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I

The third Chinese revolution, initiated in 1949 by the overthrow of the Kuomintang regime, reproduced the dynamics of the 1917 Russian revolution on the vast scale of Asia. The new China became a powerhouse, extending the revolution to North Korea and North Viet Nam. It sparked colonial revolts in Southeast Asia that swept through the Middle East and into Africa. The revolution ended the political isolation of the Soviet Union, upset the capitalist world equilibrium and altered the relationship of world forces to the advantage of the nascent socialist order.

The second Chinese revolution of 1925-27 had been defeated primarily because of the opportunist, class-collaborationist policy which Stalin imposed on the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The CCP was subordinated to the Kuomintang, and the workers and the peasantry to the bourgeoisie. The resurgence of 1947-49 triumphed when the CCP, retaining its political independence, engaged in a struggle for power by revolutionary means, and proved itself an adequate instrument for the historic task.

II

Between the defeated revolution of 1925-27 and the revolutionary triumph of 1947-49 lay the protracted period of civil war and struggle to repel the Japanese imperialist invaders. After Chiang Kai-shek's forces, defeated in frontal warfare, had retreated to the West, a predominantly peasant army, operating in the countryside, under CCP leadership, continued the struggle. Peasants who could not otherwise have been mobilized rallied in support of the party policy that combined the fight against the invaders with the struggle against oppressive landlordism. Once mobilized, the peasantry proved to be an invincible force.

In the anti-Japanese war the CCP and its guerrilla armies gained the initiative and leadership. The party's forces grew swiftly. This determined to whom the victory would belong in the subsequently renewed civil war and struggle for power. Though the party leaders for a time entertained illusions about a coalition government, which did not and could not materialize, they did not repeat the Stalinist policy of subordinating their party to the Kuomintang. In the "Anti-Japanese United Front," the CCP leaders maintained the independence of their party. When the revolutionary tide rose towards its peak, Stalin continued to give official recognition to the Chiang Kai-shek government, but the CCP set a course toward the conquest of power.

III

From the revolutionary victory came the People's Republic of China. The CCP leaders characterized the new order as the People's

Democratic Dictatorship. With it re-emerged the old political formula, the "bloc of four classes," which in 1927 had served to conceal the subordination of the Communist Party to the Kuomintang. But it appeared this time in an entirely different situation. The "bloc of four classes" now became a political formula for the subordination of the national bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie to the alliance of workers and peasants, under the leadership of the working class. The "compradore" or "bureaucratic" capitalists, who were interlocked with the foreign imperialists and native landlords and had controlled the state power and monopolized economic life -- these had been vanquished together with the Chiang Kai-shek regime.

IV

A revolution is a process, not an event. This simple axiom has been most clearly demonstrated in China. After the victory of 1949, which overthrew the Kuomintang regime, expelled the imperialists and created the premises of national unification, the revolution progressed to successively higher levels. The new regime set out first to wrest all capital from the bourgeoisie and centralize the means of production in the hands of the state. Alongside of these measures there took place a step-by-step reorganization of agriculture.

The properties of the "compradore" capitalists, together with all Kuomintang state-owned enterprises, were confiscated. By 1952, the major part of industry, the banks, all the railways and most of the coastal and Yangtse shipping had become state property. Private enterprise remaining in the hands of the national bourgeoisie (medium and small capitalists) was encouraged to develop under government control. Unlike the young Russian Soviet Republic, where civil war necessitated total nationalization in order to secure militarily the power of the working class, China could afford to take more time. China's civil war had already been won. Capitalist ownership was allowed to operate under control of the new workers' state as a means of facilitating the restoration of a broken-down economy.

V

Meanwhile, the program of land reform proved a powerful engine of social change and economic progress. The peasants themselves had swung into action. They abolished landlordism, distributed the land to those who worked it and brought the countryside into the mainstream of social revolution. This was elemental democracy -- not the democracy of a debating society, but of great masses of the people in their everyday life.

With the basic premises of land reform and economic reconstruction thus assured, the CCP put forward its general line of transition to a socialist-type economy. Where private enterprises of the national bourgeoisie operated under government control, they were now to be converted gradually from capitalist ownership to ownership by the whole people, a "step by step abolition of systems of exploitation and the building of a socialist society." The transition was to be effected by means of "control exercised by administrative organs of state, the leadership given by state-owned economy, and supervision by the workers."

