It demands recognition as a definitive confirmation of all essential Trotskyist prognosis for a recrudescence of proletarian revolutions and socialist transformations in the intensified crisis of imperialism and Stalinism during the Second World War.

In that grudging acknowledgement on page 13 of the PC Draft, it is allowed that the shipment of war planes to India at war with China is "tantamount to supporting capitalist India against Communist China." And in this way we arrive at a very subtle "dispute."

In apparent surprise, the Draft records that "Peking correctly characterized this conduct as a betrayal of proletarian internationalism." Nothing less! "It was the first time that the Soviet rulers allied themselves with a bourgeois regime against a workers' state." (What would be the content of the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939? For it is only a question of method - which is identical!) With this the authors of the Draft move on in journalistic fashion to the Caribbean crisis, only to misunderstand the Kremlin's standby purposes there.

In these events we are confronted by nothing less than the deepening on an international scale of the civil war engaged in by the Chinese Communist workers and leaders in their own defense against the counter-revolutionary heirs of Stalin. And still they make obeisances to Stalin. Ah, so!

Not even the reduction of the Kremlin bureaucracy by the armed power of the Chinese working-class would satisfy the Party specialists on Far Eastern Affairs that at least one essential of Trotskyist programmatic history had found fulfillment in life: the demand for the armed overthrow of the counter-revolutionary Kremlin bureaucracy! Moreover there is a "nuclear danger" in such an undertaking, now. If the execution of this task by others than ourselves fails to qualify in accordance with the rigorous specifications of the PC authors, perhaps we will be compelled to recognize that the shroud cannot be cut out of the whole cloth - even though history be. Still, it is unquestionably true to say that we must not speculate on the final shape of the civil war, except to observe that the Chinese have a political line and the Kremlin has a "bomb."

Entrapped in their own fetishism the PC authors refer to Peking's dalliance in the Albanian Stalinist principality of 600,000 workers, peasants, and bureaucrats. This romance has not deceived the more cagey bourgeois analysts and gossip-column journalists who evince marked discomfort over the tactical brilliance of the Peking Marxist-Leninists. It was not a literary campaign that brought the Chinese Red Armies to a climactic victory over Chiang's imperialist constabulary in 1948-49. Nor did the skirmish over the Himalayan real-estate serve any other useful purpose than to expose the thoroughly reactionary character of the bourgeois oriented compradors in the Kremlin.

Once again, the statement on page 12, Sec. 5, of the PC Draft reveals the sine quo non of all "Trotskyist" departures from Marxist method on the question of the Chinese CP: "Their refusal (!) to abandon Stalinist practices at home not only offends powerful progressive currents in the Soviet bloc but runs counter to its own conduct in the dispute with Moscow." It reduces a civil war to a bureaucratic dispute, and is the inevitable outcome for that construction of history which can attribute a gigantic revolution to a counter-revolutionary gang of bureaucrats entrapped by their built-in revolutionary tasks. Unfolding before our eyes - and demanding battle-stations for all Trotskyist parties the world over, either within or against the regional Communist Parties depending upon their history and composition, is a struggle that has all the features of civil war, including the diplomatic engagements on May Day.

What kind of "dispute" is that which is invested by the withdrawal of economic aid and 10,000 Soviet technicians from the young revolution on the vast expense of China to bolster the Kremlin's services to the colonial bourgeoisie of India and Egypt? It is economic sabotage of the Chinese Communes and the revolutionary toilers of China. It is our shame that in the Trotskyist movement comrades can join the bourgeois leaders and publicists in elation over agricultural failures in China - and over a temporary set-back for the Great Leap Forward.

The root cause of Trotskyist isolation from the armed struggle against the Soviet bureaucracy is repeated again on Page 14 of the Draft: "The root causes of the Sino-Soviet dispute (my emphasis - J.E.B.) are to be found in the very different national and international situations of two workers' states which give rise to conflicting interests, aims, and policies of its ruling strata." Comrades of the Majority, what is the class content of this "dispute" and where does it originate?

