

movement and re-examine the possibilities of making revolution in the United States.

The Chinese Revolution took place far away from the European context where the original socialist revolutions had been expected to happen. It became a factor that enhanced the relevance of Marxism-Leninism to Black and Latino revolutionaries in the United States as well as for the national liberation struggles in the traditionally colonized regions of the world. No longer could scientific socialism be derided as a "European ideology."

Political organizations of oppressed peoples like the Black Panther Party, the Young Lords and the Brown Berets openly proclaimed themselves communists—thanks in large part to the Chinese Revolution. Many of these groups based their political education on the "Red Book"—"Quotations of Chairman Mao Zedong."

It was only after Mao invited Nixon to China in 1972 and resumed relations with the United States on the basis of an anti-Soviet alliance did China back away from its historic commitment to the national liberation movements. This signaled the beginning of the end of the heroic era of the Chinese Revolution. It badly tarnished China's revolutionary credentials and led to a global collapse of the hundreds of political parties that had earlier associated with Maoism based on it being a beacon light for true fighters against imperialism.

Despite this later turn, Mao Zedong's contributions to the struggle for socialism during his lifetime continue to provide lessons for revolutionaries today. His leadership in facing the tremendous task of making a revolution in the world's most populous country is an example that nothing can stop a determined people from taking control of their own destiny—once they have a steered organization capable of leading that struggle. This is precisely why Mao Zedong became the embodiment of the Chinese Revolution. □

Endnotes

1. H. Ouanyu, Ch. Tong, and R. Ountz, "Marxism and Christianity Within the Great Wall," *Asian Philosophy* vol. 4 no. 1, 1994.
2. Han Suyin, *The Morning Deluge: Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Revolution* (Little, Brown), 1972.
3. *Ibid.*, 154.
4. *Ibid.*, 156.

The Sino-Soviet split

From revolutionary potential to tragic consequences

BY MONICA RUÍZ

THE year 1969 was one of the high points in the world revolutionary movement. The Vietnamese Revolution was gaining momentum in its fight against U.S. imperialism. The Black liberation movement was sweeping the United States, propelling forward the anti-war and other national liberation struggles. People's struggles were sweeping every continent.

But 1969 also witnessed one of the lowest points in the history of the workers' movement. In March 1969, troops from the two most powerful socialist countries, the Soviet Union and China, clashed across the Ussuri River border.

The firefights between troops of two former allies marked the sharpest point in what is known as the Sino-Soviet split. While all-out war was averted, the impact of that split reverberated for decades. It culminated in a strategic alliance between U.S. imperialism and China against the Soviet Union, an alliance that damaged the world-wide working class and strengthened imperialism precisely at a time when it was weakest.

What caused the bitter split between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the People's Republic of China? How did the ideological dispute between the two most prestigious communist parties spiral downward to a conflict between states that were each trying to build socialism?

REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA AND CHINA

The Russian Revolution took place in 1917 after more than three years of czarist Russia's involvement in World War I. Three years of

civil war and imperialist intervention followed the revolution. Then, with barely over 20 years of peace, the Soviet Union faced invasion by the most powerful military yet created—the German Nazi war machine. By 1945, 27 million Soviet workers and peasants had been killed in the war, and around two-thirds of the country's industry had been destroyed.

The Chinese Communists, by comparison, achieved power in 1949 after more than 20 years of civil war and resistance to Japanese imperialist invasion and occupation. When the People's Republic of China was declared on Oct. 1, 1949, it not only brought an end to over two decades of war, but also to what was called the "century of humiliation" as a result of colonialist brutality and exploitation at the hands of the world imperialist powers. Yet, within a year, one million Chinese People's Volunteer Army troops heroically came to the aid of the Korean Revolution following the U.S. invasion of Korea in 1950.

Both China and the Soviet Union desperately needed peace. No countries had suffered more from imperialist war. The basis of their agreements and disagreements in the following decades revolved around the question of how to win peace in the face of an extremely aggressive, nuclear-armed U.S. imperialism.

