

CHINA AND TROTSKYISM



Marxist discussion on China, 1929 to 2017

Compiled by the Alliance for Workers' Liberty, 2023

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Compiled and introduction by Paul Hampton

Edited by Sacha Ismail, Zack Muddle

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Introduction

This collection of articles from the Trotskyist tradition about Maoist China provides a unique and original perspective that has long been buried in the archives.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP), led by Chen Duxiu, Liu Renjing, Peng Shuzhi, Zheng Chaolin and Wang Fanxi was an authentic workers' party in the 1920s, until misguided by Stalinism and physically exterminated by the nationalist Guomintang under Chiang Kai-shek.

These leading communists became Trotskyists after reflecting on the failed Chinese revolution (1925-27). They were the sharpest critics of Maoism from the beginning. They understood the Stalinist nature of the CCP under Mao Zedong and fought it within the Chinese labour movement. The Trotskyists also opposed the Guomintang and were repressed by it.

The Chinese Trotskyists understood the threat posed by the Maoists in power. The documents show the hostility of the Maoists towards Trotskyism. The Maoists ultimately repressed the Chinese Trotskyists in 1952, stamping out independent working-class politics in China.

The documents show that the best of the internationalist Trotskyists — notably those grouped around the Third Camp banner of Max Shachtman, developed their own realistic assessment of Maoism, consistent with the best traditions of Chinese Trotskyism.

However, the bulk of the Fourth International “orthodox” Trotskyists capitulated to Maoism, characterising the overturn in 1949 as a socialist revolution, even though the working class was absent as a social actor. They wrongly regarded the Maoists as a workers' and peasants' party, heading a workers' and peasants' government and ultimately creating a “workers' state”. The

pioneer of these errors was Ted Grant, but he was rapidly followed by Ernest Mandel, Michel Pablo, James Cannon and most others prominent Trotskyists.

This meant the “orthodox” Trotskyists consistently mischaracterised the nature of the Chinese state, its ruling class and mode of production. They were soft on Maoist industrialisation and collectivisation, including the Great Leap Forward and the communes. They preached reform and the tactics of working within the CCP, even after the Chinese Trotskyists were eliminated.

Despite the Cultural Revolution and the disastrous Maoist repression, “orthodox” Trotskyists clung to the characterisation of China as a workers' state, up to and after the terrible Tiananmen Square massacre in 1989. The “orthodox” Trotskyists offered the emerging Chinese working class no independent perspective under the Maoists. Although most would now regard China as a state capitalist regime, none have accounted for their mistakes during the Maoist period.

These texts are published today to help the new generation of socialists orientate our politics on China. Most of the material was difficult to access until recently, buried in obscure and hard to obtain newspapers and magazines, in the vaults of university libraries or the personal collections.

All texts here are abridged for space and relevance. Most of the full texts are available on the Marxist Internet Archive. They were scanned by the Riazanov Library Project, mostly from files provided by the Holt Labor Library in San Francisco. Chinese names are in Hanyu Pinyin transcription as far as possible. American English spellings are anglicised.

*Paul Hampton
January 2023*

PART I: The Stalinisation of the CCP, 1928-49

Opposition Group in China, May 1929

From Opposition Group in China, The Militant, II, 10, 1 May 1929: 9

The *Militant* has just received the first information about the Communist Opposition that has been organised in the Chinese Communist Party. A letter from China states — we quote it as it was written in English — “Chinese Oppositionists, Bolshevik-Leninists, have begun to fight with the opportunism. We are deeply believed that with continuing achievement, Chinese revolution will going again according the way of Leninism. But we are youngest in the world. We want the moral and material assistances from the international Oppositionists. We shall tell you about the present conditions as much as can, when received the letter from you.”

The appearance of the first organised movement in the Chinese Party basing itself on the platform of the International Opposition led by comrade Trotsky will be joyfully greeted by every revolutionary fighter. Especially in China did the revisionist line of Stalin-Bukharin-Martynov cause the greatest damage to the revolutionary movement by enslaving the proletariat and the peasantry under the yoke of the bourgeoisie under Chiang Kai-Shek, Wang Chin Wei and Co. The struggle of the Opposition gains new strength among the revolutionary elements with every new blow of persecution dealt it by the Stalinite apparatus!

Chen Duxiu, An Outline of Our Political Views, 15 December 1929

Chen Duxiu (15 December 1929), An Outline of Our Political Views. In Tony Saich, The Rise to Power of the Chinese Communist Party: Documents and Analysis. Armonk: M.E. Sharpe. 1996: 419-26

The leadership of the Comintern... rigidly adhered to the doctrine of the democratic revolution, constantly retaining their blind faith in the Guomindang, and dreamed of using the democratic party composed of the big bourgeoisie and the upper petty bourgeoisie to replace the soviet, which represented the workers and the impoverished people in urban and rural areas. At this time, the CCP CC did not make an effort to withdraw from the Guomindang or establish the soviet to overthrow the leadership of the Guomindang. On the contrary, it admitted in both the declaration drawn up by the Comintern representative and the message from the Peasant Department that the peasants had “gone too

far,” and it even volunteered to disarm the pickets of the Federation of Trade Unions in Hankou in order to avoid any clashes with the Guomindang army. These are all terrible mistakes...

The Comintern representative brought with him these messages from Moscow: “The Chinese revolution is still surging ahead”; and “China has reached the stage of the direct revolution.” Translated and relayed to the party by Qu Qiubai, Zhou Enlai, and Li Wei-han, these messages helped bring about putschism. The party leaders thought that armed insurrections alone were the correct Bolshevik line and that only they and those who agreed with them were genuine Bolsheviks. They used such charges as “opportunist remnants” and “wrong viewpoint” to persecute any comrade who showed even slight suspicion about the “climax of the revolution” and the political line of the CC or who acted more cautiously with respect to armed insurrection. Reorganising party committees at all levels and carrying out a new political line, the so-called general policy of the armed insurrection, they strictly forbade anyone who disagreed with the new line to register as a party member and even expelled from the party those who were already registered. Apart from ordering party organisations to launch the insurrections, they also asked the masses to act at once without making any preparations. Hence, a putschist atmosphere prevailed. and insurrections, big and small, were launched throughout the country wherever there were party organisations. The period from the “August 7 Conference” to “the Sixth Congress” was one of insurrections. During this period the party’s leading organ accomplished nothing except for closely following the Comintern’s instructions and using “the absolutely correct line of the CC” to help in reality the Guomindang destroy thoroughly the organisations and strength of the workers and peasants...

The CCP’s Sixth Congress, under the direct leadership of the Comintern, avoided analysing the fundamental mistakes of the opportunist policy implemented by the CCP CC during the climax of the revolution — mistakes such as the failure to make a timely withdrawal from the Guomindang, following the Guomindang’s leadership, and refusing to organise the soviet. This was because analysis of these mistakes would have meant dealing with the very essence of the Comintern’s policy toward the Chinese revolution...

The gradually broken political and practical lines have inevitably affected the present organisational policy of the party. This has followed the example of the Sovi-

et CP and relies on stem bureaucratic rule to suppress criticism from average party members and to preserve the prestige of a few leaders. None of these problems originated with the CCP but are all imposed by the leading organ of the Comintern controlled by Stalin and Bukharin. Lacking systematic training in Marxist theory and class struggle, the CCP itself does not possess the capability to devise any new theories or formulate any new policies. In this sense, it is only natural to discover that its major erroneous theories and policies, both in the past and at present, are all handed down from the Comintern. To be sure, the former party leadership should also be blamed for these problems, because it neither perceived the opportunist nature of the theories and policies of the Comintern nor made any protest against them but carried them out faithfully and shamefully. However, the party's present leadership continues to stick obstinately to and defend consciously the opportunist and putschist line of the Comintern despite the fact that the Opposition has clearly pointed out the mistakes...

The CC has adopted a putschist and "self-defeating" policy everywhere and on every issue, thus making our comrades both in and out of the party feel that the situation is hopeless. Party cadres at the grass roots all find that they can do nothing under the CC's present line. Working-class comrades in the party feel that the policy and action of the party absolutely contradict the requests and conditions of the working class. In particular, the putschist orders have caused them to leave the party in droves. As a result, party branches in various industrial fields have collapsed, and the number of the party members and the strength of the proletariat have declined rapidly. In important cities such as Hankou, Changsha, and Canton the party organisations have all disappeared, and there is virtually no connection between the party and the proletarian masses: there are no mass organisations led by our party in significant industrial fields such as the railways, mines, textiles and silk, and hardware...

The bureaucratic organisational line is represented by the appointment system and the absolute commandism now prevailing in the party. Democracy within the party has been abandoned, and everywhere there is bragging and false reports — from the Comintern to party organisations at all levels. The party bureaucrats use these reports to cheat each other and to deceive the masses. The present organisational line favours factionalism within the party... They have expelled many party members in order to solve the political problems inside the party, put the prestige of a few leaders above the interests of the whole party and the class, and forbidden the party members from discussing political issues with the excuses that "there is the danger of enemy attack," "the

situation is adverse," "the necessities of secret work," and "the application of iron discipline." In this way, they have changed Bolshevik-style enthusiastic discussion into bureaucratic blind observation. Under the present system, the relationship between the leading organ (the Comintern) and the grass-roots organisations (the CCP's branches) is just like that between the emperor and the village head. The average party member has to obey faithfully orders from above, otherwise he or she will be immediately persecuted. Hence, no party member dares express what he or she really wants to say.

Now, the most powerful weapon used by the bureaucrats of the party's leading organ to control party members is "iron discipline." Ordinary party members must submit themselves to party bureaucrats because of blind faith in this weapon. They dare not criticise the rule of the party bureaucrats even though, in their hearts, they disagree with it...

Liu Renjing, Decline of the Chinese Communist Party, 13 April 1930

Niel-Sih [Liu Renjing] (13 April 1930), Ruining a Movement — Decline of the Chinese Communist Party, The Militant, III, 21, 24 May 1930: 7

The membership [of the CCP] under such conditions is miserable. According to an official admission in a circular of the Shanghai Eastern district (the biggest industrial district in Shanghai), the membership decreased since last August from 85 to 82. The membership in all Shanghai, according to the most optimistic figure, is about 800. There are many other industrial cities where the Communist workers do not count more than ten. We owe all this to Stalin's blind policy of adventurism, to the destructive work of the Stalinists which alienated the Party from the workers...

As to the guerrilla warfare, in many places it becomes "aimless burning, killing and pillaging under the leadership of the declassed elements" (from the Party circular), since it lacks a mass basis. It sometimes violates the poor peasant's property because the armed forces of the landlords and rich peasants are too strong to permit of plundering...

Since last year, the Party has concentrated all its propaganda work in the struggle against "Trotskyism", because the Communist Opposition has begun to work in China. Since then, it has taken a series of organisational measures against us.

Liu Renjing, *A Picture of the Situation in China Today*, 3 December 1932

Niel-Sih [Liu Renjing], *A Picture of the Situation in China Today*, *The Militant*, V, 49, 3 December 1932: 2

To complete the picture of present Chinese political life, let us turn our attention to what is happening in the red army districts. The government troops have lately gained several victories in the Hubei, Anhui and Honan provinces. Direct and up-to-date information from those districts, we do not possess. We have read, not so long ago, two resolutions passed by the first delegated congress of the Communist party in the Southern Jiangxi Soviet district (the centre of the Soviet districts)...

The resolution starts by complaining against the line of Li Lisan for "not confiscating the rich peasants' superfluous and better land ... in every many Soviet districts, much of the landowners' and rich peasants' land was not confiscated and the land was left undivided for a long time; where it was divided according to the productive implements. It was absolutely a rich peasant line"...

Thus, in spite of the passage of impotent resolutions condemning bureaucratism, the rich peasant tendency, militarist survivals, etc., for the last two years, matters in the Soviet districts continue to go from bad to worse. The partisan warfare inevitably degenerates when it is not supported by mass movements in the cities. The Stalinists want to deny this truth but, in the long run, they become its victims. Under the cover of Communism, the Stalinists are really converting the Chinese party into a peasants-workers party. The influence of Communism in Chinese politics is practically nil, what the Chinese Communist Party represents is the policy of the petty bourgeois turned desperate. The Manchurian crisis opened up broad possibilities for Chinese Communism to make progress. The Guomindang government has never been so discredited as in this crisis. The masses of the people are becoming radicalised, but Chinese Communism is paralysed by its internal weakness and has let its chances go by. The Guomindang regime is regaining its lost positions and once again stabilising itself.

P.K. *The Civil War in China*, 12 December 1932

P.K. (12 December 1932), *The Civil War in China*, *The Militant*, VI, 2, 14 January 1933: 4

The political line of the Stalinists is to have the village surround the city, to have it lead the workers, and not have the proletariat lead the peasantry. The victories of the Stalinists come out of the military advances of the peasant detachments and not from the power of the

workers, and as a result, the Stalinists are leading the party onto the road of a peasants party.

The Stalinists are not 'liquidators' but the banner-bearers of 'runawayism'. They have left behind the urban proletariat: such a flight is no small matter. The development of the 'Red Army' has brought the Stalinists to the attempt to realise the fantasy of the village laying siege to the city, that is, the line of the peasantry 'leading' the workers. What will the result of such an idea and course? This: the Chinese Communist Party will be led by the Stalinists along the road of a peasants' party.

Communist League of China, *Protest Persecution of Chinese Bolshevik-Leninists*, August 1935

Communist League of China (Bolshevik-Leninists), Protest Persecution of Chinese Bolshevik-Leninists — W.P. Call, *New Militant*, I, 33, 10 August 1935: 1-2

Comrade Liu Renjing, known internationally as Niel Sih, and four other leading members of the Communist League of China (Bolshevik-Leninists) were recently arrested and are now prisoners of the Kuomintang military authorities in Nanking...

Niel Sih is now being subjected to daily beatings in an effort to force him to sign a statement repudiating his Communist views... As a result of the treatment he has suffered, he has fallen seriously ill. The authorities have refused to give him any medical treatment and his condition is believed to be critical...

The labour movement in the cities has been abandoned and left prostrate by the Stalinists, who have linked their fate to that of the peasant armies in the rural interior. The policy of the Chinese Stalinists is being dictated solely by the military-strategic interests of the Soviet Union and takes no account of the fundamental interests of the Chinese Revolution.

Frank Glass, *New Stalinist Frame-up Hits China 'Trotskyists'*, 16 October 1937

Frank Glass [Li Fu-jen], *New Stalinist Frame-up Hits China 'Trotskyists'*, *Socialist Appeal*, I, 10, 16 October 1937: 5

According to what purports to be a cable dispatch from Shanghai printed in the *Daily Worker* of 5 October [1937], the hand of Stalin's G.P.U., dripping with the blood of murdered revolutionists in the Soviet Union and in Spain, has now reached into China.

The dispatch reports the uncovering of "a Trotskyist plot to knife the Chinese defence against Japanese imperialism in the back by a putsch in Kwangsi province." Police, it is stated, nipped the alleged plot in the bud

by arresting “the entire membership of the local Trotskyist group,” which, in familiar language, is declared to be “made up principally of bandits and other shady elements.”

That we are confronted here with another G.P.U. frame-up is apparent from the entire text of the *Daily Worker* story. We are told that the Trotskyists were headed by Wang Kun-tuh, “who had wormed his way into the executive committee of the Kuomintang organisation in Kwangsi during the period of anti-Communist terror that swept China after 1929.”

No person named Wang-tuh is or ever has been a member of the Communist League of China (Bolshevik-Leninists). Nor has any member of the League ever been a member of the Kwangsi executive committee of the Kuomintang or any other Kuomintang organ. I state these facts as one having personal knowledge of the League’s membership and activity.

Even more decisive is the fact that there is no organisation of the Communist League in Kwangsi province and there never has been. The Stalinist practise of dubbing sundry persons (especially its own agents provocateurs) “Trotskyists” is sufficiently well-known in China and other countries...

Step by step, the *Daily Worker* reveals the Stalinist frame-up, or attempted frame-up of the Chinese revolutionists. “The leading Shanghai newspaper, *Hsin Ching Jih Pao*,” it declares, “called for the rooting out of the Trotskyist traitors.”

“At a time when the entire nation is united in war against our mortal foe,” the paper is quoted as saying, “this despicable gang of Chinese Trotskyists are taking advantage of the sending of troops to the battlefronts to organise a plot in the rear. Is it not clear at whose orders these Trotskyists perform their deeds ... In the name of our country’s future, in the interests of resistance to the aggressor, the Trotskyist spies and traitors must be destroyed.”

Fu Ling, A Letter from China, 22 February 1938

Fu Ling (22 February 1938), A Letter from China, Socialist Appeal, II, 14, 2 April 1938: 4; and Socialist Appeal, II, 15, 9 April 1938: 4.

The author of this letter, a leading member of the Communist League of China (Fourth Internationalists), was released from a Guomintang prison in Nanjing on 25 November 1937... his arrest occurred in Shanghai in April 1937, approximately one year after he had served a four-and-a-half-year sentence in a military prison, where he was subjected to frightful torture. He was taken to Nanjing and again tortured by the Guomintang jailers...

The Stalinists have founded a daily paper in Hankou, the *Hsin Hwa Jih Pao*, which devotes much of its space to attacking the ‘Trotskyite bandits’. It slanders the Fourth Internationalists as the ‘hired dogs’ of Japanese imperialism. This anti-Trotskyist campaign was started by Wang Ming, who arrived in Hankou from Moscow six weeks ago...

GPU Tries to Frame Chinese Bolsheviks, 5 March 1938

GPU Tries to Frame Chinese Bolsheviks, Socialist Appeal, II, 10, 5 March 1938: 1

A violent lynch drive, with provocation and slander as its instruments, is being waged against the Communist League of China... Leading the campaign in China is Chen Shaoyu (known abroad as Wang Ming)...

