

# *The Shifting Line in Soviet Orientalology*

By W. Z. LAQUEUR

THE recent revival of Oriental studies in the Soviet Union obviously has more than academic significance when viewed against the backdrop of Soviet diplomatic efforts to win friends and influence people in the non-Communist lands of the Middle and Far East. The revival primarily concerns studies on contemporary Asiatic problems and is the more striking because it follows the almost total eclipse of such studies from 1938 to 1954. Since May 1955, moreover, there has been a sharp and significant change in the whole approach of Soviet Eastern experts toward the national governments and movements in various countries of the non-Communist East. This faithfully reflects the new, altered line of Communist diplomacy in Asia epitomized so dramatically by the Khrushchev-Bulganin goodwill tour of India, Burma and Afghanistan.

To indulge in a practice much favored by Soviet authors, one may divide the historical development of Soviet Oriental studies into six periods. The decade from 1919 to 1928 might be termed the "golden age" of Soviet Orientalology, during which the attitude toward Asia was generally friendly. From 1929 to 1934, reflecting the general hardening of the Comintern line, this sympathetic attitude was replaced by hostility toward the Asiatic national movements, and there was a corresponding decline of Oriental studies. Then, with the switch to worldwide "popular front" tactics in 1935, a revival got under way, only to be cut short in 1937 by the Great Purge, which hit Soviet Oriental experts particularly hard.

From 1923 to 1948, encompassing the entire duration of World War II, events in Asia were largely ignored in the USSR, and Oriental studies remained in eclipse. In 1948 Soviet policy in Asia again began showing gradually increasing activity, but the almost total absence of studies on contemporary Eastern affairs continued until 1954. The great revival began in the latter part of 1954 and continues at the present time. As already noted, the revival was marked at first by a sharply critical attitude toward the non-Communist national regimes and movements of the East, shifting suddenly to a sugared tone of friendship in the summer of 1955.

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## Early Bolshevik Indifference

THE "golden age" of Soviet Orientalology developed, curiously enough, against a background of relative indifference toward Asia on the part of the newly-established Bolshevik regime. Communism in 1917 was not much more interested in that part of the world than were the other Western political movements of the period.

To be sure, Lenin way back in 1913 had written an article entitled "Backward Europe and Progressive Asia," which is often quoted today as proof of his prescience.<sup>1</sup> But Lenin's orientation was wholly western, and he himself acknowledged that this title was a bit facetious. He noted, as did others, the great spiritual impact which the Russian revolution of 1905 had had on many Asian countries; and he also remarked that by and large the middle class in Asia was still joining forces with the proletariat whereas, in Europe, the proletariat had become "the only progressive force." It was only in one of his last articles, published some years after the 1917 revolution, that Lenin recognized the long-range importance of Asia to the future of world communism, declaring that the outcome of the struggle would be determined in the last resort by the fact that the USSR, India and China together account for the vast majority of mankind.<sup>2</sup>

Despite this acknowledgment of the potential importance of Asia, the East occupied an inconspicuous place in overall Soviet policy calculations throughout most of the 1920's.<sup>3</sup> The Baku Congress of the Peoples of the East, held in the fall of 1920, did—it is true—make at least a symbolic gesture toward spreading the Bolshevik revolutionary philosophy to the unawakened Asian masses; and the early 1920's also saw the short-lived Soviet irruption into Iran and flirtation with Turkey. Although somewhat greater attention was given to Asian affairs during the latter 1920's, it was focused almost exclusively on the question of Communist tactics in China; Stalin and

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works* (4th Edition), Moscow. Vol. XIX, pp. 77-8.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Better Less, But Better" (March 2, 1923), *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXIII, p. 458.

<sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that Stalin, in 1918, published two articles stressing the importance of the East: one entitled "Do Not Forget the East" and the other "Ex Oriente Lux" (Light from the Orient). See J. Stalin, *Collected Works*, Moscow, 1946-48. Vol. IV, pp. 171-3, 177-82. These articles were largely in protest against the early Bolshevik neglect of the East.

the other party leaders evinced no real interest in the Middle East. The elaboration of theses in accordance with the exigencies of the time and of Soviet foreign policy was left to the lower echelons of the Comintern hierarchy.

