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THE RED CHINESE CHALLENGE TO WORLD
TROTSKYISM

by

Doug G. and Rosemary S.

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The Trotskyist movement today presents a picture to the world of organizational weakness, theoretical conflict and disunity wherever one looks.

It is our intention in this bulletin to demonstrate that the crisis goes far beyond the current problems of the reunification. The roots of the crisis extend back many years and involve a central question -- that of the Chinese revolution and its leadership.

Several factors have combined to produce the present disorientation of the world movement, causing its breakup into bickering camps -- conditions of prosperity and reaction, of working class quiescence and isolation of the party, etc. But these factors have conjuncturally combined with another factor of fundamental importance, which is becoming more and more decisive: that is, the entire movement's sectarianism on the Chinese revolution.

The Chinese revolution has now become the central axis and main revolutionary base for the world proletariat's united struggle against revisionism (i.e., Stalinism) and imperialism. It is the historic tragedy of the Trotskyist movement that it foundered at its inception on this question, for embodied in the Chinese question were the theoretical touchstones of the world proletariat struggle against revisionism (Stalinism) and imperialism.

In the introduction to "The Age of Permanent Revolution: A Trotsky Anthology," Isaac Deutscher stated:

"Moreover, Permanent Revolution has taken a course very different from that which Trotsky had predicted. In accordance with the tradition of classical Marxism he expected its next acts to be played out in the 'advanced and civilized' countries of the West...."

"This fault of perspective (if this is the right term here) is closely connected with the Marxist assessment of the role of the industrial working class in modern society, an assessment summed up in the famous epigram that 'The revolution will either be the work of the workers or it will not be at all.' Yet not one of the social upheavals of the last two decades has been strictly 'the work of the workers.'..." (Deutscher is well aware, as are we, of the role of Stalinism in the failure of revolutions in Europe.)

In all the splits and factional disputations in the Trotskyist movement the debate gravitates around the question of the proletariat and the peasantry and the nature and the role of the vanguard party in colonial or backward countries.

In an article in the January, 1964 Socialist Register, Isaac Deutscher said:

"There is no question that the record of Maoism compels a critical review of some habitual Marxist assumptions and reasonings. How this is necessary is

illustrated inter alia by the assessment of Maoism which Trotsky gave in the 1930s. Grasping all the intensity of the agrarian upheaval in China, but apprehensive about the Maoist withdrawal from the cities Trotsky bluntly ruled out the possibility of the consummation of the Chinese Revolution without a previous revival of the revolutionary movement among the urban workers. He feared that Maoism, despite its communist origin, might become so completely assimilated with the peasantry as to become nothing but its mouthpiece, that is the champion of the small rural proprietors. If this were to happen, Trotsky went on, Mao's partisans, on entering the cities, might clash in hostility with the urban proletariat and become a factor of counter-revolution, especially at that critical turn when the revolution would tend to pass from the bourgeois into the socialist phase. Trotsky's analysis, reverberating unmistakably with decades of the Russian Marxist-Narodnik controversy and the experiences of the Russian Revolution, was reduced ad absurdum by some of his Chinese disciples who denounced the victory by Maoism in 1949 as a "bourgeois and Stalinist counter-revolution."

Trotsky's theories and errors were further reduced ad absurdum throughout the entire world movement.

Again, Deutscher, in the introduction to "The Age of Permanent Revolution," observed that "Mao's partisans carried the revolution from country to town, whereas with Trotsky it was an absolute axiom that the revolution must come from the town to the country and cannot succeed without urban initiative and leadership."

Trotsky's Error on China -- The Role of the Peasantry

When Trotsky in "The Criticism of the Draft Program" quoted Lenin to the effect that "The city inevitably leads the village, the village inevitably follows the city. It is only a question which urban class will be able to rally the village to its side," he was applying the schema of the Russian revolution to the Chinese revolution.

The urban proletariat as an organized mass did not lead and fight the Chinese revolution in its national-democratic stage, and as an organized mass the urban proletariat, that is the town, did not lead the villages in the fighting and winning of the Revolution. It was the other way around.

Although it had at times sizeable numbers of proletarians in its ranks, the Chinese Communist Party by no stretch of the imagination was more than the "representative" of the proletariat class in China. In the Soviet Union, on the contrary, the Communist Party not only "represented" the proletariat (and was primarily made up of the proletariat) in winning the revolution, but the proletariat -- that is, the city workers, the urban proletariat -- as an organized body, led the insurrection and was the main fighting force of the revolution and did rally and lead the villages.

Exactly the opposite took place in China. The main battering ram, the leading force of the insurrection, was the peasantry. The city did not lead

¹ SEE NOTES - APPENDIX

the village in China. It was the village, that is, the peasantry, that constituted the revolutionary army, the main organized insurrectionary force, the main battering ram and surrounded the cities and won the victory. It was only after the conquering of the cities by surrounding them with the great peasant army that the proletariat played in physical fact a leading role as an organized body.

The CCP (Chinese Communist Party) "representing" the proletarian vanguard is far removed from the proletarian vanguard itself, which Trotsky thought should play the leading role as an organized mass in the fighting and winning as well as ideological force of the revolution.

Thus the alliance of the proletariat and peasantry in the national-democratic stage took an unorthodox form in the Chinese revolution. It is this unorthodoxy, combined with the false historical viewpoint of labelling Mao Tse-tung and his strategical conception as Stalinist that has led to such confusion in the Trotskyist ranks, and worse, to the complex, disoriented and factional struggles within the movement.

Joe Hansen, in a review of Isaac Deutscher's final volume on Trotsky, "The Prophet Outcast" (International Socialist Review, Winter, 1964), states that "...The specific pattern of the Chinese revolution -- organization of the peasantry into armies and their advance from the countryside -- offers the most spectacular example of a mode foreseen by no one."

No one, that is -- except Mao Tse-tung!

Two Antagonistic Concepts Within a Single General Theory

During the same period that Trotsky was outlining his perspectives for the Chinese revolution (based on the experiences of the Russian revolution), Mao Tse-tung was developing his own strategy for the Chinese revolution along quite different lines.

In 1927 in his "Report on an Investigation into the Peasant Movement in Hunan," Mao laid the foundation for his conception of the role of the peasantry.

His strategy, as he developed it, was that the peasantry, organized into great armies, would constitute the main organized body, the insurrectionary force of the revolution.

This strategy of Mao Tse-tung was actually nothing more than a different application of the same general theory to which both he and Trotsky adhered -- the "uninterrupted revolution" (in Mao's terms), the "permanent revolution" (in Trotsky's terms).

Mao Tse-tung enriched and made innovations in Marxist theory by placing into proper historical perspective the revolutionary potential of the Chinese peasantry, which he saw as being progressive and revolutionary to

a much greater extent than did Marx, Trotsky or Lenin, who were of course relating themselves to their knowledge of the European and Russian peasantry, different in important respects from the Chinese. (There is evidence that Lenin before his death was reassessing the potentialities of the peasantry under certain historical conditions.) 2

In 1940 Mao Tse-tung wrote that "the peasant question becomes the fundamental question of the Chinese Revolution, and the force of the peasantry is the main force of the Chinese Revolution."

Trotsky never in any of his writings on the worker-peasant alliance took the position that the "fundamental question" of the Chinese revolution was the peasantry or that the "main force" in the Chinese revolution would be the peasantry.

These two strategic concepts, Trotsky's (subsequently the entire Trotskyist movement's) and Mao's were basically antagonistic and led to active conflict.

The position of Trotsky and his Chinese followers, proceeding from a preconceived schema based on the Russian revolution, opposed both in theory and practice Mao's strategic conception of the peasantry as the main fighting force of the revolution and the encirclement of the cities, with the proletariat as an organized body playing little or no role in the bourgeois-democratic phase.

