

Fifty Years of World Revolution

FIFTY YEARS
OF WORLD REVOLUTION
(1917—1967)

An International Symposium

Edited and with an Introduction by

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THE CHINESE AND INDOCHINESE REVOLUTIONS

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By Nahuel Moreno

It is not my purpose to argue whether the Chinese Revolution was more or less important than the Russian. At the same time they constitute without doubt the two transcendent revolutionary events of the century.

While the October Revolution began the epoch of world socialist revolution, the Chinese Revolution definitively broke the imperialist equilibrium. It temporarily transferred the center of the world revolution to the underdeveloped and colonial nations. It ended the isolation of the Soviet Union and thus posed the immediate possibility of a federation of Eurasian socialist states, a possible bridge to a world federation of socialist states. It forced Yankee Imperialism to develop a worldwide strategy to confront the colonial revolution. It indirectly produced two counterrevolutionary wars, the Korean and Indochinese. It has made the destruction of imperialism within its own borders, as the only way to avert a nuclear war, an urgent necessity on the world political agenda. Finally, it has posed the problem of problems, that of a unified strategy and organization by which the revolutionaries of the entire planet may confront imperialism.

The existence of People's China, with all of the crises and contradictions that the cultural revolution presents, again raises in all its acuteness the problem of the method and form of government most effective to cope with the transitional stage from capitalism to socialism, principally in the backward countries. And it demonstrates that there is no solution other than workers' democracy to avert or overcome grave economic, political, and cultural crises.

The present Vietnamese war, an indirect consequence of the Chinese Revolution, involves the fate of China and the world revolution. The Indochinese workers and peasants have demonstrated, arms in hand, that it is possible to face up to imperialism and to defeat it. This defeat will in all likelihood be the beginning of the end for imperialism.

I. The Chinese Revolution Is a Victory of the World Revolution As a Whole

The world revolution has followed an uneven and combined course. China, despite its colossal importance, is no more than a part of this process. For, contrary to what the heroic Chinese revolutionaries and the New Left which echoes them may think, the victory was not won only by the Chinese revolutionaries and the Chinese masses but by all the world's exploited. Without the consciously or unconsciously revolutionary action of the workers of the entire world, and principally those in the capitalist centers, it could not have triumphed. The history of the Yugoslav Communists has been repeated. Moshá Pijade wrote a pamphlet entitled *The Fable of Soviet Aid*, in which he proved that the Yugoslav Revolution got no aid from the USSR. The pamphlet that needs to be written about the victory of the Chinese and Yugoslav revolutions is not yet begun: the truth about the aid to them from the world revolution. When Mao and Giap, in accordance with protocol, say that they were victorious thanks to the aid they received from the USSR and the other socialist countries, they are telling a half-truth. It is the most pernicious of lies because it masks the crucial factor: the revolution or pressure of the Western masses.

The Second Chinese Revolution (1925-27) began as a reflection of the revolutionary upsurge in the period following the first world war and the Russian Revolution. The recession of the world revolution brought on the victory of Stalinism, and this produced the failure of the British General Strike and of the Chinese Revolution, which was moving toward a working-class seizure of power. From 1935 to 1939 there was a renewed revolutionary upsurge with the Spanish Civil War, the great French strikes, and the massive unionization of the industrial workers in the United States. In China the struggle against the Japanese invaders and the civil war formed part of this new upsurge. In contrast to the outcome in Western Europe, it was not defeated or derailed.

With the conclusion of the second imperialist world war, a new revolutionary upsurge began—touched off both by the spectacular crisis of imperialism and by the new revolutionary wave in Western Europe. The new civil war in China and the victory of the Third Chinese Revolution were directly related to this new upsurge. *Mao's triumph cannot be explained except by the revolutionary pressure of the European workers and the attitude of the Americans in the armed forces.*

The sectors of world imperialism that survived the crisis, and

Yankee Imperialism in particular, concentrated all their forces on halting the workers' revolution in Western Europe, primarily in France and Italy. The working class of these countries had *de facto* power in their hands when, at the Kremlin's order, the liberation movements and the Communist parties—together with the national bourgeoisies and Yankee Imperialism—blocked the seizure of power. The price imperialism had to pay for this was to let the Soviet Union hold sway in Eastern Europe and permit the Chinese and Yugoslav revolutions to triumph.

In this, the American workers, so much defamed by the New Left, played a role of the first magnitude. The fact that our American class brothers have not posed the question of power in their country has often been mistakenly construed to mean that they have played no role in the revolutionary triumphs of the postwar period. How then can it be explained that Yankee Imperialism did not convert China into another Vietnam at that time? The only answer is that the American workers in the ranks of the armed forces were not ready to serve, once the war was ended, as a counterrevolutionary force. Yankee diplomacy then found itself forced to take into account two factors in its China policy: first, that its main objective was the halting of the workers' revolution in Western Europe and the reestablishment of capitalism there; second, that it was impossible to mobilize Yankee soldiers for a counterrevolutionary war right at that time. Without these two factors, the Chinese revolutionists would not have been able to win so easily in the civil war or to take the cities. The Yankee army had more than enough material power to maintain itself in the big cities of the coast on a much grander scale than Japan had. If it did not do so, it is not for the reasons adduced by the American reactionaries—that Truman and Marshall were some kind of imbeciles—but because they were convinced that it was impossible to pursue such a policy at that time.

If they are able to follow such a policy in Vietnam today, this also is a consequence of the state of the world revolution and of its uneven development: the class struggle in Europe and the United States has been stabilized; there is no immediate danger of workers' revolution in Europe or of mass desertions by the Yankee soldiers. Having restored order in their rear, the imperialists can mount a brutal attack on the colonial revolution, as they are now doing in Vietnam.

II. The Second Chinese Revolution

In 1911 the fall of the last emperor marked the beginning of

the bourgeois revolution in China. The corrupt compradore class and the rachitic national bourgeoisie were to prove incapable of resolving the historic tasks on the agenda: national independence and agrarian revolution. More than that, their impotence would be manifested in a retrogression: China was in fact divided into regions controlled by warlords subservient to the various imperialisms. Thus, instead of resolving the two great historic problems posed, the Revolution of 1911 only added yet another: the achievement of national unity.

The first world war produced the Second Chinese Revolution. It began in 1919 with a fervent anti-imperialist mobilization of the students and professors, the May 4 Movement against the Versailles treaties. The war had brought about a considerable industrial development, which led to an increase of two million in the proletariat between 1916 and 1922. In the same period, 200,000 workers had been sent to work in France. When they returned, they served as the leaven of the working-class ferment. In 1917, the first modern trade union had just been founded in China. In a short space of time, in 1919, the trade-union movement joined with the May 4 Movement in a series of strikes in Shanghai and other cities.

Linked to all this was the influence of the triumphant Russian Revolution. Marxism, in its Leninist form, began to penetrate China. The leaders of the May 4 Movement, with Chen Tu-hsiu at their head, became Marxists, and in 1921 founded the Communist Party with about fifty members. Chen was elected secretary-general in absentia. The Kuomintang, the bourgeoisie's party led by Sun Yat-sen, was also to experience a resurgence. The probable reason for this was its change in policy. While of course bringing up the rear, still it felt the influence of the new revolutionary process. Its former policy had been to try to play one warlord off against another, and it had failed and been totally prostrated until 1919.

The working class was the backbone of the new, resurgent, revolutionary process, and it was joined shortly by the peasant movement. The revolution was to be a workers' and peasants' revolution led by the proletariat. In January 1922, the strike of the Hongkong longshoremen broke out, ending in victory in March as the British were forced to recognize the union and grant a wage increase. In 1922, as a consequence of this working-class upsurge, the first national congress of trade unionists was held under the leadership of the victorious longshoremen. This congress represented about 230,000 members. In central and northern China, the organization of the workers

revolved around the railroadmen, who held their first congress in 1924. In Shanghai, China's largest city, there were 40,000 workers organized in twenty-four unions at the beginning of 1923. Isaacs describes the situation this way: "In 1918 there were twenty-five recorded strikes, involving some 150,000 workers in all parts of the country. The movement grew with astonishing rapidity and militancy. On May Day 1924, 100,000 workers marched through the streets of Shanghai and twice that number in Canton. Contemporary reports describe how in Wuchang, Hanyan, and Hankow, despite martial law, red flags appeared over working-class quarters."¹

Like its shadow, the peasant movement began to raise its head, following the lead of the workers' movement. In 1923 there was already a Kwantung province peasant association in Canton.

The Chinese Communist Party was forced by the Russian emissaries, who in turn reflected the Stalinist bureaucracy, to enter the Kuomintang and accept the political and organizational discipline imposed on them, first by Sun Yat-sen and, after his death, by Chiang Kai-shek. Soviet Stalinism, moreover, established close and direct contact with the Kuomintang and with Chiang Kai-shek, whom it helped in founding the Whampoa Military Academy in 1924. This capitulationist policy was pursued in the name of the opportunist theory propagated by Stalin that a bourgeois-democratic revolution was on the agenda in China and would be led by the bourgeoisie. The independence of the workers and peasants and that of the Chinese CP was sacrificed to this conception and program.

