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THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

Part II

by Peng Shu-tse and Peng Pi-lan

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THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

II.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This is the second of a series of three educational bulletins on the Chinese revolution from the conquest of power in 1949 through the "Cultural Revolution" of the 1960's.

The selection of articles in this bulletin covers the critical period of the "People's Communes" and deals with the controversy over the question of the character of the regime, more specifically, on the applicability of the slogan of political revolution to the Chinese regime.

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A CRITICISM OF THE VARIOUS VIEWS SUPPORTING
THE CHINESE RURAL PEOPLE'S COMMUNES
What Our Attitude Should Be

by Peng

(reprinted from SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 21 # 1, January 1960)

The rural people's commune movement was propelled by the Chinese Communist party (CCP) on an immense scale and at a ferocious tempo. Productive relations in agriculture were upset; personal lives of 500 million peasants thrown into turmoil. Not only were the masses in all of China affected, especially the peasantry, in whom it aroused fright, anxiety, illusory hopes and opposition; it became a world-wide issue. Landowners, capitalists and imperialists, especially the Americans and the gangster Chiang and Company, vehemently denounced the movement. Bureaucrats in the Soviet bloc outside of China, and Stalinists the world over, exhibited the reticence that goes with great uneasiness. On the other hand, among petty-bourgeois circles abroad, especially among intellectuals far from China, it appeared that an ideal world had been realized in the people's communes. They accepted them naively, and praised them lavishly.

Faced with something of such extraordinary and bewildering complexity, revolutionary Marxists, i.e., Trotskyists, require careful and detailed study to reach a correct objective estimate. We find ourselves compelled to utilize Marxist method and theory as a guide, and especially to recall the theory and strategy of Engels and Lenin in regard to the peasantry. To reach a correct position on the communes we must consider the experience and lessons of agricultural reconstruction in Russia for the forty years since the October Revo-

lution and in the East European countries for the past ten years. In addition, in our analysis and synthesis, we must collect the most dependable facts available on the Chinese commune movement itself. If we confine our approach merely to an abstract principle, to a one-sided formula, or the propaganda of the CCP, or make a hasty appraisal and decision as to what our standpoint and attitude toward the communes should be, we inevitably risk being careless and arbitrary, and can even stumble into the road of compromise with Stalinism and a betrayal of Marxism. Divergences in opinion have appeared over the Chinese communes, as is evident in the documents which have so far been published (mainly those of the Chinese and American comrades). If these differences should deepen and develop to their logical conclusion, they can involve principles and lead to unfortunate consequences. It is my hope that through full and democratic discussion internationally we can clear up the differences and arrive at a common policy. I believe that the truth will emerge in a serious discussion and gain the approval of the majority.

Superiority of Large-Scale Farming And the Principle of Voluntary Peasant Participation

Among the arguments adduced in support of the people's communes, the most powerful is the "superiority of large-scale farming." This stems from the axiom in Marxist political economy that "large-scale production is superior to

production by small units."

A systematic exponent of this idea is our Chinese Comrade Mah-ki. In his long article, "The People's Communes," he writes: "...characteristic of the people's communes are the 'large scale' and the 'collective ownership.' The so-called 'large scale' is obtained through the merger of many co-operatives.... 99% of the peasantry at present have joined the people's communes. There are 26,000, each including an average of 5,000 peasant households, over 10,000 laborers and 60,000 mu. (Six mu equal one acre.) ...The agricultural economists tell us that in agriculture as well as in industry large-scale production is superior to production by small units...." ("The People's Communes," by Mah-ki, p. 4. The article has not been translated into English.)

That large-scale production is superior to production by small units in agriculture as well as in industry is a general principle of economics that is undoubtedly true. That is why all socialists adhering to Marxism maintain that individual peasant farming must give way to agricultural collectives. Only as the scattered, less-productive small-peasant economy is superseded by co-operative ownership can the peasant become integrated into highly productive socialist economy. But this "economic principle" is closely related to and inseparable from the "political principle" -- the "voluntary participation" of the peasants in large-scale units or collectives. If only the "economic principle" is taken, while the "political principle" is overlooked or abandoned, then instead of advantages, damage and even worse can occur to the work of socialist construction.

Obviously -- at least from the Marxist viewpoint -- the difference between the peasants and the workers is qualitative. The peasants represent a transitional formation left over from pre-capitalist society which has not been assimilated by the capitalist system (but which undergoes continuous differentiation under the influence of capitalism); a portion of them have declined gradually, becoming hired peasants or laborers -- the proletariat of rural areas; while a smaller portion have become big peasants or rich peasants -- rural capitalists. Engels pointed out in "The Peasant Question in France and Germany": "This small peasant, just like the small handicraftsman, is therefore a toiler who differs from the modern proletariat in that he still possesses his instruments of labor; hence a survival of a past mode of production." (Selected Works, Marx and Engels, Vol. II, 1951, Moscow Edition, p. 383.)

In the same article, Engels analyzed

in detail the gradual decline of the small peasant under the pressure of capitalist large-scale production and concluded:

"The common possession of the means of production is thus set forth here as the sole principal goal to be striven for. Not only in industry, where the ground has already been prepared, but in general, hence also in agriculture." (Ibid., p. 387.)

Engels pointed out the superiority of large-scale production from the economic viewpoint, and the necessity for the common possession of the means of production in agriculture, the replacement of small individual peasant holdings by collective ownership, but at the same time he declared:

"...it is just as evident that when we are in possession of state power we shall not even think of forcibly expropriating the small peasants (regardless of whether with or without compensation), as we shall have to do in the case of the big landowners. Our task relative to the small peasants consists, in the first place, in effecting a transition of his private enterprise and private possession to co-operative ones, not forcibly but by dint of example and the proffer of social assistance for this purpose. And then of course we shall have ample means of showing to the small peasant prospective advantages that must be obvious to him even today." (Ibid., p. 393.)

"We of course are decidedly on the side of the small peasant; we shall do everything at all permissible to make his lot more bearable, to facilitate his transition to the co-operative should he decide to do so, and even to make it possible for him to remain on his small holding for a protracted length of time to think the matter over, should he still be unable to bring himself to this decision." (Ibid., p. 394.)

"The victory of Socialism over capitalism, and the consolidation of Socialism, may be regarded as ensured only when the proletarian state, having completely suppressed all resistance on the part of the exploiters and secured complete stability for itself and complete obedience, reorganized the whole of industry on large-scale collective lines and on a modern technical basis (founded on the electrification of every branch of economic activity). This alone will enable the towns to render such radical assistance, technical and social, to the backward and scattered rural populations and will create the material basis for enormously raising the productivity of agricultural and of farm labor in general, thereby stimulating the small tillers by

the force of example and in their own interests to adopt large-scale, collective, mechanized agriculture." (Ibid., pp. 458-59. My emphasis.)

Engels thus combined dialectically the "economic principle" with the "willingness of the peasant"; that is, he combined the principle of large-scale production in agricultural collectives with the principle of voluntary participation by the peasant, in this way establishing a basic norm governing the attitude of the proletariat toward the peasantry, hence determining the strategic direction for agricultural reconstruction and the alliance between the workers and peasants. Since then all revolutionary Marxists have accepted this as their guiding principle in action. The Bolsheviks, after the seizure of power and the establishment of the Soviet government following the October Revolution, applied under Lenin's leadership the principle laid down by Engels. For example, Lenin said in his speech "At the First Congress of Agricultural Communes and Agricultural Artels":

"Of course, from all the activities of the Soviet government you know what tremendous significance we attach to the communes, artels, and all organizations generally that aim at transforming and gradually assisting the transformation of small, individual, peasant farming into social, co-operative or artel farming. You are aware that the Soviet government has long ago assigned a fund of one billion rubles to assist efforts of this kind. The 'Statutes of Socialist Agrarian Measures' particularly stress the significance of communes, artels and all enterprises for the common cultivation of the land, and the Soviet government is exerting every effort in order that this law shall not remain on paper only, and that it shall really produce the benefits it is intended to produce.

"The importance of enterprises of this kind is tremendous, because if the old, poverty-stricken peasant husbandry remained unchanged there could be no question of building up a stable socialist society." (Selected Works, V.I. Lenin, Vol. II, Part 2, 1952 Moscow Edition, p. 294.)

In the above paragraph, immediately after emphasizing the significance of the aim of transforming small, individual peasant farming into communes, artels and similar enterprises for common cultivation of the land, Lenin illustrated methods of carrying out this aim.

"Only if we succeed in proving to the peasants in practice the advantages of common, collective, co-operative, artel

cultivation of the soil, only if we succeed in helping the peasant by means of co-operative or artel farming, will the working class, which holds the state power, be really able to convince the peasant of the correctness of its policy and to secure the real and durable following of the millions of peasants. It is therefore impossible to exaggerate the importance of every measure intended to encourage co-operative, artel forms of agriculture. We have millions of individual farms in our country, scattered and dispersed throughout remote rural districts. It would be absolutely absurd to attempt to reshape these farms in any rapid way, by issuing an order or bringing pressure to bear from without. We fully realize that we can influence the millions of small peasant farms only gradually and cautiously and by successful practical example. For the peasants are far too practical and cling far too tenaciously to the old methods of agriculture to consent to any serious change merely on the basis of advice or the indications contained in books. That is impossible and it would be absurd. Only when it is proved in practice, by experience comprehensible to the peasants, that the transition to the co-operative, artel form of agriculture is essential and possible, shall we be entitled to say that in this vast peasant country, Russia, an important step towards socialist agriculture has been taken." (Ibid., pp. 294-95. My emphasis.)

Lenin states very clearly in the above paragraph that to prove "the advantages of common, collective, co-operative, artel cultivation of the soil," it is absolutely forbidden to use compulsive measures; we can only convince the millions of small peasants by practical example, and only in this way bring them to the side of the working class. This policy is not limited to Russia, but holds also in the advanced capitalist countries. In his "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the Agrarian Question" for the Second Congress of the Communist International, Lenin wrote:

"In the majority of capitalist countries the proletarian state should not immediately abolish private property completely; at all events, it guarantees both the small and the middle peasantry not only the preservation of their plots of land, but also the enlargement of the latter by the addition of the total area they usually rented (abolition of rent).

"The combination of measures of this kind with a ruthless struggle against the bourgeoisie fully guarantees the success of the policy of neutralization. The proletarian state must effect the passage to collective farming with extreme caution

and only very gradually, by the force of example, without any coercion of the middle peasant." (Ibid., pp. 453-54. My emphasis.)

The "principle of voluntary peasant participation"; namely, the objection to coercive measures to force the peasants into collectives, Lenin stressed particularly, concretely and in detail in his "Report on Work in the Rural Districts" delivered at the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist party in 1919:

"We must particularly stress the truth that here, by the very nature of the case, coercive methods can accomplish nothing. The economic task here is an entirely different one.... Here coercion would ruin the whole cause. What is required here is prolonged educational work. We have to give the peasant, who not only in our country but all over the world is a practical man and a realist, concrete examples to prove that the 'kommunia' is the best possible thing." (Ibid., p. 185-186. Emphasis in the original.)

"On this question we must say that we do encourage communes, but that they must be so organized as to gain the confidence of the peasants.... Nothing is more stupid than the very idea of applying coercion in economic relations with the middle peasant." (Ibid., p. 186. Emphasis in original.)

"When it is stated that we must strive to gain the peasants' voluntary consent, it means that they must be persuaded, and persuaded by practical deeds. They will not allow themselves to be convinced by mere words, and they are perfectly right in that. It would be a bad thing if they allow themselves to be convinced merely by reading decrees and agitational leaflets. If it were possible to reshape economic life in this way, such reshaping would not be worth a brass farthing." (Ibid., p. 137. My emphasis.)

"We must live in peace with him. In a communist society the middle peasants will be on our side only when we alleviate and ameliorate their economic conditions. If tomorrow we could supply one hundred thousand first-class tractors, provide them with fuel, provide them with drivers -- you know very well that this at present is sheer fantasy -- the middle peasant would say: 'I am for the kommunia' (i.e., for communism). But in order to do that we must first defeat the international bourgeoisie, we must compel them to give us these tractors, or so develop our productive forces as to be able to provide them ourselves. That is the only correct way to pose this question." (Ibid., p. 189.)

It was because of his resolute objection to forced collectivization, and insistence on model examples to persuade the peasants in agricultural reconstruction that Lenin considered collectivization or co-operation to be absolutely impossible of accomplishment hastily or even within a brief time. Consequently he said in his essay, "On Co-operation": "But it will take a whole historical epoch to get the whole population to take part in the work of the co-operatives.... At best we can achieve this in one or two decades." (Ibid., p. 718.)

According to Lenin, if Russia, with all its backwardness, was to eventually arrive at socialism (including agricultural collectivization), one condition was absolutely essential, namely electrification. He gave the following explanation:

"If we construct scores of district electric power stations... if we transmit electric power from these to every village, if we obtain a sufficient number of electric motors and other machinery, we shall not need, or shall hardly need, transitional stages, intermediary links between patriarchalism and Socialism. But we know perfectly well that at least ten years will be required to complete only the first stage of this 'one' condition; a reduction of this period is conceivable only if the proletarian revolution is victorious in such countries as England, Germany or America." ("The Tax in Kind," Ibid., p. 550.)

I have patiently quoted examples of Lenin's repeated emphasis on the correct principle in agricultural collectivization -- the need for the voluntary consent of the peasants. I have done this not only because the bureaucrats in the Stalinist parties have violated this principle, but also because quite a few Trotskyists, deluded by the current Chinese rural people's communes, have also forgotten or neglected it.

In the period following the death of Lenin, Stalin, compromising with the rich peasants, abandoned, or, at least, delayed agricultural collectivization. The growth of the rich peasants was facilitated, leading to a serious food famine. Beginning in 1929, under the threat of the mounting influence of the rich peasants, Stalin jumped from one extreme to the other, forcing all peasants by decree to join collectives despite their resistance. He even mobilized the Red Army and the GPU to suppress the opposition of the rich peasants and the great majority of the middle peasants. The tragic results of the forced collectivization are well known to us; they testify that violation of the will of the peasants leads to dire

consequences.

Forced collectivization in Eastern Europe after World War II provided fresh evidence that such measures create dissatisfaction among the peasants, and lead to stagnation and even retrogression in agricultural production. Chronic food shortages forced Tito and Gomulka to readjust and even dissolve some collectives in order to allay the crisis.

In the struggle between Trotsky and Stalin, agricultural collectivization became an important issue. Trotsky fully accepted the principle established by Engels and Lenin of respecting the will of the peasants in agricultural collectivization. When Stalin made his compromise with the rich peasants and delayed collectivization in 1926, the Left Opposition led by Trotsky called for a policy of collectivization. Later when Stalin introduced forced collectivization in the face of peasant resistance, Trotsky relentlessly attacked it as adventurism that would lead to disaster. Finally in the Transitional Program of the Fourth International Trotsky summarized as the guiding strategy for the alliance of workers and peasants, Engels' and Lenin's principles for the nationalization of land and collectivization and drew the tragic lesson of its malpractice in Russia under Stalin.

"The program for the nationalization of the land the collectivization of agriculture should be so drawn that from its very basis it should exclude the possibility of expropriation of small farmers and their compulsory collectivization. The farmer will remain owner of his plot of land as long as he himself believes it possible or necessary. In order to rehabilitate the program of socialism in the eyes of the farmer, it is necessary to expose mercilessly the Stalinist methods of collectivization, which are dictated not by the interests of the farmers or workers but by the interests of the bureaucracy."

Now let us turn to the Chinese communes. Were they formed with the voluntary consent of the peasants, or as the CCP propaganda puts it, with the enthusiastic support of the peasant masses? Mah-ki, who supports the communes, made the following judgement:

"The commune movement as a whole was largely compulsory in character.... Though the CCP agrees in words with the principle of voluntary consent by the peasants, it has not complied with it in deeds. The people's communes started as an experiment in April, 1958, but the documents concerning them were first published in August, 1958. Then in a

period of not more than two months 99% of the rural population was organized into the communes. In such a short period, the superiority of the communes could not be proved by an increase in production and by an improvement in the standard of living of the people. Also there was insufficient time for discussion among the masses on how to form the communes.... All was decided simply by decree in this hastily organized movement." ("The People's Communes," by Mah-ki, pp. 17-18.)

In fact, the CCP inherited the traditional Stalinist practice and policy in agricultural production. For a relatively long time after taking power, the CCP, compromising with the landlords and rich peasants, suppressed its program of nationalization of the land and its intention of collectivizing agriculture. Even the urgent task of confiscating the land of the rich peasants and distributing it to the poor peasants was postponed. Later, during the Korean War, after encountering the resistance of the landlords, rich peasants and bourgeoisie, the CCP was forced to solve the problem of distributing the land to the poor peasants, but still hesitated to project a policy of agricultural collectivization. In 1955, jumping from one extreme to the other as Stalin did in 1929, the CCP suddenly announced agricultural collectivization. In less than a year all Chinese peasants had joined the co-operatives. This forced collectivization inevitably aroused the resentment of the peasants, causing general unrest, chaotic conditions, and even riots in the rural areas during 1957. Some co-operatives were dissolved by the peasants themselves. To meet this awkward situation, the CCP repressed the dissatisfaction and resistance of the peasants under the guise of an "anti-rightist" campaign. In an attempt to turn the peasants' attention away from resistance, it forced them, under the slogan of a "great leap forward," to work doubly hard to increase production. The move into people's communes carried the "great leap forward" to its culmination.

The utter violation of Engels' and Lenin's principles on the agrarian question and agricultural reconstruction, and hence the violation of the strategy of the alliance of workers and peasants, is amply proved by the extreme inconsistency with which the CCP dealt with the agrarian question -- the abrupt shift from right to left in agricultural reconstruction, as indicated above. We are justified in saying, therefore, that the co-operative movement in 1955 and the general establishment of people's communes in September 1958 were "dictated not by the interests of the farmers or workers but by the interests of the bureaucracy."

Comrade Mah-ki acknowledges the validity of the principle of voluntary peasant participation in agricultural collectivization. He says:

"The commune, no doubt, is vastly superior, but since it signifies a great change in productive relations and social life, an experimental stage and concrete examples are necessary to obtain the full understanding and hearty support of the masses. Otherwise, the imprudent forced communization will encounter mass resistance. Moreover, the lack of tested planning and experiment loads the new system with defects which bring much unnecessary suffering and great inconvenience to the masses, increasing their misgivings and opposition. That is why all Marxists insist on the principle of voluntary consent by the peasants in agrarian collectivization." ("The People's Communes," by Mah-ki, p. 17.)

If Comrade Mah-ki had actually insisted "on the principle of voluntary consent by the peasants in agrarian socialization" and if the "imprudent forced communization" mentioned by him above is a fact, then his support in general of the CCP's handling of the communes is not only self-contradictory, but signifies abandonment of his insistence on the principle of voluntary consent by the peasants.

Why does Comrade Mah-ki take such a contradictory position on such an important issue, an issue which is so basic to the alliance of the workers and peasants and which affects the daily life of 500 million peasants? It is obvious that by insisting one-sidedly on the "superiority of large-scale agrarian production" and by falling victim to a delusion in which he sees the commune as "vastly superior," he overlooks the ominous result of the "imprudent forced communization." Consequently, he fails to understand the decisive role played by the "principle of voluntary consent" in "agricultural collectivization" about which Lenin warned us: "We must particularly stress the truth that here, by the very nature of the case, coercive methods can accomplish nothing." "Here coercion would ruin the whole cause" and "Nothing is more stupid than the very idea of applying coercion in economic relations with the middle peasants." Comrade Mah-ki forgets or neglects, in addition, the painful lesson of Stalin's forced collectivization and the fresh experience of forced collectivization in Eastern Europe during the past ten years.

If Comrade Mah-ki will make a careful study of Lenin's writings and the experience of the forced collectivizations in Russia and in Eastern Europe, I believe

he will come to the following conclusion:

That "large-scale agrarian production is superior to production by small units"; "the commune is vastly superior"; but in view of the "lack of an experimental stage and concrete examples" to "obtain the full understanding and hearty support of the masses," "imprudent forced communization" is adventurism. That "coercive methods can accomplish nothing"; "coercion would ruin the whole cause"; therefore, communes of this type "are dictated not by the interests of the peasants or workers but by the interests of the bureaucracy."

Let us leave aside for the moment the principle of voluntary peasant participation. We remain with "the superiority of large-scale agrarian production." But this is not something all powerful. As Comrade Mah-ki observes: "The superiority of large-scale production has its limitation; namely, increasing a farm's size hinges on the agrarian technical level, to over-do it has disadvantages." ("The People's Communes.") This is especially true where agrarian technique is at such a low level as in China -- not only are modern machinery and draft animals lacking, but the greater part of farming is done by primitive means, depending virtually on human labor alone. On the other hand, the communes were set up on a grandiose scale -- averaging 60,000 mu with 5,000 households, quite a few ranging from a hundred thousand to several hundred thousand mu with 15,000 to more than 30,000 households. (Shen Ioh Association Dispatches; October 1958, People's Daily.) The readily apparent contradiction between such extraordinarily large-scale farms and the low technique can only be overcome by agrarian mechanization and electrification. These absolutely cannot be achieved in a short period of time.

Though Lenin held in high esteem the superiority of large-scale agrarian production and insisted on practicing collectivization, he emphasized at the same time the principle of voluntary peasant participation, pointing out in particular that collectivization must be carried out gradually in combination with mechanization and electrification. He said, as we noted, that it "will take a whole historical epoch to get the whole population to take part in the work of the co-operatives.... At best we can achieve this in one or two decades."

Disregarding for the time being the item of "unnecessary suffering and great inconvenience to the peasants" -- which increases their "misgivings and opposition" -- from the viewpoint purely of

production, the commune is unprofitable. A real increase in agrarian productivity depends on the general application of modern technique (tractors, chemical fertilizers, electrification, etc.) If an increase rests solely on lengthened hours and increased intensity, dependent in turn on the rigid or militarized organization of labor, the increase in production at best can be only temporary; it cannot make up for the backwardness of the agrarian technique. Consequently it remains open to question whether the communes have increased productivity and, if they have, by how much. (I will return to this point later.)

Another argument raised in support of the communes is: large-scale communes facilitate huge irrigation projects and public works such as opening up new acreage to irrigation, dredging rivers, erecting flood controls, etc. Comrade Mah-ki declares: "The commune movement developed large-scale irrigation projects which are greatly needed." This is the same as saying that in order to undertake large-scale irrigation projects and other public works, large-scale communes must be set up. Such a statement is not only absurd in theory, it is unrealistic in practice.

Let us follow Comrade Mah-ki more closely in his remarks about accomplishments in irrigation: "Less than 20% of the farm land in China was irrigated in 1952; now it has increased to 55%, 30% of which was accomplished at the high tide of the advanced co-operative movement in two periods: from the winter of 1955 to the following spring and from the winter of 1957 to the following spring." ("The People's Communes.") This indicates that 30% of the new land brought under irrigation can be credited to the advanced co-operatives before the establishment of the communes. They can be credited with only 5%.

Liu Shao Chi, now Chairman of the Chinese government, said in his "Report to the Second Session of the Eighth National Congress" in May 1958: "The most outstanding leap forward in agriculture is the opening up of new acreage to irrigation by the cooperatives. Enlarged and new irrigation areas have been increased by 350,000,000 mu which is 80,000,000 mu more than the increase in the eight years immediately after the liberation." What Comrade Mah-ki and Chairman Liu Shao Chi say comes to the same thing; namely, without large-scale communes large-scale irrigation was achieved within the original framework of co-operatives. This discredits the theory that only large-scale communes can handle large-scale irrigation projects.

