Rouge, September 10, 1976

Mao Tse-tung in the Chinese Revolution -- by D.R.

Xs. Bar, Sainty, Sre, Gas

The agony of the Chinese empire submitted to the rapacity of the imperialists, the impotence of the bourgeois revolution of 1911 to carry out the agrarian reform and liberate the country, the chaos engendered by the warlords, such was the Bashsson setting for the youth Childhood and youth of Mao Tse-tung, born in 1893 in Hunan into a family of poor peasants. It would take too long to recount here his clashes with his father, who soon became wealthy; the or the perigrinations of his school stalling asa life as a poor student. Put simply, Mao very soon became interested in the destiny of China, and participated in the reformist and modernist intellectual ferment created by the "importation" of Western ideas into China. "At that time," he would tell Snow, "my outlook was m print in unter a curious blend of liberalism, of democratic reformism, and of utopian socialism I was Frankly antimilitarist and

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anti-imperialist." In 1917, he founded the Society for Society of the New Worlds, in 1919, he pertisipated, in Peking where he IN was an assistant librarian, he participated in the student movement of May 4, 1919, against the Versailles Treaty, which transfered to Japan the German concessions in China. He began his initiation in Marxism, which was brought to China by the salvos of October. In 1920, he founded a Marxist study society, while beginning to carry out the job of organizing the working class. In 1921, he participated in the founding congress of the Chinese Communist Party.

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With the Kuomintang

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This tiny group (57 members in 1921:) lost no time in implanting itself solidly in the working class, which Mao organized from Shanghai to Hunan. But the CCP young and CCP Compared inexperienced was constrained to submit to the directives of the Stalinist Third International, and in 1923 concluded an unprincipled alliance with the Kuomintang, the bourgeois nationalist party. This led to the defeat of the Chinese revolution of 1926-27.

During this period, Mao showed himself to be a fervent partisan of collaboration with the Kuomintang, in which he held responsible posts from 1923. If Schram is to be believed,?/ Mao was one of the last to break from the KMT. But he would have the opportunity to go through his first campaign in the working class, and to discover, in 1925 and in 1927, the revolutionary potential represented by the peasantry. Despite his enthusiasm for the peasant movement of Hunan, he submitted

ally.

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From the defeat of 1927 to the Kiangsi Republic: "A single spark can start a prairie fire"

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In August 1927, the working class had been massacred

note 2

by Chiang Kai-shek and the CCP decimated. Nevertheless. the Comintern launched a policy of uprisings in the cities, as criminal as the preceding policy, which culminated in December with the crushing of the Canton Commune. Mao, for his part, was entrusted with the leadership of the "Autumn Harvest uprising." Beaten, excluded from the CCP Polithuro for his disagreements, he retreated with * the remnants of . his army into the Chingkan mountains, where he tried to protect what remained of the CCP and of his army. Meanwhile, adverate, the Comintern continued to pursue a disastrous policy in the cities which led in 1930-31 to the complete elimination of the working class as a revolutionary force.

It was in the defeat of 1927 that Maoism was born. If Mao was not capable of producing axy an averall analysis of Stalinism

and of its repercussions in China, if he remained loyal to the theory of the revolution by stages, he drew a certain number of lessons from 1927 which he never forgot. He understood the necessity of distructing the treacherous Kuomintang, the

necessity of preserving the political and organizational autonomy of the Communist Party, and the need to construct a political and military relationship of forces that would assure for the CCP the leadership of the revolutionary process. He also understood that he must oppose the Comintern's directives whenever these were in contradiction with the interests of the Chinese revolution.

Through his campaigns he created an army out of nothing, herbuilt a base of support from which to launch the conquest in practice if not very explicitly of China from the Nationalists. And he refused to give support to the policy of the CCP in the cities (to prepare the support insurrections).

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in practice by refusing to attack Changsha with his army,

after a preliminary setback If-not in Very explicitly.

In 1931, the Kiangsi Soviet Republic was founded, of Saw itselfas which he was the chairman and which was a "workers' and peasants' government." The Communists won support through a radical agrarian reform, later moderated when the Nationalist

encirclement prevented them from indulging in the "luxury" of alienating the middle and rich peasantry. It would be wrong, however, to conclude that Mao in 1927 deliberately opted for the peasantry out of contempt for the working class. It was the defeat of the Autumn Harvest uprising and his

disagrements with the party in the cities which Comparison (1997) constrained him to stay where he was as a

strategic withdrawal.

It would not be until after 1931 that he would see no other alternative in China except a revolution from which the proletariat was absent But the proletarian position would always be preserved.