In the meantime, the workers and peasants moved further and further away from the bourgeois nationalist party. There were great working-class struggles throughout 1925. In April a strike broke out against the Japanese factories in Shanghai. The Yankee and English police fired on the anti-Japanese demonstrators, killing several. In retribution, the workers declared the general strike of June 1. In the meantime, strikes began to break out against the Chinese employers. This upsurge culminated, from June 19 to October 10, in a general strike in Hongkong and a boycott of English goods in Canton. This movement left the actual power in the hands of the worker-pickets, the strike committees, and the revolutionary cadets of Canton.

In March 1926, Chiang Kai-shek counterattacked, turning the Second Congress of the Kuomintang into a *coup d'état* within the governing party. He demanded that the Communists cease campaigning for their views inside the party and that they turn

over a list of all their members. On the pretext that he was preparing a military invasion of the north against the warlords, he succeeded in obtaining a grant of full powers. Stalin forced the Communist Party to accept these conditions. Stalin's agent Borodin urged that those Russian advisers who had incurred Chiang's displeasure be removed and replaced with more amenable colleagues. On July 29, Chiang declared martial law in Canton. All activity by the workers' movement was forbidden and more than fifty workers were murdered. The landlords began a counteroffensive in the countryside.

Shortly after March 1926, the political bureau of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, with Trotsky voting against, approved the admission of the Kuomintang into the Communist International as a "sympathizer party." The request which Chen, the secretary-general, made to the Russian emissaries in Canton that the workers' movement be given 5,000 guns from the Russian arms in the city was denied.² In October of the same year the Soviet Communist Party leadership sent a telegram to 'The Chinese Communist Party ordering it to rein in the peasant movement in order not to frighten the generals. On January 1, the Chinese national government was organized in Wuhan, and its head, Wang, a representative of the left Kuomintang, appointed two Communist ministers. From this moment on, the Left Opposition in Moscow raised a hue and cry for the Communist Party to break with the Kuomintang and prepare to seize power. Karol points out that "Trotsky was also the first in the Comintern to speak of the necessity of creating the 'peasant soviets' dear to Mao."³

The march of Chiang's army toward the north provoked, however, a new revolutionary wave. In Hunan, the trade unions spread out to new districts and increased their membership from 60,000 to 150,000. In Wuhan, after the advance of Chiang's army, their numbers reached 300,000. The peasants did not lag behind. In Hunan at the end of November, fifty-four peasant districts were organized with a total of a million members. In January 1927, this number rose to two million.

"Now at the end of three months, the Communist party had organized 600,000 workers in Shanghai and found itself in a position to issue a general strike order . . . The first insurrection failed. Without arms and without training the workers did not know how to make themselves masters of the city. They had to learn by experience the necessity of forming a nucleus of armed workers . . . Chou En-lai and the famous Shanghai leaders, Chao Shih-yen, Ku Shun-chang and Lo Yi-ming, succeeded in organizing 50,000 strike pickets and in finding

centers in the French concession where 2,000 militants received secret military training. An 'Iron Troop' of 300 riflemen armed with contraband mausers was formed and this was the Shanghai workers' sole armed force. On March 21, 1927, the Communists launched a strike which led to the closing of all the factories and brought the workers for the first time in their lives to the barricades. First they took the police headquarters, then the arsenal, later the military barracks, and they won the day. There were 5,000 armed workers; they formed six battalions of revolutionary troops and proclaimed 'citizens' power.' It was the most notable *coup d'état* in modern Chinese history." Thus Karol recounts the workers' triumph in Shanghai, which left the power in their hands.

One day later Chiang entered the city and was given a hero's welcome by the Communist Party. This is how he was able to prepare his *coup d'état* against the workers at his ease and convenience. It came on April 12 and took the form of a massacre comparable to that of the Indonesian Communist Party in 1965. This *coup* definitively decapitated the Chinese working class.

III. The Lessons of the Failure

The Stalinist betrayal—unconditional support to the Kuomintang—was carried out under the direction of the Chinese Communist Party leadership, which itself was opposed to the policy, though then unaware of Trotsky's views. The formation of the party had been taking place during the heat of the workers' and peasants' mobilization. From a membership of fifty in 1921, it had risen to lead the Shanghai insurrection. The development of its leadership had proceeded apace with its growth in numbers and influence. This leadership had formulated a theory and program for the revolution very similar to that of Trotsky. A Western scholar has called it proto-Trotskyism. Both Chen and his disciple Peng maintained that what was on the agenda in China was a workers' revolution against the bourgeoisie, a revolution which would carry out the bourgeois-democratic tasks. At every opportunity they stressed the need of cutting free from the Kuomintang and adopting a revolutionary line toward the taking of power.

Another tendency with its own coloration began to develop in the party, Maoism. This tendency placed great stress on the peasant movement. It worked perfectly well within the party, which had a Bolshevik structure in which ample internal freedom

was combined with discipline in action. The outlook was for an ever greater integration of these two tendencies under the undisputed hegemony of Chen.

On the basis of the discipline of the Communist International and the prestige of the USSR, Stalin unfortunately succeeded in imposing his line. In the face of such pressure, Chen gave in to Moscow's order. Thus a contradictory situation developed: Stalin succeeded in imposing his policy but not his men, for Chen's prestige was too great and the workers' movement too strong for Stalin to be able to force acceptance of his "made-in-Moscow" bureaucrats. Moreover, the Communist International was not entirely bureaucratized at that time.

The Second Chinese Revolution not only showed that a workers' movement could lead an agrarian and national revolution, but that the formation and development of a highly qualified revolutionary Marxist party is possible in a short time, in the course of the revolutionary process itself. The theoretical, political, and organizational richness of the Chinese party proved this. The Stalinist betrayal produced a historic working-class defeat, and as a consequence the chance was lost to complete the construction of a Chinese Bolshevik party.

Thus the consequences of the Second Chinese Revolution contrasted with those of the Russian Revolution of 1905. The 1905 revolution did not remove the Russian proletariat from the scene. On the contrary, in the historic sense, it strengthened its influence and helped bring the formation of the Bolshevik Party to fruition; in a certain sense it created the Bolshevik Party. The ultimate cause of these combined misfortunes in China is not to be sought in the defeat of the working class (it was to demonstrate on several occasions its capacity for recovery) but in the triumphant course of the world counterrevolution and its reflection in the international workers' movement—Stalinism. It was Stalinism which was directly responsible for the fact that the Chinese failure in 1927 did not have the same effect as the 1905 Revolution.

I point this out because various theories have been propounded to explain the reasons for the failure of the Chinese workers and why a revolutionary Marxist party could not be formed: because the proletariat was not a revolutionary class; because there was not sufficient cultural tradition for the development of Marxism; or because the geographical and political conditions (a vast country without unity or a national political life) blocked the political development of the proletariat and its party. The Second Chinese Revolution, at once magnificent and tragic, proves all

these theories profoundly false. Social, cultural, or geographical-political factors do not explain why the Chinese proletariat did not raise its head again and why it did not complete the organization of a revolutionary Marxist party. Stalinism and world counterrevolution are the real explanation.

IV. The Consequences of the Defeat

Stalin responded to the disaster in China by ordering a putschist line: strike for the seizure of power. This line completely failed to take into account the setback the workers had suffered, and was to be the cause of new disasters for the mass movement.

The workers and militants responded empirically to the counterrevolution. Rather than allowing themselves to be liquidated, the Communists in the army chose to revolt along with their troops, and began the armed struggle. Thus they seized the city of Nanchang and created the Red Army. Peng Pui, the party's peasant leader, joined the Red Army and retreated with it to the peasant zones of Haipeng and Lupeng and there founded the first Soviet government, organizing peasant militias and dividing up the land. Mao began to promote peasant soviets in violation of the Stalinist line, which did not authorize them until September, and launched a peasant insurrection in Hunan, the August Harvest Rising, which failed. This, together possibly with his audacity in the launching of peasant soviets, cost him his posts in the party leadership and even put his party membership in jeopardy. This new course culminated in the Canton putsch ordered by Stalin in an attempt to salvage his prestige. It was a total failure.

The Stalinists, however, did not change their course. Instead they adopted on a world scale an adventurist and putschist line, seeking in this way to respond to the counterrevolutionary danger represented in the USSR by the Kulaks and in the West by the reaction which was to culminate in the onslaught of Nazism. The Communist parties received the order to strike for power, to ignore the workers' minimum demands, to refuse united fronts with other working-class and anti-imperialist currents and not to work in the reformist trade unions, which embraced the majority of the workers.

