CURRENT INTELLIGENCE STAFF STUDY

MAO TSE-TUNG AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

I. REVOLUTION

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I. REVOLUTION

This is a working paper, the second of a series of papers on Mao Tse-tung as a Marxist philosopher. The first was addressed to Mao's alleged contributions to dialectical materialism. Others will be addressed to his alleged contributions (some of them genuine) to other aspects of historical materialism.

The Sino-Soviet Studies Group would welcome comment on this paper. The paper, like the first, was written by Arthur Cohen of the China Division of the Sino-Soviet Bloc Area, who is studying at Stanford this academic year; so comment should again be addressed to the acting coordinator of the SSSG, who will forward it to Mr. Cohen.
SUMMARY

Chinese Communist spokesmen acknowledge that Mao's early analysis of the Chinese revolution owes a general debt to Lenin and Stalin, but they minimize that debt, and they conceal the importance of Comintern directives in Mao's early thinking. All of their specific claims for this early work appear to be spurious. Mao's alleged "development" of the concept of "leadership of the proletariat" in 1926 is not an advance on Lenin's position in 1912, and even his agreement with Lenin on this point was inserted into Mao's works many years later. Mao's alleged discovery that revolutions in backward countries are primarily peasant revolutions was anticipated by Lenin, Stalin, and other Chinese Communist leaders such as Peng Pai. Similarly, Lenin, not Mao, first emphasized the importance of the poor peasants in a revolution, and, with respect to the responsiveness of the poor peasants to Communist party leadership, again the Chinese Communists have faked a date to credit Mao with making this point years before the fact. Further, Mao's alleged discovery that a part of the bourgeoisie was friendly to the revolution was simply a repetition of Lenin and Stalin.

Subsequently, Mao made two or perhaps three contributions to the theory of revolution. One of these, although forced on him by circumstance, was the concept of an isolated rural base area. Another, although taken in part (perhaps in largest part) from Chu Te, was his doctrine on guerrilla warfare; Soviet writers themselves have paid Mao tribute in this field. The possible third, a development over his early thinking, was Mao's moderate and conciliatory line toward capitalists and the capitalist economy during a revolution, a policy which seems to have been troublesome to Moscow at the time. However, another of Mao's concepts of the middle years, the "paper tiger"—enjoining Communists to have faith in their eventual triumph, but to respect the enemy in particular situations—which is presented as a "new development of enormous significance" in theory, is simply a platitude.

The Chinese Communists believe that Mao's contributions to the theory of revolution—whether false, true, or platitudinous—are applicable to other backward countries. For example, the gloss on Mao's selected works contends that other "colonial peoples," holding rural base areas, can wage a long war to encircle the cities and win a total victory, just as the Chinese Communists had done.
MAO TSE-TUNG AND HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

I. REVOLUTION

Introduction

In his Dialectical and Historical Materialism of October 1938, Stalin defines historical materialism as "an application of the principles of dialectical materialism to the phenomena of the life of society, to the study of society and its history." (1) This definition is too general and obscures Lenin's and Stalin's special way of treating the idea of historical materialism.

Marx and Engels had discussed historical materialism with primary emphasis on the way in which the material production of goods is organized and the relations between the classes producing them. Revolution would occur almost spontaneously as the inevitable stages of class struggle developed. In their writings, the outline of the future society was vague.

Lenin and Stalin shifted the emphasis slightly but decisively, concentrating in their works more on the tactics of revolution and less on the modes of production. That is, as actual leaders as well as theorists, they constantly attempted to gauge the strength of political and military forces and the possibilities of "pushing the revolution forward," relegating theoretical analysis of economic factors in any country to a secondary position. Thus Lenin says that, "we Marxists have always been proud of the fact that by a strict analysis of the mass forces and mutual class relations we have been able to determine the expediency of this or that form of mass struggle." (2) The same is true of Mao Tse-tung, who, in his first Marxist-Leninist work (3), Analysis of the Various Classes in Chinese Society of March 1926 (hereafter, Analysis/), centers his attention on estimating the revolutionary potential of social classes in China.

Claims of Mao's Originality

Chinese Communist writers have agreed with Soviet writers that Mao Tse-tung used Lenin's and Stalin's ideas in his
analysis of the Chinese revolution. Thus Chang Ju-hsin states in 1953 that in the period of the First Revolutionary Civil War (1924-1927), "Comrade Mao Tse-tung...the faithful student and comrade-in-arms of Stalin, upheld the standpoint of Lenin and Stalin on problems of the revolution in China." (4)

Chang, however, implies that there was an element of originality in Mao's analysis: "in 1926 (the time of the publication of Stalin's Prospects of the Chinese Revolution), Comrade Mao Tse-tung published his Analysis, in which he used as a basis the theories of Lenin and Stalin to arrive at a similar conclusion with that of Stalin on the fundamental problems of the Chinese revolution." (5) That is, Chang seems to feel that any careful Communist reader will know that Mao's Analysis was written before Stalin's Prospects, as these works were published in March 1926 and November 1928 respectively.

