THE CHINESE TROTSKYISTS

THE BIRTH OF THE CHINESE LEFT OPPOSITION by Damien Durand

CHEN DUXIU AND THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL
by Pierre Broué

First published in French in Cahiers Leon Trotsky, no 15

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THE BIRTH OF THE CHINESE LEFT OPPOSITION

Damien Durand

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N 1929 TROTSKY was laying out the foundation of the International Left Opposition. He identified three principal tendencies in the International Communist movement. These were the opportunist Right, the Marxist Left and the centre. He proposed three criteria for assessing them politically: the Russian question, the question of the Anglo-Russian Joint Trade Union Committee and the Chinese question.

The policy of the Communist International in China was in fact the essential stake in the battle between the Left Opposition and Stalin from 1925 onwards. The axis of the policy of Stalin and Bukharin was the subjection of the Chinese communists to the Kuomintang, the nationalist party which General Ch'iang Kai-shek succeeded in dominating after the death of its historic leader, Sun Yat-sen¹. Its inevitable result was subjection to the political aims of the nationalist bourgeoisie. The desertion of the man whom Moscow was still calling its reliable ally a few days before he first moved to disarm and to massacre workers and peasants dealt a heavy blow to the Communist Party and the revolution.

From the military point of view, the Communist Party and the workers' militias were most often disarmed by the Kuomintang - when they did not bury the arms themselves on the orders of the Communist International, "to avoid certain defeats", as Bukharin said. From the political point of view, the Communist International and Moscow, searching for some new ally, found Wang Jingwei and his Wuhan Government, in which the Communists participated. The Wuhan Government subsequently fell. Wang Jingwei and the left wing of the Kuomintang returned to the bosom of Ch'iang Kai-shek and his government at Nonking in which the Communists also participated.. Moscow then found Fen Y xiang, the "Christian General".

Then Stalin changed course. After burying the arms, he went over to an insurrectionary line. This ended in the disaster of the Canton Commune: 5,700 dead in a few days. The wave of subsequent uprisings, which has been called

"the Autumn Harvest", was held to confirm the "new revolutionary wave" which the Communist International thought was unfolding in China and of which the Canton Commune had been only a preliminary sign. This was in fact an adventurist policy. Its consequences were the defeat of the Chinese Revolution, the massacres of peasants in the countryside and the destruction of the workers' movement in the cities.

The fact is that Stalin, who was at the height of his struggle in the USSR against the Trotskyist Opposition, did not want to accept the slighest responsibility for this defeat. He denied its very existence for as long as he could. When the hour of truth came, it was the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and especially Chen Duxiu, its general secretary, who were declared to be responsible. They were accused of having mis-interpreted the orders of the Communist International.

In reality, the Chinese leadership had done no more than apply the policy of Stalin and his successive emissaries, Borodin, Roy and Lominadze. Chen Duxiu was relieved of his functions in hus absence at a special conference of the Chinese Communist Party at Wuhan on August 7 1927. He was the scapegoat. He was not allowed to defend himself before his peers, all of whom were as blameworthy as he. They consented to throw the blame on him in exchange for the benevolence of Moscow. Chen Duxiu temporarily disappeared from the political scene. The Chinese Communist Party, which was already decimated by repression, was reorganised.

The Russian Opposition and Trotsky battled against the policy of Stalin and the Communist International. They battled against the zigzags and denounced the policy of class collaboration which handed over the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese workers to the hangman Ch'iang Kai-shek They put forward the slogan of "soviets" when Stalin was busy applying the brake to the peasant movement. They condemned the adventurist putschist line which

followed. At each stage, the Russian Opposition denounced the mistakes and dangers in Stalin's policy. The documents of the Opposition tried to warn the party of the dangers to which this policy was exposing the Chinese Revolution and also its inevitable repurcussians on the USSR and the world revolution.

Though events confirmed the analyses and forecasts of the Opposition and though the official line often seemed to the Chinese Communists to be inapplicable, a Left Opposition did not yet exist in China. The Russian Opposition did not have the necessary connection with China. Consequently, the first real opportunity for the Russian Opposition to go forward towards forming a Chinese Left Opposition was the large-scale visit to Moscow of Chinese Communist students in 1927.

Chapter Two

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE CHINESE TROTSKYIST OPPOSITION: MOSCOW

HREE OF THE SCHOOLS and universities in Moscow were specially charged with receiving the Chinese students. These were the University of the Peoples of the Orient, the Sun Yat-sen University and the Lenin School. There were also some courses in various military schools in Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev that were restricted to a few dozen students.

THE FIRST CHINESE STUDENTS IN MOSCOW

Those Chinese students who were members of the Chinese Communist Party or the Chinese Socialist Youth, and who earlier had been in France or Germany, attended the University of the Peoples of the Orient. The decision on this point had been taken by Chen Duxiu during the Fourth Congress of the Communist International. The University of the Peoples of the Orient specialised in training revolutionary cadres for the countries of the East. It already included students from more than seventy nationalities and national minorities.

There was a first group of Chinese students in Moscow before 1922, among whom were Liu Shaoqi and Feng Shutzi. The second group, after 1922, included in particular Wang Jefei and the two sons of Chen Duxiu. Between 1923 and 1925 the struggle between Stalin and Trotsky found no echo among these students, even though their general sentiment was unfavourable to Stalin. Trotsky had no direct influence on them.

THE FIRST GROUPING OF CHINESE OPPOSITIONISTS

From 1925 onwards, two of the universities shared the Chinese students in Moscow: the University of the Peoples of the Orient and the Sun Yat-sen University. The director of the former was Boris Chouiatsky, an enthusiastic supporter of Stalin. The other was directed by Karl Kadek and A A Joffe², two top-level Trotskyists.

After the rupture between Ch'iang Kai-shek and the Chinese Communist Party, during the period of collaboration with Wang Jingwei and the Wuhan government, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party sent some 600 to 800 students to Moscow. Most entered the Sun Yat-sen University. Among them were Wang Wenyuan, who, under the pseudonym of Wang Fanxi, has written his memoires³ and tells how he was sent to Moscow.

In August 1927 the Chinese Communist Party decided to send people to study the military art in Moscow. Those who were selected were full of enthusiasm. Wang writes:

"Mao's idea that 'power comes out of the muzzle of a rifle' well expressed the mood of the Chinese Communists in Wuhan during this period ... But we thought that things would be different now that we were going to learn how to use arms, to form our own army and no longer have to look for allies among the existing generals. I think that this was an opinion common to all those of us who were on the point of leaving for Moscow ..."

These students arrived in Moscow one month before the Tenth Anniversary of the October Revolution. Wang continues his acount and discusses the difference between the universities. The Sun Yat-sen University had become a problem for the Stalinists. The rector was a figure-head for the Trotskyist Opposition. Numerous Chinese students had joined the Opposition and demonstrated in Moscow, in accordance with the decision of the Russian Opposition, at the time of the celebrations of the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution. Some withdrew and were transferred to other schools — this is what happened to the son of Ch'iang Kai-shek. Others were sent back to China. Radek was replaced by the Stalinist Pavel Mif, and the participation of the first Chinese Oppositionists led to a certain number of exclusions and deportations. Yet the Opposition deserves the credit, after these serious losses, for the fact that the group of students who were sent back to China organised in a fraction named "Our Word", and took back to China the first of the documents of the Russian Opposition.

This was the first Oppostion group. It was born in Moscow, but was to begin to express itself and to develop in China.

THE SECOND GENERATION: THE STUDENTS FROM WUHAN

The students who arrived in Moscow in September 1927 from Wuhan had just left China in a state of complete defeat. The Chinese Communists were isolated and crushed. The man who had been General Secretary of the Communist Party since its formation was removed and charged with opportunism. And an ally of the Communists had once more betrayed them. They thirsted to understand what was happening to them.

Wang, who was one of them, writes:

"We knew very little about the internal struggles that were going on in the CPSU. In Wuhan we had been told that Lenin had been succeeded by Stalin, who was now the leader of the Communist movement both in Russia and the world, whereas Trotsky was consumed by personal ambition, was a romantic, and was a militarist man of the Ch'iang Kai-shek type."5

Despite their ignorance of the history of the Russian Revolution and the Communist movement, these students were interested in the struggles of the internal fractions in the USSR. They understood that these were not without effect on the course of events in China. They followed meetings and discussions with the greatest attention, and devoured all the documents they could get. Their doubts about the policy which had been followed in China continued to grow. Wang writes:

"None of us either dared or wanted to express support for the Opposition, which had, after all, been denounced as counter-revolutionary ... We were very careful about what we said in the course of these discussions ... We behaved in this way only becuase words like 'party', 'Central Committee', and 'majority' had such a sacred and authoritive ring about them that none of us either dared or were equipped to challenge them. To that extent, therefore, I was a 'Stalinist' at the time of the celebrations to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution."

On the evening of the anniversary celebrations, which had greatly impressed them, Wang and his comrades learned that the Opposition had held a counter-demonstration in which some Chinese students had taken part. That same evening, they were present at the showing of a film on the October Revolution. Wang says:

"It gave me a broad idea of the roles played by Trotsky and Stalin in the revolution. Despite the deliberate attempt to exaggerate Stalin's role and play down Trotsky's, the contrast between the two men — the one colourless and uninspiring, the other brilliant and outstanding — must have been clear to anyone not utterly blinkered by factional prejudice. My own admiration for Trotsky dated from the showing of that film."

The gulf between the Stalinist careerists in the apparatus and these Chinese students continued to deepen. They were avid to understand why their revolution had just been defeated. This progressive involvement of the Chinese Communists in the struggle between Stalin and Trotsky was to lead a good number of them to the Opposition. In order to understand this, it is enough for us to follow the evolution of Wang Wenyuan.

HOW WANG WAS EDUCATED AS A TROTSKYIST

Between October and December 1927 Wang devoted the major part of his time to studying and seeking out political documents. He developed rapidly towards the Opposition. The problem which faced him was that there were only small quantities of material to be had. It was incomplete, garbled and one-sided. He says:

"The three main issues in dispute were the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Committee, socialist construction in the Soviet Union and the strategy and tactics employed in the Chinese Revolution. I was not clear about the reasoning behind the two positions and was not prepared to make a judgement ...