This policy had grim consequences for the Chinese Revolution. Instead of unifying all the sectors of the movements opposed to Chiang and the Japanese encroachments then underway, Stalinist ultraleftism either left them each to their separate

fate, or else, lacking the least appreciation of the relationship of forces, it flung them in offensives against the cities. This was the opposite of the revolutionary movement's previous course, which had combined the anti-imperialist struggle, the workers' movement, the revolutionary soldiers, and the peasant movement into a single process. Chiang proceeded to defeat each revolutionary sector separately at his convenience, for the Stalinists were floundering in the inanity of orders issued from Moscow which had no relevance to the Chinese reality.

With this was combined the Stalinists' struggle to transform the Chinese Communist Party into a Stalinist party. Prior to 1927 they were unsuccessful. The CP followed their policy but it was not a Stalinist party; for Stalinism fundamentally is neither a theory nor a policy but a bureaucratic caste, which draws its political and social privileges from its intimate and dependent connection with the Soviet bureaucracy. For this reason, Stalinization of any national party means domination of its party apparatus by a privileged bureaucracy dependent on the Soviet bureaucracy and trained in Moscow. The 1927 defeat began this stage in the Chinese CP. Moscow now did not stop at imposing its policy; it imposed its right-hand men. On August 7, 1927, Chen was removed from his position as secretary-general, thus beginning the march of Moscow's men toward total control of the Communist Party. The Sixth Party Congress was held in Moscow from June to September 1928 and completed the total Stalinization of the party.

The first great Stalinist crime had to do with the labor movement. After the defeat, the latter retreated to the Yellow or reformist, unions and from there defended itself against the bosses' offensive in a series of economic strikes. In 1928 in Shanghai alone, 120 strikes for better wages and reduced working hours broke out. The Stalinist CP, which was busy trying to send its own red unions into ill-fated political strikes, did not intervene in these struggles. The Chinese Trotskyists headed by Chen, persecuted as they were both by Chiang and the Stalinists, could do little. Thus the opportunity presented by this revival in the workers' movement was lost.

In 1931, the Japanese occupation of China began, starting in Manchuria. The Stalinists refused to see that the immediate enemy was Japanese imperialism. All imperialisms are alike, they said, and should be so treated. When the Japanese army laid siege to Shanghai early in 1932, the Chinese army force stationed there rebelled against Chiang's order to evacuate the city and resisted heroically for two months before retreating.

This roused a wave of anti-Japanese fervor throughout China. The Stalinists paid no attention to this anti-imperialist movement, which they categorized as social-democratic, and gave no help or support to the rebellious army, allowing Chiang's forces to crush it mercilessly. Moscow's men were too busy with their revolution against all national and foreign exploiters to see the importance of the national movement of resistance to the Japanese occupation.

The Stalinist ultraleft policy was also disastrous for the peasant movement, which from 1925 on had continued ceaselessly to develop by leaps and bounds. After the defeat, it resumed its course. Along with the first Soviet government founded by Peng Pui, we find the peasant base established by Mao in the mountains of Chingkanshan with his remaining troops. From there the movement steadily advanced. A year later it had already occupied a part of the province of Kiangsi. It was distinguished from Peng Pui's movement by its emphasis on the military aspects of the struggle and on the method of guerrilla warfare. This would permit it an ever greater development.

The Stalinists, whose policy kept them from linking up this struggle with the workers' movement in the cities, almost brought disaster on the red peasant armies. In mid-June 1930 they ordered the Red Army to begin an offensive against the cities. They occupied the city of Changsha. Six days later they had to evacuate it, but the army laid siege to the city. Imperturbable, the Stalinists ordered Mao's forces to assist in the siege. Thus the Communist armed forces on orders from their leaders left their peasant bases to engage in a military adventure. On September 13, Mao broke the Stalinist discipline and returned to his peasant bases. This saved the peasant movement, and, on the basis of the guerrilla warfare method, it continued its expansion. This violation of Stalinist discipline in China soon permitted the creation of the Soviet Republic of China on November 7, 1931, in Jui-chi. It was not an artificial creation of Mao, for, according to Karol, it exercised "real control over one-sixth of Chinese territory, commanded an army of 145,000 men which was soon to double its 'effectives.'" Its policy on the land question was forthrightly revolutionary: "The land of the large landowners was to be purely and simply confiscated, while that of the rich peasants was to be distributed but not in its entirety: the rich were authorized to keep enough land to feed their families."

At the time, despite his position as president of the Soviet Republic, the Chinese and worldwide Stalinist movement considered Mao a second-rate figure. The bureaucrats carried much

more weight in the party hierarchy and they continued with Moscow's cherished policy of making a revolutionary impact on the cities. Mao repaid this attitude by not letting them participate in the formation of the Soviet Republic. There were in fact two factions in the Communist Party which completely ignored each other: Moscow's men in the cities and the Maoists in the countryside.

By the end of 1934, Chiang had succeeded in decisively defeating the peasant Soviet Republic, forcing Mao to withdraw to the north. The Long March signified the historic defeat of the peasants of the south, which brought to a close the cycle opened by the Second Chinese Revolution. It was the Stalinist policy that brought on this series of defeats of the working class, the anti-imperialist movement, the Communist armies and, finally, the peasant movement. But Mao's policy was also responsible because it disregarded the importance of building a revolutionary party, unity with Chen's Trotskyists, and struggle against the Stalinists' criminal policy in order to unite all the revolutionary movements against Chiang and the Japanese imperialists.

But neither the Stalinist policy nor Mao's or Chen's errors by themselves totally explain the 1934 defeat. All in all, Mao had a force equivalent to the force which in 1945 enabled him to defeat Chiang. The reason is that in 1934 the counterrevolution was on the offensive throughout the world and, as a consequence, the Chiang regime and imperialism were much more formidable. In 1945, it was Chiang and the imperialists who were in decline and the revolution which was on the rise.

During the Long March, the Chinese Communist Party, which had led the Shanghai insurrection and which had produced Mao's Soviet Republic, was reduced to almost nothing. Chiang had succeeded in defeating the workers', anti-imperialist, and peasant movements and had virtually liquidated the CP. On a dead body the parasites die. With the practical extinction of the Chinese Communist Party, Moscow's men disappeared. Leadership of the party fell into the hands of the Mao wing which, basing itself on its armed forces and the peasantry, succeeded with great hardship in surviving as a nomadic party and army. After 1935, when Mao took over the leadership of the party, there were no more Stalinist leaders in China, no more bureaucratic agents of the Kremlin.

With this statement I return to my original definition: Stalinism is not a theory of the revolution nor a certain conception of the party but a parasitic growth, a social phenomenon, a bureaucratic apparatus dependent on Moscow. While Maoism could

have all of the Stalinist vices and conceptions, it was not the same thing—to the good fortune of the Chinese Revolution, it could never be a parasitic, bureaucratic growth dependent on Moscow. Its key feature was to have not a Stalinist bureaucratic, but a revolutionary agrarian character.

In China, world Stalinism would have to be satisfied with imposing its policy on, or urging it on, men who were not its own. Thus the previous relationship with Chen was to be repeated: Moscow commanded not its own men but a handful of agrarian revolutionaries with a Marxist past and Stalinist ideological and organizational concepts. One of the effects of the final defeat of the Second Chinese Revolution was to be the disappearance of the Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy.

V. The Objective Bases of the Third Chinese Revolution: Decline and Permanent Counterrevolution

The capitalist and imperialist regime is characterized by periodic upsets of the equilibrium and *status quo* it has achieved. These upsets are the logical result of its own laws. Such changes may be either quantitative or qualitative. The offensive of the Yankee exploiters against their workers during the decade of the twenties represented quantitative change; the change that produced the great crisis of 1929 was a qualitative one. If we give the name counterrevolution to the leaps and qualitative changes, the abrupt breaking of the equilibrium that the exploiters execute in their relationships with exploited classes and peoples, we must realize that there it has an uneven and combined development. There are some countries, chiefly the most backward, which mercilessly and unceasingly bear the brunt of the exploiter offensive. China is the most illustrative example of this. From 1911 on, imperialism, the bourgeoisie, and the landlords were unable to achieve an equilibrium, however unstable, for any number of years. From 1911 on, the counterrevolutionary offensive constantly provoked national and civil wars.

Under the regime of the imperialists and the national exploiters, the situation of the Chinese workers steadily worsened. The regime, as Isaacs has said, offered them no alternative but an ever worsening situation. Let us take a look at this process, which is key to an understanding of the Chinese Revolution. For the struggle against imperialism, the fall of the empire meant a turn for the worse. China was forced to abandon the

offensive posture it had assumed as a semicolonial country trying to recover its independence by liquidating the foreign concessions and had to go over to a defensive posture, blocking total colonization. Through the agency of the warlords there began a stage of semicolonization of different regions, of Latin-Americanization, of division into spheres of influence with military chiefs who reflected the interests of the various imperialisms. This process acquired its full scope as the move toward colonization crystallized in the Japanese invasion, which baldly and directly aimed at making China a Japanese colony.