VI

In 1953 the first Five Year Plan was launched. Industrialization now became a prime objective. But the contradiction between the individual, small peasant economy and the needs of socialist industrialization came quickly to the fore. Though land reform was completed, the primitive farming techniques on fragmented holdings led to a new class differentiation in the countryside. Poor, middle and rich peasants reappeared. This promoted the growth of capitalist tendencies and undermined socialist planning. There arose an imperative need for rural reorganization. Industrialization required large-scale agriculture, the amalgamation of midget peasant plots into more efficient farm units. The Peking government accelerated the development of the agricultural producers co-operatives. But while collectivization alone could not notably elevate the technical level of agriculture, it was essential as a foundation for technical and cultural progress.

VII

Like industry, agriculture had to be subjected to state planning so that the production of food supplies and industrial crops could be regulated and agricultural surpluses made available to help supply capital for industrialization. In its turn, the real material basis for socialism could be provided only by a machine-building industry capable of the technical reorganization of agriculture. The interdependence of these two major sectors of the economy necessitated their simultaneous development. Collectivized agriculture furnished food and raw materials for the rapidly growing urban and industrial areas, while industry provided better tools and some mechanical implements to help elevate the technical level of agriculture. The alliance between workers and peasants was thereby strengthened.

Collectivization unfolded through a series of steps in which each new stage followed logically from the one preceding. These carried the peasantry from the early mutual aid teams, through the simple producers' cooperatives, to the socialist type cooperatives and finally the Communes, set up in 1958. Each stage provided sufficient time for verification and development to prove its progressively increasing value to the peasant, to agriculture and to society.

VIII

From the beginning the poor peasants were encouraged to take the lead in this profoundly revolutionary advance. It was they who formed the backbone of the peasants' associations. They received government loans, and, together with the lower middle peasants, they were relied upon to fight the rich peasants and spearhead the socialist reorganization; they remained firmly in the vanguard through its various stages. No rich peasants or former landlords were allowed to join the cooperatives until these were solidly established. Concretely, these measures illustrate the Peking policy of support to the poor peasants in building the alliance with the middle peasants. Not Stalin's policy was followed, but Lenin's, namely: "To succeed in achieving an alliance with the middle

peasants -- without for one minute renouncing the struggle against the kulak and always solidly supporting ourselves on the poor peasants."

An important reason for the success in transforming Chinese agricultural relations lies in the methods pursued by the Peking regime. They stand in sharp contrast to Stalin's collectivization, forced through by police terror against ferocious peasant resistance. Stalin's measures brought the Soviet Union to the brink of disaster. The CCP leaders used the methods of persuasion in order to enlist voluntary peasant cooperation.

A party directive, adopted December 1953, declared: "...they [the cooperatives] represent a transitional form through which the peasants can be induced to advance naturally and willingly to socialism." It stressed as a "basic principle" that the development "should be voluntary on the part of the peasants ... compulsion and commandism and expropriating the peasants' means of production are criminal acts ... blind, rash adventurism is totally wrong."

Mao Tse-tung characterized this rural reorganization as "spreading the very essence of socialism, that is, making the principle of linking the collective interest with the individual interest the touchstone by which all words and deeds are judged."

IX

Some pressure from above to achieve the rural reorganization may have been exerted through state control of supply and marketing. But actual coercion is unnecessary where people willingly cooperate. The fact is that initiative from below, from the peasants themselves, was constantly outrunning government expectations. Skeptical peasants were left alone until they saw the more effective work with better returns and then came along. Thus over and above the economic gains, there was human advance.

The greatest assurance to the peasants was the right to manage their own affairs. The democratic control established at the outset, when the peasants dealt harshly with the landlords, was continued. It is maintained in the rural people's communes. These are self-governing politico-economic units. Each commune plans and carries out its own public works, its own agricultural, industrial, commercial, housing, medical, welfare and other activities -- even including military training. While government administration and commune management are integrated, the communes are governed by elected councils in which all but former landlords have the right to vote.

X

Advances from the smaller cooperatives to the rural people's communes provided that broader field required for the fullest mobilization of labor in order to raise agricultural production and carry out large-scale projects like conservation, irrigation and reforestation. Together with such large undertakings, the small and medium-sized industrial plants, promoted by the regime and sprouted by the communes, furnished correctives to the chronic underemployment for the rural population.

