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History and Revolution in China

Owen Lattimore

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HISTORY AND REVOLUTION IN CHINA

When a revolution breaks out it occurs in the present; but each people, each nation enters on this present by a somewhat different path, because it has its own history, its own past, which makes it see "the present" in its own way. This is how the past affects the present, and the shaping of the future; and this is why history is of special importance in understanding the Chinese Revolution. China has the longest continuous history of any country in the world. We have older historical records from Egypt and Mesopotamia than we do from China, but nobody today is using the cuneiform writing of Babylonia or the hieroglyphs of Egypt, and the languages spoken by the peoples who used those forms of writing no longer exist. Our oldest writing from China goes back only to about 1400 B.C. That is not old compared with Egypt and Babylonia, but this Chinese writing is quite unmistakably an early form of the writing that the Chinese still use today. We do not know how the language was pronounced, between two and three thousand years ago, but the words are clearly the same words that are used today, the grammar is the same, the order of words is the same. This language has lasted uninterruptedly and so has the culture of which it is a symbol.

Another important thing about the historical character of China is that China never went through a Dark Age. The Han Dynasty in China, about 200 B.C. - 200 A.D., was approximately contemporary with the Roman Empire; but when the Roman Empire fell before the Barbarians, Europe was plunged into a dark period in which civilization was almost lost. There never was such a period in China. This is partly a question of geography. The cultural and economic centre of the Roman Empire lay on the northern side of the Mediterranean and when that was penetrated by the Barbarians there was not room enough in Northern Africa for the civilized part of the Roman Empire to retreat, carrying its culture along and preserving it. In China on the other hand when the Barbarians broke through the Great Wall and conquered the northern part of China the Chinese still had an enormous depth of territory to retreat into southward and this territory was on the whole more fertile than that of the North so that in China we have the unique phenomenon of several Chinese dynasties which were politically defeated and forced to retreat but became even more prosperous and civilized in retreat than they had been in their old homeland. From the area to which they retreated they could in time

advance again and recover their old territory.

This happened several times in Chinese history. For some three centuries before Marco Polo visited China, most of the northern part of the country had been ruled by successive barbarian invaders. Most of the northern Chinese remained in the north, but some retreated southward, combined there under continued Chinese dynastic rule with the southern population, and created what is known in history as the Sung Period, one of the most brilliant in the whole history of China in scholarship, in art, painting, philosophy, in the study of China's own history, and also in technological development. The rest of the world has nothing to compare with this. Perhaps we may regard Byzantium - the Eastern Roman Empire, as an equivalent of the Chinese southern dynasties; but the Eastern Romans never recovered the West, as the Southern Chinese recovered the North. Consequently in the hundred years approximately from the Opium Wars of the 1830-40s to the Second World War, when China experienced a century of imperialistic encroachment, the idea never entered the heads of the Chinese that they were totally defeated or destined to be ruled completely by foreigners. There was always the thought that China would yet recover as it had recovered in the past.

This brings us to the question of war and revolution. In its long past China went through a number of rebellions the typical character of which was the rising of the peasants against their landlords and against the government, which brings us to the further question of why there should have been such rebellions. What was the nature of the society, and what caused the kind of rebellion typical of that society? Here I think that we in the West are going to need to do a drastic overhaul of some of our traditional ideas about China and its society. In the 17th and 18th centuries, when the Jesuit missionaries presented to Europe their interpretation of China, their object was to demonstrate that China was a civilized country and therefore that Christianity would not be lowering its standards if it made certain adjustments in order to persuade the Chinese to become Christians. So the Jesuits, who were good scholars in the Chinese language, presented their own version of a paternalistic, despotic government under an emperor, in which authority was exercised by scholars and in which authoritarianism within the family was matched with the authority of the government itself. This was a picture of China, of course, which was perfectly acceptable to a monarchic Europe. The truth of the matter is I suspect, though I do not think it can yet be fully demonstrated, that both the traditional Chinese Confucian scholars and their western interpreters have exaggerated the Confucian nature of the Chinese society. Confucianism flourished especially in the landlord class of China, the only class which in a hardworking country had the leisure

time to educate its sons so that they could pass the competitive examinations and enter the bureaucratic structure of the government. The bureaucracy perpetuated the landlords and the landlords perpetuated the bureaucracy.

Under them in the villages there survived, throughout Chinese history, a much older, much more primitive tradition which was really more characteristic of the Chinese people as a whole. This was a tradition of village self-sufficiency and village autonomy with a large degree of the settlement of village affairs internally by the villages themselves so that they would not have to appeal to the authority of the officials above them. There are many indications that there was always tension and latent hostility between the villages, which had many of the characteristics of a collectivized society, and the hierarchy of the upper classes above the villages. Certainly for every Chinese peasant rebellion as far back as we know the more evidence we have, the more we find that there was a tendency not only to revolt against government authority, not only to revolt against the political and social control of the landlords but a positive tendency to revert to a sort of collectivized society with marked egalitarian tendencies and particularly - which is most anti-Confucian - with a tendency to restore the equality between women and men. Now Confucianism, which has been so often presented to us as a benevolent paternalistic ethic of society is in fact one of the most authoritarian and one of the most unequal systems in the world. The husband is above the wife as the father is above the whole family. The elder son is above the younger son and all sons are above the daughters, all men are above all women and women are for almost all their life a form of property. They are the property of their father until they are married off and when married off they become the property of their husband or rather not of their husband but of their husband's family. The nearest a woman could rise to importance in such a society was if she produced sons and outlived her husband. In that case her authority as mother of her sons and mother-in-law of her sons' wives could be considerable but this was something only to be attained as older age came on.

We find then, that Chinese peasant rebellion has throughout history two characteristics: a political thrust to overthrow authority and a social thrust which has always been anti-Confucian and against the accepted ethic of the state. This means that even something as modern as Marxism and Communism found in China what Marxism and Communism require, that is a potential of political revolution borne on a tide of social revolution. We may turn also I think to another characteristic of history which will help to prepare us for the idea of a China going communist.

The Chinese culture as a whole is one of the most unreligious in the world. Confucianism is not properly a religion; it is an ethic. In fact, Confucius was always sceptical of the supernatural. He said that he had enough to do worrying about the problems of man without bothering about God. Taoism carries within it survivals of ancient magic, but magic is not quite the same thing as religion. Then we come to what has been called the third of the great Chinese religions namely Buddhism. Buddhism was brought into China early in the Christian era and entered quite differently from the way in which Christianity entered Europe. Christianity was spread by Christian missionaries going constantly further and further to persuade people to adopt their religion. Buddhism was discovered in Central Asia by Chinese, largely merchants, who had been there and found a Buddhism which had been brought to Central Asia not so much by missionaries as by merchants from India.

The Chinese were interested in this and carried it back to China. Even though some of the early exponents were foreigners, they were not foreigners who had gone to China as missionaries, but foreigners whom the Chinese had found in Central Asia and brought back to China. Afterwards, as the religion began to gain ground in China, the Chinese sent their own scholars to India to acquire the scriptures and study them and bring them back to China. We have therefore a first stage in which Buddhism seems to have been crudely translated into Chinese by foreigners who could speak Chinese and Chinese who could speak one of the Central Asian languages but not scholars who could make careful translations from written texts, and a second stage, carried out by the Chinese themselves, of careful scholarship. The same thing with later religions that penetrated China to a greater or lesser depth, including Nestorian Christianity and Islam. Only from the 18th century onward do we have a growing conflict between foreigners trying to impose their religion on the Chinese and the Chinese trying to maintain their right to accept only what religion they wanted.

I labour this point because when we come to the introduction of marxism into China we find very much the same story - the story of modern Chinese who were looking all over the world for those western ideas which they could use independently in China in order to make China independent of the West. It was in the course of this search that Chinese became interested in marxism and the first official foreign exponents of marxism in China came there only by invitation of Chinese who were already radical and revolutionary. From then on Chinese marxism has had a strong mark of Chinese independence. This is a most important point, because you will still see in popular books about the history of the revolution in China discussions of the Comintern, Russian advisers, and

the period of the first United Front between the communists and Kuomintang which place too heavy an emphasis on "Moscow-trained" Chinese. It was not in fact Moscow-trained Chinese who finally led China to communism. Mao Tse-tung himself never left China for any foreign country until after the war. In the early triumvirate of the great Chinese communist leaders there are also Chou En-lai and General Chu Te. Chou En-lai was a Chinese student who went to France, where as a young radical nationalist he came in touch with French socialists. He made his own choice in preferring Third International communism to Second International socialism, and consequently went to Russia only because he was already a communist. Similarly the old General Chu Te. He had been a professional soldier and a warlord. He had been quite a corrupt man, and an opium smoker. He broke himself of the opium habit and at the end of the First World War he adopted a line of thinking quite common among Chinese professional soldiers. The argument was that it had taken a world coalition to defeat Germany. If China ever had to fight, it would be an unequal war of the weak against the strong. Therefore, China could learn more from defeated Germany than from the triumphant victors. This has always seemed to me a characteristic insight of Chinese realism. So Chu Te went to Germany. There he got young Chinese students to attend military lectures and interpret for him, and it was through his own radical military thinking combined with the comments of radical young Chinese students in Germany that he decided to become a communist. Again, no question of being converted by some Russian marxist missionary.

These signs of independent Chinese choice of marxism as a kind of political method which they could apply in their own way in their own country for their own purposes have characterized Chinese communist history almost throughout. One must not oversimplify. There were, of course, always some Chinese, especially returned students from Moscow who wanted to make China uniform with the rest of the marxist world. But clearly the trend which has been predominant has been the instinctive feeling of the Chinese that they cannot be saved by swallowing any foreign doctrine as if they were swallowing pills; that they must learn the methods of remedying their problems, but must do the work themselves.

