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ABERDEEN SOLIDARITY PAMPHLET No 2

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THIRD WORLDISM OR SOCIALISM

In the two decades that followed World War II, the political scene was dominated by the anti-imperialist struggles of the colonial peoples. The Chinese revolution is but the most important instance of a colonial people fighting fierce battles against a vastly superior imperialist enemy - others include Cuba, Algeria and Vitenam.

While these anti-imperialist battles raged, the metropolitan working class fought few politically significant battles against it's own rulers; in none of the industrialised countries did the proletariat rise against the bourgeoisie, to challenge it's political rule. The 1956 uprising in Hungary * (like the Kronstadt* uprising in Russia in 1921) was of political importance, but since it occurred in a country where the private ownership of the means of production had already been abolished, these did not fit into the orthodox Marxist analysis of social dynamics, and their deeper significance was ignored. It was in these circumstances that the theories of "third worldism" emerged.

The main pivots of these theories are:

1. The proletariat of the industrialised countries does not rise in revolt because it is fed the crumbs of pluder extracted from the colonial world. This deadens their revolutionary initiative. The proletariat of these countries is corrupted, and integrated into the bourgeois order.
2. The people of the colonial countries, whose labour supplies the raw materials necessary for imperialism, constitute a "world proletariat" (even if they are peasants, not engaged in industrial activity). On a world scale, they are the revolutionary class. And it is they who have risen in armed revolt against imperialism. The anti-colonial revolution is therefore the socialist revolution of our epoch.
3. The world peasantry will rise in armed struggle and surround the urban centres of the world (just as happened in China and Cuba). Evenutally, these centres will collapse through economic crisis (being cut off from the sources of raw materials, markets and manpower). The urban proletariat will at this stage join the victorious colonial peasant revolution.

* See Solidarity Pamphlets

"Hungary '56" and

"The Kronstadt Commune"

(ii)

This perhaps somewhat simplified, is what we mean when we speak of the theory of "third worldism". Like any other orthodoxy it has many variants, each claiming to be the only authentic one. However, the three points mentioned constitute the common denominator of those who subscribe to the "third worldist" ideology.

"Third Worldist" Marxism ignores the basic assumptions of Marx's analysis of society. According to Marx, a revolution is not merely a revolt against misery. It is the legitimisation of a new set of social relations, which have come into existence before the revolution, due to a new technology of production. According to Marx, it is not the revolution which produces a new society, but a new set of social relations which produces a revolution, and then allows it to develop. Thus the great English (1640) and French (1789) revolutions could only legitimise the social order which the bourgeoisie had been generating for decades.

What kind of society matured in the colonial countries prior to their independence? The industrial proletariat in these countries was almost non-existent and could play no decisive role. The struggle of the colonial people was one, primarily, of peasant revolts. Revolutions led by semi-military parties, achieved through military struggles, which have produced regimes deeply stamped by their origins. The new political structures are the images of the forms of the struggle for power: regimented, authoritarian, doctrinaire, bureaucratic. Such new regimes cannot inspire the millions in modern industrialised countries. Every revolution in an under-developed country has produced the absolute rule of a political or military bureaucracy. Even when tolerated by their own populations (frequently after the incarceration or execution of all opposition - the left included), these regimes cannot serve as a model, or as a desirable goal, to broad layers of the population in a modern industrial society.

This does not mean that the revolutions were meaningless. Where thousands die of hunger, it is irrelevant to complain about lack of democracy. If the Chinese, Cuban or Algerian revolutions did no more than lessen the misery prevailing in the colonial countries, they would have been worthwhile. In fact, they have done more than fill bellies, they have abolished illiteracy, abolished private land-ownership, commenced industrialisation, etc. But none of this can be considered, either implicitly or explicitly, to have anything to do with socialism, the advanced countries have produced much more than this, and still we criticise them without mercy. Socialism is about a fundamental change in the relations of production: the abolition of the order-giver and order-taker relationship in the productive forces and in all aspects of social life. The third world upheavals do not produce a new kind of social order meaningful to industrial society.

Moreover, the amount of national political autonomy existing in such states is often very limited. Economic and military aid, the ubiquitous 'advisers', inheritance of particular political structures and established patterns of trade tend to leave some such states in a position of dependence on their former imperialist rulers, e.g. Algeria's relationship with France.

Where the upheaval has been more thorough, new political structures, and trade patterns are created and the country generally finds itself coming under the growing influence of other super-states. Cuban support for the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia showed how dependent Castro was on Russia's purchase of the Cuban sugar crop - the trading of principles is related to the principles of trade. Even when real "political" independence is gained, as in the case of China, principles are sacrificed to trading profits. In 1964, the Maoist Japanese C.P. sabotaged a general strike as part of its efforts to promote Sino-Japanese trade^{xx}, and two years later it became known that the Chinese were supplying the U.S. with flat and round steel vital to its military effort in Vietnam.^{xx}

Even the "economic collapse" of the metropolitan centre fails to materialise - as anyone slightly familiar with the primacy of the internal market in modern capitalism could easily have predicted. It turns out that the industrialised countries depend less on the under-developed countries than vice-versa. Not only can man-made fibres replace cotton, but cotton producing countries are very poor markets for, say, cars and computers. The modern industrialised states become less and less dependent on their former colonies, either for raw materials or for markets, than in the past. Holland loses Indonesia, Belgium loses the Congo, America is forced out of Cuba without the economies collapsing.

However, the struggles of the colonial peoples made a contribution to the revolutionary movement. That poorly-armed peasant populations could withstand the enormous forces of modern imperialism, shattered the myth of the invincible military-technological-scientific power of the West. The struggle also revealed to millions of people the brutality and racism of capitalism and drove many, especially youth and students, to come out in struggle against their own regimes. But the support of the colonial peoples against imperialism, does not, however, imply support for this or that organisation engaged in the struggle.

Our refusal to support political organisations with nationalistic, bourgeois or state-capitalist programmes is not merely a question of abiding by revolutionary moral and ideological principles. It is also a question of political solidarity. In most cases it turns out that next to the large, rich and vociferous organisations there exist small groups of militant, internationalist revolutionaries, in bitter conflict not only with imperialism but with their own nationalistic "partner". In China, for example, both Anarchists and Trotskyists were crushed in the Communist Party's path to victory. Advocates of 'realism' who grant their support according to size rather than to programme, according to objective conditions, rather than subjective consciousness, betray not only their revolutionary principles, but also those who struggle for the same principles in the countries concerned. This is the politics of those who adapt to "objective conditions" rather than of those who dare to challenge and transform them.

^{xx} See Solidarity Vo.3 No.I "A Maoist Party in Action".

^{xx} See "Rape of Vietnam" Solidarity Pamphlet No.25

(iv)

The text which forms the bulk of this pamphlet is the "Theses on the Chinese Revolution" by Cajo Brendel, originally published in Dutch by the 'Thought and Action' group, and translated into French by 'Cahiers du Communisme de Conseils' of Marseilles (from which this English translation is taken). The pamphlet is the most completely demystifying to have been produced on China, and will provide a much-needed antidote to current thinking on the third world. In spite of disagreements on incidental points, we endorse Brendel's analysis of the development of China, expounded with rigorous logic.

The introduction to the pamphlet is an altered version of an article which first appeared in SOLIDARITY (North London) Vol.6 No.3 dealing with the importance on a world scale of third world revolutions. Combined with the analysis of the most important of such revolutions, we think the pamphlet forms a complete statement of our total perspective on this question.

Aberdeen SOLIDARITY Group.

November, 1970.

Aberdeen Solidarity have also published:-

SPARTAKISM TO NATIONAL BOLSHEVISM (The K.P.D. 1918 - 24).

This pamphlet deals with the events of the German revolution and with the role played in it by the K.P.D. (German Communist Party). Questions discussed include the strength and weaknesses of the workers' councils, the ideas of the ultra-left (K.A.P.D.) and the disastrous attitude of Russia (under Lenin) towards the German Revolution in these years.

The pamphlet is complete with photographs, a map, a chronology and bibliography to help in understanding this neglected period. So far over 800 copies have been sold, and a translation into Italian is under way. The pamphlet is available, at 2/- post free, from: N.Roy, 138 Walker Road, Aberdeen.

I.

When the armies of Mao Tse Tung and of General Chu Teh crossed the Yangtse river in April 1949, the seal of defeat was set on the forces of Chiang Kai Shek. His power had collapsed and before the autumn, the Kuo Min Tung was to be driven from the mainland. The world started talking of a "victory for communism" in China.