"Mao and his colleagues", (p. 14) are not only at the "head of an independent and powerful state of 700 million"; as a matter of history the Maoists organized and led the revolutionary classes in this society of 700 million through a victorious socialist revolution. Where have you been? Not only do Mao and his colleagues "feel on a par with the Soviet leaders but superior to them", they ARE superior to them and have embarked upon a course aimed at destroying them, without inviting the intervention of the world bourgeoisie. In this lies the revolutionary essence of their position for unity of "the socialist Camp" and of their "pro-Stalinism." Trotsky could make a bloc with Stalin, too - but with Bukharin, never!

It is the elementary duty of the PC authors to make a distinction between content and form in this "dispute", between tactical obeisances and the hard line of action. But first the PC would have to understand that we are engaged in a civil war, joining the revolutionary forces of the world proletariat against the Kremlin bureaucracy. The continued failure to understand the Marxist-Leninist character of the CCP, and especially in relation to its profound position on the "nuclear teeth of imperialism", and to define the revolutionary-democratic character of the Chinese regime can only spell disaster for the Parties of the Fourth.

Now it will be impossible to examine the PC Draft in all of its dim awareness, point by point; simply because its point of departure is all wrong. And just because the method for a construction of its first premise was all wrong; it is incapable of describing the political expression of a living revolution - and the essential Trotskyist content in the Chinese war against the counter-revolution on two major fronts. It is impossible to find a single paragraph in which the PC authors get out of the muddle and into the huddle for a call on the next play in the world revolution. It is the task of Marxists to anticipate revolutionary events, to participate in their unfolding.

In addition it must be said of the Albanians that it will be a positive delight to hear that mouse squeal, trapped in the paws of the Tibetan tiger. And again for the Yugoslavs, who have cut their own European path of concessions to the Kremlin and to imperialism in every sphere, economic, social, and political, there can be no bourgeois-pacifist neutrality in the revolutionary war against all vestiges of world capitalism. That is the meaning of the Communes and of the "Dispute."

V. A History of Party Paralysis on the Chinese Question

The paralysis engulfing the SWP, its majority leadership and co-thinkers abroad, expresses its endemic quality in the chronic disorientation of leading cadres from 1947 onward in relation to the emerging Asiatic revolutions. By 1947 the impasse of world imperialism in World War II had erupted into a succession of social revolutions on the European and Asiatic continents.

By 1947 A. Goldman, F. Morrow, and their co-thinkers abroad had completed their episodic pasturage in the world Marxist political arena by describing the postponement of proletarian revolutions for an indefinite period of history. By 1947 the Yugoslav partisans had cracked the Stalinist monolith in victorious civil war against the imperialist allies of the Kremlin. By 1947, the Chinese Communists at the head of a nation had

clearly demarked a strategic path for the victory of proletarian revolution in China.

By 1948 leading cadres of the Fourth International were struck down before the awesome social transformations sweeping Eastern Europe and the Asiatic continent - even as the profound prognosis of Trotsky found fulfillment in life. There began a succession of shocks that cut down the world sphere of imperialist exploitation and the world sphere of Stalinist ideological betrayal and counter-revolution. For the Trotskyist parties, each event failed to meet the test of exclusive empirical criteria, and above all, the ultimatum requiring a formal break and head-on collision with the Stalinist bureaucracy as the starting point for any serious revolutionary affair - if only to satisfy us with guaranteed credentials. The dual character of Communist parties in the Stalinist era was brutally ignored.

Fifteen years after the gigantic offensive over the Yangtze flood we are faced with the task of finding a proletarian revolution in China for want of adequate tools with which to describe a revolutionary leadership in process of formation. And even today some comrades are disturbed that Fidel Castro has made his inescapable, if temporary, economic dependency upon the Kremlin politically retroactive. It is entirely inexcusable for Marxists, and especially the Trotskyist echelon from the school of the old Warrior Jew, to continue a proscription of whole revolutionary movements and leaderships with a barren formal criteria for form, style, technique, and insignia; and with the emotional paraphanelia drawn from ancient episodes - or from the uncertainties of Li Fu-jen. And one suspects that Alvin and Reed really have no partisan heart for victorious revolution.