Then we come to another question which is of interest both to students of general history and to students of revolutions. The vision of the founders of marxism, Marx and Engels themselves, was one of successive stages of history in which eventually a proletariat based on urban industry would overthrow a bourgeois society and establish first socialism and then communism. There were always some Chinese who had learned their marxism through foreign languages who were inclined to accept

this doctrine without close examination, but certainly one of the characteristics of the theoretical thinking of Mao Tse-tung throughout his career, and also one of the characteristics of his style in political action is to go beyond mere imitation to face the realities of the situation. China had never been through the regular stage of a society controlled by a bourgeois class which Marx, Engels and Lenin himself had regarded as a necessary preparation for a marxist-led revolution. In China not only was there practically no modern factory-working proletarian class but the most revolutionary section of the Chinese people was the peasantry. We know from the writings of Mao himself, when as a young revolutionary he toured the deep interior of his own country observing peasant conditions in order to write a report on the peasantry for the newly founded Chinese Communist Party, that what caused his enthusiasm, what fired him with a vision of what could be accomplished by a revolution in China was the revolutionary potential of the peasantry.

We must also take into account that historically the way was opened for a communist-led revolution in China by a war which for the Chinese was quite different from what the First World War had been for the Russians. For Lenin as the leader of the revolution in Russia it was necessary that his own government be defeated, otherwise its hold on the country was too strong. For Lenin the Tsar was as bad as the Kaiser; they were both imperialists and therefore the Russian Revolution would be misled if it allowed itself in the name of patriotism to support the Russian Tsar in a war against the German Kaiser. So in fact the Russians were preaching defeat; they needed the defeat of their own country to give them a revolutionary opportunity. The case of China was quite different. It would have been absurd if Mao Tse-tung and the other Chinese communist leaders had told the Chinese people that Chiang Kai-shek was just as bad as the Japanese. No, for China the survival of the opportunity for revolution depended on the survival of China as a nation. Hence the communist emphasis on patriotism in the war against Japan. It was their form of political rivalry and political competition with the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek himself. On this question there is a book by a young American, Professor Chalmers Johnson, on "Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power", which goes far beyond any question of communist propaganda against the Kuomintang or Kuomintang propaganda against the communists. It is based on Japanese intelligence documents from occupied China. These are the reports of agents to their superiors, who wanted to know who was inspiring and organising the Chinese resistance to Japanese occupation - the Kuomintang, or the communists.

It is out of these Japanese intelligence reports that we get the picture that the natural instinctive nationalism of the peasants in North China

was better understood and better organized by communist leadership than it was by the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek. This brings us to a most important question in the study of all revolution as one of the categories of politics. You all know the old saying attributed to somebody in the French Revolution: "There goes the mob; I am its leader; I must follow it". In a revolutionary situation, when the leaders are confronted with a decision, the people may be wanting to move in a certain direction. Should the leaders try to turn them in a different direction or should they follow the crowd until the mood of the crowd enables them to change the direction? We can see this question particularly clearly, I think, in the career of Mao Tse-tung. From his first critically important report on the peasantry of the interior of China - a report made for the Communist Party - in which at a time when the theories of the young communists were based on the idea of a proletarian-led revolution, he reports to the Party that the great explosive revolutionary force in the interior is the peasantry. He uses very picturesque language, saying that it is ready like a fire or a flood to devour everything in front of it. Clearly his conclusion is that if the communists wanted to put themselves at the head of a revolutionary movement in China, they must begin by following what the people wanted. Only after convincing the people that they were going in the direction that the people wanted could they put themselves at the head of the movement. This has remained characteristic of the revolutionary method of Mao Tse-tung. Throughout his career he seems to have had a conviction that the most downtrodden class in China, the peasantry, had an instinctive knowledge of what was in their own interest, the general direction in which they should move. Therefore he and his followers, if they were good professional revolutionaries, should first take it for granted that the instinct of the peasants was right, but secondly as professional revolutionaries they should examine whether the methods instinctively favoured by the peasants were right, and if they thought that there was something wrong with the methods or that the methods could be improved, they should then argue with the peasants, not diminishing their revolutionary fervour but trying to convince them intellectually that the revolutionaries knew something about how to do the job that the peasants wanted done.

This is extremely interesting because it is so different from the idea of a small revolutionary élite trying to impose discipline and control on the population as a whole and trying to force them to follow the direction of the leadership. I think that I have said enough to show that Chinese communism has its own characteristics. I do not want to over-emphasize this because I might mislead you into thinking that Chinese communism is so different from other marxisms and communisms that it is not really the

same thing. I would not for a moment want to mislead you in that way because I think that the Chinese communists are extremely anxious to make themselves into really expert students and interpreters of the thought and the theories of Marx and Engels and Lenin. They do not want to be, and they do not want people to think that they are, some kind of exotic oriental marxists that are different from European marxists. I think that they would probably say that the good marxist, the professional marxist, is the one who masters the general doctrine of marxism and applies it best in a practical way to the problems that actually exist in his own country, not to any problems that somebody might say theoretically ought to exist in his country. And this coincides with the strain of peasant realism that is so characteristic of the mass of the Chinese people who are peasants.

I remember a story told by an American journalist just after the Japanese surrender when the civil war between the Chiang Kai-shek forces and the communists was about to begin. This was at a period when American journalists could still get around in China freely. He came to an area in Shantung province, where the peasant resistance to the Japanese had been particularly bitter and very bloody and had cost the Chinese enormous losses. I flew over that territory myself at the end of 1945. It was criss-crossed with miniature great walls which the Japanese had built trying to control the country by preventing guerilla movement. The Chinese had answered this by digging tunnels, the Japanese had countered by pumping poison gas into the tunnels. The Chinese had then devised tunnels with different levels to deal with heavy gas and light gas so whatever the Japanese would use there would always be certain levels that were gas-free. This war was going on for years in a very bitter way. In that area there was a man who had started out simply as a peasant leader organizing neighbouring villages against the Japanese. There had been some Chiang Kai-shek attempts to organize guerrillas in the same area, but they had failed because the Chiang Kai-shek agents could never really win the trust of the peasants, to whom they wanted to give orders. This man had succeeded because he was a peasant himself, and always proceeded by consulting the peasants. Toward the end of the war the communists got near enough to get in contact with him, and they got on all right with each other.

Then at the end of the war the Japanese surrendered and the Chiang Kai-shek forces were nearer to this man's territory than the communists were. In taking over from the Japanese, they were making one of the great mistakes that led to the defeat of Chiang Kai-shek. Instead of saying to guerrillas and partisans - "Bravo! You have done the right thing. Now what can we do for you?" they came in saying, "All right now, the

Japanese have surrendered. You peasants have no business carrying guns around. Just turn your guns in to us. The regular forces will take over, we will appoint officials, and we will tell you what to do at the right time. Just sit there and wait for orders." Whereas the communists were coming in saying, "You have done a fine job. You have fought the Japanese magnificently. Now keep your arms. Don't let anybody dictate to you. You liberated your villages from the Japanese. They are your villages. Don't let anybody take over."

This is perhaps the most significant application of Mao Tse-tung's famous phrase, "power grows out of the barrel of a gun". The armed peasant - and the communists freely armed the peasants - could not only stand up against the Kuomintang; he could negotiate on level terms with the communists. This application of the phrase has been lost sight of, because anti-Chinese propaganda has treated it as meaning one thing only: dictation to the unarmed people by the armed communists. Just at this moment however these particular peasants were in danger of being enveloped by the Chiang Kai-shek forces, so there was held a council of war which decided that they had to retreat to escape encirclement. It was a question of mobilizing transportation and determining the direction of retreat. While the council of war was going on in came a couple of communist agents with the glad news that they had brought a couple of cartloads of pamphlets, communist pamphlets. Up to this point, the peasants had only been discussing communist ideas. Now they had the real thing - the written word. Whatever else had to be abandoned in the retreat, the pamphlets must be saved. This attitude incidentally shows how even a Chinese communist can be affected by one of the traditional ideas of China, inherited from Confucianism and the scholar-bureaucracy: that the printed word is more authoritative than the spoken word. In the old culture, if one man presented a lucid argument and his opponent quoted a printed precedent, the printed word always prevailed over the spoken word. In the end, the peasant leader proposed a solution. He said, "Let us find a dry place and dig a deep hole and bury the pamphlets. They are awfully heavy and they would slow us down if we tried to carry them away; but we will find a good dry place and when we win we will come back and then we can dig them up and everybody can enjoy the pamphlets. But right now, right now in my opinion, comrades, the best marxist man is the one who runs fastest." This kind of realism is where the peasant realism of China and the political realism of a man like Mao Tse-tung meet and blend together.

There are many other instances of the importance of history to the Chinese Revolution. I will tell you one more story about this kind of thing because it is so important for us to try to understand a little of

what it is all about. Years ago when I used to travel on the Chinese Inner Mongolian frontier, the frontier of settlement between Chinese colonists and Mongols who were still nomads and shepherds, there was a good deal of banditry. I found there that the practice of the local authorities (China being then in a rather dismembered state) was that if a warlord general's territory was being bothered by bandits, he did not want to spend too much money and ammunition really rounding up these bandits and exterminating them. He would therefore merely "sweep them out", as it was called locally, at the same time leaving open a line of escape, so that they could get away into the territory of a neighbouring general. In this way the problem was not solved, but merely geographically transferred. This was the simple observation of a traveller and it was long after that that I learned that Mao Tse-tung, from his study of Chinese history, had understood that this was not simply a contemporary characteristic of Chinese warlordism in the modern age, but was regularly characteristic of the combination of bureaucratic structure and geographical administrative structure in China. In the traditional Chinese society the appointed official sat in the middle of his territory, and dealt there with all problems that were actually brought to him. But from the middle of his territory towards the frontiers of his territory his power faded. This was also true of the adjoining territorial units. Therefore, as Mao Tse-tung saw and understood, the ideal base for an armed rebellion was a region where two or more territorial jurisdictions met. Then, if hard-pressed in territory A, the rebels could move into territory B. Territory A would then stop chasing you. In due course, you could later move from territory B into territory C, and so on. The early communist bases in South China made good use of this principle. In itself, the principle had nothing to do with Marx; it was the application of a shrewd practical mind to what could be learned from the past historical record of China, from an understanding of the way traditional Chinese authority was built up, together with the perception that institutional authority and territorial jurisdiction could be manoeuvred against each other.