Instead of achieving national independence and unity, the corrupt Chinese bourgeoisie had brought the country to the point of direct colonization. The imperialist regime produced in turn the following stages in China: from the preceding century to the fall of the dynasty, semicolonization (principally of the port cities); after the fall of the dynasty, dismemberment of the country and semicolonization of its territory; after the failure of the Second Revolution, direct colonization by Japanese imperialism.

With regard to bourgeois development, the situation was similar. The great industrial development in the coastal region, sparked by the war, soon turned out to be ephemeral. First, the great 1929 crisis and, second, the Japanese invasion that followed wiped out Chinese industry, although a great Japanese industry developed in Manchuria. In the aftermath of the second world war, this situation was aggravated by the hopeless crisis of the bourgeois economy, which was manifested in the most galloping of inflations. ". . . 70 per cent of the budget was devoted to the army . . ." "One American dollar was worth (in Chinese dollars)—in June 1947, 36,000; August 1947, 44,000; October 1947, 165,000; May 1948, 1,000,000; beginning of August 1948, 10,000,000 . . ."4

"The inflation led to complete prostration of business. 'Production is paralyzed,' wrote the correspondent of *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, October 17, 1948, 'because of the lack of raw materials. The peasant producers refuse to sell their products so long as they cannot buy foods at official prices.' Fear of inflation led to a heavy disinvestment of capital. Such capital, transformed into gold bars or dollars, flowed into Hong Kong, the United States, Latin America. Plant equipment deteriorated. Machines were no longer repaired. Capital ceased to be renewed. Inflation devoured what reserves remained intact in the country. Coal production fell to half the pre-war level; textile production to a

similar level. Throughout Manchuria industrial production in 1948 stood at 10 per cent of its normal level." "Great stocks of foods and cotton accumulated in the villages of Manchuria and northern China, while famine reigned in the cities. At the same time, huge stockpiles of coal accumulated in mining centers, while the peasant population suffered terribly from the bitter cold of winter."⁵

This overall situation—Japanese occupation, the liquidation of industry, the crisis of the Chinese bourgeois economy—would produce a transformation in the character and structure of the government and the bourgeoisie. The further Chiang went from the coast, the more his government transformed itself into a Bonapartist government reflecting the interests of the most reactionary landlords and its effective master, Yankee Imperialism.

Its Bonapartist character developed to such an extent that when it returned to the coast it no longer represented the interests of the industrial and commercial bourgeoisie there, but served as the bourgeois intermediary between imperialism and the Chinese economy. Thus a monopolistic concentration of the economy in the hands of bureaucratic capitalism developed to an extent much greater than anything known in the capitalist countries of the West. Concretely, the old Chinese industrial and commercial bourgeoisie was replaced by a new bourgeoisie intimately bound up with the state, which it used to control the commanding positions of the economy. This bureaucratic bourgeoisie, made up of only four families, virtually controlled, in conjunction with the state, the entire Chinese economy: 60 per cent of the metallurgical industry; 53 per cent of the petroleum industry; 55 per cent of the textile industry; 70 per cent of the machine industry; 62 per cent of the electrical industry; 72 per cent of the paper industry; 37 per cent of the cement industry; 89 per cent of the chemical industry.

There existed then a Bonapartist government, the agent of the most reactionary landlords and Yankee Imperialism, which created its own capitalist base in order to free itself from the pressure of the old sectors of the bourgeoisie and to enrich itself through the exercise of power. That is, instead of bourgeois development in the hands of a modern bourgeoisie intent on accomplishing the national democratic tasks, we see a new bureaucratic bourgeoisie intent on guaranteeing the landlords the greatest possible exploitation of the peasants and continuing its promotion of the penetration of Yankee Imperialism.

This general crisis of the Chinese bourgeois regime was more clearly reflected in the situation of the peasantry than in that of any other sector of society. The peasants' situation steadily deteriorated. Toward the end of Chiang's regime it was catastrophic. Let us take a look: "At the same time the system of military requisitions of manpower and agricultural products which drained entire regions was established and extended. In the already cited article by Pei Wan-chung, it is related that in 1946 in the province of Hopei no one would accept a *mou* [slightly over .15 acres] of land as a gift since the special tax exceeded the income which could be gotten from it. Belden cites cases on the plain of Chengtu where the tax on the land exceeded its annual production by 100 per cent. And in the province of Honan, the same writer discovered a case in which the Kuomintang's military requisitions were 1,000 times the tax on the land. Concretely this meant that the peasants not only lost their land, their food and their clothing, they also had to sell their women and sons as concubines or servants to the tax collectors or requisition agents." "Numerous villages were depopulated—the number of farmers who died of starvation during and after the war is estimated at ten to fifteen million . . . Hundreds of millions of peasants found themselves dispossessed . . ." "Thus the war and its immediate aftermath created on one side a new layer of speculators and parasitic owners, and on the other an enormous mass of expropriated peasants."⁶ That is how Germain describes the situation.

This economic decline and the implacable offensive against the workers, as well as against the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, came in conjunction with the weakening of the world imperialist regime: the disappearance of Japanese imperialism, the exhaustion of European imperialism (including the English), and the still greater weakening of Yankee Imperialism as a result of the aid it was obliged to give to European imperialism in order to prop it up and stave off the total collapse of capitalism on that continent. Chiang's relations with imperialism and Stalinism were additional factors. Because of his character as the agent of the most reactionary landlords, it was impossible for him not to make war on the agrarian revolution. For this he counted on the support of Washington and Moscow. But for the same reason, the Yankees were unable to impose their policy of a national-unity coalition government as they had in Europe, since Chiang represented the reactionary landlords who would brook no change in the agrarian regime. At the same time, however, they had to support Chiang who

was also their agent. Nevertheless, they could offer him neither massive aid nor soldiers. Their economic aid went primarily to build up the European bourgeois economy.

In this way, the intolerable situation of the peasantry and of Chinese society in general was transformed into an irresistible revolutionary thrust against a regime rotten to the core and a weakened imperialism. The hour of victory had arrived.

Revolutionaries must give careful consideration to the objective conditions that produced this revolutionary victory. They must also compare them with those which existed in Russia. Russian conditions were as nothing in comparison with those in China. Russia had not been clutched in the years-long grip of deepening peasant poverty, implacable imperialist colonization, or of a bureaucratic bourgeoisie which gorged itself on the national economy—nor was there an unheard-of inflation or such a weakening of imperialism. But, nonetheless, it won a rapid victory and with much greater ease. One fact explains this: in Russia there was a Bolshevik Party, in China there was not.

VI. The Triumph of the Third Chinese Revolution: A Plebeian National War Becomes Transformed into an Agrarian Revolution

From 1935 on, the situation of the mass movement began to change. The Japanese occupation after 1937 would accelerate this change. It extended through the north and along the coast, provoking at once the flight of the Kuomintang and an uprising of the population, primarily of the rural population, against the occupation forces. The form this resistance took was guerrilla warfare. This must be emphasized because there is a tendency to think that the resistance to the occupation was purely and simply the work of the Communist Party. The truth is quite different. The occupation produced a vast movement of popular and peasant resistance outside the control of the Communist Party. This mass reaction can be explained as an effect of the uneven development of the Chinese Revolution: the Second Revolution had left the population of the south, where the process had centered, exhausted, but it had left the north virtually untouched. The revolutionary potential of the northern population was still intact as it was forced to confront the Japanese invader.

Jack Belden, the John Reed of People's China, reported this

movement in great detail. He quotes a former Kuomintang supporter, who had gone over to the movement, as telling him, ". . . 'I found that the people had already organized several bands of their own and had, with the disappearance of the Kuomintang officials, elected several county governments.'

"In the summer of 1939, there were therefore two governments existing side by side, two district managers, two county heads and two mayors of each city. Lu and Shih did not recognize the elected government of the people and the people did not recognize the government of Lu and Shih."⁷ The patriotic war against the invader gave rise to *de facto* dual power between Chiang and these new organs of plebeian power.

The Communist Party became the leadership of this movement. As Belden emphasizes, "No one seemed to realize that many Chinese supported the Communists because the Communists were supporting the governments which the people themselves had formed during the Japanese war."⁸

Mao accepted the new worldwide Stalinist line of popular fronts with the democratic bourgeoisie and came to an agreement with Chiang, recognizing him as the sole ruler of China. Mao's republic and army became part of Chiang's China. In order not to frighten the bourgeoisie and the landlords, on which the Kuomintang rested, he abandoned agrarian reform. As an old Communist related it to Karol: "Before the Sian incident (preceding the deal with Chiang) a very radical agrarian reform had been enacted in the north of the province which was controlled by our supporters and was beginning to be applied, but after the agreement with the Kuomintang the redistribution of the land stopped." The flag of People's China still bears the four stars which stand for the famous "bloc of four classes" (the national bourgeoisie, the urban petty bourgeoisie, the workers, and the peasants). But, contrary to the situation in the twenties, Mao did not subordinate himself organizationally, militarily, or politically to the Kuomintang. Formally, he accepted the Stalinist line, but he continued to retain full independence. On the other hand, this popular front was really an anti-imperialist front against the Japanese invader who, as the Trotskyists had emphasized in opposition to the sectarians, was China's main enemy at that time.