The Koeng Tsiang Tang (the K.T.T. or the Chinese Communist Party), was however, to characterise its military victory over the Kuo Min Tung as the "victory of the national bourgeois democratic revolution" which has begun 38 years earlier. What the K.T.T. proposed - and what Mao Tse Tung considered his first task - was the "stimulation of the revolutionary process". The bourgeois revolution, according to their beliefs, would be followed by the proletarian socialist revolution. At a later stage, the "transition to communism" would be on the agenda. There is a striking resemblance between the ideas of Mao and the K.T.T. and those of Lenin and the Bolsheviks on the development of the Russian revolution.

2.

This similarity is not coincidental. In both countries the revolutions resulted from similar factors and conditions. Both countries were backward at the beginning of this century. Their relations of production and their patterns of exploitation were semi-feudal (or related to feudalism) and were predominantly based on agriculture. Their populations were largely peasant. Religious beliefs permeated both societies, reflecting the social conditions: in China Confucianism, and in Russia Greek Orthodoxy. The social reality in each country formed the basis of similarly oppressive regimes: the Tsars in Russia, and the Manchu Emperors in China.

3.

In both Russia and China the revolutions had to solve the same political and economic tasks. They had to destroy feudalism and to free the productive forces in agriculture from the fetters in which existing relations bound them. They also had to prepare a basis for industrial development. They had to destroy absolutism and replace it by a form of government and by a state machine that would allow solutions to the existing economic problems. The economic and political problems were those of a bourgeois revolution; that is, of a revolution that was to make capitalism the dominant mode of production.

4.

The Development Plan issued by the K.T.T. in the autumn of 1949 confirmed all this. It challenged Chinese social traditions, based on family ties and on local and regional government. It advocated agrarian reform through the introduction of more modern methods of production and by the extension of the area under cultivation. The K.T.T. wanted to harness China's immense resources of human labour power and by extending

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and improving the educational system, to prepare the population for the role assigned to them in a society undergoing industrialisation. China's new rulers wanted a modern road network to bring the areas producing materials into closer contact with the urban industrial centres. According to the K.T.T., the primary task was the creation of modern industry. Mao's programme for the period to follow the "taking of power" was essentially the programme of triumphant capitalism.

CLASS RELATIONSHIPS IN THE CHINESE REVOLUTION.

5.

The economic and political problems of the bourgeois revolution were, generally speaking, ready to be tackled in France in 1789. There were, however, enormous differences between the bourgeois revolutions in China and Russia on one hand; and that in France on the other. And it is precisely in those areas where the Russian and Chinese revolutions of this century differ from the French revolution, that they resemble one another. In France, the bourgeois revolution of 1789 took a classical form - the form of a struggle of the bourgeoisie against the ruling classes of a pre-bourgeois period. But neither in China nor in Russia was there a bourgeoisie capable of understanding or conducting such a struggle. The characteristic feature of the revolutions in both countries is that they were bourgeois revolutions in which classes other than the bourgeoisie occupied the role played, in the 18th century, by the bourgeoisie in France.

These fairly unusual relationships were to form the basis of Bolshevism in both Russia and China. Bolshevism did not occur in China, because Mao Tse Tung and his co-thinkers were Bolsheviks, but because conditions in China were similar to those in Russia which originally created Bolshevism. In neither Russia nor China could capitalism triumph, except in its Bolshevik form.

6.

In both China and Russia feudalism (or its equivalent) had persisted until fairly recent times as a result of the stagnation of agrarian development. In both countries capitalism arose out of what might be called external needs. With it an embryonic bourgeoisie and an embryonic proletariat developed. In Russia, capitalism arose as a result of the economic needs of Tsarist militarism. Industrialisation began in Petrograd, in Moscow, in the coal-bearing Donetz basin and around the oil-fields of Baku. In China the same process occurred in the major ports of Shanghai, Canton and Nanking. In China however, the proletariat formed an even smaller percentage of the population than in Russia. Despite the many similarities, this fact was to result in great differences between the revolutions in the two countries.

7.

The "bourgeoisie" which, in China and Russia, developed alongside the process of industrialisation in no way resembled the "Third Estate" which, at the onset of the French bourgeois revolution, had proudly proclaimed its right to power. The bourgeoisie in China and Russia arose as a class without any firm economic base of its own. It was supported by foreign capitalism and developed in the shadow of an absolutism which had itself made concessions to foreign capitalism. The bourgeoisie was not therefore the enemy of this absolutism. On the contrary, it sought from it political support. It was a willing ally of this absolutism - or at least it hesitated to allow its interests to clash with those of absolutism. In as much as the bourgeoisie was too weak to engage in political activity, the revolution had to develop without its help. In as much as the bourgeoisie was capable of engaging in political activity, this was not of a revolutionary kind and the revolution was to develop in opposition to the bourgeoisie.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REVOLUTIONS IN RUSSIA AND CHINA

8.

In Russia, although the working class was small, the conditions of Tsarism ensured that it was very militant. Such militancy, combined with its concentration in certain areas, allowed the Russian proletariat significantly to influence events. It played an important role in both 1905 and 1917 just as the peasants did as a result of their sheer numerical force. Russia also had an intelligensia for whom history had reserved a special role. From the ranks of the intellectuals came the cadres of professional revolutionaries of the Bolshevik Party. Lenin once said of such professional revolutionaries (and it was far truer than he realised) that they were "Jacobins bound to the masses", i.e. revolutionaries of a distinctly bourgeois type, advocating a typically bourgeois method of organisation.

These Jacobin Bolsheviks left their imprint on the Russian revolution just as - conversely - they were themselves to be influenced by the Russian events. They used the word "smytschka" to describe the needs of the revolution. The "smytschka" was class alliance between workers and peasants, classes with completely different interests but who, without mutual support, could not achieve their own aims in any permanent way. In practice, (and as a historical result), this came to mean that the Party occupied a position of authority above the two classes. This situation continued until, as a result of social development, a new class appeared, a class engendered by the post-revolutionary mode of production.

4.

9.

In China history repeated itself but in a somewhat different form. Although the Chinese revolution in general resembled the Russian, it differed from it utterly in some respects. There was, firstly, an enormous difference in tempo. Although the Chinese revolution began in 1911, in the beginning (apart from some important events in 1913, 1915 and 1916) it only marked time. At its onset, in contrast to what happened in Russia in 1917, the mass of the population did not enter the scene. The fall - or rather the abdication - of the Manchus was a belated echo of mass movements of bygone years such as the Tai Ping revolt and the Boxer rebellion. The abdication was not the sequel to an uprising. The "Imperial Sons of Heaven" offered China the republic on a tray. Imperial authority was not destroyed as French royalty or Russian Tsarism had been, but was bequeathed by imperial decree to Yuan Shih Kai. Yuan has been nicknamed the "Chinese Napoleon" for his unsuccessful attempt at replacing the Empire by a military dictatorship. But this is an inaccurate designation. Napoleon was the executor of the will of the bourgeois revolution, whereas Yuan Shih Kai was only the executor of the will of a bankrupt imperial household. As such Yuan Shih Kai proved an obstacle to the development of the revolution.

Yuan cannot be compared to Bonaparte but is perhaps more like Kornilov, the Russian general who, at the end of the summer of 1917, prepared a counter revolutionary coup. When faced with this danger the Bolsheviks called for resistance and the Petrograd workers intervened on the side of the revolution. Nothing similar could have occurred in China, where the working class, small as it was, was too weak even to contemplate such action. The progress of the Chinese bourgeois revolution was therefore slowed down.

10.

In China historical necessity had thrown up no Jacobins to oppose Yuan Shih Kai; what did exist was a petit bourgeois intelligentsia - radical and republican. Their radicalism was, however, relative in the extreme and only discernible in relation to the reactionary Chinese bourgeoisie who flirted with both Yuan Shih Kai and the empire. This bourgeoisie was represented by Sun Yat Sen, who followed in the footsteps of Confucius in advocating class reconciliation. Sun Yat Sen sought a compromise between ancient China and a modern (i.e. bourgeois) republic.

Such illusions certainly could not stimulate revolutionary attitudes. They explain why Sun Yat Sen capitulated without resistance to Yuan Shih Kai, when for a short time after 1911 he found himself in the foreground of events. Yuan Shih Kai's lack of success was due primarily to the forces of separatism and decentralisation, which had rendered impossible the continued existence of the Manchu monarchy and had seriously impeded the maintenance of the former power structures even under a modified form.

11.

China in 1911 did not become a national bourgeois state as France, Germany or Italy had become after their respective bourgeois revolutions. Consequently China fell prey to a handful of generals such as Sun Chuan Fang and Feng Yu Hsiang who fought each other for over a decade, whereas in Russia, generals such as Denikin, Kolchak and Wrangel only entered the scene after the revolution in 1917. In Russia, the generals fought the peasants, the workers and the Bolsheviks; in China, the generals fought to prevent events like these that had taken place in Russia in 1917 before there was any chance of their occurrence. They attempted not to erase events, but to preclude them by extending their power over the greater part of China. But all of them failed. It was not until the late twenties that Chiang Kai Shek succeeded; at a time when the revolution had entered a new phase.