The keynote of Communist policy with regard to Asia during this period had been laid down in the theses adopted by the Second Comintern Congress in 1920. In contrast to the sharply hostile line prescribed toward social democracy in Europe, the Second Congress theses stressed the necessity of supporting bourgeois movements of liberation in the colonial and backward countries of the East, and of entering into temporary alliances with them.<sup>4</sup> At the same time they ascribed special importance to supporting the peasant movements in these countries in opposition to the big landowners and "reactionary medieval influences."

The Leninist idea of temporary collaboration with the bourgeois democratic movements of Asia was not wholeheartedly welcomed by some of the Asiatic delegates to the Congress. Roy, the Indian representative, demanded that a clear-cut distinction be made between the bourgeois national movements which proposed to achieve their political aims within the framework of the existing order, and the struggle of the peasants directed against "every form of exploitation". Support of the latter, he argued, should not be sacrificed, even temporarily, to an expedient alliance with bourgeois elements. Nevertheless, the Leninist line prevailed.

### The Heyday of Oriental Studies

AS a result of this mild, unrevolutionary policy for Asia, coupled with the relatively minor official concern over Eastern affairs, Soviet Orientalists enjoyed a fair amount of latitude in the early years after the revolution. In December 1921 they were allowed, with the government's blessing, to organize an all-Russian Association of Eastern Studies (VNAV), which became a subsection of the Commissariat of Nationalities; and for a time there was a parallel Ukrainian association. Another center of Oriental research was the Moscow Institute of Eastern Studies. The principal organ of the Orientalists was the review *Novyi Vostok* (New East), published by the All-Russian Association of Eastern Studies from 1922 to 1930.

Broadly speaking, there were three groups of Orientalists, each with a different approach and out-

<sup>4</sup> *Theses and Statutes of the Third (Communist) International Adopted by the Second Congress, July 17 to August 7, 1920. Communist International Second Congress, Leningrad, 1920.*

look. First, there were the academicians, the scholars of great international standing, such as V. V. Bartold, S. F. Oldenburg and I. Y. Krachkovski; they continued their historical researches within the framework of the Academy of Sciences and seldom, if ever, turned their attention to topical Eastern affairs. A second group was composed of Communists without academic training but with academic ambitions, some quite capable and others of no distinction whatever. This group ran the review *Novyi Vostok* and had as its outstanding members Mikhail Pavlovich (Weltmann) and V. A. Gurko-Kriazhin, both Old Bolsheviks and experts on Middle Eastern political problems. Finally, there was a group of party, government and Comintern officials with special interest or on-the-spot experience in the East—men like G. I. Broido, key figure in the Communist subjugation of Turkestan, and Pavel Mif, later to play an active role as Comintern representative in China. Apart from defining the party line, the contribution of this group to Soviet Eastern studies was of little importance.

Even with the relative freedom allowed during this period, Soviet Orientalology showed a definite party coloring. This was clearly evidenced by frequent statements in *Novyi Vostok* opposing the aim of Soviet Eastern studies to that allegedly pursued by Western Orientalists. In the words of Pavlovich:

We do not seek, in the East, ways and means of setting the clock back to century-old slavery and obscurantism; on the contrary, we look for ways of revolutionary development.<sup>5</sup>

Konstantin M. Troianovsky, another member of the group, touched upon the same theme in the inaugural issue of *Novyi Vostok*. It was clear to every revolutionary, he wrote, that for the colonial peoples of the east, there could be "no national liberation outside of social liberation."<sup>6</sup>

The Orientalists of this school published a great many books and pamphlets on Eastern problems (all too frequently based on secondary Western sources) seeking valiantly but not always successfully for evidences of a revolutionary spirit in the East. Indeed, the voluminousness of their writings on the subject appears strangely incongruous with the slight significance of Asiatic revolutionary movements during this period. There was to be an equally striking incon-

<sup>5</sup> Mikhail Pavlovich, "Oktiabrskaya Revoliutsiia i Vostochnyi Vopros" (The October Revolution and the Eastern Question), *Novyi Vostok*, No. 15, 1926, p. 1 ff. See also article by V. A. Gurko-Kriazhin, *ibid.*, No. 19, 1926.