Parties are the product of a cultural and social evolution for a whole nation, depending upon the state of development of its productive forces. All attributes in the super-structure undergo alteration and transformation in accordance with the movement of internal contradictions at the economic base. Only incidentally do they reflect the evil will of Stalin or Bernstein. The Communist Parties of the West, whored under Stalin, are still primarily the product of their own cultural and social milieu - and some are only caricatures of a workers' party of any kind.

Had history been cut out of the whole cloth to reveal the evolution of societies as embodiment of pure idea, the several tendencies within the SWP, "and some are quick; and some are in the grave," that deny an existence to all that is real in the world transition to socialism - then had they successfully demanded recognition for their criteria certifying pure "socialist states" and pure "Marxist-Trotskyist" parties. What happens in life is another matter.

By 1952 the Trotskyist parties were in possession of a document on China by S.T. Peng. He acclaimed "the victory of the CCP over the reactionary power of Chiang Kai-shek (to be) a great and even a monumental change in modern Chinese history, causing profound changes in the Far East and in international relations." He added, then, and proceeded to demonstrate that "the CCP arrived at this current victory by its extremely reactionary Menshevik program of 'revolution by stages.' "

This, to my knowledge, was the first clear statement of the sine qua non for all subsequent non-Marxist thought on the Chinese Revolution: The profound and monumental change, whatever it was, had been prepared and delivered by a Stalinist Party with an "extremely reactionary Menshevik program of 'revolution by stages'."

But was it "really" a proletarian revolution, marked by the preponderance of peasant forces and their isolation from the cities; and what did the data comparators show for stratification and rapid growth of planning and productivity in the economic sphere? The Missourians in our movement had found a new, if ancient and familiar method: show me!

By 1953, Michel Fablo came up with his perspective for "centuries of deformed-bureaucratic workers' states." That was altogether too long for the working-man, the original producing unit of the historically progressive class, to wait: as events along the explosive buffer and in the internal life of China would very rapidly prove. Yet it was long enough to disorganize the Trotskyist parties on an international scale.

A pre-requisite essential to a serious reunification of the separate parties of the Fourth International is the resumption of Marxist method to reach a revolutionary position in relation to the Chinese Revolution. For China the Party of power had been fully prepared and molded for the execution of its strategic tasks. The Revolution simply did not "happen," and the pursuit of the dialectic of development in the history of the Chinese Party by comrades Swabek and McLeod constitutes a milestone along this road.

It should be added, parenthetically, that the door of the Chinese Revolution is open to Trotskyists, for the programmatic struggle against the Kremlin cannot be a trap!

Inspired by the new turn of events, i.e. the scrapping of historical method, and without an effort to discover the historical process in China, Bert Cochran & Assortment speedily proposed the liquidation of the SWP and of themselves.

By 1955, a resolution of the Party on "The Third Chin. Rev. & Its Aftermath", concluded that China had "made the grade" as a workers' state without benefit of a revolutionary leadership party. This was a milestone on the other road.

By 1957, the comrades of the WORKERS WORLD, Marcy & Grey, had elaborated their doubts in the opposite direction. They succeeded in getting a hold on what happened in China only to confront the Party with a neo-Stalinist scheme and an impossibilist demand upon history for payment in guilt-edged Trotskyist currency for the Hungarian revolutionary advance in 1956. With that the Marcy tendency bade farewell and ruptured the unity of the world revolutionary process. Well, what combination of forces found concretization in that event? For already the Chinese Revolution had rolled into the Communist world - if only to confirm Trotsky's prognosis for shattering the foundations of Stalinism.