SINO-SOVIET COOPERATION

Just months after the triumph of the Chinese Revolution, Communist Party of China leader Mao Zedong traveled to Moscow, later joined by Foreign Minister and Premier Zhou Enlai and a large Chinese delegation. In February 1950, after six weeks of discussions, the two states signed the historic "Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance and Mutual Assistance."

Despite the fact that the treaty was between two states committed to building socialism (though China did not explicitly say so until a few years later), the signing of the treaty was neither automatic nor easy. There was a tension between proletarian internationalism, the guiding principle of communist foreign policy since the time of Marx and Engels, and the perceived national interests of the respective ruling parties. That tension was far more tenacious than earlier Marxist leaders could have imagined.

There had been a number of conflicts between the leaders of the Soviet Union and China before the triumph of the Chinese

Revolution. A long-standing source of tension was the Soviet leadership's relationship with Chiang Kai-shek, leader of the Nationalist Party (Kuomintang, or KMT), the U.S.-backed capitalist party that ruled China until overthrown in 1949. After World War II, Soviet Prime Minister Joseph Stalin, apparently not having the confidence that the CPC and its army could win a civil war, had urged the Chinese communists to become junior partners in a post-war KMT government.¹

Stalin had urged the CPC to take the same course in the 1920s. That period ended in the mass slaughter and near-annihilation of the young party at the hands of Chiang in 1927. The second time around, Mao and the CPC agreed in words but did not disband the communist-led Red Army. No real coalition government was ever set up after World War II. Instead, the CPC forces smashed the huge but corrupt and demoralized forces of the KMT in 1948 and 1949.

The 1950 treaty and other agreements reached at the time between the Soviet Union and China pledged mutual defense, the withdrawal of Soviet forces from bases in Manchuria that had been occupied after the Japanese defeat, the provision of long-term credits and the aid of Soviet experts in building and renovating 50 key Chinese industrial establishments and military bases.

In 1953, when China initiated its first Five-Year Plan, the USSR greatly expanded economic assistance, including new factories and rail lines.² The importance of this aid to China, an overwhelmingly rural country struggling to overcome the devastation left by war and colonialism, cannot be overstated.

The following year, Nikita Khrushchev, the new first secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union after Stalin's death in March 1953, announced another expansion of assistance and mutual aid, including the building of two new railways to link the two countries.

In 1955, the two states reached an agreement on nuclear cooperation. The Soviet Union was to provide expertise, aid and materials to enable China to develop nuclear power.

Facing nuclear-armed U.S. submarines and surface ships, and U.S. bases in Japan and other nearby countries, it was hardly surprising that China was seeking to develop nuclear weapons as well as nuclear power. At the same time, Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai repeatedly stated China's call for the total prohibition of nuclear weapons

and universal disarmament—something that all U.S. leaders have refused to even discuss.

Against this backdrop of growing cooperation, a leadership struggle was taking place within the CPSU between 1953, the year of Stalin's death, and 1956, when Khrushchev emerged as the pre-eminent leader.

KHRUSHCHEV'S 1956 SPEECH

In February 1956, Khrushchev gave his "secret speech" to the 20th Congress of the CPSU. In the course of the speech, he made a lengthy criticism of Stalin and his policies. He also announced new policies that amounted to a sharp rightward shift.

Khrushchev outlined two key revisions to fundamental Marxist views on war and revolution. First, according to Khrushchev's new theory, imperialist war was no longer inevitable. The military strength of the socialist camp, including the Soviet Union's possession of nuclear bombs, could deter imperialism's natural tendency toward war. Second, he announced that it was now possible, given the shift in world politics, to achieve socialism without revolution—that there was what was often called a "parliamentary road to socialism."

Khrushchev soon after began to promote what he termed "non-capitalist development." Through economic alliance with the Soviet Union and other socialist states, the national bourgeoisie or "patriotic capitalist class" in formerly colonized countries could now advance toward socialism. For this reason, he argued, communist parties in the oppressed countries should support these national bourgeois forces.

All of these issues, including the role of Stalin, were to become the subjects of sharp disputes within a few years. But at the time of the speech, the CPC endorsed and supported Khrushchev's report.