Naturally the Party Committee disapproved of our sceptical neutrality."

Above all, this "sceptical neutrality" enabled Wang to ask himself questions about the political problems of the Chinese Revolution of 1925-27:

"Should we have entered the Kuomintang? Should we have built and extended the organisation of the Kuomintang? Had Ch'iang Kai-shek been a reliable ally of the proletariat in the Chinese Revolution? Were the Canto - Hong Kong strike committees a kind of soviet? Had we been right to support another Kuomintang leader, Wang Chingwei, in order to create 'a new revolutionary

centre' after Ch'iang Kai-shek's betrayal?

Had the tactic of 'a bloc of four classes'
stood the test of events in China?"

From that point, Wang was in a position to suggest partial answers to these questions. His careful reading of the documents enabled him to understand that neither Borodin nor Chen Duxiu had been responsible for the mistakes. They were simply carrying into effect the policy which Stalin himself had elaborated. At the same time, Wang still lacked two elements, as did those who were sharing his evolution. These were the materials of the Opposition and a direct contact with the Russian Oppositionists.

This was the period when he met Luo Han. The latter was a Chinese student who had studied in France some years earlier. They discussed the internal conflicts in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, between Stalin and Trotsky. Luo Han recommended to Wang that he observe the greatest discretion in meetings. When Wang was subjected to questioning, he admitted that he had seen "one or two" of the documents of the Opposition, even though he denied having any connection with it. In fact, though there were no organised Oppositionists in the University of the Peoples of the Orient, Luo Han knew some members of the Russian Opposition in the Sun Yat-sen University.

Luo Han did not convert Wang to the Russian Opposition, but he helped to bring him much closer to it. Wang writes:

"From that time on, I was no longer a naive and confused participant in the struggle. I had opinions of my own, and began to act with more prudence than before ... The persecution directed against the Opposition was now stepped up considerably. It no longer remained on the purely 'theoretical' level." 10

Oppositionists were now dealt with by administrative means, harassed by the police and the GPU, driven out of the party en masse, sacked from their jobs and denied civil rights ... Although nothing of this sort happened among

the Chinese students at KUTV (the University of the Peoples of the Orient) a mood of anxiety and uneasiness grew up. Relations between fellow students became more and more strained. Everywhere there were spying eyes, and, as newcomers, they were singled out for special attention.¹¹

Wang reached one conclusion:

"The depth of the defeat ... was becoming more and more apparent, and we soon realised that it was an illusion to think that after a few months' military training we could return to China and turn back the wheel of history. We were upset by the arbitrary and bureaucratic way in which the Stalinists conducted the inner-party struggle, and the suffocating atmosphere which this created. The gulf between what we thought and what we were allowed to say, between our sympathies and the demands of discipline, grew wider and wider. All six hundred of us had just left behind a revolution, and we were restless and full of energy. For young rebels like us, a life of peace and quiet was worse than death."12

In the Moscow branch of the Chinese Communist Party, different groups were in conflict for the control of the Chinese party. The clique led by Pavel Mif and Wang Ming was to get the upper hand by cleverly exploiting the discontent of the Chinese students, who went as far as demonstrating sharply in the streets of Moscow for their demands. Mif decided to transfer all the Chinese students to the Sun-Yatsen University, of which he was the director. In this way he had control of the education and training of all the Chinese students in Moscow. From this jumping-off point, Mif removed Qu Qiupsi from the leadership at the 6th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in Moscow in June 1928, and installed Xiang Shungfa as general secretary.

During this time, Wang, with his friend, Fan Jinpiao, who was in contact with the Russian Oppositionists, read the documents of the Opposition. He comments:

"The first document of the Opposition which I read was Zinoviev's Theses on the Chinese Revolution. A little later, I read Trotsky's The Chinese Revolution and the Theses of Comrade Stalin, and after that The Platform of the United Opposition of the CPSU. They had enormous impact on me, because of their unassailable logic and also their superb style. They were a real contrast to the lifeless and insipid documents of the Central Committee. The arguments and warnings of the Opposition, especially those concerned with the Chinese Revolution, were so obviously true and had so often been confirmed in practice, that I could not help modding vigorously in agreement as I pored eagerly over them. I was also deeply moved by Zinoviev's writings ... I now realised that on all fundamental questions the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party had been acting on orders from Stalins's faction; that the illconceived policies which had led to the defeat of the Chinese Revolution were very far from being Chen Duxiu's mistakes; and that these mistakes had been warned against in advance and could have been avoided."13

This was the last stage in the evolution of Wang.
He concluded that the origen of the defeat in
China was the obstinate refusal by Stalin and
Bukharin to recognise that the criticisms of the
Opposition were correct. He decided:

"... when I turned to the Oppositionist documents dealing with such subjects as the Anglo-Soviet Trade Union Committee and economic construction in the Soviet Union I again found myself in complete agreement with the criticisms raised. From then on I became a 'Bolshevik-Leninist' (as the Oppositionists were called at that time) ... My ideological commitment soon became a practical one." 14

THE FORMATION OF THE FRACTION

While most of the students were sent in summer 1928 for military training. Wang was sent in a

rest home, where he met a group of workers from Shanghai.

One of the workers in this group, An Fu, is described by Wang as the most politically advanced of the group and as a semi-Oppositionist or even an Oppositionist. At the Sun Yat-sen University he and his comrades had clashed with the Wang Ming clique. Mif and Wang's assumption of control over the Chinese Communist Party had demoralised them, and they believed there was no hope whatever for the Chinese Revolution as long as such people dominated the Party.

An Fu and his group made contact with the Opposition through teachers and students who were working in secrecy in the University. This group, as well as Fan Jinpiao who was coming near to it, was won to the Opposition during the summer holidays of 1928.

When An Fu and his friends arrived at the rest home they brought with them small note-books in which they had copied the principal documents of the Opposition. These note-books were to have a great influence on the Chinese students there, of whom there were nearly a hundred.

At the end of summer 1928 the Chinese Communist students turned towards the Opposition. Wang states that this turn was linked to the events of the preceding six months in China, which had confirmed the analysis of the Opposition with remarkable speed. In fact, the 'autumn harvest' uprisings and the Canton Commune had demonstrated the bankruptcy of Stalin's policy at dreadful cost.

The students came back to the Sun Yat-sen
University at the beginning of the academic year.
By this time, nine-tenths of the students who had
earlier been in the University of the Peoples of
the Orient had been won to the Opposition. It
was urgent to organise them.

Wang recounts:

"One Sunday in late September or early October, a dozen or so of us travelled out of

Moscow by tram in groups of two or three to have a picnic. We found somewhere quiet, and there we ate, laughed and sang. As soon as there were no Russian holiday-makers within earshot, we got down to more serious business. We discussed and finally settled the prblem of how to organise so many Trotskyists. Three of us — Fan Chin-piao, An Fu and myself — were chosen from this conference of activists to form a leadership committee."

Two workers who took part in this meeting were to be imprisoned and to disappear in the USSR. 16

The establishment of the leading committee was a decisive step in the formation of the Chinese Opposition in Moscow. From this time onward, its influence continued to grow among the Chinese students. The existence of this organisation quickly became a secret widely shared by the former students of the University of the Peoples of the Orient. The documents of the Opposition were openly discussed, even in the presence of students who had not yet joined it. One mimeographed copy of The Critique of the Draft Programme of the Communist International by Trotsky was translated by Wang and read by the Chinese Oppositionists, after it had circulated among the Russian Oppositionist.

Wang did part of this translation in the apartment of a Russian Oppositionist, Poliakov, who was arrested by the GPU, along with the whole of the secret Moscow committee of the Russian Opposition. The Opposition was being fiercely repressed, but the Chinese Oppositionists were not alarmed. Among the militants who were arrested, no-one betrayed the links between the Russian and the Chinese Oppositionists and the activities of the latter. This indication of strength is related to two factors: the confidence of the students and the Oppositionists in the political line of the Opposition on the Chinese question, and the difficulty which the Stalinists encountered in

mastering this student milieu, which was best placed to pronounce on Stalin's policy in China.

The Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of China was held in Moscow in June and July 1928. It could not deny that the revolution had been defeated in China, and explained the defeat by the "opportunism" of Chen Duxiu and the "too great strength" of the imperialists. It refrained from calling into question the line of the Communist International. Among the delegates who remained in Moscow for the Sixth Congress of the Communist International were some who were contacted by the Opposition and acquainted with its documents.

It was in the room of one of them, Wang Jofei, that Wang began his translation of *The Critique of the Programme*. However, these men do not seem to have taken part in an initiative in the course of the Congress. The only intervention on the line of the Left Opposition, presented in the form of a criticism of Bukharin, was made at the congress by an Indonesian delegate, and dealt effectively with the Chinese question.

The progress of the Chinese Opposition continued rapidly during the winter of 1928. Wang estimates that nearly 150 out of the 400 students at the Sun-Yat-sen University were members or sympathisers. Groups existed even in the military schools and in the Lenin School.

The organisation was clandestine, with a small leading committee unknown to all, but the documents circulated without difficulty. Thus, the article by Trotsky, entitled The Chinese Question After the Sixth Congress of the Communist International provoked lively discussion among the Oppositionists. In fact, Trotsky put forward the slogan of a Constituent Assembly, and this appeared to many to be "opportunist". Liu Renjing intervened in the discussion, and proposed what was really an opportunist interpretation of the slogan, but found himself very isolated. Likewise Wang mentions the confusion in the ranks of the Chinese Communists at the time of the attacks on Trotsky for his interview with the Daily

Express and their relief after reading his Letter to the Soviet Workers replying on this point.

THE END OF THE CHINESE OPPOSITION IN MOSCOW

Already by this time the attack had been opened in the University to exterminate the Opposition. Its strength was now a real threat and it was forming links with the comrades who had gone back to China in the preceding year. The general lines of the work to be followed in China, as a fraction in the ranks of the Chinse Communist Party, were decided in the course of a secret conference at the beginning of 1929, during which the place of Wang, who was shortly to leave Russia, was taken by the teacher Chao Yenching.