As an example of one of the ways in which Trotskyist views were counterposed to the line that Mao Tse-tung developed and carried out, one has only to look at the bloc the Chinese Trotskyists made with Ch'en Tu-hsiu after he was expelled from the CCP. Benjamin Schwartz, in his book "Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao," states that the manifesto issued by this bloc in December, 1929 "exercised a strong pull on the disaffected elements" still within the CCP. This "Statement of Our Views" was strongly influenced by Trotsky's current line. Although it opposed Stalin's line of staying within the Kuomintang it held that "the socialist revolution can be consummated only by the proletariat at the head of the non-proletariat masses." It saw the revolution timetabled far into the future and advised the party to bend all efforts to the recapture of proletarian bases. It advocated formation of a national assembly and said all talk of uprisings must be eschewed. 3

The False Equation of Maoism to Stalinism

The failure of the Trotskyist movement to understand the Chinese revolution and its regime, its failure to see it as a phenomenon distinct from the Soviet Union both in the process by which it came into being and in the revolutionary character of its leadership, resulted in the equation of China to the Soviet Union under Stalin, which was incorporated into the programmatic documents of the Fourth International. These subsequently

became the rationalization for a call for political revolution in China.

The SWP's 1955 Resolution, "The Chinese Revolution and Its Aftermath," states: "After the defeat of the Second Chinese Revolution, they [the CCP] withdrew from the cities and established an armed peasant base. For a span of 20 years, they used this armed power to rule over the backward and scattered peasant masses. In this manner the uncontrolled, cynical, self-willed bureaucracy consolidated...." 4

The Trotskyists absolutely could not accept the fact that in China the peasantry was able to constitute the combat force of the revolution, the "proletarian" revolution -- it could not be expressed in plainer English. The strategy which Mao developed for the special conditions of China in a period of colonial oppression, invasion and civil war was rejected because it was thought to be Stalinist.

The source of this distorted view can be traced directly back to 1939, to the "Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International," the transitional program adopted by the founding conference of the Fourth International in 1939, which stated: "Following the inevitable collapse of the Canton uprising, the Comintern [!] took the road of guerrilla warfare and peasant soviets with complete passivity on the part of the industrial proletariat. Landing thus in a blind alley, the Comintern took advantage of the Sino-Japanese War to liquidate 'Soviet China' with a stroke of the pen, subordinating not only the peasant 'Red Army' but also the so-called 'Communist' party to the identical Kuomintang, i.e., the bourgeoisie."

Although the "Comintern" would have liked to "take advantage of the War to liquidate 'Soviet China,'" etc. and although the "Comintern" recognized the Kuomintang regime as the dominating force, the facts are that the Chinese Soviets did not become liquidated, and the Red Army and the Communist Party did not become subordinate to the Kuomintang. 5

The Comintern was not Mao Tse-tung. The Trotskyists -- due initially to Trotsky's insufficient information -- never understood that while the 'official' CCP, under the thumb of the Comintern, was carrying out one line from its center in Shanghai, Mao Tse-tung with his collaborators was carrying out his strategic course of action based on the peasantry. There was bitter disagreement on tactics and strategy between the two factions (for example, the dispute over the Li Li-san line.) This is fully and authoritatively documented; it is not a matter of conjecture or individual opinion, but a matter of historic record. 6

It was not until 1935, when Mao Tse-tung's faction won power by virtue of the great peasant army behind them, that he was able to assume the leadership of the CCP. Only from that point can an identity be drawn between the CCP and Mao Tse-tung. 7

During the Sino-Japanese War, Mao continued in essence to pursue his own independent course of action in pursuit of victory, both national and revolutionary. It was necessary for him, of course, to give a superficial

appearance of obeisance to the line of the Comintern and even to make compromises. The Soviet Union was, after all, despite Stalin, the first workers' state.

In answer to a question put to him in an interview published in the July-August, 1965 Young Socialist, Isaac Deutscher answered: "In my view, this violent anti-Trotskyism /on the part of the CCP/ is partly a polemical tactic. Partly, however, it is rooted in their party tradition. The paradox of the situation is that Mao and his comrades were "deviationists" during the Stalin era. After all, they made the revolution in 1948-49 against Stalin's explicit advice. They conducted their acts of warfare for a decade-and-a-half in explicit or implicit opposition to Moscow, and Mao Tse-tung was for many years regarded by the Comintern as a heretic...." 8

It is unfortunate that the Trotskyists, not only in 1939, but in 1955 and in 1965 have not been able to see the reality behind the appearances Mao was obliged to maintain, even in spite of the fact that historians have been providing documentation of the facts for all these ensuing years!

Why Trotsky Was in Error

In our bulletin, "China: The Acid Test," * we pointed out that Preobrazhensky, a member of the Left Opposition, in correspondence with Trotsky in the late 1920's, "(1) took issue with Trotsky for his application of norms and criteria of the October Revolution to China....; and (2) was of the opinion that what was needed was a fundamental study of the Chinese situation.

To criticize Trotsky today, in view especially of all the facts behind us, should not seem so shocking when a leading theoretician of the Left Opposition was making similar criticisms over 30 years ago!

Trotsky himself in a letter to the Chinese comrades during that period acknowledged that the "information at my disposal is altogether insufficient, accidental and disjointed," and added that "I would indeed welcome all amplifications and corrections."

Unfortunately a reexamination has never taken place. Cultism with regard to Trotsky as the "infallible" revolutionary leader has been the norm instead of Marxist methods of analysis. Such an attitude does no honor to the great leader of the Russian revolution.

In addition to the lack of information at his disposal, there were other

* See Bulletin, Vol. 24, No. 34 (July 1963), "China: The Acid Test" by Doug G. and Rosemary S.

factors which contributed to the failure of Trotsky correctly to analyze and foresee the developments of the Chinese revolution.

First, Trotsky's viewpoints and perspective, expressed in 1928 and '29 and in the 1930's were understandably conditioned by the experience of the defeat of the 1925-'27 Chinese revolution, with which he was thoroughly familiar, having fought in the Third International against the Stalin-directed line of the CCP and having later brilliantly and entirely correctly analyzed the betrayals of the CCP under the influence of Stalin that led to the tragic defeats. It is one of the points of ignorance of the SWP majority that it either does not know, or refuses to acknowledge, the fact that Mao Tse-tung's analysis of the defeat of the '25-'27 revolution was basically the same as Trotsky's. Mao did not blame Stalin per se, but the CCP, which amounted to the same thing essentially.

Secondly, during the '30s, as we have already explained, Trotsky did not know about the two factions in China -- the "official" CCP in Shanghai and the Mao Tse-tung faction which had gone into the countryside to organize the peasant armies. It was not until Mao Tse-tung was able to consolidate his forces in 1935 that the CCP became unified under his leadership. By then the damage by and to the Trotskyist movement had been done. Trotskyists in China, following Trotsky's line and perspective, placed themselves in opposition to Mao Tse-tung. And in 1939 the "Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International" formally set down the position of Trotskyism: the equation of the CCP (ignoring the difference between the CCP of the '20s and early '30s and the CCP under Mao) to Stalinism. The movement has been burdened with this position ever since.

Validity of the Permanent Revolution in China

The Chinese revolution, as surely as the Russian revolution, confirmed the historical validity of Trotsky's great theoretical legacy, his theory of permanent revolution. The course of the Chinese revolution, based on the strategy of Mao Tse-tung, was a strategical variant within the context of the theory of the permanent revolution, which in general content is the same theory that Mao calls the theory of uninterrupted revolution. But it was this strategical variant that the Trotskyist movement foundered on, with all the tragic consequences. This strategical variant, which was from the inception of our movement, equated to Stalinism, in fact constituted the initial break with Stalinism. The current Sino-Soviet dispute has its origins in that break.

If the Trotskyist movement cannot enrich its theory by a correct understanding and recognition of the strategical variant of the revolutionary role of the peasantry as a great contribution to Marxist theory and recognize that the source of this strategical variant was the genuine vanguard Marxist-Leninist party headed by Mao Tse-tung, it will tend to bring discredit to the theory of permanent revolution so much associated with Trotsky's name.