Preparation of the Stalinist campaign against the revolutionists in China was signalled by an article by Wang Ming in the November 1937 issue of *Communist International*...

PART II: The Maoist seizure of power

Heroic record of Chinese Trotskyists during the war, 7 June 1947

Heroic record of Chinese Trotskyists during the war, The Militant, XI, 23, 7 June 1947: 3

Our comrades in Shandong Province became the best fighters in the guerrilla war. Some comrades fought in the Stalinist Eighth Route Army. But as soon as they were discovered, they were shamefully shot, one after another. One of our young comrades died a very heroic death. Before the first Stalinist bullet killed his voice, he made a revolutionary speech attacking Stalinism among his fellow fighters and cried out the revolutionary slogans to his last breath. How many comrades lost their lives at the criminal bloody hands of the Stalinist murderers? We cannot yet give an exact account...

When Cheong's guerrilla army suffered a bad defeat in the battle of Tzin Hwa, the Stalinists grasped their golden opportunity. Comrade Cheong and his wife were captured in the Stalinist-controlled zone. Together with them, a wife and a small son of another comrade, a Formosan revolutionist, who was just converted to Trotskyism, and several women, were all placed under arrest. At first, the Stalinists tried to get a denunciation of Trotskyism out of Cheong. When they found that it was impossible to bend his will, they mercilessly beheaded him. His wife and all other captives were shot. Even the six-year-old innocent boy was not spared by the Stalinist beasts. He was thrown into the sea and drowned! Comrades! We, Chinese Trotskyists — our knowledge of Stalinism has nothing abstract in it.

Hsieh Yueh, Mao Zedong's 'Revolution', 15 April 1948

Hsieh Yueh (15 April 1948) Mao Tse-tung's "Revolution", Fourth International, 10, 11, December 1949: 328-332. Original: digest of an article in the first issue of the magazine Fourth International (published in Hong Kong), organ of the RCP. Translated from the French, as it appeared in the October-November 1949 issue of Quatrième Internationale.

The Chinese CP has introduced, these methods of exploitation in all the liberated areas. Here are the real facts about its much vaunted "wage policy." The documents of the Chinese CP openly speak of "too high wages." The working day has been lengthened to 10 and even 12 hours a day. Not only has the system of piece-work been introduced but the Stalinists have attempted

to justify it theoretically. They explain that "in the system of piece-work payment, the workers obtain higher wages if they increase, production; they will therefore increase production to obtain higher wages: this is a very reasonable and progressive conception of the rewards for manual labour." (Chang Per-la, *Policy on Labor and Taxes in Relation to Industrial Development*)...

The heads of "the liberation army" demonstrated the same conservative and reactionary spirit when they entered the big cities... The Chinese CP also maintained in effect in the cities the existing means of repression among which is the infamous principle of collective responsibility. (If the police cannot find a "trouble-maker," they can arrest a member of his family as a hostage.) The Stalinists have abolished the right to strike and instituted compulsory arbitration. Just as the power of the poor peasants was wiped out in the interests of class collaboration, so the first efforts of the workers, to create an independent organisation in the cities was stifled by the bureaucracy...

Trade unions have traditionally served the workers' movement as a school of class struggle. The Chinese Stalinists have changed this formula. For them the trade union has become "a school of production which encourages the productive and positive characteristics of the proletariat." The task of defending the interests of the workers is dubbed "leftist adventurism"...

In private enterprises, the capitalists have retained unlimited power. In nationalised factories — formerly the property of "bureaucratic capital" — power is to be invested in a control committee, with the manager of the factory acting as president, and consisting of representatives of the former owners, representatives of the supervisory personnel and representatives of the workers. But the workers have only consultative rights, the director retaining the final say in all decisions.

RCP, Special Report from China on the Civil War, 5 April 1949

RCP (5 April 1949), Special Report from China on the Civil War, The Militant, XIII, 18, 2 May 1949: 1-2

[Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP) was the Chinese Trotskyist organisation led by Peng Shuzhi]

The present situation in China is dominated by three outstanding facts: 1. The spectacular victories of the Stalinist-controlled armies. 2. The bottomless bankruptcy, corruption and disintegration of the Guomindang regime. 3. The political indifference, demoralisa-

tion, paralysis and disorganisation of the city working class...

What is happening in 'liberated' China? A series of the most abominable crimes are being committed in the name of the revolution... A decision was also adopted protecting native as well as foreign industry and trade and was accompanied by a series of decisions legalising a longer working day (from ten to twelve hours) and cutting wages to a level even lower than under the Guomintang ...

But the Stalinist 'political workers' spare no pains to hunt down and ruthlessly suppress any spontaneous proletarian action. From a worker, just escaped from Jinan (capital of the Shandong province), we learn of this horrible incident:

As the 'liberating army' approached, the workers in his factory instinctively understood that it was time to liberate themselves. They drove out the boss and set up a factory committee to control production. They were immediately visited by a Stalinist political worker who demanded to know who was responsible for this action. The workers replied that they had decided in common to liberate themselves. He then insisted that the committee men follow him to headquarters. There they were chained together and led to a courtyard where they were massacred wholesale by a firing squad. The factory was then returned to the frightened owner...

In another factory where a strike broke out for the simple economic demand of equal treatment, the strike was brutally crushed by the Stalinists and three strikers stood up before a firing squad...

In Tianjin, second largest industrial centre in China, a great strike occurred immediately after the Stalinist military government was established. The strikers demanded an eight-hour day and a reasonable increase in wages. To their astonishment they were answered by a savage proclamation in which the Stalinist military authorities decreed a longer working day — ten instead of eight — a 25% wage cut and the establishment of an arbitration board...

Enterprises formerly controlled by the Guomintang, called 'bureaucratic capital', were simply transferred to Stalinist military authorities... There is not the slightest change of property relations in the industrial centres...

Here then is the Stalinist-type of 'revolution' — a 'revolution' led by the very people who fear it like death itself. The Chinese peasant movement is being betrayed and the peasant army transformed into a reactionary bourgeois instrument for the suppression of the proletariat! Herein is the core of the new development in the tragedy of the Chinese revolution... Although the 'liberating army' is knocking on the doors of Shanghai, China's greatest industrial centre, the proletariat remains indifferent, cool and full of doubt...

C.L. Liu, *China: An Aborted Revolution*, 20 October 1949

C.L. Liu (20 October 1949), *China: An Aborted Revolution*, Fourth International, 11, 1, January-February 1950: 3-7. The writer was a veteran Chinese Trotskyist, prominent in the RCP leadership. He wrote the article in the Portuguese island colony of Macau, late last October, having just left Guangzhou on the eve of the capture of that great south China city by the Stalinists.

Mao Zedong came to Shanghai as a Messiah. To the workers he represented himself as their spokesman and defender in the coalition government-to-be. In reality, he said, they were now the masters of the country. But at the same time he turned politely to the bourgeoisie with the assurance that their properties would be protected and that they would be given every opportunity to develop their enterprises. "A reasonable profit," a high Stalinist official told the worried capitalists "is not exploitation". He promised that production would continue smoothly under "a reasonable regime of harmonious cooperation between capital and labour"...

Compulsory arbitration of all labour disputes by the Labour Bureau of the Shanghai Municipal Government was decreed. Lin Piao, the Stalinist commander, declared that all conflicts between capital and labour must be eliminated in order to "promote the prosperity of urban industry and commerce." Workers were coerced into taking wage-cuts and lengthened working hours. To cope with the growing unemployment, a decree of compulsory evacuation was issued which called for removing three million, or two-thirds, of the Shanghai population out of the city...

An order was issued to the Sun Sun Textile Factory No.9 to dismantle and move to Manchuria. Workers barricaded themselves in the plant to resist. Troops of the Stalinist "liberating" army were sent to carry out the order. A bloody clash ensued in which 10 workers were killed or wounded and three soldiers killed. There was irony in this incident, for only a year previously, before Shanghai's "liberation," the Stalinist leadership in this same plant had provoked a bloody clash between strikers and Guomintang police! We may be sure that this lesson, showing up the true character of the Stalinists, was not lost on the Shanghai proletariat with its lengthy tradition, of class struggle and revolution.

PART III: Third Camp Trotskyism vs Maoism

Carlos Hudson, *What Will Stalinist China Victory Mean?* 24 January 1949

Carlos Hudson [Jack Brad], What Will Stalinist China Victory Mean? Labor Action, 13, 4, 24 January 1949: 1 "Jack Brad" was a pseudonym for Carlos Hudson, an early recruit to Trotskyism in the US. Hudson had edited the Northwest Organizer, Minneapolis Teamsters' paper. He was one of the Minneapolis 18 of SWP members who were imprisoned during 1944 under the Smith Act. Hudson had joined Workers' Party by 1946 and was an editor of its New International magazine.

Stalinist armies continued to mop up in North China with great strides this past week as Central Government troops pulled back to the Yangtze River as the next defence line. The biggest gains for the CP were in the easy and bloodless conquest of Tianjin and Tanggu, its port. Only Beijing still stands, but it is only a matter of time before it too surrenders.

Tianjin is a city of two million people, the main port of North China, and contains one third of the textile industry of all China. Because for years it was the centre of international concessions for the North, it is a relatively modern city with good port facilities and rail connections. Its fall is a great blow to the position of the government in international commerce, as well as militarily...

The working class has played no role in the civil war so far and it is unlikely that it will in the immediate military events to come. The workers do not rise to greet the Stalinist armies, nor do they play a role in the "peace movements."

The CP has been alienated from the cities for twenty years. In August, 1948, it held its first national labour conference in Harbin at which it launched a new Chinese Labor Federation under its own auspices in an attempt to gain control of the urban working class. However, at this conference the CP advised the workers that their main task was "to prepare themselves for the arrival of the liberation armies," but not to organise independent action or even actions coordinated with these armies. The CP prepared for its military victories over the cities by urging the workers to remain passive and to take no part until the Stalinist regime was established in the cities. Only under the new regime were the workers instructed to submit themselves to Stalinist organisations and control, and then the proper role would be assigned to them.

That is why the workers today are silent and defence-

less, caught between Kuomintang terror and Stalinist manipulation. This is one of the most ominous developments in the Chinese civil war...

Chinese Stalinism is now for the first time taking over large cities. This party, which has had no urban connections for two decades, whose leadership comes from the peasantry and is oriented toward it and which has developed the unique theory that only the peasantry can make the Chinese revolution, now must face the more complex modern problems of urban society...

Stalinists are amazingly silent on Manchuria. The Iron Curtain has dropped. They do not invite delegations of newspapermen to visit the cities of Shenyang, Harbin, Dalian and Changchun, where they have ruled for years, as they used to invite them when they were in Yenan. The only reporter to have made public news from Manchuria is the Stalinist publicity agent, Anna Louise Strong. Like the rest of the handouts of the regime in Manchuria, she spoke glowingly about land distribution and the advances made by the petty bourgeoisie in tiny industries. She has not one word to say about the fate of the huge heavy industry which the Russians stripped in 1945. Are they producing? How much? What is the destination of their products? What is the extent of Russian control?

There are indications that the Russians have established tight control of Manchurian industry. This huge modern industrial complex, the greatest in Asia, was considered essential to Chinese recovery. Without it China must start from scratch. Fully 75 to 85 per cent of all industry in China was in Manchuria. The Chinese CP cannot fight the Russians on this crucial life and death question. The entire question of industrialisation, then, assumes an extremely black aspect under the Stalinist victories, for which again all China will have to pay.

For the country as a whole, from the viewpoint of its potential as well as its need, the Stalinist victory is an economic disaster.

Carlos Hudson, *What Is Chinese Stalinism?* December 1948

Carlos Hudson [Jack Brad] (December 1948), What Is Chinese Stalinism? New International, XV, 2, February 1949: 49

Chinese Stalinism is an indigenous movement in the sense that it has secured to itself a monopoly of the leadership for these ends in China. Its party, program and leadership are known and have established deep

roots in the historic struggles of the last twenty years...

Like the Yugoslavs, the Chinese Stalinists are conquering without the Russian armies. They are establishing their own tradition of victories and their own patriotism...

This means that while the Chinese CP is part and parcel of international Stalinism and takes its lead in all matters from the Kremlin, it is not a movement of Russian expansion in a simple sense but the growth of a native Stalinism, which carries out the needs of Russian foreign policy on its own...

Thus while the Chinese civil war takes place within the context of the inter-imperialist struggle, this context distorts it but does not so dominate it as to replace or overshadow the elements of national and social conflict...

The CP has become a peasant party in the sense that it seeks its base primarily in the countryside and that it has developed a theory which gives leadership of the Chinese social revolution to the peasant class, through the instrumentality of the CP. It has not been connected with the struggles of the workers for over a decade. It has not had power in any sizable city.

Nowhere else in modern history has a national revolution been led by a party based on the peasantry. The unique Chinese experience is possible because Stalinism is that unifying ingredient which is absent in the peasantry as a class...

Since 1927 Stalinism has not been a political party in China but an armed camp, an embryo state...

When placed against the background of the Great Revolution of 1925-27 the most striking feature of current events in China is the absence of the working class in an active role...

Today the Chinese proletariat does not have a party of its own; it is not an active, organised, cohesive social class... The CP desertion of the cities was a betrayal from which the workers never recovered...

The entire direction of the real social revolution which is the profoundest desire of the people is transformed into a new tyranny of bureaucratic collectivism.

Carlos Hudson, *Are the Chinese Stalinists Different?* 7 February 1949

Carlos Hudson [Jack Brad], *Are the Chinese Stalinists Different?* Labor Action, 13, 6, 7 February 1949: 4

Since 1929, Communist China has not been a party but a state. It has existed as a distinct state power with an army and political organs. Since the founding of the Chinese "Soviets" in the South, there has existed a special GPU or political police. The first head of the Chinese GPU was Teng Fo.

The first mention of a special GPU department occurs in 1931 when such a division was regularly established as one of the ten government departments. Already by the end of that year the GPU was busy earning its place...

Later, in July 1931, the GPU again proved its vigilance: "Lately we have discovered an organisation of Trotskyists. From their depositions we learned that the Trotskyists united with the Social Democrats"...

Edgar Snow refers frequently to the Chinese GPU or Cheka in *Red Star Over China*, as does Nym Wales in her book *Inside Red China*. Nym Wales describes in some detail her relations to the GPU in 1936 in Yenan. Her object is to make it out as a friendly, protective force, and no doubt it was to her. It never seems to occur to her to wonder why such an institution should exist at all in the barren half-desert of Upper Shensin. Nor does she think to question accusations by the GPU of Trotskyism, counter-revolution and the rest of the Stalinist calendar of crimes...

The claim is not made here that the Stalinists are organising a totalitarian police state in China at one full blow. The very backwardness of the country mitigates against its easy achievement. A police state based on a ubiquitous bureaucracy requires a measure of modernisation and material surpluses which are not yet at hand. BUT THIS IS THE DIRECTION OF CHINESE STALINISM...

The Chinese Communist Party is aiming at a monopoly of political power. All compromises with coalitions, with propertied classes in city and village will not alter this basic fact. They will permit the city bourgeoisie to retain their factories and mercantile establishments (provided they do not encroach on big industry and big commerce which will be nationalised). But they will not permit them to organise political parties to represent these interests. They will support the village tukhoa (kulak), but at the same time insist that he accept the party as his sole political defender.

They will form unions and workers will be forced to join, but any party that arises to speak for the workers outside of officially created organisations will be dealt with as counter-revolutionary. Without political organ-

isation and power to parallel and insure economic interests the compromises and coalitions with other classes are expedients depending on the good-will or exigencies of the ruling party.

Carlos Hudson, 'Bureaucratic Revolution' Rolls over Passive China, 23 May 1949

Carlos Hudson [Jack Brad], CP Bureaucratic Revolution Rolls over Passive China, Labor Action, 13, 21, 23 May 1949: 1

On the day of launching the present offensive the CP military leadership issued an eight-point proclamation, the first point reading in part: "It is hoped that all people regardless of their class, faith or profession will maintain order and adopt a cooperative attitude toward the People's Liberation Army."

Nowhere in the countryside have CP armies been met by self-liberated peasants who have risen against their oppressors and taken the power. Reporters on the scene write that the peasants continue their daily round of toil while the armies manoeuvre and battle around them. This also is a consequence of the bureaucratic character of the revolution...

But while this has been the nature of revolution in modern history, this has not been true in China today. The CP is marching to victory over a road which is a political desert. No contenders are in the field against it and no other political movement allied with it. The military character of its conquest is a consequence of this reality. We are witnessing the classical form of bureaucratic-collectivist revolution, the precondition for which is the prostration of the great urban social classes which have been the prime movers of history since the Renaissance.

If the above is true of the Chinese peasantry, it is even more valid for the capitalists and working class. Neither of these have political organs to express their interests. In contrast to 1927, the "comprador" bourgeoisie does not have its Guomindang rallying centre. The workers are not in a political revolt and general strike as in 1927. Typical of the scene is Shanghai today, where the greatest unrest is caused by the inflation and where economic strikes are common. But with CP armies at the gates and KMT power at an ebb, the workers remain non-political, not even organised as a class grouping...

To the workers the proclamation gives the following instructions: "It is hoped that workers and employees in all trades will continue work and that businesses will

operate as usual." From the other viewpoint, the CP is directed, in another statement by Li Li-san, as follows:

"The trade unions as the principal mass organisations of the workers must be established and coordinated. All workers with hand and brain should be systematically organised by industries"...