Chang's implied claim that Mao was an independent thinker on revolution in 1926 is supported by politburo alternate Chen Po-ta, who insists that, "Both in 1927...and afterwards...opportunists...obstructed the dissemination inside the Chinese party of Stalin's many works on the Chinese question. There were also language difficulties and the counterrevolutionary blockade. For these reasons, many comrades in our party who were actually leading the Chinese revolution did not have an opportunity to make a systematic study of Stalin's many works on China...Comrade Mao Tse-tung was also one of them. It was only after the cheng feng movement in 1942 that Stalin's works on China were systematically edited by our party...but despite these obstacles in dissemination, Comrade Mao Tse-tung has been able to reach the same conclusions as Stalin on many fundamental problems through his independent thinking." (6) Another writer says that only Stalin's Problems of the Chinese Revolution of April 1927 was "published and circulated" in China at some unspecified date between 1927 and 1936 "under conditions of bitter fighting and White terror." (7)

But neither Chang nor Chen makes any reference to the fact that the real tactical policies, and the theoretical justifications of these policies, were sent to China in the form of numerous Comintern directives with Stalin's approval. (8)
"Leadership of the Proletariat"

Chen Po-ta claims that Mao "consistently adhered to... the Lenin-Stalin theory concerning the leadership of the proletariat and developed this theory in a concrete manner." (9) But how Mao had done this, Chen never informs us. Chang Ju-hsin implies that Mao developed this theory in Analysis by pointing out that, "The national bourgeoisie's aim of establishing a state under its own rule is impracticable." (10) Chang continues: "The leading force in our revolution is the industrial proletariat."

This is merely Lenin's view of proletarian leadership in a revolution against feudalism--one of his revisions of Marx and Engels. According to Marx and Engels, revolution in modern times will progress in two distinct stages: first, a "bourgeois, democratic" revolution places the bourgeoisie in power after an attack upon feudalism and monarchy, and, second, a "socialist" revolution slowly ripens and overthrows the bourgeoisie, establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus Engels says in 1848: "Fight on bravely then, gentlemen of capital. We need your help: We need even your rule upon occasions. For it is you who must clear from our path the relics of the Middle Ages and of absolute monarchy. You must abolish monarchy, you must centralize, you must change the more or less destitute classes into real proletarians--recruits for us. It is your factories and trade connections that must lay the foundations for the liberation of the proletariat. Your reward shall be a brief period of rule. You shall dictate laws, and bask in the sun of your own majesty. But remember, 'The hangman's foot is upon the threshold.'" (12)

In his Two Tactics of Social Democracy in the Democratic Revolution of June-July 1905, however, Lenin insists that the proletariat must not be a subsidiary to the bourgeoisie, and that it must become the leader of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. (13) "Marxism teaches the proletariat not to keep aloof from the bourgeois revolution, not to be indifferent to it, not to allow the leadership of the revolution to be assumed by the bourgeoisie." (14) "The proletariat, being, by virtue of its very position, the most advanced and the only consistently revolutionary class, is for that very reason called
Upon to play the leading part in the general democratic revolutionary movement in Russia." (15) In the Agrarian Program of Social Democracy of November-December 1907, Lenin first defines the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia as a "peasant revolution" and then says that, "The proletariat must in its own interest assume the leadership of the peasant revolution." (16)

Turning his attention to colonial revolutions--"national liberation movements in the East"--Lenin at first does not stress proletarian leadership of these "bourgeois, democratic" revolutions and seems to have believed that his Two Tactics thesis need not be applied to China's bourgeois revolution of 1911. In his Democracy and Narodism in China of July 1912, Lenin contrasts the bourgeoisie of the West who are "rotten to the core" with Sun Yat-sen, "a revolutionary democrat, who symbolizes the nobility and heroism inherent in a class that is on the rise." He says: "The Western bourgeoisie is in a state of decay; it is already confronted by its grave-digger—the proletariat. In Asia, in contrast, there is still a bourgeoisie capable of championing sincere, militant, consistent democracy, a worthy comrade of France's great enlighteners and great leaders of the close of the 18th century." (Lenin's emphasis) (17) Continuing in an orthodox Marxist vein, Lenin points to the "virgin naivete" of Sun's idea that "capitalism can be 'prevented' in China," (18) and assigns the small Chinese proletariat only the task of criticizing Sun's utopias while it "defends and develops the revolutionary-democratic core of his political and agrarian program." (19)

By November 1912, however, Lenin is prepared to return to his Two Tactics thesis of proletarian (that is, Communist party) leadership of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. In his Regenerated China, he says: "China's freedom was won by an alliance of peasant democracy and liberal bourgeoisie. Whether the peasants, without the leadership of a proletarian party, will be able to retain their democratic positions against the liberals, who are only waiting for a suitable moment to shift to the Right--this the near future will show." (20) (Lenin's emphasis)

When, therefore, Satlin in May 1925 calls on students in the University of the Toilers of the East to "ensure the hegemony of the proletariat" in the national-revolutionary bloc (21) and Mao in March 1926 designates the industrial
proletariat as the "leading force" in the bourgeois-democratic revolution, they are not expounding a new idea.

Returning to Chang's and Chen's claims, they are open to another objection: at no point in the original 1926 version of Analysis does Mao designate the proletariat as the "leading" force. Why not? Because Mao and the other Chinese Communist leaders at that time were carrying out Comintern directives, which designated the Kuomintang (KMT) as a bloc of four classes and as the "leader" of China's democratic revolution. The sentence which Chang is emphatic in quoting--"The leading force in our revolution is the industrial proletariat"--was inserted into the 1951 version of Analysis (22).