Given a consistent Trotskyist view of the world process, it would be clear by now that the best instrument of struggle against "centuries of

bureaucratism" lie in the extension of the world revolution. We booted it, with the familiar credits of Weiss, Warde, Roberts, & Feng to Stalinism. Or automatism?

The general tendency toward progressive isolation from the world revolutionary process, describing all ultimatist tendencies within the SWP, can only be explained by the enormous resources of American capitalism for stultifying and alienating the American socialists from the life of their class, and by the long years of confinement in the indispensable struggle against the Stalinist retreat.

The introduction now, by Shane Mage, of an entirely novel category into the sociological controversy over the Chinese state and party leadership, i.e. the concept of "Stalinist States" and societies that evolve in accordance with the forms expressed in the political super-structure, a concept blanketing all phenomena to include the USSR, the Buffer menage and Yugoslavia, China and the Asian enclaves, and even Cuba, only signifies the bankruptcy of the 1955 resolution on China. The resolution of 1963 alters nothing. It simply cuts a new template for the further development of the Chinese state and party. Shane will be the first to live with it - as an appropriate guide to writing off the Cuban Revolution. A pure program for the construction of socialism on one Caribbean island, unfettered by the bureaucratic caprice of the Kremlin, will necessarily describe select conditions within the super-structure for an independent "Trotskyist" evolution.

But nowhere has the irrepressible proletarian revolution unfolded in accordance with a specified "Trotskyist" mold; nor did comrade Trotsky have any such nonsense in mind. A Marxist party is not a Supreme Court in international proletarian politics. It seeks hegemony in the workers' movement to make a revolution, not to pass judgment upon it.

By its failure to grasp the Chinese Revolution and the role of its leaders, the SWP will abandon the struggle for hegemony as the most effective fighter in the programmatic struggle against the Kremlin. That is our forte; but as yet we have failed to grasp the lever of action in the deepening civil war within the international socialist camp.

VI. The Parties of the West and the Military Communist Parties

For "want of habit to approach overly habitual phenomena scientifically," (L. Trotsky) the habit of regarding all Communist parties as irrevocably Stalinist in the absence of a formal break from the Kremlin, as static or exclusively degenerative, became prevalent in the international Trotskyist movement. Once tautology had become the automatic logic of definition, all Communist parties denoted the familiar features of degeneration described in the history of the CPSU and CPUSA.

The dual character for the ruling party of the Soviet Union lost all significance; and the national origin, history, and cultural influences acting upon the Communist parties was scrapped along with their relation to the state of development for the productive forces.

The conditions for an evolution in the life of military-illegal Communist parties weighed equally with the dominant class-collaborationist influences acting upon the Communist parties in the imperialist bastions. In any event, in the absence of a defined ideological and terminological break from the Kremlin, no Communist party would be described in the dialectic terms of internal contradiction and change.

That all modern revolutionary parties originated, in a final analysis, in the October Revolution and had assimilated to one degree or another its Marxist heritage became increasingly incredible, and especially in view of the long history of betrayals and defeats, in Europe above all.

What was true in general, and then only conditionally, became an absolute in the concrete. It became possible, then, to roar in a cage that no Communist party was capable of anything other than counter-revolutionary service to the bonapartist regime in the USSR, and simultaneously that a clique of Stalinist gangsters "made a revolution" in China.

At what point do Communist parties cease to be Stalinist in nature and purpose? Given a decisive class orientation, at that point where the elaboration of strategy and organizational method lead to the mobilization of important mass formations for class-struggle actions that transcend the limitations imposed by the Kremlin. Such a development implies a history, an experience, an evolution that moves in the direction of autonomy. More, it reveals the growth of Marxist method and understanding for a sector of the Party leadership. That point at which the combination of forces weighing in favor of a qualitative change, in accordance with the conditions of party life and history for the infinitely varied societies of man, cannot be formally defined with an exclusive criterion. Even Stalin had little idea of what on earth his Chinese "stooges" were up to in 1934.