Actually, the construction of really large-scale irrigation projects: such as big reservoirs, high dams, river dredging, especially controls on the Yellow, Yangtze, and Pearl rivers cannot be carried out on a commune, or even provincial scale, but only the level of the state power. This stands to reason. Immense human power, a large quantity of machine equipment and high industrial technique are required to build large-scale reservoirs, floodgates (such as the Yellow River Floodgate now under construction) and to dredge rivers. In the past, the controlling of the Huai River and some large-scale floodgates and reservoirs (such as the "Tunglin Dam" near Peking, etc.) required the support of the state power.

In a word, it is completely in violation of the basic principles of Engels and Lenin on the agrarian question and agricultural collectivization to separate the superiority of large-scale farming from voluntary consent by the peasants and to use the former as an argument to support the communes. It is absurd to claim that the construction of large-scale irrigation and public works depends upon the construction of communes.

The "Great Productive Increase in Farming" and "From Enslavement for Women to Equality"

Besides the "superiority of large-scale farming," the two suppositions most convincing to those who support and glorify the "advantages" of the people's communes are the "great productive increase in farming" and "from enslavement for women to equality." For instance, Comrade Liang in his commentary on the "Draft Resolution on the Chinese Communes" submitted by the Secretariat of the Socialist Workers Party, held that "the progressive character of the communes as superior forms of socio-economic organization, [is] proven by the great productive increases already achieved and the smashing of out-worn social and family relationships." Liang's suppositions are also contained in "The Communes of China" (Draft Resolution Proposed by NC Members in Los Angeles); they constitute the chief reasons advanced for supporting the communes. The "great productive increases in farming" of the communes is described in the Draft Resolution of the Los Angeles comrades as follows:

"The economic advantages deriving from the communes have already been proven. The 1958 cotton crop and the early rice crop were double that of 1957. The wheat crop was up 60 per cent. Work teams opened up 69 million acres to new irrigation.... These and derivative accomplishments are

due to the advantages of the new productive form of the commune...." (See SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 20, No. 8, p. 40.)

The Draft Resolution also emphasized: "This economic yardstick is for historical materialists the basic measure of progress." (Ibid., p. 40.) Right, "This economic yardstick is for historical materialists the basic measure of progress"! Unfortunately these productive increases in farming and derivative accomplishments have no, or little, connection with the communes.

The communes began to spread in the early part of September 1958, (after the "Resolution in Establishment of People's Communes in the Rural Areas" was announced by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CCP, August 29, 1958). Wheat was harvested in the middle of June, the early rice crop between July and August, while cotton, raised in the summer, was ripe for harvest by the time the communes were established. These, therefore, harvested a crop raised by the co-operatives. It is surprising that the author of "The Communes of China" could commit such a blunder as to credit the communes with achievements of the co-operatives. Evidently he is uninformed on the harvest time for early rice, wheat and cotton. This alone is sufficient to demonstrate the author's carelessness.

As to "work teams" opening up "69 million acres to new irrigation," this likewise does not correspond to the facts. On this, as we see from the report of Comrade Mah-ki, out of the 35% increase in new areas opened to irrigation since the CCP took power, 30% was accomplished before the establishment of the communes. To credit the communes before they were organized for opening up new areas to irrigation astonishes us.

We must understand that the great increase in farm production in 1958 was neither an achievement of the communes nor a "miracle" ascribable to the co-operatives (due to lack of agricultural machinery, electricity, chemical fertilizers, insecticides, etc., a "miracle" is not possible), but is the direct result of the increase in hours and the increase in intensity of labor ruthlessly forced on the peasants by the CCP in the "bitter battle" against nature.

Since the winter of 1957, particularly after the general line in agriculture was announced at the second session of the Eighth Party Congress in early May 1958, the peasants, under the slogan of the "Great Leap Forward," have worked day and night -- 12 hours, 15 hours, even 18 hours; practicing deep plowing, building and repairing dams and canals, collect-

ing fertilizer, opening up areas to new irrigation, etc. Farm production increased tremendously under the extraordinary intensity of labor. Even Comrade Mah-ki, who supports the communes, admitted: "A big part of the increase in farm production is due to the extreme intensity of labor (men, women, aged and children engaging in the 'bitter battle' day and night)." ("The People's Communes," by Mah-ki, p. 15.) This is not a normal development in agriculture, since the length of the work day and the intensity of labor cannot be kept up over a long period, while such primitive methods of obtaining fertilizer and opening up new areas to irrigation are limited.*

Even with land reform and collectivization, the heightening of farm production will proceed at a slow tempo if there is no general application of machinery, electric power, chemical fertilizers, insecticides and if the voluntary participation of the peasantry is lacking. This has been proved by the Chinese experience itself. In his report on "Government Work" at the Second National People's Congress April 18, 1959, Chou En Lai admits: "Due to the fulfillment and over-fulfillment of the First Five Year Plan, the total cost of industry and agriculture was 68% greater than in 1952; the total cost of industry being 140% and that of agriculture 25%." Let us, for the time being, admit that Chou's report coincides with fact. (In reality, CCP official reports always exaggerate. The great food shortage this year disproves the reported doubling of farm products last year.) Thus the average yearly rate of increase in industry in the five years of the first plan can be put at 28%; agriculture at 5%. It is beyond reasonable dispute that the development of agriculture occurred at a slow tempo during the five years before 1958, which is to be taken as relatively normal. The tremendous increase reported this year is abnormal, (the total cost of agriculture alone in 1958 was 64% greater than in 1952 -- same report of Chou). It is the result of the extraordinary increase in intensity of the peasants' labor.

The rate of increase in 1958 absolutely cannot be maintained by simply depending on what peasant labor can accomplish under the whip. The frenetic increase in

* Fertilizer collected by peasants consists mostly of dirt dug from sewers and ponds or the earth from the walls of old dismantled houses, etc. Such sources, like the scrap iron collected for blast furnaces, cannot be tapped for long. The new areas opened up for irrigation are mostly front yards or back yards, or fallow land along river and forest edges -- areas again which are limited.

labor time and intensity to increase the rate of production will inevitably engender its opposite. All the facts that have become evident since the establishment of the communes have tended to prove this. After their entry into the communes, the peasants were forced to continue working "energetically," intensity of labor was increased even more, the great majority of women were put to work at the same intensity as men; this exceedingly harsh drive, neglecting the well-being of the masses, soon met with bitter resistance and resentment from the peasants. Hence the CCP was compelled to prescribe last December in a "Resolution on Some Questions Concerning the People's Communes" a minimum of "eight hours' sleep and four hours for meals and recreation daily"; that is, the working day should not exceed 12 hours. (In fact, it still exceeds 12 hours.)

A 12-hour day cannot be kept up indefinitely, for, due to the lack of machinery and draft animals, almost all farm work means physical labor. The peasants dig the earth with simple hoes, stoop to transplant young rice plants and sow seeds, carry fertilizer and grain on their shoulders with a pole, use hand power for irrigation through a water-lifting apparatus, etc. All this requires endurance beyond that of horses and oxen, if the 12-hour day is continued for long.* Thus the growing peasant dissatisfaction eventually reaches open opposition. First, general sabotage, which damages crops, decreases production and lowers the rate of expansion. The CCP has been compelled to acknowledge many instances of this. For example, Tao Chu, the First Secretary of the Kwangtung Provincial Committee of the Communist Party, said in his report on the "Investigation of the Hu-men Commune": "There is sabotage, waste and lack of enthusiasm among the masses." (People's Daily, Feb. 25, 1959.) The "lack of enthusiasm among the masses" means passive sabotage due to overwork. This exists not only in the Hu-Men commune; it is a general phenomenon in the great majority of communes. Consequently, for the past half year the People's Daily continually speaks of

*The Los Angeles draft resolution on "The Communes in China" states: "As with all forced marches, hardships are inevitable." How should this sentence be interpreted by the Chinese peasants? Even if they agreed that the American Trotskyists are not defenders of the CCP, they would surely blame them for utter lack of understanding of how they are overworked and for indifference to their unbearable suffering in a "bitter battle" indescribably damaging to their health.

absenteeism and inefficiency among some members of the communes, and calls for enforcement of the "production responsibility system" (the so-called "fixed quota system") and the "incentive penalty system."

The so-called "production responsibility system" gives each unit a fixed production target; the "incentive penalty system" penalizes absenteeism and lack of enthusiasm. (Tao Chu recommends docking two days' pay for each day's absence.) But this increasingly severe forced labor with its penalty system, not only cannot raise production, it will further arouse passive resistance among the masses. Even during the autumn harvest a year ago, when the communes were first established, mass sabotage had already shown what serious effect it could have. Vice Premier Ten Tzu-hui admitted at the Second National People's Congress in 1959: "Last year we reaped less in spite of a fine crop." This means that at the autumn harvest great waste and loss occurred due to sabotage among the peasantry. This occurred again in the summer harvest this year according to reports in recent issues of the People's Daily.

Precisely because of this passive resistance of the peasantry, the CCP had to admit further: "In order to get high yield we need tractors, large amounts of chemical fertilizers, modern agricultural machinery and effective insecticides. At present our country does not have these prerequisites; consequently, farm production is very unsteady; we can have a bumper harvest one year and a poor harvest in another.... This year some communes have scored an increase in unit-area yield, but total sowing areas were much less than last year. Thus, there was actually no increase and in some cases even decreases were reported." (People's Daily, June 11, 1959.)

After reaching the conclusion that the "great productive increases in farming" were not the "accomplishment" of the communes, as I sought to point out, and then reading the acknowledgment by the CCP that "farm production is very unsteady: due to the lack of modern farming prerequisites," and that "this year... there was actually no increase and in some cases even decreases were reported," I wonder what the author of "The Communes in China" thinks.

This "form of socio-economic organization," put into practice on such a large scale, had not been subjected to test. Instead of crediting it for an increase in production accomplished before it came into existence, we should have retained cool heads, analyzed carefully

its productive possibilities and contradictions so as to arrive at a conclusion or judgment subject to the test of events and criticism. Only by a serious attitude of this kind in dealing with an important issue can we lay claim to being "historical materialists." Otherwise, the so-called "economic yardstick" becomes a mere caricature.

We also find in "The Communes in China": "The advance by the way of such collectives is...from enslavement for women to equality...." (Op. cit., p. 39.) This statement is further explained: (A) "The communes have plowed up and pulverized the crust of outworn social and family relations...." (Ibid., p. 39.) and (B) "...they have accelerated the liberation of women from domestic slavery, opened up new avenues of cultural development, and are narrowing the age-old cultural gulf between city and country." (Ibid., p. 40.) (A) apparently refers to the equality of women with men through liberation from the bonds of the feudal or patriarchal family; while (B) refers to the liberation of women from "domestic slavery" and their stepping into "new avenues of cultural development."

What (A) and (B) refer to is surely epoch-making. But the question remains: Have the communes actually led to this kind of "liberation" for women? First, let us investigate the facts. As everyone knows, Chinese women, before the third Chinese revolution, had been recognized in law to have equal status with men; such as the right of inheritance, equal rights in education, participation in social and political spheres and freedom in marriage. Of course, this legal equality was far from being realized in reality, especially in the rural areas. But it is undeniable that the Chinese women had won a preliminary stage in their liberation from patriarchal relations. Because of this relative freedom a great many women participated in revolutionary activities. After taking power, the CCP proclaimed further measures establishing legal equality for women such as equal pay for equal work, complete freedom in marriage and divorce, etc. And by participating in all kinds of social movements such as land reform, agricultural co-operatives, etc., the Chinese women, especially those in the rural areas, have, no doubt, broken with the traditional patriarchy and obtained equality with men. This is certainly an important contribution, made by the CCP after it took power, toward the liberation of women. It was noted in "The Third Chinese Revolution and Its Aftermath" (Discussion Draft, 1955): The Revolution "destroyed the Asian relations in the family and swept away

other feudalistic rubbish." (p.1.) All this was accomplished a few years before the establishment of the communes and has no connection with them. The author of "The Communes in China," crediting the communes for bringing women "from enslavement...to equality," again gets his facts chronologically out of order as he did in doubling farm production (crediting the communes with an early rice crop, wheat crop, etc. which were actually due to the co-operatives).

Doubtlessly, only liberation from "domestic slavery" will make it possible for women to win genuine, thoroughgoing liberation. But the general establishment of community kitchens and nurseries as prerequisites for the complete liberation of women, which every communist stands for, is conceivable only under highly developed material and cultural conditions. At present, neither the Chinese rural areas nor the advanced Western countries have achieved these.

Under such unfavorable material and cultural conditions, the CCP's reckless and forcible replacement of family life with collective life, unavoidably brings innumerable inconveniences and suffering to the masses. Comrade Mah-ki, a supporter of the communes, especially their community kitchens and nurseries, has to say this when confronted with undeniable facts: "Just as in the commune movement as a whole, this great leap (meaning the community kitchen established to liberate women -- Peng) was made with too much ferocity and compulsion, hence the cadres went overboard in many things. For instance, by sudden order everybody had to eat in the mess halls; all stoves in private homes were dismantled or centralized, and no food rations were issued to individuals. Yet the meals in the mess halls are insufficient and bad in quality. There is rice but no hot water, no special care for the aged, children and sick ones. Though called community kitchens, actually there is no mess hall; people eat in the open or take meals home on rainy and windy days... worst of all is the fact that the cadres have their own small mess halls!" ("The People's Communes," by Mah-ki, p. 10.)

In the above paragraph, Comrade Mah-ki gives just a bare sketch of the communal kitchens without analyzing their many serious shortcomings and contradictions. Yet it is enough to prove that they are unbearable. I am sure that except for a few, who never had enough to eat, the great majority of the peasantry harbor resentment against the communal kitchens. They at least find them inconvenient.

The situation in the nurseries is not

much better. Too many children are crowded into small rooms without any nursery equipment and placed in charge of illiterate or disabled old women. Under these conditions, how can the children be well cared for? That is why mothers are "physically in the field, while their minds are back home." (The mothers worry about their children all the time.)

What is the actual situation of the women liberated from "domestic slavery" and precipitated into social production? Comrade Mah-ki, who supports this kind of "liberation of women," gives us the following description and explanation:

"... 'equality' with men has been demanded of women in physical output since communization; they work on farms, dams, highways, mines and factories -- day and night in the 'bitter battle,' even during menstruation, pregnancy and after giving birth... the customs and prejudices of thousands of years cannot be broken at one stroke; the masses see things differently. This plus these shortcomings in the process of practicing the new system explain why the suspicion and resentment of the masses are growing to such a large extent. After the Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the CCP, these shortcomings became the target for investigation in the check-up of the communes. But these shortcomings can only be solved thoroughly when genuine proletarian democracy is fully realized in the communes and in the country as a whole." ("The People's Communes," by Mah-ki, p. 10.)

Here we can draw a conclusion from Comrade Mah-ki's description and explanation: "Before genuine proletarian democracy is fully realized in the communes and in the country as a whole," the sufferings (Comrade Mah-ki called them "shortcomings") of women liberated from the family to participate in productive labor cannot be "thoroughly solved." The problem here is reduced to how to "realize genuine proletarian democracy" in "the communes and in the country as a whole."

Comrade Mah-ki has also provided us with sufficient material to answer the questions I posed before: (A) "the meals in the mess halls are insufficient and bad in quality..." which proves that they are worse than those at home; the same goes for the nurseries. (B) Since communization, "'equality' with men has been demanded of women in physical output day-and-night in the 'bitter battle'...." which is harder and more harmful to their bodies and minds than "domestic slavery." This is the logical conclusion to forcibly replacing family

life with collective life. The main aim of this CCP policy is not the thoroughgoing liberation of women but the mobilization of maximum labor power in pushing the great leap forward in agriculture. Hence the brilliant idea of pushing all the women in the rural areas out of their home responsibilities and into the greatly needed labor force, there to work them with the same intensity as men. From "domestic slavery," the women are simply thrown into "social slavery."

I should like to repeat: for an entire people, especially a rural population to eat in community kitchens, all the children to be placed in nurseries, all the women to be liberated from "domestic slavery" and fully included in social production, is conceivable only under highly developed socialism, after the full victory of the world proletarian social revolution.

And even after the full victory of the world proletarian social revolution, in the advanced countries with highly developed material resources and culture, the whole people should not be forced to join community kitchens at once, nor the children forced into nurseries at one stroke. This is stupid and absurd. First, let us establish model community kitchens and nurseries so that the people can see for themselves that this is preferable to home-cooked meals and keeping the children at home. Gradually they will join voluntarily. By then socialist collective life will be closely linked in reality with its name.

We should understand that the disappearance of the family system, a heritage of thousands of years, and the full participation of women, freed from "domestic slavery," in social production on a basis of equality with men marks not only the complete liberation of women, but also mankind's entrance into the ideal society of genuine freedom, equality and happiness. Even after the complete victory of the world socialist revolution, it can be gradually realized only over a relatively long period. Since the "family" was gradually formed during the dissolution of primitive communist society, it can die but gradually with the development of the future communist society.

Under primitive material and cultural conditions such as exist in China's rural areas and under an objective situation in which the world socialist revolution is still far from victory, with no planning and within a few months, the CCP with unprecedented rudeness and arbitrariness forced the whole peasant mass to suddenly abandon their family life for the "socialist collective life." Besides discrediting the perspective of communes and socialist collective life,

the result was inevitably to give today's communes a bad name among the masses and to sow distrust and hatred against the urban proletariat (which has not been communized), thereby dealing a heavy blow to the alliance of workers and peasants.

It can safely be predicted that the community kitchen and nursery cannot be maintained for a long period. Under compulsion of necessity, in the not too distant future, they will be reorganized or the great majority of them will be disbanded. The return from "collective life" to "family life" means the complete bankruptcy of the communes. If, dis-regarding the unwillingness and opposition of the peasants, the CCP seeks to maintain this collective life represented by the communal kitchen and nursery in order to prove the absolute correctness of the commune policy of the CCP and Chairman Mao, then the communal kitchen and nursery, together with the unbearable forced labor, will become centers of a highly explosive situation within the communes, which can touch off a disaster.

Is "Voluntary Peasant Cooperation" Evident in the Communes? Are they "Administered by Elected Councils, Not by Bureaucratic Edict"?

Comrade Liang, in criticizing the "Draft Resolution on the Chinese Communes," which had been submitted by the Secretariat, wrote:

"On page 7 of the draft, par. 4, our support of the communes is made to depend, not on their essentially progressive character, but on 'the readiness of the peasants to accept them' How and by whom is this 'readiness' to be determined? It might be recalled that we supported, with great consistency, the collectivization of farming in the Soviet Union despite peasant resistance. What we opposed was the rude and violent forcing of the peasantry by the Stalin regime. In the case of China's communes, there is no evidence so far of mass coercion by the Peking government, but considerable evidence of voluntary peasant cooperation....

"The fact that the Communes are administered by elected councils, not by bureaucratic edict, is an important fact demanding a place in the resolution." (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 20, No. 8, p. 36. Emphasis in the original.)

The idea expressed here by Comrade Liang was fully supported by National Committee members in Los Angeles in their proposed Draft Resolution, "The Communes in China" (see page 40 of the SWP Discussion Bulletin) and was supported

and defended with special vigor by Comrade Swabeck. (See page 5 of his article, "The Third Chinese Revolution and Its Communes." In SWP Discussion Bulletin Vol. 20, No. 13.) Since this is one of the main arguments they offer in advocating support and sanction of the communes, discussion of it is in order.

First, I should like to point out that Comrade Liang does not cite evidence, he simply makes the statement that "considerable evidence" exists of "voluntary peasant cooperation" in the communes and asserts it as a "fact" that "the communes are administered by elected councils, not by bureaucratic edict." If he has "considerable evidence" and "fact," he should share it with his readers. Otherwise they may feel inclined to challenge his unsupported assertions.

"A great amount of coercion was used in forming the communes...the masses had no chance to consider all the practical problems. These were decided simply by the CCP cadres and passed on as orders to the peasants." Mah-ki wrote this in his article, "The People's Communes," following all the CCP official Chinese newspapers and documents and reading the reports of foreign visitors to the mainland. Among the supporters of the communes, Comrade Mah-ki's account can be taken as at least more trustworthy than that of such comrades as Liang and Swabeck, who are far away from China, who are unable to read official publications in the original Chinese and who depend heavily on reports of certain foreign visitors to China. Let us now consider the communes in the light of theory and facts leaving aside Comrade Mah-ki's account for the time being.

(A) Ninety-nine percent of the rural population are in the communes (500,000,000). Is it conceivable that within the short space of three months (September to December, 1958) such tremendous numbers of the rural population would of their own volition and not under compulsion join the communes and start living collectively; that is, all the women leave the family circle, work with the men in teams and eat in the community kitchen, by these acts alone bringing an end to the system of private property?

I cited at some length above the attitude of Lenin on the peasant question. He emphasized that the peasant is conservative and realistic: "They will not allow themselves to be convinced by mere words." "We have to give the peasant, who not only in our country but all over the world is a practical man and a realist, concrete examples to prove that the 'kommunia' is the best possible thing."

Consequently "it will take a whole historical epoch to get the whole population to take part in the work of the co-operatives..., at best we can achieve this in one or two decades." Instead of showing the masses "concrete examples to prove that the commune is the best possible thing," the CCP set tasks for the accomplishment in a few months which require a historical period or at best one or two decades. They organized 99% of the peasants into communes without "mass coercion." If this is what actually happened, then not only is Lenin's whole theory on the peasant question and his fundamental policy in regard to agricultural collectivization completely overthrown; the lessons to be drawn from the experience in collectivizing agriculture in Russia (forty years) and the East European countries (ten years) become meaningless! The only conclusion we can draw is that the Chinese peasants are completely different from those in the rest of the world; they are not "realists," but "born communists" or are "especially inclined to collectivization." As soon as the call for collectivization and communization was announced, they unhesitatingly, or as CCP propaganda puts it, "enthusiastically" joined up!!! I should like Comrade Liang, Comrade Swaback and the others to consider the implications of such a "conclusion"!

(B) Are the Chinese peasants "born communists" or "especially inclined to collectivization"? Let us check some facts that have appeared in official CCP publications:

The People's Daily of September 24, 1958, revealed that in setting up communes in the environs of Hangchow: "The poor and middle peasants thought that since a rational distribution of products is difficult, peasant enthusiasm in production is not likely to be encouraged; while the upper middle peasants vacillated, worried that the communes, on such a large scale and with such an enormous membership could not work out."

The reports of Li Jun-hwa, first secretary of the Ho-pu County Committee of the Communist party in Kwantung province and Ho Wen-li, a section head of the Ho-pu County co-operative, reported in the South Daily, Canton, in October 1958: "Capitalist ideology and behavior is still dominant among the upper middle peasants. This includes some party members and some lower cadres who come from the upper middle peasants. They loathe and oppose the communes. A minority of them lack enthusiasm in production. They eat and drink heavily, hide their property and reserve of food, dig green vegetables from their private plots of land and slaughter their domestic

animals and poultry."

Political Study, No. 10, 1958, published in Peking, pointed out: "In the movement of the people's communes, quite a few peasants still intend to go back to capitalism; they do not welcome, but oppose the communes whose aim is to eliminate the remnants of the private property system. (The reference is to taking over the peasants' private plots of land, private orchards, domestic animals and poultry, homes and private bank deposits. -- Peng.) Even some party cadres, due to their particularist ideology, oppose this elimination of the remnants of the private property system. Hence they become an obstacle to setting up and consolidating the people's communes."