Revision of Trotsky's Criteria for a Call for Political Revolution

Although Trotsky made an error in assessing the Chinese situation following the period of defeat in 1925-'27 (which, as we said, he analyzed brilliantly) and did not foresee the strategic role of the peasantry, and although Trotsky's error led the Chinese Trotskyists and his international followers to mistakenly label the leadership of the revolution Stalinist, it was not Trotsky who was responsible for applying the call for political revolution to the Mao Tse-tung regime. This has to be laid at the doorstep of his successors and not of Trotsky himself.

The disorientation and disintegrating symptoms of the movement had to begin when this revision of Trotsky's theory of political revolution as applied to China, the world catalyst of revolutionary regroupment and destruction of Stalinist counter-revolutionary monolithism, took place. This was, significantly, after Trotsky's death.

The revision of Trotsky's criteria for calling for political revolution of course had some of its political roots in Trotsky's own errors of analysis and prognosis on the Chinese revolution, which were written into the programmatic base of the Fourth International. Trotsky's successors accepted Trotsky's erroneous theoretical analysis and rejected the material reality of developments when they came into conflict. They mechanically superimposed a theory onto reality. Since the theory didn't fit, they had to misrepresent the realities of the revolution. In the process the theory, applied to a false situation, became as distorted as the facts. Here is how the ridiculously false Trotskyist syllogism goes:

The Mao Tse-tung leadership, holding unorthodox theories about the revolutionary role of the rural peasantry, encirclement of the cities, etc., was alleged to be Stalinist. Stalinists could not of course make a real revolution, according to the Trotskyists, because Stalinism was counter-revolutionary. Therefore the Mao leadership had to be alleged to have been "pushed into power."² Once victorious, the Maoists had to be deemed a "Stalinist bureaucracy" at the head of a "deformed" workers' state. Ipso facto, Trotsky's theory of political revolution was applied to China, which was now characterized as a duplicate copy of the Soviet Union. Wherever the theory didn't fit, the necessary adjustments were made by distorting and falsifying the origins and subsequent development of the revolution and the nature and character of the leadership. As the contradictions between reality and theory became greater and greater, Trotsky's theory itself began to undergo revisions.

The facts are that the historical criteria that Trotsky used in calling for a political revolution in the Soviet Union never existed in China.

We pointed out in our 1963 document, "China: The Acid Test":

"Nowhere in all of Trotsky's writings or in the original documents of the Fourth International is there a call for political revolution on the basis

of bureaucratic tendencies alone and lack of full workers' democracy per se. Nowhere. The concept has something in common with the utopian Socialist Labor Party and the Shachtmanites but not with Trotskyism.

"The Trotskyist movement has so distorted Trotsky's theories relating to the question of political revolutions that we now have people in the party who believe that bureaucratic formations, inequities between the bureaucracy and the masses and violations of workers' democracy in and of themselves constitute the criteria for a call for political revolution and the existence of the Fourth International.

"Trotsky first examined the problem of bureaucracy in "The New Course" in 1923 and dealt with it as an inescapable phenomenon. It was only some ten years later on the basis not of bureaucracy but of the qualitative change -- that is, of the degeneration of the bureaucracy into a national and international counter-revolutionary obstacle in actions and theory -- that Trotsky called for political overthrow of the regime."

Suffice it to say that Stalin liquidated the entire Bolshevik Old Guard. No Thermidor took place in China. Those who led the revolution are today still in the revolutionary leadership. To take Trotsky's theory of political revolution and apply it to the original leadership of the Chinese revolution is a crime against Trotsky and all that he stood for.

Reunification -- A Rotten Compromise on China

In our opinion the United Secretariat compromised itself in the recent reunification by endorsing the concept of political revolution for China.

The document on the Sino-Soviet conflict, adopted by the Seventh World Congress (Fourth International, Oct.-Dec. 1963) makes it quite clear, it seems to us, that the position of the United Secretariat regarding the nature of the Chinese regime is little different from that of the SWP:

"...despite its positive role in the international conflicts of the Communist movement, the Chinese leadership remains a bureaucratic leadership at the head of a state marked by profound bureaucratic deformations. The struggle against the bureaucracy and its regime, for proletarian democracy, that is, for workers and peasants councils having real powers, for a genuine Soviet structure for the right of free expression of tendencies and of parties that stand within the framework of the society that issued from the revolution, representing the interests of the workers and peasants, for the independence of the trade unions in relation to the state, for the freedom of all the scientific schools and all the artistic currents, etc., holds also for the People's Republic of China. These conquests cannot be won except through an antibureaucratic struggle on a scale massive enough to bring about a qualitative change in the political form of government."

-- Pages 63-64. (Emphasis added)

As it reads, this is nothing more than a thinly disguised variation of political revolution as called for in the Soviet Union.

Or, to paraphrase Joe Hansen at the 1963 SWP Convention in response to a question on whether our co-thinkers called for political revolution: "not in a formal sense, but the essence of their position is the same. The difference is one of nuance." Formal or not, the Chinese cannot be expected to make such a fine distinction, nor do they.

Indications are that the Chinese have read the main SWP documents on China and the United Secretariat's reunification documents and have drawn logical conclusions from them. The Chinese do not look upon critical support as anything but contradictory and hypocritical in the context of the direct or implied call for the overthrow of the regime the Trotskyists are pretending to give "critical support" to. They justifiably view the Trotskyist position of critical support as nothing but a hangman's noose.

Furthermore, whether the Trotskyist call is meant to mean exactly the same thing as the call for political revolution in the Soviet Union is splitting hairs. Especially when the Chinese themselves have called for an antibureaucratic struggle to change the regime in the Soviet Union, which is an implied call for political revolution!!

The fact that the International Secretariat was willing to reverse its position for the sake of the reunification indicates that its earlier position, which did not call for political revolution in China and which was arrived at partially under Pablo's theoretical influence (Pablo was then calling for deep entry into the Communist movement, prior to the Sino-Soviet dispute when he abruptly dropped all sympathy to China in favor of support to Moscow in the dispute) had been based on insufficient understanding of the Chinese revolution and its leadership. No one with a real conviction based on thoroughgoing knowledge and analysis of the revolution could make a qualitative reversal of position on a revolutionary question of such importance and immediacy -- except for reasons of opportunism. That was involved in the International Secretariat's essentially rotten compromise in the reunification.

On the subject of compromise, it is illuminating to recall a passage from a letter which Ernest Germain wrote to George Breitman in 1953 (Dec. 9) in reference to the "unprincipled bloc" between the SWP and Peng:

"You have already completely modified your position on the Chinese Revolution (I remember vividly like all the IEC members do, Manuel's excellent speech on that subject!) for the purpose of an unprincipled bloc with Peng, who doesn't represent the Chinese section but just his own egotistic warped personality. Suddenly you discover that Peng has always followed a 'principled course.' The principled course of calling for a truce and 'elections for a constituent assembly' later in 1947, after the decisive offensive of Mao Tse-tung had already started, the principled course of calling as late as 1951 the Chinese CP a 'peasant party,' the Chinese government a 'coalition government with the bourgeoisie,' and the conquest of power by

Mao as 'instructed by the Kremlin diplomacy.' Thank you for these principles, they are certainly not ours nor Trotsky's!...."

Here we are twelve years later. Germain has reversed his position on China in an unprincipled compromise and is in the same camp with the SWP and Peng!

The Separate Tendency Concept

In 1963, in our bulletin "China: The Acid Test," we wrote: "The logical extension of the...revisionist position on China is to do what [the Trotskyists] are now doing: to pose the tendency of Trotskyism either against or separate from the leadership of a tendency which has broken with Stalinism through revolution and now holds state power and is promulgating the international proletarian revolution, thus achieving the elementary task for which the Fourth International was formed...."

The world Trotskyist movement sees its role as an independent tendency sympathetic to the Cuban Revolutionary leadership and antagonistic to the Chinese revolutionary leadership, and entirely separate from the Sino-Soviet regroupment process -- i.e.:

"We enter The Great Debate equipped with our own tradition, program, proposals and goals...