The news that Chen Duxiu in China had joined the Opposition led the authorities to determine to take strong measures. Its agents who had infiltrated the Opposition threw down the mask and began to denounce their comrades. Terrible pressure on Chao enabled the police to identify the main leaders. An armed detachment of the GPU arrived one night at the dormitories of the University and took away more than 200 "Trotskyists".

The unhappy Chao, who was set free, hanged himself the next day. The Sun Yat-sen University was closed, as a "Trotskyist lair". Whether they capitulated or not under the interrogation of the GPU, none of the imprisoned militants ever saw their native land again. Only two escaped from Siberia. Among those who died was one of the earliest Oppositionists, Fan Jinpiao.

Chapter Three

THE BIRTH OF THE OPPOSITION IN CHINA

HE SUCCESSIVE RETURN of the two
groups of students who had been won in
Moscow and the declaration in
December 1929 by Chen Duxiu of support for
the Opposition, provide three essential dates

marking the beginnings of the Trotskyist Opposition in China.

THE FIRST CONTACTS

After taking part in the demonstration of the Russian Opposition at the commemoration of the Tenth Anniversary of the October Revolution, the first group back from Moscow established the first network of contacts of the Opposition. This Group, *Our Word*, consisted of some ten militants who were known for their Trotskyist opinions and had been excluded from the Chinese Communist Party in 1928. After their return to China they managed to create small Oppositional groups in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Peking.

In Shanghai they were in contact with a publishing firm, New World Press. At Hong Kong, U Fang and Chen Yimou, amongst others, were well placed among the dockers, and the Oppositionists were very active among the students in Peking. They published a review on a national scale entitled, like the group itself, Our Word. Shi Tang, who was in charge of the work in Shanghai, received the translations of the Russian Opposition documents from Wang Wenyuan in Moscow, for publication. Moreover, Shi Tang and his comrades were in correspondence with the Chinese Opposition in Moscow, led by Wang Wenyuan up to the time of his return to China in September 1929 with the second group of returning students.

THE SECOND GROUP OF STUDENTS BACK FROM MOSCOW

A second group of Oppositionists managed to get away from Moscow in September 1929. They left the USSR by way of Korea and they arrived at Shanghai, where they joined the Our Word group provisionally. However, in accordance with the orientation which had been decided in Moscow, they were to notify the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party that they were back in China and were willing to resume their places within the party.

In this way, Wang Wenyuan became one of the right arms of Chou En-lai in Shanghai.

These members of the Opposition were to work in secret both inside and outside the party for the benefit of the Opposition, and in particular were to infiltrate the whole department devoted to the propoganda of the Chinese Communist Party. As Moscow-educated cadres, many of them occupied important places in the apparatus.

Liu Renjing returned a little in advance of the second group. In the course of his return journey he passed through Paris where he met Rosmer. He went on to Prinkipo where he spent several days with Trotsky. This gave the latter the opportunity to draft a project for a programme of the Chinese Bolshevik-Leninists, which Liu brought back to China. On his arrival, Liu declared he would not work in the Chinese Communist Party, and hastened to reveal his Trotskyist positions when the comrades put pressure on him to write to the Central Committee. In fact Liu refused to work in the Chinese Communist Party and came out in favour of a new party. The "underground" Oppositionists denounced this position as a pretext for not struggling to regenerate the Chinese Communist Party, and a refusal to direct the struggle towards the party rank and file in order to convince them in favour of Trotskyist policies.

MORE GROUPS ARE FORMED

The return of the successive groups was to lead to a certain amount of confusion and division in the Opposition. The first group back from Moscow consisted of notorious Oppositionists, who had been excluded from the Chinese Communist Party and who were to act independently of the Communist Party in China. The second group, which remained secret up to 1930, worked essentially within the Chinese Communist Party, until they were exluded after the Communist International sent a list of names of Oppositionists to the Chinese Communist Party. In any case, like Liu Renjing, a certain number of militants refused to struggle in the

Chinese Communist Party and formed a new group.

The result was that in 1929 there were three groups among the students who had come back from Moscow: *Our Word*, the *October* group and the *Militant* group.

Our Word held its first congress in January 1929 and designated a Central Committee. This congress advanced slogans such as "Public Discussion between the Opposition and the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party", "For a meeting to re-organise the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party", "Bring back Trotsky to the USSR and to Power" ...

The Our Word group was led by Shi Shuyun, the general secretary. Its essential characteristic was that it was turned in on itself, because membership was restricted to students who had studied together in Moscow. It devoted itself to translating and commenting on Marxist texts and to polemics with rival groups. Thus, one of its favourite targets was to be Chen Duxiu, whom they attacked for his "opportunism" between 1925 and 1927, at the time he was actually developing rapidly towards Trotskyism! This inturned-ness was to have disastrous consequences. Wang Wenyuan was rejected by this group, lost all contact with it, and turned towards the October group which Liu Renjing founded in Shanghai with ten of the Moscow students. This small group was to grow quickly to more than fifty members, among them Luo Han. They published a short-lived journal, The Journal of the October Group.

The last group formed at the end of 1929 was the *Militant* group. Its members were all old Oppositionists who had worked in the Chinese Communist Party before being excluded. It had some thirty members, but is the least important or influential of the three groups formed by the Moscow "students".

This is the context within which a new fraction was to appear and give a new profile to the situation of the Opposition.

CHEN DUXIU, HIS FRACTION AND THE OPPOSITION

The different groups of the Opposition, and especially the group which worked as a fraction in the Chinese Communist Party, enjoyed real tolerance from the Party. This was due to two factors:

- Moscow did not know that different Opposition groups existed in China;
- The leaders of the Chinese Communist Party underestimated or, rather, ignored the Opposition groups. They were more concerned about getting into trouble with Mif and Wang Ming. Ming manipulated the students who came back from Moscow, who backed them agaisnt the old leadership of Li-san, Chou En-lai, Liu Shaoqi and Mao Zedong.

When Stalin discovered that the Opposition existed in Moscow itself and that Chen Duxiu had approached and then joined the Opposition, the situation changed radically. After a wave of exclusions of secret Oppositionists in the Chinese Communist Party, a ferocious campaign began against Chen Duxiu. At the same time, the Stalinists played another card. They suggested to Chen that he should go to Moscow for discussions and then take up a job in the Comintern. He refused. The campaign against him, orchestrated by Li Li-san, intensified.

Chen advanced the slogan of opposition to the Kuomintang becaue of its bad leadership of the nation, in defence of Chinese national sovereignty. The leaders of the Chinese Communist Party denounced him and accused him of bourgeois patriotism. Up to that point, Chen had not decided to return to the political arena, after the 1927 defeat and all that he had undergone since being removed from his post as general secretary of the Party. He now flung himself into the battle and drew round him such old cadres as Peng, Shutzi Zeng Chaolin, Ho Tzuchen, Yin Kuan and Ma Yufu. This was the beginning of a new authentic political current of opposition within the ranks of the Chinese Communist Party. We hear of whole branches of supporters of Chen in the party, such as the committee in East Shanghai, composed entirely of Chen-ists.

At the end of 1929, Chen Duxiu and Feng Shutzi received Russian Opposition doccuments translated and brought in by the Chinese Oppositionists back from Moscow and then later by Liu Renjing: The Chinese Question After the Sixth Congress and Summary and Perspectives of the Chinese Revolution. These documents were to serve as an introduction and to teach Chen to understand his own role in the 1925 - 27 period. For him it was a genuine revelation of the policy and role of Stalin, of the way in which he had been an instrument in the hands of Moscow and of the depth of the Trotskyist policy on the Chinese question. He accepted the positions which were defended in these documents in general. He was hesitant only on the nature of the 3rd Chinese Revolution that still lay ahead, which he always regarded as having "a bourgeois character".

The news that Chen had gone over to the Opposition created a sensation. It provoked a crisis in the Chinese Communist Party and particularly in its apparatus. It was all very well for Chou En-lai to say, "All right, let the old opportunists see if they can find a way out by joining the Trotskyists", but Stalin, on the other hand, did not like to see such a figure go over to the Opposition. It had important repurcussions not only on the old cadres of the Chinese Communist Party but also in the Communist International. These were important, and he had to be discreditied still further. A new campaign was launched in the Chinese Communist Party and the Communist International against the "liquidatory centre of Trotsky and Chen". A special meeting of the Central Committe of the Chinese Communist Party was devoted to these problems. A special emissary from the Communist International came to China to interview Chen and bring him back to Moscow. All in vain!

Chen's enforced silence after he was removed from his post as general secretary of the Party

and the campaign waged against him by those who previously had shared his responsibilities on the Central Committee, had not seriously impaired his prestige in the eyes of the old cadres and the mass of the party membership. The Party was shaken at every level when he went over to the Opposition and became the target of the campaign of denunciation. The depth of the crisis was such that the leadership had to exclude hundreds of members who supported Chen or were supposed to do so.

This was a great purge "in the Russian manner". The Oppositionists were cleared out of the Central Committee, the provincial committees and the Communist Youth League. The Party newspaper, *The Red Flag*, published every week the list of those who were excluded. Chen himself was finally excluded from the Party on November 15, 1929, and hit back on December 10 by publishing *An Open Letter to All the Comrades of the Party*.

Five days afterwards, eighty-one old communists who had had or still had responsibilities in the party, made public a text entitled Our Political Position. This declaration came out openly in favour of Trotsky. "If we had had the political leadership of Trotsky before 1927, we would perhaps have been able to lead the Chinese Revolution on the road to victory."17 Those who signed were the leading nucleus of the fraction around Chen, the Proletarian Fraction, which was essentially based in Shanghai. These cadres were all high-level intellectuals who had abandoned their cultural activities to join in the work of the Chinese Communist Party, at the time of the first Chinese Revolution in May 1919. For example, there was Peng Kao Yuhan and Wang Tuching.