Chiang Kai Shek was unlike the other generals; he was not a feudal war-lord, nor did he represent the well-to-do peasants. He was the general of the Chinese "Girondins", the general of the Kuo Min Tang. His party had been forced into revolutionary activity for a short period by the pressure of the masses, now beginning to play an active part in events. After marking time for a quarter of a century, the Chinese revolution had reached the stage which the Russian revolution had reached in February 1917, despite the still very different social conditions in the two countries.

THE PARTIES IN THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

12.

The Kuo Min Tang (the National Party of China) is the oldest party to have played a role in the Chinese revolution. It was the heir of the Tung Min Wuo ("United Front of Revolutionaries") which itself continued the traditions of the "China Awakes" secret society. This was formed outside China by Sun Yat Sen in 1894 with the support of emigre petty traders. The base of this group remained tradesmen and intellectuals but it also comprised many soldiers and officials with careerist notions. It also gained support from the ranks of the Chinese bourgeoisie, still in it's infancy.

13.

The outlook of the K.M.T. was as vague as it's heterogeneous composition might lead one to expect. It failed to realise that, as in all bourgeois revolutions the development of China's economy depended on an agrarian reform, and on the freeing of the peasantry from feudal forms of ownership. The confusion was inevitable for this freeing of the peasantry was inseparably connected with the breakdown of traditional Chinese family relationships. These relationships were an integral part of the future China envisaged by Sun Yat Sen and the K.M.T.

The K.M.T. were republican nationalists and the logical consequence of nationalism was a struggle against imperialism. But this was impossible for a party whose bourgeois supporters were so strongly linked to that very imperialism. So confused were Sun Yat Sen's ideas that he seriously believed that China could be unified and strong under a central power supported by foreign capital. He failed to realise that such foreign capital benefited most from China's weakness. The main feature of the ideas of Sun Yat Sen and the K.M.T. was, however, their notion of a general reconciliation between classes. This unrealistic ideal incontestably corresponded to the fact that the K.M.T. was the political expression of basically antagonistic interests.

14.

It was only in the early twenties, when the Chinese people took action to defend themselves against an oppressive imperialism, that the K.M.T. moved to the left. The Party was reorganised and Sun Yat Sen drew up a programme for it which for the first time recognised the agrarian problem as basic to the development of Chinese society. The programme was, however, so obscured by Confucian terms that the left and right wings of the Party could interpret it as they chose.

Despite this, the K.M.T. was driven by events for a while to fight imperialism and the forces of reaction which has remained as strong as they had been in 1911. For a time it seemed as if a form of "Jacobin democracy" would appear within the Nationalist Party. The revolution gained momentum but this only exacerbated the contradictions between the various social groups which composed the K.M.T. As the revolution moved forward, all that was reactionary within China arose against it.

15.

The Koeng Tsiang Tang (the Chinese Bolshevik Party) emerged in the years 1920 - 21 for much the same reasons as the Russian Bolshevik Party had been formed twenty years earlier. As the Chinese bourgeoisie was failing in its own mission, the workers and the peasants became the fighting force of the revolution. Because it was a bourgeois revolution and not a proletarian revolution that was the order of the day, the organisation formed in the struggle - in the wake of the shortcomings of the K.M.T. - proved to be of bourgeois type: a party. The party was created on Leninist lines, under similar conditions to those which had given rise to the Bolshevik Party in Russia. Its internal structure and its social and political ideas corresponded to these material circumstances.

I6.

The Chinese scholar Chen Tu Hsiu who founded the K.T.T. made of it a faithful copy of the Russian Bolshevik Party. This was confirmed by Mao Tse Tung himself when, in a speech on the occasion of the 28th anniversary of the K.T.T. in June 1949, he said, "It was through the pre-October practices of the Russians that the Chinese discovered Marxism. Before the October Revolution, the Chinese were not only ignorant of Lenin but also of Marx and Engels. The salvos of the October Revolution brought us Marxism-Leninism." The Chinese concluded from this that "it was necessary for us to follow the way of the Russians."

This conclusion was correct, but only because "Marxism-Leninism" has nothing in common with Marxism, other than terminology. Marxism was the theoretical expression of class relationships within capitalism. Leninism is a transformation of social - democratic ideas to fit particular Russian conditions. And these conditions were to shape Bolshevism more than did the social-democratic ideas. If Leninism had been Marxism, the Chinese would have had nothing to do with it, and what Mao said of other western theories could have been applied to Leninism itself, namely: "the Chinese have learned much from the West but nothing of any practical use."

I7.

Although the K.T.T. could borrow its structure from the Russian Bolshevik Party as a result of the similarity between conditions in the two countries, these conditions were not identical. It was therefore necessary to modify Leninism to fit Chinese conditions just as Lenin had previously changed western ideas to fit the Russian situation. As the situation in China resembled that in Russia more closely than Russian conditions resembled those of western Europe, the alterations made were less drastic.

Undoubted changes were made, however, and Chinese Bolshevism while remaining Bolshevism, was to reflect a much stronger peasant influence than did the Russian variety. This adaption to more primitive conditions was not consciously undertaken but occurred under the pressure of reality. The visible influence of this pressure was the total renewal of the Party in 1927. As long as it had remained a faithful copy of the Russian model, the K.T.T. had been completely impotent in the maelstrom of the Chinese revolution, but once it identified more closely with the peasant masses, it became an important factor. This explains why Chen Tu Hsiu was expelled in 1927, at the time of the "renewal of the cadres". The "rebels in the countryside" were joining in large numbers. Chen Tu Hsiu the Marxist scholar, was replaced by Mao Tse Tung, the peasant's son from Honan.

18.

A third party to appear in the Chinese revolution was the Democratic League. Founded in 1941, the League sought to act as a buffer between the K.M.T. and the K.T.T. In the journal Ta Kun Pao (January 21, 1947) close contacts of the League defined its activities as "conducting propaganda for democracy and acting as intermediaries between the K.M.T. and the Bolsheviks with a view to achieving national unity". Elsewhere the League defines itself as being directed towards the end of civil war and towards peace".

The League sought to reconcile the irreconcilable. The compromise put forward (the League themselves used the word "compromise") was an attempt similar to the one made by Sun Yat Sen in 1912 when he gave way to Yuan Shih Kai "to avert a civil war". But in 1912, the revolution once begun, civil war was inevitable. All attempts to compromise at that stage or later in history, only had one result: an intensification of the civil war.

19.

It has been said of the Democratic League, founded by the coalition of various groups and small parties, that most of its supporters were academics or students and that they used the word "democracy" much as it is used in the West, namely to mean the rule of the bourgeoisie. What is true in this characterisation is that these scholars were the heirs to the Mandarins who had ruled China for over 3,000 years, but what they had learned from western bourgeois democrats was but a thin veneer over their basic Confucian philosophy. The basic feature of this philosophy is its concern for "peace" and the avoidance of class struggle. The Mandarins of the League maintained close economic and family ties with the uppermost stratum of Chinese society. This social layer had one foot in bourgeois society but also maintained feudal interests.

This social background was eloquently expressed in the politics of the League; despite its outwardly severe critique of the K.M.T., its practical actions were confined to attempts at reforming the K.M.T. Such attempts were fruitless. The "faults" of the K.M.T. could not have been eliminated without eliminating the social circumstances which had given rise to both the K.M.T. and the Democratic League.

20.

Peace in China could not have been achieved by the compromises suggested by the League but only by pursuing the civil war to its conclusion. The League never abandoned its pacific policies but reality forced it eventually to modify them. Hesitatingly, reluctantly and too late in the day, even on their own admission, the League declared war on Chiang Kai Shek whom they considered to be politically short-sighted. At this time Chiang Kai Shek returned to his policy of destroying the advocates of

policies of compromise which he relaxed during the war with Japan. The Democratic League, caught between the left and the right, was crushed by the unfurling of events and disappeared.

THE CHINESE KERENSKY AND THE PEASANTS.

21.

In the years 1927 to 1947, the Chinese revolution underwent a second period of stagnation. During this period the K.M.T. was in power, having separated itself from its youth and its own Jacobin wing. This was the Girondin period which had begun with the defeat of Sun Yat Sen and of the left.

In the spring of 1927 social antagonisms brought about a political crisis and a subsequent split in the party. In the April of that year there were two K.M.T. governments; a left wing one at Wu Han and a right wing one at Nanking. The differences between them were not great, for the Wu Han regime itself was to keep its distance from the peasantry, now becoming active. The Nanking regime reacted in the same way. There was no difference between the agrarian policies of the two regimes.