The history of CP's evolving on the colonial domains of imperialism and of those luxuriating on the soil of parliamentary capitalist states presents a striking contrast. The former were permitted the luxury of an illegal and armed struggle for life while the latter are impoverished by the history of class-collaboration. Stalin invariably favored his attention upon the latter, especially the American, German, & French parties, even moreso due to his talent for blunder and betrayal.

The military-illegal CP's describe a history of essentially principled growth and struggle; while the parties of the West experience the degenerative process of wholesale whoring and abandonment at the pleasure of the Kremlin. If it were only the CP's in the heartlands of imperialism that the Trotskyists had to describe and condemn, comrades Alvin and Reed would qualify as revolutionists. And yet it is precisely in the heartlands, from Tokyo to Rome, that the major opportunities lay for the extant Trotskyist parties as soldiers of the Chinese Revolution.

Will the struggle for hegemony in the building of principled Marxist parties be favored by abstention in the civil war that has erupted between the Parties of the Kremlin and the Parties of Peking? Can we afford to perpetuate the anti-Marxist fiction of leaderless revolutions that borrow parties and men to carry out their function of counter-revolutionary adventure with a built-in revolutionary draft? Pure teleology.

What are revolutions without a conscious programmatically armed and disciplined leadership?

All of the Marxist teachers, Lenin, Engels, Trotsky, and Marx himself never forsook a dialectic view of political parties as the product of class antagonism and the internal history of classes, with diverse cultural traditions corresponding to the law of uneven development for the productive forces of societies. This method is dramatically revealed for the first time in the Manifesto of 1848.

Lenin was the first to admit that if his Party did not make it, another would attempt the revolutionary tasks. "On the Eve of October," Lenin prescribed death for the RSDLP if it should forfeit its historic opportunity. He foresaw the emergence of a new Marxist party under the impact of events, dare the Party proceed on the basis of its formal anti-Trotskyist (!) position of the democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants.

Now, it is the indispensable first task of serious Trotskyists not to "re-iterate" but to recognize the cause of our paralysis in the post World War II upsurge and extension of the world revolution. That we may 1) Check the further disorientation of new leadership cadres; 2) Restore the unity of theory and practice as the fundamental pre-requisite to revolutionary leadership in the transition to socialist societies; 3) Merge the invaluable ideas and forces of Trotskyism with the main fighting forces in the international Communist movement; 4) Accelerate the destruction of Stalinist-Menshevik parties in the imperialist countries where the effective parties of socialist revolution are yet to be built.

May 1963

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SOME ANSWERS TO WARDE'S ARTICLES IN THE MILITANT

by Al Johnson

Comrade Warde's analysis in the Militant of the Great Debate rests on the proposition that the controversy between the CCP and the Soviet Bureaucracy is in essence between two "conservative bureaucratic regimes, pursuing their own nationalistic interests, weighed down by Stalinist ideology and Stalinist methods". We are to conclude therefore that they are conducting a Great Swindle. Hence, what is truly great about the Great Debate is the by-product, De-Stalinization.

Let us examine Warde's basic contention. If Stalinism is defined as the subordination of the interests of the working class and oppressed classes in one's own country to that of the Soviet Bureaucracy and one's ruling class, then, surely the term, Stalinist is not applicable to the CCP. For the CCP did lead a victorious Socialist Revolution that raised one fourth of the human race to its feet, and by this revolutionary act dealt the greatest blow to Stalinism in its history.

Conservative? The very act of conducting a revolutionary struggle is anything but conservative.

Nationalistic? To give material and moral support to the struggles in Korea, Viet Nam, Algeria and Cuba can hardly be termed nationalism. It is more in tune with proletarian internationalism.

The CCP never relied on the rich peasantry as Stalin did, but instead built their alliance with the poor peasantry, bringing the middle peasantry along, as Lenin had advised.

Stalin began with the disarming of the producers. The CCP evidences no fear of the producers. They are armed in the vast militia system in country and city just as in Cuba.