This new current, which was born in the Chinese Communist Party, was the expression of an authentic current in full political development. It benefited from the experience of former high-rank cadres of the Chinese Communist Party. It started from Shanghai and developed, establishing branches in Peking, Tianjin, Wuhan, Sichuan, Ningpo as well as in Shantung

and Anhui. Some of its members even formed cells in Hong Kong and Macao. The total number of members which it regrouped reached several hundreds.

The responsibilities were shared out in the following way: Chen Duxiu was general secretary, Peng Shutzi was responsible for propoganda and the joint executive members were Ma Yufu and Liu Renjing.

The sole reaction from the Kremlin to the publication of *Our Political Position* was a telegram inviting Chen to come to Moscow to discuss his position and "the problem of his exclusion". His definitve reply, on February 17, 1930, was negative.

CHEN, THE MAN AND POLITICS

Chen Duxiu was born, like Trotsky, in 1879. He studied Chinese literature, English, French and naval architecture.

His political activity began in 1904 in Shanghai, where he was in contact with intellectuals and revolutionary bomb-throweres. From 1911 to 1913 he was adviser to the Governor of the province of Anhui. Harold R Isaacs writes:

"Out of the thinned ranks of the revolutionary intellectuals of 1911 emerged the figure of Chen Duxiu, scion of an Anwhei mandarin family, who began posing the tasks of revolt more boldly, more clearly, more courageously than anyone who had preceded him. The task of the new generation, proclaimed Chen Duxiu, was 'to fight Confucianism, the old traditions of virtue and rituals, the old ethics and the old politicis ... the old learning and the old literature." In their place he would put the fresh materials of modern democratic political thought and natural science." 18

Chen Duxiu became a professor at the University of Peking. His influence as an intellectual and a revolutionary was great, and matched that of the national review which he directed, *The New Youth*.

He was one of the leaders of the movement of May 4, 1919, the movement of revolt against the pro-Japanese government in Peking. After his imprisonment, he turned towards the West, notably France and Britain, in search of new ideas. He studied the nature of the State and began to struggle for the unification of China. In June 1920 he was definitively won to Marxism. He became the commissioner in charge of education in the provincial government of Guandong. A year later he was elected as general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party which had just been founded.

Chen carried on his activities in university and cultural circles. He retained contacts in several Chinese cultural movements, and published a manual on Chinese history and literature.

As general secretary of the Chinese Communist
Party, he led the Chinese Communists during the
revolution from 1925 to 1927, carrying into
effect the policies and the instructions of
Moscow. The defeat, and the campaign of
slander which presented him as being personally
responsible, affected him greatly, but not enough
to lead him to go into battle against his accusers.
For nearly a year he disappeared from the
political scene.

Wang Wenyaun believes that there are two reasons why Chen withdrew to the sidelines. First, because of his upright, well-formed, intransigent character, he refused to make any deal with his accusers, who nevertheless were offering him one. Wang writes:

"Whatever his weakness, Chen was certainly a lion. If Chen had been the usual spineless sort of politician, he would have agreed to take all the blame on to his own shoulders, thus enabling Stalin to ride out the storm of criticism from the Trotskyists. Had Chen chosen this course, he would have retained his status in the Comintern and would probably have been able to climb to the top again in the Chinese Party." 19

In fact Chen did not publicly attack his accusers and preferred to remain silent.

Wang also considers that there is a second element which enables this attitude to be understood and explains it. This relates to China's lack of political education and Chen's ignorance about the Soviet Union and the conflicts within the Bolshevik Party. For that reason, he was not to re-appear until he was in a position to deal with his slanderers and former comrades.

His spectacular evolution towards the Left Opposition and the formation of his own fraction within the Communist Party were a striking reply to his adversaries. From May 1931 onwards he was to lead the Unified Opposition in China. There too his temperament and force of character were to be important, if not decisive, assets in reaching the unification of the different groups, some of which had criticised him with no less violence than the Stalinists a few years earlier.

Wang Wenyuan describes his first meeting with Chen, a little before the unification:

"This middle-aged man in his early fifties, with his sincere and unassuming ways, swept all remaining traces of factional prejudice from me ... I was particularly impressed by his straightforwardness — there was not the slightest trace of ceremony or pretentiousness about him. But for all his frankness I saw no signs of his notoriously hot temper." ²⁰

If we wish to chracterise Chen in relation to another of the most important front-rank figures in the struggles of the groups before unification, we can regard him as an anti-Liu Renjing. Finally, we must emphasise that Chen was only a moderate orator, while, on the contrary, he wrote brillliantly.

TOWARDS THE REGROUPMENT?

The conditions for the Oppositions's development were changed when a group of well-known cadres, and in particular Chen Duxiu, who enjoyed international stature and notoriety, went over to it However, the immediate effect was to provoke additional

confusion. The general hostility (though in varying degrees) of the former students to the man whom until then they had regarded as an "old opportunist" was super-imposed on the rivalries between the three groups. He was a threat to the "little chiefs", and also carried the burden of the defeat of the revolution of 1925-27 at the time when he was officially head of the party. After this defeat, could he become the leader of the Left Opposition?

Could they all unite their forces in a single formation — Chinese Trotskyists from Moscow (already old stagers), those won in China, recent recruits, the young people who had been won in the Russian universities and the old cadres who had rallied to Chen.

Chapter Four

REGROUPMENT AND UNIFICATION

THE FIRST ATTEMPT

HE OURWORD CONGRESS in September 1929 seemed to be unpromising. There were quarrels, splits and exclusions. Even though they agreed on a formula, the Chinese "Bolshevik-Leninists" could not agree on its content. This is revealed by their discussion on the Constituent Assembly and the letter questioning Trotsky on this point. Were they going to break up? The Conference in November 1929 of the groups claiming to stand for the Left Opposition was hardly more reassuring.

Chen Duxiu called for preparation for the "Third" Chinese Revolution. He believed that national unification was going to be realised by the national bourgeoisie, with the aid of the foreign imperialists. He declared that there was no finance-capital in China, but only moneylending capital (banks). Our Word vigorously contradicted this, declaring that the banks controlled all financial operations and that the national capital was of a comprador type.

The tone of the discussion quickly sharpened. Personal attacks soon made any counter-position of ideas impossible. The very day that Chen was excluded from the Chinese Communist Party, the *Our Word* group wrote to Trotsky to denounce his "opportunism" and declaring its determination to make the struggle against him a priority. The Chinese Oppostion seemd well and truly in a blind alley.

Yet they continued to seek a way forward. At the end of the conference they had set up a "consultative committee" which included representatives of all the four groups. Its task was to discuss the divergences and even to publish texts on the major questions, such as the Constituent Assembly, the nature of the revolution and the lessons of the defeat of 1927.

But there are few published documents and there were many incidents, even though each group declared in favour of unification and utilised this argument in order to try to get Trotsky's personal support. He was very careful to do nothing of the kind and restricted himself to repeating that the important thing was to go forwards towards unification. In reply to an urgent letter from the *October* group he spelt out that he would not choose between the groups, and for his part, made no difference between Chen and Liu.

The correspondence with Prinkipo became more and more frequent and systematic in 1930. Liu was the intermediary between Trotsky and the other groups. He did a great deal to try to win Trotsky's support and to discredit the other groups in his eyes. His letters are full of personal attacks and unsupported political characterisations. In his opinion, the line of Our Word was "that of capitulators", while Chen Duxiu represented "the Right Opposition masquerading behind the phraseology of the Left". The other groups treated each other equally impolitely. 23

TROTSKY'S INTERVENTION

Trotsky's correspondence was extensive enough for him to have been thoroughly acquainted with the Chinese dossier from this time onwards. He decided to intervene to effect a radical change in the now untenable situation of the Opposition. On January 8, 1931, in a long and urgently-worded plea, he called upon the opponents to unify without delay, to drop their exclusive attitude to Chen and to set on foot a "negotiating committee".

This stand on Trotsky's part marked a turn for the Chinese Opposition. It was also a turn in its political judgement of the old Chinese leader Chen. Trotsky's analysis of Chen's evolution centred round two key dates: December 1929 and August – September 1930.

On December 22, 1929, Trotsky wrote about Chen, in reply to the Chinese Oppositionists:

"As far as Chen Duxiu's group is concerned, I am very well aware of the policy which it followed during the years of the revolution. It was the policy of Stalin, Bukharin and Martynov, that is to say, an essentially Right-Menshvik policy. But comrade N.24, nonetheless, writes that Chen Duxiu, on the basis of his experience of the revolution, has come very much closer to our positions. It goes without saying that we can only rejoice at this. Yet in your letter of information you categorically deny what comrade N. tells me. You even claim that Chen Duxiu has not broken from the policy of Stalin, which is a mixture of opportunism and adventurism. But up to the present, I have not read more than one programmatic declaration by Chen Duxiu and am not in a position to express myself on this question.25

Trotsky's attitude towards Chen was based on real hope and real caution. He did not change his position until he finally received a document by Chen and could make his mind up on the basis of evidence. In the event, Trotsky received and read Chen Duxiu's Declaration of December 10,

1929, The Open Letter to All the Comrades of the Party.

Trotsky wrote to the Chinese Oppositionists on the subject of this document on August 22, 1930:

"I think that this letter is an excellent document. Perfectly clear, correct positions are put forward in reply to every important question. Particularly in relation to the 'democratic dictatorship', comrade (Chen) Duxiu adopts an absolutely correct position. At the same time, you are writing to me that, if you cannot unite with Chen Duxiu, it is because he still seems to favour the 'democratic dictatorship'. I think that this is a decisive problem ... There can be no compromise on this question. But it is clear that comrade Chen has a correct position in his letter of December 10 (1929). In these conditions, how am I to explain or defend your position? What other points of divergence have you? None, I suppose, even if there are some unexpected misunderstandings."26

Trotsky's position and his support for Chen Duxiu were based on common political analyses of the Chinese question. But Trotsky went further:

"Now that we have the support of a revolutionary of the first rank in Chen Duxiu, who has broken with the party and been excluded and who announces that he is henceforth in 100% agreement with the international Opposition, how could you ignore him? Is it possible that you already have many members of the Communist Party as experienced as he? In the past he has made many mistakes, but now he is aware of this. To understand one's past mistakes is profitable for revolutionaries and for cadres. We have young comrades in the Opposition who can and should learn from comrade Chen Duxiu!" 27

Thus Trotsky undertook to defend Chen against the "youth" of the different groups who attacked him on the basis of his past errors. This support noticeably changed the position of Chen and his group during the battle of the groups before the unification. For all that, a further intervention by Trotsky was needed, on January 8, 1931, to ensure Chen's authority and enable unification to be achieved finally aand precisely.