I suggest that often, by dropping such labels as marxism, communism and so on one can analyze a situation in a very practical way and show that the communist leadership in China, in spite of the disturbances we see in the Great Cultural Revolution, in the Red Guards, and in the reported controversies among leaders, are dealing more with hard facts and tough problems than with cloudy ideological obsessions; and the people themselves, through their mass organisations, are getting a political education. This is more than being indoctrinated by a privileged élite. It is, in the newly fashionable phrase, "participatory politics".

Chinese communism today is something that we have to reckon with because it is so firmly based that it is likely to last far longer than the authority of any Chinese government that we have known, and it is firmly based because it has been led with a maximum of success and a minimum of mistakes. Mao Tse-tung always consistently adhered to the idea that theory must be constantly checked by fact. If the theories and the facts do not agree then it is probably the theory that needs some adjustment. Problems cannot be evaded by pretending that the facts are different from what they are. In the end, the facts govern, and theory is only a way of asking yourself whether you have properly observed the facts and the relationship between the facts.

Q u e s t i o n s a n d A n s w e r s

"Where do you place the present cultural revolution in China in relation to the history of China?"

At the danger of over-simplification I would say that while the present cultural revolution must be seen in the long perspective of China's history, it is most immediately concerned with recent history, the history of the Communist Party, and the correction of mistakes. Also, very important indeed and much neglected in our discussion in the West, is the fact that the cultural revolution reflects a need for emergency measures to prepare China against the danger of attack by the U.S.A. The Chinese may feel less in danger now, but they certainly have felt in danger in recent years that the next escalation in Vietnam or the next one after that might go beyond Vietnam and involve a general bombing of China. Faced with the possibility of such an emergency any regime would make a drastic overhaul of its system of administration, defense, and preparation of the people. There is a great deal of this in the cultural revolution.

"What is the significance of the "paper tiger" theory?"

I do not think that the phrase "paper tiger" is really a theory. It is part of a picturesque peasant way of talking that Mao Tse-tung likes and that is one of the things that make him popular in China. It is like saying in English, "Don't let yourself be scared by bogeymen. Don't exaggerate a danger, even if it is real". To say that a certain danger is a paper tiger is like saying - "That balloon can be pricked". The phrase be-

came popular during the war against Japan, when defeatists were saying that the Japanese had all the airplanes, all the tanks, all the artillery. How could China stand up against them? The answer was - "With proper organization, with proper training, we can stand up against them. In spite of all their advantages they are up against certain disadvantages. By studying not only the strength of the enemy but the weakness of the enemy and instead of being frightened by our own weakness if we will study also our own strength, then we can say - that danger is nothing but a paper tiger."

"Has the American policy in China been based on the proper study of history and the potentialities of the situations?"

Well, the short answer is no. It is worth trying to give a longer answer. In the 1920s and 1930s when the Japanese were encroaching first on Manchuria and then on the rest of China, they had genuine confidence in their own expert knowledge. "After all," they said, "we Japanese drew our own civilization largely from China in the Middle Ages. We are the only strong power in the world whose system of reading is largely modelled on the Chinese, and although the languages are different we have a tradition of studying Chinese history and civilization and contemporary Chinese politics more in quantity and also more in depth than any other nation. We really know what it is all about, and we know that if we handle China in this way and not in that way, we can impose our will". When the rest of the world protested against the violence of Japanese methods the Japanese would say - "Well, we are in a hurry but there is a certain emergency and you must allow us to use this extra violence because after all it is only Japan that is holding back from China the flood of Bolshevism that is trying to flow in from Russia." This all sounded very realistic but the point is that while it was perfectly true that the Japanese at that time had more knowledge of China than any other country, they did not realize, and the rest of us did not realize at the time, that their understanding of the facts was not equal to the number of facts that they knew. You might say that they knew everything that happened in China, but still didn't know what was going on. It is sad to reflect that these characteristics of the Japanese "intelligence" on China are today to be found not in Tokyo but in Washington.

THE MEANING OF CULTURAL REVOLUTION IN CHINA

You would be quite right in a way to say that I have no right to talk about the Cultural Revolution in China today. I have not been in China since 1945. To that I could reply that perhaps, having been away from China for a quarter of a century I can at least speak with detachment. On the other hand I think that I can say that for several reasons I feel that I do have some right to an opinion about what is going on in China today. For one thing, most academic people who lived in China in the old days lived under very privileged conditions. Most of them said that they were, and certainly tried to be, objective in studying the facts; but if you are living under privileged conditions that keep you apart from the common people you can never get more than a certain distance into the heart of the country. Now when, in the first years after I went back to China after my childhood, I was working for 6 or 7 years in a trading firm which, of course, also had privileged advantages. Therefore I was a participant in and a beneficiary of imperialism. I know about the imperialistic period in China from having been one of the employees of imperialism and I know a good deal about the way the Chinese felt about it. For my first years I was not in touch with Chinese intellectuals at all, but travelled in the far interior without an interpreter and therefore came in touch with ordinary people and, as much as it was possible in those days, with the manner of Chinese life itself.

At the present time, at my university in Leeds in Great Britain, I have the benefit of several colleagues in my department who have recently spent considerable time in China not to mention several who are themselves Chinese by birth. And perhaps I might add as a contingent benefit that I have the advantage of having been away from America for five years. At the present time - this is extremely important - at the present time there is more knowledge about China in the U.S.A. than in any other country. There is an enormous intelligence operation. I do not know what may be the secret intelligence that goes to the armed forces and the Department of State. I am referring only to the intelligence that is fed out to the newspapers, universities and so on. A tremendous number of personnel in Hongkong and Japan monitor the Chinese radio, make excerpts from the Chinese newspapers and so on. But all this is done under conditions in which the Americans themselves are separated from China and do not realize the extent to which their isolation from

China imposes a distortion on their thinking. I am reminded of the 1920s and 1930s when the Japanese were encroaching on China and were the main danger to China. In those days part of the Japanese propaganda to the rest of the world was that they were the only ones who really knew what was going on in China. They were the ones who read the newspapers, bribed the traitors, and interviewed the defectors. They employed as many Chinese as the Americans do now - and, like the Americans, they were often the victims of their self-interested informants. Now the course of the war proved that although the Japanese knew the facts they did not understand the meaning of them: They were defeated largely because they did not understand what they knew. This is the situation that is being reproduced in the U.S.A. today. The Americans know more and understand less about China and what is going on in China than anybody else in the world. Perhaps most important of all an American in government service, military or civilian, if he wants promotion must be "objective" about China "in the right way" - which means, of course, in an anti-Chinese way.

This is important for the rest of the world, especially the Western world, because not only the newspapers but the experts, the people who are trying to study in China, depend so much on information that has been passed through an American filter. Thus we find all over Europe even in the good papers, people who are trying to write objectively but not realizing that they are guided by preconceptions, so that over and over again one gets an enormously important phenomenon like the Cultural Revolution in China interpreted by people who assume that of course this must be simply a struggle between the ambitions of individual politicians each one with his own little following, each one trying to get the better of the other; or that of course Mao Tse-tung is getting to be an old man and wants to leave everything straight before he goes. He wants to make sure that his power passes into the hands of the right people and so on. Now I think that the phenomenon of the Cultural Revolution in China is something quite different and for this reason I would like to give you first a very rapid historical summary.

One should not begin by saying that the Russian Revolution was led by communists, the Chinese Revolution was led by communists, therefore both revolutions are in the main the same thing. Because the differences are as important as the resemblances. At the time of the Russian Revolution the chief leaders of what was to be the revolution were either in the concentration camps in Siberia or they were in exile like Lenin. They looked on the First World War as an imperialistic struggle. For them the Tsar was as bad as the Kaiser. There was no hope for Russia unless the Tsar was defeated. To defeat only Germany and then hope for

reforms in Russia was an illusion, because it would only strengthen the power which the Tsar stood for. Therefore Lenin and the Bolsheviks in the war against Germany made propaganda for defeat. "Vote with your feet. Leave the war. Go back to your farms. Don't fight the Tsar's imperialistic war." Only when Russia had been defeated did they have the opportunity to come to power. And when they did so they were a very small group of theoretical revolutionaries. Now when a revolution has succeeded you have to pass from an overthrow of the old to building of the new. Building of the new involves government. Whatever your theories are, you have to raise taxes, you have to pay bureaucrats, you have to organize an army, you have to organize the police, you have to regulate the trains, the posts, the telegraphs and all that kind of thing. For this kind of purpose the Russians had available not a single revolutionary who had ever held a position as high as say the chairman of a village council. They were pure theorists.

Now let us turn to China. In the war against Japan it would have been utterly absurd for the Chinese communists to say that Chiang Kai-shek was as bad as the Japanese, because if Japan had won China would never have been able to raise its head again. Therefore the first condition for preserving the hope of a future revolution was the saving of China by defeating Japan. Therefore where the Russian revolutionaries had preached defeatism, the Chinese revolutionaries preached patriotism. In the course of the war they tried to demonstrate to the people that they were better nationalistic leaders than the Kuomintang of Chiang Kai-shek. And there is something else. The Chinese Communist Party began in the early 1920s. At first it went into a united front with the Kuomintang. Then Chiang Kai-shek turned on them. The communists were driven into the wilderness. They retreated into an inaccessible region south of the Yangtze River. There they organized village soviets, they carried out land reforms, they judged landlords, they organized the first Red Army, and so on. After many campaigns against them by Chiang Kai-shek they were defeated. This is important because today in the mystique of the Chinese Revolution the famous Long March was a great triumph. But for us, trying to understand the Chinese Revolution from outside, it is essential to remember that the Long March would never have taken place if the communists had not been defeated. In the Long March only a small remnant of the people who set out, succeeded in reaching the north-west. There they set up a new centre, there they entered into a new united front with the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek government, and from there they fought the war against Japan.