In 1935, the Communists were compelled to evacuate Kaingsi, after having four times repelled the Nationalist troops. This would be the Long

March which would lead them to **k** north Shensi, a

military defeat transformed into a political victory, during which Mao took over the party leadership.

From the anti-Japanese united front

to the People's Republic of China

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Since 1931, Japan had been engaged in a policy of annexing China. The CCP was hardly established in north Shensi when in order to confront the invader it made a sharp turn from the line of the Kiangsi period and proposed the largest possible united front (excluding only pro-Japanese elements). According to Mao, who wrote his famous essay "On Contradiction" in 1937, the primary contradiction was to between the proletariat, the peasantry, and the possessing classes, but between the Chinese "people" and Japan.

An accord was concluded, not without difficulty, with the Kuomintang was concluded, not without

difficulty, based on reciprocal concessions. The CCP for

a reduction in crop shares paid by tenant farmers and a grand land rent), and the formal subordination of Mao's government and army to the government and army of Chiang Kai-shek.

Was this unbridled opportunism? It is not for us to justify the rightist excesses of this period, Mao's return to the necessity of a bourgeois-democratic stage, in retreat from the Kiangsi Republic (On New Democracy, 1940), which pushed the socialist revolution off into the indeterminate future. But it is necessary to keep in mind the national and international context in which the CCP operated, and also a certain number of facts. The accord with Chiang Kai-shek himself, and not only with the national bourgeoisie, was imposed by the USSR following the Sian incident in 1936. (Chiang, made prisoner by two of his generals, was freed under pressure from Mascow instead of being executed.) Mao had to struggle. if one is to believe the documents, against a wing of the party that advocated the policy of the "closed door." against the

accord with the Kuomintang (and then, their positions are little known), but he was also opposed to a pure and simple subordination to the central government.

The concessions had their limits! That is why China was

not Spain, why the CCP was able to win an unprecedented audience (cn a potential familiage of the Nationalists), and return to the civil war in 1947, after a period of confused negotiations • with the Kuomintang, with a relationship of forces that permitted the installation of the People's Republic of China in 1949. This took place against Stalin's will and in violation of the Yalta accords which, following the victory in 1945, divided the world into "spheres of influence."

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Mao and the circuitous course

of the Chinese revolution

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This is not the place to make an exhaustive analysis of Mao's revolution conception. of his relationship with

Marxism, etc. But it is necessary to indicate in a summary way that he trade led the Chinese revolution against Stalin, and that, from 1927. This, it is true, did not involve a clear and clean political break, but rather a revolutionary practice on the fringes of Stalinism and against it. On the fringes, because Mao did not renounce Stalin's fundamental theses. Against it because Mao placed the interests of China ahead of those of the USSR, and because, in fact he bent the Stalinist "theory" of the revolution by stages into the meaning of a sort of debased Leninism. If you will, in practicing a policy of class alliance without subordination-to to the national bourgeoisie, Mao returned to the policy defined by Lenin in 1920 for use in the colonial countries, not to the "Menshevism" of Stalin. But it was a debased Leninism because a Mao did not eliminate the oppostunist "excesses" (in theory and practice) already mentioned.

The Maoist conception of the revolution was born in the 100defeat of 1927, and was shaped by the specific context in

which it was created. The necessity to rely from then on solely on his own forces, added to Mao's complete lack of theoretical internationalism, **km** explains "the circuitous course of the revolution." It also explains the fact that his revolutionary theory is not exportable as such, except to provoke catastrophes # (Indonesia). line # "How Yukong moved the mountains" line # . "We are poor and 'blank. ' 'Foor, ' Dearne don't have very such industry and because agriculture also isn't very Torder. By 'llare I mean that we are like a sheet of blank rid int clean sheet of paper, because our These uss are soon want cultural and scientific level is not high. But the 'poor' charge ; only they want to have a recoliction want to trend with -revolution, to become stronger. A whiteand seek to feetine short. a bland sheet of paper is just the thing on which to write." (April 1956, "The Ten Great Relations.") It is really not possible in the framework of this Maria article to follow all the stages in the career of the after the taking of power. We can only elaborate an alenysis of the

"struggle between two lines" which has been exacerbated in the party at each critical period and which is still obscure. It would appear more interesting to attempt to grasp the Maoist

problematique of the transition to socialism, which wretends to

avoid the worst "errors" of the Soviet experience.