In this new context, it was Chen Duxiu who led the discussions with the authority that Trotsky's support conferred upon him. The hisory of the consultative committee did not start all over again. Thereafter matters went forward very quickly. Chen was given the task of drafting documents on the political resolution and on agrarian reform and Wang on the slogan of the Constituent Assembly. The platform which Chen proposed was unanimously adopted.

As can be understood, organisational problems were still a source of difficulties. It had been decided to elect to the unification conference a number of delegates proportional to the number of members of each group. But it appears that Liang Ganjiao of *Our Word* was accused by the other groups of doubling the number of members which his organisation really had. How many militants were involved? In the preparatory discussions *Proletariat* (which extended to Hong Kong and to the North) was estimated as having about 200, *October* about 80, *Militant* about 30 and *Our Word* 120 – 140.

AN OPPORTUNITY LOST: THE JIANGSU AFFAIR

The perspective of an early unification at this time, the beginning of Janaury 1931, seems to have opened a very favourable period. Before the unification had been formally completed in May 1931, a tragic episode was to demonstrate that Trotsky had been right to recommend that the different groups should unify without losing time. They risked the creation of insurmountable divergences between them as well as the permanent danger of not being able to take all the political opportunities that presented themselves.

For example, at the time when the unification campaign was in full swing, Mif, who had finished off Li-san and driven him out of the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, promoted "returned" students who supported his leadership. He then drove out of the party a group of old militants who, for better or worse, had been active under Li-san's leadership. These old militants, party members and trade unionists, had a number of youth around them. They were led by He Mengxiong, the head of the provincial committee of the party in Jiangsu, who had round him Liu Weihan, a trade unionist, and Li Juiji, one of the leaders of the Communist Youth. Luo Zhanglong, the trade union leader of the General Union of All-Chinese Labour, who was still hostile to the leadership, was excluded from the Chinese Communist Party.

The leadership of the Chinese Communist Party accused those who opposed Wang Ming of being conciliators, rightists, opportunists and liquidationists. These attacks were intended to conceal the fact that Mengxiong and his comrades were developing in the direction of the positions of the Left Opposition.

In particular, they believed it to be urgently necessary to for the party to win back a basis in the proletariat, in the cities, through work in the trade unions, while it relied on the Red Army in the countryside.

Two sources agree that on January 17, 1931, He Mengxiong re-organised the Central Committee of the provincial party committee in Jiangsu, braving the authority of the Central Committee of Wang Ming. This fractional "Central Committee" was surprised by the British police of the International Concession in the middle of a meeting in a Shanghai hotel. He Mengxiang and twenty-four of his comrades were arrested and handed over to the Kuomintang authorities. They refused to capitulate and were all executed at Lungwha, near Shanghai, on February 7, 1931. This drama had a bad effect on many of the rank and file militants of the Chinese Communist Party, but all internal opposition

disappeared and Wang Ming's "students" became the unchallenged leaders of the party.

This offered an opportunity which the Chinese Left Opposition missed, a chance to influence a whole sector of the party and implant itself there as a fraction. But the Jiangsu affair carried another lesson; There were widespread rumours that Wang Ming was responsible for denouncing the twenty five militants to the police. Neither the Communist International under Stalin's control nor the Kuomintang and its police would make the slightest concession to permit the Chinese Left Opposition so much as to live. To crush the Left Opposition, they were ready to go to any length.

THE UNIFICATION CONFERENCE

The unification conference of the groups which claimed to stand for the Chinese Left Opposition was held in Shanghai, beginning on May 1, 1931, and lasted three days. The material and financial organisation was undertaken by *Proletariat*. The first two days were devoted to discussing documents and amendments, and the third to the election of a new leadership. Seventeen delegates and four observers were present. They represented 483 members; six came from *Our Word*, five from *Proletariat*, four from *October* and two from *Militant*.

Chen Duxiu presented a short political report. In fact there was only one outstanding point of difference: could the Kuomintang realise national unity, or could it not? All the delegates present thought that only the dictatorship of the proletariat could solve the democratic tasks, but Chen did not exclude the possibility that some appearance of a solution might be possible. The majority rejected this and in the end Chen withdrew the disputed formulation. The other resolutions were voted unanimously (the Constituent Assembly, the nature of the Chinese Revolution, the problem of the soviets). The delegates elected a leadership of eight members, also unanimously, passing over the old personal divisions: Chen Duxiu, Peng Shutzi, Song Fengchon, Chen Yimou, Wang Wenyuan, Zhao

Qi, Luo Han and Zhong Chaolin. The new, united organisation took the name "Left Opposition of the Chinese Communist Party" and entitled its journal *The Spark*.

The unification in China was a victory for the international Opposition, not only because it regrouped forces but because it purified the atmosphere by eliminating the most ardent "fractionalists" in all the groups, whom the new tasks hardly suited. Liang Ganjiao, Liu Yin and Ma Yufu left the movement and were soon to find themselves a long way away from it. As for Liu Renjing, he took provisional retirement.

The unification seemd to be opening a very favourable period. The new leadership soon took over and was recognised. Luo Han, the secretary of the Central Committee, telegraphed to Trotsky that the Chinese Bolshevik-Lenisinists would soon be flying their banner from one end of China to the other. The Kuomintang Government drafted a new constitution, which made what appeared to be concessions to the democratic aspirations of the masses. The struggle for the Constituent Assembly appeared to be opening wide perspectives before the supporters of the Opposition. Meanwhile the Communist party was going through a deep crisis. After the failure of the Li Li-san leading

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group, Qu Qiubai was in turn driven out, but the Communist International enthroned the adventurer Wang Ming. The party veterans, disorientated by the zigzags of Moscow, could only question themselves and seek answers from Chen and Peng, whom everyone knew to be militants of integrity.

THE ARRESTS IN 1931

Three weeks after the unification conference, the young organisation suffered a terrible blow. The special agents of the Kuomintang police, acting on information from Ma Yufu, made a successful round-up from which only Chen Duxiu and Luo Han escaped. Nonetheless, the work went on and, three months later, a provisional Central Committee was reconstituted, with young, rapidly promoted cadres. Fresh arrests at the end of summer 1931, forced the organisation to go further underground. Nevertheless, it held together, thanks to the long experience of secrecy of the old Communists who had formed it.

NOTES

- 1 Sun Yat-sen (1866 1925): founder of the Kuomintang; he led a nationalist government in Canton from 1919 to 1921.
- 2 A A Joffe (1883 1927) was ambassador in China, where he signed a Treaty of Alliance with the Sun Yat-sen Government
- Wang Fan-hsi (Wang Fanxi) Chinese Revolutionary, memoirs 1919 - 1949, Oxford University Press, 1980, 282p
- 4 Ibid. pp 41 and 42
- 5 Ibid, p 45
- 6 Ibid, pp 52 and 53
- 7 Ibid, pp 54 and 55
- 8 Ibid. pp 50 and 51
- 9 Ibid. p 51
- 10 Ibid. p 57
- 11 Ibid. p 57
- 12 Ibid. p 59
- 13 Ibid. p 66
- 14 Ibid. p 67
- 15 Ibid. p 77
- 16 According to R C Kagan, The Chinese Trotskyist movement and Ch'en Tu-hsiu: Culture, Revolution and Policy (with appended translation of Ch'en Tu-hsiu's), London, University of Pennsylvania, 1969, 206p., n. p. 65.
- 17 Quoted by Kagan, op. cit. p 121/
- 18 Harold R Isaacs, The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution, second revised edition, Stanford University Press, 1961, quoted on p 53.
- 19 Wang, op. cit. p 121

- 20 Ibid. pp 145 and 146
- 21 Letter from Our Word to Trotsky, Novemebr 15, 1929, No. 1057 in the Houghton Library. This letter was published in Bulletin No 9 of the International Left Opposition (February - March 1930)
- 22 For Proletariat: Wu Qixien and Ma Yufu; for Militant: Liu Yin and Zhao Qi; for October: Song Fenchou and Wang Wenyuan. For Our Word: Liang Ganjiao and Chen Yimou were to replace Ou Fang who was arrested, and Shi Dang who deserted the movement. Liu Renjing, when his group did not select him to represent it, left October and joined a clique within Our Word.
- 23 Our Word, for its part, wrote a seven-page letter to Trotsky denouncing the mistakes of the Lim Renjing group. Not to be outdone, the Military group wrote to the International Secretarian of the Left Opposition on October 10, 1930, a seven-page letter to introduce the group and its activities, but also to make a vigorous attack on Chen Duxiu. They wrote: "This fraction worked in 1927 for the line of Martynov against Trotskyism. Obviously, we do not say that someone who makes a mistake always continues to do so. But this fraction is mistaken today even on the principled questions."
- 24 Niel Chih; the pseudomyn of Liu Renjin
- 25 Trotsky: Reply to the Chinese Oppositionists, dated December 22, 1929, in Exile Documents, b MS Russ 13, T 3261
- 26 Trotsky, letter to Niel Chih, august 22, 1930, Exile Documents, b MS Russ 13.1, 9412
- 27 Ibid

CHEN DUXIU AND THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL (1937 – 1942)

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the history of the Left Opposition and the Fourth International reveals the importance of the international nucleus which Trotsky initially brought together. That same history also reveals that within a few years the "old men", apart from Trotsky, played only a weak role. Those who had been historic leaders of the Third International were demoted into inferior roles or even simply departed.