At the end of the war with Japan Chiang Kai-shek would not recognize their demands. The Russians would not support them but advised them

to make their peace with the Kuomintang. So independent of Russia they faced the dangers of another civil war and in 1949 they won out. Now here is an extremely important point. From 1927 (the first split with the Kuomintang) to 1949 - 22 years - the communists had had successes, they had had defeats, had been in this part of China, in that part of China; but in all that time, whether they were being defeated or whether they were being successful they were all those 22 years somewhere in China in a situation in which they were controlling several thousands of square miles of territory and several millions of population. They were getting, under revolutionary conditions, and under conditions partly of civil war, partly of national war, experience in administration, in tax collecting, in organizing the representation of the people who were not party members; they were getting experience in the difference between giving orders to people and persuading people, frightening people and inspiring people. One can find even long ago, in the classic book by Edgar Snow, Red Star over China, that very early the Chinese communists had developed the habit of frankly admitting mistakes. It is not enough to learn from your mistakes. You cannot in fact learn properly from your mistakes until you have first admitted them. This became a tradition of the Chinese communists.

Besides "Red Star over China", if you want to know what the Chinese Revolution was like I should recommend to you a book by a young American, William Hinton, the title of which is: "Fanshen", meaning literally to turn over the body, or to convert - which means also to turn your back on the past and turn your face to the future. This is a book which describes events in 1948 in a part of China which had been occupied by the Japanese, then occupied by the Chiang Kai-shek forces, then liberated from the Chiang Kai-shek forces, but was at that moment still in danger of being re-occupied by the Chiang Kai-shek forces. It describes what went on: the searching out of those who had been collaborators of the Japanese or of Chiang Kai-shek, the village councils held to judge the landlords, the difference between good landlords and bad landlords and then the examination of a whole population. Everybody was made to confess his whole past in public and be challenged by those present. In other words this describes a violent, turbulent popular examination in public of what the revolution and the problems of the revolution were all about and done under conditions quite different from anything that I have ever heard or read of Russia or even say Jugoslavia. Namely this brought into the open something that has since become a Chinese tradition and was never a Russian tradition: that the people have the right to examine the Party; that the Party is not an élite in the sense of being above and immune from popular criticism; that members of the Party, even high members of the Party, can be put up on the

stage and have questions fired at them by everyone, including people who are not members of the Party. And if the people are not satisfied with it they answer in very rough language, "You are a liar. Come on now, tell the truth." This sort of talk from the people to members of the Party I do not know of anywhere else in revolutionary history.

But why, when the communist regime seems to be firmly established in China since 1949 - why, beginning in 1966, nearly 20 years later, should there be all this atmosphere of emergency in what is called the Great Cultural Revolution? Why the Red Guards? Why such extremism; as the journalists call it? Once more a part of the explanation, (nothing is the whole explanation), but a part of the explanation, is the fear in China, which may be decreasing now but at the time of the Red Guards and the outset of the Great Cultural Revolution was a very real thing: that there was at least an 80 per cent probability that China would be attacked by the U.S.A. Frustrated in Vietnam the Americans would say that the real source of their trouble was China, just as the Japanese used to say that there would be no revolution in China if it were not for Russia. There was a lot of justification for this fear in China, from what they read in the American papers and heard over the American radio, including speeches by important Americans, including ex-generals and leading politicians, openly advocating or making threatening hints about the use of the atom bomb. In the circumstances one of the subjects of debate in China has been not whether there is a danger of being attacked by the U.S.A. but what to do when that attack comes. This apprehension is very intimately associated with the Cultural Revolution and the Red Guards.

Here we must turn aside a moment I think to consider the nature of the quarrel between China and Russia. This is not simply a power struggle, this is a very deep philosophical difference of opinion. The Russians ever since they broke the American atomic monopoly have maintained that it is now possible to avoid a third world war, which would be an atomic war. It is possible to achieve a sort of balance which can be called co-existence, "with competition" - a favourite expression of Khrushchev when he was in power. Some Russians have even gone so far as to publish the idea that under conditions of peaceful co-existence combined with competition the socialist method of production and organization can prove its superiority over capitalism and capitalistic democracy and can do it so effectively that there is even the possibility that some of the democracies of the world will vote themselves into socialism without a violent revolution. This can be taken, in general, as the Russian philosophical position.

The Chinese position has been the opposite: that in order to have co-

existence with competition you must, so to speak, have a set of rules of the game - what is permissible and what is not permissible in forms of competition. And, say the Chinese, if we should have this competition between the capitalist-democratic and the socialist-democratic methods of production and organization, and if the socialist world should begin to prove its superiority, the Americans would never observe the rules of the game. They would break the rules and resort to force. Therefore, the whole Russian philosophical position is utopian, revisionist, and so on; and then, using the dramatic terms of controversy that unfortunately are a tradition among all communists (and I say unfortunate because I think that calling names is not the best way of getting out the facts of the situation so that they can be analysed), they use expressions like "the road back to capitalism". If there is a road back to capitalism in countries like Russia or China it is a long, long road and the immediate concerns of the world are much closer to us than that. Instead of talking about far away ideas like a return to capitalism in countries where neither its institutions nor its personnel now exist, it is much more important to talk about the problems of today.

Returning to the practical level of controversy in China today, we must admit that the danger of American attack entails practical decisions on "what to do next". Now the position represented by Liu Shao-chi on the civilian, political and administrative side, and Peng Te-huai as chief of staff, seems to have been that the danger would be so great that it would be necessary to come to terms with the Russians, and in order to restore the alliance with Russia to make, if necessary, concessions to the Russians. Only in that way could the Chinese get, to defend themselves against the greatest power in the world, sufficient supplies of missiles, advanced aircraft, artillery and tanks. The moment an American attack came it would be aimed at everything that China has created in 20 years. The factories would be blasted out, the railways would be cut, most of China's modern production would be destroyed. To fight a modern war they would need to rely on Russia's modern means of production. The other school of thought represented by Mao Tse-tung on the civilian, political side and Lin Piao on the military side is that this would be the wrong way to resist America. China, in resisting Japan, and the Vietnamese, now, have shown the right way. China would be thrown back on its own resources. It would have to go back so to speak to the Yen-an stage of the resistance fighting against Japan. The Chinese would have to decentralize, so that there would be no one centre which the Americans could paralyse with bombing. Guerrilla warfare - dispersed warfare - would require reliance on guerrilla industry, guerrilla production, guerrilla methods of agriculture, as the Vietnamese have shown is possible following the earlier example of the Chinese com-

munists themselves.

Under these conditions what would be some of the requirements for advance preparations? One of the phenomena of the Cultural Revolution, widely commented on, has been the closing of the schools and colleges and universities for something like two years. Not only in America but in Europe I have seen it suggested that this means that the Chinese are going crazy. If they want to survive as a modern nation, if they want to bring their country properly, fully, into the 20th century, then their educated intelligentsia are their primary resource. They have got to educate; if necessary they must hold a political shield over the students, so that as long as the man gets on with his work, his political opinions are of secondary importance. Surely the Chinese can see this?

To this I can give a very interesting response from several of my colleagues who have recently spent some time in China. They point out that even before the crisis of the Cultural Revolution the Chinese authorities were getting worried about some of the conditions in the educational world. They had begun with a liberal ideal of equal opportunity in education. Regardless of class origin, students were to be promoted, and eventually to go to a university, if they deserved it on their academic merits. Later it was found that under conditions of free open competition like this it was the children of the old bourgeoisie, coming from families in which the reading of books was part of the family environment, who were doing better in the entrance examinations, and because of having a better all-round cultural background were doing better in their university work and their final examinations, and consequently were getting the good positions to a percentage much higher than their percentage of the population. This the authorities felt they could not afford. It is true that it is vital for China to have an intelligentsia, but as a revolutionary country with a population overwhelmingly of peasant and worker origin (most of the industrial workers themselves coming from peasant families), China cannot afford to have an intelligentsia which is too much of bourgeois origin. Therefore the educational curricula must be revised in a frankly partisan manner. On the one hand put into the computer, so to speak, the individual student's intellectual ability. But on the other hand, try to distinguish between inborn natural ability and the artificial advantage of coming from a more cultured family. At this point we must make the entrance system "weighted" in favour of bright, intelligent children from peasant and worker families handicapped by ignorance and the cultural deprivation of the old regime. Such children should frankly be given an unequal advantage in the educational system; if necessary they should get special tuition. But all this re-

quired a thorough overhaul of the educational system - both its principles and its methods and facilities. Such an overhaul, they decided, required a shutting down of the schools to allow for revision of textbooks and re-training or new training of teachers.

One must add that any Chinese - pro-Mao or anti-Mao - in assessing the danger of an American attack, and assessing it as a practical problem, not an ideological theorem, would have to consider that after the first attack it would seem as if the Americans had won a crushing victory. There would then be a danger of quislings going over to the Americans. Where would Chinese quislings come from? Would they not be most likely to come from families which had had an association with foreign capitalism in the past - from families some of whose sons and daughters had been sent to Europe and America for education, - from the kind of person who could say to himself, "Well, all right, my country has been defeated, but even in defeat I am the kind of Chinese who has the kind of qualities and abilities that will still get me a better job than most people under American control?"

I can see that there are more of you here than could possibly be going to specialize in Chinese studies, but it would be a good thing for Denmark if all of you were to study China as much as you can. We all have a vital interest in the way politics work in our time - all politics. I find that this is a very disturbing question both in the capitalist democracies and in the people's democracies. Young people are being taught about politics in terms of formulae: the constitution is thus and so; here are the articles of the constitution; the process of representation works in this way; the kind of elections you have in the West, the kind of elections you have in socialist countries, and so on. This somehow escapes the realities of what one American political scientist called the knowledge of "who gets what". One should also study the negative side as well as the positive side. Surely we ought by now, all of us, to be able to face the fact that every country, every society, has within it the capacity to produce, under conditions of crisis, its own kind of quislings. There is no country which is immune. The question is - are all quislings the same kind of quislings? Do they all behave in exactly the same way? Are they as uniform as the monkeys that are used in medical experiments? Can you inject so much of substance A and be sure of getting A? Or is there a political difference in the quisling which is related to the difference of the social system from which the quisling came?