At the war's end, Mao's power in the area of the peasant communes and the zones liberated from the enemy extended over 100,000,000 inhabitants. Stalin, in conjunction with the

Yankees, handed over the cities of Manchuria and the arms there to the Kuomintang's troops. At the same time, they pressured Mao to capitulate to Chiang by accepting a government of national coalition headed by the latter. Mao yielded.

"On October 11, 1945, an accord was concluded between the Kuomintang and the Chinese CP, proposing the convening of a popular consultative conference for the purpose of ironing out all differences. This conference met in Chungking on January 1946, and after twenty-one days of discussion adopted a series of resolutions on the organization of a coalition government, reconstruction of the country, the military questions, the calling of a constituent assembly, etc. There was no question of a radical reform. Finally, on February 23, 1946, under the tutelage of General Marshall, who had come to China as a mediator, the Kuomintang and the Chinese CP concluded an agreement for the unification of their armed forces. The road to 'social peace' seemed open" (General Albert C. Wedemeyer, *United States Relations With China*, pp. 136-40).

The outbreak of the civil war came at Chiang's wish and against the desires of the Communist leaders. Chiang felt himself sufficiently strong to launch an attack on the zones under Mao's control and to abrogate the agreement reached in the Popular Consultative Conference. As Chu Teh said, "If the Kuomintang had put into effect the decisions of the Popular Consultative Conference, there would have been no civil war." Chiang's offensive plunged the Maoist leadership into a sea of doubts. On the one side, the poor and landless peasants were pressing for a solution of the land problem; on the other Chiang was making war on them to recover the liberated zones. The landlords and rich peasants in the liberated zones were the potential or real allies of Chiang. Mao and his group were profoundly reluctant to break their alliance with the national bourgeoisie in their zone. Belden has described these doubts in this way:

"The Communist Party delayed. In the meantime, it called back local cadres and began to collate their experiences, trying to wrest from the welter of details a proper course of action. Autumn 1945 passed. The demands of the peasants grew more urgent. Winter 1946 came and went. Still no decision. Spring came. Time for planting. Time for decision. Still the Communists held back. The delay made everyone feel more keenly the menace of Chiang Kai-shek's armies battering on the threshold of the Border Regions. The Communist Party, hovering on the brink of this historic decision, was like a soldier

waiting to cross the line into enemy territory. One step forward, or one step backward and the thing is over and done with, but it is the waiting that frays tired nerves, starts up uneasy thought and makes one wonder what is on the other side of that line. One longs to go over that line and find out what is there. Just so the Communist Party stood on the borderline between the past and the future—and waited. One step back—peace with the landlords; one step forward—war with feudalism. Truly a terrible decision to make.

"In the summer of 1946, messengers brought down to the county commissars the word: 'Divide the land.' The party had cast the die. From now on there could be no retreat."⁹

The agrarian revolution which had been decreed produced a reaction of the poor peasants against the rich, which led to the constitution of poor-peasant bodies and transformed these into the *de facto* power. "So long as it was only a question of rent or settling with traitors, the upper circle of the peasantry had played a prominent role. But when the land began to be divided and when both the landlords and the tenants lashed out in a fury of violence, the rich peasant began to look with distrust and fear at the spread of the movement, not knowing where it would end."¹⁰

"Fighting for the land, the peasantry created its own leading bodies—peasant unions and tenant associations. . . . The agrarian reform posed the question of power. In thousands of villages it brought an already existing struggle out into the open. Because of the agrarian reform, the peasants were forced to continually ask themselves: Who will have the power? We or the landlords? . . . The division of the land, in doing away with landlord rule, laid the possibility for elections and thus put village government in the hands of those favorable to the Communist cause."¹¹

Thus Belden describes the consequences of the agrarian reform. He fails to add, because of lack of information, that the struggle begun by the poor peasants was directed against both the landlords and the rich peasants. Years later the president of People's China was to make clear the fact that the revolution of the poor peasants was spontaneous and that it had been carried out against the will of the Communist Party:

"In the period between July 1946 and October 1947, in numerous regions of North China, Shantung, and Northeast China, the peasant masses and our rural members in implementing the agrarian reform were unable to follow the directives issued by the Central Committee of the Chinese CP on

May 4, 1946, which demanded that the land and property of the rich peasants remain essentially untouched. They went ahead in accordance with their own ideas and confiscated the land and property of the rich peasants as well as those of the great landholders.

"We had authorized the peasants to requisition the excess land and property of the rich peasants and to confiscate all the property of the large landowners to satisfy in a certain measure the needs of the poor peasants, to make the peasants participate with great revolutionary zeal in the people's liberation war" (speech of Liu Shao-chi on June 14, 1950, to the national congress of the political consultative committee on the agrarian reform law, which was finally adopted on June 28, 1950).

The important point is that the movement of resistance to the Japanese invader by the patriotic peasant communes, as a result of the civil war, became a poor peasants' revolution against the rich peasants for agrarian reform, which the Communist Party could not check and to which it was obliged to accommodate itself. Along with the agrarian reform, there was a resurgence of the peasant associations, and they took power in the villages. This in turn accelerated the civil war. Chiang plunged into a violent offensive against the peasants and the Communist Party which represented them. This was Chiang's final offensive, and it ended in definitive defeat for him and victory for Mao throughout China. Mao's triumph, leaving out of consideration the talents of the Communist generals as strategists, was essentially owed to the fact that his armies were, to a certain extent despite him, the standard-bearers of agrarian revolution. It was the revolutionary mobilization of the poor peasants that wrecked Chiang's army. On October 1, 1949, a new stage opened up in the history of China and of mankind. A new state was born that definitively broke the imperialist equilibrium and gave new impetus to the colonial revolution.

VII. The Class Dynamic:

Substitutionism or Socialist Agrarian Revolution?

How should we define the dynamic that carried the Chinese Revolution to victory, and its permanent course toward transforming China into a workers' state?* Isaac Deutscher believed

*It should be emphasized that the entire analysis of the class dynamic of the Third Revolution which follows represents my personal view.—Nahuel Moreno

that what occurred was a typical case of substitutionism. The Communist Party reflected the interests of the workers, although they were not actively involved in it, and was a workers' party. In leading the peasant revolution, it gave it a working-class direction, a direction unconsciously of permanent revolution. Trotsky many years before had discussed this conception of the Stalinists. "In what way can the proletariat realize 'state hegemony' over the peasantry, when the state power is not in its hands? It is absolutely impossible to understand this. The leading role of the isolated Communists and the isolated Communist groups in the peasant war does not decide the question of power. Classes decide and not parties."¹² It is interesting to note that all serious interpretations of the Chinese Revolution accept its uninterrupted, permanent course. The only point at issue is its class dynamic.

In the Trotskyist view, the key to the entire Chinese Revolution and its subsequent socialist course lies in the revolutions of the poor peasants in the north and earlier in the south. Trotsky, in his letters to Preobrazhensky, had noted that "the Chinese Revolution ('the third') will have to begin by attacking the kulaks from its earliest stages." From this fact and from the struggle against imperialism and its agents he concluded that the Chinese Revolution would be much less bourgeois than the Russian, that is, more socialist from its outset.

He thus stressed a profound difference from the Western agrarian revolutions in whose first stage the peasantry as a whole attacked the feudal landowners. Since there were no great feudal landowners in China and the real exploiters of the peasants were the usurers and the rich peasants closely linked to them, the first stage of the agrarian revolution would have an anticapitalist and not an antifeudal character. In making this assessment, he repeated the analysis Lenin had made for Russia. Lenin said in reference to the Bolshevik effort to mobilize the poor peasants against the kulaks: "It was only in the summer and fall of 1918 that our countryside experienced its October Revolution."

It is my judgment, which better documentation might disprove, that there occurred in China a great agrarian socialist revolution in the sense which Lenin gave this definition: The poor peasants along with their organizations seized *de facto* power locally in the countryside in order to move against the rich peasants. This struggle became an essentially socialist struggle.

The Communist Party did not initiate this revolution. On the

contrary, it attempted to contain it, to play the role of arbiter among all the peasant and "democratic" (anti-Kuomintang) strata. The poor peasantry, despite the Communist Party—with which it had its frictions, made its October Revolution before the proletariat in the cities took power. This socialist character of the agrarian revolution existed already in embryo in the agrarian Communist movement led by Mao and Peng prior to 1935.

The great expansion of the agrarian Communist government, its growing influence, is explained by the vanguard character of the class struggle in the Chinese countryside, the struggle of the poor peasants against the rich, which the Maoists were able to impress on the peasant movement of the south before Mao was won over to the ideology of popular-frontism. The soviet socialist program of Maoism at this time was suited to the socialist character of the Chinese agrarian revolution. This was the basis of its formidable expansion and the enormous force it was able to acquire.