<sup>6</sup> K. M. Troianovski, "Nezavisimoe Korolstvo Yegipta" (The Independent Kingdom of Egypt), *Novyi Vostok*, No. 1, 1922. p. 94.

gruity—in reverse—in the late 1940's, when these movements had gained real momentum and importance and there was no Soviet Orientalist literature to hail them.

Among the topics of primary interest to Soviet Orientalists in the 1920's, on the historical level, was the origin and social character of Islam, an issue which became the subject of protracted and acrimonious debate and which evoked a dozen or more conflicting theories.<sup>7</sup> On the political level, the paramount Orientalist task was to appraise the various national movements in the East in the light of Marxist-Leninist tenets and guide Communist relations with them along the desired channel.

It is interesting from an historian's viewpoint to note that the late 1920's found Soviet Orientalists devoting considerable attention to a proposal which was subsequently forgotten but now has regained prominence as a keystone of Soviet Asiatic policy. This was the thesis, put forth and developed at the Fifteenth CPSU Conference in 1926, that the Soviet Union could and should help to bring about the industrialization of the backward countries of Asia in order to prevent their engulfment by "capitalist imperialism."<sup>8</sup> Its author was Nikolai Bukharin, who was to be executed as a pro-Fascist "traitor" in the Stalinist purge of 1938.

### Stiffening of the Line

**I**N spite of the Marxist tinge and flood-like volume of their publications, Soviet Orientalists began to come in for censure as early as 1925 on the ground that their studies were too apolitical.<sup>9</sup> But real pressure was not brought to bear on them until the Sixth World Congress of the Comintern in September 1928, which marked a general stiffening of the international Communist line. In particular, the Sixth Congress' "Theses on the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies and Semi-colonies" cast into the limbo the past line of collaboration with the national regimes and national liberation movements of the East, denouncing the Chinese Kuomintang as an "openly counterrevolutionary force" and Gandhism

<sup>7</sup> This controversy has been summarized by the Soviet Orientalist writer, N. A. Smirnov, in his book, *Ocherki Istorii Issledeniia Islama v SSSR* (Essays on the History of Islamic Studies in the USSR), Moscow, 1954. pp. 180-202.

<sup>8</sup> *XV Konferentsiia, 26ovo Oktiabria 3 Noiabria 1926 g., Stenograficheskyi Ochet* (Stenographic Record, 15th Conference, October 26-November 3, 1926) Gosizdat, Moscow, 1927.

<sup>9</sup> One of the more prominent critics was Lev Karakhan, onetime Vice Commissar of Foreign Affairs under Maxim Litvinov. See his article, "Zadachi Vostokovedeniia" (The Task of Eastern Studies), *Novyi Vostok*, No. 14, 1925. p. 1 ff.

in India as a doctrine opposed to the class struggle and mass revolution. Other national leaders and movements fared no better. Henceforth, the battle-cry was to be agrarian revolution for the purpose of wresting power from the national bourgeoisie.<sup>10</sup>

As a direct repercussion of this shift, steps were taken to correct the allegedly apolitical approach of Soviet Orientalists. An all-union conference of Eastern experts was convened, at which a resolution was adopted criticizing the Association of Eastern Studies on the ground that it was constituted mainly of (1) persons who pretended to be Marxists but actually were not; (2) apolitical academicians; and (3) pseudo-scholars.<sup>11</sup> The Association eventually was dissolved and replaced by a new "Association of Marxist-Orientalists at the Comacademia". This imposing title and the name given to the new Association journal, *Revoliutsionnyi Vostok* (Revolutionary East), symbolized the change, which was designed to stress the divorce of Soviet Oriental studies from the "ivory tower" atmosphere of the Academy of Sciences.

Needless to say, the reorientation of the Comintern line in Asia, and consequently of the tone and content of Soviet Oriental studies, was not the result of any new revelations or discoveries on the theoretical level. It was an outgrowth of the changed international situation and, particularly, of the untoward turn of events in China where Chiang Kai-shek, after successfully establishing Kuomintang rule with Communist backing, had turned against the Reds in 1927.