To stress the importance of the question I will say that one of the things that is defeating the Americans in Vietnam is that, as imperialists, they have shown themselves hopelessly incompetent in the use of quislings.

The chief American experience in the past has been the use of Latin-American quislings. They assume that all quislings are the same as those they have been accustomed to get out of the "banana republics". They tried in the past, when they were supporting Chiang Kai-shek to support him as if he (or, later, Ngo Din Diem in Vietnam) were the same as the commodities they had been accustomed to purchase on the Latin American market, not understanding that because of the society from which they originated they might be identical in moral character, but not identical in their response to this or that political temptation. The chosen quisling might react against the particular temptation offered. In this respect the socialist-communist countries may be technically more competent than the capitalist democracies. Russia, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, China too - they all have their potential quislings. You cannot say that marxist leadership disposes of the danger of quislings. But judging from the way in which politics are carried on in marxist countries, they understand better that traitors are likely to vary according to their class origin, their position in the existing or the former class structure of their country.

All of this may seem pretty academic, but in the China of the Cultural Revolution it is very practical, calling for practical decisions and measures. In China people are not dealing simply with slogans; they are dealing with the actualities of politics, the actualities of power, the actualities of how a necessarily small number of people, in running the country, represent or do not represent the country as a whole and the best interests of the country as a whole. What they say may be "ideological". What they are deciding is the stuff of real politics. Unless we understand more than the theory, unless we understand what is really agitating the people of China (or any other country), then a mere full description of events is not going to get us anywhere.

In view of the fact that you have been having student activities in Denmark also recently I think it might be worth calling attention to the fact that, in recent years, the American university student generation has been totally disillusioned with politics, leading to an anarchistic, nihilistic attitude. But the phenomenon of Senator Eugene Mc Carthy, the New Hampshire primaries and then the Wisconsin primaries and the way he has been talking about the problems of our time in America has had nowhere a stronger effect than on the students. Many who had completely turned their backs on politics are turning around to get into politics, to work for Senator McCarthy whether he wins or not. In a chaotic situation where cynicism in politics prevails the mere coming forward of a public figure willing to talk about serious questions in serious language has brought about a startling change in the social psychology of the U.S.A.

today.

One must not say that this kind of thing is possible in the U.S.A. because it is a democracy, but does not explain the "extremism" of an Asiatic country controlled by "fanatics", as in China; because it is as true of the one as it is of the other. What is going on in China today is not mere sensationalism. It is an extremely earnest debate about the A-B-C, the simplest constituent elements, not only of politics but of national survival and the national future. Let us consider just one of the phenomena of the Cultural Revolution, the famous ta tzu-pao, the placards written in simple characters and publicly posted up in China. As far as they have been noticed and quoted, the comment has been on whether they are attacking X or attacking Y? Do they indicate that Mao Tse-tung is coming up or Liu Shao-chi is going down? Where does Chou En-lai stand? Are the military going to take over power? In all of this speculation, for which the translation of a few of the placards here and there gives us no statistical basis whatever, nobody is noticing that this is a peculiar but undisputable manifestation of a kind of right of free speech and free debate, in a country which never previously had it. This is the way in which the ordinary person can put forward his opinion in public, for other people to decide whether this is a topic that should be pursued or whether it would be better to pay attention to another one. This is a forum of ideas and arguments that historically never existed in China before.

I hope that I have not been too rambling in this discussion, going off in too many directions, but the subject is a complicated one and I have wanted to touch on a number of aspects of it so that if you are interested you can go ahead for yourselves to look for further information. I have tried to indicate that China's Cultural Revolution is not an "oriental mystery", but the kind of political question that under slightly different forms affects all of us. It is something that can be examined by all of us, and is open to our intelligence to interpret. I do not think that in this kind of question you should allow yourself to be dominated by any one "expert" or any one interpreter of events. In this, nobody, nobody in Europe - still less in America - is the reliable interpreter or expositor, least of all myself. Therefore I will close at this point and give you a chance to ask questions, which I hope will be directed at what you think are the weak points of my exposition.

Q u e s t i o n s a n d a n s w e r s

"What do you think of corruption as an opportunity for the authorities to revise the curriculum and also to sort out the student body?"

What the authorities seem to have been doing is to revise the curricula. Sorting out the student body seems to be largely left to the student body itself. This has been characteristic of the Red Guards and the Cultural Revolution all the way through. The sorting out, the acceptance of one, the rejection of another, has been primarily within the units - the army units, the village units, as well as the education units. I might say on this question of sorting out that this is one of the very things on which the book I recommended, *Fanshen*, by William Hinton, throws a sharp light.

The Mao Tse-tung method of working, his style in action, seems to go like this: the assumption is that the people, meaning of course the vast majority of the people, down below the élite, have an instinctive knowledge of what is for their own good and what ought to be done, but because of ignorance and lack of experience they only have a vague idea of how to do it. Therefore when revolution is in the air, the professional revolutionaries should go to the people to listen, not to agitate the people, not to stuff ideas into them, but to find out what they want and what they think about it. Having done this bit of intelligence work the professional revolutionaries should get together and consider the meaning of the data. What are the revolutionary potentials indicated by the way the people feel? In which direction should we lead? Should we divide the movement into several stages? How far can we go? Having produced a rough idea of what a revolutionary programme should be, they should go back to the people, talk these ideas over with them and see how much the people will accept. Then the professionals should go back again into a party caucus. It seems that the people will accept this part of a programme but not that. Then there is a further debate about whether different methods of propaganda among the people would shift them a bit further and so on. This is dramatically brought out by Hinton, in his book "*Fanshen*". After the liberation this sorting out was done by the village units, not by people in authority sent from outside but by the village people themselves. Then it went up to the regional authority and all the way up to the provincial authority. The whole thing was debated over again, then sent back to the village, and so on. Hinton said to one of the higher-up communist people that this whole business had been going on for weeks and months. It had taken an enormous amount of time. Would they not get tired of the whole thing? The professional communist shook his head and said that they wouldn't get tired, because it was their own destiny they were settling.

Now this is important. It is not the authoritarian approach of telling people what their destiny will be, but helping people to see the way in which they want to settle their own destiny. This is an extremely important revolutionary concept. Then again there is another point on which this book is valuable. This young American, coming in from the outside, was carried away by the whole thing and enthusiastically in favour of it - so enthusiastically that he did not hesitate to describe the ugly things, as well as the things of which he approved. He very dramatically reveals some of the excesses. We, today, read our newspapers, shake our heads and say that perhaps the Chinese are entitled to settle their own affairs, but what they are up to at the moment is "extremism". Hinton takes the "extremism" as something that happens in the course of a revolution. He points out how, within the village itself, certain acts of extremism will take place until the people themselves begin to realize that things are going too far; that they may be getting revenge for old grudges, but that they are wrecking the possibility of constructing something more positive, and must therefore start being more moderate.

He also shows how some of the extremisms arise. A young man during the partisan, guerrilla warfare against the Japanese, may have distinguished himself by his bravery, his intelligence, his initiative. He could have been accepted as a natural leader, brought into the Party, and pointed out to other youngsters as a model of what a revolutionary should be. Then victory is won, reorganization begins, and because of his war record he is given a leading part to play. Then this man who had shown up well under adversity is corrupted by the opportunities of power when he is given responsibility. When redividing the landlords' land he says to the pretty daughter of one of the landlords, "Look here, you and your family are pretty well in for it now, but I stand all right with the new regime, so you sleep with me and I will see that your family is able to save something". This kind of scandalous corruption occurs. People are over-punished until somebody has to come in with the argument that by over-punishing people you create obstacles instead of opportunities. This incidentally is in accord with one of Mao Tse-tung's important rules of practical politics, (very different from Stalin), namely that argument is better than killing and argument is better than beating up people. Beating up people makes them say, "Yes, yes", but it does not change their minds. To make the revolution really work you have got to convince people that your arguments are right and that they should support them. This also is important because one can check it by the fact that the record for killings and purges in the Chinese Revolution has been better than the record of the Russian Revolution.

"Some people had wanted to eliminate bureaucracy. They once had this possibility of decentralizing the system during warfare. Is that your opinion?"

No - there are two things here. One is to reduce bureaucracy, and the other is to decentralize in a period of warfare.

The Chinese are the most historically minded people in the world. Even among illiterate Chinese there is handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation an account of the history of their country. All Chinese know that the great rebellions, throughout their history, have been founded on peasant support; but even after successful rebellions power always passed back into the hands of the landlords, the "scholar-gentry". Why? Because this class had almost a monopoly of higher education. Successful rebels felt that they had to call on them to help establish a new government - and pretty soon the new government was once more controlled by the old hands. The Chinese of today are determined not to let this happen again. This is why they are suspicious of a "professional" bureaucracy - one that does nothing but govern and administer, and becomes a self-perpetuating body, whose power radiates into every activity of the society and nation. The remedy for this is to have peasants who know how the commune is run, and workers who know how the factory is run - able to challenge the directives of the bureaucrats, if the bureaucrats are trying to establish procedures that merely strengthen the position of the bureaucracy.

The other half of the question - decentralisation, in order to deal with wartime conditions - is also based on experience. A policy of trying to dominate an under-developed country from a distance, as Japan tried it in China and America is trying it in Vietnam, requires rapid reports from the periphery, and instant orders from the centre. The answer to this, in China then and in Vietnam now, is complete understanding among the cadres, dispersed in multiple centres, of the problems at issue and the measures being applied. This explains why Red Guard activities and the widespread use of "big character" wall-posters are a kind of public debate and mass education. From the Western point of view they represent a breakdown of order and civic discipline; from the Maoist point of view they are an intense intellectual agitation out of which will come the orderliness that is characteristic of a society in which everybody understands what has to be done. This was true of the communist-led areas in the war of survival against Japan, and it would be true of a China attacked by the U.S.

"Do the Americans understand China?"