When the peasant movement in Honan took on the appearance of a mass revolt, Tan Ping San, the Minister of Agriculture at Wu Han, travelled to the province to "prevent excesses" (in other words to suppress the revolt). But Tan Ping San was a Bolshevik and a member of the K.T.T. (then working in close collaboration with the K.M.T.). Chen Tu Hsiu, then still Party Leader reasoned as follows; "An agrarian policy which is too radical would create a contradiction between the army and the government in which the K.T.T. is participating. The majority of army officers come from a background of small landowners who would be the first people to suffer in an agrarian reform."

This is yet another example of why it proved necessary to renew the ranks of the Bolshevik Party with peasants. It was clear, moreover, that the Wu Han administration stood between the peasant revolts and the Nanking government, and that, because of its petit-bourgeois base, it did not take its flirtation with Jacobinism too seriously. As a result, it was forced to surrender to Nanking at the beginning of 1928, leaving Chiang Kai Shek master of the situation.

22.

Although the Nanking government of Chiang proved victorious in the critical year of 1927, working class revolts had to be put down in Shanghai and Canton. It is claimed by some that these uprisings were attempts by the Chinese proletariat to influence events in a revolutionary direction. This could not have been the case. Twenty-two years after the massacres in these two towns, the Chinese Ministry of Social Affairs announced that

in China there were fourteen industrial towns and just over a million industrial workers in a population of between four and five hundred millions i.e. industrial workers comprised less than 0.25% of the population. In 1927 this figure must have been still lower.

With the proletariat insignificant as a class in 1949, it seems unlikely that they could have engaged in revolutionary class activity twenty-two years earlier. The Shanghai revolt of March 1927 was a popular uprising whose aim was to support Chiang Kai Shek's Northern Expedition. The workers only played a significant role in it because Shanghai was China's most industrialised town, where one third of the Chinese proletariat happened to live. The uprising was "radical-democratic" rather than proletarian in nature and was bloodily quelled by Chiang Kai Shek because he scorned Jacobinism, not because he feared the proletariat. The so-called "Canton Commune" was no more than an adventure provoked by the Bolsheviks in attempt to bring off what they had already failed to achieve in Wu Han.

The Canton uprising of December 1927 had no political perspective and expressed proletarian resistance no more than the K.T.T. expressed proletarian aspirations. Borodin, the Government's Russian adviser said that he had come to China to fight for an idea; it was for similar political ideas that the K.T.T. sacrificed the workers of Canton. These workers never challenged Chiang Kai Shek and the right wing of the K.M.T., the only serious, systematic and sustained challenge came from the peasantry.

After his victory Chiang Kai Shek found himself master of a country in which the insoluble contradictions of the traditional social system had produced social chaos. The Nanking government saw before it the task of reorganising China but it was impossible to turn the clock back.

Chiang Kai Shek was obliged to embark on new roads and was ready to do so. He dreamt of being, if not the Jacobin, at least the Girondin reformer of China, just as Kerensky had dreamt of being the great reformer in the Russian Revolution. Kerensky, like a comic opera hero, had strutted across the Russian political scene between February and October 1917, believing he could dominate events whereas in fact, it was events that were carrying him forward.

Chiang Kai Shek can be compared to Kerensky in several ways: neither had much criticism to make of imperialism: both were faced with agrarian problems which resulted in the basic instability of their regimes; both became puppets of reaction as a result of their own ideals. Kerensky's "socialist" beliefs (the word can be interpreted in many ways!) led him to become the ally and friend of many of the most reactionary elements in Russia. Chiang Kai Shek who, as a cadet in the military academy, had dreamt of "renewing China with his sword" in his own lifetime, eventually became a member of a group of whom T. V. Soong was the most typical member.

But the wealth of Soong^{*} and other large financiers presupposes both a form of commercial imperialism and the mass poverty of the Chinese peasantry. Kerensky's policies were similarly dictated by the social position of his friends such as Nekressov, a position based on the poverty of the Russian peasantry. While Kerensky's government in Russia lasted only a few months, the Chinese "Kerensky" period of the K.M.T. lasted until World War II.

24.

Although the accession to power of Chiang Kai Shek impeded the progress of the bourgeois revolution, the revolution had already begun and the main revolutionary force, the mass of the peasantry, continued to press forward. In the early thirties, scarcely three years after the country had been "pacified", there was a series of peasant insurrections. These involved the K.M.T. armies and revolutionaries - the peasantry who had been continually oppressed and cheated and were now being driven to extremes of desperation.

Wherever the masses took action, they undertook a general partition of the land. This partition was so radical in the province of Kiangsi that the K.M.T. were forced to legitimise it when they "pacified" the rebellious area in 1934, although such land reform was scarcely in accord with their general policy. Chiang Kai Shek had declared, it is true, that he intended to regulate land ownership so that each could have his share; but, outside Kiangsi where the partition was imposed by peasants themselves, no such reforms took place.

The K.M.T. claimed that co-operatives would improve the living standards of their participants and, although the number of such co-operatives rose from 5,000 to 15,000 between 1933 and 1936, they only in fact served the interests of the landowners. The Swedish anthropologist Jan Myrdal, who lived for a time in a country village in Shansi, recorded that the peasants themselves had told him that the credit system brought them further into poverty. Their debts to the landlords increased and the troops of the K.M.T. enforced payment. Such conditions, as recorded by Myrdal, lend weight to the assertion that the revolution which smouldered throughout the thirties to explode in the forties was overwhelmingly a peasant revolution.

25.

The Nanking government under Chiang Kai Shek completely failed to resolve China's most urgent agrarian problem. Their incapacity in this field stemmed from the close links between the K.M.T. and those sections of Chinese society whose interests most favoured the maintenance of the traditional system. The overt and direct oppression of the peasantry under this system was of a distinctly pre-bourgeois nature and showed that remnants of feudalism were still in existence.

^{*} In fact Chiang's father-in-law.

Here can be found the source of the increasing corruption within the K.M.T: such corruption was not the result of personal characteristics of the K.M.T. leaders but of the social system itself. The K.M.T. was not corrupted because it sought support from the propertied classes but by the fact it was based on such classes. This corruption greatly exacerbated the social problems of China. The Nanking government and the parasitical classes which it represented held back development and tended to destroy China's economy.

But once this economy was challenged, the government itself was doomed. After twenty years of tentative attempts, the peasant masses at last discovered how to unite in a revolutionary force. It was not the working class, still very weak, which brought about the downfall of Chiang Kai Shek, but the peasant masses organised under primitive democracy into guerilla armies. This demonstrates another fundamental difference between the Chinese and Russian revolutions. In the latter the workers were at the head of events at Petrograd, Moscow and Kronstadt and the revolution progressed outward from the towns into the countryside. In China the opposite was the case. The revolution moved from rural to urban areas. When Kerensky called upon the army to help him against revolutionary Petrograd his soldiers fraternised with the Bolsheviks. But when the armies of Mao Tse Tung and Lin Piao approached the Yang Tse river, the soldiers of the K.M.T. deserted en masse. There was no question of a defence of Nanking or of the China of Chiang Kai Shek. The spectre of feudalism was driven out of China and capitalism was bloodily born there, the result of a social caesarian section carried out with the bayonets of peasant armies.

LAND PARTITION AND THE AGRARIAN REVOLUTION

26.

As a peasant revolution, the Chinese revolution showed its bourgeois character as clearly as did the Russian revolution. When the peasants began to move, Lenin and his colleagues were forced by events to abandon their ideas on the "agrarian question". They adopted the Narodnik policy based on the so-called "black partition" under the slogan of "the land to the peasants". In China the K.T.T. used a similar slogan, also borrowed from others (notably from Sun Yat Sen) and which had been similarly forced upon them by reality itself.

27.

In 1926 the two childhood friends from the of Honan, Mao Tse Tung and Liu Shao Chi both strictly followed the Party doctrine. The former wrote in a study of the old class structure in China that "the industrial proletariat is the motive force of our revolution." The latter wrote in a pamphlet that "the social and democratic revolution can only succeed under the leadership of the workers' unions."

The ink was scarcely dry, however, when the peasants of Honan challenged such opinions with an irresistible force. Deeply impressed by what he had seen during a short visit to his native province, Mao Tse Tung came to believe that it was not the workers but the peasants who would be at the forefront of the revolution. He wrote in a report that, "without the poor peasants there can be no question of a revolution". Whoever acted against the peasants attacked the revolution; their revolutionary tactics were beyond reproach.

28.

Mao Tse Tung depicted in great detail the revolutionary tactics of the peasants of Honan in a report on the revolutionary movement in that province. These tactics were used throughout China as much during the long "Kerensky period" as in 1949 and in 1953. The houses of village tyrants were invaded by crowds, their corn confiscated and their pigs slaughtered. Landowners were dressed up as clowns and paraded through the villages as prisoners; meetings were held at which the poor expressed their grievances against the rich, and tribunals were set up to try exploiters. These were the methods of struggle spontaneously developed by the Chinese peasants. In China, just as in Russia, it was not the Party which showed the way to the masses; the masses showed the way to the Party.