Without doubt, the Chinese and the American sections of the Left Opposition had emerged most directly from the Communist parties themselves, from their cadres and their flesh and blood. For that reason, the arrest of Chen Duxiu and his collaborators in 1932 must have been good news for the Chinese Stalinists. Completely officially, in the name of the party, one of the Chinese Stalinists, Bo Ku, did not hesitate to demand that the Chi'ang Kai-shek government should condemn to death and execute this man, who had been one of the founding fathers of the C¹Chinese Revolution.

Chen Duxiu was a historic personage: a scholar, the creator of the modern Chinese language, a writer, and a militant who had nourished with his ideas the uprising of the intellectual youth in China. Even more, he was the founder and the first leader of the Communist Party in his country². His exclusion from the Chinese Communist Party in 1929 had not succeeded in cutting him off from the leading elements. They had been through the period when he led the party, and who at least retained their respect for him. He had admirers and, on occasion, protectors high up in the nationalist spheres. However, his release in September 1937 did not have any important consequences. It was a completely secondary event in Chinese political history. But it was the spark that led to the explosion of a serious crisis in the ranks of the Chinese section of the old Left Opposition, which had become the "Movement for the Fourth International" in 1936. Chen had founded and led

this organisation from the beginning of the 1930s up to the time of his arrest.

Here we have tried, if not to explain this development, at least to trace its outline so that the facts may be known.

AN ISOLATED LEADER

O REVOLUTIONARY ORGANISATION, fraction or group can be thought of as a paradise peopled by individuals whose mutual relations are full of generosity and understanding. Still less likely is that possibility when the organisation finds itself, even for a moment, in opposition to the movement of the masses, isolated and persecuted. Damien Durand has shown how much discontent was aroused in the ranks of the Left Opposition supporters when Chen Duxiu joined it. For the most part, they identified the former General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party with the policy which had been applied when he was in control during the decisive years of the Second Chinese Revolution. In fact that policy had been dictated by the Communist International. The "Left" Oppositionists, like the Stalinists, regarded Chen Duxiu as being a "right-ist". They tended to devise "opportunist" conceptions which they attributed to him as being one of the factors in the decisive defeat of the revolution, and his party.

The old militant much appreciated Trotsky's warmth in accepting his declaration, and Trotsky's appeal that the Chinese section of the Left Opposition should be constructed around him. It was a turn of fortune after years of humiliation. At that time Chen had not respected the feelings of those of his opponents and critics who found themselves thus disavowed in a way which they found completely surprising.

But his opponents did not cease their opposition to him, especially the most convinced, Liu Renjing³. Liu felt that his ambitions were set back when Chen Duxiu joined in 1929. He was relegated to the fringes of the organisation by his permanent dislike of Chen, his open

fractionalism and his disillusionment. Len
Renjing tried to recover his position after Chen
Duxiu was arrested. On this point, his
correspondence with the international secretariat
and Trotsky is eloquent. He is the candidate for
the succession. Nonetheless there were
considerable obstacles. First, the Opposition was
severely repressed and saw its forces melt away.
Then the handful of cadres, disciples and
collaborators of Chen Duxiu, who formed the
replacement leadership in the underground,
isolated the man who always bore proudly the
pseudonym of Liel Shih which, he said, had been
given him by Trotsky himself.

The arrival in China of two foreigners and their intervention in the political life of the Chinese Trotskyists was one piece of good fortune. They were Harold R Isaacs, the American, and C Frank Glass, a South African⁴. Isaacs was a journalist who edited China Forum. He had been a sympathiser with Stalinism but broke with the Stalinists in 1932 on precisely the question of the slanders which the Stalinist leaders wanted him to print about Chen Duxiu. He had already been very critical of the Communist International's policy in connection with Germany. He had read Trotsky and had then turned towards the Trotskyists. This was the period in which he conceived the project of writing a history of the Chinese Revolution, and hired Liu Renjing as a confidential translator. At the same time they recruited a small group of students in the University of Peking, Liu Lialiang, Sze Chaosheng, Wang Shupen and Fu Hang³. They wanted to make these the cadres of the future. Their nucleus was strongly reinforced by the arrival of C Frank Glass, a correspondent in China and the American Press. After leaving the Ccommunist Party, Glass had been a leader of the Left Opposition in South Africa for several years.

At a general members meeting on January 13, 1935, the group of new disciples of Liu was strong enough to be able to insist on the election of a provisional Central Committee in which its members occupied posts of command. This

victory was the revenge of Liu Renjing, whose document Five Years of the Chinese Left Opposition, drafted while he was staying with Isaacs, formed the basis of the new orientation and the severe condemnation of Chen Duxiu which it implies. The new leadership was barely yet grasping the levers of command of the small organisation, numbering hardly more than a hundred members. Still under the inspiration of Liu, it began to settle accounts with Chen Duxiu. They launched very banal and highly debateable against him: "opportunism" to be sure, but also "... slandering the Chinese Red Army. The Central Committee voted a resolution calling upon him to recognise his mistakes on pain of exclusion. The "Old Guard" - at least what was left of it, in particular Chen Qizhang and Yin Kuan⁶ — protested against alien methods, at any rate methods hitherto unknown in the organisation. The two veterans were excluded on the spot. Were they moving towards the liquidation of the Chinese section under the form of a sect with Zinovievist morals, by way of this "Bolshevisation" in the Stalinist sense of the term?

The consequences lasted a long time. Trotsky heard quite quickly about what had happened. Isaacs had visited him at Honfoss to discuss his book and they discussed at length the history of Communism in China, Chen Duxiu and the positions of Liu Renjing. Trotsky was not convinced by the arguments of his young visitor that Chen was a "traitor". Soon it was the young American whom Trotsky convinced that Liu's line was sectarian and his pretensions ridiculous. At the moment when this discussion was developing, a new blow of repression hit the young, inexperienced leadership in China. It was ill-prepared and already penetrated by government agents. All the "young" were arrested one after another, Liu among them, in the summer of 1935.

Although not improbable in the circumstances, it is surprising that the consequences of the split which had happened some months earlier were very quickly overcome. Glass had been duly

warned. He had become more experienced and better acquainted with the Chinese scene. He adopted the pseudonym Li Furon and undertook to put the pieces together again, with the support of the conciliator Chen Qizhang. This was despite the initial reservations of others of the older generation, such as Wang Fanxi⁷ who had been liberated from prison. It was especially, despite the resolute hostility which Chen Duxiu, in prison, held against those whom he called the "hairy men". By this he meant the foreigners whom he possibly regarded as being a Trotskyist repetition of the people like Borodin ⁸ and the other emissaries.

The frankness and good faith with which Glass worked finally overcame all the obstacles. Everyone recognised that Liu Renjing had been bluffing when he represented Glass as an "emissary" of the International Secretariat and took advantage of his lack of familiarity with China to pass off his own politics by way of Glass. Even Chen Duxiu agreed to recognise the re-organisation and the reconciliation which Glass achieved.

At the end of 1936 a "Provisional Central Committee" of the Chinese section was formed in Shanghai Not only Li Furen and Chen Qizhang were to be found there, but also Yin Kuan and Jian Chen-tong. Wang Fanxi was back in jail. This was a leadership which Chen Duxiu formally recognised9. But new divergences and in other ways more serious ones, arose with the outbreak off the Sino-Japanese War. Already, in the course of the preceding months, the "old guard" of the leadership and especially Chen Qizhang were expressing the wish to place the Japanese aggression at the centre of their politics. In summer 1937, Glass was meeting Trotsky at Coyoacan 10 and spoke to him of a proposal by Chen Qizhang about taking part in creating patriotic, anti-Japanese societies throughout China on the model of the Committee of National Safety. We know that Chen, in jail, had taken a firm stand in favour of a "patriotic" orientation of this type. At the base of the organisation, on the other hand, there were

tendencies rather to consider as a major political crime any policy which would imply showing confidence in the Kuomintang government, which had slaughtered the revolution in 1927—and even on the occasion of a war against Japanese imperialism, which, moreover, they did not believe the Kuomintang to be able even to give the appearance of waging.

So the rumours about Chen's "opportunism" were re-doubled. They were fed by the theses which he developed in prison and sent to his comrades. In 1936, immediately after the first Moscow Trial, he proposed, for example, to call into question the Trotskyist characterisation of the USSR as a degenerated workers' state. He stressed that in the USSR the working class had been driven completely out of the state apparatus. He proposed the new definition "bureaucratic state". Some months later, in a study devoted to the development of democracy, he attacked the traditional conception of democracy as a form of class domination of the bourgeoisie. Democracy as an indicator of the character of a state (progressive or reactionary) did not, in his opinion, have a class character of its own. The Central Committee directed Wang to prepare a reply, which was to be published, along with Chen Duxiu's text, in the same issue of the theoretical review Huo Hua. But a wave of new repression cut this discussion short.

THE RELEASE OF CHEN DUXIU: A POLITICAL CRISIS

the great movements of armies, began in July 1937. Trotsky reacted immediately. A press statement announced that the Trotskyists throughout the world were on the side of China and the Chinese people in the just, revolutionary war against Japanese imperialism. A few days later, immediately after Japanese planes had heavily bombed Nanking, the Kuomintang authorities (who in any case were under pressure from the movement in favour of the political prisoners) decided to liberate all the political detainees who were sentenced to less than fifteen years. Between August and November the

Trotskyists were freed. Among them Chen Duxiu came out at the beginning of September, after more than five years' imprisonment.

We do not know much about his first contact only by letter — with his comrades in the leadership then located in Shanghai. We know only that it was a catastrophe. When Chen Duxiu came out of prison, he was invited to write articles and contributions to the press. He did so, explaining that he was speaking only for himself and confined himself to the theme of the patriotic war. The majority of the leaders of the section formed the opinion that the old man, on this occasion, had developed opportunist positions with regard to the Kuomintang and its government. Liu Renjing was also liberated. He bombarded Shanghai and the International Secretariat with letters denouncing the opportunism and the capitulation of Chen Duxiu. It was not yet known that Liu himself had allied himself to the political principles of the Kuomintang while in prison and must be regarded as a capitulator! We do not know in what terms the Central Committee replied to Chen Duxiu, but whatever they were filled him with fury. From then on it is clear that he regarded them as hopeless sectarians. In reality, the Shanghai comrades and even the faithful Chen Qizhang had at least certain reservations. But Chen Duxiu regarded a man like Liu Jialiang, one of Liu's "young men" as laying down the law in the Central Committee. He did not want to have relations with them.