Called upon to do a quick about-face, Soviet Orientalists now denounced the same national movements which hitherto had been considered communism's main allies, as "our main enemy in the backward countries, just as the Social Democrats are our chief foes in the more developed areas."<sup>12</sup> Particular opprobrium was heaped upon the left-wing or "national reformist" elements in the Kuomintang, the Indian Congress and the Egyptian Wafd. All these "national reformists" were against agrarian revolution, it was asserted, and historical experience demonstrated that without such revolution there could be no national liberation.

The Eastern nationalist leaders—Nahas Pasha, leader of the Egyptian Wafd; Reza Sha Pahlevi, ruler of Iran; and Chiang Kai-shek, leader of the Kuomin-

<sup>10</sup> *Theses on the Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies and Semi-Colonies Adopted at the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, 1928*. Published in *International Press Correspondence*, Vol. 8 (December 12, 1928), pp. 1659-76.

<sup>11</sup> Published in *Novyi Vostok*, No. 29, 1929. p. 21.

<sup>12</sup> L. Madyar, "O Natsional Reformizme" (On National Reformism), *Revoliutsionnyi Vostok*, No. 6, 1933. p. 24.

tang—were charged with trying to exploit differences between the Soviet Union and the “imperialist powers” and with having sought a “rapprochement with the Soviet Union merely to strengthen their own position.”<sup>13</sup> These accusations make even more interesting reading in 1956 than in 1933.

For Soviet Oriental studies this was a most difficult period. The academic historians continued their research but were hardly able to publish anything at all. *Revoliutsionnyi Vostok* had to eschew scholarly articles and concentrate on denouncing “national reformism”. The commandments of the hour were to attack Japanese “social fascism” (the Social Democrats), to castigate Gandhi as one of the most odious figures among all the leaders of bourgeois nationalist movements, and so on.

### Popular Front and Purge

AFTER roughly six years of this blustering, intransigent line, Soviet Orientalists were obliged to perform another about-face. With the adoption of the “popular front” as the keynote of Soviet world policy in 1935, the slogan of a wide coalition against fascism was proclaimed in Asia as in Europe. The “national reformists” again became allies of the Communists, and writers in *Revoliutsionnyi Vostok* had to find words of praise for both Gandhi and Chiang Kai-shek.

Another good example of the new shift was Iraq. In 1934, the Iraqi “national reformists” had been declared “the main obstacle to the development of the workers’ movement.” In 1937, the Iraqi government composed of the same “national reformists” was extolled for expressing the national aspirations of the Arab people.<sup>14</sup>

Soviet Orientalists adapted themselves to the new situation with comparative swiftness, for tendering the hand of friendship to the national movements of the East was far easier than the truculent line of 1929–1934. But time was running out fast. During the 1929–1934 period, Soviet Oriental studies had become completely politicized and, in fact, were carried on mainly by Comintern personnel. Consequently, when the latter were decimated by the Great Purge of 1937, Eastern studies received a mortal blow and virtually ceased to exist in any form, either academic or propagandistic.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> M. Kuperman, “Rabochie Dvizhenye v Irake” (The Workers’ Movement in Iraq), *Revoliutsionnyi Vostok*, No. 6, 1934, p. 104; Vitol, “Gosudarstvennyi Perevorot v Irake” (The Coup d’Etat in Iraq), *Ibid.*, No. 1, 1937.

The “Association of Marxist-Orientalists” came to a sudden and unexplained end in 1937. The editors of *Revoliutsionnyi Vostok* vanished from view together with the ill-fated majority of Comintern officials, and publication ceased. Another periodical dealing with Far Eastern affairs, *Tikhii Okean* (The Pacific Ocean), lingered on until 1939, but then it expired, too.

Naturally, it was the official Communist spokesmen and propagandists who fared worst of all in the 1937–38 purges. Not a single one seems to have survived, and none has reappeared since the recent revival of Soviet Oriental studies. On the other hand, the academicians who had not meddled in politics despite all prodding fared considerably better. Many of them have lived to play a prominent part in the revival.