Ta Kung Pao, a newspaper published in Peking, revealed December 8, 1958: "A general loss of grain, cotton, tobacco and hemp occurs on the way to the storehouses. No one kept an eye on more than ten parcels of cotton left on the highway for four or five days."

A report published by Yang Cheng Evening Post in Canton, December 20, 1958, informed us: "Peasants in the Kwantung province have rushed into the city recently to avoid communization. This was considered by the city authorities as not only increasing difficulties in city management and security, but also as affecting the consolidation of the communes and the peasants' enthusiasm in production."

Red Flag, No. 12, 1958, a theoretical journal published in Peking, reported: "Since the people's communes were set up in such great haste and on such a large scale, and with the complete elimination of private property, the ideological preparation of the cadres could not keep pace with it. The ideological struggle between two tendencies (for or against the communes -- Peng) among the masses has found receptive soil among some cadres; they doubt that 'communism will raise labor enthusiasm' and are returning to the ideology of localism and individualism. Some of them have even led the masses in hiding property to keep it from being included in the communes."

Such bits of information were disclosed either accidentally or purposefully by the officials. The actual reaction of the peasants toward the communes has certainly not been reported in detail or systematically, and what we have been given is most certainly distorted. Yet it is sufficient to show that the Chinese peasants are neither "born communists," nor "especially inclined to collectivization." Like peasants elsewhere in the

world, the Chinese peasants are "realists," imbued with "capitalist ideology and behavior," and afraid of "the elimination of the remnants of the private property system." Consequently they did not welcome but opposed the communes. Their general way of opposing the communes is through "sabotage": i.e., "lack of enthusiasm in production," "damaging farm products," "slaughtering domestic animals and poultry," "cutting down fruit trees," "fleeing to the cities," etc. Moreover, these ideas and acts have also "found receptive soil among some cadres."

The "lack of enthusiasm in production" will, of course, reduce the rate of agricultural production. "Damaging farm products" is reflected in last year's "lower harvest in spite of a fine crop" (admitted by Teng Tzi-hui, Vice Premier) and "slaughtering of domestic animals and poultry" has caused a shortage of non-staple foods in the whole country and a scarcity of meat in the cities. In spite of the daily exhortations of the People's Daily to the peasants to raise plenty of livestock, pigs, etc., the shortage of non-staple foods and meat is getting worse and worse.

Here we come to a very important question: How did it happen that the CCP, despite the opposition of the peasants (at least a part of them), could successfully organize 500 million people in the communes within a few months and yet claim that no "rude and violent" methods were used as in Stalin's time? In reaching an answer, the following considerations should be borne in mind:

(A) In the co-operatives, the distribution of products was based mainly on the workday; some poor peasants with large families, few of them able to work, could barely maintain the lowest standard of living and often went hungry. They raised both hands at the beginning in favor of the communes when they were told about "free meals" in the community kitchen.

(B) The CCP strove through its cadres among the peasants to propagandize the "advantages" of the communes. For example, "The People's Communes are the best form for the transition from collective ownership to ownership by the people as a whole. It contains the first shoots of communism...such as the communal kitchens, nurseries and sewing facilities to emancipate women from the household; a wage system, namely, basic wages plus awards paid directly to the members. Members get food and clothing allowances, housing and child-birth care, education and medical treatment, weddings and funerals." (The Advantages

of the Communes," Red Flag, No. 8, 1958.) Offered such beautiful pictures, quite a few peasants, especially the young ones, found it easy to accept the communes and even gave them naive and enthusiastic support.

(C) Beginning in the autumn of 1957, the CCP waged an extensive anti-rightist "socialist construction campaign" in the rural areas. Under the "anti-rightist" slogan, the CCP attacked not only the rich peasants, but also the middle peasants who were dissatisfied with the CCP's policy of collectivization. The hardest blows fell above all on left elements who dared to criticize the CCP's policy openly. (They were sent to border regions or labor concentration camps for reform.) Having just experienced such a severe "anti-rightist" campaign, the peasant masses naturally feared to publicly defy the CCP's order to set up the communes.

(D) A great part of the 12 million members of the Young Communist League were stationed in the rural areas when the communes were established. These organizations hold full power over the rural economic, financial, political, military and social affairs. It was clear to every peasant from the beginning that if he openly opposed setting up the communes, he would face very harsh reprisals.

Under such beguilement and intimidation, the peasants unwillingly accepted the party's order to form the communes. They could only resort to anonymous acts of sabotage such as "lack of enthusiasm in production," "slaughtering domestic animals and poultry," "cutting down fruit trees," "damaging farm products" or "fleeing to the cities," etc. Comrade Mah-ki had the following to say about this:

"The CCP's policy on the people's communes, though compulsory, was carried out, as in so many other dealings with the peasants, mainly through an organizational drive instead of by force. Through pseudo discussion, the CCP manages to stampede the masses into accepting its policy. The masses lack not only an independent organization, but also a political staff to clarify and systematize their dissatisfaction with the CCP. Consequently, their enthusiasm for socialism has often been manufactured and their opposition to the CCP's policy remains uncrystallized." ("The People's Communes.")

The explanation that "the CCP's policy on the people's communes although compulsory, was carried out...mainly through an organizational drive instead of by force" is factually correct. But to make

the policy compulsory and carry it out by means of an "organizational drive" though different from the "rude and violent" methods used by Stalin, is still "coercion." As Lenin said: "It would be absolutely absurd to attempt to reshape those farms (Today it is the communes in China. -- Peng.) in any rapid way, by issuing an order or bringing pressure to bear from without."

Moreover, one must understand that the reason why the CCP has not adopted Stalin's "rude and violent" methods in setting up agricultural producer's co-operatives and the people's communes is that it learned some lessons from the tragedy of collectivization in the Soviet Union and has sought to avoid the same gross mistakes in China. Similarly the coercive collectivization in the postwar East European countries was also accomplished mainly "through an organizational drive instead of by force." Can we, therefore, permit ourselves to conclude: "There is no evidence so far of mass coercion by the governments of the East European countries"?

From the above facts and accompanying theoretical analysis, it is beyond reasonable dispute that the establishment of the people's communes by the CCP leadership did not occur through voluntary acceptance by the peasantry but by mass coercion. In the light of this, how could a Trotskyist, inheriting Engels' and Lenin's traditional principle that collectivization is conditional on voluntary acceptance by the peasantry, support and glorify the CCP's policy of coercive communization?

The "Draft Resolution on the Chinese Communes" submitted by the Secretariat stated: "Our support of the 'rural people's communes' must, therefore, be governed by the readiness of the peasants to accept them." This is completely correct. For it is based not only on Engels' and Lenin's traditional standpoint of voluntary collectivization, but also follows faithfully the position on agricultural collectivization in our Transitional Program.

But Comrade Liang is clearly in conflict with this program. This is sufficient to show that on the problem of the Chinese people's communes he has departed from Trotskyism. He even openly declared: "We supported, with great consistency, the collectivization of farming in the Soviet Union despite peasant resistance." I must ask, whom does this "we" include? We Trotskyists? No, absolutely not! The Left Oppositionists (the Trotskyists) stood unanimously with Trotsky in severely criticizing and resolutely opposing Stalin's policy of collectivization

which coerced the peasants into collectives "despite their resistance." Trotsky expressed this viewpoint not only in many articles at the time, but also in the Transitional Program as follows: "In order to rehabilitate the program of socialism in the eyes of the farmer, it is necessary to expose mercilessly the Stalinist methods of collectivization, which are dictated not by the interests of the farmers or workers but by the interests of the bureaucracy." Consequently, I can assert that at that time (1929-32) those "who supported, with great consistency, the collectivization in the Soviet Union despite peasant resistance" were not we Trotskyists, but the Stalinists in every country.

Comrade Liang bases his support of the communes on their "essentially progressive character." According to him, whether peasant resistance exists or not has nothing to do with the "essentially progressive character" of the communes. In other words, in order to support the "essentially progressive character" of the communes, he disregards opposition by the peasants to the communes. This is a revision of Engels' and Lenin's principles on agricultural collectivization in agriculture, yet insisted that it be a voluntary matter among the peasants when the proletariat proceed to collectivization after taking power. If Comrade Liang denies the validity of Engels' and Lenin's principle of letting the peasants decide when to join, he should state this openly. (Stalin publicly declared, when he forced the peasants into the collectives in 1929, that Engels' principle of leaving it up to the peasants was "too cautious" and did not fit the situation in the Soviet Union.)

Moreover, if Comrade Liang continues to insist on this stand, he should further propose the revision of the points on the nationalization of land and collectivization of agriculture in our Transitional Program, for there it is unambiguously stated: "The program for the nationalization of the land and collectivization of agriculture should be so drawn that from its very basis it should exclude the possibility of expropriation of small farmers and their compulsory collectivization." (My emphasis.) If Comrade Liang is faithful to the logic of his own thinking words "... should exclude...." in the program should be revised to read "...should NOT exclude...."

How Do the "Councils" Administer the Communes?

Comrade Liang says: "The fact that the Communes are administrated by elected councils, not by bureaucratic edict...."

In other words the administration and the internal life of the communes are entirely democratic. But what is "the fact"? How are the "councils" elected? These questions are related to the basic problem of a democratic system, and Comrade Liang is obviously not interested in this aspect. As soon as he heard about "elected councils," he concluded that a democratic system had been realized in the communes and that "bureaucratic edict" was no more.

Was this what really happened? Let us determine the facts. When the communes were organized all over the country, in the previous organizations "the upper structure was changed while the lower structure remained unchanged." The "commune committee" was formed by combining local "people's committees" and "co-operative committees." This was the so-called "merger of township government and commune into one." The "Resolution on the Establishment of People's Communes in the Rural Areas" (August 29, 1958) states: "The township governments and the communes should become one, with the township committee of the Party becoming the Party Committee of the commune and township people's council becoming the administrative committee of the commune." In carrying out the resolution and setting up the communes, this becomes: "The township chief is at the same time the commune chief, the township party secretary is the commune party secretary, the township people's congress is the commune congress, and the township people's council is the administrative committee of the commune." No election was held at the time. After the communes were set up generally, elections were held in some communes and commune councils were elected by the peasants to administer the economic, financial, political, military, police, educational and other affairs of the communes.

The election of these "councils" was conducted in the same way as that of the "people's congress." As a rule, the township party secretary or the commune party secretary (some township party secretaries became commune party secretaries after the communes were set up) proposed a list of candidates, always nominating party leaders or cadres. The peasants, having gone through the procedure of voting for the township people's congress in the past, were quite familiar with this kind of election. They knew very well that their only right was to approve, not oppose, the list of candidates. When the election was held, they cast their votes or raised their hands in favor of the "candidates list." This was how the so-called "commune councils" were elected. Consequently "the merger of township government and commune into one"

actually was "the merger of party and commune into one." For the commune chief is, in most communes, the first secretary of the commune party committee and the members of the commune council are members of the commune party committees. It is well known that all the economic, financial, political, military, policy and educational affairs are controlled by the party, especially the first secretary of the party. There is a common saying in the communes: "Party secretary commands all," meaning that all the important affairs of the commune are handled and decided by the "party secretary." Hence the commune party secretary is the dictator of the commune just as Mao Tse-tung is the dictator of the central government. (Although Mao has nominally quit the chairmanship of the central government, he is, in fact, still the dictator.) So it can be said that every commune is a replica in miniature of the central government.

Let us ask Comrade Liang: Are these "councils," created by such elections, fully in accord with democracy? Can such "elected councils," in conducting the administration of the communes, represent the interests and wishes of the masses, rather than the interests of bureaucracy? Or as Comrade Swabeck puts it: "It looks more like a reasonable form of democracy!" ("The Third Chinese Revolution and Its Communes," p. 5.)

If Comrades Liang and Swabeck really believe what they assert, then not only the communes comprising 500 million peasants, but also every level of government in China, is a reasonable form of democracy, since every level of the people's congress is "elected by the People" the same way as in the communes. So what we have is not the dictatorship of the bureaucracy but proletarian or socialist democracy in China. This not only completely reverses our assessment of the nature of the CCP and its regime, but also repudiates the resolution "The Third Chinese Revolution and Its Aftermath" (which was approved by Comrades Liang and Swabeck) passed by the SWP in 1955, since this resolution asserts that the CCP is a Stalinist party and its governmental regime a bureaucratic dictatorship necessitating political revolution.

Furthermore, to extend the logic implied in the thinking of these two comrades, proletarian or socialist democracy has also been achieved in the Soviet Union as well as in the East European countries, since the "Soviets" in the Soviet Union and the "people's councils" in the East European countries also claim to be "elected by the people" or to be approved in accordance "with universal

electoral rights." From this you can see how a false judgment or concept, followed to its logical end, finally brings us to an amazing conclusion. A Chinese proverb says: "Hair's difference; thousand-mile gap."

Trotsky told us: "The bureaucracy replaced the Soviets as class organs with the fiction of universal electoral rights -- in the style of Hitler-Goebbels." (The Transitional Program.) If Comrades Liang and Swabeck have not yet forgotten the meaning of Trotsky's words, they should seek to understand what the "elected councils" of the present communes are. Actually the commune "councils" are copies of the former township "people's councils" or "people's committees." The Chinese "people's councils" are patterned after those in the East European countries. And the "people's councils" in the East European countries are a variation of Stalin's "soviets." Whoever does not understand this will become totally confused trying to understand the problem of the Chinese regime and will fall into irreparable errors.

Certain definite conditions are required to realize socialist democracy. First of all, the worker and peasant masses must enjoy complete freedom of speech, press, assembly, association and belief; the secret ballot must exist at every level during elections; finally, and most important of all, the legality of every workers' party that accepts socialism must be guaranteed. But in China today, as well as in the East European countries, these conditions are absent. The communes, consequently, cannot be isolated and administered democratically just by themselves. Their "councils," both in form and content, are not different from the former township "people's councils," and as a result are run only by "bureaucratic edict." Such things as arbitrarily increasing the hours of labor (from 12 to 15, even to 18 hours a day), compelling women to do the same amount of intensified work as men; forcing the peasants to dismantle their stoves and leave home to eat in the communal kitchen, etc., are enough to prove the ruthlessness of the bureaucracy.

Are the Communes a "Superior Type of Socio-Economic Organization," or Are They an Effective Instrument in the Hands of the CCP for Exploiting and Controlling the Peasants?

I quoted above Comrade Liang's words: "...the progressive character of the Communes as superior forms of socio-economic organization, proven by the great productive increase already achieved...." The phrase "superior forms of socio-

economic organization" in Comrade Liang's statement was adopted in "The Communes in China" (Draft Resolution Proposed by NC Members in Los Angeles) with the following explanation:

"The communes are...a superior type of socio-economic organization, surpassing any yet installed in a predominantly peasant country. The large-scale utilization of co-operative labor and the resulting production of agricultural surpluses can serve to speed up the accumulation of capital imperatively needed for China's industrialization. In this way the communes can make an indispensable contribution to the building of the economic basis for socialism." (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 20, No. 8, p. 40.)

That "the communes are a superior type of socio-economic organization" is a sociological evaluation. According to Marxist sociology, whether a "socio-economic organization" is "a superior type" depends on the harmony of its inner structure; i.e., no contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, and coordination among the various branches of production.

The present people's communes are described as "a basic social organization for the all-round development of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, side occupations and fishery, as well as for the all-round combination of economic, political, cultural and military affairs where industry, agriculture, trade, education and military affairs merge into one." (Red Flag, August 1958). Thus the communes, pictures as self-contained and self-supported social units, are represented as utopias; yet they are rife with contradictions. It is absolutely impossible to achieve rational division of labor and cooperation among the various branches of production, together with the specialization necessary in each of the branches of production, inside the communes despite their large size (the average is about five thousand households, and the largest about thirty thousand). This is due to the fact that they engage simultaneously in numerous branches of production such as agriculture, forestry, side occupations, animal husbandry, fishery and industry. This kind of set-up in production must inevitably lead to chaos, backwardness and primitiveness. First, it weakens the commune by dissipating its forces into so many branches of production. Thus the diversion from concentration in agricultural production. Everybody knows that the communes were ordered to set up various kinds of industry, even a steel industry (for example, the blast furnaces), thus not only introducing confusion into the state industrial plan but placing demands on the communes far beyond their

own capacity. For only if they were fully equipped with modern machinery could the commune industries compete with other industries and maintain their own existence. Lacking this prerequisite, the communes can only set up a few handicraft workshops (most of them were transferred from the co-operatives). This testifies that the commune industries are backward, outmoded and incompatible with modern industry. Consequently, judged by its mode of production, the commune is not "a superior type of socio-economic organization," but a backward or conservative "type."

The utopianism of the commune manifests itself in such fantasies as attempts to eliminate the difference between city and country, worker and peasant, mental and manual labor through the all-round development of industry and agriculture; attempts to supersede the system of pay according to work by a system of rationing through the communal kitchen plus other collective benefits.

Until the communes have been in existence for a relatively long period of time it is premature, if not careless arbitrariness, to assert that they are "a superior type of socio-economic organization."

If we consider the commune as "a superior type of agricultural co-operative" (the fact is that its actual foundation of production is agriculture), then due to its large scale and the huge labor force available, it is possible that it can increase agricultural production through the "large-scale utilization of co-operative labor" and "can serve to speed up the accumulation of capital imperatively needed for China's industrialization," if the following conditions prevail:

(A) That the peasants join the commune voluntarily. Their living conditions should gradually be improved in order to raise their enthusiasm in their work and to increase production.

(B) That genuine democracy is observed in commune management. The administrative committee should be elected by secret ballot among the entire membership; officials should be subject to recall at any time; important planning in production and distribution should be based on the real interests of the peasant masses and discussed freely and thoroughly among all the membership and then decided by majority vote.

(C) That taxes and prices set for the purchase of agricultural products by the government are reasonably applied. Industrial products should be made

available as rapidly as possible to the peasants at reasonable cost.

(D) That the government provides the technique and large amount of capital necessary to construct agricultural machinery plants, electric power stations, vehicle manufacturing plants (such as truck factories) and so on, to gradually equip the peasants with modern agricultural implements so as to lessen heavy physical labor and steadily increase productivity.

In the absence of the above conditions, the communes, dependent simply on sheer size and a huge labor force, will find it difficult to increase productivity. Moreover, the dissatisfaction aroused among the peasants decreases production. Poland's latest experience confirms this. Gomulka reported at the Eighth Plenum of the Central Committee of the United Workers party of Poland on October 20, 1956, that after six years collectivization, the value of agricultural products per hectare of land owned by individual farmers was 621.1 zlotys; while that of the co-operatives was 517.3 zlotys. In other words, the value of production on large-scale collective farms was 16.7% less per hectare than that of individual farms.

As I indicated above, the majority of peasants were coerced or inveigled into joining the communes in China. Living conditions for the majority of them have not improved but deteriorated. First of all, working hours and intensity of labor have been greatly increased; a great part of the women are put to work with the same intensity as men; food supplies in the communal kitchens are neither sufficient nor good in quality; small amounts of wages are continually in arrears; the health of the peasants is deteriorating and they are frequently sick, while medicines are in extremely short supply. All these conditions have greatly dampened the peasants' enthusiasm in production.

Since the administration of the communes is in complete violation of democracy, the peasants naturally become more passive -- everything is decided by "bureaucratic edict."

Government taxes on the communes are far above those placed on the agricultural co-operatives. The latter were taxed 15%, and, at most, 25% of their total income. No quota is fixed for the communes; it is said, "Let them decide for themselves." This actually means that the communes pay as high a tax as possible. Consequently the tax on the communes is often more than 30%. For example, the Red Star People's Commune of Sui

County, Hunan Province, paid out 32% of its total income in taxes.

Prices paid for agricultural products are variable and not set by the government although it purchases almost everything not consumed in the communes themselves. Often prices are set by the local government agents or cadres. To please the upper bureaucrats, they always make prices very low. On the other hand, industrial products supplied to the communes by the government are either insufficient or poor in quality and at prices always higher than those in the open market.

The commune bears the administrative, military, educational and production expenses (developing various branches of production for self-sufficiency and self-support): these, plus the accumulation fund, quite often amount to 50% of the total income. For example, in the Chain Nan People's Commune of Heilunkiang Province, the accumulation fund and expenses are 48% of total income; in other communes they even reach 60%. So, in general, only 20% remains of the total income (after deducting 30% for taxes, and 50% for the accumulation fund and administrative expenses). How can the communes maintain their members except on the lowest of standards?

Though the CCP has widely publicized great improvements in agricultural techniques, what has actually been done is little. The State Budget for 1959 provides ample evidence for this conclusion. Li Hsien-nien, the Finance Minister, reported at the Second National People's Congress that the agricultural investment for 1959 is one billion yuans; that is, 3% of the total budget. How effective can this small amount be in meeting the agricultural needs of such a vast country? According to the CCP, the improvement of agricultural techniques is the business of the peasants and they "must rely mainly on their own accumulations to expand their economy" (Peking Review, No. 17, 1959, p. 29). This is why the communes are continually urged by the official CCP newspapers to reconstruct and make their own agrarian tools, collect fertilizer, practice deep plowing, etc.

The policy toward the peasants in the period of agricultural co-operatives was basically to increase production by intensifying peasant labor to the utmost, to exploit the peasants' surplus labor by collecting taxes, to purchase agricultural products at low prices and raise the prices of industrial products. The aim of this policy was to meet the expenses of the huge bureaucratic apparatus and to "speed up the accumula-

tion of capital imperatively needed for China's industrialization."

But the co-operatives were small and scattered, therefore difficult to control. So, Mao Tse-tung, on inspecting several experimental people's communes in Hunan Province, August 1958, declared immediately that "It is better to set up the communes, because it is easier to lead by merging industry, agriculture, exchange, culture and education and military affairs into one." Here the euphemistic "easier to lead" obviously means "easier" for the bureaucrats to arbitrarily exploit and control the peasant masses. Events since then have confirmed this.

The large labor force of the peasants has been concentrated and expanded; the former through the merger of the co-operatives and the latter through the liberation of women from "domestic slavery" via communal kitchens, etc. Thus, by practicing "large-scale utilization of co-operative labor," "production of agricultural surpluses" can be increased. Also, it is easier, through the communes, to apply higher taxes to the peasants, to lower what is paid for their products and to raise the price of industrial products which they must buy. Is this not enough to show that the communes have become the most convenient instrument for the CCP to exploit the surplus labor of the peasants?

Intensification and exploitation of the peasants' labor to the utmost will inevitably arouse the resentment and resistance of the peasants. Therefore, strict organization, constant supervision and tight control become absolute necessities. This is why the policies of "getting organized along military lines," "working as if fighting a battle" and "living the collective way" were invented. In order to carry out these policies thoroughly, the CCP put special emphasis on the organization of the militia as the communes began. On this point, Comrade Mah-ki, a supporter of the communes, has made the following rather deep analysis:

"The main purpose of widely developing the militia at the beginning of the commune movement was obviously to administer production and private life in the commune by means of military organization and discipline. The CCP's policy was not to gradually substitute the militia system for the non-productive regular army. Serving as the assistant to and reserve for the regular army, the militia is provided with the most backward weapons manufactured by local arsenals. Militiamen are divided into two groups: basic and ordinary. The

Communist party maintains 'absolute guidance' of the militiamen and all the weapons are issued to the most 'reliable elements.' From past experience we know that those who criticize official policies are classified as 'unreliable' elements and the left opposition as 'rightist elements.'