Instead of re-joining his comrades in the organisation at Shanghai as they expected, Chen Duxiu then turned his back on them. He left Nanking to go to Wuhan, which had become the capital of China. There he renewed contact with a number of his old personal acquaintances, such as the writer Hu Shi, 11 one of the jewels of the Kuomintang, and also with leaders of the Chinese Communist Party, such as Ye Jiangying and especially Dong Biwu 12, who came to visit him shortly after his arrival. Was he really seeking conditions which would have enabled an authentic "united front" agreement to be reached

to make war on imperialist Japan? This is not only possible but probable. But we do not know anything about the initiatives, if he did take them, apart from his articles and his lectures to students. We know only that those who might have been his partners were unwilling, and let this be known.

Among the "Old Bolsheviks" of the Left Opposition who were more or less isolated since the organisation plunged into total clandestinity, one of the most important was the engineer, Luo Han¹³ who still had many friends in the Communist Party. He had been particularly pleased by Chen Duxiu's articles and, it seems, had seen an appeal for the formation of a huge gathering, independent of the Kuomintang, of all the working class and democratic forces hostile to Japan. He talked about this immediately to his old friend Ye Jiangying, who insisted that these propositions must be submitted to Mao Zedong personally. Luo Han accordingly went to Sian, where he was received by another old comrade, the regional leader of the party, Lin Boqu¹⁴. The latter at once sent a special messenger to Mao in Yennan with Chen's articles, accompanied by the proposals of Luo Han. Mao Zedong's reply was laconic but full of meaning: before Chen Duxiu could think of collaboration with the Chinese Communist Party, he must recognise his mistakes and abjure Trotskyist treachery. Chen Duxiu was extremely angry when he heard about this approach which he had not been consulted about. Meanwhile, the Shanghai leadership saw in this episode a supplementary proof of the "equivocal" character of the positions of Chen.

Following the liberation of Chen's companions, the leadership of the section had been reorganised. Two leading comrades had joined it whom Chen regarded as personal enemies. These were his former collaborator, Peng Shutzi, with whom his relations had been very bad in jail¹⁵, and the "young", former disciple of Liu Renjing, Liu Jialiang. The documentation discovered at Harvard, the letters and reports, reveal that these comrades actually had no serious documentation about Chen Duxiu's activities after the first

unfortunate contact. They had summaries or reports about his articles, and some of these appear from all the evidence to have been inspired by Liu Renjing. They had nothing but press clippings, whose reliability could not be guaranteed, of two speeches at the YMCA. They seemed also to believe that Chen Duxiu was restricting his contacts to the milieu of the Kuomintang and of the Chinese Communist Party. In fact, he was receiving visitors, two at least of whom were old Trotskyists. One of these was Wang Fanxi, who has left us an account of his visit, and the other was Bo Detsi. 16

According to Wang's account, Chen did not believe that the revolution could come out of the war in China, at least to the extent that the Kuomintang opposed it. He thought that they could not look forward to movements of the working-class, because it was broken up by the collapse of industry and destroyed by defeat and repression. On the contrary, he expected explosions and outbursts of anger and discontent from the peasantry. The only problem was to know who would lead these outbursts. The only solution, in his eyes, was the formation of a "bloc" on a broad democratic programme, independent of the Communist Party and the Kuomintang. It would set itself the aim, among others, of infiltrating the armed forces which were waging the war of resistance, in order to link them with the peasant mobilisation and even to help it to express itself.

He was completely and even violently hostile to the leaders of the Chinese section, both for the personal reasons of which we are aware, and especially for political reasons. In his eyes they were sectarians, who were incapable of abandoning the ready-made formula which served them in place of thinking and simply of seeing changing reality. He told Wang that the people who were leading the section, sitting in a room in the international concessions, were in reality able only to comment and not to act. Their conception of the party journal would come down to "a pathetic party journal" in the course of experience ... His argument no doubt

had some effect, because Wang, whose ideas were a long way away from Chen's, confesses when writing years later that Bu and he were impressed by Chen's militant way of taking up the question of how to carry on mass work.

At the same time, Chen Duxiu revealed to his two comrades the concrete plan with which he hoped to associate them and which seems never to have reached the ears of the leaders of the Fourth International, neither in Shanghai, nor in Europe nor in America. In fact, he was in continuous and confidential relations with a "Left" general named He Jifeng, 17 commander of the 179th division of the 29th Army. He regarded Chen as his master-mind and was ready to collaborate politically very closely with him. Chen Duxiu hoped that Wang and Bu would accept He Jifeng's proposal and control the work of political education in his division. The four men were agreed that a programme of agrarian reform, even a limited one, would guarantee a real mobilisation of the peasants, which was the condition to real military effectiveness - and that a divisional commander could try to play such a role.

However, they were mistaken on this point. Was it one of detail? The affair failed thanks to the secret services. He Jifeng was removed from his command even before he had taken it up, while he was still convalescing. This was the set-back of one of the first serious attempts by the Trotskyists to take up an independent position in the armed struggle against Japan. The two others which are known — that of the former student Wang Qangyao in Shantung, and that of the worker, Chen Zhungxi, who became chief of the peasant guerrilla force in Changsha¹⁸ — arose independently of the activity of Chen Duxiu. Chen was also soon to experience a second setback in his attempt to form a "bloc" with the parties known as "democratic", the "third party" and the alliance for salvation. Without doubt, the sole result of these initiatives in this area was to unleash a virulent, murderous offensive by the Communist Party, which evidently was more pre-occupied with the activity and the gestures of Chen Duxiu that with those of the Shanghai leadership.

In fact, from the end of 1937 the Chinese section of the Fourth International was once again plunged into grave crisis. This was due to the divergences on the question of the war and the attitude towards the government. It was aggravated by the positions which Chen Duxiu took up. Some of those who supported him, in particular the members of the Liu - Han "bloc", Han Chun¹⁹, the patron of the organisation in Shanghai itself and Liu Jialiang, explained the quarrel as being one of "generations": They claimed to be expressing the will of the workers and of the "young comrades" when they denounced the opportunism of the "older generation", In their eyes, the best example of this was the development of Chen Duxiu. Wang Fanxi had come back to Shanghai after his stay with Chen, and went through this crisis firmly refusing to accept this criterion of "generations". He summed up the positions of the three fractions at the time in the following terms:

"In general, there were three political positions: that of Chen Duxiu, which can be defined as unconditional support of the war of resistance; that of Zheng Zhaolin, who opposed any support for the war, arguing that the Sino-Japanese conflict was from the beginning an integral part of the new world war; and the position of the overwhelming majority of Chinese Trotskyists, which can be summed up as support for the war and criticism of the leadership." 20

But in this crisis no less than in others, Trotsky refused firmly to accept the accusations that were hurled at Chen Duxiu. At the beginning, he was disturbed that Liu Renjing (whose disciples, like Liu himself, knew and admitted that he had capitulated to the Kuomintang in prison) continued to write letter after letter against Chen, swelling the dossier in the hands of his enemies in the organisation. Trotsky, for his part, decided not to answer these letters. As he said, he "was not too sure that Liu was not playing a double

game". 21. He went even further in a letter to Glass:

"I understand perfectly that Chen Duxiu remains very prudent as regards our section. He is too well known in the country, and his every step is watched by the authorities. It is certain that there are agents-provocateurs especially Stalinists, ie GPU agents, in the ranks of our Chinese section. Chen could easily be implicated in some infamous frame-up, which could be fatal for him and prejudicial to the Fourth International". 22

Trotsky was convinced that Chen Duxiu's life was in danger. He suggested that everything should be done to try to get him to emigrate, preferably to the USA. Trotsky's determination once more influenced the organisation. After the fractional struggle between the "young" and the "old" had been quietened down, a supplementary effort was made in the direction of Chen Duxiu. In the face of the insistence of Trotsky and the Fourth International, and in order to get round the total breakdown of postal communications between Shanghai and Sichuan, where Chen Duxiu had retired after his set-back and after he had been prohibited from writing in the press, the Central Committee decided to send Chen Qizhang to see him, in order to have the necessary political discussion with him and to ask for his agreement to be prepared to leave China. The choice of the messenger is clearly a guarantee that the intentions of those who sent him were sincere.

According to reports and notes, the mission was successfully carried out between October 1938 and January 1939. Chen Qizhang's journey was full of difficulties, but he arrived in the first week of November at the village in Sichuan where his old comrade was living. He spent ten days with Chen and returned after having spent altogether three months on roads and rivers. His mission was a great success. In fact, Chen Duxiu agreed voluntarily to go abroad, because that seemed to him to be the only way to break out of the isolation to which he was reduced. In a declaration dated November 3 1938, he stated his

personal, political position as a Trotskyist militant, who is a critic of the leadership of his organisation.²⁴ Trotsky openly rejoiced in a letter to Frank Glass:

"I am very glad that our old friend remains politically a friend despite some possible divergences, which I cannot now appreciate with the necessary precision. Of course, it is very difficult for me to form a precise opinion about the politics of our comrades, on the degree of their ultra-left-ism and therefore on the correctness of the severe criticisms which our old friend levels at them. Nonetheless, the essence of this declaration seems to me to be correct. and I hope that, on this basis, permanent collaboration will be possible." 25

Trotsky was to receive one more letter from Glass, telling him that the Kuomintang government was determined not to let Chen Duxiu leave China. Trotsky was to hear no more of him until his death.