29.

The social changes which occurred in the Chinese countryside between 1949 and 1953 were characterised by partition of the land, the dispossession of the landowners, the breaking up of the social groups connected with them and, finally, by the destruction of the patriarchal family which was the basic production unit of traditional Chinese society. The social significance of this process was that it put an end to the old system which was in decline and seriously hindered the development towards private ownership of land (the most important means of production in China).

The result was the same in China as it had been in Russia. Those who had been landless peasants became small landowners. After four years of agrarian revolution, there were between 120 and 130 million independent peasants in China.

30.

Of the development of Russia after 1917, Karl Radek had written, "the Russian peasants have made the feudal land on which they worked until now their own property." This remains the basic fact although it can be partly concealed by various juridical fictions. The Bolshevik economist, Vargas, wrote in 1921, "the land is worked by peasants who produce almost as private owners". Radek and Vargas were absolutely correct.

The first phase of the Russian revolution produced capitalist private ownership in the countryside which naturally led to new social differentiations. A new class of agricultural labourers developed alongside a class of well-to-do peasants. Of similar developments in China Mao Tse Tung was to write in 1955; "in recent years, the spontaneous forces of capitalism* have expanded day by day in the countryside; new rich peasants* have appeared everywhere and a large number of well-to-do peasants are trying desperately to become rich. On the other hand, a large number of poor peasants still live in misery and poverty because the means of production are insufficient. Some of these poor peasants are in debt while others are selling or letting their land." Later, in the same article, Mao writes of "a group of well-to-do peasants who are developing towards capitalism*."

Partition of the land created, both in Russia and China, the conditions under which agriculture could enter the sphere of modern commodity production.

Such a system of commodity production arose in Western Europe under the form of classical capitalism. In such a system there no longer exists the closed units in which needs are fulfilled by local labour alone and in which production is geared to local consumption. A peasant no longer consumed all his own production nor produced for the satisfaction of all his own needs. Specialisation developed and the peasant began to work for the market just as industry did.

The peasant supplied industry with primary products and the non-agrarian industrial workers with food. In return industry supplied the peasant with the machinery to improve and increase production. This specialisation led to an increasing inter-dependance between agriculture and industry.

In Russia and China, this type of development also took place, but not along classical lines. Both these countries lacked a modern bourgeoisie which is the historical agent of this type of social change. The development towards capitalism in these two countries was also the development towards state capitalism. At first it might appear as if this development was the product of a supposedly "socialist" ideology. On closer inspection, however, it appears that state capitalism was not the result of such an ideology but rather that this "socialist" ideology was the consequence of the new inevitability of state capitalism.

Because state capitalism implies a restriction of "free" market mechanisms and of the traditional "freedoms" of the producer, it encountered both in China and in Russia the resistance of peasants who had just established themselves as free producers. The historical need to

overcome this resistance inevitably resulted in a Party dictatorship.

The climate of resistance among the Chinese peasantry is clearly demonstrated in an episode described in the Party's theoretical journal in 1951. Liu Shao Chi wrote;

"This young man had worked as a farm labourer for more than ten years. During this time he had suffered from bitter poverty. It was not until the victory of the revolution that he was able to marry and start a family. During the campaign for agricultural reform he was very active and was elected secretary of his village youth league. Once he had received land, however, he refused to continue working for the Party. When reproached he replied; 'All my life I've been poor. I owned no land. Now I own land I'm content. There is no need for further revolution.'"

The Party replied that the revolution had not yet ended. The revolution could not be ended until a modern, stable economy had been established without which, despite the land partition, agriculture would once again stagnate.

THE PEASANT AGAINST STATE CAPITALISM.

33.

In 1953, when the agrarian revolution was under way, that is to say after the partition of land had taken place, China saw the onset of a violent struggle between the peasants and the K.T.T. The object of this was the building of a state capitalist economy. Alongside this development there arose also increasing tensions between the workers and the government.

In these two respects, events in China in the fifties resembled events in Russia in the twenties. But events in the two countries were by no means identical: China witnessed nothing like the development of workers councils or the growth of these tendencies of self-management in the Russian factories which had forced Lenin to adopt the slogan of "All power to the soviets" despite this being in its essence, in opposition to Bolshevik ideology. Nevertheless, similarities can be seen underlying, on the one hand, the decision of the First All-Russian Congress of Councils of National Economy (in May 1918) to the effect that eventual nationalisation of the factories could only be undertaken with the consent of the Supreme Council of National Economy,* or the decree of the 10th Party Congress of March 1921 which forbade the further confiscation of enterprises,** and, on the other hand, the Chinese measures introduced in September 1949 forbidding even workers in the private sector from striking.

* See "The Bolsheviks and Workers' Control" p.43.

** ibid Pp77 et seq.

While the Russian proletariat were developing new methods of struggle, the Chinese proletariat were resorting to the classical strike weapon. But in both countries legislation was directed at the self-activity of the workers. Behind the thin facade of the so-called "dictatorship of the proletariat" could be found, in both countries, the features of capitalism.

34.

In both China and Russia there was a contradiction between the claims of the Bolshevik Party and social reality. In relation to the trade unions, this led to a "discussion" in which the truth was meticulously avoided, even when the facts were fairly clear.

In 1952, the Chinese unions were purged of officials who, it was stated, "allowed themselves to be led too much by the workers," i.e. who, "showed too much concern over the workers' living standards," or who, "proved overzealous in ensuring workers' rights." Meetings were called at which attacks were made on those who "failed to understand that, while strikes are necessary in a capitalist country, they are superfluous in a socialist state." A campaign was launched against "laxity in labour discipline" in much the same tone as Trotsky had used in Russia. General Hou Chi Chen, who had elaborated the new trade union laws, declared;

"It is no longer necessary, as it once was, to struggle for the downfall of capitalism."

In 1953, at the 7th Congress of Chinese Trade Unions, it was stated that, "The direct and selfish interests of the working class must be subordinated to those of the state."

Although in China, too, debate clouded reality, at the 1953 Congress of Trade Unions the truth was stated far more bluntly than it had ever been in Russia.

35.

That the Chinese Party could express itself more openly than its Russian counterpart was a direct result of the different situations existing in the two countries. In Russia the realities of Bolshevik ideology had to be more carefully hidden as a result of the more important role played by the working class in that country. After all, the Bolshevik regime in Russia had known a "Workers' Opposition" based on the trade union of metalworkers and an armed proletarian insurrection at Kronstadt.

No such pressures had been put upon the Chinese Bolshevik Party. As a result it had fewer compunctions in dealing with the working-class and could consequently allow itself a freer hand in coping with the peasantry. Until the early thirties, the Russian Party vacillated between the workers and the peasants, at times acting against one section while giving way to the other. From the beginning of the revolution, the Chinese Party could follow a straight line. As a result, it could

develop a stronger state capitalist policy in relation to agriculture, and moreover do so at an earlier date.

36.

From the moment of the Bolshevik victory in China the working-class was weaker than that in Russia. Agriculture was more primitive and therefore more dependent on industry. As a result, the Party had more elbow room and met with more success in its agrarian policy. In October 1953 the Party began to fight against the private capitalist tendencies which had resulted from the partition of the land. Three and a half years later, in 1957, 90% of Chinese agriculture had been organised into co-operatives. This first period of collectivisation was followed, in August 1958 by a second phase: the introduction of the Peoples' Communes. This second phase of collectivisation had only been going a few months when it encountered a massive and menacing resistance from the peasantry. In Russia the Bolsheviks had met this resistance earlier.

37.

In China, the struggle between the peasantry and the State Party reached its peak later than its corresponding struggle in Russia. As a result of China's larger number of peasants, the struggle proved more deeply rooted and more dangerous to the new state. In Russia, the ideological repercussions of this conflict did not occur until long after the peasant uprisings had been suppressed: it was not until 1925 that Bukharin issued his famous appeal to the peasants, "Enrich yourselves!" In China the order of events proved quite different. The peasant uprisings occurred in December 1958 in Honan, Hopeh, Kansu, Kiangsi and Kuangtung provinces but the ideological struggle had taken place two and a half years before, in the period between the two periods of collectivisation known as the "Hundred Flowers" period.

38.