"Mao's words that 'the militia is a combination organization for labor, education and gymnastics,' became, in fact, the principle in organizing and directing the militia. The members of the commune are organized into units such as regiment, battalion, company, etc., for the purpose of military training and similar activities. In correspondence with the policies of 'getting organized along military lines,' 'working as if fighting a battle' and 'living the collective way,' the work of production and the private life of the peasants are supervised by the commanders of the military units to which they belong. This militia system has assumed virtual control of every aspect of the peasants' life and has eliminated completely any individual freedom by imposing the harshest military discipline. Its military significance becomes secondary." ("The People's Communes," by Mah-ki, p. 2. My emphasis.)

It is true that the CCP "having felt the general dissatisfaction among the masses" (the words of Comrade Mah-ki), announced last December at the Sixth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the party: "The leading bodies of the militia and production organizations should be separated," and "it is absolutely impermissible to impair one iota of the democratic life in the communes and in the militia organization on pretext of 'getting organized along military lines.'" But these official statements have not changed in essence "getting organized along military lines," "working as if fighting a battle," and "living the collective way." The peasants continue to be organized in production teams: big, medium and small (equal to the regiment, battalion and company, etc.). The chief of each team decides when and where the peasants gather and march to work. He directs, supervises and speeds up the peasants' work with a megaphone. Also he arbitrarily decides the working hours of the group and extends them whenever he thinks it necessary. After work, the peasants march back to the community kitchen for supper. Is this not a militarized labor organization!

Moreover, the peasant is deprived of the freedom to change his work assignment or to move from one section of the commune to another, or, even to another commune. For instance, he cannot refuse

to transfer to a remote place even though it means being separated from his wife for a period of time; and he cannot get a job, food and living quarters elsewhere if he does not get a permit issued by the head of the commune to which he belongs. Bound to the communes, the peasants bear resemblance to the serfs of the middle ages.

Still another item is worthy of attention; that is, the recruiting of labor forces to meet the needs of the city factories. This is in the hands of the communes, whose chiefs arrange such assignments. In the eyes of the peasants, to work in the city is considered very lucky. Those considered the most active are certainly in line for first choice for these assignments. Thus, freedom to work in the city is excluded.

These actual facts of life under the slogans of "getting organized along military lines, working as if fighting a battle, and living the collective way" have never been seen in any "type of socio-economic organization" in modern times except in labor concentration camps.

Consequently, we are able to say that despite their "progressive character," the present people's communes, due to the contradictions, chaos, coercion and deprivation of peasant freedom, can hardly be termed "a superior type of socio-economic organization," but only an effective instrument for the CCP to exploit and control the peasants. The communes cannot "make an indispensable contribution to the building of the economic basis for socialism"; instead they arouse the distrust and resentment of the peasants toward "socialism" and damage the cause of socialism. As Lenin said: "For the name 'agricultural commune' is a great one; it is associated with the conception of Communism. It will be a good thing if the communes in practice show that they are indeed seriously working for the improvement of peasant husbandry; that will undoubtedly increase the authority of the Communists and the Communist Party. But it has frequently happened that the communes have only succeeded in provoking a negative attitude among the peasantry, and the word 'commune' has even at times become a call to fight Communism." ("Speech at the First Congress of Agricultural Communes and Agricultural Artels," in Selected Works, Vol. II, part 2, 1952 Moscow edition, p. 297.)

The general food shortage that began earlier this year, and the current liquidation as I write these lines, of communal kitchens in many communes, have been verified by various sources. The food shortage shows in a negative way that

the CCP was unreliable when it announced the doubling of food production last year. Why has the shortage of food become so acute that the food quota of commune members has been reduced to two-thirds, or even one-half and city residents can hardly get enough food? Any other explanation is unlikely except that the bumper figures on the harvest last year were fake.

The communes were set up in accordance with two principles -- "large scale" and "collective ownership." The communal kitchen is a concrete illustration of "collective ownership." Now, many of them along with nurseries, at least those in Kwangtung province, have been disbanded. From social production women have been returned to "domestic slavery." On this, Teng Tzu-hui, the Vice Premier, has openly admitted "the failure of the community kitchens," and proclaimed that "in the future the socialization of households in the countryside should be on a voluntary basis." This shows that one of the fundamental principles upon which the communes were established is being abandoned. Thus, the communes have begun to expose their bankruptcy "in principle."

The general shortage of food and the forced abandonment of a number of communal kitchens are undoubtedly evidence of a serious crisis due to the CCP's use of coercion in setting up the communes. Various clues indicate that Mao and Co. are now meeting to consider this crisis. Perhaps in the near future, the CCP will once again "adjust" its policy towards the communes as it did at the Sixth Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the party last year. That is to say, under pressure of growing discontent among the peasant masses all over the country, the CCP will again empirically make certain changes in the communes by way of appeasement. But to save face, they will never admit that their commune policy is fundamentally wrong; nor will they give up their basic policy of exploiting and controlling the peasants. Consequently the communes will be maintained, as will the recurring crises.

In the future, when the author of "The Communes in China" (Draft Resolution Proposed by NC members in Los Angeles) witnesses a certain change in the communes he probably will say that this is exactly what he predicted in his draft:

"Their organization and operation will very likely undergo further modifications. But such revisions, and even a retreat from their present status, would not vitiate the progressive character of the communes any more than the retreat from collectivization in Poland has

negated the progressive character of collective farms over private proprietorship and individual production." (Op. cit., p. 40.)

This statement separates the "progressive character of the communes" from the principle of voluntary consent by the peasants and uses the former as the sole criterion in evaluating the communes. I pointed out the error in this in criticizing Comrade Liang's position above. Here I would like to discuss in particular the reference to the change in the policy of collectivization in Poland.

Gomulka in pointing out that the value of production per hectare in the collective farm was 16.7% lower than that on the individual farm stated that this lag was due to the policy of coercive collectivization. So after coming to power, he reorganized or disbanded certain immature collective farms and discontinued forced collectivization. But he did this not because forced collectivization had "negated the progressive character of collective farms over private proprietorship and individual production," but merely because he thought that the consent of the peasants together with mechanization in agriculture were prerequisites for the successful realization of collectivization and increased production in agriculture. This viewpoint was clearly evident in his report on "The Central Task of Polish Agriculture from 1959 to 1965" at the Second Central Committee of the United Workers Party of Poland, June 22, 1959.

In his report Gomulka emphasized the importance of planning and "the decisive significance of increasing the actual wages and income of the rural population" in the development of agriculture. Therefore, "the total investment in agriculture in 1959-65 is put at 13 billion zlotys, of which 9 billion zlotys is allocated to improving production, that is, in mechanization, improvement of soil and the construction of 1,200,000 buildings both for housing and production." He particularly emphasized the manufacture of 112,000 tractors between 1959 to 1965 to increase production and to promote collectivization in agriculture. His conclusion was: "The party insists on the program of socialist reconstruction in the countryside, and is fully aware that the completion of this program can only be realized under the condition of large-scale agricultural economy, i.e., the collectivization of production. The aim of this reconstruction is first of all, the enlargement of agricultural production. And the collective peasant economy can be established only through the consent of the peasants." (My emphasis.)

The proposals and conclusions emphasized by Gomulka in his report could not be taken as evidence that the "retreat" in agricultural policy in Poland had "negated the progressive character of collective farms over private proprietorship and individual production"; but they do underline the need to pay more attention to the actual interests and the voluntary consent of the peasants; that is, the need to abandon Stalin's coercive methods and return to, or at least approach more closely, Lenin's point of view in the nationalization of land and collectivization of agriculture. The author of "The Communes in China" describes the Polish policy in agricultural collectivization as having not "negated the progressive character of collective farms...." But his approach misses the essence, and reveals that this author adopts the same incorrect viewpoint in approaching the change in Polish agrarian policy as he does in the problem of the Chinese communes. Here is a demonstration that an incorrect viewpoint in one set of events often becomes the basis for a similar approach to comparable phenomena.

We Trotskyists should understand that despite holding to the Stalinist viewpoint on certain issues, Gomulka's latest policy in nationalization of land and agricultural collectivization is correct in principle. He is the first one to abandon Stalin's coercive methods and to turn toward Lenin's viewpoint. In this, he is much more correct than Mao Tse-tung.

The present Chinese people's communes have already exhibited all kinds of contradictions and are in serious crisis. In order to halt the extension of the crisis and a possibly disastrous outcome, the Polish experience should be accepted as a pattern and China should undertake a similar bold "retreat," that is, from ultra-adventurism back to Lenin's viewpoint. The communes, on the basis of the actual interests and voluntary participation of the peasants, should undergo complete change, following thorough investigation. I will return to the point more specifically in the final section of this article.

A Few More Words on Comrades Liang and Swabeck

In the foregoing I criticized the main data on which Comrades Liang and Swabeck based their support of the communes. Here I wish to deal with the attitude and basic tendency which they reveal in their study of the communes.

In stating his judgment on the communes in his commentary on "The Draft

Resolution on Chinese Communes," Comrade Liang presents neither our basic theory nor historical examples. For instance he simply says: "The draft largely repeats the sins and errors of the Roberts' article." But what are the "sins and errors" of the Roberts' article, "The Chinese Communes"? Liang doesn't specify. With one stroke, through an unsupported assertion, he wipes away another comrade's opinion. To me, the general viewpoint of Roberts' article, especially its conclusion, is basically correct, and even the facts cited by him are tentatively correct and able to withstand criticism. At least they are more dependable than those cited by Comrade Liang.

Another special reason advanced by Comrade Liang for supporting the communes deserves comment: "The continuing drum-fire of hostile comment on the Communes by capitalist propagandists places us squarely before the need to take a clearcut position on what, essentially, is a class-struggle issue: FOR or AGAINST the Communes?" (Emphasis in the original.) According to the formula of a "class-struggle issue" advanced here by Comrade Liang, we should be for something if the "capitalist propagandists" give it "hostile comment" and we should be against it if they favor it. This is ultra-mechanical formal logic having nothing in common with Marxist dialectics.

All of us remember the continued and vigorous attacks on Stalin's bureaucratic dictatorship by all the "capitalist propagandists." According to Comrade Liang's "logic," we should have supported the former. But Trotsky, instead of supporting it, subjected it to penetrating criticism. The difference was that the "capitalist propagandists" considered Stalin's bureaucratic dictatorship to be the product of Bolshevism and socialist property relations; Trotsky considered it to be the result of the betrayal of Bolshevism and hence a hindrance to the rational development of socialist relations.

A fresh example occurred when all the "capitalist propagandists" furiously attacked Russia for putting down the Hungarian Revolution with tanks. At the time we Trotskyists did not give up our relentless criticism of the Kremlin's role in this event. The difference was that the "capitalist propagandists" criticized it from the viewpoint of bourgeois nationalism as an "intervention of Russian imperialism"; while we criticized it as a betrayal by the Kremlin of the interests of the Hungarian working class and the world socialist revolution. And at that time the "Trotskyists" who

"took a clear-cut position" were the Marcyites who later left our movement.

Today the reason for the continuous and vigorous attacks on the communes by the "capitalist propagandists" is that they see them eliminating the remnants of the holy private-property system and the holy family system connected with it. We see the forcible introduction of the communes within a short period by the CCP as adventurism and as against the peasants' will. We hold to this view because China today does not have the material and cultural prerequisites for eliminating the remnants of the private-property system and superseding family life with the collective life of socialism; and because, therefore, the CCP policy is very harmful to the alliance of workers and peasants and to socialism. Superficially our criticism sounds the same as that of the "capitalist propagandists," but the substance and class position represented by us is the exact opposite. As the French proverb puts it: "One tongue, two languages."

Comrade Swabeck in his article, "The Third Chinese Revolution and Its Communes," quoted quite extensively from the reports of a few foreigners who had visited China (disregarding the truthfulness of these reports) to defend his position on the superiority of the communes. Unfortunately, the facts quoted by him either have no connection with the communes or have been proclaimed bankrupt by the CCP. For instance:

(A) "No less significant is the vast public progress made possible by the Communes.... As one concrete example that witnessed by the Montreal reporter can be mentioned: A huge dam and reservoir near Peking, completed in the phenomenally short time of 160 days by 400,000 'volunteers.'" ("The Third Chinese Revolution and Its Communes," in SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 20, No. 13, p. 3.)

The "huge dam and reservoir" i.e., the "Tung-lin Dam" near Peking was completed before the communes by the great mass of workers and suburban peasants of Peking mobilized by the Central government.

(B) "In addition to the demonstrated economic gains, cultural advance is symbolized by an increase of primary school pupils from 64.3 million in 1957 to 84 million in September 1958." (Ibid., p. 3.)

The fact cited here (admitting it to be true) was also achieved before the communes. They began in "September 1958."

(C) The "home-made" or "back-yard"

blast furnaces, highly extolled by Comrade Swabeck as the "most celebrated": "small and medium industrial enterprises" initiated by the communes, ended in fact, unfortunately, in "a fiasco." They had been abandoned long before Swabeck's article was published, although the CCP did not formally discontinue them until July 1959. I wonder how Comrade Swabeck will explain this.

Comrade Swabeck devoted considerable discussion to the problem of the permanent revolution in China in the latter part of his article. I can only state that his interpretation of this problem is incorrect. (Unfortunately I don't have space here to go into it.) He had not one word to say about the CCP's foreign policy, "peaceful coexistence" (i.e., the "Five Principles" stipulated by Chou En-lai and Nehru of India). The sudden shift from right to left of Mao's internal policy originates from this extremely reactionary foreign policy which, inherited in toto from the Stalinist theory of "socialism in one country" (now Mao has developed it into his theory of "communism in one country"), contravenes the permanent revolution. Mao neither believes in nor understands the decisive role which the victory of the world socialist revolution, particularly the victory of the proletarian revolution in the advanced countries, would play in bringing the Chinese socialist revolution to victory. To maintain his own power, Mao started by compromising in all possible ways with the bourgeoisie and landlords in an attempt to build the "New Democracy" social system (i.e., non-socialist, non-capitalist) within a few decades. Later under pressure of imperialist intervention (especially American intervention in Korea) and the counter-offensive of the domestic bourgeoisie and landlords, he pragmatically jumped from ultra-right opportunism to ultraleft adventurism. Thus, he sought to exploit to the utmost the surplus labor of the workers and peasants in an attempt to facilitate industrial development and to build socialism in one country. And his reckless introduction of the communes within a short period is the culmination of adventurism in the application of the theory of "socialism in one country" or "communism in one country."

In addition, in the articles by Comrades Liang and Swabeck discussing the Chinese rural communes, which concern the lives of 500 million peasants, there is not one word about the principle developed by Engels, Lenin and Trotsky on the nationalization of land and voluntary peasant participation in agrarian collectivization. It is very significant, for it indicates how they have neglected the

traditional Marxist position on the agrarian question and our position on the alliance of the workers and peasants set forth in our Transitional Program.

It is because of this complete disregard of the traditional Marxist position that their position on the communes is the same of that of the revisionist Pablo, or at least, very close to it.

Jean Paul Martin, who speaks with complete authority for Pablo, wrote an article, "'Uninterrupted' Revolution in China," which was published in Quatrieme International of November 1958. Besides acclaiming that "China is currently in a state of 'uninterrupted' revolution," and praising the stupendous development of its industry and agriculture, the main point of his article is the great significance to China of the communes in the rural areas. For example, he said:

"All this is not simply boasts, hypocrisy or infantilism; it is pride, the immensity of her stature confronting the world of the twentieth century. China feels in herself unlimited forces awakening. Her vision of the world, quite different from that of any other power, is a mixture perhaps of infantilism, normal for a country still sleeping yesterday in the past, now entering with such impetuosity and such fury into the atomic age and real gigantism."

Besides such abstract eulogies as above, Martin declared: "The administrative committees of the communes are in reality 'popular town councils,' soviets." This political appraisal of the communes is almost identical with that of Comrades Liang and Swaback; namely, "the Communes are administered by elected councils, not by bureaucratic edict."

Having appraised the nature of the CCP and its regime in the light of Pablo's revisionism, it is not strange for Martin to have such an appraisal of the communes. It is the logical development of Pabloite revisionism. Comrades Liang and Swaback, who opposed Pablo's revisionism in the past, have arrived at almost the same political conclusion on the people's communes today as Pablo. This is worth some thought on their part.

Finally, I should point out in passing that the errors of Comrades Liang and Swaback on the issue of the people's communes go far beyond those of Comrade Mah-ki. Comrade Mah-ki does not paint up the communes, but gives them serious criticism in light of the facts; his error is that he places too much weight on the superiority of the communes' large-scale production and neglects the principle

of voluntary peasant consent. This is not an error in principle, but a bias and is easy to correct. But the errors of Comrades Liang and Swaback intersect with principles, and if not recognized in time, can lead them into the swamp of revisionism.

Our Attitude Toward the Communes

(1) We have always held to and persistently maintained the necessity for nationalization of the land and agrarian collectivization, considering it to be the only possible form through which the scattered individual peasant economy can be brought to socialist relations. But at the same time we hold to the principle put down in our Transitional Program by Trotsky: "The program for the nationalization of the land and collectivization of agriculture should be so drawn that from its very basis it should exclude the possibility of expropriation of small farmers and their compulsory collectivization." That is to say, in the practice of agrarian collectivization, it is necessary to convince the peasants by concrete example, bringing them to believe that collectivization is in fact beneficial to them, hence calling forth their voluntary participation.

Therefore, we severely criticized Stalin's forced collectivization and, together with Trotsky, considered it to be "dictated not by the interests of the farmers or workers but by the interests of the bureaucracy."

(2) Taking the Chinese rural communes as a case of large-scale agrarian collectivization, and considering it in the light of the general principle of collectivization, we are for it; but, at the same time, in view of the fact that since the collectivization is on such a large-scale and combines the practice of collective life in all rural areas (substituting the communal kitchens and nursery for family life), we consider it an absolute necessity to use concrete examples to win the voluntary participation of the peasants.

The policy practiced by the CCP toward the communes at present has greater compulsory character than CCP policy toward the former agricultural co-operatives. Consequently it is adventurist and is dictated not by the interests of the farmers or workers but by the interests of the bureaucracy.

(3) Forced entry into the communes -- all the peasant masses are forced into "getting organized along military lines," "working as if fighting a battle," "living the collective way" -- and the extraordinary increase in the intensity of labor has brought not only numerous dislocations, suffering and ill health to

the peasants, but the intensification of contradictions, lower agricultural production (as the current shortage of food and daily necessities in the cities shows) and injury to the alliance of workers and peasants. If persisted in, it will end in chaos and even cause uprisings in the rural areas, setting back the future of socialism.

(4) In confronting this very serious situation, for the benefit of the majority of the peasant masses and the strengthening of the workers and peasants alliance, we advocate the following policy toward the present communes:

(A) We call for an immediate and full democratic discussion on the communes among the workers and peasants of China. This should be done in each commune. A secret ballot should be taken. Those communes approved by the members, or a majority of them, will, of course, be maintained. Those not approved should be dissolved into the pre-commune co-operatives. In addition, farm tools and land should be distributed to those peasants who want to join neither the communes nor the co-ops.

(B) The administrative committees of the remaining communes should be elected through secret ballot by the members with the provision that inefficient officials can be recalled at any time. Production, distribution and the important welfare planning of the communes should be decided beforehand by majority opinion through open discussion among all the members. The communal kitchen and nursery should be based on the principle of voluntary participation. All this should apply also to the co-operatives.

(C) The agricultural tax should be applied rationally to the communes, co-operatives and individual peasant households -- a maximum of not more than 20% of their total income; prices of agricultural products purchased by the government should be determined reasonably (i.e., according to the general market price); the peasants should be supplied with industrial products at reasonable prices.

(5) This important measure, involving the lives of 500 million peasants and the alliance of the workers and peasants -- the people's communes -- has not been openly discussed by the worker and peasant masses nor by the membership of the CCP. With Mao's word -- "Communes are better" -- at the beginning of August 1958, every local section of the CCP acted at once as if it had received an imperial edict; ample proof that the CCP acts politically not only as a one-party dictatorship, but also as a Stalinist-type personal dictatorship. In order to end this personal dictatorship with its vicious results, China needs freedom of speech, press, assembly, association

and belief among the workers and peasants. And to guarantee these freedoms and rights to the worker and peasant masses and to correct effectively the wrong policies which run counter to the interests of the peasants and workers, the existence and activities of working-class parties adhering to socialist principles should be made legitimate. Only through such means can the dictatorship of a party, or a group, or a person be avoided and socialist democracy realized.

(6) In order to carry out the measures indicated above, the fantasy propagated by the CCP that communism will be realized in the rural areas within a few years (or several decades) must be rejected. Instead it should be proclaimed that the actual fulfillment of collectivization -- heightened farm production, guaranteed real improvements in the lives of the 500 million peasants and industrialization of the country -- can only become a possibility with assistance from the proletariat in the advanced countries upon the victory of the world socialist revolution. Hence the theory of "socialism in one country" or "communism in one country" and the illusion of "peaceful coexistence" related to it, must be rejected entirely. The main aim of foreign policy should be to aid the world proletarian socialist revolution; first of all the Japanese and Indian proletarian revolutions. Just as Comrade Roberts said: "Successful working-class revolutions in Western Europe and the United States, leading to the elaboration of a world socialist economic plan, would enable China to take the great leap forward in the shortest possible time.... A socialist overturn in Japan alone would transform China's prospects overnight. The economies of the two countries would gear together naturally. Japan would be able to mass-produce power-driven pumps, plows, carts, trucks, lift forks and dredges for China's farms...while making equipment available for industrial development." ("The Chinese Communes," by Daniel Roberts. In SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 20, No. 8, p. 9.)

August 19, 1959

POSTSCRIPT

Three weeks after finishing the above article, I received the People's Daily of August 27, in which appeared the "Communique of the State Statistical Bureau of China on the Revision of 1958 Agricultural Figures" and the "Resolution on Developing the Campaign for Increasing Production and Practicing Economy" passed by the Eighth Central Committee of the CCP at its Eighth Plenary Session. I quote below some excerpts from these two documents and make brief criticism as a postscript to my

article.

The "Communique of the State Statistical Bureau of China on the Revision of 1958 Agricultural Figures" states:

"China reaped a bumper harvest in 1958 unmatched before in its history. Owing to lack of experience in estimating the output of such an unprecedented bumper harvest, the agricultural statistical organs in most cases made over-assessments. At the same time, during the bumper autumn harvest, man-power was not very well arranged, and the harvesting, threshing and storage were somewhat inadequate. As a result there were some losses and the harvest did not conform to the estimated figures. After repeated check-ups and verifications in the first half of this year, it was found that some of the 1958 agricultural statistical figures previously released were higher than the actual amount gathered. The revised 1958 agricultural statistical figures are as follows: Total grain output 500,000,000,000 catties (250,000,000 tons). 35% more than in 1957; total cotton output, 42,000,000 tan (2,100,000 tons), 28% more than in 1957...." (Hsinhua News Agency, August 27, 1959, p. 18.)

From the figures quoted in the above "communique," (the truthfulness of which is still in question) the following points are worth our attention:

(A) The statistics in industry and agriculture published by the CCP were not compiled after production to record the actual amount of increase, but were advance estimates, an "assessment" or prediction. Here, for the first time, the secret statistical methods of the CCP are revealed. Of course, this revelation was forced from them by the resentment and dissatisfaction of the masses aroused by the general food shortage when the so-called bumper harvest proved in fact to be not so large. Hence, we can see what little reliance can be placed in the production figures put out by the CCP for industry and agriculture!

(B) How did it happen that after the establishment of the communes "the man-power was not very well arranged and the harvesting, threshing and storage were somewhat inadequate"? Obviously, the great majority of peasants were forced to join the communes, that is why they vented their feelings by sabotaging and damaging the autumn harvest.