The city of Shanghai contains six million people, the largest city in Asia and the fourth largest in the world. This metropolis is the great entrepot for foreign imports on the one hand, and on the other the great market for the products of its agricultural hinterland. One half of all China's foreign trade passes through this port. Half of China's industry, including two-thirds of her textile production, is located here. It is a main road terminus. The city is the centre of the foreign-trade communities as well as of the largest Chinese class of compradors and tradesmen. Shanghai is China's chief window on the outside world...

Control of Shanghai will present the CP with its largest single problem to date. Assuring the food supply of its six millions alone will challenge its greatest efforts. The maintenance of services, control of skyrocketing inflation, supply of raw material for industry and, above all, foreign commerce and foreign relations, will become the new axis of CP politics. With Shanghai, the CP will bid farewell to its agrarian days. It will have to administer a sizable working class. As the new piasters, Stalinism will intensify exploitation of labour to raise production. In cities already in CP hands, the workers have invariably been the first victims.

The conquest of all China by Stalinism is an event in world history whose full significance will unfold with time. If Stalinism can organise effectively this continent of half a billion people and begin its industrialisation, it may very well be one of the great turning points of history. A powerful social force, albeit the force of counter-revolutionary Stalinism, is sweeping aside the three-millennia-old incubus of decay and stagnation. China is being torn from her antiquated roots and thrust into the modern world maelstrom. The tragedy of the Stalinist victory lies in this: that this gigantic event takes place under the aegis of a totalitarian rather than a liberating leadership, one which will tie China to the Russian despotism in world politics as well as in domestic economic construction.

Carlos Hudson, Battle over Formosa Ignores Formosa's Right to Freedom, 16 January 1950

Carlos Hudson [Jack Brad], Battle over Formosa Ignores Formosa's Right to Freedom, Labor Action, 14, 3, 16 January 1950: 4

No one in a position of power has spoken up in defence of the rights of the six million Formosans. Yet no one has a better right to be heard...

There is no better single criterion for nationhood than the struggle of a body of people to become a political entity...

After the Sino-Japanese war of 1890, Japan took Formosa and held it for 50 years...

This is background of the Formosan revolt of 1947 — an unarmed uprising of desperate people... Chiang's response was the massacre of 20,000 people...

All this does not yet make a nation...

Socialists should defend the rights of the Free Formosans. Its people has a right to peace and this is possible only through independence. Socialists should oppose the Stalinist invasion as much as the Chinese dictatorship. This programme for a Free Formosa also applies to other areas such as Tibet.

Let the people decide their own future! That is the only democratic road.



Woodcut "The Terrible Inspection" by Huang Rong-can, depicting the massacre in Formosa — now Tiawan — following the 1947 revolt. Huang Rong-can was executed in 1952.

PART IV: Chinese Trotskyists vs The Maoists in power

Wang Fanxi, The Stalinist State in China, February 1950

M.Y. Wang (February 1950) The Stalinist State in China, New International, XVII, 2, March-April 1951: 100-10

In judging and estimating the nature of a movement, a political party, or a state, for the proletarian revolutionist there is one unchanging standard: What is its relation to the working class, that is, to the only revolutionary class in the modern world? For us there can be no more decisive standard than that, nor can there be any other point of departure.

What is the relation of the CCP, the Liberation Army led by it, and the People's Republic which it has established, to the Chinese working class? What attitude does it take toward that working class? Notwithstanding the fact that the CCP calls itself a working-class party, notwithstanding the fact that the CCP proclaims this new state to be a "people's" state led by the workers, nevertheless a variety of facts demonstrates that the political and economic position of the workers has not only failed to improve, but in certain respects has even deteriorated. The working class is the victim of this "War of Liberation". "The liberation of the working class is the function of the working class itself." Consequently, "liberators" drawn from another class cannot confer genuine liberation upon it. And this has in fact been the case. Politically speaking, the position of the working class has not changed at all. The military governments established by the conquerors are composed entirely of a new nobility, and have no connection with the working class. Not only could workers' soviets not be formed in practice, they were not permitted to exist even as a concept. All that the workers got from their "liberators" was the designation — on paper — of "leaders" of the new society...

In Tianjin from February to April [1949] and in Shanghai during June and July [1949] there was extensive activity on the part of the workers, but after the suppression in April of the Tianjin movement by Liu Shaoqi and the promulgation in Shanghai on 19 August [1949] of Military Government regulations for the adjustment of labour-management disputes, the working class was robbed completely of its right to fight and of its fundamental right to strike. In other words, it was made the victim of exploitation at the hands of private entre-

preneurs. This new slave status of the working class was finally fixed in September by governmental fiat, and the workers have been unable to win an improvement in living conditions by striking. In order to disguise this act of barbarism, the new rulers have given the working class the right of "factory control."

But this right, as a glance at the Regulations for the Conduct of Factory Committees will indicate, is a patently worthless piece of trickery. For example:

7. The Factory Committee shall be presided over by the Head of the Factory (or the Manager) ...

8. If a decision passed by a majority of the Factory Committee shall be judged by the Head of the Factory (or the Manager) to be in conflict with the said Factory's best interests, or when the said decision shall be in conflict with the instructions of higher authority, the Manager or Head of the Factory is empowered to prohibit its implementation...

Therefore we may affirm that politically the Chinese Communist regime has not improved the position of the working class, while economically it has lowered its standard of living. The Chinese Communist regime, while characterising itself the "representative of the working class" and making use of the words "people" and "nation," has in reality, like the Guomindang, in effect enslaved the Chinese working class. This view must constitute the point of departure for our interpretation of the nature of the CCP and its government.

Any political party or state apparatus which enslaves the working class is, in this day and age, from a proletarian, socialist, revolutionary point of view, fundamentally and completely reactionary. Therefore the CCP and the state apparatus which it has set up are also reactionary. Yet at the same time we must recognise the following facts: They have overthrown the Guomindang government, which represented foreign imperialism and the native bourgeoisie and landlord class; they are wiping out the anachronistic agrarian relationships in China's farming villages; they have dealt a mighty blow to the foreign imperialist powers led by the United States. All of these actions, from the point of view of Chinese nationalism and democracy, have an undeniably progressive character...

These three phenomena, (a) the tendency of world capitalism toward statification, (b) the thoroughgoing

corruption and decay of the individual capitalist, and (c) the numerical increase of the petty bourgeoisie and its rise in importance as a social and political force, may serve to explain the principal events that have taken place throughout the world during the last twenty years, particularly since the end of the war, and can explain very adequately the events that have transpired in China.

The Chinese Stalinists, taking advantage of this state of affairs, basing themselves on the overwhelming numerical strength of the impoverished and embittered peasantry, and proposing a program of reformed state capitalism (that is, the New Democracy), rallied the urban petty bourgeoisie and medium bourgeoisie, and gathered to their banner even a part of the working class. Through military might they easily transformed the rotten rule of the Chinese-style “national capitalists” and took over (but by no means abolished) the state machinery and the entire economy under its control.

The Chinese proletariat since 1927, when it suffered a staggering defeat thanks to its adherence to Stalinist policies, has not ascended the political stage. Although a year or two before the struggle with Japan and within the first year after Japan’s surrender the labour movement revived for a time, nevertheless, thanks to the weakness of the proletarian parties, the Guomindang’s oppression and deceit, and the degeneration of Chinese industry in the war, and under the influence of the decay and stagnation of world capitalism, the ranks of the working class were scattered and weakened, and these movements could never acquire sufficient political and revolutionary character. The fact that the Chinese proletariat for over twenty years was unable to interfere in China’s political processes to a significant extent determined the peasant aspect, the capitalist nature, and the bureaucratic-collectivist direction of Chinese Stalinism. Of course — and this is far more important — we must seek the answer to this question in the nature of the Soviet Union and the CPUSSR and the influence they exerted on the CCP.

Therefore the Soviet Union now stands in the following class relationship politically and economically: On the one hand the bureaucracy collectively holds all political and economic power in the state, and on the other the toiling masses are absolutely without rights. This sort of state is naturally not a workers’ state, nor even a degenerate workers’ state, because the working class is politically ruled over and economically exploited; and yet it is not a capitalist state, since there is no capitalist class in it which privately owns the means of production. In that state all the means and materials of production are concentrated in the hands of a bureaucracy comprising the party, the governmental machinery, and the army, which collectively owns all the wealth...

On the face of it, bureaucratic collectivism, that is, Stalinism, would appear to be a completely new thing. It is neither socialism nor capitalism. But upon closer examination it is not difficult to perceive that it belongs under a subheading of capitalism. One difference between it and traditional capitalism is collective ownership of the means of production as opposed to private ownership. The ownership of the means of production has not been socialised, but it has been collectivised (in the hands of the ruling class). And as for the relationship of owners to producers, exploitation continues to exist, and is in fact intensified. Bureaucratic collectivism has two great advantages over private capitalism and even over state capitalism (under the latter also there is large-scale private ownership): (a) it is possible to regulate capital in a more systematic fashion; (b) it is possible to exploit workers more efficiently. These two advantages are precisely what is needed to overcome the present crisis of capitalism. Seen from this point of view, Stalinism is a special kind of reformism, it is the reformism of the age in which capitalism has developed into imperialism. On the one hand it prevents the emergence and success of a genuine socialist revolution, and on the other, by means of collective exploitation, it continues the rule of capital over labour. Bureaucratic collectivism or Stalinism is essentially the transitional form which obtains during the delayed and difficult birth of socialism from the womb of capitalism. It cannot create a new historical era, but it can maintain itself for a time, and in several countries at once. In southeast Europe several such states have already been created, while the New China is being recast in the same mould.

To create a bureaucratic-collectivist state, one must first have a bureaucratic-collectivist party to carry out the action. The Chinese Communist Party has been that ever since Communism degenerated into bureaucratic collectivism. Because of a common international situation and long-standing historical ties, also because the class relationships within China after the defeat of the Great Revolution (the destruction of the proletariat, the long peasant wars, the utter corruption of the bourgeoisie, the anger and dissatisfaction of the petty bourgeoisie) were favourable to reformism and unfavourable to the growth of revolutionary socialism, the Chinese Communist Party took over entirely the bureaucratic collectivism perfected by Stalin within the Soviet Union. This ideological change was complete by the early Thirties. Now the CCP, embracing this ideology, has come to power and is organising the state around it...

Since the creature spawned by the CCP is a bureaucratic-collectivist state and must continue to enslave the workers, it is reactionary; but since such a state must reform capitalism, change property forms, and increase productive power, it cannot help adopting certain pro-

gressive measures...

The capitalism represented by the Stalinists is no longer capitalism in the original sense of the word, but bureaucratic collectivism; the class they represent is not a capitalist class in the original sense, but a bureaucratic class which collectively owns the means of production. This distinction is of exceptional importance. If one points to the Bonapartism of the CCP without understanding this difference, then one will be unable to understand the events taking place before one's very eyes or to predict future developments, because, while others may expect the attitude of the CCP to become daily more conciliatory toward the bourgeoisie, what we shall in fact see is a greater solidification of collectivism and a strengthening of state capital...

When the Stalinist party, in order to advance the cause of bureaucratic collectivism, very cautiously initiates its mass movement, can the workers and poor peasants, taking advantage of this opportunity, push the struggle further, work free of the limitations imposed upon them by the Stalinist party, and cause a bureaucratically dominated movement to turn into the Chinese socialist revolution — or can they not? In theory, we can never exclude this possibility, and we — the Chinese proletarian revolutionary party — must turn all our subjective efforts in that direction. But, in fact, if we dispassionately analyse China's present class relationships, we cannot deny that this possibility is extremely slight. The prestige of the Stalinist party among the general masses is still very great, the illusion that bureaucratic collectivism equals socialism is widespread; the Chinese proletariat and its real vanguard have yet to educate themselves and unite through the bitter experience of Stalinist rule, for only then can they initiate a mighty anti-Stalinist revolution.

Our chief task at present is patiently to interpret and reinterpret the fundamental nature of Stalinist bureaucratic collectivism. Naturally, "patient interpretation" by no means signifies passive observation. We must participate actively in these events. We must, while pointing out the internally contradictory character of the Stalinist party's present struggle, on the one hand advance and broaden in scope the fight against the landlords and rich peasants and advocate and participate in all anti-capitalist struggles; and, on the other hand, oppose simultaneously the fight of the bureaucracy, oppose the enslavement of the workers under whatever guise, oppose the oppression of the poor peasantry, and, above all, consistently advocate the convocation of a Congress of workers, peasants, and soldiers, to exchange the Stalinist military agencies and the so-called "People's Government" for a genuine workers' and peasants' state. We must direct every struggle toward the formation of soviets. Our principal slogan must be for a Congress of

Workers, Soldiers, and Peasants...

Therefore, not only can we state positively that China is not a workers' state, but we can also prove by the same token that the Soviet Union is no longer any sort of workers' state. The difference between the new China and the Soviet Union at present is one of degree, not of kind. Both are equally bureaucratic-collectivist states, except for a huge difference in degree of thoroughness. Therefore the Fourth International's traditional attitude toward the Soviet Union must be altered. It must reject the view that it is any sort of workers' state. Similarly it must reject the view that the Stalinist parties are parties of Menshevik opportunism, because, although the Stalinist parties are at present indeed fundamentally reformist, their principal crime is not their collaboration with the bourgeoisie but their bureaucratic enslavement of the proletariat. Needless to say, it is only by viewing the Soviet Union and the Stalinist parties from the point of view of bureaucratic collectivism that one can understand their nature and their actions. The same is true of the Chinese Stalinist party and its newly established state.

Labour in Revolutionary China: A First-Hand Report, December 1951

Labor in Revolutionary China: A First-Hand Report, Fourth International, 14, 2, March-April 1953: 49-55; *Labor in Revolutionary China*, Fourth International, 14, 4, July-August 1953: 88-94. The author was "a leading Trotskyist with many years of experience in the Chinese labour and revolutionary movement".

During this entire period the sole aim of the CP was "to restore production" and to find the means for helping the capitalists preserve their enterprises. In August 1949, the new regime published a series of "provisional laws" on the relations between workers and capitalists. These documents specify that "the workers must comply with factory administrative regulations and with the work orders of the capitalists. The capitalists alone have the light to hire and fire workers and personnel."

Those already dismissed can only be reinstated on the job if the employer himself decides to rehire them. "It is forbidden to occupy the factory by force or to compel the capitalists to rehire or to impede the smooth functioning of the enterprise in any way whatsoever. The workers and unions are in no case authorised to seize buildings, machines, raw materials, furnishings and property of the capitalist, nor to take over or automatically distribute these properties." The length of the working day varied from 8 to 12 hours. All labour conflicts must be settled by "negotiation." If the latter fails, the Bureau of Labour is the mediator. If it also is

unsuccessful, a last appeal may be made it to the Courts. "Prior to any decision, the two parties must maintain normal production, which means that the employer must not close the factory nor suspend payment nor decrease the amount of wages; for the workers, it means that they must continue to produce at the same tempo and maintain discipline." This law, in effect, suppressed almost all the workers' rights...

For example, in a large textile manufacturing plant in Shanghai, where the workers had molested "their representatives," the Army of Liberation received an order to suppress the disturbance. Eight workers were killed or wounded...

In most of the plants, Communist Party members in the unions, who were usually the "representatives" of the workers, worked toward strengthening the confidence of the capitalists while being aware of the hostile attitude taken by the workers...

Prior to liberation, the already weak forces of the Communist Party in the unions were annihilated by the Guomindang, whose control was then absolute. Subsequently, the Chinese CP did not recognise these unions, and set up other organisations for workers' representation. The CP was then very weak in the large cities. In Kwantung province the regional union had very few cadres of natives of the cities...

At the end of June 1950, the People's Government published a "Trade Union Law" covering workers in all enterprises, functionaries, teachers and workers of every kind. They received the right to form unions, on condition of recognising the superior authority of the Central National Trade Union. In the State enterprises, the unions could represent the workers in the control of production. In the private enterprises, they could conclude collective contracts within the framework of the negotiating committee between employers and workers. The unions from then on were assigned the task of "education and organisation of the workers and carrying out the policy of the People's Government. A new attitude toward work must be adopted, its order must be respected, competitions in production must be organised. In the State enterprises, a struggle must be conducted against corruption, waste and bureaucratism, and against sabotage; in the private enterprises, the prime task is to develop production, respect for the interests of the employers and the workers must be maintained, everything interfering with governmental action, especially sabotage, must be annihilated"...

We can state that in the spring and summer of 1950, the unions were a capitalist instrument in the hands of the government. Today they represent the organisation of the working class. We must now admit that, if not from the standpoint of its immediate interests, at least from that of its long-term interest, the unions are the

protective organisation of the proletariat.

Mei Lei-tar, On the Chinese Situation.

February 1959

Mei Lei-tar (February 1959), On the Chinese Situation. SWP DB, 20, 8, May 1959: 46-49

The main contradiction in present-day China is the contradiction between the bureaucracy and the masses. This contradiction was on the verge of creating a massive explosion during the "Hundred Flowers" campaign in 1957. The Chinese CP postponed this explosion by the following two measures. The first measure was the attack and suppression of those who really demand socialist democracy. Called "rightist," they were sent to the farms for "labour re-education." The second measure was to wage the "Great leap forward" campaign in order to convert workers' and peasants' dissatisfaction into the most intensified hard labour...

This wasn't enough, however. Mao went a step further. Under the most unfavourable economic conditions, he suddenly announced the setting up of the People's Communes. Within a short period of three months, over 500 million, or more than 99% of the peasants have been organised in over 26,000 "people's communes." The way of living of the peasants has been totally changed. Families (small-size families not the old patriarchal families which dissolved with the elimination of the feudal system) have been abolished. Fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, husbands and wives have been separated, reorganised into production and education units according to their age and sex. They now live along a strict military line. Cooking equipment has been confiscated and is being melted down to aid steel production. There are even no tables and chairs in some of the new dining halls. The peasants' mud houses and cottages have been demolished and are now being used as fertiliser. The peasants have to sleep under an open sky. Babies and young children have been taken away from their mothers and have been put in houses called "nurseries"...

