

Xs: ... T.M.A., ...

Informations Ouvrieres, September 15-22, 1976

After the Death of Mao Tse-tung

(unsigned)

The death of Mao Tse-tung has led people to try to outdo each other in offering funeral eulogies, <sup>in</sup> to a unanimous chorus for the leader of the Chinese Communist Party of <sup>a</sup>praise that is no doubt without precedent. One of the common denominators in this posthumous homage is the exclusion of the masses of Chinese workers and peasants from any decisive role in the great upheavals and profound social transformations China has experienced and with which Mao's name is certainly bound up. Mao's activity is ~~is~~ supposed to explain everything, "the <sup>man</sup> who gave their national dignity to more than 800 million human beings in Asia." This formula, used by the editorialist in Echos of September 10, is repeated with variations in many commentaries.

However, if only yesterday China was prey to all the imperialist powers who divided it up among themselves, and today it is a sovereign and united nation, if hunger is no longer the lot of the overwhelming majority of its population, if

the domination of the landlords and the moneylenders has been broken, along with that of imperialism, this is the result of a revolutionary process that developed over many years, involving the struggle of tens of millions of human beings. Not even the most idolatrous could reduce this process simply to the actions of the "great helmsman."

So, at the risk of striking a jarring note in the midst of the funeral eulogies, we prefer to assess the political role played by the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and Mao Tse-tung at the crucial moments in this revolutionary process, rather than repeat a gilded legend as others do.

Observing the recent political developments in China, one <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~ compelled to <sup>say that</sup> ~~say~~ even before Mao's physical departure <sup>r</sup> a period opened which he no longer dominated. The violence of the attacks against Teng Hsiao-p'ing, which have grown sharper in the immediate past despite the purge of the <sup>chief</sup> "revisionist" ~~in~~ <sup>chief</sup>, the suddenly uncontrolled character of the demonstrations in <sup>p</sup> April that took place under the pretext of honoring Chou En-lai, are evidence of a <sup>little</sup> ~~post-Mao~~ war of succession. This is

a struggle that cannot remain confined to the rival cliques  
but which will see the workers seek to <sup>assert</sup> affirm their own interests,  
independent of the different factions of the apparatus.

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The revolution of 1927

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From whence arise these conflicts, this crisis that  
shakes the very summits of the Chinese Communist Party?  
It cannot be understood except through an analysis of China  
more than twenty-five years after the entry into Peking of  
the revolutionary troops, as well as through an analysis of  
the conditions under which the ~~regime~~  
Chiang Kai-shek regime collapsed.

It seems necessary to remind many commentators -- in-  
cluding those who claim to stand for "proletarian revolution,"  
or even for the Fourth International -- that in 1925-27 the  
Chinese proletariat, which was beginning to draw the peasant  
masses behind it, took up a revolutionary struggle against the  
imperialists and the Chinese bourgeoisie, a revolutionary

struggle in which it formed unions and also tried to build soviets, like those that appeared in Russia in 1917. The young Chinese Communist Party (formed in July 1921) played an essential role in this mobilization, but was itself <sup>f</sup> directed by the leadership of the Communist International, then <sup>already</sup> controlled by the Stalin faction. It was this leadership that ordered them to follow a line of subordination to the "national bourgeoisie," that is, ~~to~~ to Chiang Kai-shek, a line that led to disaster and to the massacre of many working-class cadres. This was done in the name of the policy that had been espoused <sup>o</sup> by the Mensheviks and which Lenin had condemned from 1905 onwards, the policy of the "revolution by stages" (first a "bourgeois-democratic" stage, then the struggle for socialism).

The founder of the Chinese Communist Party, not Mao Tse-tung, but Ch'ien Tu-hsiu, at first blindly followed this policy, denouncing "Trotskyist adventurism." Later he had the rare courage to recognize his error and to point to Stalin's responsibility. He joined the Left Opposition. For this crime he is still banned from "official" history. It requires a

great deal of intellectual cowardice to fail even to note his existence today while singing the praises of Mao.