"The Trotskyists represent a distinct ideological and independent political tendency." (From the SWP's 1963 P.C. Draft Resolution on the Sino-Soviet Dispute.)

This expresses the entire movement's conception of Trotskyism in relation to alleged Stalinism. Any other course is seen to mean the liquidation of what Trotskyism considers its prime task: the building of indigenous Trotskyist parties. For this reason the movement has a vested interest in this separateness, both nationally and internationally.

Ironically, the necessity to overcome the isolation of Trotskyism from the rest of the world communist movement was one of the main concerns of the early Trotskyist leaders. Cannon in this connection has spoken of the "sectarian origin" of the movement as a phenomenon to be overcome. *

Unfortunately, this process was stunted when the movement failed to take its proper position initially in relation to the Chinese revolution, the catalyst agent in the break-up of the Stalinist monolith. Instead of seeing the Chinese revolution as the main basis of a whole de-stalinizing process which began in the countryside of China and is still going on, they have consistently seen it as a part of Stalinism. Thus, through the years, instead of moving in the direction of alliance with the new international revolutionary communist movement, the Trotskyist movement has remained outside, more sectarian than ever, and getting farther and farther removed

* James P. Cannon, "Struggle for a Proletarian Party," p. 58

from the living revolutionary movement. The Stalinist monolith has been crumbling for many years now, yet the Trotskyist movement attempts to use the old Stalinist charges against a leadership and a revolution that was not Stalinist, that on the contrary embodied the essential antithesis of Stalinism. A new revolutionary movement is now emerging in full sway on a world-wide scale, but the old poison of Stalinophobia is still running at full tide in the Trotskyist movement at this late date in history.

The Trotskyist Sectarrians

Here is the picture of sectarian disarray the Trotskyist movement presents to the world: One section (Pablo) has gone over to the Khrushchev revisionist camp and probably was influential in Ben Bella's acquiescence to representation of the Kremlin revisionists at the Afro-Asian Conference; the ISSP in Ceylon took the parliamentary road in collaboration with the Khrushchev CP right-wing into the bourgeois camp in a coalition that excluded the Chinese split-off section of the CP. At the same time Healy, the United Secretariat and the SWP all stand, in one variant or another, for the overthrow and replacement of the revolutionary leadership of China which is leading the great struggle against revisionism and building new world revolutionary movements, while Posadas says to the Chinese in effect: "What you are doing is all right and we support it but we are the only true revolutionary organization, destined to be the only true international, therefore you join us..." (So far as we know, they don't call for political revolution but they may have some version of that too.) What a pathetic spectacle -- and what a very real obstruction the Trotskyist movement appears to the Chinese.

What is central to and provides a common denominator for the positions of the right-wing Pablo & Co., the ultra-left sectarianism of Healy & Co. and the sectarianism of Germain & Co. and the SWP on the colonial revolutions is the refusal to acknowledge theoretically that a Marxist-Leninist vanguard party existed and does exist in China. Healy & Co. in addition denies the theoretical significance of the particular revolutionary role of the peasantry under the leadership of this Marxist-Leninist vanguard party.

Hansen refers to the Chinese development as "a mode foreseen by no one." (International Socialist Review, Winter, 1965, in a review of Isaac Deutscher's "The Prophet Outcast.") He treats it as a sort of accident, ignoring the fact that it was a definite theoretical, strategic conception of Marxist theory developed by Mao Tse-tung. At the same time Hansen does accept as fact this new revolutionary role of the peasantry. (The "unforeseen mode" description is necessary to obscure the error made by Trotsky in his opposition to Mao's strategy.)

Healy, on the other hand, not only denies the theoretical significance of the Maoist conception of the role of the peasantry in the alliance of the proletariat and the peasantry, but he uses the fact that the peasantry played the dominant role in colonial revolutions (instead of the proletariat!) as

the basis for his counter-revolutionary positions on Cuba and Algeria, as well as China.

Hansen says of Healy that "he fails to see why the Cuban revolution is much more dramatic evidence of the true balance of world forces than were the overturns in Eastern Europe or even the Chinese revolution, the theoretical appreciation of which Healy did not question."

Thus Hansen makes Cuba the "acid test," the axis of world revolution, which is historical nonsense as world developments show. 10

One explanation for the generally correct position on the Cuban and Algerian revolutions by the SWP and the United Secretariat is that there existed no breeding ground for the peculiar Trotskyist form of sectarianism. Trotskyists could fairly leap at the chance to extend revolutionary honors and credits to a non-communist (i.e. non-Stalinist) -led revolution -- hence there was no sectarian brake on the leadership's capacity to use something resembling the dialectic method. Voilà! -- the generally correct line on Cuba. * +

But the world revolutionary axis does not swing around the Cuban and Algerian revolutions. It swings around the Chinese revolution, and the Sino-Soviet dispute. The Cuban and Algerian revolutions are dependent economically on the Soviet Union and they can be expected to make ideological concessions in return for aid; they cannot be relied on to follow (let alone, lead) a consistent, clearcut theoretical position.

Also involved in Hansen's approach is his tendency to negate the necessity for vanguard parties in colonial revolutions. Furthermore, from this follows the tendency toward negation of the necessity for vanguard parties in the imperialist centers. Cuba's revolution coincided with the bourgeoisie's short-lived attempt at managed bourgeois-democratic revolutions which, with the successful Cuban revolution, turned into active world-

* A couple of facts about China (overlooked by the majority of the SWP which has not discussed the subject for two years) are worth mentioning here: (1) Soviets exist in China, although not in precisely the same form as in Russia during and following the Bolshevik revolution. (2) Adolfo Gilly in his Monthly Review article on Cuba discussed Che Guevara's correct position on moral incentive, as opposed to the material incentive practiced in most of the workers' states. Moral incentive is the very touchstone of the economic program of the Chinese revolution. In massive nationwide campaigns this has been a main theme, stressed over and over again in many ways in the continuing Chinese revolution.

+ How do Trotskyists appear to the Cubans? We know about the trouble caused by the sectarian peculiarities of Posadas. Healy & Co. calls for the overthrow of the Castro regime. The SWP eulogizes the Castro regime but plays an abstentionist role in the Students Trips to Cuba and, like all the rest of the Trotskyist movement, calls for the overthrow of the Chinese regime. To many Cubans the Trotskyist groupings must appear at least as sectarian oddities, if not dangerous.

wide counter-revolution. For this reason, there is practically no possibility of repetition of the Cuban example -- that is, of victory without a vanguard party. There will have to be more definitive forms of vanguardism than existed in the Cuban revolution (also the Algerian, we might add).

Neither Hansen nor Healy is willing or able to comprehend the fact that it was Mao Tse-tung's innovation on Marxist theory and practice regarding the revolutionary role of the peasantry in the alliance of the proletariat and the peasantry that in part enabled the Cuban revolution to be successful. For Che Guevara and Castro had studied the writings of Mao Tse-tung on the waging of guerrilla warfare, with the peasantry as the main battering ram. They were following the strategy of the Chinese revolution and its Marxist-Leninist vanguard party in leading the Cuban revolution.

. . .

The betrayal in Ceylon was a terrible tragedy, all the more so because it demonstrated in life the Trotskyists' failure to assimilate the lessons of the Chinese revolution.

An attempt by Ernest Germain in the article, "From Wavering to Capitulation" (International Socialist Review, Fall, 1964) to analyze the betrayal served only to reveal once again that the Trotskyist leadership is still securely shackled in sectarian chains.

Germain refers to the main error in Ceylon as follows:

"...This [fourth and gravest instance of 'Ceylonese exceptionalism'] concerned the problem of the relationship between the peasantry and the bourgeoisie, the peasantry and the working class, and the reciprocal relationship of the three classes in Ceylonese politics in general and Ceylonese revolutionary politics in particular." (emphasis in original)

He then goes on to discuss Trotsky's theory of the permanent revolution with quotes from Trotsky. He says: "Now it is nearly incredible but nonetheless true," that these comrades who had been quoting these passages for so many years from Trotsky's "Theory of the Permanent Revolution" "failed to recognize the very things they had been talking and writing about when they ran up against them face to face in their own country."