Mao's non-Marxist and non-socialist policy is plunging 600 million Chinese people into slave conditions which are worse than any that could have existed in ancient Rome. Owing to the CP's tight military and police control, the Spartacus of our time has not appeared from among the Chinese masses, but the people's anger and resentment has reached a high point. Riots and chaos have occurred in various places (a peasants' riot in Wanchai village, Kwantung, was witnessed in Macao). This kind of dissatisfaction and rebellion causes worry about the stability of their regime among the ruling caste of the Chinese Communist Party...

The differences and dissatisfactions in the Chinese CP in the last analysis are mainly the reflections of the dis-

satisfaction of the masses. It is this very pressure which forces Mao to relinquish his post as Chairman of the People's Republic of China. There is another important factor which should not be overlooked. This is the influence on China by the Soviet Union. We do not think that Mao's resignation is the result of Moscow's order as some bourgeois reporters contend. The Chinese Communist Party is totally independent in domestic affairs and is starting to share international leadership with the Soviet Union due to its huge prestige in the Far East. The Communist Party of the Soviet Union cannot control the Chinese Party any more, but Mao's policy of people's communes is so immature as to give Khrushchev a favourable chance to exert influence. Although he has not openly criticised the policy, he certainly has criticised some of the work being done inside the Chinese CP...

The dissatisfaction and resentment of the masses will have repercussions inside the party and intensify the struggle there. This process will lead to a huge anti-bureaucratic current and it is only through the mobilisation of the masses in this way that socialist democracy will be realised.

What Workers' Liberty stand for

Today one class, the working class, lives by selling its labour power to another, the capitalist class, which owns the means of production.

Capitalists' control over the economy and their relentless drive to increase their wealth causes poverty, unemployment, blighting of lives by overwork; imperialism, environmental destruction and much else.

The working class must unite to struggle against the accumulated wealth and power of the capitalists, in the workplace and wider society.

The Alliance for Workers' Liberty wants socialist revolution: collective ownership of industry and services, workers' control, and a democracy much fuller than the present system, with elected representatives recallable at any time and an end to bureaucrats' and managers' privileges.

We fight for trade unions and the Labour Party to break with "social partnership" with the bosses, to militantly assert working-class interests.

In workplaces, trade unions, and Labour organisations; among students; in local campaigns; on the left and in wider political alliances we stand for:

- Independent working-class representation in politics
- A workers' government, based on and accountable to the labour movement
- A workers' charter of trade union rights — to or-

ganise, strike, picket effectively, and take solidarity action

- Taxing the rich to fund good public services, homes, education and jobs for all
- Workers' control of major industries and finance for a rapid transition to a green society
- A workers' movement that fights all forms of oppression
- Full equality for women, and social provision to free women from domestic labour. Reproductive freedoms and free abortion on demand.
- Full equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people
- Black and white workers' unity against racism
- Open borders
- Global solidarity against global capital — workers everywhere have more in common with each other than with their capitalist or Stalinist rulers
- Democracy at every level of society, from the smallest workplace or community to global social organisation
- Equal rights for all nations, against imperialists and predators big and small
- Maximum left unity in action, and full openness in debate

If you agree with us — join us!

See: workersliberty.org/join-awl

PART V: The Fate of the Trotskyists

Letter from Shanghai, 17 January 1949

C.M., (17 January 1949), *Letter from Shanghai*, *Labor Action*, 13, 6, 7 February 1949: 4

According to the recent announcement of a pro-CP newspaper in Hong Kong, it was stated that the CP will purge out the Chinese Trotskyists from all fronts, etc. Furthermore I was told by a Communist here that the Trotskyists would be seriously punished as soon as they took over Shanghai. Basing ourselves on our knowledge, it is clear that the CP will keep its word after its triumph.

We are now ready to take all possible means to prevent such bad consequences from befalling us if we are careless. At the same time we beg you to stop immediately sending us *The New International* and the *Labor Action* for safety sake.

Trotskyist Program in China, 5 April 1949

RCP (5 April 1949), *Trotskyist Program in China*, *The Militant*, XIII, 19, 9 May 1949: 3

The Stalinist bureaucrats have just declared in their Hong Kong paper, *Hwa Sanh Pao*, they will launch a savage campaign of extermination against the Trotskyists immediately after Nanking and Shanghai are 'liberated'. From a reliable source we have also learned that a list with the names of many of our leading members is in the hands of Stalinist GPU.

Appeal from Chinese Trotskyists, 28 January 1953

Appeal from Chinese Trotskyists (28 January 1953), *The Militant*, XVII, 42, 19 October 1953: 2

We five, the signatories of this document, are up to the present the only ones lucky enough to have escaped the recent wholesale arrests of Trotskyists... We are all communists: one of us has formally joined the Chinese Trotskyist party and the rest have been in the Trotskyist socialist youth... This document is written in Shanghai and will be taken to Hong Kong at the risk of death.

No sooner did the Chinese Communist Party overthrow the reactionary Guomindang regime and establish the People's Government of China than several local organisations of the Chinese Trotskyist Party were raided. In August 1949 most members of the Jiangsu-Zhejiang Emergency Committee of our Party and several other responsible comrades were arrested, but were lat-

er instructed to cease political activity and released.

Meanwhile, the CP mobilised an anti-Trotskyist campaign in two districts, Wenzhou of Zhejiang Province and Shunshan of Guangdong Province — where the Trotskyists had a long tradition of broad activities and had considerable strength in numbers — and arrested many of them. Some were shot on the false charge of being 'Guomindang agents'.

When they were bound and dragged to execution grounds, they demanded that the signboard hung on their backs should be marked with the name "Trotskyist", but this just demand was denied to them. Their mouths were stuffed with cotton to prevent them from shouting at the moment of execution.

In 1950, a new wave of similar general arrests occurred in another place (Jiangsu Province) where the Trotskyists had the most profound traditions and influence. The fate of dozens of arrested comrades is not yet known to this day.

The Trotskyist organisations which were not raided during these years were constantly persecuted in all sorts of ways, such as tracing their daily activities, constant surveillance, withholding of letters, etc.

From December 1952 to January 1953, wholesale arrests of Trotskyists were staged throughout the country, from Beijing to Guangzhou, and from Shanghai to Chongqing. These arrests occurred at midnight of two different days, 22 December 1952 and 8 January 1953. Such a simultaneous action on a national scale clearly indicates that it was by no means a 'local incident', but a planned action conducted directly by the supreme authority of the CP.

Up to now we have not yet learned exactly how many were arrested, but there are at least a few hundred already...

Among the arrested, ranging them in revolutionary generations, there are old militants over 50 years of age, like Zheng Chaolin, Yin Kwan, etc, who were leaders in the 1927 revolution and passed a number of years of their lives in Chiang Kai-shek's prisons...

Among those arrested are factory workers, trade-union officers, university professors, teachers in colleges or primary schools or in the 'work of social education', students, land-reform workers, functionaries in state financial or economic institutions, etc...

This nationwide series of arrests was carried out secretly and brutally. In the dead of night, CP agents came to the victims' homes under the pretext of taking a 'census'. These were frozen nights; snow fell heavily in

Shanghai, Tianjin and Beijing, and even in the south, the city of Guangzhou was also under the cold wave. The agents drove the families out of doors and proceeded to cross-question them for several hours while ransacking their homes. Then the victims were bound with their hands behind their backs and taken away without being allowed to either dress themselves or pack any necessities...

Chinese Trotskyists explain Mao purges, 11 July 1955

Editor, Chinese Trotskyists explains Mao purges, The Militant, XIX, 28, 11 July 1955: 2

The Maoists razed Chen [Duxiu]'s tomb to the ground as part of their consistent efforts to prevent the Chinese working class from developing its own political leadership and taking an independent course.

Prominent Trotskyists imprisoned or killed by the Maoists

From Gregor Benton, Prophets Unarmed (2015)

He **Zishen** (Ho Tzu-shen) (1898-1961). A Beijing student in the early 1920s. Participated in the Northern Expedition. Active in Hunan and succeeded Mao as Secretary of the Hunan Provincial Committee. Became a Trotskyist in 1929, and spent several years in jail under the Guomindang. Arrested by the Maoist secret police in 1952. According to his prison-mate Zheng Chaolin, he had collapsed in both body and spirit before he died of a stroke in prison in 1960.

Huang Jiantong (Huang Chien-t'ung) (1918-87). A leader of the Guangxi Trotskyists. Released from prison together with Zheng Chaolin in 1979, and died in 1991.

Jiang Zhendong (Chiang Chen-tung) (1906-82). A textile worker and veteran Communist. One of the leaders of the Shanghai insurrections of 1927. Became a Trotskyist in 1929. Arrested by the Maoist police in 1952 for his dissident activities. Released from prison in 1979.

Lian Zhengyan (Lien Cheng-yen) (1928-51). A young Trotskyist student in Wenzhou, Zhejiang, shot by the Maoists in 1951.

Lin Huanhua. A leader of the student Trotskyists in Guangxi province in the early 1930s. In charge of

printing for the Trotskyist centre in the mid-1930s and a member of the Executive of the Printworkers' Trade Union in Guangzhou until his arrest in December 1952.

Liu Jialiang (Liu Chia-lien). One of the leaders of the second generation of Chinese Trotskyists. Liu died in a North Vietnamese Stalinist prison in 1950, along with

two Vietnamese Trotskyists.

Liu Jingzhen (Liu Ching-chen) (1902-79). Joined the Party and took part in the Revolution of 1925-27. Married Zheng Chaolin and became a Trotskyist together with Chen Duxiu. When Chen was in prison she acted as a link between him and the surviving underground Trotskyist organisation. Arrested by the Communists in 1952, freed five years later, and rejoined her husband Zheng in a labour camp during the Cultural Revolution. Released in June 1979 and died in October of the same year.

Sun Xi (Sun Hsi). A left-wing writer who joined the Trotskyists. After the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, Sun went to Yunnan with Zhao Ji. After 1949, Sun, Zhao Ji, and Pu Dezhi were arrested and interviewed in Kunming by Zhou Enlai, who urged them to 'reform'; Pu did so, and was freed immediately; Zhao and Sun stood firm, and were kept in jail, Zhao until 1979 and Sun, too, probably until 1979. Shortly after his release, Sun died.

Wang Changyao (Wang Ch'ang-yao). A returned student from Moscow who became a Trotskyist in the early 1930s. Active in the Beijing student movement before he returned to his native province of Shandong, together with his wife, **Zhang Sanjie**, to organise an anti-Japanese guerrilla detachment that was destroyed by the CCP.

Wang Guolong (Wang Kuo-lung) (1914-2010). Became a Trotskyist in 1929. A leader of the Wenzhou Trotskyists. Arrested in 1952 and sentenced to life.

Wang Shiwei (Wang Shih-wei) (1907-47). A writer and translator, author of the well-known article 'The Wild Lily', and a Trotskyist sympathiser. Killed in Yenan by the CCP.

Wang Songjiu (Wang Sung-chiu) (1922-52). A young Trotskyist educator and organiser in Japanese-occupied Shanghai. Arrested by the Maoist secret police in 1952 and committed suicide in prison.

Yin Kuan (Yin K'uan) (1897-1967). A veteran Communist who joined the CCP in France, was active in its Shandong Provincial Committee, its Anhui Provincial Committee, and its Jiangsu-Zhejiang Regional Committee in 1925-27, and became a Trotskyist in 1929. Twice arrested by the Guomindang for his revolutionary activities, and arrested by the Maoists in 1952.

Yu Shuoyi (Yü Shuo-i). A leader of the Shanghai young Trotskyists who was the first to be arrested after 1949 and died in an asylum where he had been sent after developing schizophrenia.

Zeng Meng (Tseng Meng) (1904-58?). Introduced to the Communist Party by Deng Zhongxia and Li Qihan in Guangzhou. Became a Trotskyist in Moscow. Worked under Zhou Enlai on return to China before his discovery and expulsion. Arrested in 1932 with Chen Duxiu and Peng Shuzhi, but bailed by a Guomindang agent. Returned to Wenzhou, where he worked as a Trotskyist. Arrested after 1949 but never sentenced. Died in prison sometime between 1958 and 1960.

Zhang Dehan (Chang Teh-han) (1918-87). Joined the underground Trotskyist organisation in 1939 and carried out educational work among the workers in Shanghai. Arrested by the Maoist secret police in 1952, released from a labour camp in 1979, and died of illness in 1987.

Zhang Yisen (Chang I-sen) (1909-1980). she participated in the 1925-27 revolution. After its defeat, remained in the party. Twice arrested by the Guomindang and served short prison terms. Became a Trotskyist in 1929, and remained so until she was arrested and persecuted in 1952 by the Mao regime. Died in a fit of schizophrenia. Married to He Zishen.

Zhao Ji (Chao Chi) (1902-94). A veteran Communist who participated in the Northern Expedition as a political commissar and became a Trotskyist in Moscow in 1928. Kept in jail until 1979.

Zheng Chaolin (Cheng Ch'ao-lin) (1901-98). A writer and translator, joined the CCP in Paris in 1922. Returned to China in 1924 to edit the Party organ Xiangdao ('Guide Weekly'). A member of the Party's Hubei Provincial Committee during the Revolution of 1925-27, and a participant in the Emergency Conference of 7 August 1927. Became a Trotskyist in 1929, and a founder and leader of the Chinese Trotskyist organisation. Served seven years in prison under Chiang Kai-shek. Arrested by the Maoist secret police in 1952 and kept in prison without trial until 1979. His memoirs were published in China in 1986.

Zhou Lüqiang (Chou Lü-ch'iang) (1927-). The youngest of the known Trotskyists, he was born in Wenzhou and joined the movement in 1947. Arrested in 1952 and sentenced to seven years, but did not return to Shanghai from Inner Mongolia until 1987.

Zhou Rensheng (Chou Jen-sheng) (1922-2004). Became a Trotskyist in 1940. Active in Wenzhou. Arrested in 1952 and sentenced to life. Together with Wang Guolong, translated Deutscher's Trotsky trilogy while in prison.

PART VI: Grant — The Inventor of China as a “Workers’ State”

Ted Grant, Against the Theory of State Capitalism: Reply to Comrade Cliff, 13 June 1949

Ted Grant, The Unbroken Thread, 1989

Look what happened in China after Chiang Kai-shek had, with the dregs of the Shanghai gangs, crushed the Shanghai working class. The bankers wished to give him banquets and applaud him as the benefactor and saviour of civilisation.

But Chiang wanted something more material than the praise of his masters. Unceremoniously, he clapped all the rich industrialists and bankers of Shanghai in jail and extracted a ransom of millions before he would release them. He had done the job for them and now demanded the price. He had not crushed the Shanghai workers for the benefit of the capitalists, but for what it meant in power and income for him and his gang of thugs. Yet who will presume to say that the bankers who were in jail were not still the ruling class though they did not hold political power? The Chinese bourgeoisie (no Marxists!) must have reflected sadly on the complexity of society where a good portion of the loot in the surplus value extracted from the workers had to go to their own watchdogs, and where many of their class were languishing in jail.

The bourgeoisie is politically expropriated under such conditions; naked force dominates society. An enormous part of the surplus value is consumed by the top militarists and bureaucrats. But it is in the interests of these bureaucrats that the capitalist exploitation of the workers should continue, and therefore while they squeeze as much as they can out of the bourgeoisie, nevertheless, they defend private property. That is why the bourgeoisie continues to be the ruling class...

For the proletariat to take the path of socialism, a new revolution, a supplementary political revolution which will turn the Bonapartist proletarian state into a workers’ democracy is necessary. Such a conception fits in with the experience of the past. Just as capitalism passed through many stormy contradictory phases (we are far from finished with them yet, as our epoch bears witness) so in the given historic conditions has the rule of the proletariat in Russia. So also by a mutual reaction, Eastern Europe and China are passing through this Bonapartist phase, resulting in the inevitability of new

political revolutions in these countries in order to install workers’ democracy as the prerequisite for a transition to socialism.

It is in the inter-relation between the class and its state under given historical conditions that we find the explanation of Stalinist degeneration, not in the mystical idea that a workers’ state, under all conditions, must be a perfect workers’ democracy or the transformation of the state into a class. In the long run, the economic factor, as in bourgeois society, with many upheavals and catastrophes, will emerge triumphant...

Ted Grant, Stalinist land programme wins peasants.

Ted Grant, Stalinist land programme wins peasants. Chiang’s conscripts roped to prevent escape, Socialist Appeal, 66, January 1949: 4

Despite the false political line which led to successive disasters, in one of the most remarkable military feats in world history, Mao was driven from Central and South China in a 6,000-mile retreat to the mountain fastnesses around Yen-an, where a “soviet” republic was set up. There, despite all the efforts of the Chiang regime to dislodge them, they succeeded in holding out against one attack after another. The secret of their success was that the land had been divided among the peasants in this small area, comprising, according to some estimates, about 10 million population...

The Chinese Red Army had waged a guerrilla struggle against Japanese militarism throughout the war and were in a strategic position to seize certain areas with the Japanese collapse...

However, the main reason for the victories of the Chinese Stalinists has been readily pointed out by Mao Zedong: the social questions involved. “Land to the peasants,” as in the Russian revolution, sounded the death knell of feudal landowners and their corrupt regime. In large part, the Chinese Stalinists have carried out the agrarian revolution. That is the significant difference between the struggle in 1927 and now. It is this which has been responsible for the melting away of the armies which Chiang tried to use to crush the agrarian rebellion. Chiang’s armies are composed of peasants—the poorest peasants at that—who have not enough money to escape conscription by bribing the officials...