THE FINAL BREAK

HEN DUXIU'S SPLIT from the Fourth International came nearly at the end of his life. Already, by all the evidence, the link between them was beginning to break at the moment of the great crisis, immediately after the Hitler - Stalin Pact, when, through the war in the Pacific, the Sino-Japanese War was integrated in the Second World War. The discussion raged in the Chinese section in 1940 - 41. One tendency, known as the "Left" and led by Wang Fanxi, argued that with the entry of Great Britain and the USA into the war, the war against Japan had become an imperialist war. They must revert to "revolutionary defeatism" in China. Peng Shutzi denounced this attitude, which he regarded as "ultra-left". He supported the traditional positions of the movement towards the antiimperialist war of China and necessary "defence of the USSR".

For Chen Duxiu who, as we have seen, did not believe that the revolution would come out of the war, it was necessary to choose the "lesser evil" in the approaching world conflict. In this case, he regarded the "lesser evil" as being the camp of the democracies, which contained the possibility of the revolution, as against fascism, which wanted to destroy this possibility. He therefore proposed the abandonment of "defeatism" for democratic countries such as France and Great Britain, and likewise came out against the defence of the USSR, which he regarded as no longer a workers' state.

The old revolutionary was trying to draw the lessons of the cruel history which was the history of his times. He believed that one must honestly and sincerely recognise the failure of the revolution to create a workers' state in backward countries. On that matter he wrote:

"If there does not exist a people's democracy, the regime which claims to be that of the people or the dictatorship of the proletariat will inevitably degenerate into being administered by a small number of people like Stalin. Such is the inevitable tendency of things." 26

Nevertheless, he drew the conclusion from this set-back that the imperious necessity of internationalism must be re-affirmed:

"The true liberation of the peoples can be produced only at the same time as the socialist revolutions in the imperialist countries ... The one and only hope for a small, weak nation rests in co-operation with the oppressed workers of the whole world and the other oppressed nations."

27

In his opinion, it was necessary to fight for democracy for it to reach its full development under socialism.

None of the writings of Chen Duxiu which we know in the West from this last period permit him to be regarded as the renegade who abandoned the ideas of his whole life on the eve of his death. On this point, his friend Hu Shi, who wrote the preface to his last writings, defends the thesis that he went back to the principles of Sun Yat-sen. But does not carry

conviction, though his opinion has been widely relied on! The fact is that Chen Duxiu broke all organisational connection with the Chinese section immediately after its national congress in August 1941, where the final split was achieved between the factions of Peng and Wang — a year after Trotsky was assassinated.²⁸

Fundamentally, and without concealing that much of the evidence we need is lacking, let us recognise the temptation to agree with Wang Fanxi:

"The thought of Chen Duxiu in the last years of his life was already distant from Trotskyism ... but I was not alone in thinking that, if he had lived longer, he would certainly have gone further forward and, under the pressure of events, would have returned to Trotskyism". 29

Chen Duxiu's years were already numbered. He was old and weakened by his five years of hard prison regime. Moreover he suffered from incurable sclerosis. His old comrades retained contact with him to the end. They had the medicines which alleviated his condition sent from Hong Kong when they evidently could not be obtained in his Sichuan refuge. He died at Jiangchin on May 27, 1942. He was accompanied to his last resting place by three old friends of his generation, none of whom was a Trotskyist.

Like some others, he is a symbol of a generation — to which Trotsky also belonged — which carried the Communist International on its shoulders to storm heaven and then was crushed under the load of its degeneration ... a generation of which the old man of Sichuan was surely one of the most worthy representatives.

NOTES

- Chin Pangxien was also known as Bo Ku (1907 1946). He was one of the "twenty-eight Bolsheviks", these former Moscow students who were grouped around Wang Ming and whose role was decisive for the operation of "stalinising" the Chinese Communist Party. He would have been the General Secretary from 1932 to 1935 and died in an aircraft accident. The reference to the article in which he called for the death penalty for Chen Duxiu is given by Richard C Kagan in *The Chinese Trotskyist Movement and Ch'en To-hsiu: Culture, Revolution and Policy*, PhD, University of Pennsylvania, p 155
- Chen Duxiu, like Trotsky, was born in 1879.
 This great teacher and inspirer of the movement of the youth for revolt was, on May 4 1919, one of the first Chinese Communists. He was General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party and then one of the founders of the unified Chinese Opposition.
- Liu Renjing was born in 1899, studied at Peking and played a role in the movement of May 4, 1919. He joined the first Marxist group of Li Dazhao in 1920. He was one of the twelve delegates to the first congress of the Chinese Communist Party and then to the 3rd and 4th Congresses of the Communist International. He joined the Russian Left Opposition during his stay in Moscow in 1926-29, where he took the name Lensky. Returning home by way of France, he met Rosmer, who arranged for him a stay with Trotsky at Prinkipo. He wrote a short history of the Left Opposition in China.
- Harold R Isaacs (born in 1910) (I Loan in Chinese) lived in China from 1930 to 1933 and edited the *China Forum* up to the time of his break from the Communist Party in January 1934. He left China in 1935. C Frank Glass (born in 1901) arrived in China in 1932 and remained there, except for short periods, up to the beginning of the 1940s
- Liu Jialiang (1911 1950) was born in Kwangtung and became a Trotskyist at the beginning of the 1930s. He was imprisoned from 1933 to 1937 and interrupted all activity for reasons of health from 1942 to 1946. He

- took refuge in Hong Kong in 1949 and went to Vietnam in 1950. There he was arrested and murdered by the security police of Viet Minh. Sze Chaosheng converted to Buddhism after a long, hard imprisonment. Wang Shupen was executed in Kuomintang prison in 1949.
- Chen Qizhang (1905 1943) was born in Hunan and joined the Communist Party as a student in 1925. He was a party cadre and joined the Proletariat group. In 1932 he became one of the leaders of the Opposition. He was arrested under the Japanese occupation and died under torture.
 - Yin Kuan (born in 1900) came to Marxism as a worker-student in France. He was a leader of the Chinese Communist Party in the province of Anwei in 1925 27 and then joined the Proletariat group. He was in prison between 1932 and 1934 and again between 1934 and 1937. He disappeared in 1946 after being arrested by the Maoist police.
- Wang Fanxi (born in 1904) wrote the memoirs which are several times quoted in the article by Damien Durand. He settled in Britain in 1983.
- Michel Borodin (whose real name was
 Grusenberg) (1884 1951) was the envoy of the
 Communist Party of the Soviet Union to the
 Kuomintang and the official adviser of the
 Canton Government. He was charged with the
 application in China of the "opportunist" policy
 of Stalin and Bukharin
- Jiang Zhentong (born in 1906), a textile worker in Shanghai, was one of the leaders of the 1927 insurrection and later joined the Proletarian group. He was arrested by the secret police of Mao in 1952 and disappeared. Wang (op. cit. p 175) reports Chen's approval of this leadership.
- These matters are discussed at length in Cahiers Leon Trotsky, No 15.
- Hu Shi (1891 1962), a great teacher, friend of Chen Duxiu, member of the democratic opposition to Ch'iang Kai-shek, a man of great prestige, was ambassador of China to Washington from 1938 onwards.
- Ye Jiangying (born in 1898) a career officer in 1919 in the service of Sun Yat-sen. He was a

professor at the military academy of Huangpu (Whampoo), and joined the Communist Party in 1927. He took part in he Canton insurrection and then spent two years in the USSR. He became a Marshall, survived the cultural revolution, succeeded Lin Biao as a minister and retired from the army in 1978.

Dong Biwu (1886 - 1975) collaborated with sun Yat-sen in exile and was one of the twelve delegates to the first congress of the Chinese Communist Party. He lived in the USSR from 1927 to 1932 and then filled important posts at the head of the health service. He was a member of the Political Bureau and likewise survived the cultural revolution.

- Luo Han (1894 1939) the son of a peasant, studied engineering in France and became first an anarchist and then a Communist. He was a political commissar in the army at Canton up to March 1926, and went over to the positions of the Left Opposition while staying in Moscow. He spent two years in prison on his return to China, led the October group, and played an important role in the unification and financed the movement between 1932 and 1937. He was a military engineer and was killed in a bombardment.
- Lin Boqu (1896 1960) was a militant in the Kuomintang and a secret member of the Communist Party from its formation. He then lived in the USSR from 1926 to 1932. He took part in the Long March and was general secretary of the government after 1949.
- Peng Shuts (born in 1895) was the son of a peasant and became a Communist in 1920. He studied in Moscow from 1921 to 1924 and stayed in Moscow until 1925. He was a member of the Central Committee and of the Political Bureau and declared in March 1926 for withdrawing the Communists from the Kuomintang. He was sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment, reduced on appeal to eight. He was able to get to Europe in 1951.
- Bo Detsi (alias Xi Liu) (born in 1908) joined the Communist Party in 1926 and the Left Opposition in Moscow in 1928. He was arrested with Chen Duxiu and liberated in 1937."
- He Jifeng (1897 1980) became one of the most important military chiefs in the army of Ch'iang Kai-shek after world War II, and revolted against him in 1948. He was appointed to

- governmental responsibilities in the People's Republic of China.
- On Wang Qangyao, see Chinese Revolutionary: Memoirs 1919 - 1949, Oxford University Press, 1980, by Wang, p 275.

Chen Zhungxi (1908 - 1943) was a worker from Hong Kong and a Trotskyist from 1930. While a member of the Communist Party, he led a group of rural partisans in 1927. In 1943 he organised a group and was killed in battle.

- We know hardly anything about him, apart from his death in 1945.
- ¹ Wang, op. cit., p 228
- Letter from Trotsky to Glass, June 25, 1938, in Papers in Exile, bMSRuss 13 - 1, 8753.
- 1 Ibid
- Glass gives his account in a letter to Trotsky dated January 12, 1939, ibid. 10426.
- This declaration was sent to Trotsky by Frank Glass in his letter of January 19, 1939. See Cahiers Leon Trotsky, No 15, pp 102 105.
- Letter from Trotsky to Glass, February 25, 1939 (8254)
- Document quoted by R C Kagan, op. cit., p 137
- 1 Ibid
- ¹ Wang, op. cit., pp 235 236
- ¹ Ibid. p 239