He proceeds from this to examine the relationship of class forces with emphasis on the rural proletariat and the failure to have a program and strategy on this key section, etc., etc., within the context of the peculiarities of Ceylon.

Germain has thus used a Marxist document as an example to show why these comrades should not have fallen into error. But he never once refers to the living, concrete example of the Chinese revolution! How could a person calling himself a Marxist do such a "nearly incredible" thing? The answer is crystal clear: to do so of course would acknowledge the historic contributions made to revolutionary theory and practice regarding the role

of the peasantry by Mao, which in so doing would disclose the fact that precisely the same fundamental error had been made previously in the Chinese revolution by the Chinese Trotskyists, who in turn were following Trotsky's erroneous conceptions on the developments and perspectives for China vis-a-vis the role of the peasantry!!!

The simple and tragic fact is that what Comrade Germain calls incredible was absolutely inevitable given the failure of the entire movement to learn the lessons of the Chinese revolution and to acknowledge and correct its errors all the way back through Trotsky's own.

All that Comrade Germain has to say in reference to the Chinese leadership is to charge that the Maoists "either speak out of ignorance or deliberately lie." (page 107) The Maoists are neither ignorant nor are they liars. The Maoists are aware (by virtue of the position of the Chinese Trotskyists) of Trotsky's errors on the respective role of the proletariat and the peasantry in China in the fighting of the revolution, and know that the conclusions deriving from these errors were incorporated into the programmatic base of the Fourth International. They also know about the subsequent sectarian obstructionism of Trotskyists in China and elsewhere in the world on this question.

. . .

When the concept of Trotskyism as a separate tendency, independent of all other currents in the international communist movement, is applied nationally, we find seeds of sectarianism, and of sectarianism's other side, opportunism, tending to bear fruit. For instance, the SWP looks upon its party as the only genuine revolutionary movement, one that is and must continue to be independent of the alleged non-revolutionary "Stalinism" of the Chinese internationally, and one which must therefore reject the Progressive Labor Party nationally. The concomitant of this policy is that the leadership begins to seek positions and activities not only independent of but different from those taken by the pro-Peking, allegedly non-revolutionary "Stalinists"; that is, they begin to seek a middle ground between the alleged Stalinists and the social-democrats. But middle ground inevitably shifts to the right, coming ever more close to social democracy. That is precisely what we have happening in the SWP on a whole number of policy questions both national and international: resumption of testing by the Soviet Union; nuclear test ban treaty; Chinese bomb; Kennedy assassination; Warren commission report; Hoover and the FBI; federal troops to the South; student trips to Cuba, etc.

Involved in these positions was an adaptation to pacifism or left liberalism, reflecting the SWP's bending to imperialist pressure.

The reformism of the SWP majority, whether in its international or national expression, carefully avoids genuine commitment, taking of sides, or alliance or merger with forces or organizations on concrete class struggle actions (in other words, it is abstentionist) that might bring it into a serious clash with American imperialism. The other side of the coin of sectarianism on the Chinese question is thus manifested in opportunism

and a growing reformist political perspective that is reducing the SWP to a leftist Socialist Labor Party-type propaganda sect.

Regroupment

One of the resolutions adopted by the Reunification Congress includes the following passage:

"It is not a matter then of choosing allies within the bureaucracy, but rather within the mass movement, and these allies can only be the left communist currents; that is, the Castroist and 'Chinese' currents in the CP's of the capitalist countries (colonial, semi-colonial and imperialist), and the currents to the left of the Khrushchevist tendency (wanting to push de-Stalinization further than the bureaucracy) in the CP's of the workers states." [emphasis in original] -- "The International Situation and Our Tasks" (Fourth International, Oct.-Dec., 1963, page 46)

This perspective of regroupment called for by the United Secretariat is not agreed to by the SWP, whose approach to PLP is dead-end Stalinophobic factionalism at its worst.

But what is wrong with even the United Secretariat's regroupment perspective is that they don't comprehend the fact that there is not going to be a revolutionary rejuvenation and regroupment around Trotskyism as a result of the break-up of the Stalinist monolith as had been expected, but a revolutionary regroupment within the communist movement under the hegemony of the Chinese, the logical extension of the Chinese revolution. The Sino-Soviet dispute has determined this.

Despite this obvious historic fact the International Information Bulletin of August, 1965, in the section on "The Evolution of Capitalism in Western Europe and the Tasks of Revolutionary Marxists," contains one brief reference to the Sino-Soviet dispute. It is a factionally obtuse comment about the pro-Peking parties, accompanied by the self-deceptive and irrational perspective of winning them over to the Trotskyist program -- which program includes the overthrow of the Chinese regime.

And what about that bulletin's other section, the "Draft Thesis on the Program and Problems of the African Revolution"? The Chinese regime's global strategy of United Front against imperialism's counter-revolutionary actions against the colonial revolution combined with their struggle against Soviet revisionism as the obstacle to colonial revolution from within the proletarian camp has had an enormous impact and effect on the African revolution. The vanguards of African revolutionaries are militantly pro-Peking and look to the Chinese regime for ideological and practical leadership and help. They are receiving both in abundant measure. Further, the world revolutionary regroupment under the hegemony of the Chinese precipitated by the Sino-Soviet conflict has penetrated deeply and permanently into the African revolution, with pro-Peking vanguards emerging. But the

United Secretariat, like the perennial ostrich with its head in the sand and its rear to the world, refuses to see the great global revolutionary regroupment and the massive build-up of a world-wide living revolutionary movement under the hegemony of the Chinese. 11

We concluded our bulletin, "China: The Acid Test," with the following prognosis:

"The revolutionary manifestos of the Chinese revolution thus become a (probable) ideological weapon and catalyst agent for the beginning development of a process leading toward a political revolution in the Soviet Union and the eventual achievement of the world revolutionary program advocated by the Chinese. Thus a process is (in all likelihood) being set in motion that leads towards the eventual goal of the Fourth International. To support the political overthrow of the source of this revolutionary process is (thus) contrary to the aims of the Fourth International."

The Chinese have indeed traveled a long distance since we wrote that paragraph in 1963 in their struggle against Kremlin revisionism, having arrived at the point of a critical examination of bureaucracy in the Soviet Union with an implied call for political revolution. Thus Trotskyist sectarianism has come to the point where it is now calling for the political overthrow of a revolutionary regime which has arrived at a position that parallels Trotsky's of the necessity for a political overturn of the Soviet bureaucracy. The revolutionary Chinese regime is "stealing the clothes" of the Trotskyist movement, and the whole world can see its sectarian nakedness.

So long as the United Secretariat and the SWP maintain their present positions on the Chinese regime, all of the protestations of critical support to their line aren't worth the paper they're written on, nor can the regroupment efforts of Trotskyists ever come to anything really significant as long as this is so. That is the sectarian impasse of the world Trotskyist movement.

Summary

The world Trotskyist movement has not been able to correct its errors of thirty-five years ago. Only to the extent that it could have done so could the movement escape inevitable political degeneration.

By virtue of its failure to assimilate the lessons of the Chinese revolution and rid itself of sectarianism, the world Trotskyist movement is becoming the architect of its own liquidation.

Why haven't Trotskyists in all these years given a thorough re-examination to the Chinese revolution and discovered the historic errors made by the movement?

We can find part of the answer by drawing a parallel with the Chinese leadership's failure thoroughly to reexamine Stalinism, about which Isaac Deutscher made these observations:

"The reliability and effectiveness of the Chinese call for a restoration of pristine Leninism would be far greater if Maoism did not seek to recover the myths of Stalinism from the discredit into which they have deservedly fallen. In this Maoism is acting from motives of self-defense: It has to vindicate its own record, its past commitments, and its rigidly ritualistic party canon which, like every such canon, requires that the formalistic continuity be unalterably upheld. The infallible leader could not have been in error on any of these past occasions on which he extolled Stalinist orthodoxy."