One of the outstanding facts in the situation in China

is the relative passivity of the working class. It is true that as a result of the collapse of the Chiang armies, there have been widespread strike struggles in the large cities, Shanghai, Canton, Hankow and Nanking, despite the repressive conditions. However, it is clear that as the Stalinists advance towards the big cities on the Yangtse, the workers, for lack of a mass alternative, can only rally to their banner. The workers never supported the Chiang Kai-shek regime.

Every socialist worker will wholeheartedly applaud the destruction of feudalism and of large-scale capitalism in this important section of Asia, even though it is carried out under the leadership of Stalinism. In its long-term implications it is as important as the October revolution itself...

While supporting the destruction of feudalism in China, it must be emphasised that only a horrible caricature of the Marxist conception of the revolution will result because of the leadership of the Stalinists. Not a real democracy, but a totalitarian regime as brutal as that of Chiang Kai-shek will develop. Like the regimes in Eastern Europe, Mao will look to Russia as his model. Undoubtedly, tremendous economic progress will be achieved. But the masses, both workers and peasants, will find themselves enslaved by the bureaucracy...

However, it is quite likely that Stalin will have a new Tito on his hands.

Ted Grant, Reply to David James, 11 March 1949

Ted Grant, The Unbroken Thread, 1989

The Marxist method starts with a class analysis of society and any of its phenomena or organs, but it does not end there. It is necessary from there to analyse all the cross-currents and interactions within the given class definition. In dealing with Yugoslavia and China, it is necessary first to have the essentials firmly in mind. Without the existence of Russia as a degenerate workers' state, without the weakening of world imperialism as a result of the war, Eastern Europe would have taken on an entirely different pattern. These events can only be explained on the basis of the survival of Russia with its nationalised property forms; the survival of Stalinism at the helm of a vastly strengthened Russia as the outcome of the war. It is this which led to the extension of the revolution in a deformed, Stalinist shape, to the other countries.

From the fact that the revolution — and undoubtedly it is a revolution taking place in China — springs from the 'innermost needs of the country' and is not merely a creation of Moscow, comrade James draws the conclusion that therefore Mao must be an unconscious Trotskyist:

"The RCP's position is vague, but at least we can say that it places Stalin and Tito on the same footing, and regards the overthrow of both as essential for socialist advance. Let us see how these will stand the test of a fresh event, the victory of Stalinism in China.

"The neo-Stalinist attitude will stand this test. As I remarked before, the Yugoslav revolution appears to have sprung from the innermost needs of the country, and not to have been imposed by Moscow, but no doubt is possible in the case of China. Clearly the revolution is primarily a native affair, consequently Mao, like Tito, is a genuine revolutionist an 'unconscious Trotskyist', and fit material for recruitment to the Fourth International. (Doubtless the I.S. is preparing a letter along these lines). On the other hand if the IS insists on regarding the Chinese Stalinist regime, like Yugoslavia, to be degenerate, we are again faced with the question, 'what is the source of this early degeneration?'

"The RCP position on the other hand finally collapses. By no stretch of the imagination can Red China be conceived as a Russian creation. If we regard Mao, like Tito, as being equally as bad as Stalin, we must acknowledge that the features which cause us to take this attitude are inherent in the revolution. That is, it is not a degenerated workers' state, but a bureaucratic class state, i.e., we arrive at Shachtman's position."

It is unprecedented in the history of Marxism, that a revolution which leads to the nationalisation of property and the division of land, should begin among the peasantry and not the working class. How is this to be explained?

Paradoxically, this peasant movement is an off-shoot of the defeat of the revolution of 1925-7. With the defeat of the proletariat, the Chinese Stalinists transferred their base from the proletariat to the peasantry. It cut itself adrift from the cities and led a peasant war. Its whole social basis, the psychology of its leadership, which has been in the mountains and rural areas for more than 20 years, became divorced from the working class and its outlook. The psychology of this group was necessarily determined by their conditions of life. The original nucleus that formed the leadership and staff of this movement, was composed of a small proportion of ex-worker militants, bandits, ex-peasants, adventurers and intellectuals. In that sense, it was a classical Bonapartist grouping. It fused itself into an army...

The revolution in China starts with a Bonapartist deformation, not because it is inherent in the needs of the revolution, but on the contrary because of the specific social circumstances nationally and internationally which we have dealt with...

Stalinism, leaning on the proletariat can, under giv-

en conditions, balance between the opposing classes to strengthen itself for its own ends. We have seen how this was accomplished in Eastern Europe. We now have a similar development taking place before our eyes in China. Whereas it would be impossible for the revolutionary Marxist tendency to make a coalition with the bourgeoisie, precisely because of the need to ensure the independent self-mobilisation of the masses in the struggle to overthrow the bourgeoisie, Stalin has no need for such inhibitions. Stalinism makes a coalition under conditions where the back of the bourgeoisie has been broken, in order to play off the bourgeoisie against the danger of an insurgent proletariat. Thus the coalition which the Stalinists are proposing in China will not mean the victory or even the survival of the bourgeoisie. It will be used in order to gain a breathing space for the organisation of a Stalinist, Bonapartist state machine on the lines of Moscow...

It is evident that the Chinese movement draws its viability from the 'innermost needs of the economy'. However, while a genuine revolutionary, Trotskyist leadership in a backward country would draw its strength from the proletariat, welding the peasant masses behind it, Mao rests on the peasantry and not only bases himself on the passivity of the proletariat at this stage, but ruthlessly suppresses any proletarians who dare to take measures against the bourgeoisie on the basis of independent class action. At a later stage, Mao will lean on the proletariat when he needs it against the bourgeoisie, only later to betray and ruthlessly suppress it. In this it would be far more correct to say that Mao, as Tito, is a conscious Stalinist, adopting consciously many of the Bonapartist manoeuvres which Stalin was forced to adopt empirically...

Mao's regime will follow the pattern of the other Stalinist regimes. Having consolidated itself, it will become a military-police dictatorship with all the other malignant aspects of the Russian regime. The signs are already visible...

The fact that Mao has a genuine mass base independent of the Russian Red Army, will in all likelihood provide for the first time an independent base for Chinese Stalinism which will no longer rest directly on Moscow. As with Tito, so with Mao, despite the role of the Red Army in Manchuria, Chinese Stalinism is developing an independent base. Because of the national aspirations of the Chinese masses, the traditional struggle against foreign domination, the economic needs of the country and above all, the powerful base in an independent state apparatus, the danger of a new and really formidable Tito in China is a factor which is causing anxiety in Moscow...

We think we have shown above the deformation of the Chinese revolution and its roots. We support the

progressive measures that the Stalinists take in the same way as we supported them in Finland and Poland, but we warn against the inevitable corruption because of the social forces at work. Thus the role of the Chinese Trotskyists is clear. They support, yes hail, the progressive measures introduced; at the same time, they explain the need for soviets, for democratic control by the masses, etc, and they oppose any reactionary measures taken against the masses in the interests of the bureaucracy. Theirs is not an easy task. The Opposition has been virtually wiped out in Russia; does this mean to say that there is no role for the Trotskyists in Russia? We place our faith in Chinese Trotskyism, not as a mere ritual, but because we have faith in the future of socialism. Of its own volition, China will never be freed from bureaucratic strangulation.

***Ted Grant, Open Letter to B.S.F.I.,
September/October 1950***

Marxist Internet Archive

The collapse of capitalism in Eastern Europe enabled Stalinism as a Bonapartist tendency to manipulate the workers and manoeuvre between the classes — establishing deformed workers' states of a Bonapartist character with more or less mass support. Stalinism in the present peculiar relationship of class forces, basing itself in the last analysis on the proletariat — in the sense of standing for the defence of the new economic form of society — is Bonapartism of a new type manoeuvring between the classes in order to establish a regime on the pattern of Moscow.

In China and Yugoslavia, the Stalinist parties came to power on the basis of overwhelming mass support and established regimes relatively independent of the Moscow bureaucracy.

The fact that the revolution in China and Yugoslavia could be developed in a distorted and debased character is due to the world factors of:

(a) The crisis of world capitalism.

(b) The existence of a strong, deformed workers' state adjacent to these countries and powerfully influencing the workers' movement.

(c) The weakness of the Marxist current of the Fourth International.

These factors have resulted in an unparalleled development, which could not have been foreseen by any of the Marxist teachers: the extension of Stalinism as a social phenomenon over half Europe, over the Chinese sub-continent and with the possibility of spreading over the whole of Asia.

This poses new theoretical problems to be worked out by the Marxist movement. Under conditions of isola-

tion and paucity of forces, new historical factors could not but result in a theoretical crisis of the movement, posing the problem of its very existence and survival.

Ted Grant, Stalinism in the Postwar World, June 1951

Ted Grant, Stalinism in the Postwar World, The International Socialist, 1, 2, May/June 1952: 14-16

History, however, is full of inexhaustible variants which cannot be foreseen in advance. Theory is grey, but the tree of life is green. All these complicated factors in combination have resulted in the revolution being accomplished in a different way than theory had previously indicated. Using the same technique as in Yugoslavia, with the mass movement of the peasants as their base, Mao and the Chinese Red Army (with possibly an even more popular and greater mass base than Tito had) waged a revolutionary war for the land. The armies of the Kuomintang clique melted away. Here was a peasant war in the classical revolutionary tradition. The Bonapartist clique of Stalinism based itself firmly on the longing of the peasantry for the land. Leading the peasant war they gained the powerful support of the masses. Here we have a peculiar variation of the permanent revolution [where a victorious peasant army was led by] ex-Marxists.

Due to the crisis of the regime and the paralysis of the movements in the cities by Stalinism, Mao Zedong and the other Stalinist leaders established an independent base in the peasant army; the classical instrument of Bonapartism. But in line with the epoch and the various factors already exhaustively dealt with it could not end as normally a peasant war independent of the mass movement in the cities would end. Having conquered the cities, with at least the passive acquiescence of the working class and urban petty bourgeois masses, Mao Zedong and his group could succeed in Bonapartist fashion in balancing between the classes.

Starting with the gradual elimination of the landlords throughout the territory which they had conquered (after the initial stages of the movement the bureaucracy was concerned not to have any independent movement of either the peasants or the workers which could not be directly harnessed and controlled by themselves), and immediately confiscating what they termed 'bureaucratic capitalism' i.e. the key centres of whatever heavy industry and finance existed, the Bonapartist bureaucracy could manoeuvre between the classes. For a temporary period and in order to help consolidate the rise and control of the bureaucratic caste, they have tolerated merchant and industrial capitalism in a neo-NEP.

Manoeuvring between the classes, they will establish a firm and strong state machine. Basing themselves now on the peasants, now on the workers, then on the bourgeoisie, to serve different ends they will balance between them as 'arbiter' and regulator of the relations between the classes. Inevitably they will move on to the confiscation of private ownership in industry and then at a later stage, to the expropriation of the peasantry as well, on the model of Russia and Eastern Europe. Because of the weakness and impotence of the bourgeoisie, with no historical perspective and no historical mission to perform, it will be eliminated with comparative ease. Mao will base himself on the workers in order to strike blows at the bourgeoisie, as Stalin did at the time of the elimination of the Kulaks and the 'Nepmen'.

PART VII: Other early Workers' Statists

Morris Stein, PC Discussion on the Buffer Countries, 2 August 1949

Morris Stein (2 August 1949), PC Discussion on the Buffer Countries, SWP Internal Bulletin, 11, 5, October 1949: 19

In my presentation of the resolution on the Eastern European countries at the last meeting, I failed to deal with the position of the British RCP... their position dates back some sixteen months [April 1948]. Already then they declared that the buffer countries are workers' states. As a matter of fact, they have a similar position today on China. They proceed from the concept that Stalinism in power equals a workers' state. When they first took their position that the buffer countries were workers' states, those countries had not yet undergone any extensive nationalisations. In a sense their method of reasoning is similar to that of the Shachtmanites, even though they arrive at opposite conclusions.

Marcel Bleibtreu-Favre, Where is Pablo going? June 1951

Marcel Bleibtreu-Favre (June 1951), Where is Pablo going?, International Committee Documents 1951-1954. March 1974: 15

In April 1950 one of us, Comrade Bleibtreu, spoke before a public meeting of the 'Lenin Circle' on the problems of the Chinese revolution. Vietnamese, Chinese, French, and Sinhalese comrades attended the meeting. It concluded with an analysis of the Chinese revolution and the Chinese Communist Party, and with the necessity for Trotskyists to enter the Chinese Communist Party and form its consistent Marxist wing, a wing capable of resolving in both theory and practice the tasks of the permanent revolution.

Sam Marcy, Memorandum, 29 October 1950

Sam Marcy (29 October 1950), Memorandum on the Unfolding War and the Tasks of the Proletariat in the New Phase of the World Permanent Revolution, SWP Internal Bulletin, 12, 4, November 1950: 4

China is a workers' state because the main fundamental obstacle to the rule of the workers and peasants has been swept away, and a new alliance — based on workers and peasants — erected in its place. It is not a chemically pure dictatorship of the proletariat, as no social formation ever is, but its fundamental class content is beyond doubt.

PART VIII: The Fourth International collapses behind Maoism

IEC, The Third Chinese Revolution, April 1949

International Executive Committee (IEC) of the Fourth International (April 1949), The Third Chinese Revolution, Seventh Plenum, International Information Bulletin, June 1949: 29-32

9. During the last years the Mao Zedong movement has remained what it was at its origin, a peasant movement led by the Stalinists... Even now, at the moment of victory over the completely disintegrated nationalist armies, the armies of Mao Zedong display extreme caution in approaching the large cities... The victory of Mao Zedong over Chiang Kai-shek is a military victory of peasant uprisings over a regime in complete disintegration.

10. Socially, the Chinese Communist Party is a typical realisation of the bi-partite party which Bukharin and Stalin called for at the time of the Second Chinese Revolution...

15. From this point of view also, the Chinese revolution will reveal its character as permanent revolution...

IEC, Theses on the International Perspectives, 27 November- 1 December 1950

IEC (27 November-1 December 1950), Theses on the International Perspectives, Ninth Plenum, International Information Bulletin, January 1951: 6

In the event of powerful revolutionary uprisings of the masses, like those which occurred during the war in Yugoslavia, in China, and recently in Korea... it is not excluded that certain Communist Parties with the bulk of their forces can be pushed out of the strict orbit of the Soviet bureaucracy and can outline a revolutionary orientation.

From that moment on, they would cease to be strictly Stalinist Parties, mere instruments of the policy of the Soviet bureaucracy, and will lend themselves to a differentiation and to a politically autonomous course...

In the event of new revolutionary uprisings led by the Communist Parties, the Fourth International cannot permit itself a repetition of the errors of evaluation committed in the past regarding Yugoslavia or China.

Mandel, The Third Chinese Revolution, December 1950

Ernest Germain [Mandel] (December 1950), The Third Chinese Revolution II. Nature and Perspectives of the China of Mao Zedong, Fourth International, 12, 1, January-February 1951: 20-25

It was by basing itself on the peasantry that the Chinese CP was able to conquer power, and that is why the nationwide extension of the agrarian reform was inevitable. But what happened when the peasant armies entered the big industrial cities of Eastern China? To properly answer this question it must be understood that these peasant armies were headed by a party that in program as well as political perspectives, tradition, consciousness and tempering of cadres did not issue from the peasantry but remained for close to three decades the main spokesman of the Chinese proletariat. To be sure, this party fought for the bloc of "four classes," it came out in favour of collaboration with the "industrial bourgeoisie," with the representatives of which it constituted a coalition government. But it affirmed at the same time that "the working class has become the ruling class of the nation" and that it is only a question of time until the construction of a socialist society can be undertaken in China...

The whole logic of the situation pointed to the conclusions of the Trotskyist theory of the permanent revolution...

To estimate the chances of such a turn to the left, we must not forget the fact that the leadership of the Chinese CP, contrary to the affirmations of some people, has never ceased to consider itself as a proletarian leadership. True, the party is composed of an overwhelming majority of petty-bourgeois peasant elements. Its rapid growth (30,000 members in 1937, 1,200,000 in 1945, 4,000,000 at present) signifies an extremely low ideological level. But at the Seventh Congress, when the party was still cut off from the cities, it did not cease insisting on the proletarian character of the party, on the necessity of the non-proletarian members assimilating the proletarian ideology; they even inscribed in the statutes different conditions for admission of workers, poor farmers, middle farmers and intellectuals, etc., increasing the difficulty of their entrance into the party to the degree their mode of existence departs from that of

the proletariat...

Politically it is a *Workers and Farmers Government* still maintaining a coalition with certain elements of the big bourgeoisie. The alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry is in brief the revolutionary alliance with the poor farmers in the North, in the Centre the temporary alliance with the rich peasantry and in the South the uncertain alliance with the urban exploiter elements who dominate agriculture. Dual power, existing on the village scale, is also reproduced on the national scale in the opposition between various zones and inside the government itself by the presence of bourgeois ministers in its ranks.

Fourth International, Third Congress, August-September 1951

Fourth International (August-September 1951), The International Situation, Third Congress, Fourth International, November-December 1951: 197-98

In China, our reorganised and reoriented forces will give unconditional support to the struggle for the defence of the Chinese revolution against imperialism, against the native reactionary forces and against the manoeuvres and pressures of the Soviet bureaucracy which is seeking to reduce China to a state of dependence. They will have to clearly define their line in relation to the victory of Mao Zedong, i.e., our line in the past and as regards the present regime. They should find the means of working in the mass organisations under the influence of the Chinese CP, including the CP itself, with the aim of aiding a more radical development of the militants of these organisations and of organising them against all bureaucratic measures of their leadership. They will accord critical support to the Mao Zedong regime and will centre their main opposition on the character and organisation of the government. They will call for all power to the democratically elected people's committees. They will develop a more concrete program of economic and political demands and for the reconstruction of China, with the chief aim of satisfying the needs of the workers and poor peasants of the country.