It is true that both Trotsky and Lenin always estimated that only the industrial proletariat of the cities could lead this agrarian socialist revolution. On the other hand, the schematists refuse to recognize that this anticapitalist agrarian struggle is defined as socialist by the character of its "historical agency." From the sociological point of view, the poor and landless peasants must be considered petty bourgeois. But, leaving aside the theoretical task of defining the landless or starving peasants with full "sociological" precision, I feel that some indications or intimations demand consideration.

Capitalism arose because it was able to create a gigantic industrial reserve army from the peasantry uprooted from their lands or sunk in extreme poverty on little plots, who had to sell their labor power to live. Marxism defined this social phenomenon and this newly developing class in accordance with its dynamic and not its past. For Marxism, it represented unemployed labor-power and not an impoverished petty bourgeoisie, an industrial reserve army and not a peasantry wandering along the roads or dwelling on the outskirts of the cities. The contradiction exhibited by China and many other backward countries is that the penetration of capitalism has created a giant reserve army of uprooted peasants, which cannot be utilized because of the crisis of capitalism worldwide and nationally and the consequent lack of industrial development. As a result of these historical circumstances, these poverty-

stricken peasants, exploited by the rural capitalists, become a reserve, agents of anticapitalist revolution in their villages, soldiers of the revolutionary armies, Communist militants or future workers of primitive socialist accumulation. They are potential workers who become a vehicle of socialist revolution. Thus a historical leap occurred.

Instead of going through the phases traversed by their brothers in the West—from landless peasants to workers "in themselves" in manufacturing and the factories to workers "for themselves" in the trade unions or workers' parties—they skipped over the stage of being factory workers "in themselves" to become anticapitalist revolutionaries locally and nationally. Moreover, this was a class phenomenon since the majority of the Chinese peasantry was poverty-stricken or landless. That is, the Chinese Revolution was essentially a revolution of poor peasants against the rural Chinese bourgeoisie; it was an agrarian revolution which took power on the local level in villages or small zones. The peasant, petty-bourgeois past of these revolutionaries manifested itself in the character of their revolution, which was primitive, barbaric and, most important, lacking in centralized organs of power. The leading bodies of this revolution, the poor peasants' associations, had no democratic central body; they were merely local.

In its pursuit of victory this revolution became intertwined with the women's revolution against the authentic survivals of China's past, paternalism, the struggle in Chiang's zone against the landlords and against the bureaucratic capitalism which dominated almost all Chinese industry and, ultimately with civil war, against the dictatorial regime of Chiang, the agent of Yankee Imperialism. But in all this revolutionary fabric, the crucial factor was the poor peasant revolution against the rural bourgeoisie.

The actual dynamic of the Chinese Revolution followed the lines predicted by Trotsky: In the countryside the struggle of the poor peasants, the vast majority, against the agrarian capitalists and Chiang became a struggle against imperialism and Chinese capitalism. The Communist Party tried to play an arbiter's role in this whole combined process but it had to yield to the anticapitalist socialist dynamic that the Third Chinese Revolution of the poor peasants imposed upon it.

From its initial stages as a civil war, the Third Chinese Revolution was a socialist revolution with an uneven development that would mark its entire future. The industrial prole-

tariat played no role in the winning of its victory; the vanguard was the poor peasantry. Since for geographic and demographic reasons no possibility existed in China for the transformation of the poor peasantry into a new class of relatively stable farmers, the struggle of the poor peasantry continually accelerated the course of the revolution, though showing a historical weakness in its inability to create a central leading body. The need for industrial proletarian leadership of the poor peasantry was not operative in achieving the victory of the Third Chinese Revolution, but it is more and more so for solving the economic and political problems of the poor peasantry, the real authors of the Third Chinese Revolution.

VIII. People's China

After the war, a new working-class revival began in the big cities, but it was mercilessly crushed. As a result, it played no role in Chiang's defeat and Mao's triumph. The Chinese People's Republic was proclaimed at the end of 1949 as a consequence of the mass movement's uneven development: the agrarian revolution of the poor peasants in the north, whose organs of power were the poor-peasants' associations, along with the revolution against feudalism, bureaucratic capitalism, and Yankee Imperialism in the south. The two processes were intimately related but the primary one is that which has been noted. The Mao leadership strove to keep the revolution within the bounds of a democratic revolution. It was unable to achieve this, however, because of the logic of the socialist revolution in the countryside, which produced a state with a workers' and peasants' government. This is a social definition of this regime since, politically, it was typically Bonapartist, a personal regime based on the party and the army.

This Bonapartist dictatorship was revolutionary, however, not counterrevolutionary like the Stalinist one. It was not based on the victory of counterrevolution but on the uneven development of the revolutionary process itself, which gave no time for the emergence of organs of power of the industrial proletariat. In this process only the semiproletarian sectors in the countryside were able to develop organs of power, and these only on the local scale, leaving the regional, provincial, and later the national levels to the army.

The Maoist bureaucracy is a political phenomenon with profound political and social causes: the backwardness of the

landless peasants, petty-bourgeois influences, the weakness of revolutionary Marxism, the decline of the industrial proletariat, and the pressure of Stalinism. It is not, like the Russian bureaucracy, a privileged economic caste raised to power as a reflection of world counterrevolution. As a Bonapartist government, it reflects the contradictions between the various classes and in turn attempts to keep these differences alive so that it can play an arbiter's role. During the resistance against the Japanese occupation forces, it balanced itself on the landowners, the agrarian bourgeoisie, and the poor peasants, and after the start of the civil war it balanced itself between the agrarian bourgeoisie and the poor peasants. This policy of balancing between the poor peasants and the rich failed in the north, where the poor peasants forced through their revolution, but it was successfully applied throughout the rest of China.

Nothing is more demonstrative of this than the Mao group's eagerness to prevent a recurrence in south China of what had transpired in the north. When the agrarian reform was launched in south China in 1950, the leaders issued strict directives to protect the rich peasants and block any action by the poor peasants. "The principal agency for land redistribution was the peasant association and one third of these organizations was to be made up of middle-class peasants, including upper-class peasants." "The law also officially sanctioned the employment of laborers."¹³ The revolutionary process which had been effected by the peasants in the north also developed in the south, but with greater slowness. The regime's mediating role was reinforced by the beginning of the growth and organization of the working class, by the appearance of the privileged sectors typical of a transitional economy—the bureaucracy, and by its attempts to conciliate the democratic bourgeoisie ("The task of the New Democracy we advocate is . . . to assure to broad masses of the Chinese people the possibility of freely developing personal initiative in society, freely developing a private capitalist economy which, however, must not 'hold in its grasp the livelihood of the people' but must bring them benefits, and also secure the protection of all private property legitimately acquired."¹⁴).

This regime was to be revolutionary because it would unify the nation for the first time and free it from imperialism; basing itself on a mass mobilization, it would halt inflation and thereby regularize the functioning of the economy and eradicate hunger in China. Led on by the logic of the revolution that brought it to power, it began to organize the workers' movement in the cities, enacted a timid agrarian reform in the south, and ex-

propriated the bureaucratic capitalists, thus bringing China to the threshold of transformation into a workers' state. From the beginning the government showed that it was revolutionary as well as Bonapartist by fighting against the corruption, bourgeoisification, and bureaucratization of its cadres.

Shortly after coming to power, it had to confront Yankee Imperialism in Korea. This confrontation forced the regime's policy leftward and compelled it to attack the bourgeois survivals in the country. Then began the great trials of counterrevolutionaries and the confiscation or transformation into mixed companies of the bulk of the capitalist enterprises in China. Thus the most populous country on earth was transformed into a workers' state. While the emergence of a workers' state meant that the regime became a dictatorship of the proletariat, this did not change its Bonapartist character. On the contrary, due to the onset of the stage of primitive socialist accumulation, this was accentuated.

So it was that China became a workers' state with profound bureaucratic deformations but with a revolutionary Bonapartist regime, not a counterrevolutionary Bonapartist regime as in the USSR. The deformation of the Chinese workers' state was the result of the revolution's uneven development, in which the industrial workers' movement had played no role.

After 1953 the stage of primitive socialist accumulation began. The successes registered were truly spectacular: the atom bomb and a steady economic progress greater than any yet known. One fact can illustrate this: in 1958 China passed Great Britain and West Germany to become the world's third-ranking coal producer. China benefited from the existence of the USSR and the other workers' states—not only from the aid they extended, which however great was always of minor importance, but from the example and lessons of the five-year plans.