The Importance of the Peasants

Chang Jü hsin also claims that Mao solved the problem of allies in the Chinese revolution. Chang states that, "Comrade Mao Tse-tung developed Lenin's and Stalin's directives on the special and important role of the peasant question in colonial and semicolonial revolutionary movements, making a complete estimate of the peasants' revolutionary attitude. He said that the poor and middle peasants, who compromise more than 80 percent of China's population, are the most important and reliable ally of the proletariat in the democratic revolution." (23) Analysis (March 1926) and Report of an Investigation Into the Peasant Movement in Hunan (March 1927) /hereafter, Report/, Chang continues, contain Mao's contribution.

In Analysis, Mao says that, "The overwhelming majority of the semitenant peasants, together with the poor peasants, constitute a very large section of the masses in the countryside. The 'peasant problem' is essentially their problem." (24) Mao centers his attention on the poor peasants even more forcefully in Report, the most striking thing he ever wrote:

The main force in the countryside which has always put up the bitterest fight is the poor peasants. From the period of underground organization to that of open organization, the poor peasants have fought militantly all along. They accept most willingly the leadership of the Communist party. They are the deadliest enemies of the local bullies and bad gentry and
attack their strongholds without the slightest hesi-
tation.... They are the backbone of the Peasant As-
sociation, the vanguard in overthrowing the feudal
forces, and the foremost heroes who have accomplished
the great revolutionary undertaking left unaccomplished
for many years. Without the poor peasants (the 'riff-
raff' as the gentry call them) it would never have been
possible to bring about in the countryside the present
state of revolution; to overthrow the local bullies and
the bad gentry, or to complete the democratic revolu-
tion. Being the most revolutionary, the poor peasants
have won the leadership in the Peasant Association....
This leadership of the poor peasants is absolutely
necessary. Without the poor peasants there can be no
revolution. To reject them is to reject the revolu-
tion. To attack them is to attack the revolution. The
general direction they have taken in the revolution
has never been wrong. (Emphasis in original 1926
Report) (25)

According to Chang, therefore, Mao demonstrated original-
ity by maintaining that (1) revolutions in backward countries
(such as China) are primarily peasant revolutions and (2) the
poor peasants are the most important force and reliable ally
in these revolutions.

1. Revolutions in Backward Countries Are Primarily
Peasant Revolutions

In view of Lenin's statements as well as Stalin's and
those of several Chinese Communists, Mao appears not to have
made a contribution to theory on this point. For it was
Lenin who departed from Marx's reluctance to use the peasants
as an important revolutionary fighting force. In his Agrarian
Program of Social Democracy of November-December 1907, Lenin
emphatically states that, "The agrarian question /In Russia/
is the basis of the bourgeois-democratic revolution.... We
must have a clear idea of the character and significance of
precisely the peasant agrarian revolution as one of the
varieties of bourgeois revolution." Further: "The peasant
revolution, as Kautsky justly pointed out, leads also to state
bankruptcy, i.e., it damages the interests not only of the
Russian, but of the whole international bourgeoisie." Fur-
ther: "A section of the Marxists, the Right wing, persistent-
ly made shift with an abstract, stereotyped conception of the
bourgeois revolution, and failed to perceive the peculiar features of the present bourgeois revolution, which is precisely a peasant revolution... The Bolsheviks, on the other hand... singled out the concept of peasant revolution as one of the varieties of bourgeois revolution.... Thus we see that Plekhanov completely collapsed on the question of fundamentals of the general Social-Democratic tactics in a bourgeois revolution that can be victorious only as a peasant revolution." (26)

Later, turning to the task of formulating Communist tactics for backward countries of the Near East and Asia, Lenin in effect sees only the peasants as the revolutionary force. It is as a proponent of peasant revolutionary movements that Lenin speaks to the Second Congress of the Comintern in July 1920:

The most important feature of backward countries is that the precapitalist relations still prevail there and that, therefore, there can be no question of a purely proletarian movement in them. There is almost no industrial proletariat in those countries.... The idea of soviet organization is a simple one, and it can be applied not only to proletarian conditions but also to feudal and semifeudal peasant relations...we must base the theses of the Communist International on the assumption that the peasant Soviets...are applicable not only to capitalist countries but also to the countries of precapitalist conditions, and that it is the absolute duty of the Communist parties...to propagate the idea of peasant Soviets, the Soviets of the toiling people everywhere...and to try, wherever conditions permit, to create peasant Soviets or Soviets of the toilers. (27)

Actually, despite Lenin's directives on the importance of peasant revolutions for backward countries, most of the very early leaders of the Chinese Communist party (CCP) directed their activities toward organizing the urban working class, which was small in numbers. (28) But at least one prominent Chinese Communist leader, Peng Pai, who in the late 1920's became a politburo member, carried out Lenin's instruction to organize peasant Soviets.
In 1921, one year after he became a member of the CCP, Peng Pai went to the Kwangtung countryside to carry out "organization and propaganda" work among the peasants. He organized the first village peasants' association in China in Kwangtung province, which, by September 1922, had enrolled more than 500 members. On 1 January 1923, the Haifeng County Peasants' Association was formally established with a membership of about 20,000 families of 100,000 persons, or one-quarter of the population of the county. By mid-1923, he established the Kwangtung Provincial Peasants' Association and raised the slogan, "Down with the landowners! Long live the peasants!" Demands for reduction of land rent became demands for its total abolition. Peasant struggles against landlords and local officials spread throughout Kwangtung Province and into Hupeh and Hunan. Peasant associations were firmly established in Honan by September 1925. In Hunan, by late November 1926, there were 54 hsien, with a total registered membership in the peasants' associations of 1,071,137. By January 1927—when Mao began his investigation—this number exceeded 2,000,000. (29) Peng Pai set up the first peasant Soviet in China—the Haifeng Soviet Republic of Kwangtung—in November 1927. (30)

Peasant revolution was rapidly developing in the rural areas when the KMT began its own revolutionary activities among the peasants in 1924. In August 1926, the KMT Peasant Department published its declaration of Current Tactics for the Peasant Movement in Hunan, which extensively discussed policies for expanding and strengthening Hunan's peasant associations, (31) especially among the "poor peasants." Mao did not go out to inspect these Hunan associations for the Central Committee of the CCP until early 1927, when he was also training activists for the peasant movement for the KMT.