(C) The increase for grain was 35% over 1957, not double or 100% as had been claimed; the increase for cotton was 28% over 1957, not 60%. What a big difference between the actual figures now reported

and those figures about "the great productive increases in farming" quoted by the author of "The Communes in China"! This especially deals a great blow to the arguments of Comrade Swabeck because he had emphasized: "In this manner China has revolutionized the feeding of its millions. Food grain production in 1958 reached the astounding total of 375 million tons, doubling the 1957 output of 185 million tons. With this the teeming, crowded population has advanced from the malnutrition and famines of yore to a living diet today. This is confirmed by Lord John Orr, world authority on food and population, who declared upon return from his recent visit, that China is solving its food problem." ("The Third Chinese Revolution and Its Communes," SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 20, No. 13, p. 3). According to the revised statistics published by the CCP, the doubling of the 1958 output, which was so highly praised by Comrade Swabeck, is declared false, and a question mark is placed on the "confirmation" by the highly recommended "Lord John Orr, world authority on food and population."

(D) In my article, I said that the CCP official reports on the increase in agricultural production were exaggerated and that the CCP's widely proclaimed doubling of the 1957 output was unreliable, as proved negatively by the general food shortage. My distrust of the official CCP reports stemmed from general distrust of the acts and words of Stalinist bureaucrats. The revised statistics now published by the CCP not only shows that our distrust of official CCP reports is completely justified, but proves that the discrepancies far exceeded what we had imagined, since the difference between the two reports on actual amount of grain gathered was 65%. What a hard lesson for those who only depend on the official reports to study and judge the development of Chinese agriculture, especially for Comrade Swabeck who blindly believes the official CCP reports!

Following are several points in the "Resolution on Developing the Campaign for Increasing Production and Practicing Economy" adopted by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party at its Eighth Plenary Session on August 16, 1959, which are worth taking up here.

(A) The resolution states: "During the check-up, the principles of management and business accounting at different levels, of 'to each according to his work' and more income for those who do more work have been implemented." (Peking Review, September 1, 1959, p. 7.) This signifies the elimination, "in principle," of the "rational system" originally pre-

scribed for the communes of "to each partly according to his needs," and the abandonment, "in principle," of marching toward communism by gradually replacing the system of "to each according to his work." Here demonstrably the utopia of the CCP, under the merciless lesson of circumstances, has been returned to its starting point. It is also evident that the CCP, in order to fulfill the aims of the "Great Leap Forward," is attempting to put pressure on a part of the peasants (those with greatest capacity for work) with the material incentive of "more income for those who do more work." This attempt will inevitably have two bad results: first a detrimental effect on the peasants' health; and second, a widening of the differentiation at the two poles; i.e., rich and poor peasants in the communes.

(B) "It has been decided that at the present stage a three-level type of ownership of the means of production should be instituted in the people's communes. Ownership at the production brigade level constitutes the basic one. Ownership at the commune level constitutes another part.... A small part of the ownership should also be vested in the production team." (Ibid., pp. 7-8.) To go by the decision that "ownership at the production brigade level constitutes the basic one" in this three-level type of ownership of the means of production, the commune has actually turned back to the former producer's co-operative, inasmuch as the production brigade is the same size as the former producers' co-operative, and was reorganized from the latter. On this, the CCP has officially admitted: "In the present people's communes...ownership is basically the same as that of the original production brigade in the high co-operative." (The People's Daily, August 29, 1959. My emphasis.) Thus, in production and distribution, especially "ownership," the commune actually has almost dissolved into the original producers' co-operative. It is time now for Comrades Mah-ki, Liang, etc. to re-examine their opinions on the communes. (The former praises highly the "superiority of large-scale production" of the commune and the latter paints it as a "superior type of socio-economic organization.")

(C) I pointed out that the community kitchens, because they were forced upon the peasants, absolutely could not be kept up -- "in the not too distant future, they will be reorganized or the great majority of them will be disbanded." Now the resolution states: "With regard to the community dining-rooms in the rural areas, the principle of making vigorous efforts to run them well and voluntary participation should be adhered to; grains should be distributed to each

family on the basis of a fixed allocation for each individual; a food ticket system should be introduced in the community dining-rooms, with unconsumed food being returned to the person who saves it." (Peking Review, Sept. 1, 1959, p. 10.) This open admonition to adhere to "voluntary participation" in the dining-rooms is the same as admitting "in principle" that the former measures forcing the peasants to participate in the community kitchens were wrong and absurd. Also, it is the same as permitting women "in principle" to return home to do the cooking. Thus, the women are going back to "domestic slavery." This fact should prove sobering to Comrade Liang and the others who highly praised the way the communes freed women from "domestic slavery."

(D) "On the basis of verified statistics on agricultural production in 1958... The Plenary Session recommends that the State Council, submit a proposal to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, for adjusting the 1959 plan... the target for grain is about 10% over the verified 1958 output of 500,000,000,000 catties." (People's Daily, August 27.) The target for grain in 1959 was originally 1,000,000,000,000 catties. Now the readjusted targets are cut to almost half the original goal. This indicates how arbitrary the planning is in agricultural production under the CCP bureaucracy led by Mao Tse-tung, and to what depths they have reached in their ignorance, confusion, impudence and self-contradiction.

The readjusted target also testifies to the correctness of our judgment that due to the lack of modern mechanization and chemical fertilizers, etc., the heightening of farm production will still proceed "at a slow tempo." Here is a little victory for Marxist analysis and judgment.

(E) "The Eighth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party calls on the whole party, the people of all nationalities in the country under the leadership of the Central Committee of the CCP...to overcome a brand of rightist ideas and sentiments." (People's Daily, Aug. 27.) But who holds "rightist ideas and sentiments"? Those who are "skeptical of the great leap forward and the people's communes...." (Chou En-lai's report delivered on August 26 at the plenary meeting of the Standing Committee of the Second National People's Congress), and those who consider the big leap forward and the people's communes as "petty-bourgeois fanaticism." (The editorial that appeared in the People's Daily on August 27, 1959, under the title of "Oppose

Right Deviation....")

The CCP's call for a fight to uphold "the superiority of the people's communes" against "right opportunists" and "rightist ideas and sentiments," as proclaimed in the editorial of the People's Daily, "Oppose Right Deviation," shows that criticism and opposition to the big leap forward and the people's commune movement among the broad masses of workers and peasants have become very effective and widespread. The opposition even attacks this movement as "petty-bourgeois fanaticism." Chou En-lai has publicly admitted that "This kind of thinking and sentiment has grown in the past two months." (See Chou's report.) This shows that the masses of workers and peasants, from practical experience in life, have already sensed the dire consequences of the adventurism in the policies forced upon them by the CCP.

To allay this resentment and criticism of the masses, the CCP on the one hand makes some concessions (as shown in the resolution); and, on the other hand, increases repression under guise of a fight against "right opportunists." But until "the petty-bourgeois fanaticism" evident in these adventurist policies is finally eliminated, the resentment and criticism of the masses will continue to develop. Consequently, we have reason to predict that the commune movement will prove unstable, crises will continue to break out. Only by carrying out the proposals indicated in "Our Attitude Toward the Communes" can this outcome be avoided.

September 15, 1959

by S. T. Peng

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The Distorted Permanent Revolution

In my article "A Criticism of the Various Views Supporting the Chinese Rural People's Communes," on criticizing the assertion of Comrades Swabeck and Liang that the "communes are administered by elected councils, not by bureaucratic edict," I was led, in carrying their position to its logical end, to the following conclusion:

"If Comrades Liang and Swabeck really believe what they assert, then not only the communes comprising 500 million peasants, but also every level of government in China, is a reasonable form of democracy, since every level of the people's congress is 'elected by the People' the same way as in the communes. So what we have is not the dictatorship of the bureaucracy but proletarian or socialist democracy in China. This not only completely reverses our assessment of the nature of the CCP and its regime, but also repudiates the resolution 'The Third Chinese Revolution and Its Aftermath' (which was approved by Comrades Liang and Swabeck) passed by the SWP in 1955, since this resolution asserts that the CCP is a Stalinist party and its governmental regime a bureaucratic dictatorship necessitating political revolution." (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 21, No. 1, p. 22.)

Less than four months after I wrote the above, Comrades Liang and Swabeck came out with another article "The Third Chinese Revolution, The Communes and the Regime." In this new article, they certainly followed the logic of their position to its ultimate conclusion. They openly call on the SWP to abandon its "present basic position"; that is, the position that "the CCP is a Stalinist party and its regime a bureaucratic dictatorship necessitating political revolution" passed by the SWP in its resolution of 1955, and adopt the new line offered by them as the correct position -- the CCP is not a Stalinist party and its regime is not a bureaucratic dictatorship, therefore "the program and slogan of the political revolution is invalid for China." (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 29) and what is required in China today is "a program of democratic demands" (Ibid., p. 29). If this "new line" is adopted, not only must the "present basic position" of the SWP be overthrown from the

bottom up, but it is inevitable that our attitude towards North Korea, North Indochina, Yugoslavia, Poland and even Russia must also be changed. This would constitute an epochal change in the strategy of the world Trotskyist movement towards the countries in the Soviet bloc, of decisive effect on the future of our movement. Hence it is incumbent on every Trotskyist to give the problem serious consideration -- and to probe the facts and the theory involved with the closest attention in order to re-establish our position.

The Nature of the CCP -- Is It Still a Stalinist Party or Has It Departed from Stalinism?

The main grounds advanced by Comrades Swabeck and Liang in proposing that the SWP abandon its "present basic position" is "changing reality," especially "changing reality" in the agricultural sphere -- the development of mutual aid groups into "the superior type of socio-economic organization" represented by the communes. They attempt to demonstrate that the "basic position" reached by the SWP in 1955 has become outdated and no longer corresponds entirely with this "changing reality." Actually, the "new line" they propose is not based on "changing reality," but on their reappraisal of the nature of the CCP and its regime. The so-called "changing reality" is only a pretext for overturning the "present basic position" of the SWP.

For instance, they say: "The resurgence in 1947-49 triumphed with the CCP engaged in a struggle for power by revolutionary means, disregarding Stalin's policy of coalition with Chiang Kai-shek. By this action the Chinese Communist Party departed from Stalinism in the properly accepted sense of this term and proved itself an adequate instrument for the historic task." (Ibid., p. 24. Emphasis in original.) If this judgment is correct, then the CCP, when it took power back in 1949 was not a Stalinist party, having "departed from Stalinism." Therefore, the resolution passed by the SWP in 1955, and approved by Comrades Swabeck and Liang, was basically incorrect and it is not necessary to cite against it the "changing reality" since then. Why did not Comrades Swabeck and Liang frankly go to the heart of the question? Appar-

ently, under guise of appealing to the "changing reality," they want to back out of their responsibility for supporting the SWP resolution in 1955.

Let us begin by considering the question in the form in which it has been raised by Comrades Swabeck and Liang -- whether or not the nature of the CCP changed.

To say that the nature of the CCP changed during its struggle for power in 1947-49 is not something new. Early in 1951 Germain offered the following opinion:

"Our movement has traditionally conceived the outstripping of Stalinism by the masses as involving profound splits inside the Communist parties. The Yugoslav and Chinese examples have demonstrated that, placed in certain exceptional conditions, entire Communist parties can modify their political line and lead the struggle of the masses up to the conquest of power, while passing beyond the objectives of the Kremlin. Under such conditions, these parties cease being Stalinist parties in the classical sense of the word." ("What Should Be Modified and What Should Be Maintained in the Theses of the Second World Congress of the Fourth International on the Question of Stalinism?" International Information Bulletin, April, 1951, p. 5.)

In this Germain is defending "theoretically" the revisionism that Pablo had begun to display toward Stalinism. (Pablo at that time had already begun to publish his revisionist views; that is, under mass pressure Stalinist parties can take the revolutionary path that leads the masses to power, the establishment of proletarian dictatorship and socialist reconstruction.) Concerning this, I offered detailed facts and analysis in my "Report on the Chinese Situation," emphasizing the following few points:

"First, since the CCP withdrew from the cities to the countryside in 1928, it established a considerably solid power and army (the peasant army). For these twenty years, it used this army and power constantly to rule over the peasant masses (as we know, the backward and scattered peasants are the easiest to control), and hence a stubborn and self-willed bureaucracy took shape (especially in its manner of treating the masses). Even toward the workers and students in the Kuomintang areas, it employed either ultimatic or deceitful methods instead of persuasion.

"Secondly, in ideology, the CCP has further fortified and deepened the theory

of Stalinism through its treatment of a series of important events -- the defeat of the Second Revolution, the peasant wars and the Resistance War against Japan, etc. -- especially through its resistance to the criticism of Trotsky and the Chinese Trotskyists in regard to its concepts and policies.

"The 'systematic' and dogmatic 'New Democracy' of Mao Tse-tung is nothing else but an ideologically and politically deepened and crystallized expression of Stalinism, that is to say, it is the expression of obstinately holding onto the 'revolution by stages' in direct challenge to the Permanent Revolution.

"Thirdly, over these two decades, the CCP has been an organization receiving special attention from the Kremlin, and it follows that its relations with the latter are particularly intimate. After the Soviet Union occupied Manchuria and rearmed the CCP with weapons taken from the Japanese captives, the Kremlin's control over the CCP became more rigorous than ever." (International Information Bulletin, February, 1952, p. 18.)

My conclusion was "that the most important turns the CCP experienced in the past were entirely the result of pressure from the Kremlin, and in violation of the will of the masses. Even the present 'turn toward the seizure of power was not a product of its yielding to mass pressure and its violation of the objectives of the Kremlin, but on the contrary resulted from the mortal pressure of Chiang Kai-shek, in complete agreement with the Kremlin." (Ibid., p. 19.) Precisely because of the uncompromising policy of Chiang and under peril of the latter's attack, the CCP, in order to survive -- and with the consent of Stalin -- was compelled to counter-attack and take the road to power. Therefore, the CCP has certainly not departed from Stalinism so that it "ceases being a Stalinist party." This opinion which I expressed has demonstrated its durability; it has not been refuted by either Germain or Pablo or anyone else.

Eight years pass (1951-1959) and Comrades Swabeck and Liang pick up the old opinion of Germain defending Pablo's revisionism which they opposed. (By approving the SWP resolution in 1955 that the CCP is a Stalinist party, Swabeck and Liang put themselves on record against Germain's and Pablo's position.) They now use this old opinion of Germain's as a major argument to challenge the SWP's "present basic position." This demonstrates that to oppose an incorrect view or to accept a correct one without deep consideration and understanding opens the door to undue susceptibility to the

influence of immediate events and even impressionism.

In order to counter such a capricious appraisal of the nature of the CCP, I feel that a reinvestigation of the nature of the CCP factually and theoretically is needed.

First, let me make a simple explanation of what is Stalinism in general or what is "the distinctive and exclusive characteristic of Stalinism" (Comrades Swabeck's and Liang's words -- SWP Discussion Bulletin, January, 1960, Vol. 21, No. 2.) As we all know, Stalinism was formed in the process of degeneration of the first workers' state in a backward and isolated situation. Its social base is the petty-bourgeois bureaucratic caste. Due to the specific privileges of this caste, its ideology is conservative, compromising and opportunistic in nature. In face of disastrous defeat or rejection by an opponent, its opportunistic policy turns to the other extreme -- adventuristic or imprudent action. And when this adventuristic action proves unsuccessful, it reverts to its original position. Sometimes, a combination of adventurism and opportunism occurs. The highest expression of its opportunism is the theory of "socialism in one country" from which is derived the line of "peaceful coexistence" between socialism and capitalism as a replacement of the strategy of international world revolution. Organizationally, Stalinism substitutes bureaucratic centralism for proletarian democratic centralism -- and this is concentrated in an omniscient faultless leader. By stifling all party democracy, conditions are prepared for a dictator given to arbitrary orders and indulgence in the cult of the individual. This organizational method is applied to the masses; persuasion is replaced by commands or ultimatums and even deceitfulness; in the state apparatus, police or GPU absolutism appears; the revolutionary opposition is met with slander, smear and persecution (including murder, frameups, liquidation, etc.).

Here, it is not necessary for me to recall the domestic and foreign policies (opportunism and adventurism) carried out by Stalin after he usurped power, nor to recall how the Communist parties in every country were converted into diplomatic instruments of the Kremlin. In the case of the Chinese Communist party it, too, was deeply poisoned by the opportunistic policies of Stalinism and suffered a tragic defeat in the process of the Second Revolution. Then the surviving revolutionary forces were buried in adventurism. They became ideologically and organizationally Stalinized -- the

image of the beloved Stalin. Before being forced to struggle for power, it was a genuine Stalinist party, as even Comrades Swabeck and Liang have admitted. Now the question is: Do the facts show that it has departed from Stalinism since coming to power?

Let us consider some major facts to see what generalization can be reached:

(A) Under the peculiarly favorable situation created by the Second World War, the CCP overthrew the landlord-bourgeois regime of the Kuomintang party. Nevertheless it still continued to practice the opportunistic policy of class collaboration or four-class bloc, hence a "coalition government" of the workers, peasants, petty-bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie was formed. It decreed the protection of bourgeois property, "equal consideration to state and private industry" and "equal benefit to labor and capitalist." To compromise with the landlords and rich peasants, it even postponed the acutely needed agrarian reform demanded by the peasants.

(B) On the other hand, except in permitting the workers to join unions, it prohibited any independent organization of the workers, any strikes -- even strikes against private capitalists to improve living standards. Peasants were permitted to fight gangsters, and to fight for reduction of high rents and interest, but not the expropriation of land from the landlords or the elimination of interest on loans.

(C) Its foreign policy not only completely followed the Stalinist "peaceful coexistence" line, it even openly declared the sanctity of alien property in China.

(D) It arbitrarily arrested, imprisoned and even shot down revolutionists who disagreed with such policies, especially its political opposition, the Trotskyists.

(E) It not only practices absolute bureaucratic centralism in the party; it, in addition, holds up Mao as the "Eastern Sun," the Chinese Stalin. He, like Stalin, is the only interpreter and elucidator of Marxism in China and the only person who decides the policy of the state and the party. His "new democracy" ideology has been defined in the rules and regulations of the party (passed by the Seventh Congress of the CCP) as "the guiding line for all kinds of work in the CCP" and "the foundation on which members of the party strive to raise their own consciousness." (The second paragraph of the general program of the CCP reads: "The guiding line for all

kinds of work in the CCP is Marxist and Leninist theory together with the ideology practiced in the Chinese revolution -- Mao's theory." In the party rules and regulations one reads: "All members have the following obligations: (1) to strive to raise one's consciousness and learn the fundamentals of Marxist, Leninist, and Mao's thought....") Any policy decided by Mao and any speech uttered by him are for the membership to study and obey and absolutely not for them to criticize and oppose.

These are absolutely indisputable facts showing the CCP in the period from its coming to power to the outbreak of the Korean War. Is it not enough to prove: the CCP not only did not depart from Stalinism during the struggle for power, but still remained a Stalinist party in the period after taking power (1949 - 1951)?

Maybe Comrades Swabeck and Liang will argue that at least after the outbreak of the Korean War, particularly after 1953 the CCP departed from Stalinism, since it not only armed itself against American imperialism, suppressed the counter attack of the domestic bourgeoisie, landlords and rich peasants (such as, the "Five Anti Movement"), but also abandoned the new democracy policy, adopted the "general line of socialist construction" (proclaimed in the beginning of 1953) and began the Five-Year Plan of industrialization, agricultural collectivization and even communalization.

Yes, after the outbreak of the Korean War, under the mortal threat of the attack of the imperialists from abroad and the counterattack of the domestic bourgeoisie and landlords, just as in face of Chiang's all-out attack, the CCP again was forced to take a big step forward by abandoning the reactionary illusion of new democracy and adopting a series of revolutionary measures. But this does not equate to departure from Stalinism. This was an empirical jump to the left within the frame of Stalinism. It started gradually expropriating bourgeois property instead of protecting it (through both state and private operation), but it still allows the capitalists to draw "fixed interest," and also allows the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties to exist legally and partly participate in the regime. Its foreign policy in particular still follows "peaceful coexistence" as developed in the "Five Principles" of Chou En-lai and Nehru. On the other hand, it still limits the democratic privileges of the workers and peasant masses and still suppresses the revolutionary Trotskyists and other revolutionary elements. Bureaucratic centralism in the CCP and absolutism in

the state regime are flourishing. Its practice of industrialization depends on the administrative lash; agrarian collectivization and communalization especially are carried out by administrative decree, amply manifesting its adventurism. We must not forget that Stalin practiced state industrialization and agricultural collectivization without departing from Stalinism. In carrying out these policies, Stalin used administrative decrees shot through with adventurism and intended not for the benefit of the workers and peasants but for the benefit of the bureaucracy. The CCP policy of industrialization and collectivization is a copy of Stalin's, with certain corrections but the same in nature.

Here I must specifically stress that if a party, deeply rooted in Stalinism, wishes to depart from Stalinism and return to Marxism and Leninism, this cannot conceivably be done without a serious internal struggle -- an unlimited open discussion on the basic revolutionary theory of the present epoch and on political and organizational questions within the party. The thorough elimination of the opportunism, adventurism and bureaucratic centralism characteristic of Stalinism as well as the riddance of obstinate Stalinists has to be realized in the process of discussion. But within the CCP, neither before coming to power, nor in the process of taking power, nor in its turn to the "general line of socialist construction" after it was in power, has there been any such purge of Stalinist ideology.

In fact, just the opposite. When Stalin was still alive, the CCP ordered its members, the cadres in every organization, teachers and students in school, etc., to study Stalinist ideology -- in the pattern of the "study of Stalinist ideology movement" after the Nineteenth Congress in the Soviet Union. After Stalin died, in his funeral oration, Mao said: "All the writings of Stalin are imperishable records of Marxism and Leninism. 'The Fundamentals of Leninism'; 'The History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union' and his final extraordinary writing, 'Socialist Economic Problems in the Soviet Union' are the encyclopaedia of Marxism and Leninism and the synthesis of the experience of the communist movement in the past one hundred years." (The writings mentioned here by Mao embody precisely the "essence" of Stalinism and the "crystallization" of his betrayal of Marxism and Leninism and his falsification of the history of the Bolshevik party.) The Central Committee of the CCP following the line of this speech, immediately mobilized on the largest scale the

"Study Stalinist Ideology Movement," forcing all members of the party and youth organization, teachers and students in the schools, cadres in organizations of all levels and officials in all mass bodies to participate. This movement lasted for some months, every participant having to listen to numerous reports and discuss them.

After Khrushchev's liquidation of Stalin's cult and admission of some of his fantastic errors and crimes at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Union, the CCP, although compelled to admit that some errors were committed by Stalin in his old age, still did everything to defend him and praise his great contributions to fortifying the Soviet Union, building socialism and elucidating Marxist-Leninist ideology. (See "On the Lesson of Proletarian Dictatorship" put out by the CCP.) Mao said at a Central Committee meeting of the CCP: "We have to defend the dead Stalin." That is to say the "glory," the "achievements" and the ideology of Stalin have to be defended.

Finally, after the outbreak of the Hungarian revolution, the CCP, defending the interests of the Stalinist bureaucracy, not only did not show any sympathy but did all it could to smear it -- denouncing it as a counterrevolution. At the same time, they praised and gave resolute support to the merciless policy of the Kremlin in suppressing this revolution.

From the facts cited above, we have adequate reason to conclude that the assertion of Comrades Swabeck and Liang that the CCP "departed from Stalinism in the properly accepted sense of this term" is baseless. Facts speak just the contrary. And judging from their extreme abhorrence of the Hungarian revolution, and the "Study Stalinist Ideology Movement" which they have undertaken, Stalinism in the CCP, or at least in its leading cadres, has become strengthened and more stereotyped.