The same motives that Deutscher described as being behind the failure of the Chinese to reexamine Stalin are involved in the reluctance of Trotskyists to reexamine and admit the grave errors made by Trotsky and his followers. In the context of the Trotskyist movement's life and death struggle against Stalinism, to refuse to admit Trotsky's error in equating Mao's leadership of the CCP to Stalinism and his error in opposing Mao's strategy of the peasantry as constituting the main battering ram of the revolution is to deepen and extend the tragic disorientation of the Trotskyist movement on the Chinese revolution and its regime and on the nature of the Sino-Soviet dispute. The Chinese at least have a great revolution and millions of people to defend but Trotskyists can fall back on no such rationalization for themselves.

The leaders of the Trotskyist movement know that to reevaluate seriously the Chinese revolution -- its history and its leadership -- would be tantamount to altering their position to one not only of critical support to the regime but to recognition of the Chinese as the heads of the world revolutionary struggle against imperialism, and against the Kremlin revisionists. It would require the Trotskyists to go full cycle back to their beginnings as a Left Opposition and declare themselves once again a part of the world communist movement, on the side of the Chinese left-oppositionist faction, struggling against the revisionism of the Kremlin and against world imperialism.

History will record as one of its great ironies the fact that the failure of the Trotskyist movement to correct its errors on the Chinese revolution contributed to Maoism's failure to correct its falsification of the Stalin-Trotsky positions. The obstructionist role of the Chinese Trotskyists and subsequently the obstructionist and sectarian position of the entire Trotskyist movement in relation to the Chinese revolution and leadership bears directly upon the Chinese evaluation of Trotskyism per se and therefore, because of the historic struggle between the Left Opposition led by Trotsky against Stalin, of Stalinism.

We could not feel more certain of anything than we do of our conviction that Trotsky would have altered his position on the Chinese revolution had he had the opportunity to study the developments that actually took place.

There is, as we all know, ample evidence from his own long history as a revolutionary that he was capable of seeing his own errors and correcting them when new evidence was available. Trotsky could not but have solidarized himself with the living revolution in China. Had he lived to see the ultimate conclusion of that revolution, the Trotskyist movement would have assumed a very different role. It would have had a totally different relationship with the Chinese leadership and revolution. Had Trotsky lived there would have been no conception of an independent and indigenous Trotskyist movement, separate from both the Moscow and the Peking communist movements. For the recognition of the revolutionary Chinese regime constitutes the recognition of a revolutionary base from which Stalinism and imperialism must be -- and are being -- attacked.

The Chinese under these circumstances -- had history so developed -- would not and could not make the statements they are now making about the Trotskyist movement.

The world Trotskyist movement has reached a historic juncture. A new world realignment under the hegemony of the Chinese is well underway, with the possibility of a new International looming ever closer. Trotskyist tail-enders with a deservedly bad reputation on China are going to be looked on with no particular kindness if they attempt at the last minute to climb onto the revolutionary bandwagon, since the Chinese are already deeply prejudiced against Trotskyism.

If the Trotskyist movement does not resolve its sectarian crisis within the immediate future and come down on the side of the revolutionary Chinese in critical support of the regime, admitting its own past errors in the process and, through regroupment channels, return to the communist camp as revolutionary allies of the Chinese, the movement faces certain dissolution.

If the great historic errors are acknowledged, the end result is that the Trotskyist movement returns to the fold of the world communist movement: that is, as allies of the Chinese and as an integral part of the global left-wing realignment under the hegemony of the Chinese in opposition to revisionism and imperialism, at the same time of course with Trotskyists making its own contributions.

APPENDIX

Footnotes

(1) "There is no doubt that Mao carried his indifference to the workers and to the cities far beyond anything Lenin's disciples, sitting in Moscow, would have considered admissible. (Needless to say, this neglect was only provisional; Mao had no intention of remaining indefinitely in the wilderness, nor was he indifferent to the question of whether his party represented the proletariat, even though it might not have been recruited from the real urban proletariat.) [Emphasis in the original.] -- Stuart R. Schram, "The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung"

"...Chou En-lai, reporting on the 'Organization Problems of the Party,' pointed out that 'at the time of the sixth congress the proletariat still constituted 10 per cent of the party membership. Now [1929] this proportion has been reduced to 3 per cent.' The Hung-ch'i (Red Flag) of 20 March 1930 said that the workers made up 66 per cent of the party membership in 1926 but only 8 per cent in 1930. The decline in the proletarian membership was undeniable...." -- Jerome Ch'en, "Mao and the Chinese Revolution"

(2) "There is not the slightest doubt that Lenin had gone very far in sketching the role of the peasantry in the underdeveloped countries. On the other hand, can one claim that Lenin anticipated all the theories and actions of Mao Tse-tung? In dealing with this question, one must distinguish between the idea that the peasantry must constitute the chief force of the Asian revolution, and the idea that the Communist Party, which directs this revolution, can issue from the peasantry. The first notion is indeed of Leninist origin. The second most emphatically is not...."

"All Marxists, beginning with Marx himself, have looked on the peasantry as an extremely important revolutionary force. None has ever recognized that the peasants were capable of independent revolutionary action. For Lenin, as for Trotsky and all their contemporaries, the peasants were fated to fall under the influence either of the proletariat or of the bourgeoisie, the only two classes capable of establishing their domination over society as a whole. It is hard to deny that in the Hunan Report, Mao attributed to the peasants a degree of initiative going well beyond Lenin's theoretical formulations, and well beyond what Stalin was disposed to accord them at the time...." -- Schram, ibid.

"... If Lenin arbitrarily identified the Communist Party with the true will of the real proletariat, Mao and his friends affirm that the Party can substitute itself for a virtually nonexistent proletariat as the leader of the agrarian revolution...." -- Ibid.

(3) "...At the fifth congress of the CCP, Wuhan, April 27, 1927 -- 'the crucial one of Ch'en Tu-hsiu's incumbency as the secretary of the CCP' the question of restraining the peasants was heatedly debated, with...Mao Tse-tung

...in the minority opposition. According to Mao,

"Ch'en Tu-hsiu did not understand the role of the peasantry in the revolution and greatly under-estimated its potentialities at this time. Consequently, the fifth Conference [congress] held on the eve of the crisis of the Great Revolution, failed to pass an adequate land programme. My opinions, which called for rapid intensification of the agrarian struggle, were not even discussed....The Conference [congress] discussed the land problem by defining a landlord as "a peasant farmer"... -- a wholly inadequate and unpractical basis on which to develop the class struggle and quite without consideration of the special character of land economy in China."

"Not only were his opinions, which represented the decisions of the conference of the peasants' delegations held in the spring of 1927, ignored, but he himself was held responsible for some of the happenings in Hunan and was deprived of the right to vote at the congress....

"The theory behind this disciplinary action against Mao lay not with Ch'en Tu-hsiu but with Stalin and his policy of 'revolution from above.'" -- Jerome Ch'en, ibid.

"The attitude of Moscow being such, Ch'en Tu-hsiu could hardly be blamed for adopting the policies he did [i.e., "keeping the peasant movement in check."] -- Ch'en, ibid.

(4) "The success of Mao and the Chinese communists in bringing about a revolutionary mobilization of the peasantry lay in their subtly dialectical understanding of the respective roles of the middle peasants and the poor peasants. The task before them was to raise the level of revolutionary consciousness of the poor peasantry, a task which called for skill as well as much devoted effort. This was necessary precisely because the poor peasants were initially the more backward section but, at the same time, potentially the more revolutionary section of the peasantry. On the other hand, Mao and his comrades had to take full account of the fact that it was the middle peasant who was initially the more militant and his energies had to be mobilized fully in carrying forward the initial thrust of the agrarian revolution. But, precisely because the middle peasants were not a revolutionary class, while fully utilizing their energies, and without antagonizing them, the revolutionary initiative had to be maintained independently of them; an initiative which was to be carried forward at a second stage of the agrarian revolution by the newly aroused poor peasants. Mao and his comrades showed, in practice, a masterly understanding of this dialectic. But in some of Mao's formal texts it seems to be missing altogether. The poor peasant is depicted to be spontaneously and unconditionally playing a revolutionary role; a picture which obscures the crucial role of the Communist Party, as a party with a proletarian revolutionary perspective, and the Red Army which broke the existing structure of power in the village, which prevented the Chinese revolution from degenerating into an ineffective peasant uprising...." -- Hamza Alavi, "Peasants and Revolution," The Socialist Register, 1965 [Emphasis added.]