Thus Mao was not a newcomer as a peasant organizer and inspector. Moreover, he was not the first Chinese Communist to emphasize the importance of the peasants.

In addition to Peng Pai, several Communist writers working with the KMT's Peasant Department placed almost exclusive emphasis on the peasants. In August 1925, they were designated the "major force for destroying feudalism" by the Communist Kan Nai-kuang. Kan says that, "The peasant class is the basic class of the national revolution. In other words,
the peasantry is the main force of the national revolution." He explicitly reverses the view held by Marxists, and, more often than not, by Leninists, on the role of the peasants as an ally of the proletariat: "We consider that the working class is the most reliable ally of the peasants." (32)

Stalin, too, had underscored the importance of a peasant revolution for China before Mao stressed the point. Thus the Theses of the Seventh Plenum of the Comintern Executive Committee which Stalin and Bukharin drafted with the assistance of Tan Ping-shan, the Chinese Communist delegate, in November 1926 states:

Not to deal boldly with the agrarian question, not to support in their entirety the political and economic aims of the peasant masses would be a real danger for the revolution. It would be wrong not to place the program of the peasant movement first in the program of national liberation for fear of alienating the uncertain and perfidious cooperation of a part of the capitalist class. (33)

In his Prospects of the Revolution in China of November 1926, Stalin considered as correct the view of Tan Ping-shan, who maintained that the immediate satisfaction of the most urgent peasant demands is an "essential condition for the victory of the Chinese revolution." (34)

Peasant revolution was in the air. Inasmuch as land held by KMT officers was not to be confiscated, KMT delegate Shao Li-tzu reported to the November 1926 Comintern plenum that, "Comrade Chiang Kai-shek declared in his speech before the members of the KMT that the Chinese revolution would be unthinkable if it were unable to solve correctly the agrarian, i.e., the peasant question." (35)

2. The Poor Peasants are the Most Important Force and Reliable Ally

Lenin, not Mao, first underscored the importance of the poor peasants in a revolutionary movement. In his Agrarian Program of Social Democracy of 1907, Lenin speaks of the "poor peasantry" which he describes as crushed by the feudal landlords. He also distinguishes a small group of "middle peasants," who possess land sufficient to conduct farming in
a tolerable way, a small group of "well-to-do peasants," and "feudal latifundia." (36) In a work written two years earlier, he speaks of a "rural proletariat" and says that "we lay the main emphasis on...the special organization of the rural proletariat into a class party...we are keen on revolutionary peasant committees.... Class antagonism between the rural proletariat and the peasant bourgeoisie is inevitable, and we reveal it in advance, explain it and prepare for the struggle on the basis of it:" (37) [Lenin's emphasis]

Thus Lenin seems to use the designation "rural proletariat" as Engels had done in his The Peasant Question in France and Germany of 1894, that is, as poor farm workers as distinct from big and small landowners. For Lenin, it is the rural proletariat who will make the revolution in the countryside.

Returning to Mao's Report, viewed in its time and circumstances, Communists seem not to have considered it as a heresy. Because rural revolution was rapidly increasing in 1925 and because Stalin had designated it the "essential condition for the victory of the Chinese revolution" in November 1926, the Report of March 1927 seemed appropriate to the time. It apparently was a fairly accurate estimate of the revolutionary potential and total forces of the peasants in Hunan. To provide an accurate picture of the peasants as he saw their activities, Mao gave the peasants credit for 70 percent of the revolutionary work in Hunan and attributed only 30 percent to the Hunan urban dwellers and military units.

That this was viewed as a useful estimate of the peasants' revolutionary enthusiasm rather than a piece of heretical writing is suggested by the fact that it was reprinted by the Russian-dominated CCP in its official journal (38) as well as by Moscow. (39)

Similarly, Peng Pai's reports of experiences in organizing the first peasants' association in China in early 1920's and the first peasant Soviet in 1927 were reprinted in the Soviet publication International Literature (1932). Moscow did this, despite the fact that Peng speaks almost exclusively of the peasants' revolutionary activity without any significant urban support. In describing Haifeng County as divided into two big camps—"landowners and the peasants"—Peng speaks of the workers not as leaders but as subsidiary allies of the peasants: "The workers were on the side of the peasants." (40) That is the extent of his discussion of the workers.
In October 1951, however, when the Chinese Communists were laboring to build Mao Tse-tung's prestige as an eminent theorist, the emphasis on reportorial accuracy was replaced. The new emphasis was on doctrinal maturity, on theoretical excellence. What in March 1927, and in the years immediately following, was viewed as a good on-the-spot account of the Hunan peasant revolts, in October 1951 was viewed as a "brilliant" Marxist-Leninist theoretical analysis of the Chinese revolution in general. As such, it was subjected to the test of doctrinal rather than practical accuracy, and as a result, the sentence slighting the "urban dwellers" role in the Hunan revolts was deleted. (41)