The Contrast Between the CCP Regime and the Stalin Regime in the Soviet Union

If we acknowledge that the CCP is a Stalinist party, then the nature of its regime is naturally settled. But Comrades Swabeck and Liang maintain that the CCP departed from Stalinism during its struggle for power. Hence they assert that "the Peking regime is not a Stalinist-type regime...." (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 29.) In defending this new idea, they cited a great deal of theory and material. So I am forced to follow them in the process of further investigation.

Comrades Swabeck and Liang themselves raised the question in the first place: "Can the regime be defined by simple allusions to its training in the school of Stalinism, or by reference to Stalinist characteristics alien to socialism?" And they answered it themselves: "Such references are not very helpful for serious study.... We should analyze carefully both the similarities and the contrasts of Chinese development with those of the Stalin regime in the Soviet Union." (Ibid., p. 22.) They think that the CCP "training in the school of Stalinism" and "Stalinist characteristics alien to socialism" are irrelevant and "not very helpful for serious study." According to their theory, then, "training in the school of social-democracy," or reference "to social-democratic characteristics alien to socialism" are "not very helpful for serious study" of a social-democratic party. Thus they completely forget Lenin's most important teaching: "Without revolutionary theory, there is no revolutionary action." Here, I leave aside temporarily the relation between revolutionary theory and action; that is, the nature of action decided by theory (including the nature of the regime). Let us take a look at "the similarities and the contrasts of Chinese development with that of the Stalin regime in the Soviet Union." On this, Comrades Swabeck and Liang tell us:

"We have always attributed the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy, and its crystallization into a privileged caste, to the conditions of a particular historical juncture. Basically, its rise was due to the world situation and a special correlation of internal factors and forces. Mention need be made here only of such outstanding factors as the economic backwardness of the country and its isolation in a hostile capitalist world."

Right, in the Soviet Union we attributed "the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy and its crystallization into a privileged caste to the particular conditions of a historical juncture. Basically, its rise was due to...the economic backwardness of the country and its isolation in a hostile capitalist world." But Comrades Swabeck and Liang are mechanical in their approach to the "similarities" and "contrasts." They say: "The Third Chinese revolution unfolds in a distinctly different historical period and under different historical conditions" (Ibid., p. 23) and so China cannot undergo "the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy and its crystallization into a privileged caste." However, taking a dialectical approach, we must consider the following fundamental points:

(A) If the "economic backwardness" of Russia is taken as the most basic objective condition for "the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy, and its crystallization into a privileged caste," then the "economy" of China is more "backward" than Russia, a fact that is acknowledged by Comrades Swabeck and Liang. For instance, they say: "To be sure, the new China started out from a position even more economically backward than did the young Soviet Union." (Ibid., p. 23.) "Bureaucratism arises from the need to appropriate an insufficient national product. The poorer the society that issues from the revolution, the more dangerous is bureaucratism to socialist development." (Ibid., p. 27.) This means that in China objective conditions for the formation of "Stalinist bureaucracy and its crystallization into a privileged caste" are more favorable than they were in Russia.

(B) Only with direct aid (including military, economic, cultural and technical aid) from the victorious working class in the advanced capitalist countries can "the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy, and its crystallization into a privileged caste" be avoided. No such condition exists in China today just as it did not exist in Russia in its time.

Yes, Comrades Swabeck and Liang argue that "the Chinese revolution, in its development, has been able to draw assistance from the now well advanced resources of the Soviet Union, both military and economic." (Ibid., p. 23.) But they forget that despite the "now well advanced resources" Russia has today, it is still a degenerated workers state under a Stalinist bureaucratic dictatorship. Its "military and economic" assistance to China can, of course, help the latter to resist the invasion of imperialism (as in the Korean War) and build a socialist-type industry; but on the other hand, by bringing the CCP under its control and making it more dependent, the Kremlin bureaucracy facilitates the growth of the Chinese "Stalinist bureaucracy and its crystallization into a privileged caste." A concrete example of this was the influx along with the "military and economic assistance of Russia" of thousands of military, political, economic and cultural advisers and all kinds of specialists or technicians, etc. Being of the bureaucratic caste, they bring with them to China the bureaucratic method in their work and the habit of granting special privileges to the new generation of bureaucrats in China.

On the international side, the period and the conditions facing the CCP are greatly different from what they were in

the Soviet Union in its time. But there is one basic similarity. That is since the Second World War, the working-class movement in the advanced countries (Germany and France) just as after the First World War suffered defeats. The nationalist movement in the Far East, Near East and even North Africa is rising, but with the exception of North Korea and North Indochina, the regimes fall into the hands of the native bourgeoisie, who form so-called democratic parliamentary regimes (as in Ceylon, India, Burma, Indonesia, etc.) or military dictatorships (as in Egypt, Iraq, etc.). These bourgeois democratic regimes or military dictatorships can neither inspire the Chinese working class nor counter the growing bureaucracy; instead they strengthen the myth of "peaceful co-existence," the foreign policy of the Chinese bureaucracy, by providing the screen of neutralism. There is still another important factor; the only advanced capitalist country in the Far East -- Japan -- is entirely under the control of American imperialism. By using Japan as a base and tying South Korea, Taiwan and South Indochina together, American imperialism has set up a blockade or encirclement that threatens China.

(C) The Russian Bolshevik party took power through an uprising in which the working class under Lenin and Trotsky led the peasants. Due to the backwardness of Russia and a series of defeats of the working-class revolution in the advanced Western countries, the revolution became isolated; this led to the degeneration of the most revolutionary party and the loss of state power to the bureaucracy. But the CCP from the very beginning was under the leadership of a Stalinist -- Mao Tse-tung, who not only did not mobilize the workers to lead the peasants through an uprising in the cities to overthrow the landlord-bourgeois regime, but who instead suppressed to the utmost the activities of the working class, relying solely on the peasant armed force to attack the cities. It was only because of the exceptionally favorable conditions created by the Second World War, that it was able to come to power. Therefore, the CCP from the beginning was a Stalinist regime.

Precisely because the regime in the Soviet Union was a proletarian dictatorship established after a victorious armed uprising by the working class, which was led by a genuinely revolutionary party, the usurpation of power and conversion of the regime into a bureaucratic dictatorship by the Stalinist bureaucracy was met by stormy resistance (the Left Opposition led by Trotsky). Finally, through Thermidor, the Stalinist bureaucracy, to use the words of Comrades

Comrades Swabeck and Liang, "had to strangle the Leninist party and destroy physically the whole generation that led the revolution to the victory under Lenin and Trotsky." (Ibid., p. 23.) Since the CCP regime began as "a Stalinist-type regime" it develops in accordance with its own logic without the necessity of going through "degeneration" and "Thermidor."

The few points analyzed above are sufficient to prove that the attempt of Comrades Swabeck and Liang to conclude "theoretically" that there is a basic difference between the regime of the CCP and that in the Soviet Union -- or "the Peking regime is not a Stalinist-type regime" -- lacks sound basis. The cause of their error is the substitution of mechanical "contrast" for dialectical analysis.

When Trotsky explained the "conditions for omnipotence of the bureaucracy," he wrote: "The scarcity in consumer goods and the universal struggle to obtain them generate a policeman who arrogates to himself the function of distribution. Hostile pressure from without imposes on the policeman the role of 'defender' of the country, endows him with national authority, and permits him doubly to plunder the country." (In Defense of Marxism, p. 7.) This explanation is fully applicable to China under the rule of the CCP today.

Of course, "the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy, and its crystallization into a privileged caste," "is not likely to be reproduced elsewhere under different historical conditions." But in a certain area and under certain conditions, where the influence of the Soviet Union reaches or where a Communist party under Kremlin control comes to power, then "the rise of the Stalinist bureaucracy and its crystallization into a privileged caste" can be inevitably reproduced. Conditions in Eastern Europe demonstrate the former; China, North Korea and North Indochina testify to the latter.

The Shaping and Development of the Privileged Caste -- Their Enjoyment of Special Privileges

In my "Report on the Chinese Situation," written in 1951, I pointed out that even before the CCP took power, a stubborn and self-willed bureaucracy had taken shape in the rural area it occupied. After taking power, this bureaucracy, because of the monopoly and concentration of all political, economical, military and cultural organizations and power, rapidly crystallized into a privileged caste. Along with the expansion of these organizations and

aggregation of power, the newly shaped privileged caste attracted into its ranks a large number of the petty bourgeoisie, especially intellectuals, a part of the labor aristocracy (the so-called labor hero, labor model, or Stakhanovite), even a few members of the bourgeoisie (through cooperation between the bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie). In this way, a huge privileged caste formed. Its number is estimated as much greater than that of the Soviet Union under Stalin's rule. (Due to limited space I will not attempt to analyze here the component parts and approximate number in the Chinese bureaucracy. Generally speaking, it resembles the Soviet bureaucracy as analyzed by Trotsky in The Revolution Betrayed, pp. 135-139.) This privileged caste, like its counterpart in the Soviet Union forms a pyramid of several strata. At the bottom are the vast masses of oppressed workers and peasants and all the poor people; at the pinnacle stands the chairman of the party, Mao Tse-tung. The strict division of strata in the pyramid is clearly reflected in the formation of the officers' ranks -- lieutenant, colonel, general and marshal in the Chinese army, in complete imitation of the Red Army in the Soviet Union.

The consequence of the formation and development of this privileged caste is surely the enlargement and deepening of social inequality, the deterioration of the worker and peasant masses' living conditions and the growth or prerogatives among the privileged caste.

It seems to me that nobody has ever denied the low standard of living of the Chinese worker and peasant masses (even Mr. Duncan, the Canadian reporter whom Comrades Swabeck and Liang praise highly as an "objective observer," admitted as much in his book Red China Today). What is in dispute is whether the ruling stratum of the CCP enjoys privileges and maintains a police system which protects its privileges. In respect to these questions Comrades Swabeck and Liang explain as follows:

"However, granting the existence of bureaucratic tendencies does not at all justify the characterization of the Peking regime as the rule of a privileged caste in the sense that we have always understood it -- a hardened social formation of a parasitic nature, standing above the people, consuming an inordinate share of the national income and concerned primarily with the protection of its own powers and privileges against the masses. There is no evidence for such an assumption. Nor is there any evidence of an omnipresent police system which would be required to protect such a caste.

"Townsend mentions a certain degree of social differentiations, the only example in his whole book of about 400 pages. Cadres who drew their provisions from the government would eat in 'bigger kitchens,' or 'little kitchens.' To the former came department heads, ministers and those of similar rank. Their fare contained more meat than was served in the more common 'little kitchens.' But Townsend adds: 'After searching for those riotously living Communists of whom one sometimes hears, I came on none who qualified for the description.'

"More recent verification is contained in Gerald Clark's book. 'Mao Tse-tung, Chu Teh and Chou En-lai lead austere, almost monastic existences, dedicated to the building of a nation; and millions follow suit,' he reports." (Op. Cit., p. 27.)

The above-cited "facts" on the non-existence of the privileged caste in China, as presented by Comrades Swabeck and Liang are specially important, so it is worthwhile to check them. If their argument is correct and the facts observed by Townsend and Clark are reliable, then China would be entirely different from the Soviet Union in that a privileged caste exists there; China has only a group of incorruptible and honest officials who serve the country in the interests of the worker and peasant masses and for the sake of building socialism. Do the facts really testify to this? In contrast to the observations of Townsend and Clark, let me cite, as extensively as space permits, some of the more concrete facts in a book entitled Ten Years of Storm written by Chow Ching-wen in Hongkong. Chow was a standing member of the Central Committee of the China Democratic League, which cooperates with the CCP, and was a member of the Committee on Political and Legal Affairs of the Government Administration Council. (Tung Pi-wu and Peng Tsen, members of the Political Bureau of the CCP, are respectively the chairman and vice-chairman of this committee. The task of this committee is to lay out the systems and regulations in state administration and jurisprudence.) He was also a delegate to the National People's Congress. He participated in the CCP's regime for eight years (1949-56) until his departure for Hongkong in December, 1956. (It is said that his departure had the permission of Mao.) This voluminous book contains nearly 600 pages. (In the Chinese edition. The English is about half that -- translator.) The following are citations from it describing the privileges enjoyed by the CCP bureaucracy.

"The Communists boast that they themselves have heroic personalities. Stalin

even said a communist is made of special material. Before seeing their ways of living and behaving, I also had the illusion for quite a time that members of a revolutionary party should 'grieve before anybody, and rejoice after everybody.' Although I did not agree with Communist ideology and methods, I did respect them. But after working together with them for nearly eight years in which I learned how they live, my respect for them evaporated." (Ten Years of Storm, p. 112, Chinese edition.)

"As to the way of living among the Communists, I could write a book dealing exclusively with this, but since there is no space here I can only sketch it on the basis of some concrete facts. Also I should like my readers to bear in mind that today's China is neither a capitalist country like the USA with abundance of goods, nor is it a Soviet Union which claims to have reached socialism thirty years after revolution, but a poverty-stricken country emerging from the second world war and the civil war. Most people in China still live in old and decrepit houses. In densely populated Shanghai the average person occupies a living space of only two square meters. People eat mostly rice products and wear coarse cotton clothes; in the poorer areas they even eat distiller's grains, leaves, weeds and wild fruits and wear indescribably tattered garments.... This is the real picture of the Chinese people. Bearing this in mind, we shall see how astonishing are the living conditions of those so-called revolutionaries who call for improvement in the people's standard of living!" (Ibid., p. 112-113.)

"The material life of a human being consists mainly of clothing, food, housing, transportation and recreation. In the following, I shall describe living conditions among the Communists along these lines.

"First is their housing. Prior to 1948 the top party leaders lived in caves in Yen-an. In 1949 they moved into imperial palaces in Peking, and the cadres (big and small) took over the best buildings in all the cities which once belonged to capitalists. Dissatisfied with the original furniture and decorations, which were in fact quite nice, they had them redecorated and bought new and better furniture. They wanted specially designed carpets, comfortable sofas, imported bathtubs and basins, splendid gardens and to be served by many servants. If you happened to visit such a mansion, you would say that it is not in poverty-stricken China, but rather the villa of a New York millionaire." (Ibid., p. 114.)

"But the original buildings were not

enough for the party men. New mansions with modern decorations have been erected in all the big cities to meet the demand of the new aristocracy. As a result a newly constructed residential area in any city is where the new aristocrats live." (Ibid., p. 114.)

"Mao Tse-tung, Liu Shao-chi, Chou En-lai, Chu Teh, etc., built their new villas in the western suburbs of Peking. The provincial and municipal leaders followed suit. So socialist construction started by building beautiful residences for top leaders, then the apartments, dormitories, auditoriums, dance halls, etc., for the enjoyment of party functionaries." (Ibid., p. 300.)

"New hotels were also built in many cities with the exception of Shanghai where there are many good buildings left by Westerners for the use of important guests and top men. All these places are exclusively reserved for foreign visitors and top cadres. No ordinary people are allowed to stay in them. This includes the Peking Restaurant, Peace House, Lu-Kuo Restaurant, Tsineman Restaurant, West Village Guest House, New Oversea Chinese Restaurant...in Peking, the Ching Restaurant and Broadway Building...in Shanghai, the original Sun Le Teh Restaurant and in Tientsien the Tai Li Restaurant." (Ibid., p. 114.)

"Next let us talk about how and what the new aristocracy eats.... People in other countries know only that there are three kitchens; namely, the little kitchen, the middle kitchen and the big kitchen for top, middle and low cadres respectively. The little kitchen cooks special and delicious food for high-class leaders; the middle kitchen is for the middle-rank cadres, while the big kitchen cooks ordinary meals for lower cadres and the rank and file. (But Comrades Swaback and Liang erroneously put them in reverse order. See SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 21, No. 2 -- translator.) This distinction among kitchens has roughly told us the division of three classes. But if you enter the place behind the curtain, you will discover that the top and middle rank 'chiefs' not only live in magnificent mansions, they also enjoy delicacies from the hills and sea. At least all the ministers whom I have visited live this kind of life. Everyone has a famous cook, who in the old days, used to serve imperial officers or mandarins. I have tasted at a leader's residence both Chinese and Western dishes prepared by a cook who used to serve Fu-Yi, the last emperor of the Chin Dynasty. Well-known cooks of big restaurants are transferred to serve top men. Whenever I dined at a chief's home, I often heard the host

boasting about what a big person the cook used to serve or what big restaurants they were transferred from. Judging from the fact that cooks are called in to serve the top men at their residences, you can see that what they eat is not rice and salt vegetable, but chicken, duck, goose, fish and delicacies from the hills and sea. Doesn't a ration system for meat and edible oil prevail in China? The hierarchy enjoys exceptional rights. They have special permits to buy extra meat and oil. When the markets open, cars and jeeps are lined up, their cooks buy the best portions of meat and leave the bones and skins for the ordinary people. The chiefs are not confined to enjoying good meals at home; they give big banquets all the year around, some of them attended by over a thousand guests. Peking Restaurant, Peace House, New Oversea Chinese Hotel and Huai-Jen Hall...are places where big banquets are usually given. You can see over six hundred cars parked in front of Peking Restaurant at dinner time almost every evening. Those who have never been in Peking could hardly believe it; but those who have been in Peking are accustomed to such scenes." (Ibid., p. 116.)

"The ruling class enjoys a lot of privileges. Fattened chickens and ducks are sent directly to their residences without passing through the market. Special farms and vegetable gardens for the top men grow special food which can never be enjoyed by the ordinary people. First-class apples grown in Manchuria are reserved for the top men...when the harvest season for Peking peaches arrives, the government will buy all the first-class ones for the top men and distinguished visitors.... Watermelon which grows in Harin, Sinkiang, lichee which grows in Kwantung and all the other best fruits of the country are transported by air to Peking, giving priority to the taste of the top men." (Ibid., p. 302.)

"Let us now turn into the means of transportation. In the countryside people either walk on foot or ride donkeys or horses.... In the city, there are street cars and buses. Only the new aristocracy is permitted to ride in automobiles. It is interesting to see that the CCP distributes automobiles according to the rank and position of the officers. First-rank personages such as Mao Tse-tung, Liu Shao-chi, Chou En-lai, Chu Teh...etc., ride first-class Russian cars. Ministers of the Central Government ride second-class Russian cars. Middle-rank officials ride American cars. Each governmental department has special buses for its employees.... But ordinary people have no right to share these privileges.... As a result, there is every indication

in the city that those who ride in automobiles must be top men or middle-rank functionaries.

"These cars are not confined to officers' use. Wives and children of the new aristocracy also ride in cars to the theaters or schools. A long line of cars can be seen every night in front of theaters. In the hot summer, dust flies in the street when a car of the new aristocracy passes by; while in winter a cold chilly wind blows dust in people's faces. (Ibid., p. 117-118.)

"Now I shall describe in a few lines what the Communists wear. When the Communists marched into cities in their shabby clothes, the city dwellers praised them for austerity. Therefore, everybody followed suit....

"While the country earnestly copied the austerity of the Communists, the top leaders, however, changed their clothing from shabby outfits to new ones: woolen uniforms, fox or sable overcoats, seal-skin collars, and otter fur hats. Then all the high-rank and middle-rank Communists followed suit.... Their wives also did not want to lag behind and began to wear woolen clothing and so do their sons and daughters. As a result, those who shop in the department stores or patronize big restaurants are mostly the Communist chiefs and their families. (Ibid., pp. 118-119.)

"As for recreational institutions there were no commercial dance halls in the past few years, but movies, folk music, and local dramas. However, every organization, no matter how big or small, holds evening parties every Saturday or holiday, mostly for dancing, but sometimes for drama. Hwai Jen Hall (where the delegates of the National People's Congress meet -- translator) and the auditorium of the Political Consultative Committee give evening parties all the time. Whenever there is an evening party, thousands of cars of the top men roll into the place like flowing water....

"Here is something worth mentioning. During the meetings of the Political Consultative Committee in the spring of 1958, Mao Tse-tung dropped a remark about Chou Shing-fang, a well-known Peking opera actor then performing in Shanghai. Chen Yi, the Vice Premier, guessed that the 'chairman' wanted to see the performance of Chou Shing-fang and his group; so he telephoned Shanghai and asked Chou's group to be sent immediately to Peking. As a result we had a chance to see Chou's performance the third day after the call.

"The most lively recreational activity

among the Communists is the evening party. The most colorful and enjoyable one is the dancing party held at the Violet Light Pavilion in Peking. It is exclusively for the chiefs of the Central Government. There the music is superb, furnishings splendid, service best, women extraordinarily pretty, food delicious, and atmosphere soft and fascinating. Present are high-ranking chiefs, such as Liu Shao-chi, Chou En-lai, Chu Teh and other political and military chiefs in the party." (Ibid., p. 122-123.)

"The Communist top men usually go to summer resorts such as Pei-tai Ho Summer Mountain Resort in the North, the seaside resorts in Tsing-tao and Darien and Lu Mountain Resort and Hwang Mountain Resort in the South. In the old days these places were where foreigners, politicians and capitalists went during the summer, and where they built villas and modern-style resorts.... Now the owners of these resorts are the Communists who in addition built many more splendid ones. But in order to show that the party is for the working class, the new aristocracy selected a few common buildings and also built a few in warehouse style as workers' sanatoriums; it is these that appear in the newspapers and not the splendid resorts of the new aristocracy.

"The top men go to the summer resorts as soon as summer comes. They and their families take chartered trains with cooks, nurses, doctors, attendants. So those enjoying themselves in the mountains and at the seashores are the top men in the party and the administration. Their lives are comfortable and they are spend-thrifts. They have everything, but the ordinary people who feed the former have neither enough to eat nor enough to wear but watch with sad faces the enjoyments of the new aristocracy." (Ibid., p. 304-305.)

"This extravagant and rotten way of living started first among the top party leaders, then spread among the middle-rank party officials, and then even to some degree among its lower cadres." (Ibid., p. 299.)

How does this privileged caste of the CCP cover the cost of their extravagant way of life? Chow Ching-wen tells us: "Although the wage system has been adopted in recent years, the Communists, besides wages, can get what they want in the name of public expenses." (Ibid., p. 300.) The so-called "public expense" is an "expenditure from the state treasury." "I don't have to mention that Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai and the other high-ranking leaders naturally get their expenses from the

state treasury, but so do the other elements of the privileged class -- the party members and officials. Therefore, there is no distinction between public and private expenses. The upper and middle-rank officials have official residences, special cars and attendants. When they travel, they have first-class transportation and their expenses -- private and public -- are paid by the state treasury. Even the lower cadres also share these privileges though to a lesser degree. Take a regimental commander for example: he has sufficient salary, an official residence, a radio, an automobile, first-class transportation when traveling and a first-class room in the hospital in case of sickness." (Ibid., p. 305-306.)

"The Communist regime is an unprecedented, huge organization containing over ten million party members, two or three million armed forces, over twenty million functionaries.... This parasitic class, from top to bottom, enjoys luxurious living rendered possible only by the unhampered economic system." (Ibid., p. 306.)

The luxurious life of the CCP privileged caste, described above, is sometimes referred to in official CCP publications. For instance, when the party center attacks some dissident functionaries, it often accuses them of being extravagant and wasteful in their way of living. Especially at the peak of the blossom and contend campaign (April to June, 1957), a number of articles appeared in the People's Daily, Ta Kung Pao, and Kwang Ming Daily, listing many facts concerning the privileges and extravagant lives of the CCP bureaucracy. This testifies, from another angle, to the reliability of Chow Ching-wen's report. Chow, a petty-bourgeois democrat and a self-called socialist, favors the nationalization of big enterprises but disagrees with Marxist theory and its fundamental policies, and considers the CCP to represent Marxism and Leninism. Therefore his criticism of the CCP's policies, from the theoretical viewpoint, is always incorrect and reactionary; but the factual exposition of the arbitrariness and the privileges enjoyed by the CCP, and the low living standards and miserable conditions of the workers and peasants in China is based on reality. This is due to his participation in the CCP regime for nearly eight years, to his close relations with the top and middle bureaucrats, and to several missions to rural areas to interview peasants and investigate their conditions. This presented him with first-hand material.