(5) "...Mao attacked Wang's [Wang Ming] interpretation of the united front policy as 'capitulationism' -- not co-operation. Co-operation, according to him, meant the subordination of the class struggle to the anti-Japanese national struggle, sacrificing neither the independence nor the essential rights of the component parties and classes of the united front. Therefore Mao was against the advocacy that every action should have been sanctioned by the united front before it was taken; in particular he was opposed to the amalgamation of the communist forces with the KMT forces. And as early as May 1937 he wrote:

"It is a law proved in China's history that, because of its economic and political flabbiness, the Chinese bourgeoisie which can take part in fighting imperialism and feudalism in certain circumstances will vacillate and turn traitor in others. History has therefore decided that China's anti-imperialist and anti-feudal bourgeois-democratic revolution can be completed not under the leadership of the bourgeois, but only under the leadership of the proletariat.'

"In other words, no matter how weak the CCP and its army were, they must not concede the leadership in the Resistance War to the KMT, even if it was only on paper, for they were, according to Mao, the only resolute fighters against the Japanese; nor must they repeat the mistake of the 'bloc within' policy of the first united front of 1924-7. The arms should never be buried or handed over." -- Ch'en, ibid.

(6) "In this letter of 9 Feb 1929 [from Li Li-san to Mao and Chu Te in Juichin] Li Li-san expressed a pessimism which was then common in the ranks of the Red Army and also a fear that the ascendancy of the peasantry in the party might threaten the hegemony of the proletariat [also Trotsky's fears precisely! -- D & R] with consequences detrimental to the cause of the revolution. Li advised Chu and Mao to switch to pure [emphasis added] guerrilla warfare by dividing up their forces into small units so as to preserve their strength and to arouse the masses. Mao's reply dated 5 April showed strong disagreement with Li...and went on to explain the essence of his [emphasis in original] guerrilla warfare:

"The tactics we have worked out during the last three years in the course of the struggle are indeed different from any employed in ancient or modern times, in China or elsewhere. With our tactics, the struggles of the masses are daily expanding and no enemy, however powerful, can cope with us. Ours are guerrilla tactics...." and he went on to describe them in detail.

"About Li's fear of the ascendancy of the peasantry, Mao remarked:

"...in our opinion it is...a mistake for any of our Party members to fear the development of the power of the peasants lest it become stronger than that of the workers and hence detrimental to the revolution.'

"The pattern of revolution Li Li-san followed, on the one hand, was the classical Franco-Russian pattern and its underlying theory was the orthodox Marxism; the pattern Mao followed, on the other hand, was the classical Chinese peasant war and its theoretical basis was Marxism adapted to suit the

Chinese background....So a conflict arose between them...." -- Ch'en, ibid.

"In Li Li-san's view, the 'great struggle of the proletariat is the decisive force in the winning of preliminary successes in one or more provinces. Without an upsurge of strikes of the working class, without armed insurrection in key cities, there can be no successes in one or more provinces...' He mocked at Mao's revolutionary strategy of a protracted warfare as 'boxing tactics'...."

Jerome Ch'en goes on to state that Li's proposals were accepted by the Politburo in Shanghai and that "the plan for insurrections" was drawn up.

"The orders for action arrived at Ch'angting directed to Chu Te and Mao Tse-tung, apart from whom 'there was very little opposition to the Li Li-san line. We [Mao and Chu] had no choice but to accept it.'"

Ch'en goes on to describe an initial victory (in Ch'angsha) which "the Comintern hailed as 'the commencement of a new chapter of the Chinese revolution.'" Later he says:

"If both these cities (Nanch'ang and Hankow) could have been taken by the communists within three days or a week, Chinese history would have run an entirely different course...."

The situation worsened. Li Li-san, knowing that his whole "line of thinking and of his own career" were threatened, "was playing for high stakes, with Mao, Chu, and P'eng as his pawns and Mao, Chu, and P'eng disliked his move."

When a second attack on Ch'angsha became clearly headed for disaster, "Mao persuaded his colleagues to retreat along the Hunan-Kiangsi border back to Chian and then to the south Kiangsi base. It was a momentous decision, taken without the sanction of the party centre, and it compelled Li Li-san to abandon his plan for nation-wide insurrections....

"For Mao himself, the failure strengthened his belief in 'encircling the cities with the countryside' -- a policy he did not reverse until 18 years later when in Sept 1948 he ordered Lin Piao to attack Mukden...."
-- Ch'en, ibid. [Emphasis added.]

(7) Mao was elected chairman of the Politburo at the Tsunyi Conference of January, 1935, making him the supreme leader of the CCP. Jerome Ch'en says "his election to such an important post represented a victory of the rural soviet over the urban party centre...." and he comments that "Mao, on major issues, had seldom had the majority of the party with him before the Tsunyi Conference and has never been in the minority since."
-- Ch'en, ibid.

(8) "...but equating of Mao's strategy with that of the Comintern cannot possibly be defended." -- Schram, ibid.

"....In later years, and especially after 1949, when Mao Tse-tung was in undisputed control of the Party and the state, policy may be taken as a direct expression of his views and desires. In the days when Mao was the leader of a little guerrilla band in the mountains, or even the President of the Chinese Soviet Republic in Kiangsi obliged to defer -- or at least to appear to defer -- to the orders of Moscow and of a Party leadership he did not control, his policy statements sometimes revealed and sometimes concealed his real intentions. Only one thing really interested him: that he be allowed to pursue his rural strategy based on the peasantry, rather than the line of the Comintern and of the successive leaders of the Chinese Communist Party, who placed primary emphasis on the urban proletariat and on the conquest of the cities. Apart from this, he was willing to say what he was expected to say.... [Emphasis added.]

"One thing was clear to him: The almost total destruction of the Party's urban base following the repression of 1927 left only two alternatives -- tactical mutation or defeat. From the beginning, Mao chose the tactical mutation: he set about creating an organization largely, if not totally, of peasant origin, which nonetheless called itself the party of the proletariat, and proposed to play the role attributed by Lenin to the proletariat and its party as the guiding force of the bourgeois-democratic revolution.

"Karl A. Wittfogel* points out that Stalin and his spokesmen eventually gave their full approval to this strategy -- as indeed they did. It would have been strange had they repudiated a revolutionary authority that was soon to rule over millions of people in Kiangsi at a time when victories were scarce. But it is equally true that the Central Committee under Li Li-san, and later Wang Ming, undoubtedly enjoyed the support of Moscow in its efforts to promote a more familiar strategy based on the urban proletariat and the reconquest of the cities. In a resolution of August, 1931, the Executive Committee of the Comintern affirmed the orthodox position in language of the utmost clarity:

"The hegemony of the proletariat and the victorious development of the revolution can be assured only on the condition that the Chinese Communist Party become a proletarian party not only as regards the political line, but also as regards its composition and the role of the workers in all its leading organs."

-- Schram, ibid

"While both Mao's Report of an Investigation into the Peasant Movement in Hunan and the Comintern realized the urgency of the peasant problem and

*Karl Wittfogel -- see footnote, next page

the insufficient attention given to it by the CCP, the Comintern stated: 'the class which decisively tackles this basic question and is able to give a radical answer will become the leader of the revolution...in the given situation in China the proletariat is the only class able to pursue a radical agrarian policy'; but Mao described the broad peasant masses as having 'risen to fulfil their historic mission...to overthrow the rural feudal power,' and said: 'The main force in the countryside which has always put up the bitterest fight is the poor peasants....The section on 'An Awful Mess!' and 'Very Good Indeed!' of his Report leaves an unmistakable impression that he regarded the poor peasants as the main force, 'the vanguard of revolution.'..."