Surplus labor in the country found employment without migrating to the cities.

The rural industrial enterprises, sustained by local resources and supplying tools and materials for local needs, help fill the time gap until nationalized industry can provide the more complex implements of farm mechanization. More important, in these enterprises some of the agricultural labor force acquires technical skills indispensable to the growth of industrialization.

Above all, the communes have destroyed the outworn social and family relations that impeded progress. Opening up a broad road leading away from medieval barbarism to modern civilization, they have rescued great masses from the scourge of hunger, while assuring productive increases in farming and the completion of vital public works. This economic and social yardstick is for historical materialists the basic measure of progress.

XI

The peasants entered the cooperative labor force of the communes as wage workers. A social transformation of profoundly deep-going consequences thus occurred in the countryside. Transcending the achievements of the original land reform which destroyed feudal land relationships, this transformation signified the disappearance of the peasantry as a property-owning class.

The preponderant role of the workers' state in all phases of economic life, the nationalized property relations, state planning and industrialization, together with the elimination of private proprietorship in land and the launching of the communes -- all these factors provide the foundation for the socialist structure of the new China. On this foundation a new culture is arising -- a new age of science and technology, of the development of the arts, the banishment of ignorance and oppression, and the narrowing of the age-old cultural gulf between city and country.

XIII

Marrxists have generally assumed that the peasantry because of its intermediate and dependent social position, its cultural backwardness and its individualistic proprietary characteristics, is unable to play any leading independent political role. "But Marxism," as Trotsky once observed, "never ascribed an absolute and immutable character to its estimation of the peasantry as a non-socialist class ... The very nature of the peasantry is altered under altered conditions." Trotsky noted the great possibilities discovered by the Bolshevik regime for influencing the peasantry and for re-educating it, and he added the significant remark: "History has not yet plumbed to the bottom the limits of these possibilities."

The Chinese revolution has probed deeply into these possibilities. In the civil war and anti-Japanese struggle the peasants played a political role independent of the landlords and the bourgeoisie. In

fact, the Chinese Red Army, the revolutionary military power designed and assembled by the CCP, was overwhelmingly peasant.

As early as 1927, in his "Report on an Investigation into the Peasant Movement in Hunan," Mao Tse-tung predicted: "In a very short time in China's central, southern and northern provinces, several hundred million peasants will rise like a tornado or tempest, a force so extraordinarily swift and violent that no power, however great, will be able to suppress it. They will break all trammels that now bind them and rush forward along the road to liberation..."

Hardly - Mao argued
it on his defeated
factional opponents.

The CCP accepted this estimate. It organized and it led the peasant uprising. A communist-led peasantry became the predominant force of the revolution. History showed once again that every social revolution creates its own unique forms and methods of expression, of struggle and of development.

XIII

While the peasants became the great battering ram, the CCP did not overlook the leading role of the working class and the importance of struggle in the cities. Shortly after Mao Tse-tung made his prediction about the peasant rising, he wrote a letter on behalf of the Front Committee to the party center, April 1929, in which he declared:

"Proletarian leadership is the sole key to the victory of the revolution ... It is therefore a mistake to abandon the struggle in the cities ... For the revolution in a semi-colonial China will fail only if the peasant struggle is deprived of the leadership of the workers."

This conception of working class hegemony in the revolution was reaffirmed at the national party conference held in Yen-an in 1937. Explaining that China would reach the stage of socialism only by going through that of bourgeois democratic revolution Mao insisted that this "bourgeois democratic revolution can be completed not under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, but only under the leadership of the proletariat."

A declaration by Mao Tse-tung stated this policy of the CCP more explicitly, in June 1949, as the party prepared to take full state power:

"The leadership of the working class is necessary because it is the most far-sighted, just, unselfish and richly endowed with revolutionary thoroughness. Without its leadership the revolution is bound to fail, and with the leadership of the working class the revolution is victorious. In the era of imperialism no other class in any country can lead to revolutionary victory."

XIV

To carry this concept into practice the party adopted a resolution stating that, henceforth, "The center of gravity of the work of the party must be placed in the cities." As the cities were liberated from

Kuomintang rule, workers joined the CCP in large numbers. In 1950 it was decided to halt peasant recruitment and concentrate exclusively on recruitment of workers.