No. The Americans today like the Japanese forty years ago have too many preconceptions about China. They know a great many facts, but they misunderstand them, because they try to make the facts fit the preconceptions. I will give you just one example. It comes up in the American press every day and in the statements of public men. The Asiatics, they say, and most of all the Chinese, are supremely concerned with "face". If you make them "lose face", all is lost. This idea of "face" has become an American obsession. They do not realize that Mao Tse-tung and of course all Chinese communists regard consideration for "face" as a sign of being immature. There is nowhere in the world where "face" matters less today than in China, and nowhere where it matters more than in Washington D. C. With this obsession with preconceptions on one side, and uncompromising realism on the other, who is going to make the mistakes? In the long run success in politics, and victory in war is usually not decided by who was most often brilliantly right, but by who made the most mistakes. We should not overlook Mao Tse-tung's frequent emphasis on the importance of analysing mistakes.

"Will there in your opinion be a change in Chinese politics towards the western world after Mao Tse-tung dies?"

Certainly there will be changes, but I think that the way you put it is an indication of the weakness of our thinking about China and the whole of Asia today. China is not Mao Tse-tung alone, and Vietnam is not Ho Chi-minh alone. We do not know enough about China, but we do know a few names, so we try to explain everything by names like Mao Tse-tung or Chou En-lai. Certainly Mao will be recorded as one of the great figures in history; but while he is alive he has to be understood in the context of the forces at work in China. What we have to try to understand is whether the forces represented at the moment by Mao Tse-tung are growing forces or declining forces. That is what matters. If they are growing forces, then in due course Mao Tse-tung's place will be taken by somebody else who is still moving in the same direction. Putting it in those terms of "change" I think, yes, the potentials of political and economic development in China are still enormous. We must also remember that no nation in the world today, even the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. is now or in the future likely to be able to dictate to the rest of the world. When we get relative stability based on an admission of that fact, then the policy of China towards the rest of the world will change, partly because the policy of the rest of the world toward China will change.

Question on Chinese atomic power

I think that the possession of atomic knowledge by China is probably a deterrent to atomic war. We have got used to the idea of talking about a "balance of terror" - that the fact that the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. both possess the atomic bomb and the ability to deliver is in its way a guarantee against atomic war. I think that the force de frappe of General de Gaulle does not increase the danger of atomic war but diminishes it. And I think that the acquisition of atomic knowledge by China can be classed with the acquisition of atomic knowledge by France.

"Could you explain why the people's communes apparently have turned out to be a failure?"

I don't think they have, although they are far from having turned out as much a success as the Chinese hoped. This involves a difficult question of measurement. If you fall too far short of your goal, it may mean that your whole programme is ruined; but you can also fall short of the goal and still have a partial success. I think that this is what happened in the case of the people's communes. Naturally the stress in the western press has been on the idea of a total failure. A great deal of the press in the western world depends on the American supply of news. The American interpretation is naturally directed towards creating the idea of a catastrophic failure. I myself believe that the Chinese fell short of what they hoped for, but it certainly was not a total collapse. One of my colleagues at my university in Leeds and his wife were in China for a couple of years just after the "great leap forward" and its supposed catastrophic collapse. On their holidays, they used travel round the country, both of them speaking Chinese. They say that one of the things that struck them was that in different parts of China they would come across something that they were surprised to find in China. When they asked about such things, the people would say - Oh yes, that is a new product that we developed during the "great leap forward". They did not succeed in a crash programme of heavy industry at that time, but there was a very wide dissemination of new technical skill and technological knowledge - much faster than it would otherwise have been.

Here I think is one of the things that is difficult for us to understand, particularly because of the Russian precedents. Stalin's first 5-year plan needed forced collectivization. Therefore today, in the organization of communes and things like that we still take it for granted that they are forced upon people against their will, and that they succeed or fail according to whether the government is strong enough to make the people accept them, or the people are strong enough to resist the programme of the

government and make it partially fail. This is certainly not the case in China. One of the great differences between the Chinese Revolution and the Russian Revolution is that during the war against Japan, 1937-45, when the communists were organizing guerrilla resistance they could only get the peasants to follow them if they in return would do enough of what the peasants wanted. They had to persuade the peasants, first that if they did not resist the Japanese they would be done for, secondly that there were ways of resisting the Japanese, and thirdly that in order to adopt these ways of resistance the peasants had to make various kinds of sacrifices. At the same time, in Chiang Kai-shek's part of China young men were conscripted into the army with no regard to their family, no compensation to their family at all. People used to talk in those days about the scandal of seeing young men chained together being marched over the hills to be put into the army. The Chinese communists, all during the war, did not conscript a single soldier. They absolutely would take nobody into the Red Army unless he was a volunteer. Then they would go to the district from which the volunteer came and say, "Look, this young man is joining our army to help to defend you all. How about doing your share by putting in enough hours of work to see that the fields of the family of this young farmer, this young volunteer, are properly tended". From this they went on to the introduction, during wartime, of various kinds of co-operation. The stress was always on co-operation, co-operation, co-operation not dictation, not force, because if they had dictated to the villages, the villagers would have asked, "Who is dictating more: the Japanese, Chiang Kai-shek or the communists?" They had to get into a position of helping the people to do what they ought to do. The result was that after the war and after the defeat of Chiang Kai-shek, when the communists began to introduce post-war reforms of various kinds the general attitude of the Chinese peasants was that, "What this government is now proposing is pretty queer, nobody ever heard about it before; but we have had a good many years of the experience that these crazy communist chaps play it straight, and usually what they suggest works out well. So with this new idea, crazy as it may seem, give it a fair trial; don't sabotage it, don't drag your feet. It is worth trying."

René Dumont, the great French agrarian specialist and agricultural economist, with a wide knowledge of Asia, Africa and Latin America said at a seminar of mine in Paris some years ago that he had seen a lot of peasants in his time and that the normal attitude of a peasant is that if either the landlord or the government, anybody in authority, suggests something to them, it is pretty sure that if there is any profit in the idea it is going to be the landlord's or the government's profit and not his. He told of a Chinese village which had received a suggestion from the government about the benefits of deep ploughing to conserve moisture and

close planting to diminish weeds. The peasants got together to discuss "How deep is deep and how close is close". They took the government's suggestion for most of their land, and then they did a control field at double the government's suggestion and another control field at half the government's suggestion. Dumont said that he had never heard of a peasant anywhere in the world who would do that on his own - this must be a Chinese phenomenon.

Because of this kind of evidence, I strongly suspect that part of the trouble the Chinese ran into with the communes and the "great leap forward" was due to the peasants being over-confident and thinking they could do better than the blueprint and trying to do too much too rapidly; it was not due to resistance but to over-enthusiasm. Another thing to bear in mind is that we have enough meteorological data about China to know that one of the characteristics of China's weather is its unpredictability. If you study only the averages of rainfall in China, you are likely to be misled, because the average year after year does not vary a great deal. You have to look instead at the variation within the year. You can get the same average per year but in one year the rain will come too early in another year the rain will come too late. We know that as much as say three to five successive years of good crops in China is extraordinarily unusual. Now it so happened that from 1949, after the communists came to power, China had an absolutely phenomenal run of good harvests. This may have contributed to over-confidence both in the government and among the people. Then, just at the moment of the "great leap forward" there began a series of fantastically bad years. Now in the good years the Chinese tended to give too much credit to the communists and not enough credit to the weather. In the bad years we in the western world have tried to put too much blame on the communists and not enough blame on the bad weather. You have to take a more realistic view of these things.

"What do you think about the Russian-Chinese border problem?"

I think we will probably hear a good deal more of this in time. It is a natural thing to play up sensationally in the press, but I do not think - I may be quite wrong - that it will lead to any serious clashes. There is something very interesting historically here again. The Sino-Soviet frontier is not like the Rheinland frontier between France and Germany where Frenchmen and Germans have confronted each other for centuries and at times the Germans pushed the French back and at other times the French pushed the Germans back. The Sino-Russian frontier, until very recently, was a frontier running through territories where there were very few Chinese and very few Russians. It was a large, almost

empty territory except for a few primitive tribes which beginning in the late 1500s and then increasingly in the 1600s and on into the 1700s was being divided up by the Tzarist regime in Russia and by a regime in China which was not even Chinese but the empire of the Manchus who had conquered China. With this kind of historical background there is not the tradition of deep national enmity as in the case of the centuries-old Franco-German confrontation. This is a confrontation of a different kind.

CHINA'S PLACE IN GREAT POWER POLITICS

For some years now there has been no doubt that China is one of the great world powers. This has led to speculation all over the world about what China as a great world power will do. China is contrasted with the weak China of the 19th century, which was constantly being encroached on, losing fragments of its sovereignty to the great world powers. But in this speculating I venture to suggest that a wrong direction has been taken. We think of great world powers in the past as countries that have manipulated smaller countries to their own advantage. Accordingly, we think of China entering this old power game and playing it according to the old rules.

I would suggest a quite different approach. World War II ended with great hopes of peace and friendly co-existence all over the world. This hope was soon disappointed and we moved into the cold war. The frame of mind of the cold war was not based at all on the idea of China as a great power but on the idea that the world was divided between two great powers, sometimes referred to as the two super-powers or the two giant powers - the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. In America, notably, the official doctrine was that China was totally under Russian control, and people (like myself) who questioned this were accused of being "pro-Russian", or even "Soviet agents".

The fact that the two super-powers were also the only atomic powers led to a period of speculation and theorizing about what would happen if there was a terminal nuclear war and about possible methods of avoiding a terminal nuclear war. We had formulae like the "balance of terror" which would supposedly prevent an atomic war, or other great war, and so we slid over imperceptibly into what have been called "limited wars", which were still regarded as primarily a field of American-Russian competition. People have been so obsessed with this theoretical view of a world dominated by two powers that insufficient attention has been paid to what has actually happened - and what has actually happened has been in fact an increasing demonstration that the power even of the super-powers is limited.