The successes attained in the first five-year plan began to produce new problems and contradictions for the Chinese Revolution. Most important was the advance and increased social weight of the working class. The number of wageworkers neared 20 million. "An article in *People's Daily*, August 1957, described a trip of 2,500 miles by a lower-ranking official of the Chinese Federation of Labor Unions accompanied by a member of the Chinese government. They visited ten cities from Peking to Canton. Some of the union members in Canton complained that their union functionaries kept close ties with the administration. In Canton, Changsha, Wuhan, and the other

cities, the labor unions were known as the tongues of the bureaucracy and the tails of the administration and the Department of Workers' Control. It was said that the trade union functionaries never really fought for the workers' interests. Many times they found dreadful working conditions—excessive hours and crushing pressures on the workers—and the labor unions never did anything to alleviate such conditions. Later some trade-union leaders complained that if they did what the workers asked, they got no answer from the government functionaries and were liable to be considered agitators or 'tail-enders.'"¹⁵

The rise of the Chinese workers' movement was given an assist by the workers of Poland, Hungary, and East Germany, and by the Khrushchevist course. In 1956 and 1957 the leadership set a democratic course: the Hundred Flowers campaign. Like any democratic orientation of a bureaucratic and Bonapartist government, however much based on a workers' mobilization, it had an inviolable limit: total democratization of the state, transforming it into a workers' democracy, cannot be achieved by Maoism. In the face of the wave of criticism provoked by this call to democratization (often from the counterrevolutionary right) and the pressure from the workers' movement, which began to organize factory committees, the government retreated; and in 1958 it began its famous "great leap forward" to transform China into a great industrial country like England, and started the "people's communes." These two policies failed completely and their failure was aggravated by three years of natural calamities (droughts, floods, etc.). This forced the government to retreat again.

In the meantime the Maoists' relations with the Soviet bureaucracy were becoming continually more strained until they produced the final break. This serves as yet another proof that these tendencies represent two distinct bureaucracies and regimes, not only with respect to their policies but with respect to their origins and pattern of development. After 1960, this rupture became ever more acute.

The failure of the "great leap forward" and the droughts forced the regime to give higher priority to agriculture and the production of necessities. The Chinese atom bomb is, nonetheless, a demonstration of the enormous potential of economic planning in a workers' state. However, the present confusion of the leadership is shown by the fact that the third five-year plan has been drawn up without a public statement of its goals.

The disaster suffered by the Indonesian Communist Party, brought on by the suicidal policy pursued by its leadership

(with the Maoists' blessing), dangerously isolated China in face of the threat of world imperialism. Precisely because of this defeat, Yankee Imperialism has been able to step up its intervention in Vietnam. Thus Yankee soldiers and airplanes have recently been encroaching on the Chinese frontier.

Primitive socialist accumulation in China, an extraordinarily backward country, has inevitably brought a whole series of mounting contradictions: continuing differentiation of the peasantry into bourgeois and poor peasants (Karol estimates that the average incomes in the countryside range from 160 to 600 yuan from commune to commune, and Chinese functionaries themselves refer to associations of poor-peasants; bureaucratization of state, party, industrial, and military functionaries; growth and reinforcement of the industrial working class; greater weight of the cities as against the countryside. The first two phenomena are negative and harmful to a workers' state. They put it in constant danger since they produce counterrevolutionary strata or sectors.

Such elements can only be defeated on the basis of the political development of the industrial working class in alliance with the poor peasantry. This requires the most extensive workers' democracy. As long as this is not attained, the contradictions engendered by primitive socialist accumulation under a Bonapartist government, however revolutionary, will become ever more grave; for the Bonapartist government is the reflection of these contradictions and the impossibility of their resolution under such a regime.

The cultural revolution is a demonstration of the fact that all these tendencies have produced a crisis, and that the Bonapartist regime, which succeeded in keeping all these contradictions alive and in drawing its sustenance from them, has entered into crisis along with Chinese society. Its definitive crisis is at hand.

IX. Maoism

Maoism can be considered from various angles. One of its most important facets is the enormous contribution made by its political-military-social theory of guerrilla warfare to the program of permanent revolution. "This union attains one of its highest expressions in guerrilla warfare, which—against the armed forces of imperialism and of the bourgeois state—proves itself to be a powerful factor of struggle and a no less powerful factor in political organization.

"Guerrilla formations of this type can live, develop, and win

only when composed of individuals with a very high revolutionary morale, and when connected with the masses of the country. That is to say that they tend to become a selected vanguard that elaborates and applies a policy corresponding to the interests of the masses.

"In addition to its vital political importance, the guerrilla has also proved itself to be an 'economical' form of warfare, needing only limited cadres, a small number of troops, little material equipment, yet that paralyzes considerable enemy forces."¹⁶

Maoism represents, to some extent, a repetition of the case of the Narodniks. The latter contributed to Marxism through their influence on the formation of the Leninist concept of a centralized party of professional revolutionaries. Although Maoism is not Trotskyism, i.e., revolutionary Marxism, it has contributed the programmatic elements noted to the program of the world socialist revolution.

We can also consider Maoism from the standpoint of its method, thought and outstanding characteristics. In this light, it is provincial, backward, empirical, pragmatic, half reformist and half revolutionary, with an ideology at once Jacobin, Stalinist, and Marxist; it practices armed struggle; it is a revolting cult of Mao's personality, which is bound up with a paternalistic outlook.

None of this is Marxism. We must study the growth and dynamic of Maoism in order to be able to understand its contributions, its characteristics, and its crisis. Its development has four clearly delineated stages represented by the following: the ideological imprint of the CP up until 1927; the revolutionary socialist agrarian tendency until 1935; the official leadership of the CP and the government of the liberated areas, which reflected the agrarian national movement of resistance to Japanese imperialism and world Stalinism, up until 1945; the government of People's China which was borne to victory by the revolution of the poor peasants in the north of China. Of these four stages, the first two are prehistory. However, it is from those stages that Maoism's contributions of Marxism stem: the geographical political concept of guerrilla struggle as class struggle in the countryside prior to a seizure of power by the proletariat.

Present-day Maoism is the result of the struggle and victory in the zones liberated from the Japanese occupation. In these zones there arose a plebeian people's state, turned in on itself, with a primitive economy in which the landowners and rich peasants wielded an influence. Though linked to world Stalinism, this

state was totally independent of imperialism. The government of Mao and the CP in this zone was revolutionary and Bonapartist. It was the guarantor of the unity of all classes and their united struggle against the Japanese occupation.

In this stage Mao went over ideologically and organizationally to Stalinism. He accepted the concept of revolution by stages, in which the first stage would be a democratic revolution of all national classes against feudalism and imperialism, and the second socialist phase was left to the distant future. Organizationally, he consolidated a typical Stalinist party without internal democracy and topped by a party oligarchy. This does not mean, however, that the Kremlin controlled it; it remained independent. The lack of imperialist influence and the absence of a substantial regional bourgeoisie gave the Maoist regime and party a thoroughly independent character which complemented its primitive, barbaric, peasant, and Jacobin-populist features. Its centralization and Bonapartism derived not only from its role as arbiter between Stalinism and the masses and among the various agrarian classes, but from the atomization of the peasants.

A product of isolation, of its role as arbiter among classes, subclasses, and regional particularisms, Maoism in turn became a superstructure whose survival depended on such conditions and tended to generate them.

Maoism is a consequence of the retreat and uneven course of the world revolution, which brought about first the isolation of the revolutionary resistance to the Japanese occupation, and then the isolation of the revolution of the poor peasants from the workers of China, Asia, and the capitalist centers. It was a provisional, episodic combination in the course of the world revolution that consolidated itself and formed an apparatus.

This explains Maoism's similarities and dissimilarities with Stalinism and Castroism. For contrary to what many commentators on the Chinese Revolution believe, Mao's justification of Stalin is not a tactical error. Maoism's Stalinist characteristics stem from its development in the Stalinist phase, from the character of the Chinese mass movement during that phase, and from the deep impression left by the recession of the world workers' movement. Its differences from Stalinism derive from its role in leading a process of revolutionary guerrilla warfare first against the Japanese, and later of the poor peasants against Chiang and what he represented.

Its divergences from Castroism result from the fact that Castroism developed in a directly revolutionary stage, untrammelled by counterrevolutionary Stalinism or advancing world

reaction. Hence Castroism's dynamic is less provincial, less nationalistic, and has a less bureaucratic and Bonapartist character. The stages in which these two movements developed explain both their profound, basic dissimilarities and their similarities: both reflect the revolutionary advance of the colonial masses following the method of guerrilla warfare. To sum up: Stalinism is the product of counterrevolutionary pressure on a victorious workers' revolution; Maoism is the product of a provisional combination of counterrevolutionary Stalinism and the uneven development of the Chinese mass movement; Castroism is a direct result of the advance of the world revolution.

The cultural revolution is a desperate attempt to contain the contradictions produced by the course of the world revolution, the counterrevolutionary advance of Yankee Imperialism in Vietnam consequent to the reactionary victory in Indonesia, and by the internal problems resulting from the growing strength of the proletariat and the hopeless crisis of the poor peasantry. I do not know which in this explosive combination of contradictions is the most important. But I do know one thing for certain: These contradictions are the background for the grave political crisis that has been shaking Maoism and China since the beginning of the cultural revolution.