The Khrushchev report led to upheavals within many communist parties. That turmoil helped trigger a counterrevolutionary revolt in Hungary in October 1956. The CPC supported the intervention of Soviet troops in Hungary to prevent the restoration of capitalism.

DIFFERENCES EMERGE

While economic cooperation and Soviet aid continued, differences between the CPSU and CPC began to emerge in 1959 and 1960.

In June 1959, the Soviet Union repudiated a secret agreement to assist China in developing nuclear weapons.

Three months later, Khrushchev visited the United States to hold three days of private talks with President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Khrushchev highly praised Eisenhower, saying that the U.S. president "sincerely wants to liquidate the cold war and improve relations between our two great countries."³ This was at the time of the "Eisenhower Doctrine," the foreign policy proclaimed in January 1957, which stated the U.S. government's intention to send troops to prevent the alleged spread of communism in the Middle East.

The U.S.-Soviet summit meeting marked a turning point for Sino-Soviet relations. China felt snubbed. It feared that Khrushchev might be negotiating over a tense border standoff between China and Soviet ally India. Khrushchev's follow-up visit to Beijing eased no fears, with the Soviet leader displaying a chauvinist attitude toward his Chinese hosts.⁴

Open differences emerged in April 1960. The Chinese published a series of articles titled "Long Live Leninism." While agreeing that communists should seek to prevent a major war, the articles argued that such a war was likely as long as capitalism and imperialism existed. It also quoted Lenin's view that the transition to socialism was not possible without revolution, and advocated the support of revolutionary movements "without the slightest reservation."

"Long Live Leninism," "The Differences Between Comrade Togliatti and Us" and many similar publications electrified the world communist movement, and particularly millions of students and young workers who came into political life during the 1960s. Revolutionary China had tremendous prestige and that prestige lent great weight to the views of its leaders. The CPC's publications, printed in many languages and distributed at very low cost, played an irreplaceable role in reviving revolutionary Marxism on a world scale.

The CPSU responded by attacking "dogmatism" and "outmoded ideas," arguing that imperialist war was no longer inevitable and that the growing strength of the socialist camp could lead to the worldwide triumph of socialism without war. "One cannot mechanically repeat now on this question," stated Khrushchev, "what Lenin said many decades ago on imperialism."⁵

On July 16, 1960, the Soviet government sent a letter informing the Chinese government that it was withdrawing all Soviet technicians and canceling more than 600 technical aid and scientific contracts and projects. Blueprints and plans were taken as well.⁶

This unilateral act was a devastating blow to China's economy. It came at a time of natural disasters, which China's national radio said were "without parallel in the past century," and included plagues of locusts, extreme flooding and widespread drought.⁷

The cancellation of all economic aid was intended to punish the Chinese leadership. It caused severe harm to the economy and population and greatly embittered the relations between the two states by extending the ideological struggle into the area of state-to-state relations.

The perceived national interests of the leaders of both states overwhelmed working-class internationalism, to the advantage of imperialism and detriment of the world struggle.

Another point of contention between the Chinese and the Soviets was Khrushchev's signing of a partial nuclear test ban treaty with the United States and Britain in 1963. The Chinese, who had been excluded from the meetings, denounced the deal as "a dirty fraud" and an attempt by the three states to maintain a nuclear monopoly.⁸ At the time, U.S. hostility and provocations against China were sharply escalating. Both the massive U.S. intervention in Vietnam starting in 1964 and the 1965 coup and massacre of over a million members of the pro-CPC Indonesian Communist Party were aimed at China as well as those countries directly affected.

Despite the deepening rift, China and the Soviet Union did not differ on all points, nor did they break off diplomatic relations. Both countries supported the 1959 Cuban Revolution. Both gave vital aid to Vietnam. The Soviet Union continued to advocate that China be given a seat in the United Nations. Trade continued between the two countries, although at reduced levels.

But for all practical purposes—military, political, diplomatic and economic—China was now outside of the socialist camp.

In a world divided into two major class camps, this posed a grave danger, which at the time still seemed unthinkable. Was it possible for China to stay outside of the life-and-death struggle

between U.S. imperialism and the Soviet Union? Or would China become drawn into allying itself with U.S. imperialism against the Soviet Union?