In the crisis of Hungary the U.S.S.R. learned the lesson that although it could enforce its policy within certain limits the consequences were

so dangerous that ever since then one can detect in fact that one of the rules of Soviet policy has been, "Never again another Budapest". At the same time a power that had always been despised - Egypt - showed that the will of the minor great powers - Great Britain and France - could not be enforced in the matter of the Suez Canal. When we come to Cuba we find that in spite of the proximity of Cuba to the coast of the U.S.A., America - the super-power - hesitated to employ the whole of that power against this tiny nation. Simultaneously the U.S.S.R. realized that its ability to support Cuba at that distance from the U.S.S.R. was also limited. In spite of the quite rational argument that if the U.S.A. was entitled to have atomic weapons as close to the U.S.S.R. as Turkey, then it was not unfair for the U.S.S.R. to have missiles as close to the U.S.A. as Cuba. Russia was unable to challenge the point.

We come now to the case which ought to provide an awakening. First France and then the U.S.A. have found that no amount of sophisticated weapons, heavy material, willingness to inflict suffering on a civilian population could enable them to crush a tiny, backward, under-developed nation in Asia. Surely that is a lesson which shows us that the whole super-power approach to world politics is a fallacy. It is true of course to a certain extent, as people often say, that the one thing we learn from history is that people do not learn from history. Therefore perhaps one can say that China, having become a great power, will go ahead and make the same mistakes as other great powers. I doubt it. I think the direction in which the world is moving indicates that China's policy - as a great power - will be something very different from what we have associated with great power politics in the past.

Let us dispose first of some of the conventional ideas, like the idea of an exploding population in China which will force the Chinese to overflow their frontiers and spread into Southeast Asia and perhaps eventually into Siberia. Here, in spite of the conventional demographers, it seems to me that we have to recognize the fact that over-population is more often a relative than a positive condition. The old China was a country which had a very large population. It became conventional to measure the size of China by dividing the millions of population by the millions of square kilometres, to give a population ratio. This was always unreal. The population of China was always heavily concentrated in the eastern coastal area, the lower valleys of the great rivers, and a few favoured regions like Szechwan. These were the regions of the classical type of Chinese agriculture - maximum man-hours spent on cultivating tiny fields, so that many writers have referred to Chinese agriculture as being more like gardening than farming. With maximum concentration on small bits of land, demanding unlimited man-hours of labour, the

population per square mile was also very dense. But only in certain parts of China. Away from the regions of intensive rice cultivation and some parts of the North where there was irrigated wheat and millet cultivation, much the greater part of the surface of China was in any rational terms under-populated.

In my own case my first realization of this came from flying extensively over China during the last war. One could see with one's own eyes, looking down from the plane, hundreds or even thousands of square miles of territory which under, say, a mixed form of agriculture combining sown fields with orchards and dairy farming, could have supported a large population. And yet there was little human habitation to be seen. The fact is that the ancient agriculture of China, because of the requirements of heavy concentration of manpower on a particular kind of agriculture, developed first a particular kind of society and then out of that society a particular kind of politics. It was to the interest of those who controlled the rich land, especially the irrigated land, to maintain a heavy population because human labour was necessary to produce the crops. To keep this labour cheap, the economic art of the landlord was to allow as little as possible of the crops of rice to be eaten by the human beings who grew the rice, so that the maximum part of the crop could be disposed of on the market for cash. The device used to achieve this was "share-cropping" - the peasants had to bid against each other, each offering to pay a larger share of the crops, as rent, for the privilege of cultivating the landlord's land. This gave rise to what I have elsewhere called "the Asiatic paradox" - that in China and similar areas of intensive cultivation in Asia the place to look for chronic under-nourishment and grinding poverty was in the maximum food-producing areas.

All this has a practical application to the idea of the Chinese wanting to swarm over their frontiers into Thailand, Laos, Burma and so on. If the Chinese were to invade these territories they would find there conditions like those of the old China - relative under-population of a large part of the area, overconcentration in the richest rice growing areas, under-development of forms of economic activity other than rice cultivation - in other words the same problems out of which China is trying to escape by means of industrialization and rationalization. The result of Chinese imperialist expansion of this kind would therefore be to add enormously to the geographical areas of China's present problems, without adding a single factor for the solution of those problems. This is hardly rational. It suggests, on the contrary, that the solution for China's problems, including the population problem, is to turn inward.

Why were alternative forms of agriculture not sufficiently developed in

China? And why were productive activities other than rice farming and irrigated wheat farming neglected? Because it paid the families and the social classes which were rooted in rice production to limit the competition. They could not get people to endure the conditions of a tenant farmer growing rice unless there was no alternative. Hence it has been frequently noted by scholars that in the past, whenever for example mining began to develop in the mountain ranges, the tendency of the state was to tax the mining out of existence. Tax it until it became unprofitable. This was because the people in the government who had the say about what kind of taxes were to be collected on what activities were drawn in the main from the families whose revenues depended on cheaply produced rice.

To maintain the "share-cropping" system I have described above, they needed a surplus of peasants to bid against each other, and therefore made it difficult to take up other occupations.

Several years ago the American journalist Edgar Snow reported that Mr Chou En-lai said to him that even under the old methods of Chinese cultivation something like 25 per cent in the increase of cultivated land in China was possible. If you add to this diversification by introducing new crops on land hitherto neglected, you can produce an enormous increase in the supply of food. But above all the future of China lies in diversification from agriculture into industry, and here again a look at the map shows us the possibilities. The traditional Chinese agriculture to which I have been referring, with its heavy dependence on irrigation, naturally concentrates on the flat eastern plains of the country and on the lower alluvial valleys of the great rivers like (taking them from the North) the Yellow River, the Hwai River, the Yangtze River and the West River complex in the Canton region. Alluvial regions are the last regions in which to look for mineral resources. Therefore the search for and the exploitation of mineral resources will in itself produce a shift, withdrawing population from the over-populated rice areas into the areas which do not produce food but can produce industry, including the kind of industry which produces the chemical fertilizers for the rice-producing fields.

Some of these questions of industrialization, striking a new balance for the geographical distribution of the Chinese population, are extremely interesting. It was long thought that it was very unlikely that petroleum would be found in China in any large quantities. It has now been found, under the present government of China; and we also find that oil stubbornly follows in China the same geographical pattern that it follows all over the world. Oil for some reason likes to be discovered mostly where people are not, and China like the West will have to get its oil from regions and areas that face the Chinese not only with problems of drilling

but with problems of moving the oil to where it can be consumed, just as the Western world moves its oil from Arabia and Venezuela and Texas and Iran and so forth - from barren or backward regions to the industrial regions which consume the oil.

There are problems of a quite different kind between China and the U.S.S.R., two countries under communist rule with a common frontier zone which is probably the longest land frontier in the world. It is more than twice as long as the frontier between Canada and the U.S.A. Along this immense frontier one of the peculiarities, until quite recently, was that it was a frontier on which Chinese did not meet Russians face to face. It was a frontier chiefly occupied, as far as it was occupied, by non-Russian, non-Chinese people: Tungus and Manchus in northern Manchuria and eastern Siberia, then the immense Mongolian frontier, then the Central Asian frontier inhabited chiefly by Turkish-speaking peoples, so that the political relationship along this frontier has always had latent within it the paradox that small and weak peoples could affect the policies of powerful peoples according to whether they preferred one or the other. This was dramatically illustrated in the 17th century during the rise of the Manchu dynasty in China and the spread of Tsarist Russia into Siberia, when at times the decision of Mongol princes to prefer to accept Manchu overlordship or prefer to accept Tsarist overlordship could determine or strongly influence the course of events. Naturally that old, rather crude situation has been considerably modified in the last half-century. The Chinese population in previously almost uninhabited territory along the Amur river and the Ussuri river - the north-eastern part of the frontier with Russia - has been colonized by Chinese. It still can take a great many million more colonists, but nevertheless on this part of the frontier Chinese and Russians do already directly confront each other. In that case what about frontier and territorial quarrels between the Chinese and the Russians? This question is of interest to the historian as well as to the contemporary geopolitician.

Owing to the deep cleavage between the present Chinese and the present Russians over fundamental questions of political philosophy, to which I shall return later, there has been a lot of polemical literature published in the languages of the two countries. The Chinese have said, "Yes we have had imperialism in our past but our imperialism was never as wicked as the modern imperialism of the Western powers." The Russians have similarly said, "Yes, Tsarist imperialism was imperialism, but it was never as wicked and never as cruel and damaging in its effect as the imperialism of the capitalist powers." Going beyond that, some of the Chinese literature accusing the Russians of an imperialistic past has said that large areas of Siberia lying across the rivers from China's

Manchurian provinces historically once belonged to China and should belong to China again. In the western, Central Asian sector of the frontier they say that at its maximum the power of China in the past has extended deep into what is today the Soviet Republics of Central Asia and should by rights revert to China again.

I think that one can throw some light on the problem by approaching it from a direction which is neither Chinese nor Russian. The fact is that this frontier, including the central sector which is now the Mongolian People's Republic, was decided for practical purposes in the 16th and 17th centuries when we have the remarkable conjunction in time of the Manchu conquest of China, the Russian conquest of eastern Siberia, and the beginning of the Russian conquest of southern Siberia and Central Asia. Far from a confrontation of "Russian" and "Chinese" imperialism, the Russians were conquering territories where China did not rule, and the various peoples were not Chinese. Nor did these peoples think of turning to "China" to ask for support against the advance of the Russians. On the "Chinese" side it was not at first, nor for a long time, even a question of the Chinese themselves; it was a question of the Manchus, a non-Chinese people who were simultaneously conquering China and conquering Mongolia, a large part of Central Asia and Tibet (partly, after the Manchus had established themselves in Peking, in 1644, with the use of Chinese troops). Therefore any question of future frontier adjustment - if it should turn out to be desirable - between China and Russia need not involve emotional questions of the surrender by the one side or the other of territory claimed to be "always Russian" or "always Chinese" in the past. Above all, any adjustment along these frontiers will carry questions still important, of adjustments which will not do damage to the interests of the minority peoples living in both states.