It is quite wrong to see the resistance against the Mao regime during the "Hundred Flowers" period as a preliminary to the events of the Red Guards period of the Cultural Revolution. During the "Hundred Flowers" period it was the Party which found itself the accused, denounced for suppressing individual liberty and creating a division between itself and the people; in short of, "behaving like a new dynasty" as a spokesman of the opposition put it. The Party was being accused by people who, consciously or not, reflected the aspirations of the small agricultural producers. During the Cultural Revolution, instead of being the accused, the Party was then the prosecutor and the accusations it leveled were not the suppression of individual liberties but an over-indulgence in personal liberty. While the "Hundred Flowers" period was a struggle against the Party's state capitalist attitudes. The Cultural Revolution, as will be shown, was a conflict between the Party and the 'new class'.

In China this 'new class' developed more quickly than in Russia. One of the main reasons for this was the ability of the K.T.T. to move more quickly and more strongly towards state capitalism in the dozen years that followed its victory. In China many of the most profound social changes occurred sooner after the revolution than in Russia. As is often the case in history, what was initially a brake became a stimulus to further development.

THE PERIOD OF THE "HUNDRED FLOWERS" AND THE POLICY OF THE "THREE RED FLAGS"

39.

In the middle of January 1956, the Chinese Bolshevik Party held a conference during which it decided to change its policy with regard to scientists and writers. Chou En Lai, the Prime Minister, promised the intellectuals better treatment, admitted that a gap had developed between the Party and the intellectuals, and conceded that this could partly be blamed on Party officials. On March 21st, 1956, the "Peoples' Daily" wrote that the Party should make greater attempts than ever to rally the intellectuals back to its ranks. By "intellectuals" they were referring to the new intellectuals rather than to the old political idealists who formed the Party cadre and who belonged to the intelligentsia. At the same time open attempts were made to persuade Chinese intellectuals abroad to return home. On May 2nd, 1956, Mao Tse Tung made his famous speech in which he said:

"Let a Hundred Flowers bloom and a Hundred Schools of thought contend."

Thus began the "Hundred Flowers" period. It was pure coincidence that it began at the same time as the "thaw" in Russia or as the Polish "spring in autumn". This coincidence was to lead to a misconception that these were similar phenomena.

40.

Misunderstandings were heightened by the fact that in China, too, people used the word "spring". If, however, a comparison with this Chinese "spring" is to be sought, it will not be found in the European developments of the fifties but rather in the Russian events of early 1918. In March of that year Lenin proclaimed the need to attract people from the professions. In 1921 and in the following years of the N.E.P., relations between the Bolsheviks and the scientists and specialists steadily improved until they once more came under attack from Stalin.

In 1928, the first famous trial took place in Russia against certain engineers. The event in some ways resembled the purges of the thirties, but was in essence different. Trials also took place in China, for example that against the author Hou Fu, widely read in this period. That cases such as this occurred before even the beginning of the "Hundred Flowers" period only demonstrates how complex reality is, and how, beyond all the analogies there remain profound differences between the Chinese events and those of Russia.

41.

Despite these differences the "Hundred Flowers" period in China can be compared to the N.E.P. in Russia. Changes in economic policy took place in China during this period, namely a pause between the two periods of collectivisation. In Russia this period lasted ten years if dated from Lenin's change of policy towards the intellectuals, or seven, if dated from the formal adoption of the N.E.P. on March 21st, 1921. As a result of her backwardness, China's corresponding phase was to prove much shorter, but did not occur until six and a half years after the Bolshevik victory. The systematic building of state capitalism, for which both countries needed intellectuals, began later in China, which was a more backward country; but, once begun, the process continued at a faster tempo, as the Chinese did not need to make the detours that were forced on Lennin (see thesis 35).

42.

The period of the "Hundred Flowers" lasted only a year. While the hundred flowers were flowering and the hundred schools of thought were contending, comments of the following kind could be read in China:

"When the Communists entered the town in 1949, they were welcomed by the people with food and drink and they were regarded as liberators; now the people keep clear of the Communist Party as if its members were gods or devils. Party members behave as police agents in civilian clothing and spy on the people."

or:

"The unions have lost the support of the masses because they side with the Government at decisive moments."

To dissatisfaction such as this must be added that caused by a low standard of living and by widespread hunger. One cannot help recalling that Kollontai had said in Russia, in the early twenties, that the bars of the prison cells were the sole remaining symbols of soviet power - or how the Workers' Opposition had criticised the economic situation. But in China the working class was still weak. No workers' opposition had appeared. The reality of the situation, namely the defence of the liberty of peasant entrepreneurs against the state capitalist tendencies of the Party, was better expressed in the literary critiques of the "Hundred Flowers" period than it had been by pamphleteers during the N.E.P. In Russia this had been mixed up with a primitive proletarian critique - something which did not occur in China.

43.

The "Hundred Flowers" period was in no way related to the events in Russia or Poland after the death of Stalin. Nor was it related to the critique which began in China, in the early sixties, despite the fact that, in a number of instances the Party was the common object of these criticisms.

- In the "Hundred Flowers" period, the Party was criticised because it was state capitalist; in the sixties it was criticised despite it's state capitalist position.
- Whereas in the "Hundred Flowers" period the critics were against both state capitalism and the Party; in the sixties the critics were against Mao Tse Tung but not in the least against state capitalism.

Behind these apparent subtleties there lay important differences.

44.

In 1957 while the seed of the "Hundred Flowers" was germinating in the fertile soil of the existing social relations, the Party replied to criticism by a sharp campaign against "right deviationists" which lasted until April 1958. Then in the summer of that year, the Party announced it's policy of the "Three Red Flags" which it had been preparing for some months.

- The first "red flag" was the "general policy of socialist construction: the joint development of industry and agriculture by the simultaneous utilisation of modern and traditional productive methods.

- The second "red flag" was the "great leap forward:" the attempt vastly to increase the production of steel and power.

- The third "red flag" was the formation of "peoples communes" throughout the countryside as the second phase of agrarian collectivisation.

From this it can be seen that after the short "Hundred Flowers" period, the Party continues on it's state capitalist course more decisively than ever. China was now at the stage that Stalin's Russia had reached in 1928, eleven years after the Bolshevik revolution. China had taken nine years to reach this stage. Her development had been more rapid and the methods used more radical.

Such "progress", however, was not achieved without trouble. When towards the end of 1958, the "weapon of critique" of the "Hundred Flowers" period was discarded and the peasants took the road of a "critique by weapons", the Party had to back peddle. In December 1958, April 1959 and on several subsequent occasions the Party had to modify it's 'Communes' programme before eventually abandoning it in 1962. A similar fate met the other two "red flags". In the spring of 1962, the policy of the "Three Red Flags" was completely abandoned.

45.

History repeats itself, but in ever new forms. In Russia there was a fairly strong peasant resistance at the beginning of 1921. The Party took a step back and announced the N.E.P. only to renew it's fight against this resistance in 1928. In China phenomena similar to the N.E.P. were witnessed in 1956-7, after which the Party began a struggle against the peasants which resulted in uprisings similar to those seen in Russia

in 1921. The Chinese Party then back peddled as Lenin had in 1921. What resembled the N.E.P. in China therefore took place in two distinct periods, the "Hundred Flowers" period and the period between 1962 and 1964 when a new 'radical' course was again set. But the Chinese events of 1964 no longer resembled what happened in Russia at the end of the N.E.P. At best they resembled the second phase of a delayed N.E.P. A new conflict was then beginning, not between the Party and the peasantry, but between the Party and a 'new class'.

THE 'NEW CLASS' IN CHINA AGAINST THE K.T.T.

46.

In the early sixties China entered a new phase which the Party called the "Great Socialist Cultural Revolution". In a three volume work published in the autumn of 1966, it was stated that, "The victory of the socialist revolution does not mean the end to a class society or to the class struggle." The authors went on to say that after the proletariat had established its power through a political victory, there were other struggles to be fought; in the fields of culture, literature, art, philosophy, life-style and everyday conduct. It was because of this that China had been involved in inter-class struggle on the cultural front since 1949.

This is a typical example of Bolshevik mystification: there had not been a socialist revolution and power was not in the hands of the proletariat. Instead there had been a bourgeois revolution which, as a result of specific historical circumstances, had been carried out by the peasantry. It had taken the form of state capitalism and had subsequently evolved a very unusual ideology. This ideology required a presentation of the facts in such a manner as to imply that, from the outset, the capitalist nature of the revolution had rapidly become socialist. This sleight of hand boils down to the fact in China, as in Russia, state capitalism is presented as 'socialism' and the power of the Party as "the dictatorship of the proletariat".

The new ideology also develops the false idea that, after its allegedly political victory, the working class has yet other victories to win. But the real power of the working class, as of any other class, does not lie in political institutions but is of a social nature. It implies above all a revolution in the relations of production, associated with a revolution in all other relationships. In China, the relations of production changed. Feudalism was replaced by capitalism. As earlier in Europe, one system of exploitation was replaced by another. As long as revolutions in relations of production only result in one form of exploitation replacing another, they will result in the emergence of institutionalised political power. When a change in the relations of production does away with exploitation, political power will cease to exist. One cannot speak of political domination by the proletariat where the proletariat is still exploited. Once the proletariat frees itself, all forms of exploitation and of class domination will cease.