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To walk on two legs,

to put politics in command

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By his own admission, Mao was not an economist. This certainly explains his "misapprehension" of objective conditions and the extraordinary voluntarism that marks his attempt to construct socialism "faster, better, and more economically." Since 1956, in the wake of the Twentieth Congress of the Russian CP, Mao pursued a partial but virulent critical analysis of the Soviet model. The principal axes of this analysis were developed in the texts of 1958-60, collected by Hu Chi-chi. For him (and this concern appears as early as 1955), it was a question of avoiding as much as possible

distortions between the development of agriculture, of light industry, and of heavy industry, and of not sacrificing everything for this last. He was also concerned not to become exclusively devoted to economic advancement but to make place in tandem the rise of the productive forces and the overthrow of social realtions, accreating the necessary structures (the people's communes), and the seeking support through an intensive mobilization of the masses. The Great Leap Forward, launched in 1958, was the first

attempt to put this policy into practice. It came to grief, for reasons that would take too long to develop here, and provoked the first grave crisis in the party. This was settled by the expulsion of P'eng Te-huai (who had in 1959 undertaken a virulent criticism of the Great Leap), but also by a relative "imprisonment" of Mao in the party, to the **profit** of the "moderate" line of Liu Shao-ch'i. Mao did not succeed even with an unprecedented mobilization of the population in overcoming the inherent contradictions of China's backwardness, especially after is the withdrawal of Soviet aid in 1960.

In order to counterbalance the social and political effects of the "moderate" lines, as much as to "regain power" in the party and the state, Mao continually launched political 16 A. B. Carl Car campaigns of various amplituge, before and after the riskiest of these attempts to reimpose his political line, the Cultural Revolution. (The social effects of the "moderate" line included social differentiation between and countryside, and within the working class; the constitution of a "bureaucracy" of the "Stalinist" type, completely cut off from the masses, etc.) line = Mao, the party, the bureaucracy, and the masses line 🗧

In order to better carry out his effort to break with the Soviet "model," Mao has always claimed to practice "the mass line." A It is not our concern to portray China, as

the smug Maoists do, as a model of proletarian democracy. But Mao's concern to not cut himself off from the masses was real

and was based on several reasons:

One to containly One thing is clear about the history of the Chinese

revolution: the bureaucea

Chinese bureaucracy did not arise like the

Stalinist bureaucracy, as a parasite on the social conquests of a victorions revolution. The Chinese & Communists made the in order to do in revolution; they had to carry out a profound mobilization of the so peasant masses, and then to "lend a receptive ear" up to a certain point. There is also, and this is striking in the documents of 1956, the specter of the Hungarian insurrection. Mao analyzed this as a counterrevolutionary insurrection, but he understood he many the danger of cutting himself off too much from the masses while exercising ever them too strong a proan economic pressure and the for the need of accumulation and heavy industrial construction, while multiplying the material privileges of the bureaucracy. * There was at a wixe the necessity already raised in mobilizing to the maximum the labor force, of giving to the workers a minimum of rights in the direction of the factory or of the This was done commune. This was also implied by carrying out a politicalization

(albeit highly contradictory) of the masses rather than putting the accent on material incentives.

prestige with the masses to get them to intervene into the internal affairs of the party.

From all this, it does not flow that Chairman Mao was a great bureaucrat slayer; there are too many facts that attest to the contrary. But he tried by the most diverse means (flexible and mend decentralized planning, relative autonomy of the provinces, and up to a certain point, the drawing together of production, politicalization of the masses, and minimal "proletarian democracy") to evade the consolidation of a bureaucracy of the classic type, founded on the backwardness, the isolation, the lack of culture of the masses the "imperatives" of economic development.

But the permanent mobilization of the masses for economic or political objectives is not the excercise of workers' democracy in the structures of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

And the Maoist project is full of explosive contradictions. It represents a different method of political domination by

the bureaucracy rather than a consistent antibureaucratism.

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From the hundred flowers

to the anti-Teng campaign

In 1956, Mao launched the slogan, "Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend." He was concerned with rallying the intellectuals and the democratic parties to the party, and trying to cut back on an excessive bureaucratization. This was to be a general outcry against the party, which led also to a wave of workers' strikes. The disorders should not be feared, Mao said, and in 1957 hiwrote his essay on "The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People." But the hundred flowers "Muickly faded under the repressive blow of the "rectification movement" of 1957.

What else could a party do that wanted to get rid of excess baggage without tolerating genuine organs of proletarian

democracy? In a very different context, the Cultural Revolution UND stopped short before the same insoluble contradiction. Mao launched the Cultural Revolution int 1966 to reassure his position in the party by using the oblique shortcut of a mass campaign, which soon went far beyond its initial objectives. The working class surged into the breach to win its own economic and political demands. And in 1967 the bureaucracy. closed ranks. Mao declared that 90 percent of the cadres were good or relatively good and tried his utmost to restrict the targets of the movement. Revolutionary Committees were instituted. These were a compromise between the two factions, who contended for power under the arbitration of the army. It took two long years to "reestablish order."