IEC, Report on the Chinese Question, May 1952

Report on the Chinese Question (May 1952), Eleventh plenum, International Information Bulletin, December 1952

Germain [Mandel]: The Chinese CP... has begun in reality to apply the theory of the permanent revolution...

Characterisation of the Chinese CP as a working class

party is the prerequisite for a theoretical understanding of the third Chinese revolution...

To characterise the government therefore as a workers' and peasants' government...

Peng Shuzhi: I corrected my original position on the class character of the Chinese CP...

On the question of the class character of the State, I have also revised my position and there are no longer any major differences between us on this question. The main disagreement now lies in the characterisation of the government. I think that it is an error to characterise the government as a workers and peasants' government...

I wish to add in conclusion that I agree with the position of critical support for Mao...

I must state that we decided as early as 1948 to participate in peripheral Stalinist organisations and in the CP itself. In 1949 we held a CC meeting which decided upon entry and we adopted resolutions stating that our comrades must work as the best militants in these organisations. We also took special measures on the attitude to be adopted regarding liaisons etc. Some cells were destroyed as a result of penetration by Stalinists but elsewhere the work is continuing successfully...

Pablo: Insofar as the Stalinist parties are concerned, what is decisive for characterising them as working class parties, is their allegiance to the Kremlin bureaucracy, that is to say, to the bureaucracy of a degenerated workers' state...

Bleibtreu: Which class holds the State power? The working class holds it through the CP as intermediary. In order to re-establish their power the former possessing classes cannot change the government through cold means. We can maintain that a return to former conditions would require a counter-revolution, a civil war. On the other hand, however, is it necessary to destroy the existing state in order to go ahead towards the solution of the tasks of the permanent revolution? Must a new state be built? Is a civil war necessary for that? It is by the road of reform that this can be realised...

When the masses enter into struggle with such a sweep as they have in China, the CP ceases to be dependent on the Kremlin, ceases to be a Stalinist party in the classical meaning of the word.

IEC, The Third Chinese Revolution. Eleventh Plenum, May 1952

IEC, The Third Chinese Revolution. Eleventh Plenum (May 1952), Fourth International, July-August 1952: 116-118

14. We characterise this government as a *workers' and peasants' government* because, on the one hand, it has broken in practice with the historical interests of the bourgeoisie to enter upon the road of revolution, and because on the other hand it has not yet completed the destruction of the power of the bourgeoisie, nor liquidated the dual power from top to bottom of the state apparatus. *This workers' and peasants' government will only be a short, transitory stage along the road to a dictatorship of the proletariat, toward which the dynamics of the national and international situation is more and more propelling it...*

15. The characteristic nature of the CP as an opportunist workers' party, operating in a semi-colonial country, has a dual significance which reflects the two fundamental aspects in the contradictory policy of this party...

20. The Fourth International and the Chinese Trotskyists will give critical support to Mao Zedong's government...

21. In order to realise the orientation of unconditional defence of the Chinese People's Republic, and critical support to the Mao government, the Chinese militants of the Fourth International should integrate themselves completely in the mass movement of their country, as has been decided by the Third World Congress of the Fourth International.

Ernest Mandel, *The Rise and Decline of Stalinism*, November 1953

Ernest Mandel [Germain] (November 1953), *The Rise and Decline of Stalinism. Resolution Approved by the Fourth World Congress of 1954*, Fourth International, 1, Winter 1958, 31-56

28. Both the Yugoslav state and the Chinese state, born of a victorious revolution resulting from the destruction of the political power of the bourgeoisie and of its state, have moved at a rapid tempo toward the complete economic expropriation of that same bourgeoisie. After the first hesitations and compromises, to the extent that this tendency has been manifested more and more, the structure of these states has also been adjusted to its new social base, and the non-capitalist, working-class character of these states has clearly manifested itself. But, even though born of a victorious revolution, the Yugoslav state and the Chinese state bear the stigmata of an opportunist and bureaucratic workers' leadership... In the case of China, the opportunist and bureaucratic character of the Chinese CP has equally left its mark upon the Constitution and upon the evolution of the state in the People's Republic of China. Its desire to collaborate with important fractions of the "national bourgeoisie" led it in the beginning to sabotage and im-

pede revolutionary mobilisation of the proletariat in the cities conjointly with the revolutionary uprising of the peasants in North China. The same desire then led it to take entire segments of the old Kuomintang state apparatus and incorporate them into the newly constructed state apparatus. And when, after the Chinese intervention in Korea, the offensive was opened up against the bourgeoisie and a certain mobilisation of the masses of the poor took place (mobilisation of the peasant masses in the South in order to achieve the agrarian reform; mobilisation of the workers in the campaigns Against Five Ways and the campaign Against Three Ways), the Chinese CP did everything possible to limit this mobilisation and halt it and prevent it from giving birth to organs of self-administration of the working-class masses in the cities; and it even utilised this same occasion to employ terror against the vanguard revolutionary elements. As in the case of Yugoslavia so in the case of China the new workers' states are not based upon organs of self-administration (soviets, committees), and where such organs formally exist, they are void of their revolutionary content because of the lack of political freedom and freedom of expression for the various workers' currents. That is why in these two cases it is a question of *bureaucratically deformed workers' states...*

33. The tasks of the Fourth International in Yugoslavia and in China are determined by the particular nature of these states and of the Yugoslav and Chinese Communist Parties. Since workers' states are involved, we are obviously for their defence against any attempts to overthrow them and to alter the social bases created by the Yugoslav and Chinese revolutions. Since both the Chinese CP and to a certain extent also the Yugoslav CP are in reality bureaucratic centrist parties, which however still find themselves under the pressure of the revolution in their countries, we do not call upon the proletariat of these countries to constitute new revolutionary parties or to prepare a political revolution in these countries. We are working toward the constitution of a left tendency within the JCP and within the Chinese CP.

IEC, *The Class Nature of the People's Republic of China*. November 1954

La nature de classe de la République populaire de Chine, Résolution adoptée par le 15e Plénum du Comité Exécutif International — November 1954, Quatrième internationale, 12, 68, mars 1955: 73

Power in China is therefore consolidated in the hands of a workers' party which occupies a leading role in a process of permanent revolution, where bourgeois power has been destroyed. This is why the 15th IEC plenum considers China to be a workers' state, though marked by bureaucratic deformations.

PART IX: The SWP wobbles over Maoism

SWP NC, *The Third Chinese Revolution*, 16 June 1955

SWP National Committee, (16 June 1955), *The Third Chinese Revolution and its Aftermath, Discussion Draft*, SWP Discussion Bulletin, A-31, October 1955: 9-10

China is a deformed workers' state because of the Stalinist deformation of the Third Chinese Revolution...

In terms of political organisation the Mao bureaucracy succeeded in the very course of the Third Chinese Revolution in imposing a totalitarian state power... poses before the Chinese workers the iron necessity of political revolution against the bureaucratic caste.

James P. Cannon, *On the Chinese Question*, 18 September 1955

James P. Cannon, (16-18 September 1955), *On the Chinese Question: Speech at NC plenum*, SWP Discussion Bulletin, 17, 1, March 1956: 1-7

I personally am of the opinion that these new developments of recent years in the Chinese revolution represent a striking confirmation of the theory of the permanent revolution — if we understand it correctly and if we see the facts as they really are...

That was one feature of the first stage of the revolution, distinguishing it from that of 1917 in Russia — the absence of the dominating role of the city proletariat. The second big difference was the program proclaimed by the Stalinist leaders at the moment of the victory. That was a program of capitalism.

It seems obvious to me that this military victory of a predominantly peasant army, led by a gang of Stalinists openly proclaiming a capitalist program for the further development of China, could not, by itself, signify the creation of a workers' state...

Here I disagree quite radically with comrades who say we should have designated the new regime in China as a workers' state from the moment of the military victory in 1949. That gives the Chinese Stalinists far more credit than they deserve...

To say precisely what kind of regime was established at the moment of the definitive military victory, was a question easier to put than to answer. We were cautious in answering that question in these last six years. For a while we characterised it as a transitional regime. It took us even some time to arrive at that definition of the new regime as a workers' and peasants' transitional regime.

Evidently this could only be a short term affair. It had to develop one way or another.

The slogan of the workers' and peasants' government, formulated by Trotsky in the Transitional Program, was the same as that advanced by the Bolsheviks in 1917 for the workers' parties to take power. It was conceived as a transitional regime that could lead to the dictatorship of the proletariat, but not as the dictatorship of the proletariat itself. That could be realised only if and when the program would turn revolutionary and the expropriation of the capitalists would be put on the order of the day...

The Chinese revolution is still moving in the same direction as that in Russia, although not at the same pace as the Russian revolution moved under Bolshevik leadership in 1917. I believe that the Chinese revolution has to be considered in that sense as an extension and continuation of the October revolution in Russia. It shows all the tendencies to develop the same characteristics, although its development is slower and less consistent than the Russian development under a conscious leadership.

In Russia the expropriation of the bourgeoisie took place within one year after the victory. In China it is dragged out over six years and is by no means completed yet. We have yet to hear the proclamation of a completely socialist policy in China. We have yet to see the Chinese revolution find the consistent leadership of a revolutionary party, as our theory of the permanent revolution presupposes...

But in what direction is China moving? What direction has it taken since 1949? As far as I can judge the facts, the direction is almost in a straight line, in the same way as that taken in the Soviet Union. We can attribute the slowness of it, the deformations, the uncertainty of the future, to the fact that the conscious factor has not caught up yet with the objective forces pushing it forward.

But I believe the trend is clear. We have enough facts of socialisation, of capitalist elimination, of developments toward the soviet form of social organisation, to say that a point of qualitative change has been reached; and that there is no longer a real capitalist basis in the economy in China. The character of the regime there must be designated accordingly.

The NC Resolution is correct in saying it is a workers' state, horribly disfigured and deformed, with an unqualified leadership which endangers its future, but that its basic class character is established by these facts. The

political tasks outlined in the Resolution follow from this analysis of the character of the regime.

NC members, *The Communes in China*, 21 April 1959

NC members Los Angeles (21 April 1959), The Communes in China, SWP Discussion Bulletin, 20, 8, May 1959: 40-41

7. It is incorrect to equate the advance to the communes with Stalinists campaign to collectivise farming in the Soviet Union in the early 1930's. We supported the collectivisation at that time despite peasant resistance. What we opposed was the rude and violent forcing of the peasantry by the Stalin regime. We denounced the use of the Red Army to dragoon the peasants into the collectives and condemned the killings and mass deportations. The circumstances are different in the case of China's communes. There is no evidence so far of any large-scale coercion by the Peking government while there is considerable evidence of voluntary peasant cooperation...

8. Summing up: The communes represent a new stage of the Chinese revolution. They are a higher type of socio-economic organisation. They are helping to clear away the accumulated debris of an ancient past and to promote the powers of production necessary for the foundations of a new socialist society.

Arne Swabeck and Frank Glass, *The Third Chinese Revolution*, December 1959

Arne Swabeck and John Liang [Frank Glass] (12 December 1959), The Third Chinese Revolution, The Communes and the Regime, SWP Discussion Bulletin, 21, 2, January 1960: 24-30

The resurgence in 1947-49... 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...

It is our opinion that the programme and slogan of the political revolution is invalid for China, for the simple reason that the Peking regime is not a Stalinist-type regime hindering the country's advance...

The answer to bureaucracy is not a call for the overthrow of the present Peking regime — which would be regarded by the masses as counterrevolutionary — but a programme of democratic demands...

Implicitly and explicitly our position should include the idea that in China such measures can be attained by means of reform.

Frank Glass, *Where I Differ from Swabeck on the China Question*, 25 November 1962

Frank Glass (John Liang) (25 Nov 1962), Where I Differ from Swabeck on China Question, SWP Discussion Bulletin, 24, 3, Jan 1963: 16-19

Comrade Swabeck has now gone beyond — far beyond — this simple joint position... he depicts those [CCP] leaders as brilliant strategists whose policies (with only minor, episodic exceptions) led logically, consistently and almost uninterruptedly to the revolutionary victory of 1949. Most notably, he endorses, at this late date, Mao Zedong's people's front policy during the period of the anti-Japanese war as a necessary stage in the revolutionary process...

Comrade Swabeck has the record on his side when he points out that Trotskyist prognoses concerning China, including some made by Trotsky himself, were not borne out in life, notably in the question of the relative roles of the proletariat and the peasantry...

The CCP today, despite many bureaucratic faults, is in my judgement a genuine party of the socialist revolution...

Finally, let me make it crystal clear that I continue to stand with Comrade Swabeck on the proposition that the CCP, by leading and continuing to lead a revolution, ceased to be a 'Stalinist' party...

The SWP Position on China — PC Draft Resolution, June 1963

SWP Political Committee (3 June 1963), The SWP Position on China — PC Draft Resolution, SWP Discussion Bulletin, 24, 19, June 1963: 1-7

The Chinese Revolution converted China from a capitalist-colonialist country to a workers' state by overthrowing Kuomintang rule...

The Chinese Revolution... is a continuation and extension of that first socialist victory...

It is a workers and peasants state by virtue of its property relations and major social tendencies. But it is a deformed workers state because of the lack of any means of popular control over its policies and administration...

Nevertheless, the Chinese CP has not cast off its Stalinist heritage...

The progress of the Third Chinese Revolution has supplied massive positive confirmation of the laws of the permanent revolution.

PART X: Chinese Trotskyists zig-zag

Peng Shuzhi, Letter to J, 7 April 1959

Peng Shuzhi (7 April 1959) Letter to J, SWP Discussion Bulletin, 20, 8, May 1959: 43, 45

The People's Commune is a step further than the collective farm and even more in the interests of the bureaucracy. The peasants are completely deprived of any freedom and in spite of the increase in production, their living standards are not improving but declining. Their health in particular is declining because of the extreme intensity of labour.

Basically, we are not against the form of the People's Commune, but against the current rabid enforcement of it by Mao's party. We consider the CP's course adventurous and purely in the interests of the bureaucracy. The main purpose of the People's Commune is to industrialise by exploiting the peasant's surplus value to the greatest extent possible...

At present, the Chinese People's Commune is like a concentration, or forced labour camp. The people are forced to work and their work is arranged at the will of the bureaucracy. This is a new form of slavery under Stalinism.

RCP, The Struggle to Overcome the Food Crisis, March 1961

RCP (March 1961) The Struggle to Overcome the Food Crisis, International Information Bulletin, 1, March 1962: 1-5

The shadow of starvation covers the country. From Hainan Islands to Hulong River, from Shanghai to Lhasa, the great majority of the people are unable to acquire enough food to eat or enough clothes to wear. A small number of privileged bureaucrats are the exception...

The current situation in China is not the logical outcome of the revolution...

The main causes were the CCP's economic policies and the bureaucratic character of the regime...

The CCP not only takes away the peasants' surplus produce but also part of what they need for daily consumption...

The situation in agriculture has been radically deteriorating since the 'great leap forward' and the commune policy began in 1958...

The policy of the 'great leap forward' hurt agricultural production in 1958 in two ways...

The real purpose for setting up the people's communes was to use the CCP's bureaucratic organisational power to increase the peasants' intensity of labour and drive all countrywomen into production so as to increase agricultural output and thereby provide heavy industry with more capital...

China is a workers' state. Although it has many shortcomings it is still an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist country.

Wang Fanxi, Thinking in Solitude. Memoirs, 1957

Wang Fanxi, Thinking in Solitude. Memoirs (1957). In Benton, Prophets Unarmed. 2015: 968-69

I made my own attempt to come to grips with the causes of the CCP victory, and noted some of my conclusions in a booklet published in early 1950 [Yi De, *Sulian yanjiu (A study on the Soviet Union)*, Hong Kong]. In it I said that the Soviet Union had turned into a bureaucratic collectivist state, and the Stalinist party into a party of collectivist bureaucrats. From this I concluded that the victory of the CCP was merely the victory of a collectivist bureaucratic party and in no way the victory of a Chinese proletarian party, that is, of proletarian revolution.

This analysis seemed to me to explain many features of the Stalinist parties and to solve the riddle of the CCP victory. Gradually, however, I discovered that for all its advantages and its theoretical consistency, once applied to revolutionary practice (such as which side to take in the civil war between the CCP and the Guomindang) it proved to be wholly inappropriate and plainly wrong. Armed with this discovery, I returned again from the realm of politics to sociology and from practicalities to theoretical research, and eventually I arrived at the conclusion that among the numerous theoretical analyses of the Soviet Union and Stalinism advanced both inside and outside the Fourth International, Trotsky's was by far the strongest and in the best interests of socialist revolution.

**Wang Fanxi, Mao Zedong Thought,
August 1964**

Wang Fanxi (August 1964), Mao Zedong Thought. 2020: 148, 157, 160-61, 185

31 Is the regime the Chinese communists set up after the revolution a proletarian dictatorship? If so, to what extent and in what sense? This question has exercised non-Stalinist communists and socialists throughout the world. I have my own view on it. Initially, I thought it was not a proletarian but a bureaucratic dictatorship. After further study and reflection, I concluded: 'The CCP can still be regarded as representing the working-class tendency and its state, and, from the point of view of its principal major economic measures, can still be said to represent the demands required by history of the working class. Naturally, this "representation" is grotesquely misshapen, brutal, bureaucratic, and dictatorial' (Sixiang wenti [Ideological questions]) (note by Wang)...