The social position of women is a good criterion with which to judge the character of a regime. In no way has the CCP sought to subordinate the women as Stalin did, but on the contrary has done everything to fulfill its revolutionary obligations toward them.

As evidence of the character of the Mao regime, Comrade Warde informs his readers of the unprincipled character of their bloc with the Albanians. The question immediately arises: What is the program of their bloc?? Against whom is it directed? What is the relationship of forces within the bloc? Who is leading whom? The evidence is clear. The "unprincipled bloc" is directed against the class collab-

orationist Soviet bureaucracy. The program of the bloc is the class struggle, and the leadership is without question, the Chinese. As for the Stalinist character of the Albanian government, we have only Khrushchev's and Tito's word for that.

Warde explains that the CCP's antagonism toward Yugoslavia is "not simply for its ideological deviations and excessive adaptation to capitalism, but because of its decentralized administration, experiments in workers control of enterprises and flexibility of agrarian policy."

Decentralized administration? But the Bolsheviks were centralists! If we accept Warde's criterion, then not only the Chinese and the Albanians, but also Lenin and Trotsky would have to be characterized as Stalinist.

Flexibility of agrarian policy? A correct policy is not determined by flexibility or inflexibility, whatever that means, but by the correct class line in the countryside.

Experiments in workers control? If Warde means that the workers determine production, have the right to strike, elect their own management and are organized in Soviets, then indeed if the Chinese are opposed to these, they are wrong. And furthermore we should be giving far more attention than we have, to the Yugoslavs in our press and meetings.

We quote Warde, further, concerning "the most reprehensible refusal of the Chinese to favor the destalinization moves taken in the Soviet bloc since 1956. The continued cultivation of the Stalin cult and antagonism toward the liberalization of authoritarian rule places them at odds with the most progressive forces and anti-bureaucratic tendencies within the Soviet bloc and Communist parties."

Refusal to favor destalinization? Their program is not Stalinist but on the contrary, Leninist.

Continued cultivation of the Stalin cult? If there were to be any cult in China, it would obviously be a Mao cult. However the leadership of CCP has not adopted cultism. It has not favored the naming of cities, government districts, factories and streets with the names of "beloved leaders" as in Stalin's Russia. They have considered Stalin, along with Marx, Engels and Lenin, as a respected revolutionary leader. In this, the Chinese are wrong. But to imply, as Warde does, that the Chinese are the slavish pupils of Stalin, is without foundation.

Antagonism toward the liberalization of authoritative rule? What is authoritarian about the Communes? Its lead-

ers are elected, they determine their own local production, and they are armed.

At odds with the most progressive forces and anti-bureaucratic tendencies within the Soviet bloc and Communist parties? Where is the evidence for this assertion? Have the Cubans and the revolutionary elements in South America evidenced any feelings of hostility towards the Chinese? Who are the progressive forces in the Soviet bloc opposed to the Chinese line?

Warde's attempt to establish an identity, a Stalinist identity, with the Soviet Bureaucracy, is to look at reality from distorted lenses. His analysis of the causes of the ideological dispute and the Sino-Soviet rift leaves unanswered the essence of the question.

If the Chinese regime is conservative, bureaucratic and steeped in the Stalinist school and method, why is it that they have not followed in Stalin's steps and proclaimed a concern only for Socialism in their own country? Why have they revived the long forgotten works of Lenin and proclaimed the standard "Long Live Leninism." Why have they upset their relationship with imperialism by giving revolutionary support to Viet Nam, Algeria and Cuba? Why have they not played Stalin's game of being prudent, of attempting a deal with imperialism?