Now we can say that the detailed and concrete facts mentioned by Chow Ching-wen, not only suffice to discount

the "observations" made by Townsend and Clark, but also prove that Clark's claim that "Mao Tse-tung, Chu Teh and Chou En-lai lead austere, almost monastic existences, dedicated to building of a nation; and millions follow suit" is an entirely false myth. Chow's report fully confirms the accuracy of the "characterization of the Peking regime as the rule of a privileged caste in the sense that we have always understood it -- a hardened social formation of a parasitic nature, standing above the people, consuming inordinate share of the national income...." Now the remaining question is whether or not there exists any "evidence of an omnipresent police system which would be required to protect such a caste."

The "Evidence of an Omnipresent Police System

After the defeat of the revolution in 1927, the CCP started to organize a secret police. Its main purpose was to protect the party cells from destruction by Kuomintang agents. Later, when Mao Tse-tung set up "the Chinese Soviet Government" in Kiangsu, this secret police organization was moved there also and became the local secret police. After Mao and Co. moved to Yen-an in 1935, this secret police system continued to exist and develop with the participation of the GPU of the Soviet Union. As soon as the People's Government was established in Peking during 1949, the secret police network spread immediately all over the country as the official public-security organization. Russian GPU experts were invited in as advisers to help set up plans and train new agents to complete this public-security police system. Now let us turn to Chow's description of the CCP "police system." "The most general and penetrating machine of suppression utilized by the Communists for control of people is the police. The chief policeman is Lo Jui-ching, the Minister for Public Security (Marshal Lo became Chief of Staff of the Army in January, 1960 -- translator). His men are sent out to every province, city, county and district to suppress the people.... The Communist agents have excellent capacities in their work. They live among the people and as a result constantly watch and control every activity of the latter." (Ten Years of Storm, p. 98, Chinese edition.) "As for the policy system of the Communists, at the top level, there is the Ministry for Public Security; at the municipal level, the Bureau for Public Security; in the districts, the branches of the Public Security Bureau; and at the bottom, the basic police station which directly governs and controls the people. Police stations are scattered among the residential areas. Each station controls a certain number of families and, of

course, their activities. For instance, each police station is in charge of the population records in its governing area. Any person who wants to go to another place, even temporarily, has to report to the police station about his destination, the purpose of his trip and the date of return. Likewise if a family has a visitor, within three days he has to be reported to the police station in that area as to his personal history, the purpose of his trip, etc. Under guise of population survey, a policeman can enter any home at any time (day or night) to ask any question about something he suspects. If one buys things for private use he has to register them at the police station. If he receives money from a source other than his job, he should also put the amount he received in the 'family register record' for the inspection of the police." (Ibid., p. 98-99.)

"Besides the police station, there is a street committee under the direction of the police. Its responsibilities are to know every family's status and to mobilize the people for contributions, campaigns, and demonstrations. To carry out its functions it either calls a meeting or visits the family in which it is interested. Like a policeman, the member of the street committee has to report in time to the police station on the general situation. The main task of the street committee is to uncover secret agents of the Kuomintang and suspicious elements.... In addition to the police station and the street committee, everyone, every family, especially those considered by the police station as activists, have special assignments. That is, for an individual to watch other members of his family; for a family to watch its neighbors and relatives. If one finds anything suspicious, he or she should immediately report to the police station. Consequently, everyone and every family is under constant watch and has the possibility of being the target of investigation. Under Communist police rule, people can't trust each other, not even husband and wife, father and son, brother and sister, relatives and neighbors. Amid the black cloud created by the Communists, everybody lives in the terror of uncertainty and everybody suspects the others as being his or her enemy or a police agent. As a result to avoid getting into any trouble, one has to be very discreet in words and deeds. (Ibid., p. 99-100.)

"In calling the Communist regime a police state we not only mean its police organization, but also include its entire police network. Living amid this network, who would not be horrified, terrified and compliant? Those who are in government

administration, factories, enterprises, schools, etc., are handled by the Communists with the same method mentioned above. Many visible or invisible shadows are behind everybody's back; every word and action are under constant watch and an unsuitable sentence is often the target for report and criticism; everybody is a watcher in the eyes of the others. Disturbed, everybody either keeps his mouth shut or cautiously utters Marxist terminology and the political line endorsed by the top leadership. Thus, every organization is a prison, and its members the prisoners. (Ibid., p. 100.)

We can cite many specific instances that testify to the truthfulness of Chow's description of the "police system." On account of limited space, I will mention only two examples experienced by our Trotskyists:

(A) Within a year of taking power, the CCP through the surreptitious activities of its secret agents had thoroughly investigated all the leaders, members, sympathizers and friends of our organization. In the autumn of 1950 all the leading comrades in Shanghai, Wenchow, and Kwangtung were arrested simultaneously and some of them murdered afterward. On December 22, 1952, and January 10, 1953, all our comrades, sympathizers, their relatives and friends in Shanghai and elsewhere were imprisoned.

(B) In the spring of 1955 our Comrade Chiu visited a friend of his while touring Canton. Within five minutes after his arrival, a special agent from the street committee walked in and stayed to listen to their conversation until he left.

The above two facts sufficiently prove the existence of "the omnipresent police system of the Peking regime." Therefore we can say that the police system of the Peking regime is, if not more severe, at least equivalent to the GPU under Stalin's rule. If Comrades Swabeck and Liang deny both Chow's reports and our judgment, they should submit concrete facts by way of refutation.

Is the Election of the National People's Congress "Remarkably Similar to the Elections to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets at the Time of the Bolshevik Revolution"?

In order to glorify the democratic system of the Peking regime Comrades Swabeck and Liang not only deny the existence of a privileged caste and police system, but also beautify as

much as possible the National People's Congress which sets up the People's Government. Under the subtitle "How About Popularly Elected Government?" the following lines appear.

"This body ('The People's Political Consultative Conference' -- Peng) was later superseded by the National People's Congress. Says Townsend: '...by 1953 the votes cast by electors in villages, city lanes and other "cells" had replaced the hitherto supreme organ of the United Front...with a government elected in accordance with "democratic centralism" whereby the lower electoral bodies elected representatives to those a step higher, which in turn elected representatives to those immediately above.'

"Describing the first such regular election in Peking, Townsend points out that representatives were elected directly from large factories, from universities and from city wards; smaller units could combine to elect joint representatives. 'All were subject to recall at the elector's demand.' This is remarkably similar to the elections to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution." (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 22.)

Basing themselves merely on Townsend's sketchy report of the election of the National People's Congress in Peking and completely neglecting the necessary conditions and concrete steps in carrying out a socialist democratic election, Comrades Swabeck and Liang assert that "This is remarkably similar to the elections to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution." This is even more light-minded and incoherent than the assertion they made that "the communes are self-governing" when they heard about "elected councils" in the communes. In criticizing their midjudgment on the "elected councils" of the communes, I pointed out:

"Certain definite conditions are required to realize socialist democracy. First of all, the worker and peasant masses must enjoy complete freedom of speech, press, assembly, association and belief; the secret ballot must exist at every level during elections; finally, and most important of all, the legality of every worker's party that accepts socialism must be guaranteed. But in China today, as well as in the East European countries, these conditions are absent." (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 21, No. 1, p. 22.)

In China today the necessary conditions for realizing socialist democracy are not only absent; but, since it is

under the severe control of the police system, it is just as impossible to hold a democratic election for the People's Congress as it is in the communes. However, "the fiction of universal electoral rights -- in the style of Hitler-Goebbels" (see the Transitional Program), is maintained in elections at all levels in the People's Congress and commune committees. A list of candidates appointed by the CCP is given to every electoral unit for the people, or representatives of the people, to vote for or circle. It is a familiar fact known to everyone in China. Now let us bring Chow Ching-wen forward as our witness, since he personally participated in the election of the National People's Congress in 1953, particularly the election in the Peking District People's Congress. The following is his description of the elections at all levels of the People's Congress and in the government administration:

"The lists of representatives at all levels of the People's Congress are hand-picked by the CCP. Likewise with the lists of candidates in all the governmental committees. That is, the representatives of the village People's Congress are appointed by the Communist party; the village administrative officials elected in the village People's Congress are also selected and appointed by the Communist party. the so-called election is the Party appointing someone for the masses or representatives of the masses to be approved by the raising of hands or voting. This also holds true in the Hsien People's Congress and Hsien Governmental Committee and even the provincial and central government People's Congress and its Committee."

"The list of candidates decided on by the party beforehand is given to each electoral unit for election. For example, in the election of the more than one thousand delegates to the National People's Congress, about half of the candidates are chosen by the Central Committee of the CCP from the officials and personnel of CCP headquarters, the Central People's Government and other organizations in Peking; the remainder are chosen by provincial party committees and submitted for approval to the Central Committee of the CCP. The candidates are then 'elected' in the provinces as delegates. The same procedure is followed in electing delegates to the People's Congress on all levels. One part of the delegates to the provincial People's Congress is chosen by the Provincial Party Committee, the other part by the Hsien Party Committee with the approval of the Provincial Party Committee, then the list is submitted for election by the Hsien People's Congress. The candidates for the Hsien People's Congress

are decided on by the Hsien Party Committee for election in the villages. Administrative officials at all levels in the government are all named by the party and passed by the People's Congress. These candidates for office at all levels of the People's Congress are always passed. The number of candidates always equals the number of delegates to be elected, so that voting is only a question of whether or not to put a circle around the names of the candidates. In brief, the names on the list given to you are all to be elected; if you disapprove of certain persons, all you can do is not circle their names, but they will be elected just the same because the majority of the electors put circles around every name on the ballot. And also before the election the Communist party mobilizes persuasion in order to pass unanimously the names it has appointed. In fact, this kind of list is always passed by a big majority vote if not unanimously at all levels of the People's Congress." (Ibid., p. 415-416.)

The above description of the elections at all levels of the People's Congress and governmental Administrative Committee fully proves that Townsend's report of "a government in accordance with democratic centralism" is completely false. In fact it is precisely what Trotsky called "the fiction of universal electoral rights -- in the style of Hitler-Goebbels." I have said before: "The Chinese 'people's councils' are patterned after those in the East European countries. And the 'people's councils' in the East European countries are a variation of Stalin's 'soviets.'" (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 21 No. 1, p. 22.) To say, as Comrades Swabeck and Liang do, that the election of the National People's Congress in China is "remarkably similar to the election to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution" is the same as saying that "the elections to Stalin's Soviets" is "remarkably similar to the election to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution"!

Since we all know the democratic conditions and election procedures in "the All-Russian Congress of Soviets at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution," I need not repeat them here. However, it is necessary particularly to point out that the "Soviets at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution" absolutely excluded electoral rights to all exploiters. But the Chinese People's Congress has granted by law the participation of bourgeois elements and their political representatives (such as the Democratic League, the Revolutionary Committee of the Kuomintang, etc.) in the elections with

full right to run and to be elected. Therefore, in the past two National People's Congresses and at all levels of the People's Congress, political representatives of the bourgeoisie and capitalists were elected and even designated as committeemen in all levels of the government administration. This reveals that the class content of the Chinese People's Congress is different in essence from that of the Soviets at that time. It is astonishing to read the assertion of Comrades Swabeck and Liang that the Chinese People's Congress, which includes bourgeois elements, is remarkably similar to that of the Soviets which excluded all exploiters!

The Distorted Permanent Revolution and the Distortion of the Theory of Permanent Revolution

After asserting that the CCP has departed from Stalinism, has no privileged caste and no police system for the protection of the privileged caste, and after praising the election to the National People's Congress which forms the national government as "remarkably similar to the elections to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution," Comrades Swabeck and Liang proceed to describe the whole process of the Third Chinese Revolution, concluding as follows:

"Subsequently (that is after the outbreak of the Korean War -- Peng) the CCP leaders put forward their general line of the transition to socialism. Where private capitalist enterprise had previously been encouraged to develop under government control, it was now to be restricted and gradually transformed in order to attain 'the step by step abolition of systems of exploitation and the building of a socialist society.' At the end of 1952 the first Five Year Plan was launched. Industrialization now became a prime objective.

"In agriculture the march of events proceeded from the early mutual aid groups to producers co-operatives and collectives, culminating in the socialist type of socio-economic organization -- the Communes. Unfolding side by side with industrialization, this powerful combination constitutes the motive force for the whole newer culture, while providing a material foundation for the socialist transformation of society.

"Thus, regardless of the misconceptions, empirical improvisation and opportunism of the CCP leaders, the uninterrupted development of the Chinese revolution stands out clearly and conclusively. Each new stage has been firmly anchored in the preceding one, each

stage elevated society to qualitatively higher levels in which the socialist direction is unmistakable. What this signifies is a striking confirmation of the theory of permanent or continuous revolution." (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 25.)

To picture the Third Chinese Revolution as "a striking confirmation of the theory of permanent or continuous revolution" constitutes the highest praise. It almost equals saying that the Third Chinese Revolution is a model example of the democratic revolution proceeding successfully into socialism. If this is the fact, then we cannot criticize but only unconditionally support the CCP policy. But the "facts" singled out above by Comrades Swabeck and Liang do not correspond either with the theory of the permanent revolution or the historical experience of the October Revolution. What they noted belongs to the sphere of socialist economic reconstruction and they completely overlooked the most decisively significant political factor of the theory of permanent revolution. The great adventurism of the CCP in carrying out economic reconstruction -- industrialization and collectivization -- directly violates the theory of permanent revolution.

Since the beginning of the Third Chinese Revolution, great confusion, involving all kinds of misunderstandings and distortion of the theory of permanent revolution has been evident in the Trotskyist movement. Therefore, I consider it a special need to investigate the development of the Third Chinese Revolution in the light of Trotsky's own explanation of the theory of the permanent revolution as well as the historical experience of the October Revolution.

Trotsky wrote in the preface to the Russian edition of the Permanent Revolution, published on November 30, 1929:

"To dispel the chaos that has been created around the theory of the permanent revolution, it is necessary to distinguish three lines of thought that are united in this theory.

"First, it embraces the problem of the transition of the democratic revolution into the socialist. This is really the historical origin of the theory. (Introduction to the Permanent Revolution, First Indian Edition, March 1947, p. 22.)

"These ideas and moods declared war upon the theory of the permanent revolution, risen anew in 1905. It pointed out that democratic tasks of the backward bourgeois nations in our epoch led to the

dictatorship of the proletariat and that the dictatorship of the proletariat puts the socialist tasks on the order of the day. In that lay the central idea of the theory. If the traditional view was that the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat led through a long period of democracy, the theory of the permanent revolution established the fact that for backward countries the road to democracy passed through the dictatorship of the proletariat. By that alone, democracy does not become a regime anchored within itself for decades, but rather a direct introduction to the socialist revolution. Each is bound to the other by an unbroken chain. In this way, there arises between the democratic revolution and the socialist transformation of society a permanency of revolutionary development." (Ibid., p. 24 -- My emphasis.)

This "central idea" of the theory of the permanent revolution, stated by Trotsky in 1905, was fully confirmed by the October Revolution. That is: in the midst of the democratic revolutionary tide flowing from the February Revolution, the Bolshevik party established the proletarian dictatorship by overthrowing the bourgeois power through an uprising in which the working class led the peasants (armed peasants in uniforms). Immediately after announcing the transfer of the land to the peasants and the right of internal nations to self-determination (these were the democratic tasks of Russia at the time), the socialist task of expropriating private property was put on the agenda by the Bolshevik party. This is precisely the model example of the democratic revolution developing uninterruptedly toward socialism.

What was the attitude of the CCP towards this "central idea" of the theory of permanent revolution? It took the cities with armed peasant forces (not through an uprising with the proletariat leading the peasants). After the overthrow of Chiang's regime, instead of establishing a proletarian dictatorship, it did just the contrary; "co-operating" with the democratic or national bourgeois, it set up a "coalition government," the "People's Democratic Dictatorship"; instead of placing the socialist task of expropriating the bourgeois on the agenda, it declared that "private capitalist enterprise has been encouraged to develop under government control" and it promoted "equal consideration of private and state industry" and equal benefits to workers and capitalists"; it even postponed the burning land problem and protected foreign property (the land problem and the expropriation of foreign property were the democratic tasks in China). All this was the new democracy policy of

Mao. Mao's policy was formally passed by the "Political Consultative Conference" in which the CCP, bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie participated, and it became a "common program of building the state." The period for realizing this program was the so-called "new democracy stage." Though the CCP did not formally pronounce how long this stage would endure, it was understood to be for a long time. Chow reports that in one meeting it was said that the new democracy period would last twenty years. In other words the passing over from the democratic or "new democratic" revolution to socialist tasks would take a "very long period" and the "new democracy" was able to become a "self-sufficient regime" (Mao called it a "new democracy regime") for several decades (or, as Chow reported, twenty years), before proceeding to the socialist revolution. Does it not sound like practice of the typical Menshevik theory of "revolution in stages"?

But the class struggle has its own logic which is precisely the dynamics of the permanent revolution. Even before the Korean War, but especially after its outbreak, the peasants in many areas displayed great resentment and unrest due to postponement of agrarian reform, oppression by the landlords, exploitation by rich peasants and all kinds of excessive taxes levied by the new regime. On the other hand, the landlords, rich peasants and commercial-industrial capitalists in the cities took advantage of the advance of the imperialists to mobilize a counterattack. (For instance, cheating in both labor and material in filling government orders, upsetting the the market through black market manipulations, corroding the CCP cadres with bribes, etc.) In addition the remnants of Chiang's regime were very active. So under the twofold menace -- the advance led by American imperialism and the domestic counter-attack of the united forces of landlords and bourgeoisie, the CCP was forced to revise its new democracy policy empirically, once again undertaking agrarian reform against the landlords and rich peasants, pushing forward the "Five Anti Movement" against the bourgeoisie, severely suppressing counter-revolution elements, etc., in order to satisfy the land hunger of the peasantry and to gain the workers' support by allaying their dissatisfaction. Following this, at the beginning of 1953, the CCP also announced the "general line of the transitional period" of building socialism and it began the First Five Year Plan of industrialization. All this demonstrates that the CCP under the irresistible pressure of the class struggle was forced to relinquish its completely reactionary new democracy policy of "revolution in

stages" and adopt some progressive measures corresponding to the development of the permanent revolution.

But in adopting these progressive measures the CCP put great limitations on them. They did not announce the expropriation of bourgeois property and were not ready for collectivization of agriculture. This is apparent in the resolution passed by the CCP in March, 1955, that the "general line of the transitional period" was to be fulfilled in several decades or a half century. According to this resolution, socialist reconstruction will be accomplished in several decades or a half century through the establishment within the national boundaries of a self-sufficient socialist economic system. This, once again, is in evident violation of another basic concept of the theory of permanent revolution -- internationalism.

Trotsky wrote in the above-cited preface of the Russian edition of the Permanent Revolution:

"The international character of the socialist revolution, which constitutes the third aspect of the theory of the permanent revolution, results from the present state of economy and the social structure of humanity. Internationalism is no abstract principle, but a theoretical and political reflection of the character of world economy, of the world development of productive forces, and the world scale of the class struggle. The socialist revolution begins on national grounds. But it cannot be completed on these grounds. The maintenance of the proletarian revolution within a national framework can only be a provisional state of affairs, even though, as the experience of the Soviet Union shows, one of long duration. In an isolated proletarian dictatorship, the internal and external contradictions grow inevitably together with the growing successes. Remaining isolated, the proletarian state must finally become a victim of these contradictions. The way out for it lies only in the victory of the proletariat of the advanced countries. Viewed from this standpoint, a national revolution is not a self-sufficient whole: it is only a link in the international chain. The international revolution presents a permanent process, in spite of all fleeting rises and falls." (Permanent Revolution, Indian Edition, March 1947, pp. 24-25. My emphasis.)

Precisely because of the decisive significance of "International socialism," Lenin, right after the victory of the October Revolution, proclaimed that this revolution was only the "prelude of the world revolution." He even said in

March, 1918: "Our backwardness has pushed us forward, and we shall perish if we cannot hold out until we meet a mighty support on the part of the insurrectionary workers of other countries." (The History of the Russian Revolution, by Leon Trotsky, English Edition, Vol. III, Appendix Two, p. 394.) A resolution of the Seventh Congress of the party in March 1918 therefore declares: "The Congress sees the most reliable guarantee of the consolidation of the socialist revolution which has won the victory in Russia only in its conversion into an international workers' revolution." (Ibid., pp. 393-394.)

In order to "convert the revolution into an international workers' revolution," or to convert the "prelude of the world revolution" into world revolution, the Bolshevik party led by Lenin and Trotsky sought with all its might to establish the leading organ of the world revolution -- the International. At that time all the foreign policies and activities of the Bolshevik party centered in pushing forward the world revolution. Precisely this is the concrete expression of the internationalism of the theory of permanent revolution.

After the death of Lenin, Stalin on usurping Bolshevik leadership, published his "theory" of "socialism in one country," a thorough betrayal of internationalism, and a development in a new situation of the Menshevik theory of "revolution in stages." On the basis of this "theory," Stalin converted the Bolshevik policy of pushing forward the world revolution into the line of "peaceful coexistence," a line contrived for compromise with world capitalism so as to help build socialism in one country.

Under the theory of "socialism in one country," Stalin at first compromised with the rich peasants to the utmost and postponed industrialization and collectivization. Later, threatened by the rich peasants, he turned to the opposite extreme, disregarding the interests of the workers and peasants, accelerating industrialization and collectivization with the administrative lash. Concerning this, Trotsky wrote in the preface of the American Edition of The Permanent Revolution, March 29, 1930:

"To gain economic 'independence' speedily with the aid of the fastest possible tempos of industrialization and collectivization! -- this is the transformation that has taken place in the economic policy of national socialism in the past two years. Crawling was replaced all along the line by adventurism. The theoretical base under both is the same: a national socialist conception." (Permanent Revolution, First Indian Edition, March 1947, p. 13.)

After "crawling" for two years (1953-55), the CCP "general line of the

transitional period" came to a turn at the end of 1955. The collectivization of agriculture was proposed and the transformation of all private industry into "state and private" was also announced almost at the same time. This turn was facilitated under pressure of the rapid differentiation of the peasants in the mutual aid groups toward opposing poles and the obstruction of economic planning by private industry. The turn represented, certainly, great progress, and it corresponds in a way to the law of uninterrupted development of the revolution. But in carrying out collectivization, the CCP forced the peasants to join the producers' co-operatives regardless of their willingness. And so all the peasants were forcibly collectivized in less than a year. On the other hand, under the name of "state and private operation," the property rights of the private capitalists were retained through payment of "fixed interest" and they have been allowed to participate continuously in the administration of production. At the same time, the workers are given the whip to speed up production in order to overfulfill the plan. Under the slogan of a "great leap forward" in 1958, this kind of speed-up in pushing industrialization and collectivization almost reached a maniac pitch. The most concrete expressions were the "steel production by the whole nation" movement (producing steel in backyard furnaces) and the commune movement. This was nothing else than replacing "crawling all along the line by adventurism. The theoretical base under both is the same: a national socialist (Mao further develops it into a national communist) conception." Utilizing a "national socialist or communist conception" to accelerate industrialization and collectivization is far from "a striking confirmation of the theory of permanent revolution"; in fact, it is the exact opposite of this theory.