A doctrinal content was supplied by insertion. Thus, theorist Li Ta claims that, "In the Report, Comrade Mao Tse-tung established the theoretical foundation of the worker-peasant alliance." (42) But in the original version of the Report, Mao does not mention the "worker-peasant alliance." Another theorist, Chu Chien-nung, claims that in the Report Mao solved the question of leadership of the peasant revolution. To prove this doctrinal point, Chu cites the following sentence from the Report: "The poor peasants accept most willingly the leadership of the Communist party." (43) But this crucial sentence appears only in the 1951 version of the Report as an insertion; it was not in the 1927 original. For the Comintern had designated the KMT as leader of the national revolution, not the CCP. At the time, Mao was working for the KMT as well as for the CCP, and his Report was therefore published not only in the CCP's official organ and in Moscow, but also in the weekly publication of the Central Executive Committee of the KMT. (44)

The Bourgeois Ally

Regarding the question of allies, Li Ta claims that in Analysis, Mao indicated that the Chinese bourgeoisie is different from the bourgeoisie in capitalist countries and "came to the conclusion" that the "left-wing of the national bourgeoisie could be friendly toward the revolution." Li asserts that by including the "national bourgeoisie" in the worker-led united front of peasants and petty bourgeoisie, "...Comrade Mao Tse-tung has further developed the Marxist-Leninist theory of classes." "Clearly, Analysis established the theory of a revolutionary united front led by the workers." (45)
Li mentions no early Communist literature on the subject of the national bourgeoisie probably because his claims would crumble were he to do so. For Lenin and Stalin were explicit in discussing the "revolutionary" section of the bourgeoisie.

Thus in his The Stages, Trends, and Prospects of the Revolution of 1905, Lenin makes a distinction between two sections of the Russian bourgeoisie: "...The labor movement flares up into a direct revolution, while the liberal bourgeoisie has already united in a Constitutional-Democratic party and thinks of stopping the revolution by compromising with tsarism. But the radical elements of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie are inclined to enter into an alliance with the proletariat for the continuation of the revolution...." (Lenin's emphasis) (46)

Discussing revolution in backward countries, particularly in China, Stalin in 1925 speaks of the split of the "national bourgeoisie...into a revolutionary and an anti-revolutionary wing." "Hence the task of the Communist elements in the colonial countries is to link up with the revolutionary elements of the bourgeoisie...." (47) When, therefore, roughly one year later Mao says in Analysis that "some sections" of the "middle class" (i.e., the national bourgeoisie) will "turn left and join the ranks of the revolution" and the other section will become anti-revolutionary (48), he is merely repeating Stalin's formulation.

But in order to credit Mao with originality, Li Ta cites Chen Po-ta's statement that Mao in the 1920's "did not have an opportunity to make a systematic study of Stalin's many works on China." (See page: two, above) The whole basis of Chen's argument is untenable. Few Communist leaders, if any, had the opportunity to make a "systematic" study of Stalin's "many" works on China. The point is that they received his directives on policy regularly and in considerable detail through Comintern channels. These directives included the matter of a united front with the "revolutionary" section of the bourgeoisie—a distinction which appears frequently in the writings of early Chinese Communist leaders.

In at least one decisive case, the Comintern directive was given forcefully and orally in Moscow. At the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, which met from 5 November to 5 December 1922, Karl Radek attacked the Chinese
delegates for being too "leftist" in their view of the bourgeoisie. "You must understand, comrades, that neither the question of socialism nor of the Soviet republic is now the order of the day...the immediate task is: (a) to organize the young working class; (b) to adjust its relations with the revolutionary bourgeoisie elements in order to organize the struggle against European and Asiatic /Japanese/ imperialism." /emphasis supplied/ (49)

To sum up, Mao Tse-tung did not make a contribution to the theory of historical materialism in his earliest works, Analysis and Report.

The Rural Base Area

But Communists say that in the actual conduct of life, in the actual direction of the party in revolution, a leader contributes to the theory of historical materialism as well. This is true, and it is in this area that Mao has made a significant contribution to the theory of revolution.

Specifically, Chen Po-ta claims that Mao "...worked out a series of complete conclusions: ...that it was possible for the revolution to achieve victory first in the countryside and that it was possible to establish long-term revolutionary bases there." (50)

Mao and his supporters apparently believed that they had little choice but to achieve "victory first in the countryside." In his The Chinese Revolution and the CCP of December 1939, Mao says that since "powerful imperialism and its reactionary allies in China have occupied China's key cities for a long time...," the relatively weak Communists "must build the backward villages into advanced, consolidated base areas." (51) The idea of a rural base area is a contribution to the Marxist-Leninist theory of revolution.

The prerequisites for establishing "long-term revolutionary bases" in the countryside are enumerated by Mao in November 1928. In his The Struggle in Chingkang Mountains, Mao says that in order to survive, an "isolated base" (52) requires, "(1) a sound mass basis, (2) a first-rate party organization, (3) a Red Army of adequate strength, (4) a terrain favorable to military operations, and (5) economic strength sufficient for self-support." (53) We can agree

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with Chen Po-tat's statement that, "To establish revolutionary bases by armed force was the starting point of the road along which Comrade Mao Tse-tung led the revolution to nation-wide victory."