FROM 'REVISIONISM' TO 'SOCIAL IMPERIALISM'

By 1966, the ideological struggle had been transformed into a state-to-state conflict on both sides. The CPC accusations that the CPSU was "revisionist"—that is, revising Lenin's positions on imperialism, war and revolution—escalated to charges that the Soviet Union was "fascist" in February 1967 and that it had restored capitalism by May 1968. In August 1968, after the Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia to halt the restoration of capitalism there, Chinese leaders began calling the Soviet Union "social imperialist."

There was no objective evidence for the allegation that the USSR had somehow become capitalist, much less imperialist or fascist. There was no sign of the dismantling of the socialized core of the economy.

With the start of the Cultural Revolution in August 1966, the hostility further deepened. Demonstrations outside the Soviet embassy in Beijing involved assaults on Soviet personnel. In January 1967, Leonid Brezhnev, then general secretary of the CPSU, denounced the Cultural Revolution, calling it "a tragedy for all true Chinese Communists."⁹

Mutual charges led to greatly heightened tensions along the long border separating the two countries. In 1968 and 1969, there were numerous clashes, some involving casualties. More than 600,000 troops from both sides were concentrated on the border regions. Both sides, fortunately, pulled back from the abyss of what would have been a truly senseless war between states.

Just as there was no guarantee that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and People's Republic of China could achieve unity in 1950, there was nothing automatic or predestined about the split between the two countries just a few years later.

The ideological struggle by the CPC against Soviet revisionism focused on the issue of how best to wage the struggle against imperialism that made an invaluable contribution to the revival of revolutionary Marxism and Leninism.

Unfortunately, the degeneration of the debate became a material factor in the class struggle both in China and the world. The perceived

national interests of the leaders of both states overwhelmed working-class internationalism, to the advantage of imperialism and detriment of the world struggle. It is a lesson for future revolutionary leaders to study and learn from. □

Endnotes

1. Han Suyin, *The Morning Deluge: Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Revolution* (Little, Brown, 1972), 504.
2. Bill Brugger, *China, Liberation and Transformation, 1942-62* (London: Croom Helm; Totowa, N.J., 1981), 89.
3. "The Sino-Soviet Dispute," *Keesing's Research Report*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), 20.
4. 'When masters quarrel, the servants are shaking in their shoes' is a phrase that escaped Khrushchev when he referred to 'the two greatest states in the world, on whom depend war and peace.'—presumably referring to the United States and the Soviet Union. Han Suyin, *Wind in the Tower* (Jonathan Cape, 1976), 167-69.
5. "The Sino-Soviet Dispute," 28.
6. *Ibid.*, 29.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, 59.
9. *Ibid.*, 95.

From liberation to Thermidor

Phases of China's socialist revolution

BY EUGENE PURYEAR

REVOLUTIONS are traditionally marked by the year that the old state is defeated: the 1789 French Revolution, the 1917 Russian Revolution or the 1949 Chinese Revolution, for example. In each of these great social upheavals, the old ruling-class state was defeated and a state representing a new social class was built.

The final conquest of political power is a single historical moment, but a social revolution is a profound transformation that does not take place over weeks or months, but years—a reality this tradition fails to take into account. The defeat of the old ruling-class state opens the door for the economic, political and cultural changes that meet the needs of the new class in power. In the case of a socialist revolution, that means changes that safeguard the interests of the working class, small farmers and other oppressed sectors.

That was certainly the case in China. The 1949 revolution took place in a country still containing elements of feudal relations. Most Chinese people were peasants, not workers. Landlords exploited millions who worked the land, despite land reforms carried out in territories liberated by the Red Army.

Economist Arthur G. Ashbrook, Jr., described China—the world's most populous country—as it existed in 1949:

Since the fall of the Manchu Dynasty in 1911, extensive areas of China had been wracked by revolution, warlordism, civil war, foreign invasion, and flood and famine. ... Dams, irrigation systems and canals were in a state of disrepair. Railroad lines had been cut and recut by contending armies. ... Finally, the population had suffered enormous casualties from both man-made