The path [Mao] took was an extension of the Chinese tradition of peasant revolt, a pragmatic and largely unintended choice forced on him by circumstance...

For Marxists, the answer would seem to be obvious. However, the CCP not only survived but led the revolution to victory, not just militarily but in the full sense of the word, as deep social revolution, conforming (with all its faults) to workers' interests and securing their liberation...

Mao, in leading China's democratic revolution between 1947 and 1949, went against his own subjective wishes and led an essentially socialist rather than a democratic revolution to victory.

PART XI: USFI advocates reform during 'Great Leap Forward' and Cultural Revolution

Ernest Mandel, The Industrialisation of Backward Countries, October 1958

Ernest Mandel [Germain] (October 1958), The Industrialisation of Backward Countries, Fourth International, 4, Autumn 1958: 14-22

In the Spring of 1958, this first mobilisation of rural underemployed was followed by a new and gigantic application of Professor Nurkse's theory: the "acceleration" movement of the Chinese revolution. In thousands of villages, small local industries were built up almost without cost to the central accumulation fund. The peasants "sat down and made their tools with their own hands." This tremendous movement was accompanied by the creation of the so-called "people's communes." The results seem to have been staggering: doubling of steel production within one year; even doubling of the food-grain harvest in a like time...

But on the other hand, it would be completely wrong to compare this "acceleration movement" to Stalin's forced collectivisation. There is a tremendous difference between the two. When going into the kolkhoz, the Russian peasant of 1932-3 was worse off than before; when adhering to the "people's commune" the Chinese peasant immediately reaps the dividend (or at least part of it) of the huge "low cost" investment projects of the last 12 months in the form of more and better food, more and better clothes, and more and better lodgings. The "acceleration" movement was possible only because it included a big and immediate increase in agricultural production, an immediate albeit moderate increase in the standard of living of the peasantry. Where Stalin experienced his biggest failure, Mao seems to be winning success, moderate or sensational according to the credit one gives to the current harvest figures...

But whatever may be the distasteful aspects of the "accelerated" revolution in China, the comparison between China and India shows the decisive influence which the social revolution in city and countryside has upon the possibilities of a quick rate of growth of industry, without supplementary hardships for the mass of the people.

Editorial Notes, The Situation in China, Winter 1959

Editorial Notes, The Situation in China, Fourth International, 5, Winter 1959: 9

The economic balance-sheet for 1958 in China confirms and surpasses the optimistic predictions issued by the Chinese leaders... There is no longer any doubt about both China's colossal productive effort and its spectacular results... The experience of the 'people's communes' is closely linked with this aspect of the question...

International Secretariat, On the Events in Tibet, July 1959

Resolution of the International Secretariat — On the Events in Tibet (July 1959), Fourth International, 7, Autumn 1959: 53-54

Quite apart from any criticism about the previous attitude of the Beijing government toward Tibet, at the moment of the conflict itself revolutionary Marxists define their position by taking into account the social forces facing each other: who is fighting whom. From this point of view, they are unreservedly for the victory of the armies of the Chinese revolution against the armed forces of feudal reaction.

The Tibetan people being obviously a separate nationality, revolutionary Marxists recognise this people's right of self-determination... In Tibet itself, any revolutionary Marxist forces would however have to support the position that the country remain fraternally united, on the basis of equality, with the other nationalities and autonomous territories of the People's Republic of China.

Editorial Notes, China at the Hour of "Rectification", Autumn 1959

Editorial Notes, China at the Hour of "Rectification", Fourth International, 7, Autumn 1959: 4-5

The entire world was seized by admiration for the exploits that the Chinese economy, especially agriculture, achieved in 1958. Their scope equalled the Soviet prestige by sputniks...

What conclusions are to be drawn from all this? Certainly not that the communes do not represent a form of economic and social organisation which gives promise of a great future.

Ernest Mandel, *The World Crisis of Stalinism after 22nd Congress*, May-July 1962

Ernest Mandel [Germain], *The World Crisis of Stalinism after 22nd Congress*, Fourth International, No. 15, May-July 1962: 6-7

Let us pass over to the question of world war, and more precisely world nuclear war, a question on which certain Chinese leaders have effectively adopted an indefensible adventurist position...

To begin with, the Chinese CP is by no means 'Stalinist' in the strict meaning of the term... If it is also true that in this second phase, the movement called the 'People's Communes' gave birth to excesses comparable with those of Stalinist forced collectivisation, it remains no less true that, neither by tradition nor experience, are the present leaders of the Chinese CP exemplary admirers of the late master of the Kremlin. Must we recall that they won power contrary to Stalin's formal 'counsels' and 'directives'?...

The Chinese Communists have begun to revise one of the immutable 'theoretical' dogmas of Stalinism, namely the theory of 'revolution by stages' in backward countries, they have drawn nearer to the Trotskyist theory of permanent revolution, which they call 'uninterrupted revolution'.

USFI, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict*, 7th World Congress, October-December 1963

USFI, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict and the Situation in the USSR and Other Workers' States*, 7th World Congress, Fourth International, 17, October-December 1963: 51-64

It is then on three of the major questions of our period — the question of the struggle against war, the question of the nature of the colonial revolution and the orientation of the revolutionary movements in the underdeveloped countries, and the question of the road to socialism above all in the advanced capitalist countries — that the Chinese concepts prove to be on the whole more progressive than the Khrushchevist concepts, being analogous to certain theses of revolutionary Marxism...

The last five years of the development of China have been characterised by events of great importance, which have cast light on the contradictory aspects of this giant-scale revolutionary experiment as well as its current...

The years 1958-59 were characterised by the 'leap forward' and the installation of communes. These two measures achieved results which must not be denied or minimised because of subsequent setbacks in the following years...

The attitude of the Chinese leadership, in the face of these economic setbacks, showed that it was an empirical leadership but one that did not conduct itself on the Stalinist model at the time of the forced collectivisation. The movement of the communes was certainly developed at an excessive rate, without taking into account the necessary preliminary technical conditions...

But the Chinese Communists never resorted to violence to force the peasants into communes; they did not resort to the methods of Stalin at the time of forced collectivisation, a conclusion that is confirmed by the fact that there was no butcheries such as bloodied the Soviet fields, nor the desperate reaction of peasants such as a massive slaughter of cattle.

In China, the revolutionary Marxists emphasise that despite its positive role in the international conflicts of the Communist movement, the Chinese leadership remains a bureaucratic leadership at the head of a state marked by profound bureaucratic deformations. The struggle against the bureaucracy and its regime... cannot be won except through an anti-bureaucratic struggle on a scale massive enough to bring about a qualitative change in the political form of government.

USFI, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict*, June 1965

USFI, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict and the Crisis of the International Communist Movement*, Eighth World Congress, June 1965, International Socialist Review, 27, 2, Spring 1966: 76-85

The Chinese Communist Party cannot be considered to have been a Stalinist party in the strict sense of the term; that is, subordinated since the twenties to the bureaucratic leadership of the Kremlin. The Mao leadership had its own personality; and its policies, although often marked in practice by compromises with the Moscow leadership which led to the gravest deviations, had a generally centrist character leaning toward the left. The Mao leadership was also shaped by long years of difficult struggles and it underwent the impact of the great popular revolution that brought it to power.

Thus in the light of the international relationship of forces, the dynamics of the Chinese revolution, and the special features of the Maoist leadership, it can be concluded that the bureaucratism in China, bad as it is in and of itself, is not the same as the bureaucratism that developed in the Soviet Union into a powerfully consolidated caste. It was Trotsky's view that the Stalinist experience, viewed in all its concreteness, was due to a completely special combination of forces and circumstances. His forecast that it would never be repeated still holds.

The differences between Stalinism and Maoism are involved in the Sino-Soviet conflict and are an impor-

tant element for revolutionary Marxists in determining which side it is better to offer critical support in the interest of advancing the world revolution. But to insist on the differences between Maoism does not imply that the bureaucratic nature of the Chinese regime can be forgotten or that criticism of the persistent cult of Mao can in any way be attenuated. The world Trotskyist movement maintains its independence from all bureaucratic formations. In all the workers states it stands against bureaucratic rule and for proletarian democracy. In China the struggle against the bureaucracy and its regime, and for proletarian democracy, cannot be won except through an anti-bureaucratic struggle on a scale massive enough to bring about a qualitative change in the political form of government.

USFI, The Internal Crisis in China, 6 November 1966

USFI (6 November 1966), The Internal Crisis in China, World Outlook, 4, 40, 16 December 1966: 22

The Fourth International maintains that the crisis in recent months has confirmed that the Chinese leadership... remains a bureaucratic leadership. The struggle for proletarian democracy against such a leadership cannot bring about a qualitative change in the political regime except by means of a profound mobilisation of the masses capable of breaking through the framework of the bureaucratic system, and by the action of a new Marxist revolutionary vanguard able to orient the mass movement towards establishing a democratic proletarian power.

PART XII: Grant and Woods make Maoism progressive

Ted Grant, The Colonial Revolution and the Sino-Soviet Dispute, August 1964

Ted Grant, The Unbroken Thread, 1989

[This was submitted to the 8th Congress of the USFI in 1965 from the British section]

Proletarian Bonapartism represents a most peculiar form of workers' rule.

The development of the Chinese revolution, next to the Russian revolution the "greatest event in human history" as the documents of the Revolutionary Communist Party proclaimed in advance, took place with a mighty deformed workers' state at its back, plus the frustration of the revolutionary tide in the West. Without the existence of the monstrously deformed workers' state in the East, and the paralysing of the hands of imperialism by the radicalisation of the workers in the West, the Chinese revolution could not have taken the form which it did.

The Chinese revolution unfolded as a peasant war (see documents where this is developed) led by ex-Marxists. Thus as in Eastern Europe the revolution from the beginning assumed a Bonapartist character, with the classical instruments of Bonapartism, the peasant army...

The Chinese bureaucracy, like all bureaucracies of a similar character, is interested mainly in advancing its own power, privileges, income and prestige. It defends the base of nationalised property on which it rests, because this is the basis of its income and power.

As predicted in advance, before the Chinese bureaucracy came to power, the possibility of a conflict between it and the Russian bureaucracy, was inherent in the situation. The attempt of the Russian bureaucracy to arrive at an agreement with American imperialism, without giving consideration to the needs and interests of the Chinese bureaucracy, precipitated the split between the two tendencies...

Where they are organised by the leadership of ex-Marxists or by intellectual strata of the petit-bourgeoisie in one form or another—the army officers of Burma, Egypt, the ex-Marxists in China, the intellectual layers of the petit-bourgeoisie in Ghana and other countries—it is possible under the historical conditions sketched above, with a weak and rotting bourgeoisie, or even the absence of any real bourgeoisie, for a transitional regime of a Bonapartist workers' state to be set up.

Alan Woods, What is really happening in China? 1 October 1976

IMT website

For the advanced workers of all countries the Chinese Revolution of 1949 follows the Russian Revolution as the second most important event of the twentieth century...

The establishment of a nationalised, planned economy was an indispensable precondition for the enormous growth of the productive forces during the last 20 years. Any analysis of present day China is faced with a serious problem of the lack of concrete facts and above all of official figures for economic development.

For that reason the figures that we have are scanty and incomplete. Nevertheless even these figures show that the rates of economic growth are impressive. The first official statistics of economic development were made public a few years ago in an interview given by Zhou Enlai to the American reporter Edgar Snow, the well-known biographer of Mao...

The superiority of a nationalised, planned economy over capitalism can be seen in the contrast between China and India, a country which achieved independence two years before the Chinese revolution, but which remained under the capitalist system...

These things mean enormous historic gains and the Chinese workers understand that perfectly...

The "Cultural Revolution" had a role similar to this policy of Stalin's in the period 1929-39. Basing themselves on the workers and the students, above all on the latter, the top layers of the bureaucracy grouped around the Chinese "Bonaparte" Mao, as part of the ruling caste, carried out a number of heavy blows against other sections of the bureaucracy which were excessively greedy, and whose corruption and thieving was threatening the advances in the economy...

The Chinese Revolution of 1949 began where the Russian Revolution left off. From the very beginning the Chinese workers state was established in a peculiar Bonapartist manner. Resting on a peasant army, in a classic peasant war, the Stalinists (ex-Marxists) balanced between the different classes of Chinese society to destroy the bourgeois state and carry out the nationalisation of the economy. But at the same time the most elemental conditions of workers' democracy were lacking. In China there were neither Soviets, nor

workers' control, nor real labour unions independent of the State, nor an authentic Marxist leadership. The victory of the Chinese revolution was possible due to a favourable confluence of objective circumstances — the inability of American imperialism to intervene directly and the complete bankruptcy of Chinese capitalism, which in 20 years had not been able to solve any one of the fundamental problems of Chinese society.

With the living example of the very powerful Stalinist state in Russia before their eyes, the Chinese ex-Marxists built a state in the image of Russia. That is to say that from the beginning it was a deformed workers' state, which was resting on the nationalised productive forces. These nationalisations meant a great historic step forward, but without the conscious control and participation of the working class in the running of the state, the economy and society...

Despite all protests to the contrary the bureaucracy of Stalinist China has the perspective of becoming the third world power in the next two decades... Nevertheless, in spite of the totalitarian state, with the existence of privilege corruption and repression, there is no doubt that the masses of workers and peasants still support the new order (due to the enormous historic gains which it represents) and are even ready to make sacrifices in order to develop the economy at this particular time. There is no reason to doubt that there exists a real enthusiasm for the building of socialism in all sections of the population, at least amongst the working class...

The illusion of greatness does not proceed from the supposed "genius" of Mao (the illustrious "Thoughts" of the little red book are approximately on the same theoretical level as a guide for boy-scouts), but from the relations between the classes and layers of Chinese society. The personal power of Mao is an aberration from the point of view of socialism. It is of course something completely alien to Marxism and incompatible with a socialist society. Nevertheless, here it is not a question of a socialist society, but of a society in the transition stage from capitalism to socialism. The nationalisation of the means of production means an enormous step forward, guaranteeing the rapid development of the economy for the benefit of all the Chinese people...

With the necessary changes a comparison can be made between the role of the reformist bureaucracy under capitalism and the ruling caste in the USSR and in China. To the degree that the Stalinist bureaucracy rests on the new socio-economic forms, the gains of the revolution, defending them against Imperialism, it is playing a relatively progressive role. Nevertheless the mere existence of the bureaucracy is a factor which more and more undermines the workers' state, with its corruption, bad administration, and economic and political zigzags...

Ted Grant, The Colonial Revolution and the Deformed Workers' States, July 1978

Ted Grant, The Colonial Revolution and the Deformed Workers' States, Militant International Review, 14, Summer 1978; Ted Grant, The Unbroken Thread, 1989

In Burma, where the regime, newly emerged from British domination and where the ruling class was incapable of successfully 'holding the country together', it faced a series of rebellions and wars. The army was formed from the Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League, which described itself as 'socialist'.

With China as a model next door, the army leaders tired of the incapacity of the landowners and capitalists to solve the problems of Burma. Basing themselves on the support of the workers and peasants, they organised a coup, expropriated the landowners and capitalists and established Burma as a 'Burmese Buddhist Socialist State'...

Only the Marxist tendency in Britain argued against the Stalinists and the alleged 'Trotskyist' sects and explained the inevitability of Mao's victory and the establishment of a deformed workers' state.

At a time when Mao and the Chinese CP had the programme of capitalism and 'national democracy' we could predict the inevitability of proletarian Bonapartism as the next stage in China. This had nothing in common with the methods of the proletarian revolution in Russia in 1917...

Power was gained through the peasant war by giving land to the soldiers in Chiang Kai-shek's army. Then, by balancing between the classes and playing them off against each other in Bonapartist fashion, once military victory was achieved, landlordism and capitalism were expropriated. Nearly all the so-called 'Trotskyist' sects now accept the accomplished fact. But never before in history has it even been theoretically posed that a peasant war on classical lines could lead to a workers' state, however deformed. The workers in China were passive throughout the civil war for reasons we will not enter here. But here was a perfect example of one class — the peasants in the form of the Red Army — carrying out the tasks of another.

It is amusing now to see the sects without turning a hair, swallowing the idea that a 'workers' state' was established in China by the peasant army, only because at the head of the army was the so-called 'Communist' Party. In classical Marxist theory this idea would be precisely considered hair-raising and fantastic. The peasants, as a class, are least capable of assuming a socialist consciousness.

It is an aberration of Marxism to think that such a process is 'normal'. It can only be explained by the impasse of capitalism in China, the paralysis of imperi-

alism, the existence of a strong deformed Bonapartist state in Stalinist Russia, and most important of all, the delay in the victory in the industrially advanced countries of the world. The colonial countries cannot wait. The problems are too crushing. There is no way forward on the basis of capitalism.

International Marxist Tendency, China's long march to capitalism — Part One, 2 October 2006

IMT website

[Note: The original draft of this document was written in April 2006 and was then discussed and voted at the July 2006 World Congress of the IMT]

After the October 1917 Russian Revolution the Chinese revolution in 1949 was the second most important event in history. It led to the abolition of landlordism and capitalism and with it the end of imperialist domination in a huge area of the globe.

However, whereas the Russian revolution led to the setting up of a relatively healthy workers' state established by the working class under the leadership of the Bolshevik party - a revolutionary party with an internationalist outlook — the 1949 Chinese Revolution led to the immediate setting up of a Stalinist deformed workers' state...

We have to remember that the Chinese revolution abolished capitalism in China in spite of the perspectives of the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party...