Guerrilla Warfare

Chen singles out guerrilla warfare, as well as rural bases, as an important component of Mao's theory of revolution. Chen says: "The main strategy of the revolutionary war as expounded by Comrade Mao Tse-tung was to develop guerrilla warfare to the fullest possible extent and on a large scale and then, under certain conditions, after the growth of our strength, to transform it into regular warfare..." (55) Chen then quotes from Mao's The Chinese Revolution and the CPP: "...the protracted revolutionary struggle conducted in such revolutionary bases is chiefly a peasant guerrilla war led by the Chinese Communist party...."

Chinese claims for the originality of Mao's theory of guerrilla warfare tactics--some of which he took from Chu Te--are marked by considerable detail. "In this series of lectures /On Protracted War, 26 May to 3 June 1938/, Comrade Mao Tse-tung...worked out his strategic concept of 'conducting independent and isolated guerrilla warfare in mountainous terrain' and 'prosecuting primarily guerrilla warfare coupled with a war of movement in favorable circumstances' for the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army." (56) "With regard to the problem of engaging the enemy, it was Comrade Mao Tse-tung who always determined military strategy and military art. Precisely coincident with the promulgation of guerrilla warfare, he created his famous 16-word formulation: 'Enemy advances, we retire. Enemy tarries, we harass. Enemy tires, we fight. Enemy retires, we pursue...!' To summarize the 25 years of experience in guerrilla warfare, Comrade Mao Tse-tung wrote many famous military treatises: Strategic Problems of China's Revolutionary War, Strategic Problems of the Anti-Japanese Guerrilla War, etc. In these works, he explains the sources, nature, and theories of war involved in strategic military thinking, the laws of war, and even problems of military art...." (57)
International importance is also claimed for Mao's guerrilla warfare theories. Thus Kuan Meng-chueh in 1952 states that Mao's Strategic Problems of China's Revolutionary War of December 1938 "...is one of the most brilliant Marxist works of the world Communist movement on military science." (58) Kuan's statement carries considerable authority, as he seems to have taken it verbatim from the 30 Years of the CCP of July 1951, which thus far is the only official history of the CCP.

Despite their references to Lenin and Stalin, Soviet writers had paid Mao great tribute in discussing his treaties on guerrilla warfare. Thus in discussing Strategic Problems of China's Revolutionary War, M. Mitin states: "It is an extremely valuable and useful military text...Mao shows himself to be not only a major military figure and leader of great dimensions, but also a military theoretician who skillfully and creatively applied Lenin's and Stalin's ideas in the concrete conditions of the revolutionary war in China." (59) I. Plyshevskiy and A. Sobolev state that, "Mao Tse-tung's working out of strategic and tactical problems is an important contribution to the art of warfare." (60) This Plyshevskiy-Sobolev statement, which was made in a review of the second volume of the Russian edition of Mao's Selected Works is one of the most unequivocal tributes to Mao ever made by Soviet writers.

The idea of revolutionary guerrilla warfare as it was fully developed by Mao Tse-tung appears to be another contribution to the Marxist-Leninist theory of revolution.

Mao's teacher in guerrilla warfare tactics was Chu Te, whom Major Evans F. Carlson, an early on-the-spot observer of Chinese Red Army tactics, described as "pre-eminent in his field." (61) It is difficult to determine the extent of Mao's debt to Chu on the matter of strategy and tactics. In any case, Chu steps aside:

We must not absorb foreign countries' theories...mechanically and regard them as unchanging dogmas. The Great Revolution, the Agrarian Revolution, and the War of Resistance have given birth to a correct military science...it is a military science that has both theory and practice...the many books on warfare written by Comrade Mao Tse-tung are representative
works of this new military science...the strategy of the people's war is the outstanding result of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's method of waging war. 

This is Chu's tribute to Mao in April 1945.

To sum up, Mao made at least two contributions to the Marxist-Leninist theory of revolution. These are: the idea of forming rural revolutionary bases which were self-sustaining, and the idea of expanding and systematizing guerrilla warfare tactics.

Conciliation of the Capitalists

Mao seems to have made a third contribution as well. Regarding the question of the "revolutionary section" of the national bourgeoisie (also designated as the "middle bourgeoisie"), Mao in his earliest works merely repeated the formulations of Stalin and of Comintern directives. An alliance with the "middle bourgeoisie" meant an alliance with political leaders; that is, with the "left KMT." This was to be a united front "from above"; a direct appeal to the economic interests of businessmen was not envisaged.

But in his later works, Mao attempts to gain the maximum number of allies by a direct appeal to the economic interests of businessmen in the "national" or "middle" bourgeoisie. In effect this is a united front "from below," as it included a promise to protect their profits and was not restricted to political leaders. Thus in his The Present Situation and Our Tasks of December 1947, Mao states: "All that the New Democracy revolution aims to eliminate are feudalism and monopoly capitalism, the landlord class and the bureaucratic-bourgeoisie, not capitalism in general nor the petty bourgeoisie nor the middle bourgeoisie.... The existence of the capitalist economy of the petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie must still be permitted for a long period of time." (63)

In two respects, Mao's statement goes beyond Lenin's policy of tolerance towards Russian capitalists during the New Economic Policy (NEP) period. First, it envisaged the existence of a capitalist economy for a "long" period rather than for a temporary interval. Second, Lenin carried out...
the NEP after the Bolsheviks took over national power, but Mao pledged to protect the economic interests of capitalists before the CCP took power.