From this point onward the workers were considered the key factor in the constellation of political power; they were treated accordingly and they acted accordingly. China's ability to industrialize depended in large measure on their discipline and initiative. Special steps were taken to provide educational facilities for them and their children and to keep the ladder to technical, intellectual, political and managerial advancement open. A system of workers' participation in the administration of production was set up in all state enterprises under "the leadership of management." Simultaneously, the peasants were advancing step by step toward the socialist transformation of agricultural relations. Abundant labor power available in urban and rural areas was converted into the capital of China's socialist future.

XV

The energy, ingenuity and inspiration unleashed by the revolution promoted a socialist consciousness among the masses. They not only welcomed, but they demanded, and themselves undertook, the most decisive shake-up and abolition of capitalist property in city and village. In its forward surge, the mass movement exerted pressure and checked party tendencies toward class conciliation. The CCP not only rode, but as its policies show, tried to guide the revolutionary wave, with which it was compelled to keep pace. This reciprocal relationship between party and class has been a decisive feature of the Chinese revolution. The CCP, by its leadership of the revolution, from the overthrow of the Kuomintang through all the subsequent stages of social transformation, played and still plays a revolutionary role. This being so, we cannot continue to assert that the revolution was "deformed" by CCP leadership and that the state which emerged from the revolution is a "deformed workers' state."

XVI

Every social revolution creates its own forms of state power, suited to its particular tasks and to the conditions of its development. China is no exception. To slap the label "Stalinist" on the Peking regime because it arose from a revolution led by the CCP would amount to endowing Stalinism with a quality of permanence it does not possess. This parasitic growth originated and developed in a period of revolutionary retreat. It could not arise out of conditions of revolutionary advance.

Relations between the Peking regime and the people have been determined by the process of revolution -- above all, by the continuous revolutionary advance. The class foundation for this relationship has been the alliance of workers and peasants under the leadership of the workers. The Peking government bases itself, first and foremost, on the working class and is supported by an overwhelming majority of the population.

XVII

When assuming state power the CCP leaders maintained their view that the Chinese revolution would be consummated in two stages -- the bourgeois-democratic and the socialist. The first task of the new state was to carry through the historically belated bourgeois-democratic revolution: overthrow of the Kuomintang, expulsion of the imperialists, national unification, land reform. This democratic stage grew logically and without pause into the socialist stage, affirming in life the "permanency" of the revolution.

XVIII

The Peking government is a highly centralized regime and as such displays bureaucratic tendencies -- arbitrariness and commandism. But there is not in China a BUREAUCRACY such as developed in the Soviet Union under Stalin, a hardened social formation of a parasitic character, consuming an inordinate share of the national product, standing above the people -- a social formation of the type that crystallized in the Soviet Union in a period of revolutionary retreat. China is a workers state with "bureaucratic distortions" in the sense that Lenin applied this definition to the Soviet state during its formative years.

The CCP leaders always closely identified themselves with the people and proved responsive to the needs and demands of the masses. In the planning and promotion of a new social order there was and there is collaboration between government and people. The democratic tendency also appears in the armed defense of the revolution. Peking did not hesitate to arm the people and establish a militia in which millions of young men and women serve on a basis of equality. The same democratic tendency occurs in the rural communes, self-governing socio-economic units. In industry, the workers take part in the formulation and execution of productive plans and have unions to defend their interests. Thus the relationship between government and people is similar to that in Cuba, where we hold the Castro regime to be democratic although "lacking as yet the forms of democratic rule."

XIX

Our party's 1955 resolution ("The Third Chinese Revolution and Its Aftermath") had one positive merit: It designated China a workers state, obligating the party to defend this state against imperialist intervention and internal counter-revolution. In all other important respects the resolution has been proved invalid, particularly in its prediction of an inevitable collision between the Peking regime and the peasantry.

A turn is imperative. The program and slogan of the political revolution, which flowed from our false conception of the Peking regime as "Stalinist," must be discarded in favor of critical support to the regime and backing for its basic policies, both domestic and international. This does not exclude, but rather implies, criticism of all bureaucratic manifestations and stress on the need for democratization in every phase

of government and society, to be achieved by peaceful reform, not by the overthrow of the Peking government.