This was, in a certain sense, a confirmation of the theory of the Permanent Revolution in a distorted manner.

In spite of the fact that the Chinese revolution did not take the form of a proletarian revolution, the Marxist tendency supported it for it freed the productive forces from the constraints of capitalism and feudalism and laid the basis for a development of the economy, which would not otherwise have been possible...

The growth of the Chinese economy after 1949 was spectacular. It is sufficient to compare economic development in China and India in the period 1949-1979. Both countries started off more or less on the same level, but growth in China was far higher throughout this period. This can only be explained by the fact that China had a centralised, state-owned, planned economy...

In spite of its shortcomings, the Chinese bureaucracy managed to achieve what the effete Chinese bourgeoisie had abysmally failed to do, to create genuine national unity and a modern state for the first time in the history of the country. The agrarian revolution was also achieved in one sweep and the nationalisation of the means of production laid the basis for the development

of the Chinese economy on an unprecedented scale...

In essence the Cultural Revolution was not, as some claimed in the west, a movement of the workers and youth imposing their will on the bureaucrats. Mandel and co., compared the Cultural Revolution to the Paris Commune, thus showing their utter inability to understand what was really happening. They confused a movement unleashed by one wing of the Chinese bureaucracy aimed against another wing, with a genuine uprising of the workers in Paris in 1871. They did not understand that the Cultural Revolution was always controlled from the top, by Mao, the supreme arbiter...

John Peter Roberts, China: From Permanent Revolution to Counter-Revolution, 2016

John Peter Roberts, China: From Permanent Revolution to Counter-Revolution. Wellred Books, 2016.

Chapter 9. *The Final Collapse of the KMT: the CCP Assumes Power*

The government that began wielding power in Beijing in 1949 would establish a workers' state in China despite Mao's declared goal of maintaining capitalism for a prolonged period. Of course, if Stalin and Mao had been Leninists they would have proposed the creation of a Socialist Federation of the Soviet Union and China in 1949. Instead, the Mao regime tried every which way to construct a stable bourgeois state until faced by the Korean War and the aggression of American imperialism. To protect itself it took measures that were socialist in principle...

Chapter 10. *The New Democracy*

As an aside it should be noted that as the PLA swept southward it was particularly rigorous in arresting all known revolutionaries, especially Trotskyists, together with their spouses, siblings, relatives and friends. These people simply disappeared. Many were killed immediately, the remainder imprisoned for decades without trial or public notification.

Formally, the elections to the People's Congress were based on universal suffrage but the representatives were determined beforehand by the CCP in agreement with the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties or groups. In view of the composition of the new regime and its political line it was certainly no bourgeois dictatorship. But it could not be characterised as a proletarian dictatorship either. Rather, it was a distorted form in transition between bourgeois and proletarian dictatorships, but without any certainty that it would actually complete the transition. It has become common practice to designate such a contradictory and transitional

form as a Workers' and Peasants' Government...

Unfortunately, within the world Trotskyist movement there has long been a current with a 'get rich quick' mentality that has consistently looked for ways to short-circuit the arduous task of building a Leninist Party. Their siren song is that the socialist revolution could be better and sooner accomplished by joining with other forces. These people greeted Maoism as a genuine revolutionary force and accommodated their politics to it. In Italy, for example, under the leadership of Livio Maitan (prominent member of the United Secretariat of the 4th International) the formation of Maoist groups was welcomed and no serious political fight put up against Maoist ideas with the result that in the late 1960s the majority of the Maitan group broke away from Trotskyism and joined the Maoists, possibly the only time in history that such a thing has happened.

Maitan and Ernest Mandel (Secretary of the United Secretariat of the 4th International) were sufficiently impressed to support a Maoist strategy of peasant guerrilla warfare for an extended period, looked for a suitable environment and hit on Latin America as an appropriate location "on account of technical and military considerations." [40]

What followed was scandalous, the good name of Trotsky was appended to ultra-left, rural, sectarian Maoist guerrilla groups, leading an entire generation of revolutionary youth down a blind alley and contributing to the needless deaths of numerous young revolutionaries. There was even a discussion within the Ligue Communiste (largest and most prestigious of the sections of the USec) as to whether the rural (sic!) guerrilla tactics used in Latin America should be applied in France on the grounds that power comes from the barrel of a gun!

Mandel and Maitan were the most prominent representatives of an international mood. Michael Lowy, a respected academic, whose book *Combined and Uneven Development* was widely promoted as a defence of Trotsky's ideas was not immune. The manner in which he introduced Mao in this book showed where his emotions lay. Mao is presented as a "young and unknown Communist leader", who "largely in defiance of Comintern directives" was the organiser of the 1927 radical peasant movement in Hunan which was actively seizing the land and killing landlords, supported apparently, by no lesser person than Trotsky. It turns out on investigation, that Mao was already an established leader in both the CCP and the KMT and a firm supporter of the policies of the Comintern, and that Trotsky was praising the independent peasant movement in Hunan and Hupeh which was acting against the wishes of the CCP and, especially, Mao Zedong. [41]

Maitan, Lowy and others saw Mao as having led a successful revolution and, taking appearances for re-

ality, accepted him as a genuine revolutionary. Marxist analysis and the history of Stalinism was thrown aside by these people because they wanted to believe that Mao would make the revolution for them. Lowy makes it clear that he did not consider the CCP either Stalinist or petty-bourgeois, rather he suggests that large sections of the Red Army and CCP had attained a socialist consciousness.[42] It could be argued that the facts were not known, that Mao had led a revolution and that he appeared a genuine revolutionary. But such an approach is impressionism, taking the appearance for the reality. These people wanted to believe in Mao and this desire trumped Marxist analysis and the counter-revolutionary history of Stalinism...

Chapter 11. *The Unexpectedly Short Life of the New Democracy*

For Marxists the Chinese Revolution is second only to the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 as one of the greatest events in human history. In 1949 the People's Liberation Army (PLA) took power and within a short span of time snuffed out capitalism and landlordism...

It will be argued that the establishment of a workers' state in China is striking confirmation of the general tendency for revolutions in backward countries to transcend the bourgeois-democratic phase and turn into socialist revolutions. The situation after World War II may have had specific characteristics, such as imperialism being temporarily impotent and the leadership of the mass uprising being in the hands of Stalinists, which gave the Chinese Revolution particular features, but the trend was, inevitably, towards the establishment of a (deformed) workers' state, or as some describe it "proletarian Bonapartism"...

Chapter 12. *Establishing the Chinese Workers' State*

It is from the launch of the 1st FYP in October 1953, that revolutionary Marxists date the bureaucratically-deformed workers' state in China...

In terms of overall economic growth, the 1st FYP was a stunning success. Despite the best efforts of imperialism to sabotage the plan, wages rose by a third in real terms, life expectancy rose from about 36 years in 1949 to 57 years in 1957, the proportion of children attending primary school doubled to 50%, the quality and quantity of urban housing improved significantly, and the rights of women were extended and protected in law, exemplified by the abolition of the binding of women's feet. Famine appeared to be a thing of the past...

In China, October 1953 was a defining moment; the CCP introduced the 1st FYP for economic construction and industrialisation and proclaimed the beginning of the transition to socialism. The CCP finally rejected the concept of the New Democracy in favour of a policy

of what was euphemistically termed state and private co-operation — the final seizure of bourgeois property and the creation of the Chinese (deformed) workers' state.

15. China Marches Back to Capitalism

While generally peaceful, and often welcomed, it would not be correct to say there were no protests against the bureaucracy and the measures it was taking. In 1989 there were demonstrations of protest across China but centred on Tien An Men Square in Beijing. These were crushed by the PLA under the direction of the hard line Stalinists within the Party. These people took the protests as a sign that reform needed to gather pace, and within five years the CCP had ended the monopoly of foreign trade, allowed unfettered foreign currency exchange, ended state planning of the economy, and were using the giant State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) to support private industry at the expense of the Chinese workers. When these measures were carried through China ceased to be a workers' state. However, important sections of industry and the banks remain in state hands, the better to support privatisation and the growth of Chinese capitalism...

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40. Maitan, L. Cuba, Military Reformism and Armed Struggle in Latin America, *Intercontinental Press*, 20 April 1970: 360.
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42. Lowy, *Combined and Uneven Development*, Verso, 1981: 83

PART XIII: Fourth International Clings to Workers' Statism

IEC, FI Opens Discussions on Chinese Revolution, 19 May 1967

IEC, Fourth International Opens Discussions on Developments in Chinese Revolution, World Outlook, 5, 20, 19 May 1967: 519-23

The International Executive Committee of the Fourth International decided at a recent meeting to open a discussion in the ranks of the world Trotskyist movement on the current development in the Chinese Revolution... For the first time since the People's Republic of China in 1949, the masses, and in particular the proletarian masses of the large cities, were mobilised in a process the logical culmination of which is an anti-bureaucratic political revolution...

Ernest Mandel, The Cultural Revolution: An Attempt at Interpretation, 10 May 1967

Ernest Mandel [Germain] (10 May 1967), The Cultural Revolution: An Attempt at Interpretation, International Socialist Review, 29, 4, July-August 1968: 38-64

For Trotskyism, the experience of the "cultural revolution" confirms that the theory of the possible degeneration of a victorious socialist revolution, a theory which was considered heretical 20 years ago by the entire official Communist movement, has now been partly admitted by practically all of the victorious revolutions since the second world war. Tito, Castro, Mao Zedong have all picked it up, each in his own way. The need for a political revolution, for a "revolution within a revolution," as the Cubans say today, begins to make its appearance in a not negligible part of the international Communist movement. But the experience of the "cultural revolution" also demonstrates that there is no other road for effective struggle against the bureaucratic degeneration of the revolution than the one outlined by Lenin and Trotsky: the consolidation and institutionalisation of workers power on the basis of democratically elected councils (Soviets); the widest proletarian democracy; the right of several soviet tendencies and parties to exist legally within that framework; the limitation and progressive abolition of inequality in remuneration; the management of the economy by the workers them-

selves; the planned development of the productive forces; the international extension of the revolution...

Chinese society is in the throes of a deep upheaval. Mao's attempt at reforming the bureaucracy without having the masses question the whole of the bureaucratic regime has failed. In the same way Liu's attempt to keep the inter bureaucratic dispute under rigid control of inner-party rules devised by the bureaucracy has not in the least succeeded. Independent mass action and independent critical thought have surged among the rebellious youth as well as among the rebellious workers. The task of the revolutionary Marxists is to clearly show to the Chinese proletariat a way out of the political impasse and crisis, appearing as an alternative leadership to both contending factions by uniting revolutionary Red Guards with rebellious working masses on the platform of the political revolution, the platform of the establishment of proletarian democracy, of power wielded by Soviets of workers, poor peasants, soldiers and students.

Livio Maitan, Ideology of Maoist Tendency, 29 May 1967

Livio Maitan (29 May 1967), Ideology of Maoist Tendency, World Outlook, 5, 30, 8 September 1967: 775-6

Almost all the comrades who have taken part in the discussion have declared themselves in favour of explicitly accepting the concept of political revolution against the bureaucracy in the case of China. I am in agreement on this fundamental point and, moreover, I note in this connection the following important passage from the United Secretariat declaration of November 1966:

"The struggle against such a leadership can only be brought to a close by bringing about a qualitative change in the political regime — through a deep going mobilisation of the masses which can break up the structure of the bureaucratic system and through the activity of a new revolutionary Marxist vanguard which can orient the mass movement toward the establishment of proletarian democracy."

USFI, Resolution on the 'Cultural Revolution' in China, April 1969

USFI (April 1969), *Resolution on the 'Cultural Revolution' in China*, Intercontinental Press, 14 July 1969: 701-05

All these contradictions were intensified by the damage done to Chinese agriculture and economy during the second phase of the Great Leap Forward and the near-famine period at the beginning of the sixties. They created an explosive situation in the country, in which a process of political differentiation and increased political activity of the masses became possible. In this situation, conditions for a genuine political revolution against the ruling bureaucracy matured. The "cultural revolution" constitutes objectively an attempt by the Mao faction to divert the social forces pushing in that direction from an overthrow of the bureaucracy into a reform of the bureaucracy...

The need for a political revolution where state power has been usurped by a bureaucracy and all avenues of democratic control have been closed to the masses has been made clearer and more understandable to broad sections of the international Communist movement and the revolutionary vanguard.

Ernest Mandel, For the Beijing Commune — For the Political Revolution in China, July 1989

Ernest Mandel (July 1989), *For the Beijing Commune — For the Political Revolution in China*, Bulletin in Defense of Marxism, December 1989: 13-17, 24

If we look at the demands of the students and the demands of the workers, we will find an amazing parallel. The seven key demands of the students as they were published by the students' organisational committee of Beijing University, on 21 April [1989]...

If we look at the seven demands there is not the slightest attack against socialism in them, there is not the slightest call or appeal for capitalism. These were demands for the democratisation of a bureaucratised workers' state.

USFI, Capitalist globalisation, imperialisms, geopolitical chaos and their implications, 27 July 2017

USFI, *Capitalist globalisation, imperialisms, geopolitical chaos and their implications*, Seventeenth World Congress, 27 July 2017

In the past, without ever aligning ourselves with Beijing's diplomacy, we defended the People's Republic of China (and the dynamics of the revolution) against the Japan-US imperialist alliance — we were in this sense in its camp. We were opposed to NATO, whatever we thought of the Stalinist regime; we were not however "campist" because that did not limit our struggle against the Stalinist bureaucracy. We were simply acting in a world where there was an articulation of lines of conflict: revolutions/counter-revolutions, East/West and Sino-Soviet blocs. This is no longer the case today...

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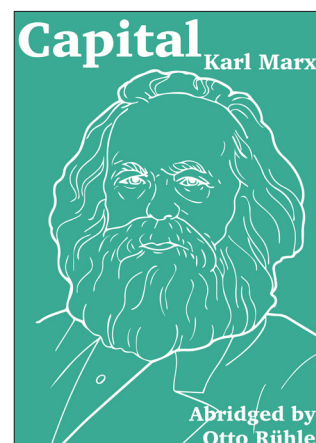
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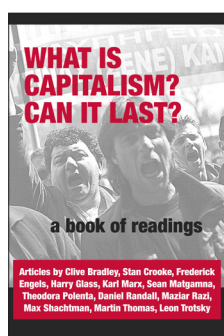
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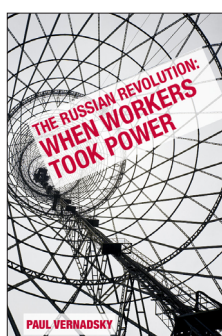
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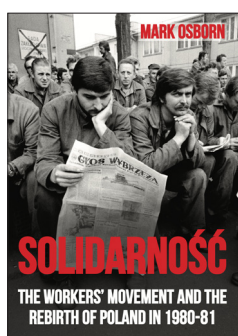
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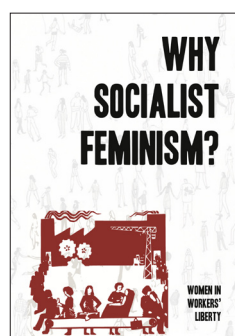
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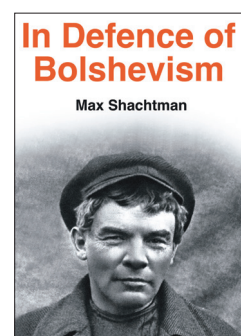
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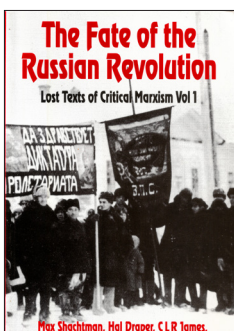
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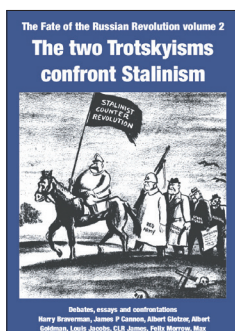
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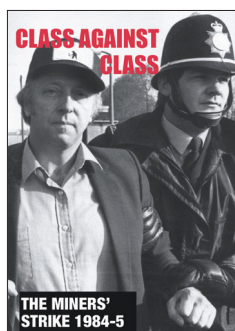
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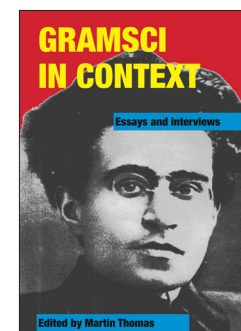
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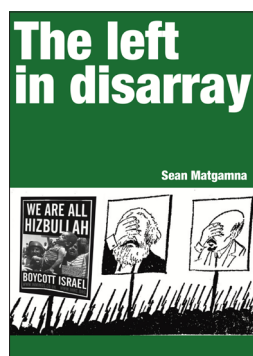
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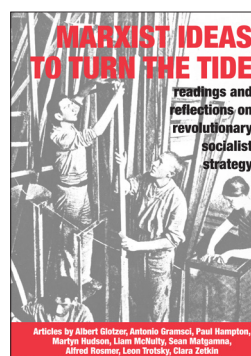
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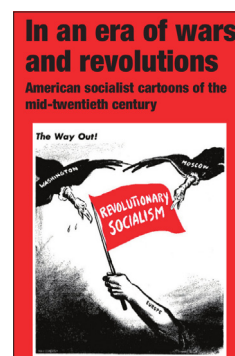
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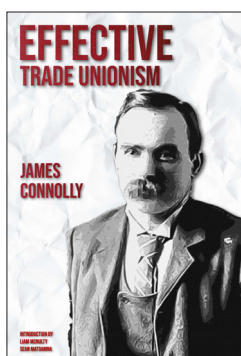
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