Between 1938 and 1948, there were no publications worth mentioning in the field of contemporary Eastern studies. Even comment in the press and radio was most cursory. Research institutions such as the Institute of Eastern Studies of the Academy of Sciences, the Oriental institutes of Moscow and Leningrad Universities, and the Eastern Faculty of the Central Asian University in Tashkent (specializing in the Middle East and Southeast Asia) continued to function in a restricted way. But their members preferred the relative security of the Middle Ages, or even more remote periods, to the treacherous ground of more recent eras.

The prolonged effacement of contemporary Eastern studies had another important cause in the temporary submersion of interest in Asian affairs and Soviet preoccupation with Europe throughout the period of World War II. By 1948, the postwar polarization of most of the world into two hostile camps and the brightening prospects for communism in the Far East injected new life into Soviet Asiatic policy. However, the revival of smoldering Soviet designs in Asia did not produce an immediate rebirth of Soviet Eastern studies. The period from 1948 to 1954 witnessed only the barest beginning of such a revival.

The initial sign was the publication in 1950 of a series of essays under the title *Uchenye Zapiski Instituta Vostokovedeniia* (Learned Papers of the Institute of Eastern Studies). In 1953 the Institute published another series entitled *Kratkie Soobshcheniia Instituta Vostokovedeniia* (Short Communications of the Institute of Eastern Studies). Some of these papers dealt with philological topics, but others with contemporary Eastern political problems, and the authors were the leading Soviet authorities in their respective fields such as A. M. Dyakov for India, E. M. Zhukov for the Far East, and A. A. Guber for Indonesia.

## Orientalist Renaissance

THE real comeback of Soviet Oriental studies got underway in 1954. It was marked by a decision to provide the Asian expert once more with a central organ of their own. After a period of preparation, the first issue of the new bimonthly, *Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie* (Soviet Eastern Studies), appeared in May 1955, declaring in its preface that it would deal *inter alia* with "questions of culture and ideology pertaining to the countries of the East" and would seek to "unmask reactionary ideologies which hamper the successful struggle of the masses for social liberation and national independence." The desire of the Eastern peoples to create an Asiatic "zone of peace" was also praised:

Only the fight of the Asian peoples, supported by the peace-loving peoples of the whole world, brought about the cessation of bloodshed in Korea and later in Indochina.<sup>15</sup>

While the new organ was still in preparation, a number of basic Eastern studies of more than ordinary interest appeared in print toward the close of 1954. Among them were the first volume of a projected four-volume work, *Noveishaia Istoria Stran Zarubezhnoy Vostoka* (Most Modern History of the Countries of the Foreign East), issued by Moscow University; a large volume on the peoples of Africa (*Narody Afriki*), published by the Soviet Academy of Sciences; and a survey of Islamic studies in the USSR, by N. A. Smirnov.<sup>16</sup> Other published material included Russian translations of books by Asian authors (a few of them non-Communists) and a revival, *Palestinski Sbornik* (Palestine Collection), once issued by the Russian-Palestine Society in Tsarist Russia.

In writing on topical affairs, however, the Eastern experts found themselves seriously hampered by a lack of official guidance indicating the party line which they should follow. Writers like G. B. Erenburg and E. M. Zhukov, on the Far East, V. B. Lutzki, A. F. Miller and L. Vatolina, on the Middle East, I. M. Reisner, A. M. Dyakov and A. A. Guber, on Southeast Asia, had been in the field long enough to harbor vivid recollections of the fate which had befallen their teachers in the Great Purge. Small wonder that none of them was anxious to venture out on a limb by being too outspoken.

Some ideological guidance, it is true, had been given by Andrei Zhdanov, late member of the party Politburo, in 1947. At that time, Yevgeni Varga, the well-known Soviet economist, had been upbraided for voicing—among other things—the "preposterous" idea that Indian independence constituted a new

<sup>15</sup> *Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie*, No. 1, 1955, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> For Smirnov book, see footnote 7.

political fact of real importance, which meant a basic change in international relations. "No change whatever" had been the official pronouncement then.

After Stalin's death, however, this line became progressively more anomalous as both the Soviet Union and Communist China began assiduously wooing India and other Asian countries. Soviet writers consequently took care to avoid offensive references to heads of state such as Prime Minister Nehru of India and President Soekarno of Indonesia; but otherwise their attitude toward leaders of the national movements in non-Communist Eastern countries remained decidedly unfriendly.