That this degree of moderation and conciliation towards capitalists and capitalist economy during a revolution was unprecedented, and troublesome for Moscow, is suggested by the manner in which the Cominform journal published Mao's The Present Situation and Our Tasks. Included among the deletions which the Cominform editors made in republishing it is Mao's statement on sustaining the "middle bourgeoisie" and capitalism. (64)

But Mao's idea has been maintained in the CCP. In their review of the fourth volume of Mao's Selected Works, two Chinese theorists state: "Comrade Mao Tse-tung...pointed out that, with regard to the national bourgeoisie, we should not only win them over politically, but we must also give its members consideration economically...." (emphasis supplied) (65) Changes in the CCP's policy towards the capitalist economy after 1949 will be discussed in a later paper.

The "Paper Tiger"

The two theorists also claim that Mao's "paper tiger" concept, that is, the idea of "slighting the enemy strategically and taking full account of him tactically," is a "new development of enormous significance in the theory of Marxist-Leninist strategy and tactics." (66) It is not that at all. It is a platitude. Many revolutionary leaders, including non-Communist nationalists--e.g., Abd-el-Krim, the guerrilla leader in Morocco--measured their cloth seven times over before acting when faced with a superior enemy force. As a fighter in the cause of Soviet Communism, Stalin was a supreme master in showing contempt for his enemy "strategically" while using "caution tactically." The theorists say that "paper tigers...considered on any particular sector or in regard to any specific struggle...are also living tigers, iron tigers, real tigers capable of devouring people, and we must use caution and carefully study the art of struggle." (67) Only a fanatic or lunatic would fail to use "caution" when confronted with "real tigers."

The idea of "caution" has an important place in Mao's "paper tiger" theory, but it is not frequently publicized.
When it is mentioned, it is used to provide sufficient reason for a manifest retreat. Thus in October 1958, Chou En-lai used the idea to explain to the party's propaganda department the Chinese Communist backdown from the venture in the Taiwan Strait.

A Text for Backward Countries

The Chinese Communists believe that Mao's contributions to the theory of revolution should be applied to other backward countries. When Mao's Why Can China's Red Political Power Exist? of October 1928 was republished in the 1951 edition of his selected works, the Commission on the Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, a body of the CCP central committee, amended one of Mao's statements. In 1928 Mao had left it implicit that rural revolutionary bases could exist only in the unique geographical and political environment of China. The Commission apparently was directed to add a footnote which made the Chinese revolutionary experience applicable to other backward countries. The key passage in the 1951 footnote is as follows:

Thus, just as the Chinese people have done, all or at least some of the colonial peoples in the East can hold for an extended period big or small base areas and revolutionary regimes, carry on a protracted revolutionary war to encircle the cities from the countryside, and proceed gradually to take over the cities and win nationwide victory in their respective countries. (68)
NOTES


3. Actually, Analysis of the Various Classes Among the Chinese Peasantry and Their Attitude toward the Revolution, is Mao's first known Marxist-Leninist work. This essay, which was published in the 1 January 1926 issue of Chung-kuo Mung-min (The Chinese Peasant), is not discussed separately in our paper, as it has been incorporated into the larger essay, Analysis of the Various Classes in Chinese Society, which appeared in Chung-kuo Nung-min, published by the KMT Central Executive Committee, Peasant Department, Canton, Number 2, 1 February 1926. The current Chinese Communist date for Analysis is March 1926—the date of its publication in Chung-kuo Ching-nien (Chinese Youth).


8. Direct and regular contact with the Far Eastern Secretariat of the Comintern was established by the CCP in spring 1921 following G. Voitinsky's arrival in China in spring 1920. According to B.Z. Shumiatsky, chief editor of the Russian and English journal published by the Special Department of the Far Eastern Secretariat of the Comintern, the Special Department was established in Irkutsk in 1920 and a Chinese Section was set up one year later. The duties of the Chinese Section were outlined by Chang Tai-lei, later a hero of the Canton Commune (December 1927), as follows:

"1. A Chinese Section of the Far Eastern Secretariat in Irkutsk is established to attend to the problems connected with relations between the CCP and the Comintern, to supply information to the CCP and to the R.S.F.S.R., as well as to pass on the directives of the Executive Committee of the Comintern to the CCP. . . .

"3. The Section follows the pattern of Comintern organization by which the Communist parties of separate countries serve as Sections of the Comintern. Likewise, the relations between the Central Committee of the CCP and the Far Eastern Secretariat of the Comintern must be based on the similar principle of organizational contact. That is, the membership of the Chinese Section of the Far Eastern Secretariat will consist of the local representative of the Central committee of the CCP in the Secretariat, and the Section itself will be subordinated to the Secretariat."

Comintern influence was exerted with increasing effectiveness. The Resolution of the First CCP Congress (July 1921) is a short document which rejects compromise with the Nationalists (KMT), but the Decisions of the Second Congress (July 1922) attack "imperialism," drop the non-compromise policy in order to permit Communists to join the KMT, and provide the theoretical rationale that the proletariat must help the bourgeoisie at this stage against "imperialism and feudalism." The hand of the Comintern is unmistakable in the Decisions and in early CCP policy documents.


15. Lenin: ibid., p. 59. According to Trotsky, in 1905 Lenin did not adhere to the view that the bourgeois-democratic revolution would "pass over" into the socialist revolution, and it was only in the spring of 1917 that he advanced this idea, re-equipped with Trotsky's theory of "permanent revolution."