After the crushing defeat of 1927 -- which, in aggravating the isolation of the Soviet Union, was one of the factors in the growth of the Stalinist bureaucracy (which itself played an essential part in the defeat) -- the Chinese Communist Party reconstituted itself in the countryside, primarily as a military and administrative apparatus based on the local discontent in peasant areas that were in a chronic state of rebellion against the central power.

In the CCP leadership, the questions raised by the defeat and by the "official" version, which put all the blame on Ch'en Tu-hsiu, were not settled. Mao Tse-tung himself experienced these problems. The role he played in 1927 as organizer of the peasant unions led to an attempt to oust him from the leadership.

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A Stalinist policy

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However, the CCP maintained itself as a section of the

Stalinized Communist International, and it was in this framework that its leadership consolidated itself. The leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, and Mao with them, <sup>Endorsed</sup> ~~gave their support~~ to the monstrous Moscow trials.

In 1935, after the worldwide turn toward the "People's Front," the CCP sought an accord with Chiang Kai-shek in the name of the struggle against Japanese imperialism. It returned to the policy that had led to the defeat of 1927. It was Mao Tse-tung himself who intervened personally to secure the release of Chiang, who had been taken prisoner by a faction of rebellious officers. And the "anti-imperialist" accord that politically subordinated the CCP to the Kuomintang government was accompanied in the cities by the revival of the anti-working-class terror; trade unions were prohibited and strikes were punishable by death.

But the state of decay of Chiang Kai-shek's regime meant that the armed forces of the CCP remained under <sup>the CCP's</sup> ~~its~~ control: they were not integrated into the Kuomintang army.

The zones occupied by the CCP forces continued to escape the

imposition of the power of the central government.

~~At the end of~~ <sup>Following</sup> the Second World War, after the collapse of Japanese imperialism, it was not only the Chinese political scene that was radically upset. The relationship of <sup>class</sup> forces was altered on a world scale. Imperialism, with the cooperation of the Stalinist bureaucracy, was concerned above all with protecting its domination <sup>in</sup> Europe.

~~The~~ <sup>China's</sup> decayed regime of ~~Chiang~~ could not stand up against the mass mobilization. However, guided by the needs of the Kremlin bureaucracy, the CCP leadership tried desperately to find room for compromise. The advance of the class struggle, however, undermined all such possibilities.

The peasants began to mobilize, the cities were swept by ferment, strikes broke out. The regime disintegrated, leaving a void that was filled by the Chinese ~~as~~ CP.

The CCP leadership had to choose between a capitulation that would mean suicide and siding with the masses, <sup>who</sup> ~~which~~ would threaten <sup>it</sup> the very existence of Chiang's regime.

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The collapse of Chiang's regime

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Finally, against Stalin's orders, the CCP leadership "crossed the Rubicon," to use the expression of the American journalist Belden. In October 1947 it placed itself at the head of the agrarian revolution, which had already begun spontaneously. And, in 1948, it rejected a final unreasonable demand by Stalin that it renounce the offensive. In January 1949, Peking was taken. Chiang's government disintegrated before the onslaught of the agrarian revolution, just as the Thieu government in Vietnam did twenty-five years later. The CCP militarily and administratively filled the void left after the collapse of the <sup>a</sup>decaying regime.

The Chinese revolution constitutes a verification, not of Mao Tse-tung's <sup>2</sup>policy, which proclaimed the necessity of a bloc with the national bourgeoisie, but <sup>on the contrary</sup> of ~~the converse~~, of the theory of permanent revolution. The victories won by the Chinese proletariat are <sup>e</sup>inseparable from the international



revolutionary upsurge of the proletariat that marked the end of the Second World War.