It would be wrong to reduce the Cultural Revolution solely to the struggle for power inside the party. But what concerns us here is that these events showed the difference between Mao and Stalin (one cannot imagine Stalin taking the risk of calling on the students and the working class to intervene on the political scene -- even though these forces largely

arrogated that right to themselves), as well as what separates Mao from a revolutionary Marxist conception of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Mao took care to winvthe army before launching the Cultural Revolution. He would_later_tell Snow that he had been for a massive dose of the "cult of personality" in this period, which is a strange way to allow the masses to take charge of their own affairs. Thus, he substituted the Revolutionary Committees for the election of delegates "according to the principles of the Paris Commune."

Hao, then around the Cultural Revolution avoided taking the risk of a general antibureaucratic outbreak by the masses (this can be seen in the antibourgeois rightist campaign of 1975 or the campaign against Teng Hsiao-p'ing in 1976).

In conclusion

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This quick survey of Mao's trajectory does not permit

an overall assessment of Maoism. Only a few points can be

made: Mao made the first important break in the Stalinist hegemony over the international workers' movement. After taking power, he tried in his own way to xaustan ^Lsquare the circle. to resolve the contradiction of claiming to construct socialism in a backward and isolated country without counting on the To construct socialism development of the world revolution. ind y unable to as a on the basis of national self-sufficiency its incluctabl corfollary the subordination of the interests of the world revolution to the interests of the Chinese state. It will suffice (Even a casual glance at China's foreign policy should suffice to convince one of this. This is all the more true in that Mao never ceased to thing in terms specifically "Chinese," 4 On the field of internal politics, he sought a more harmonious development of the ecopomy, which brought him into conflict with infin insurmountable difficulties (the need to struggle constantly against the supporters of the "right" wing, but also to compromise with them).

Finally, he was moved by an undeniable desire to halt the "natural" development of the bureaucracy, but because he never envisaged the development of organs of a genuine proletarian democracy his efforts fell short and were reduced to a permanent concern for mobilizing the masses for the reasons enumerated above, without ever giving them the means to take the direction of the Chinese state into their own hands.

In wanting to rely in a voluntarist manner on the "poorness" and "blankness" of China, Mao came up against contradictions that the international context, China's isolation, and his own realationship with revolutionary Marxism made it impossible

for him to surmount.

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1. Red Star Over China? Snow, p. 126. Scham Stuart 2. Mar 2- Trug. Schuster 1967. 2. Hao Tse-tung; Collection Mar.

3. Mao et la construction du socialisme (Editions de Seuil)

XS: Bar, J-MM. Tre, Gus

Rouge, September 10, 1976

Mao Is Dead -- by Ernest Mandel

embodies

Mao above all **represente** the victory of the third Chinese revolution, the **brocking** of the power of the bourgeoisie and of the landed proprietors in the most populous country in the world, the breaking of the imperialist encirclement of USSR, the fundamental modification of the relationship of forces on a world scale. Whatever may be our opposition to the bureaucratic regime which rules today in the People's Republic of Ctina, we must judge the role of Mao in the history of the twentieth century firstly by his relations with the fundamental classes of the contemporary world.

The victory of the third revolution, of which he was the principal architecht, was the most important event of the twentieth century after the socialist October revolution in Russia. China is not just any country. This was a country $W \to C MCE$ that had once been the most advanced and the richest in

the world, where the penetration of foreign capitalism in

Manhel Bouge.....2

the nineteenth century had blocked the transition toward the formation of an autonomous imperialist power such as the Japanese ruling classes had finally succeeded in creating.

Tens of millions of peasants and impoverished artisans were submitted for were submitted in decades to a more and more unbegrable regime rose up in of misery, oppression, and humiliation. They **minimal** successive waves of revolt, from the Taiping rebellion to the Boxers,

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revolutions of 1911 and of 1925-27. These uprisings had to chance $\frac{for}{of}$ political success until the appearance of a

proletariat sufficiently powerful to put forward its own

candidacy for the **kendership** political and organizational leadership

of the agrarian revolution. To break the grip of imperialism,

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to modernize the country, to free the peasantry from the

yoke of the landed proprietors and usurers -- this would not be possible except through the conquest of post proletarian

hegemony within the Chinese revolution, through the transcendence

of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into the socialist revolution, through the ostablishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

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The second Chinese revolution came to a tragic defeat in 1927 because Stalin imposed on the young Communist Party political subordination to the bourgeois Kuomintang of Chiang Kai-shek.