-- Ch'en, ibid.

"In recent years the Report has become the focal point of the Maoism controversy between Benjamin Schwartz and Karl Wittfogel. -- Schwartz sees in the Hunan Report 'a unique trend within the Chinese Communist movement,' for it looks to the village as the key center of revolutionary action,' and 'it judges the worth of any revolutionary party by its willingness to place itself at the head of the peasantry.' He goes farther to say that the Report 'is an implicit attack on the whole Comintern line.' The Documentary History compiled by C. Brandt, B. Schwartz, and J. K. Fairbank contrasts the Marxist-Leninist view that the 'revolutionary vanguard' was the urban proletariat with Mao's view that it was the poor peasantry. In his "Stalin's Failure in China," C. Brandt remarks that over the question of revolutionary means Mao differed from Stalin in his emphasis on 'revolution by the peasants' rather than 'revolution for the peasants' and regards this as Mao's contribution to Marxism. Fairbank, too, interprets the Report to mean that the application of the communist theory to rural China's concrete realities meant that the peasantry would be the class on which revolution was founded and that 'this became the basis of "Maoism" which was the final Sinification of communism in China'....

* In the introduction to his book, "Mao and the Chinese Revolution" from which these excerpts are taken, Author Jerome Ch'en says of Karl Wittfogel: "Useful as they are, Wittfogel's views are not entirely fair and his researches are punctiliously textual rather than factual." Wittfogel happens to be the one and only Western historian Tom Kerry could find as a source for the bulletin he wrote in 1963 in an attempt to answer the analysis and massive documentation presented by the Chinese tendency. He titled his factional contribution, "Maoism: Myth and Reality" (Vol. 24, No. 31, July 1963) He claimed that "Wittfogel effectively punctures the legend [i.e., "the myth of Mao's break with Stalin"] by demonstrating that it is largely based on deliberate falsifications of historical events by Mao and the Maoists."

Unfortunately for Comrade Kerry, it is Wittfogel who is being punctured by an ever-growing number of authorities.

"[Schwartz] defines the strategy of Mao thus:

"Essentially, the Maoist strategy involves the imposition of a political party organized in accordance with Leninist principles and animated by faith in certain basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism onto a purely peasant mass basis."

"The strategy did not, in fact, take full form until 1936 and was far more complicated than hitherto realized. It was the marriage of Marxism-Leninism to the traditional pattern of the Chinese peasant revolt by which Mao has changed the entire concept of revolution in China -- perhaps also in other backward countries. As to the Hunan Report itself, Schwartz is quite right to point out that 'it does not contain the whole of the Maoist strategy since parts of the strategy represent a response to a situation which did not exist at the time'."

-- Ch'en, ibid.

"There was also the famous telegram of 30 May (1927) from Stalin to the CCP, and to Borodin and Roy, ordering them: 'Confiscate land, but do not touch the land of the military officers; check the peasants' overzealous action with the power of the Party Headquarters;...'" -- Ch'en, ibid.

Ch'en says Mao was not included among the 16 delegates to the sixth national congress of the CCP convened in Moscow in July 1928:

"The [congress] resolved that 'the present stage of the Chinese revolution is [still] bourgeois-democratic,' that 'the twin major tasks of the revolution' are by armed insurrection and by setting up a democratic dictatorship of workers' and peasants' soviets under the leadership of the proletariat, and that 'at present there is no revolutionary rising tide,' Nevertheless the resolutions added, the CCP should prepare for such a rising tide by advocating armed insurrections on a national scale in order to win over the masses and to overthrow the KMT regime when the time was ripe. On the peasant movement, the congress decided that although confiscation of landlords' holdings was necessary, it was wrong to confuse the issue by waging an intensive struggle against the rich peasants. The poor peasants were 'the basic strength of the proletariat in the villages,' whose guerrilla units should be supported and enlarged. Furthermore, the party should develop the Red Army and consolidate and expand the soviet bases. Though Mao was elected to the Central Committee, the secretaryship went to the innocuous Hsiang Chung-fa, the organization department to Chou En-lai, the labour department to Liu Shao-ch'i, and the propaganda department to Li Li-san who became the body and soul of the Politburo.

"The mistaken hypothesis of these resolutions was that the assumed progressive qualities of the urban proletariat made it the class predestined to lead the revolution, despite the fact that the CCP was becoming less and less of a workers' party...."

-- Ch'en, ibid

"...the essence of Maoism must be sought in his revolutionary practice [emphasis in original] rather than in writings, which do not always reflect accurately his own practice in so far as he had to pay lip service to Comintern orthodoxy in order to gain the freedom to follow the demands of the Chinese situation. Mao, the 'theoretical Marxist,' had a role which did not always coincide with that of Mao the 'practical Marxist.'" -- Hamza Alavi, ibid

(9) "[the proletarian revolution] would not have come into being from its agrarian bases but for the crucial role played by the Red Army and the Chinese Communist Party. Unfortunately, the mythology about the revolutionary leadership which the poor peasant is supposed to have shown right from the beginning obscures this most important feature of the Chinese revolution."

-- Hamza Alavi, ibid

(10) The youth, in the pamphlet on Vietnam, urged the National Liberation Front to go across the world to the Cuban revolution for a good example of theory and practice, forgetting, or not knowing that the Cuban revolution followed the theory and pattern of the Chinese revolution, which is right next door.

(11) "The national-democratic revolution in Asia, Africa and Latin America is an important component part of the contemporary proletarian world revolution. It has shaken the imperialists' strategic rear areas, weakened their rule in their own countries, and promoted and supported the revolution of the proletariat and other working people within these countries....

"The development and resolution of the contradiction between the oppressed nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America and the imperialists headed by the United States have a vital bearing not only on the future of the people of these areas but also on the future of the people of the whole world. This is not a regional question but a question of an overall character in the contemporary world. Its development and resolution are of key importance in promoting the development and resolution of the other basic contradictions....

"Since the October Revolution, the national-liberation movement has ceased to belong to the category of the bourgeois world revolution, but belongs to that of the proletarian world revolution, of which it forms a part. Lenin said,

"...the socialist revolution will not be solely, or chiefly, a struggle of the revolutionary proletarians in each country against their bourgeoisie -- no, it will be a struggle of all the imperialism-oppressed colonies and countries, of all dependent countries against international imperialism."

"He also said that the proletariat in the imperialist countries 'will

not be victorious without the aid of the toiling masses of all the oppressed colonial peoples, and primarily of the Eastern peoples."

-- Speech delivered by Peng Chen, head of the delegation of the CCP, at the Aliarcham Academy of Social Sciences in Indonesia, May 25, 1965 (Peking Review, 6/11/65)

While Sukarno and the Indonesian national-democratic revolution moves steadily to the left, breaking loose from the imperialist orbit, nationalizing its industries and starts on the road to socialism, Trotskyists are criticizing the pro-Peking communists for not engaging in a struggle against Sukarno. In his presentation on the Khrushchev ouster at a public forum, Comrade Dobbs equated the revolutionary tasks in the Congo to those in Indonesia, stating that in the Congo the Chinese had a correct line, and in Indonesia an incorrect line. Sectarianism thus led to equating two fundamentally different situations, leading to total disorientation.

The Afro-Asian conference is of extraordinary importance in theory and practice in the forging of the united front of oppressed nations against imperialism. The Chinese are the main proponents and architects of this global task. It is of fundamental importance that the united front of oppressed nations not be poisoned by the revisionist theory of the Kremlin. Yet the Chinese regime's dual concern over revisionist influence and physical representation and the forging of the global united front of oppressed nations against imperialism is dismissed as being nothing but the narrow national interests of the so-called Chinese bureaucracy.

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