[The bourgeois-democratic tasks (solution to the land question, national independence) were not ~~real~~ accomplished by pacts with imperialism and through ~~trust~~ <sup>agreements</sup> in the national bourgeoisie, which is tied to the ~~power~~ <sup>of</sup> imperialism, ~~as~~ as the Stalinist policy, defended by the CCP, envisages. They were accomplished by breaking with imperialism and defeating the national bourgeoisie. To accomplish these tasks it was necessary to destroy the bourgeois state, to abolish private property in the means of production, in a word, to enter into the proletarian revolution.

[The event of international significance <sup>represented by</sup> ~~which constitutes~~ the revolutionary victory of 1949 was foreseen <sup>as</sup> ~~and~~ a theoretical possibility and its content formulated by Leon ~~\*~~ Trotsky in 1938 in the Transitional Program:

[However, one cannot categorically deny in advance the theoretical possibility that, under the influence of completely

exceptional circumstances (war, defeat, financial crash, mass revolutionary pressure, etc.), the petty-bourgeois parties including the Stalinists may go further than they themselves wish along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie."

Going "further than they themselves wished along the road to a break with the bourgeoisie," the CCP leadership precipitated the collapse of Chiang Kai-shek's bourgeois regime and had to fill the political void by taking the power. ~~The~~ <sup>then</sup> class forces were stronger than its program. The agrarian reform deepened. The "national bourgeoisie" opposed the new regime, forcing it to expropriate the essential means of production. Imperialism mobilized militarily against the new government, and the Stalinist bureaucracy saw in the Chinese revolution a threat to the "national order" that it assiduously defended.

Certainly, even if circumstances determine ~~one's~~ <sup>one's</sup> choice, one is responsible for the choice he makes. The decision taken by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in October 1947 to ~~base~~ <sup>base</sup> support itself on the rising tide of the

revolution means that the name of Mao Tse-tung, as well as the other leaders of the CCP, is tied historically to that revolution. But strict respect for historical truth leads to recognizing that it was not on the basis of the policy put forward by the CCP leadership but rather in opposition to it, sweeping away all Mao's theoretical justifications for this policy (such as in his work, On New Democracy) that the working masses of China put an end to Chiang Kai-shek's dictatorship.

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The proletarian revolution has not been achieved in China

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The consequences of the defeat of 1927 remain inscribed on the form taken by the forward march of the proletarian world revolution in China. Chiang Kai-shek's defeat <sup>occurred</sup> ~~took the form~~ primarily <sup>as</sup> ~~of~~ the victory of a peasant army led by the CCP, a workers' party, over a collapsing regime. As the cities were conquered, the CCP apparatus that was set up opposed (including by repression) every expression of working-class

independence.

There was no formation of soviets. The new state was built up out of the apparatus of the CCP and its army. They were recognized by the masses as the leadership, but the masses did not have any means whatsoever to impose their own control or to make political decisions.

What characterizes the Chinese bureaucracy primarily is that it alone exercises political power. This is a typical case of a workers' state bureaucratized from its inception, unlike the workers' state in the USSR, which was founded on the dictatorship of the proletariat exercised by the soviets, soviets the bureaucracy had to destroy in order to usurp political power.

It was as a part of the world proletarian revolution that the Chinese revolution triumphed in 1949. This success was in fact a new victory of the October revolution.

But if the existence of the Russian workers' state, resulting from the October revolution, posed problems insoluble in the limits of Russia, the regime that arose in 1949 and in

which the proletariat had no means of exercising political power, <sup>was</sup> quickly ~~to run~~ up against greater domestic and international problems.

Today, a quarter century after the entry of the revolutionary armies into Peking, no one denies that a grave crisis is developing in China, shaking up the <sup>2</sup> summits of the party and the state. What is the content of this crisis? What are the opposing forces and what role did Mao Tse-tung play in all this? These are some of the questions to which we will offer a reply in a second article which will comment that were published in the United States in Intercontinental Press by in particular on the statements of Comrade Peng, one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party and the first of its leaders to join <sup>2</sup> the Left Opposition.

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