The The third Chinese revolution was able to triumph because, despite some erroneous texts such as "On New Democracy," Mao in practice refused to subordinate the People's Liberation Army born of the arti-Japanese guerrilla war to the army of Chiang Kai-shek. He refused to sacrifice the peasant uprisings on the altar of a coalition government with the bourgeoisie. The third Chinese revolution resulted in the creation of the People's Republic of China, a workers' state thanks to which the Chinese people became a great independent nation in the world, torn free of stagnation and famine. No later event can take from Mao the historic credit for the key role he played in the victory of the socialist revolution

in China.

The third Chinese revolution was not a "normal" socialist revolution. It took place after a long, devastating war against China by Japanese imperialism. This war devastated the economy and disintegrated the urban proletariat. This objective fact, added to Mao's conscious orientation of stifling the struggle of the urban proletariat, had as a consequence the fact that the working class was unable to play an autonomous role in the course of the third Chinese revolution. The leadership of the revolutionary process was in the hands of a highly bureaucratized CP, which prevented any development of soviets Vor workers' councils / in China. The Chinese revolution was a bureaucratized revolution from the beginning.

Mao was neither a Lenin nor a Stalin precisely because he led a revolution and not a counterrevolution, but the revolution he led was not in its organizational form an authentic proletarian revolution, although it had that social and historic content. It destroyed the power and the property of the bourgeoisie; and destroyed the bourgeois state.

But if Mao was neither a Lenin nor a Stalin, the bureaucratic regime that he erected in the People's Republic of China had traits in common with the Stalinist regime in the USSR. These included the stifling of proletarian democracy, the absence of workers' control over the industrial enterprises, the pragmatic deformation of Marxism, the cult of Mao's personality, and the material privileges of the bureaucracy. To explain . these phenomena solely by the backwardness of China, which is clearly one of the roots of the bureaucratization, is to (both underestimate the importance of the subjective factor and the dynamic of the mass movement in the People's Republic of China.

It is here that the truly tragic dimension of the ageing Mao appears. He was uneasy with the consequences of the bureaucratization of the party and the country resting on the depoliticization of the masses, in the image of what had developed in the USSR. Put in a minority in the party leadership after the failure of the "Great Leap Forward," he appealed to the masses over the heads of the party apparatus. This was

the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, which had similar features is the youth radicalization in the rest of the world. It was launched under the sign and the slogan: "In the last analysis, the lessons of history come down to this: rebellion is justified."

But, when the mass mobilizations passed more and more outside the control of the Maoist faction, when they raised the specter of left oppositional tendencies, when they began to draw in the workers and place them on the road of strikes, Mao reversed course and reunited with the majority of the apparatus. The "Red Guards" were disciplined and repressed. The rule now became: "All rebellion is justified, except rebellion against Mao Tsetung Thought."

The domestic right turn led to a still more pronounced right turn in the field of foreign policy. After having reproached the Soviet leaders for their lack of support to revolutionary movements and their excessive concessions to imperialism, the Maoist leadership discovered the existence of "social imperialsim"

in the USSR, of two "superpowers" placed on the same plane. Then they discovered that the "young" Soviet imperialism was more aggressive and therefore more dangerous.

Let us recall the cynical betrayal of the revolutionary movements in Ceylon, Sudan, and Ethiopia, the support given to the Iranian hangman, the hand extended to the European imperialisms to strengthen their armies against the USSR.

The Sino-Soviet conflict -- for which the Khrushchevist bureaucracy bore the main responsibility through having stopped its economic and military aid to the People's Republic of China -- and then the Cultural Revolution exercised a genuine attraction on the second state of the new vanguards on a world scale.

Maoism appeared as an alternative, at the same time leftist and Third Worldist, and even libertarian, to the official communist parties. The end of the Cultural Revolution, the right turn in Chinese foreign policy, the transformation of the

Maoist organizations the vinto neo-Stalinist sects that singularly

tarnished this image. Mao is dead at the moment when Maoism

had gone into decline internationally.

Mao leaves a People's Republic of China in deep ferment. In contrast to the USSR of the 1940s and 1950s, the masses are neither demoralized nor passive. The intrabureaucratic struggle for the succession will not be decided without intervention by the masses. The crisis of Maoism is here and now begun. It will lead to the victory of the antibureaucratic political revolution based on the exercise of power by the Chinese workers and peasants, who will consolidate and render invincible the gains of the great Chinese revolution? Mao Market Market Market Market

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