Excluded from Warde's analysis is an important trifle, the dynamics of the Chinese revolution itself. A revolution is a process. It either goes forward or backward. It is something more than a mere abstraction. It is concrete. The revolution has substance in people, a party, and a leadership. The leadership of the Chinese revolution had an unbroken continuity of 26 years. Today, it has made a giant step forward in the ideological dispute, by reaffirming the basic tenet of Marxism, the class struggle. This was not accidental. It flowed from the preceding history of the party, its victorious revolution of 1949, the Korean War, its successful demand that the Soviet Union change its policy toward the Algerian revolution, and the Communes. What we have witnessed is the revolution in permanence. This ideological dispute is the conscious reflection of the objective dynamics of the permanent revolution, its logical subjective conclusion.

Regrettable is Warde's pedagogical method of proceeding pen in hand, giving plus or minus to the participants on various questions. No party can correctly orient itself on the most important event since the founding of the Communist International, with this method. It will only place us on the side lines as commentators and not in the heart

of the struggle where we belong.

The ideological dispute has a logic of its own. Not only does it further the de-Stalinization process and reaffirm Lenin's program of the class struggle, but it also leads to a world wide regroupment of all revolutionary forces. Today, the Chinese have the support of most of the Asian Communist parties. The splintering of Communist parties in South America is well known. The New Zealand CP has given its support.

The future of our party will be determined for a long time to come on how we react to this Great Debate. Ours is a great party with a 35-year tradition of class struggle. At critical junctures of the class struggle in the past, our party has taken the correct attitude toward revolutionary tendencies moving toward Marxism.

It would be tragic to adopt a sectarian attitude today. Our position should be one of critical support for the Chinese Communists.

Let us join the revolutionary side as Trotskyists.

May, 1963
Los Angeles, Calif.

WHO IS JUNKING LENINISM?

by I. Warwak

What brought me to the party were my experiences in Korea. I was there for sixteen months, arriving a couple of weeks after the truce was signed in the fall of 53. First of all I got an appreciation of the way in which the majority of mankind, the peasantry lives. The most primitive tools, backbreaking physical labor, hanging on to existence with a bare portion of rice. Vast tar paper shack slums in the cities; hunger, destitution, prostitution, a complete breakdown in human relations, with man pitted against man and family against family for the rice and firewood to survive. Korea, South Korea that is, remains this way today despite the promises of the U.S. government to make South Korea the show case of democracy in South East Asia.

As one ROK army soldier put it to me at the risk of his life perhaps, "In South Korea if you have no rice you starve. In the North the rice is shared." During our weekly troop information and education sessions we were shown movies of the destruction wreaked on Korea by the U.S. air force. Not a tree was left standing, North or South. This is literally true.

It was U.S. intervention which drove the North Korean army back from control of the South and in the process the U.S. air force destroyed everything.

In conversations with career army men who were in Korea for the fighting there was respect, fear and awe of the Chinese Red Army.

There was no morale in the American army and certainly no feeling that they were engaged in a just cause. It is interesting to note how many American POWs were "brainwashed" by the Chinese Reds.

The Chinese and North Koreans fought this war with inferior equipment as compared to the U.S.

The fact that McArthur got to the Yalu, and then was driven back by the Chinese intervention, raises some interesting comparisons.

Hitler got halfway across the USSR before the Nazis were stopped at Stalingrad. Stalin had disarmed the Soviet workers and peasants ideologically and militarily and caused widespread disaffection. The swift Nazi advance was not too difficult.

The Chinese were obviously both ideologically and militarily prepared. The morale and revolutionary sacrifice of the Chinese Red Army was quite high.

The origin of the "Paper Tiger thesis" dates back, but the Korean War certainly demonstrated the paper tiger thesis in life to the Chinese.

The most decisive yardstick to measure the Chinese Revolution is material improvement of the standard of living of the masses. All observers testify it is phenomenal.

To believe as we in the Trotskyist movement are supposed to, that this New China exists not only without leadership but in spite of a counterrevolutionary leadership is a negation of Trotskyism as the continuation and defense of the role of the conscious vanguard in the transition from capitalism to world socialism.

The Chinese Revolution developed in spite of Stalinism. The Chinese Revolution was made and is advancing due to the leadership of the Chinese C.P.

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