The concept according to which the 'political power of the proletariat must be used to win victory in the cultural field' is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the link between relations of production on the one hand, and political and cultural relations on the other. These wrong ideas arose from the fact that the respective roles of the social and economic infrastructure of society and of its political and cultural superstructure were reversed.

Cultural and economic changes are not brought about by the instrument of politics, but where economic systems are being transformed, cultural and political changes are bound to occur. The "Great Socialist Cultural Revolution" had nothing to do with socialism nor was it in any real sense a revolution.

47.

What the K.T.T. labelled as a "cultural revolution" led, in late 1966 and in early 1967, to violence on such a wide scale, that the world spoke of a 'civil war'. It should not be thought, however, that these are mutually contradictory categories. Cultural developments, historically, have often been violent. In our opinion, there is a direct link between the conflicts expressed in art and literature in the early sixties, and the violence which broke out in later years. The Chinese scholars and literary critics fought for essentially the same things as were later to be fought for physically. As so often in history, and as has previously been seen in Chinese history itself (see thesis 44), an ideological struggle preceded an armed struggle.

It was no coincidence that the work already mentioned on the "cultural revolution" dealt only with literature. The K.T.T. were not wrong in emphasising the relationship between the struggle of the Red Guards and the earlier literary struggle. They were wrong, however, in their distorted view of that relationship. The struggle of the Red Guards did not have a cultural objective. The opposite was the case. The cultural struggle expressed conflicting social interests. The Chinese Bolsheviks failed to appreciate the opposing social interests precisely because they were Bolsheviks and limited by Bolshevik ideology. They described the conflicts of 1966 -67 as "cultural" instead of explaining these conflicts in the field of culture as stemming from antagonistic social interests.

48.

The French review 'Le Contrat Social' (edited by the Institute of Social History in Paris), called the "Great Socialist Cultural Revolution" a "pseudo-cultural pseudo-revolution". This might appear to coincide with our viewpoint. We have said it was wrong to explain social conflicts through cultural mechanisms. We have said that there was no 'revolution' at this period. This is true, but the writer in the French review meant something else. By "pseudo-cultural", the French review meant anti-cultural, and by "pseudo-revolution" it meant counter-revolution. But in China during the sixties, there was neither a revolution nor a counter-revolution, neither physical nor literary. What happened was a conflict between the 'new class' and the Party just as occurred in Russia after

Stalin's death.

But there is an important and specific difference between the parallel developments in China and in Russia. In Russia there was the same upheaval but the defenders of the traditional type of Party were labelled 'anti-party', and the 'new class' won it's victory easily and almost without violence. In China, where the Party was much stronger for historical reasons, (see thesis 35 & 41) the 'new class' experienced more resistance and violence erupted. If, in the fifties, Molotov and those around him had succeeded in mobilising the Army against the Mikoyan faction, developments in Russia might have shown more resemblance to those in China.

49.

The agitation of the Red Guards was no more than a reaction against an earlier action by the 'new class'. To grasp this, one need only study the literary conflict that took place in the early sixties. Despite the fact that it was couched in literary terms, the true social nature of this conflict became clearly visible in January 1961, after the author Wu Han had published his novel, "Hai Jui Dismissed from Office" (Peking 'Arts and Literature' edition).

Although this dramatic story was to be severely criticised by the official press several years later, the same author in 1961 published "Three Family Village" in collaboration with Teng To and Liao Mo Sha. Between January and August, Teng To began a regular column entitled "Evening Tales from Jenchan" in a Chinese paper. These were short contemplations in the classical Chinese style and apparently dealt with former periods of Chinese cultural prosperity. The allegorical nature of these articles is, however, transparently obvious and within the framework of depicting the Ming dynasty or the vagaries of Imperial philosophy, he was describing the contemporary Peoples' Republic of Mao Tse Tung and the K.T.T. and aiming his blows against the Party dictatorship.

Teng To was undoubtedly the most brilliant of Mao's critics and his works contain constant attacks on political fanaticism and persecution because of the disastrous affects they have on harmonious social and economic development. In his column "Evening Tales of Jenchan" dated April 30th, 1961, Teng To further clarifies his position. The article is on "the theory of the precious nature of labour power" and Teng To makes it clear that he considers the wasteful use of so 'precious' a commodity to be harmful to production. By such criticism, Teng To distinguishes himself from the critics of the "Hundred Flowers" period. He appears as something which previous critics were not, namely as the spokesman for a group with an undoubted interest in production. When in his 'Evening Tales' of April 22nd 1962, Teng To asks if one can base oneself on theory alone and tells the Party bureaucrats that 'people can't do things all alone' one must see it in the light of the 'new class' staking a claim to being heard and listened to.

24.

50.

The Party's tame critics claimed that writers such as Wu Han and Teng To "wanted to restore capitalism" in China. Such an accusation slots into the jargon of Bolshevik ideology but is patently absurd. Capitalism, being the existing economic system, there was no need to "restore" it. What was, at most possible was that some Chinese preferred traditional liberal capitalism to the state capitalism variant which existed in China.

Who then were the critics? Classical capitalism had made little headway in China and the embryonic classical bourgeoisie had been destroyed or exiled in the late forties. Its residual representatives are to-day to be found in Formosa or elsewhere. In the unlikely event that there are people in China who favour a return to the social relations of classical private capitalism, Teng To, Liao Mo Sha and Wu Han are not amongst them. While their enemies within the Party constantly publish long attacks on the works of these writers to prove their hostility to the current regime, nowhere in their works does any hostility appear towards the system of state capitalism. It is true that "Three Family Village" (the joint work of these three pilloried authors) contains a semi-cryptic attack on the "peoples communes", but these criticisms are neither of state capitalism nor of the Party, which was in fact itself now abandoning the "communes" policy.

In "Three Family Village", Teng To criticises Mao's famous phrase, "the east wind is stronger than the west wind" and Mao's characterisation of imperialism as a 'paper tiger'. Teng To's criticisms spring from his standpoint as a realist. When in his 'Evening Tales', he attacks the K.T.T.'s general policy as being based on illusions, he is echoing his criticisms of the Peoples' Communes. In both instances he is expressing his preference for efficiency. Teng To does not treat history daintily and he attacks political idealists like Mao, who try to channel the process of social development according to their own political wishes. In other words, Teng To and his fellow writers are not opposed to state capitalism, they are only opposed to the Party.

51.

The story of Wu Han's novel, "Hai Jui Dismissed from Office", concerns a Party official who, despite his honesty, is sacked from his post because of divergent ideas. It is probable, as suggested by the author's critics within the Party, that the novel alludes to those who were expelled from, and persecuted by, the Party after the Lushan conference in 1959. The conclusion drawn by the critics was, however, that Wu Han was defending "right-wing opportunists". This relapse into the traditional jargon tells us nothing either about Hai Jui or about those expelled from the Party. The Party pen-pushers could only monotonously reiterate that the writers wanted to 'restore capitalism'.

If, however, nothing can be learned about Hai Jui, or about his creator Wu Han, from the criticisms of his detractors, much can be learned from the author's articles and letters, which appeared after the publication of his book. Wu Han wrote continually that his hero was among those who did practical work and kept in close touch with reality. Teng To expresses a similar preference for reality when he wrote in his "Evening Tales" column, that "those who believed that they could learn without a

teacher would learn nothing." The 'teacher' referred to by Teng To throughout his work is historical reality, the actual development of the productive process. It is precisely this type of criticism that identifies Wu Han and Teng To as spokesmen of the 'new class'.

52.

In China, the "Great Socialist Cultural Revolution" was nothing more than an attempted self-defence by the Party against the increasing pressure of the 'new class'. Against the literary attacks of Teng To, Liao Mo Sha, Wu Han and others, the Party at first used purely literary weapons. The 'Thoughts of Chairman Mao' were published in the famous "little red book", in which are contained Mao's pronouncements on art and literature uttered at Yen-an, in May 1942. When Mao said, in the forties, that, "writers must place themselves on the Party platform and must conform to Party policies", he meant something rather different than the use that was to be made of this phrase some twenty years later.

When the 'new class' changed its weapons, the Party followed suit. The literary conflict between the 'new class' and the Party developed into a physical struggle. The stake in this struggle was just as obvious as in the previous literary phase. But there was a difference. Reality could be ignored on paper; in real life it could not. The 'new class' in China was a product of social development, just as it had been in Russia, and as such, the Party felt obliged to defend it. This explains why, at a certain stage, Lin Piao had to hold back the Red Guards and why Mao Tse Tung himself had to call a halt to the "Cultural Revolution". What was at stake then was neither literature nor cultural affairs, but production and the Chinese economy.