18. Lenin: ibid., p. 45.


20. Lenin: "Regenerated China" (8 November 1912), in The National Liberation Movement in the East: Lenin, op. cit., p. 52. M.N. Roy, the chief Indian delegate to the Second Congress of the Comintern, July-August 1920 opposed Lenin's view that a "temporary alliance" with the bourgeoisie in colonial areas should be established. Roy insisted on complete Communist party leadership of revolutions in the Far East from the outset. As a compromise, Lenin on 26 July told the Congress that "we should speak of the national-revolutionary and not of the 'bourgeois-democratic' movements" in the East. Thus in the 1920's, Chinese Communists designated the KMT as leader of the "national revolution," but many leaders feared the "temporary alliance."

before Mao allegedly did. In his Who Are the Leaders of the Chinese National Revolution? of late 1924, Peng states that the Proletariat is stronger than the industrial bourgeoisie, as it extended to both Chinese-owned and foreign-owned industries. The "natural leader" of the revolution, therefore, was not the bourgeoisie but the proletariat. (Cf. Peng Shu-chih" "Chung-kuo Ko-ming chih Ken-pen Wen-ti" /Basic Problems of the Chinese Revolution/, in Chung-kuo Ko-ming Wen-ti Lun Wen-chi /A Collection of Essays on Problems of the Chinese Revolution/, Hsin Ching-nien She, Shanghai, 1927, p. 29.)


26. Lenin: Selected Works, Volume III, International Publishers, New York, no date, pp. 159, 286, Lenin displayed, however, no deep sympathy for the peasants and wanted to use them only as an ally. Thus in his The Attitude of Social Democracy Toward the Peasant Movement of September 1905, he says: "We support the peasant movement in so far as it is revolutionary and democratic. We are making ready (making ready at once, immediately) to fight it in so far as it becomes reactionary and anti-proletarian... At first we support to the end by all means, including confiscation, the peasantry generally against the landlords and then (or rather, not 'then,' but at the same time) we support the proletariat against the peasantry in general." (Cf. Lenin: Selected Works, Volume III, ibid., pp. 144-146.)

28. In line with Lenin's Comintern thesis of 1920, the Manifesto of the CCP Adopted in July 1922 by the Second Congress states that: "Three hundred million Chinese peasants are the most important factors of our revolutionary movement.... We believe that the Chinese revolution will quickly succeed when the majority of the peasants ally themselves with the workers." (Cf. Chen Kung-po: The Communist Movement in China (1924), op. cit., p. 120. Chang Kuo-tao has said that he worked on the drafting of the Manifesto.) Nevertheless, the CCP's major effort in the very early 1920's concentrated on organizing factory workers, railroad workers, seamen, and dockworkers in the cities.

29. Hua Kang: The Great Chinese Revolution of 1925-1927, Two Volumes, Shanghai, 1931, Chapter 4, Section IV.

30. Peng Pai: "Hai-feng Nung-min Yun-tung Pao-kao" (Report on the Peasant Movement in Haifeng), in Chung-kuo Nung-min (The Chinese Peasant), op. cit., Canton, 1926: Number 1, 1 January; Number 3, 1 March; Number 4, 1 April; and Number 5, 1 May. (Cf. also T. C. Chang: The Peasant Movement in Kwangtung, Shanghai, 1928).

31. Hunan Nung-min Yun-tung Mu-chien ti Tse-lueh (Current Tactics for the Peasant Movement in Hunan), Chung-Kuo Nung-min (The Chinese Peasant), op. cit., Canton, Number 8, 1 August 1926, pp. 30-40.

33. "Theses on the Situation in China," adopted by the Seventh Plenum, Executive Committee, Communist International, November-December 1926, Inprecor, Paris, 20 February 1927. The theses limited the Communists to confiscating only the land of "reactionary" militarists, and this had the effect of restricting the force and scope of the peasant revolution.

34. Stalin: "Prospects of the Revolution in China" (30 November 1926), in Works, Volume VIII. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1954, p. 385. But, unlike Tan, Stalin said the only way to organize the peasants was through the KMT government.

35. Shao Li-tzu: "Speech to the Seventh Plenum, Session of 30 November 1926," in Inprecor, 30 December 1926. In his Report, Mao speaks repeatedly of "bad" gentry, "evil" landlords, and local "bullies." This was KMT terminology, as "good" gentry and "good" landlords were permitted to retain their land.


39. Revolyutsionnyi Vostok (The Revolutionary East), published by the Scientific Association for the Study of National and Colonial Problems, Moscow, Number 2, 1927.

41. The original sentence states: "To give credit where it is due, if we allot ten points to the accomplishments of the democratic revolution, then the achievements of the urban dwellers and the military rate only three, while the remaining seven should go to the peasants in their rural revolution." (Cf. Mao Tse-tung: Hsuan-chi (Selected Works), Ta-chun Shu-tien, Dairen, November 1947, p. 215.)


44. Chinese Correspondence, Number 8, 15 May 1927.

45. Li Ta: op. cit., 5 September 1952, p. 35.


52. "Isolated base" or "cut-off base" is a more literal translation of the Chinese than the English-language rendition, "independent regime."


55. Chen Po-ta: *ibid*.


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65. Teng Li-chun and Wu Chiang: "Dialectics is the Algebra of Revolution -- Read the Selected Works of Mao Tsetung, Volume IV," in *Hung Chi (Red Flag)*, Peking Joint Numbers 20-21, 1 November 1960, p. 28.

66. Teng Li-chun and Wu Chiang: *ibid.*, p. 25.