XX

In the ideological dispute between Peking and Moscow we must also take a stand on the side of Peking. This dispute arises directly out of the uninterrupted revolutionary advance in China, contrasted with the bureaucratic conservatism of the Kremlin rulers. The Peking-Moscow dispute has material roots that go back to the beginning of the Peking regime in 1949. Among them we may note: (1) The reluctance of the Kremlin to return or make restitution for industrial machinery looted from Manchuria in the closing days of World War II; (2) Soviet tardiness in withdrawing its occupation forces from Port Arthur and Dairen; (3) Kremlin failure to give maximum economic aid to China -- still a cause of strained relations. The CCP justifiably demands that aid to revolutionary China should be given precedence over aid to former imperialist colonies now ruled by their national bourgeoisie.

The material conflicts between Peking and Moscow lead directly into the ideological dispute and serve to illuminate it. While the guide-lines of Moscow policy are those of bureaucratic conservatism, those of Peking conform closely with the principles of revolutionary internationalism.

XXI

The needs and interests of the continually developing Chinese revolution cannot be adjusted to the Kremlin policy of peaceful co-existence with imperialism. This is a major factor in the conflict between Peking and Moscow. China's position in Asia, where it is surrounded by the undeveloped world of which it is a part, dictates the necessity of extending the revolution. Peking's foreign policy has therefore included consistent and active support to revolutionary struggles by colonial peoples, especially in Southeast Asia and Korea, but even as far away as Algeria and Cuba. This cuts across the efforts of the Kremlin to reach a peaceful modus vivendi with imperialism, above all with the United States.

In the ensuing controversy, the CCP leaders have advanced Marxist-Leninist positions on vital political questions: (1) The role of imperialism and the struggle against imperialist war; (2) the revolutionary or the parliamentary road to workers' power. Other contested questions flow directly from these two.

XXII

Without specifically naming the Kremlin rulers, the CCP rejected their contention that since Lenin's time there have been important changes that have outmoded his views on imperialism and war. "On the contrary," says the CCP, these changes "have more clearly confirmed the truths revealed by Lenin." They continue: "We believe in the absolute correctness of Lenin's thinking: War is an inevitable outcome of systems of exploitation and the imperialist system is the source of modern wars. Until the imperialist system and the exploiting classes

come to an end, wars of one kind or another will still occur." Therefore, "Marxist-Leninists must expose the absurdities of the imperialists and modern revisionists on these questions, eradicate their influence among the masses, awaken those they have temporarily hoodwinked and further the revolutionary will of the masses."

Regarding an alleged "peaceful" road to socialism, the CCP speaks in equally clear terms. It takes issue with the declaration of the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU to the effect that the increasing strength of the Soviet sector opens up possibilities of achieving socialism throughout the world by new "forms," including the conversion of parliament "from an organ of bourgeois democracy into an instrument of genuine popular will." This, say the Chinese, is "precisely what divides Marxists from revisionists." And they add: "The capitalist-imperialist system surely will not crumble of itself. It will be overthrown by the proletarian revolution within the imperialist country concerned, and the national revolutions in the colonies and semi-colonies."

Hence, contrary to the modern revisionists who seek to paralyze the revolutionary will of the people by empty talk about peaceful transition to socialism ... the proletariat must never allow itself to one-sidedly and groundlessly base its thinking, policy and its whole work on the assumption that the bourgeoisie is willing to accept peaceful transformation. It must at the same time prepare for alternatives: one for the peaceful development of the revolution and the other for the non-peaceful development of the revolution. Whether the transition will be carried out through armed uprising or by peaceful means is a question that is fundamentally ... determined only by the relative strength of class forces in that country in a given period."

XXIII

The stand of China's leaders is a development of great significance. It tends to accelerate the process of breaking bureaucratic rule in the Soviet Union by its challenge to the monolithic authority of the Kremlin bosses and its reassertion of the principles of socialist internationalism. Peking's policy has already borne fruit: it compelled the Kremlin to identify the Soviet Union with the Algerian independence movement, despite Moscow's policy of peaceful co-existence with French imperialism.

Peking's stand is proving a stimulus to the revolutionary re-orientation of communist-minded workers in the capitalist world as they reject the opportunism of the Kremlin and seek anew the path to the socialist revolution. We must not dismiss this ideological dispute as a mere quarrel between two groups of Stalinist bureaucrats. That would mean misreading all the signs and excluding ourselves from an important development. Instead we should take sides in the dispute, supporting the positions taken by Peking.

February 21, 1962.