Trotsky in the above-cited preface to the American edition of the Permanent Revolution stated the difference between the Left Opposition and the Stalinists in basic standpoints on industrialization and collectivization as follows:

"Industrialization is the motive force of the whole newer culture and, by that, the only conceivable basis of socialism. In the conditions of the Soviet Union, industrialization means first of all the strengthening of the base of the proletariat as a ruling class. Simultaneously, it creates the material and technical premises for the collectivization of agriculture. The tempos of both these processes are interdependent. The proletariat is interested in the highest tempos for these processes, insofar as the new society that is to be created

is thus best protected from external danger, and at the same time creates a source for systematically improving the material level of the toiling masses.

"However, the tempo that can be accomplished is limited by the whole material and cultural position of the country, by the mutual relationship between the city and village and by the most urgent needs of the masses, who can sacrifice their today for the sake of tomorrow only up to a certain point. The best and most advantageous tempos are those which not only produce the most rapid development of industry and collectivization at the given moment, but secure the necessary resistance of the social regime, that is, first of all the strengthening of the alliance of the workers and peasants, which alone prepares the possibility of further successes.

"From this point of view, the general historical criterion by which the party and state leadership directs the development of industry as planned economy assumes decisive significance. Here two principal variants are possible: (a) the course described above towards the economic entrenchment of the proletarian dictatorship in one country until further victories of the international proletarian revolution (the viewpoint of the Left Opposition); (b) the course towards the construction of an isolated national socialist society and at that 'in the shortest historical time' (the present official viewpoint).

"These are two distinct, and in the final analysis, directly opposed theoretical conceptions of socialism. Out of these flow basically different strategy and tactics." (Permanent Revolution, First Indian Edition, March 1947, pp. 2-3.)

The two antithetic basic positions on industrialization and collectivization in the Soviet Union pointed out by Trotsky are not only of profound theoretical value and great historical significance, but also bear the most realistic political significance, particularly for China today. The starting point of the position represented by the Left Opposition, led by Trotsky at that time, was internationalism as expressed in the theory of permanent revolution, and that represented by Stalin was national socialism expressed in the theory of revolution in stages.

Stalin's domestic and foreign strategy and tactics, flowing from this "theory and ideology of national socialism," brought unprecedented damage in human and material resources by ruthlessly forcing the peasants into collectivization; brought an imbalance between

heavy and light industry, shortages in daily necessities, intensification of labor and the decline of working-class living standards as industrialization was speeded up under the administrative goad; the destruction with rare ferocity of the whole generation of old Bolsheviks and revolutionary youth; the undermining of the revolutions in China, Germany, Spain, etc., which had big chances of success. What terrible sacrifices were placed on the workers' state when the internationalism of the theory of permanent revolution was violated!

The "general line" in the industrialization and collectivization of China, which is highly praised by Comrades Swabeck and Liang today, is in its nature a copy of Stalin's national socialism as practiced and developed on Chinese soil. The "strategy and tactics" flowing from this "general line" there, is unavoidably a mixture of opportunism and adventurism. It has been proved beyond reasonable dispute that the acceleration in production and communalization (the so-called "great leap forward") represented adventurism, matching the opportunism of the "Five Principles" and "peaceful coexistence" in foreign policy. The damage caused by such domestic and foreign "strategy and tactics" is beginning to appear (as can be seen in the great shortages in daily necessities, the extreme intensity of mass labor, the decline in living standards, and the semi-hunger of the peasant masses, the breakdown of the alliance of peasants and workers, etc.) and more ominous consequences still lie ahead!

In general, the basic policy practiced by the CCP in the process of the Third Chinese Revolution is not "a striking confirmation of the theory of the permanent or continuous revolution," but the distortion of this theory. When the dynamics of the continuous revolution become objectively irresistible under the pressure of internal and external contradictions, the CCP is empirically forced to make a "turn" and proceed a step forward. This certainly reflects objectively the correctness of the theory of permanent revolution. But the step forward taken by the CCP becomes either a half step (as in the turn in the general line to a "transitional period" in 1953) through suppression of the natural tendency for the revolution to continue uninterrupted, or scrambles blindly under the impulse of adventurism (as in the collectivization in 1956 and the "great leap forward" in industrialization and communalization in 1958). We are able to say, therefore, that the power of the theory of permanent revolution is surely revealed in the process of the Third Chinese Revolution which

forces the CCP through a series of "turns" to compromise with it for self-survival. But due to the deep-rooted Stalinism (the opportunism and adventurism inherent in the theory of revolution in stages), the uninterrupted development of the revolution is distorted at every "turn," resulting in the deformation of the whole process of revolution. Hence the creation of great confusion in the uninterrupted development of the revolution, which in turn leads to distortion and confusion involving the theory of permanent revolution.

Early in 1951, Pablo reached the opinion that "Mao practices permanent revolution in China." (I heard this from people close to him.) In 1952, the draft resolution of the "Third Chinese Revolution" written by Germain under the influence of Pablo read: "...it is not through the alliance with Chiang Kai-shek but by the rupture of this alliance that the Third Chinese Revolution has begun. The Trotskyist theory of the permanent revolution, defended with tenacity by the Chinese Trotskyists and the international Trotskyist movement for 25 years, is thus confirmed in one of its fundamental theses." I wrote several critical comments on the draft resolution regarding its distortion of the theory of permanent revolution, but these were not published due to Pablo's suppressing them.

Liu Shao Chi reported at the Second Plenary Session of the CCP Central Committee during its Eighth Congress, May, 1958: "The Chinese Revolution has been led by the CCP Central Committee and Mao in the spirit of permanent revolution." Inspired by Liu's revelation, Jean Paul Martin, an author whose thought always parallels that of Pablo, wrote an article, "Uninterrupted Revolution in China" in which he proclaimed: "China is currently in a state of uninterrupted revolution." (See Quatrieme Internationale, November, 1958.) Actually the CCP Central Committee and Mao have practiced the theory of "revolution in stages" in opposition to the theory of "permanent revolution" for the past thirty years. The sudden proclamation by Liu Shao Chi in May 1958 that the CCP practices permanent revolution aimed at no more than defending the adventurism in the "great leap forward" which Mao was pushing forward full speed at the time in order to accelerate industrialization and prepare for communalization. Similarly Lominadse, Stalin's representative in China, suddenly proclaimed in November 1927, after the defeat of the revolution, "China is in a situation of permanent revolution." He did this to defend his adventurous policy of uninterrupted uprisings. In praising the CCP's practice of permanent revolution, Pablo was only echoing Liu

Shao Chi.

Comrades Swabeck and Liang, in praising the development of the Chinese revolution as "a striking confirmation of the theory of permanent revolution," only follow Pablo in distorting Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution to defend CCP adventurism in industrialization and collectivization.

In criticizing the draft resolution on the "Third Chinese Revolution," I said:

"It goes without saying that we should never proceed from the programmatic norms of the permanent revolution to deny the important significance of the Third revolution begun by Mao's party; on the other hand we should not permit the objective significance of Mao's victory to draw us into depreciating the theory of the permanent revolution, nor into accommodating to the victory by misinterpreting it in the name of the permanent revolution. Our attitude should be on the one hand, to understand the objective facts and diverse causes of Mao's victory, and on the other, to analyze from the standpoint of the permanent revolution how this victory suffered distortion through the 'theory of revolution by stages,' resulting in the present deformed shape, the obstacles arising from this deformation and the perspectives of its possible development. Our fundamental task is to stand on the program of the permanent revolution to defend, to push forward and complete the revolution, bringing it to final victory."

This opinion, written eight years ago, I still consider to be correct and effective. Here I only add: "It is still necessary for us Trotskyists, basing ourselves on the theory of permanent revolution, to criticize the CCP in its turn from the new democracy policy toward a socialist policy, especially their practice of industrialization and collectivization. Our basic position towards industrialization and collectivization in China today is at bottom the same as that of the Left Opposition in the Soviet Union as I have sought to indicate above."

Political Revolution or Democratic Reform?

In light of the above analysis of the CCP regime and its Stalinist characteristics and in view of the existence of a privileged class, protected by a police system under CCP rule, as proved by the facts, the need for political revolution follows logically. I can say, therefore, that no matter how "reality" has "changed," the basic position of "The Third Chinese Revolution and Its Aftermath," the resolution passed by the SWP in 1955 -- political revolution --

is still correct and effective. Its correctness is reflected not only by its theoretical analysis and prognosis, but also by the facts and the tendency that came to light in the "blossom and contend movement" of 1957.

After the liquidation of the cult of Stalin at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist party and the outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution, the CCP, under pressure of deep mass dissatisfaction and the threatening sympathy felt by the revolutionary elements both inside and outside the party* toward the Hungarian Revolution, was compelled to launch the "blossom and contend movement," inviting every party, every faction and the people as a whole to express their opinions, to criticize the "three harms" within the CCP -- "bureaucratism, commandism and subjectivism," and to help in "rectifying" and reforming the party, thus preventing the outbreak of a Hungarian-type revolution on Chinese soil. At the high tide of "blossom and contend movement" (April to June, 1957), facts about the arbitrariness and special privileges enjoyed by the CCP bureaucracy poured in from all corners among the masses, especially young students and revolutionary intellectuals (including members of the CCP and its youth organization).** The revolutionary tendency of this movement was reflected in the opinions expressed by Lin Hsi Ling, student-movement leader and member of the CCP youth organization, and Tai Haung, reporter for Hsinhua and member of the

* Before launching the "blossom and contend movement," Mao said: "Certain people in our country were delighted when the Hungarian events took place. They hoped that something similar would happen in China, that thousands upon thousands of people would demonstrate in the streets against the People's Government." ("On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People," speech made by Mao on February 27, 1957, at the Eleventh Session (Enlarged) of the Supreme State Conference.) This proves that the CCP felt threatened by the sympathy of revolutionary elements in the country for the Hungarian Revolution.

** During the rise of the "blossom and contend movement," Liu Shao Chi, the second leader of the CCP, openly admitted: "There is serious bureaucracy...mass criticism is spreading to every corner of China, including factories, farms, schools and other organizations. The target of criticism is the leadership." (Speech at the reception party given to representatives of the LSSP of Ceylon visiting China. People's Daily, May 19, 1957.)

CCP. The former declared that "the present upper strata of China does not correspond with the property system of common ownership" because "the party and state apparatus has become a set of bureaucratic organs ruling people without democracy." Therefore she proclaimed "not reform but a thoroughgoing change." The latter proposed to build a new party and "to realize democracy, freedom and the eradication of a privileged class." Doesn't this revolutionary tendency, reflected in the "blossom and contend movement" -- "not reform but a thoroughgoing change" and "to realize democracy, freedom and the eradication of a privileged class" -- mean the junking of the bureaucratic dictatorship of the privileged caste and the realization of a socialist democratic political revolution?

Precisely because of the threat to CCP rule from the revolutionary tendency opposing bureaucratic dictatorship, which was revealed in the "blossom and contend movement," the CCP immediately discontinued this movement (in the middle of June, 1957) and vigorously counter-attacked all the critics. Under the label of "antirightists," all the left revolutionary elements were ruthlessly suppressed! Thousands upon thousands were forced to recant, were suspended from their posts, placed under surveillance and even arrested and sent to the labor camps. Thousands upon thousands of party and youth organization members, besides suffering expulsion, were fired from their jobs, dismissed from school, placed under surveillance or arrested, etc. Accordingly, those who had been invited to criticize the CCP now became sacrificial goats because of their "criticism." Once again it was proved that a Stalinist party and its dictatorial regime cannot be self-reformed. Their nature is to represent the interests of the privileged bureaucracy.

But Comrades Swabek and Liang insist:

"The answer to bureaucratism is not a call for the overthrow of the present Peking regime -- which would be regarded by the masses as counterrevolutionary -- but a program of democratic demands designed to curb and break down bureaucratic arbitrariness through ever greater popular participation in and control over all phases of the national life." (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 29. My emphasis.)

"Our support of these revolutionary developments must of necessity be critical of all bureaucratic manifestations and emphasize demands for specific democratic measures without which the

road to socialism cannot be assured. These should include democracy in the party with free opportunity for all members to criticize and to control policies and leadership. Similarly, democracy in all the organs of government, through the various levels from the local to the national, requires full powers of control in the hands of the people. In the economic domain democratic control by the masses of working people of state planning in production and distribution at all levels is essential to enable timely review of results in the light of actual experience, and to reduce inequalities to the minimum.

Implicitly and explicitly our position should include the idea that in China such measures can be attained by means of reform." (Ibid., p. 30. Emphasis in original.)

The above "program of democratic demands" or "demands for specific democratic measures" raised by Comrades Swabeck and Liang, is attractive and exciting and worth approving -- if it can be realized. But they completely forget or fail to take note of the facts and lessons of the "blossom and contend movement" of 1957.

(A) At that time those who proposed the "overthrow of the present Peking regime" were not Trotskyists, but revolutionary elements, even members of the CCP and its youth organization such as Lin Hsi Ling, a member of the youth organization and Tai Haung, member of the party, etc., who represented the interests of the masses and their thinking.

(B) At that time the CCP members who attempted "to criticize and to control policies and leadership" met with expulsion from the party and youth organization and dismissal from all posts, and even merciless punishment -- arrest and imprisonment.

(C) Those who expressed the view that "democracy in all the organs of government, through the various levels from the local to the national, requires full powers of control in the hands of the people" met with all kinds of punishment (including forced recantation, dismissal from jobs, surveillance, and transfer to labor camps for reform).

(D) From this it must be concluded that it is quite impossible to realize "in the economic domain democratic control by the masses of working people of state planning in production and distribution at all levels."

In the light of the lesson drawn from the historical facts, let me ask Comrades

Swabeck and Liang: How do you expect to realize your "idea that in China such measures can be attained by means of reform"? Ask the CCP "leadership" to realize it? They have answered this question to the negative in the "blossom and contend movement." Propagate and inspire among CCP members and the worker-peasant masses realization of your "idea"?

That is equivalent to calling on them to rise in a political revolution against the CCP. My dear comrades, in the face of reality, your "idea" of "democratic reform" ends in a blank wall.

For a time (at least before 1953), I had hoped CCP rule in China could be reformed through democratic measures, just as I entertained similar hopes about Russia under Stalin before 1933. But at present in China, as in Russia, the East European countries, North Korea and North Indochina, it is impossible to carry out democratic reforms. The right road, and the only passable one, is political revolution. The following program for political revolution should be proposed by us:

(1) End the special privileges of the bureaucracy; down with the new aristocracy (including the "labor hero" or "labor model") and its rankings; greater equality in wages for all forms of labor; strict observance of the eight-hour day; greater efforts to raise the living standard of all laborers.

(2) Fight for freedom of choice in union and factory committees, freedom of assembly and freedom of press.

(3) In line with the interests and the will of the peasants, thorough reorganization of the communes. (Detailed under "Our Attitude Toward the Communes," in SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 21, No. 1, pp. 32-33.)

(4) Abolish the "fixed interest" given the capitalists, readjust the economic plan according to the interests of the producers and consumers. Establish the right of factory committees to supervise production. Form committees through democratic means in all the state stores, regional stores and consumers' co-operatives to check qualities and prices.

(5) Replace the "People's Congress" with worker, peasant and soldier soviets, excluding not only bourgeois elements but the bureaucratic aristocracy, limiting the delegates in the soviets to workers, peasants and soldiers.

(6) Ban all parties and factions of the bourgeoisie. All parties that accept

socialism must be granted legal recognition and the right to conduct political activities.

(7) Abrogate the foreign policy of "Five Principles" and "peaceful coexistence"; substitute the strategy of pushing world revolution forward.

(8) Together with worker-peasant masses in the Soviet bloc, overthrow the system of Stalinist bureaucratic dictatorship and restore or establish socialist democracy.

In fighting for the above program of political revolution, we Trotskyists, standing with the masses, defend resolutely and unconditionally the existing socialist property and planned economy against imperialism, particularly any intervention or invasion of China engineered by American imperialism.

Long live Socialist Democracy!

Long live the World Revolution!

Where Are Comrades Swabeck and Liang Headed?

In discussing the communes, I pointed out: "But the errors of Comrades Liang and Swabeck intersect with principles, and if not recognized in time, can lead them into the swamp of revisionism" (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 21, No. 1, p. 32.) Since then, Comrades Swabeck and Liang not only failed to recognize their errors in time, but went further in their original errors, sinking deeply in the swamp of revisionism, as is clear from their recent article, "The Third Chinese Revolution. The Communes and Regime."

Their revisionism is obvious in the following items: On the issue of agricultural collectivization, they revise the principle of "nationalization and agricultural collectivization" as set down in our Transitional Program by departing from the traditional position of Engels and Lenin. On the nature of the CCP, disregarding "the training in the school of Stalinism" and "Stalinist characteristics alien to socialism," and singling out this or that measure which the CCP felt compelled to adopt for a time, they judge that the CCP has broken with Stalinism. On the nature of the CCP regime, overlooking entirely the essence of Stalinism implicit in its whole policy, and depending only on the electoral form of "universal electoral rights," they assert that it is a regime of socialist democracy. On the theory of permanent revolution, they distort it, neglecting the decisive significance of the internationalism at its core. Due to this series of violations of the

principles of Marxism-Leninism and their revision of Trotskyism, they have reached the point on the Chinese question where as in the case "birds of a feather" they find themselves in Pablo's revisionist flock.

What is the objective force that brought Comrades Swabeck and Liang into revisionism on the Chinese question? It is mainly the influence of the "great leap forward" in production which the CCP has boasted about since 1958, particularly the "success of the communalization." Affected by the idealization of the people's communes current among petty-bourgeois intellectuals who live far away from China, they unconsciously departed from their original position. This is clearly reflected in the change and development of their stand following the growth of the commune movement. For example, when informed that "elected councils" exist in the communes, they asserted that the communes are "self-governing political-economic units." Later, in accordance with their logic, they concluded: "The Peking regime is not a Stalinist-type regime." Also, the subtitle of their article, "The Communes and the Regime" and the attractive description of the communes under this heading, clearly show that their reappraisal of the nature of the CCP and its regime is closely connected with their appraisal of the communes. In other words, their reappraisal of the CCP and its regime is deduced from their formula -- "the communes are self-governing...." If Pablo's departure from Trotskyism and arrival at revisionism came in response to the expansion of Stalinist influence after the war, especially after the surprising victory of the CCP, then the fall of Comrades Swabeck and Liang into the swamp of revisionism was due to the blinding brilliance of the "great leap forward" in Chinese industrialization, especially communalization.

Another reason for the fall of Comrades Swabeck and Liang into revisionism is their methodology in studying questions. They stress, of course: "The position taken in the 1955 resolution can be maintained only by sacrificing the materialist principle and dialectical method that constitute the heart of Marxism." (See SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 26.) But in fact, they are "sacrificing the materialist principle and dialectical method" and applying the mechanism of formal logic and even idealism in dealing with problems and establishing and defending their new position. For example:

(A) Disregarding the exceedingly low level of material, technical and cultural conditions in China today, as soon as the

propaganda of the CCP came to their attention about a "double increase in agricultural production" and "liberation of the women from the family" after the general establishment of the communes, they responded with the belief that "China is solving its food problem," (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 20, No. 13, p. 3) and asserted that the communes "have accelerated the liberation of women from domestic slavery, opened up new avenues of cultural development, and are narrowing the age-old cultural gulf between city and country." (*Ibid.*, Vol. 20, No. 8, p. 40) Such an obviously idealistic pronouncement could be made only "by sacrificing the materialist principle."

(B) Seeing the "great leap forward" in Chinese industrialization and communalization, but completely ignoring the adventurism and the grave harm it signified to the worker-peasant masses, they gave it unconditional praise and support. In this they manifested mechanical thinking, sacrificing materialism.

(C) Hearing about "elected councils," they did not ask how such "councils" are elected, or what their concrete content might be. They drew the conclusion of formal logic: "The communes are self-governing political-economic units." Likewise they judge the "People's Congress" by the form of the elections.

(D) Comrade Liang declares: "The continuing drumfire of hostile comment on the Communes by capitalist propagandists places us squarely before the need to take a clear-cut position on what, essentially, is a class-struggle issue. FOR or AGAINST the Communes?" (*Ibid.*, p. 36.) To raise a question in this way is purely "ultra-mechanical formal logic," as I pointed out in my article discussing the communes. (*Ibid.*, Vol. 21, No. 1, p. 29.)

(E) They emphasize that we "must become genuine partisans of the Chinese revolution and give unqualified support to its positive gains." (*Ibid.*, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 30.) But they denounce those who criticize CCP policy as "critical commentators with a factional axe to grind." (*Ibid.*, p. 15.) They do not understand that it is possible for us to "become genuine partisans of the Chinese revolution" only if we stand firmly on Marxist-Leninist viewpoint and on Trotsky's program of permanent revolution, seriously criticize the Stalinist policy of the CCP and do everything possible to arouse the masses to recognize the error of this policy in order finally to bring their power to bear to change it. This is nothing else but flexible application of dialectically uniting "support" and "comment" or "criticism."

In the final analysis, Comrades Swabeck and Liang sacrifice "materialist principle and dialectical method" because of their impressionism, as is indicated by the following:

"A few fundamental questions remain to be considered, particularly the question of our own methodology. If we agree that reality is ever changing and always manifested concretely, then our thinking must reflect these same characteristics, and be likewise concrete and changeable, for only the application of this method can assure a reasonably correct position." (*Ibid.*, p. 28.)

In appearance this declaration seems above criticism. But on deeper consideration, it is revealed as the root of impressionism. They completely left out by what principle or law we should investigate "reality" and its "change." They stress only "that reality is ever changing and always manifested concretely...our thinking must reflect these same characteristics...." All impressionists disdain principle, paying particular attention to "ever changing reality" which they "reflect" or accept as "concrete" or new phenomena. But as soon as a new "change" occurs in this "changing reality," they fall prey to other "concrete" or "new" phenomena. The impressionist, therefore, forever changes with the changing reality, lacking a consistent principle of his own. It was that way with Pablo and Shachtman. Now our Comrades Swabeck and Liang prove to be no exceptions.

On the eve of the outbreak of World War II, Shachtman saw the signing of the "Soviet-German pact," followed by the Soviet army attack on Finland, etc. He thereupon decided that the nature of the Soviet Union had changed and was not worthy of unconditional support. On seeing the expansion of Stalinist influence and the victory of the CCP, etc., after World War II, Pablo saw the possibility of the self-reform of Stalinist parties, no need for political revolution in the Soviet Union. Confronted by CCP industrialization and collectivization, especially the "changing reality" of communalization, Comrades Swabeck and Liang assert that the CCP has departed from Stalinism, "the Peking regime is not a Stalinist-type regime" and the political revolution is outdated. This series of examples demonstrates that impressionists, unable to maintain principles firmly, disdaining theory and relying only on the "concreteness of events," or "new reality," or "changing reality," depart inexorably from a principled stand and fall into revisionism.

The revisionist position of Comrades Swabeck and Liang on the Chinese question has now reached its final point. If they

proceed in accordance with the logic they are following, they will inevitably arrive at revising the basic Trotskyist position toward the Soviet Union. But I hope that in the light of comradely criticism they will reconsider their position. I believe that subjectively, with their long record of faithful service, they are loyal to the Trotsky-

ist movement. After serious self-investigation, in the light of criticism of their facts called to their attention, it should be possible for them to re-establish their original authentic Trotskyist position.

April, 1960