You may say that imperialism, any imperialism, will never bother about the rights or feelings of minority peoples. I think in the Russian case and the Chinese case that on the contrary the question of minority peoples is a very sensitive one, because on it depends to a very appreciable extent the standing that the Chinese and the Russians will have in the world at large. This lecture was given some months before the Warsaw Pact intervention in Czechoslovakia. The world-wide reaction to that intervention seems to bear out the thesis of the lecture. If you want a test case to indicate that I am here talking sense, just look at the way that the Negro question in the U.S.A. is damaging the ability of the U.S.A. to exercise moral influence or leadership all over the world.

When we come to the question of expansion, applied to China as a new entrant into world power politics, let us look at some of the recent

redistributions of power that have taken place since the end of the war. The U.S.S.R. stands today on almost exactly the maximum frontiers of the old Tsarist empire. The most important change is that Finland is not a part of the U.S.S.R. as it was of the Tsarist empire, and just note in passing that this important change is not an addition in favour of Russia but a subtraction. The Chinese People's Republic today stands on almost exactly the maximum frontiers of the Manchu empire. Again with one important territorial change, and again the change, namely the fact that Northern Mongolia has now become the Mongolian People's Republic, is a subtraction from the maximum and not an addition to it. Against this fact that both China and Russia represent on the whole the restoration, but a stable, not an expansive restoration of old frontiers there is the striking contrast that today, after World War II, the power of the U.S.A. is to be found in areas enormously distant from America, where it never existed before. We have US garrisons and US bases in South Korea, while neither Russians nor Chinese have troops in North Korea; US garrisons and bases in Japan and Okinawa (which has been in part detached from Japanese sovereignty); in the Philippines; in Taiwan (where the Chinese are prevented from asserting their sovereignty, once promised to them by America); in South Vietnam, where there is a huge American army, while there are no Chinese troops in North Vietnam; in Thailand (actively used as a base for bombing Vietnam) - and so on. Where, then, is the expansionism, where is the "domino effect"?

In fact the Americans themselves are now acknowledging that they have over-expanded. The major task confronting international diplomacy at the moment is to assist the Americans in a retrenchment from their over-expansion into Asia. For this purpose "anti-Americanism" and "pro-Americanism" are beside the point. Nothing is going to be decided by being "pro-American" or "anti-American". The only way that things can be satisfactorily advanced towards a peaceable solution is by consideration of the interests of the peoples on the spot. Here we come to questions of political philosophy and I think before venturing a personal opinion on a subject like this one I ought to make a few autobiographical remarks so that you can understand a little why I stand where I stand.

My experience in China for many years was first as an employee of a business firm, with a year in journalism, then some years of independent activity as a research worker in the field, interested first in geography, then in historical geography; all with as nearly as humanly possible no contact with politics, until the very eve of World War II; also with no or virtually no training in any of the higher academic disciplines - simply a man moving from the practical life of business into a practical, rather than academic approach towards problems of history. Out of that I

developed ideas which on the theoretical or philosophical side would define my position I think, in the West, for any reasonable person as non-communist. The same ideas would define me I think in the view of most marxists and communists as anti-marxist, but not in general anti-Russian or anti-Chinese. On the theoretical side I believe that while marxism and communism are potentially at least one of the roads into a better future, they are not necessarily the only roads and not necessarily the best roads. Moving to the plane of practical politics, I am interested in the kind of politics that might help us to find roads into a better future that are open to both marxist and non-marxist advance. It is for this reason, among others, that I am deeply opposed to the kind of anti-communism which results in recruiting communists faster than you can burn them up with napalm - the kind practised by the Americans in Vietnam.

If you take this practical approach you are bound to realize that in the 1930s and 1940s the Japanese tried to justify their imperialism on the grounds that it was necessary to hold back the "red wave of bolshevism" coming from Russia. The consequence was that in those days the chief agent of recruitment into the Chinese Communist Party was not communist propaganda but Japanese actions. Unfortunately this function has since been taken over in the cold war by the U.S.A. While preaching the doctrine of the necessity of holding back a supposed flood of communism coming from China into Vietnam and Southeast Asia, Uncle Sam has in fact become the chief recruiting sergeant for the communists of Ho Chi Minh. This was illustrated rather vividly just the other day when an American television correspondent who had managed to get into North Vietnam came out and gave his report, on a most interesting programme. He called to mind that shortly after the French withdrew, and before the Americans actively intervened in Vietnam, the communists tried to carry out a programme of agricultural collectivisation which was bitterly resented by the peasants. Their resistance was put down by force, but it was recognized by the North Vietnamese regime itself that it was the most severe setback they had ever had. They had to withdraw from collectivisation and permit milder measures. Today, however, all through North Vietnam agriculture has been 100 per cent collectivised and this collectivisation is 100 per cent supported by the peasants. And why? Because that is the only way to survive under American bombing. So what the theoretical communists were unable to impose the anti-communist Americans have successfully accomplished. This, I submit, is what American theorists themselves are fond of calling "counter-productive".

Let us then in closing return once more not to theories of what the Chinese are likely to do with their great power but to the study of a world framework in which China has the status of a great power. Its power is and will

for decades remain primarily defensive. It has no problems that can be solved outside the present frontiers of China. It has many problems but the solution of all of them lies within China's present frontiers. I shall be speaking elsewhere about special phenomena like the Great Cultural Revolution and the Red Guards and so on, so all I will say about those things here is that they reflect the debate going on within China about the methods that China needs to find, has partly found, but has not yet completely found, for the solution of China's problems within China - which involves disputes about the next steps to be taken within China and not for the expansion of China's power outside of China.

Much has been said in the past about balances of power but with the entry of China on the world stage as one of the three greatest powers I think that we have at least the possibility, if all of us are wise, of being able to contribute to a genuine triangular balance of power involving the U.S.S.R. the U.S.A. and China and adhered to by other nations all over the world, and which could produce a long period of stability. By stability I do not mean stagnation. I mean the stability that is consistent with a steady progression forward of the world as a whole and the steady expansion of possibilities and methods of international contribution to problems that of their very nature are international.

Q u e s t i o n s a n d A n s w e r s

"How long would it take to achieve a triangular balance of power?"

I do not know how one prophesies on things like this. One can only observe what has happened already and note trends and directions, but it is extremely difficult to judge the rate of development. For example 2 or 3 years ago nobody would have risked any money on a bet that President Johnson would make a contribution to stability by limiting American bombing in Vietnam and simultaneously declaring himself out of the international race; but it happened. What the next development may be one can hardly prophesy. It certainly seems to be true, however, that the settlement of the Cuban crisis contributed a good deal to stabilization. The necessity for both China and Russia to do something about helping the Vietnamese to help themselves, without actually intervening in the war, has had as a by-product a certain degree of stabilization of the relations between Russia and China. American withdrawal from Southeast Asia would also contribute to stabilization: but this depends a great deal on how things go inside America itself. Fortunately the signs here are rather

good because the domestic politics of the U.S.A. do not involve a revulsion of the Left against the Right. The opposition to the Vietnam War is not a leftish opposition and this is extremely important. The opposition to the war is not even headed only by the intelligentsia - it is openly and vocally supported by organs like the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times. It is therefore in the main a decision within the ruling groups of the U.S.A. themselves to liquidate an unprofitable enterprise. This I think makes it at least possible that - to use the jargon - phasing out the American imperialism in Indo-China need not be followed by the kind of demagogic accusation and counter-accusation that followed the American failure to maintain Chiang Kai-shek in power in China. At that time so many of the forces operating in Asia were imperfectly understood that it was possible for demagogues to say that the U.S.A. had "lost" China - as if China had ever belonged to the U.S.A. But the debate about Vietnam has gone on long enough so that nobody can say that any individual in the U.S.A. would be responsible for "losing" a Vietnam which has never belonged to the U.S.A. Consequently the matter can be accepted as the rectification of a major mistake in American policy. This is the line taken by people like Senator Fulbright and by publicists like Walter Lippmann, and I think that one can illustrate it by citing a verse from that old leftist Rudyard Kipling, at a moment in the South African War when the British had suffered a rather ignominious defeat. Kipling wrote a poem in which there occurred the verse "We have had an imperial licking; it may make us an empire yet".

We have time for some more questions.

"Do you think that the amount of uncultivated but cultivable areas in China which we spoke about is so considerable that it will be able to absorb the violent population growth for any length of time?"

On the question of the amount of cultivable but at present uncultivated land in China I gave you the figure quoted from Chou En-lai by Edgar Snow, which was the possibility of a 25 per cent increase. That is fairly large in itself. But probably an even greater margin for the increase of food supply is in the application of chemical fertilizers. At present the production of rice per hectare in China is simply astonishingly far below that of Japan - something like 10 per cent of the Japanese yield. It is very odd that people talk about the danger of population explosions in the under-developed countries. Surely the rapid growth of the population in Japan is also phenomenal but nobody worries about Japan because they are a developed nation and they have other methods of solving the problems. This may be a pointer toward the possibility that as China moves from being an under-developed nation into the full industrialisation

for which it is much more richly endowed than Japan, it will also be able to solve these problems. Getting people to understand for themselves the desirability of limiting the size of their families is psychologically and in terms of persuasion a quite different problem in developed, highly educated countries from what it is in under-developed countries. This is socially easy to understand. It has often seemed to me in the past that the large families of poor people in countries like China and India can be explained by a paradox - they have too many children because they cannot afford to have children. And why cannot they afford it? Along with the general backwardness goes a tremendous infant mortality. Along with the economic backwardness goes an inability to pay supplementary labour. So you will beget children in order to have unpaid child labour in your own family; and you beget too many children because you are afraid that a lot of them will die before they are big enough to help you dig in the field. Once you relieve the conditions which produce this kind of mentality in the parents then the pressure to have too many children is relieved.

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Owen Lattimore, Professor of Chinese Studies, University of Leeds, member of the Academy of Sciences of the Mongolian People's Republic, one time adviser to Chiang Kai-shek, is a leading American scholar in the study of Central Asian and Chinese politics. Author of more than 15 books on China, Mongolia and Chinese border regions, known around the world for his keen mind in debate and clarity in formulating broad concepts of East Asian history.

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