The Maoists' attempt to repeat history is condemned to failure unless extraordinary factors again intervene, such as a new imperialist war against China, which would delay for a time a new upsurge of the Chinese proletariat. When this advance, of which there are symptoms, comes, it will be the disciples, party and method of Chen Tu-hsiu, and not those of Mao, that will come to the historical forefront; for the unevenness in the Chinese Revolution between the development of the peasantry and the working class will have ceased to exist. The tragedy of Maoism is that it set in motion the forces of permanent revolution, of the Chinese and world workers' movement, which will in the end incorporate Maoism as a stage in its development and go beyond it.

X. The War of National Liberation in Vietnam and the Agrarian Revolution

The victory of the Chinese Revolution was followed by an intensification of the struggle in Vietnam. In a certain measure the sequences of the Chinese revolutionary processes were repeated. The people and the peasantry responded to the permanent offensive of the colonial powers by defending themselves with de-

termination and valor, using the same method as the Chinese—guerrilla warfare. There are, however, certain specific characteristics that mark this struggle. Stalinist influence has been much greater on the Indochinese Communist Party than on the Chinese. This is because it has had much closer ties to the West, principally to the French Communist Party. This gave it a much more opportunistic character. On the other hand, the influence of Trotskyism was much stronger and more important in Indochina, and among the Indochinese living in France, than it had been in China.

“The initial phase of the Japanese occupation was marked by important uprisings: October 1940 in Tonkin, November 1940 in Cochinchina, January 1941 in Annam. The Japanese and French imperialists united in fierce repression of these people’s movements. It was then that the Viet Minh was set up. It was formed by two nationalist parties, embracing the petty bourgeoisie and the left wing of the liberal bourgeoisie; two communist parties (the Stalinists and the Trotskyists); and by women’s, peasants’, workers’, soldiers’ and youth organizations. The program which it formulated in 1941 was a program of democratic freedoms. It did propose agrarian reform, but this meant only confiscation of the property of the Japanese, the French and Indochinese ‘fascists,’ and the Church. It had the same effect, however, because all the possessors collaborated with the Japanese occupation forces and accommodated themselves to the Pétain government. The second major point of the program was armed struggle against any invader country” (a document by an Indochinese Trotskyist published in 1945).

Japan’s defeat produced a popular upsurge and gave rise to people’s organizations that took local administration into their hands. The Viet Minh remained the sole central government. It sought to demonstrate its “seriousness” to the French imperialists by dissolving the people’s organizations. In Paris, Ho Chi Minh’s comrade, Maurice Thorez, was minister of state and tried by every means to keep Indochina inside the French empire as an associated state. Ho Chi Minh’s negotiations with the French government failed, despite the fact that the French and Indochinese Communists did not demand independence. This policy drove the majority of the Indochinese workers in France into the ranks of the Trotskyist movement. The Trotskyists alone called for full independence for Indochina.

French imperialism, which also expressed the interests of the other great colonial powers, could not permit the existence of an independent national government like Ho’s. It began a gradual military occupation of Indochina, starting from the

south. After November 1946, it stepped up its offensive against the north, which was totally controlled by Ho’s forces. Ho strove to maintain his alliance with the shadowy national bourgeoisie, which participated in his government of national unity. This reformist line led him to a dangerous postponement of the launching of agrarian reform. The guerrilla struggle was waged in the name of national unity with the bourgeoisie. Giap conceded that “in 1953, the party and the government decided to carry out an agrarian reform to liberate the productive forces and give more powerful impetus to the resistance.” From this moment on, the Vietnamese guerrilla war was changed from a war of national liberation into an agrarian revolution. In the last analysis, this explains the legendary heroism of the Vietnamese fighters.

The talents of the party leaders as strategists, together with the combativity of the peasants and guerrilla fighters, enabled Vietnam to defeat French imperialism at Dienbienphu. The Geneva Accords recognized this victory and divided Vietnam into two parts until 1956, when general elections were to be held to unify the country. In the south, a puppet government was imposed, an agent of imperialism directly dependent on the Yankees.

They ordered their puppet of that particular time not to observe the Geneva Accords in the south, thus assuring total colonization of south Vietnam. The National Liberation Front developed in response to this colonization and began guerrilla warfare against the agent of Yankee Imperialism. The rest is recent history. Faced with the collapse of its agents and the south Vietnamese army, the White House threw the weight of its army and air force into the war to teach the colonial revolution a lesson by example. Before our eyes the most colossal counterrevolutionary war in history is taking place; neither the USSR nor China was ever subjected to anything like it. Despite this, the NLF masses and north Vietnam not only continue to resist but are slowly beginning to turn the tide of the war. And this is being achieved by a small people in a small country! The creation of several Vietnams, as Che Guevara proposed, is both possible and indispensable.

Thus far the USSR and China have refused to join in a political and military united front of total support to north Vietnam and the guerrillas in the south. Only the Castroists, the revolutionary intellectuals of the West, some black leaders, Korea, north Vietnam, and the Fourth International have projected such a united front. The USSR continues unperturbed in its diplomatic strategy of peaceful coexistence with imperialism.

Its aid to north Vietnam is a tactical expedient within the context of this strategy. The victory of the Vietnamese revolutionaries will not only mean a disaster for imperialism but also for the policies of Moscow and Peking.

Mao's China has rejected a united front under the pretext of its pretended revolutionary policy, which dangerously isolates China from the revolutionary forces of the entire world.

XI. The October Revolution and the Chinese and Indochinese Revolution

On the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution, we must evaluate it in comparison with the results of the Chinese Revolution. The first thing that strikes one is that as a result of the Russian Revolution a new revolutionary international, the Third International, sprang into existence along with Communist parties in all, or almost all, countries.

This new organization was to be a vital factor in world politics. Its role ranged from the development and organization of national revolutionary parties—support to the world revolution in Lenin and Trotsky's time—to aid to the counter-revolution or bureaucratic defense of the USSR under Stalin's aegis. This democratic-centralist Bolshevik International embraced the revolutionaries of the entire world. It was as important or more important an achievement than the workers' conquest of state power, although the two phenomena were interconnected. The Russian Bolshevik Party understood the revolution's international character. Therefore, from the very first it gave top priority to a program and organization for revolutionaries throughout the world. Its policy and its organization were subordinated to the goal of world revolution, and, most important, revolution in the central capitalist countries.

The Chinese Revolution, which has meant many successes for the world revolution, such as the struggle of the heroic Vietnamese guerrillas, has not succeeded in achieving, nor has it attempted to achieve, what Lenin and Trotsky achieved: a revolutionary socialist international and national parties. This is because the leaders of the Chinese and Indochinese revolutions, themselves a part of the international socialist revolution, have not understood the dialectic of this revolution. The victories in the colonial world are, in the last analysis, tactical successes of the world revolution. The revolution's strategic objective is no other than victory in the central capitalist countries—most importantly the United States. So long as this is not achieved,

the colonial revolution will always be in danger; there can be no respite for it because the international class struggle will continue to mount in intensity.

The legacy of the Russian Revolution has had a peculiar history. The legitimate and direct heir of its revolutionary socialist program and organization is Trotskyism. But its heirs in the attainment of revolutionary victories of the post-World War II period are narrowly nationalist parties like the Maoists, which propose no program or organization for the international socialist revolution. They have stubbornly refused to accept and advance the real heritage and lesson of the Russian Revolution: its militant internationalism.

This contradiction, as Mao's China shows, cannot long persist, since it is a transitory consequence of the very world situation that is being transformed. Everything indicates that now, fifty years after the Russian Revolution, hundreds of thousands of revolutionaries throughout the world are preparing to accept its heritage, which is the consciousness of the urgent necessity to strengthen the revolutionary Marxist international.

NOTES

1. Harold R. Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution*, Secker and Warburg, London, 1938, p. 70.
2. These arms were meant for delivery to Chiang. Karol cites Edgar Snow. Cf. note 3.
3. K. S. Karol, *La Chine de Mao: L'autre Communisme*, Laffont, Paris, 1966.
4. Ernest Germain, "The Third Chinese Revolution," *The Fourth International*, Sept.-Oct. 1950.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. Jack Belden, *China Shakes the World*, Harper and Brothers, New York, 1949, p. 74.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 169.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 173.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 202.
12. Leon Trotsky, *Problems of the Chinese Revolution*, Pioneer Publishers, New York, 1932, p. 239.
13. Hughes, T. J. and Luard, D. E. T., *La China Popular y Su Economía*, Mexico and Buenos Aires, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1961, p. 179.
14. Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1956, Vol. IV, p. 273 (On coalition government).
15. Hughes and Luard, *op. cit.*
16. "Documents of the Fifth World Congress of the Fourth International," *The Fourth International*, No. 1, 1958, p. 24.