THE K.T.T. AGAINST THE 'NEW CLASS'

53.

Information, both official and semi-official, on recent events in China is vague, contradictory, politically distorted and incomplete. Any attempt to build a social image of Mao's opponents, against whom the violence of the "Cultural Revolution" was directed, confronts great difficulty. It is rather like the task the police undertake when it seeks to build up an 'identikit' picture from a mass of partial or incomplete testimonies. Doubtful and uncertain details must be discarded in favour of the features common to the many partial or inadequate reports. From these features can be built up a composite mental image which, while lacking specificity, nevertheless demonstrates all the general i.e. essential features. Such features provide a distinct and immediately recognisable framework. Applying this method, Mao's adversaries are found:

- to be living in large and middle sized industrial towns (Chou En Lai said at a dinner in Peking on January 14th 1967, that it was in such towns that the Party first felt obliged to move against its opponents);

- to compromise, within their ranks, high Party officials and well-known men (talk by Chou En Lai and articles in the Peking "Peoples' Daily"); and people in official positions (leader in the theoretical review, "Red Flag");
- to be attempting to gain the workers' support by wage increases, and the bestowing of social benefits, and through the distribution of food and other goods (the "Peoples' Daily" and the "Red Flag");
- to have interests closely tied to production (statement of a pro-Maoist group in Shanghai);
- to distinguish themselves from the masses through their dress and a life-style, neither proletarian nor peasant (numerous street witnesses);
- expressing opinions characterised by the Maoists as 'economistic'; these opinions reflect the atmosphere of industrial life and come into head on collision with the Maoist conception that "political work forms the basis of economic work" (the Peoples' Daily" and the "Red Flag");
- to favour a policy which would, according to the Maoists, drive a wedge between the "dictatorship of the proletariat" (i.e. the dictatorship of the Party) and the "socialist system" (i.e. state capitalism), (the "Peoples' Daily" and the "Red Flag").

From all that precedes, Mao's opponents give the impression of being a group with roots in industrial life, and including many Party officials. They have financial influence and are in a position to allocate the products of industry (both food and other commodities). They have the power to grant wage increases and other social advantages. They can therefore be characterised as managers.

The clearer the picture of Mao's opponents becomes, the more readily are they identifiable as the 'new class'. The real social differences between them and the Party corresponds exactly to the theoretical differences between Wu Han and Teng To on the one hand, and the Party on the other. It is no coincidence that, in the early sixties, Wu Han was not only an author but also assistant mayor of the large industrial town of Shanghai. Neither is it a coincidence that in the mid sixties the mayor of Shanghai was one of those fighting the Party with more than a pen. Their so-called 'economism' was the atmosphere they encountered every day, in the industrial climate of Shanghai.

The intervention of the Chinese 'new class' (or managers) does as much to clarify the attitudes of their literary predecessors as a study of the latter's writing does to clarify the practical activities of the Chinese managers. The charge that the managers wanted to sever the links between the Party and the economic system shows that the managers - just like the writers - were not directing their blows against state capitalism as such, but against the power of the Party. They did not consider the two as

inseparable. They wished to destroy the stiffling influence of the Party, not to abolish state capitalism. In fact, they believed that state capitalism could only prosper, once freed of the political fetters of the doctrines of Mao Tse Tung and of the K.T.T.

55.

What the 'new class' is proposing in China is a different conception of the Party, in other words an entirely different kind of Party from that conceived of by Mao Tse Tung.

During his visit to London, Kosygin, the Russian Premier, said that the Russian government sympathised with Mao's adversaries in China. This declaration fits in perfectly with our analysis of Chinese events. It was not the "ideological conflict" with which the Russian leaders sympathised. What they identified with was the struggle of the managers of the 'new class' against the traditional Party. Their sympathy for the 'new class' stemmed from the fact that such a class had already proved victorious in Russia, personified by such manager-administrator types as Kosygin and Mckoyan.

In Russia the old style Bolshevik Party had been replaced by a Party of a new type. This gives us an insight into the objectives of the anti-Maoists in China. However, despite similarities one must constantly stress that events had developed differently and at different tempos in the two countries.

56.

In Russia, the traditional, old style Party and the 'new class' were natural enemies. This was not the case in China where, because the proletariat had always been weak, the Party had not been forced to pay as much heed to the workers as had its Russian counterpart. As a result the Chinese Party had a freer hand. Its policies were more drastic and direct (see thesis 35). It moved faster and more confidently towards state capitalism. This is why the Chinese Party differed from its Russian counterpart and why in China the borderlines between the Party and the 'new class' have been less easy to discern.

Mao's opponents are so strong, even within the Party itself, that at an Executive Conference, held early in 1967, only six of the eleven present supported Mao. In Russia, the 'new class' came to power imperceptibly, the traditional Party having proved an anachronism. In China, the rise of the 'new class' has been associated with struggle for control of the Party.

This struggle for the Party in China makes the situation more complex. Definitions such as 'old-style Party' and 'new-style Party' mean different things in the Chinese and in the Russian contexts. While the 'new class' in China is seeking to escape from the stranglehold of the Party, the Party is seeking to reform itself to ensure its continued domination over the managers. This gives rise to the totally erroneous impression that the 'cultural revolution' was directed against the Party, whereas in reality it was directed against the 'new class'. Such misunderstanding is heightened by the fact that it was Mao himself who first used the term 'new-style Party'.

What Mao meant by this phrase is the very opposite of what is represented by the 'new-style Party' in Russia, correctly seen by Mao as the instrument of the 'new class'. Mao sought to make the 'new-style Party' a barrier to the advance of the 'new class'. In Russia the 'new class' rebelled against the power of the traditional Party; in China the Maoists rose up against a Party structure in which they found their own power too circumscribed. Whereas, in Russia the development of the 'new class' was compared to the 'thaw', in China Mao wanted to prevent the occurrence of such a 'thaw'. To this end he used the Red Guards who threw China into turmoil. Yet despite the violence of this upheaval the social relations did not alter.

We have sought to analyse the social characteristics of Mao's opponents, but we hope it will be realised that every detail cannot be fitted into this analytic framework. Information leaking out of China concerning battles between Red Guards and workers for the control of several factories in Manchuria confirms, no doubt, that the 'Proletarian Cultural Revolution' was neither proletarian nor a revolution. But no one will assert, we hope, that the workers who fought Mao's Red Guards were managers or members of the 'new class'.

One does not think of the managers either, when one looks at the 1967 uprising against Mao Tse Tung in the capital city of Kiangsi province. The movement took the name 'The First of August Movement', in reference to the time, forty years earlier, when organisations were briefly formed, in that part of China, on the model of workers' councils, these had played a part in the conflict between the left and right wings of the Kue Min Tang.

Still more difficult to place is the Chinese head of state, Liu Shao Chi, who, even within the Party, had always held an independent position.

The Maoists of the 'cultural revolution' call him their enemy, but Liu himself takes care to distinguish himself from all other opponents of Mao. It is obvious that many different developments are occurring simultaneously in China. But although reality is more complex than any abstract schema, the exceptions do not contradict the rule. Whatever the forces may have been against which the Red Guards and the 'cultural revolution' were unleashed, the situation can only be understood by the appearance on the scene of the 'new class', with its own indisputable claims.

The 'new class' in China did not appear from nowhere. It was the product of the development of specific social relationships, in that country, just as previously it had developed in Russia from similar social relations. This explains two facts: firstly the endurance and obstinacy of the struggle against Mao which is continually breaking out in new places; secondly, the repeated calls to order made to the Red Guards. These phenomena are related to one another, and are both connected with the economy. Millions of Red Guards cannot be withdrawn from industry and education (i.e. from* the 'new class' without severely disorganising industrial progress. As soon as the Red Guards are directed anew to production, industrial development is stimulated, but so inevitably is the growth of the 'new class'.

From the preceding theses one can conclude that the so-called 'cultural revolution' is not another step towards state capitalism, as has been claimed. On the contrary: the struggle of the K.T.T. is directed against the very requirements of state capitalism in full development. The Chinese 'cultural revolution' was a struggle by the Party to defend itself, a struggle against the 'new class' produced by state capitalism, a struggle against attempts to adapt the political apparatus to the reality of social conditions. It cannot be predicted what forces either the Party or the 'new class' will be able to mobilise. Even in China no one can prognosticate on this matter. But in the final analysis this is not the issue. How many times the Party can still win is not fundamental. What is important is whether it will be the managers or the political bureaucrats who will wield power in the conditions of state capitalism. This can be predicted, outwith the pressures and balances of the moment. In the social, historical and economic framework of state capitalism, the ultimate victory of the 'new class' is the only logical perspective.

* Should read:-- '(i.e. from the preparation of the industry of the future) and be mobilised against the new class'.

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