Thus, for example, the long-standing condemnation of Gandhi as an enemy of the class struggle and mass revolution continued through the first part of 1955. Volume I of the *Most Modern History of the Countries of the Foreign East*, referred to above, repeatedly denounced him as a traitor to the national cause and even went so far as to describe Nehru's father as a most unsavory character, though it refrained from criticizing Nehru himself.<sup>17</sup> On India Varga, too, showed signs of having digested the lesson of 1947. In a book published in the winter of 1953-54, he accused Indian socialist leaders (including the left-wing leader, Dr. Lohya) of being paid American spies, even mentioning the sums allegedly paid to them for their services.<sup>18</sup>

Views expressed with regard to the Middle East followed the same pattern. Abdul Nasser's regime was strongly attacked as "anti-democratic" and "anti-patriotic" because of its agreement with Britain in July 1954 regarding Suez.<sup>19</sup> The Muslim Brothers were denounced as imperialist tools despite the fact that the Egyptian Communists regarded them as allies.<sup>20</sup>

The case against an over-indulgent appraisal of the Eastern national movements was put most succinctly, perhaps, by V. V. Balabushevich, writing on India. It had been quite wrong, he said, to consider the leftist heads of the Indian Congress in the 1930's, *i. e.*, Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose, as the real leaders of the leftist lower middle class and of the national revolutionary movement. Time and realities

<sup>17</sup> *Most Modern History of the Countries of the Foreign East*, Moscow University, 1954. p. 172.

<sup>18</sup> Yevgeni Varga, *Izmenii v Ekonomike Kapitalizma v Itoge Vtoroi Mirovoi Voine* (Changes in the Capitalist Economy Resulting from World War II), Gospolitizdat, Moscow, 1946. (See chapter on India.)

<sup>19</sup> L. Vatolina, *Imperialisticheskaia Borba za Afriku* (Imperialist Struggle for Africa), Soviet Academy of Sciences, 1954. p. 125. Also see *Narody Afriki*, same publisher, 1954. pp. 207-13.

<sup>20</sup> Smirnov, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

have helped to correct these mistaken notions, he added, acknowledging that he, too, had been guilty of too charitable a view in this regard.<sup>21</sup>

### Post-Bandung Reversal

THE persistence of the unfriendly line in Soviet Oriental studies may have been in conformity with the theory and past interpretation of Marxism-Leninism, but it certainly was far from conforming to the practical exigencies of Soviet foreign policy in 1954-55. The Bandung Conference of Asian-African Nations in April 1955 seemingly brought home the realization of this contradiction, for it was swiftly followed by ideological modifications of far-reaching importance.

The new reversal of the party line was heralded by an unsigned editorial published in the May issue of the CPSU theoretical organ, *Kommunist*. The editorial prefaced its discussion of policy by emphasizing that the growing importance of the Asian and African countries made a further expansion of Soviet Eastern studies absolutely imperative. It complained further that the scant attention given to Oriental history and culture in the curricula of Soviet secondary schools and universities imposed a serious limitation on the development of needed Eastern experts. The editorial continued:

Serious mistakes have occasionally been committed in appraising the role of the national bourgeoisie of the countries of the East in the anti-imperialist movement. The progressive features of the struggle of Kemal [Ataturk] and the Kemalists in the fight against imperialism in the 1920's have been ignored. Also, in surveying the role of Gandhi in the anti-imperialist struggle, our Orientalists have not always taken as their point of departure the concrete historical circumstances in India itself.<sup>22</sup>

The fraternity of Eastern experts was taxed in this connection with disregarding Lenin's observation that, in the bourgeois national movement of oppressed nations, there is always some "general democratic content which is unconditionally supported by communism."<sup>23</sup> However, since quotations to the contrary can just as easily be found in Lenin's, and especially Stalin's, writings, it is fairly obvious that the real error of the Orientalists lay in disregarding,

<sup>21</sup> Balabushevich's views were expressed in a study of relations between the working class and the nationalist movement in India, 1923-27, published in *Learned Papers of the Institute of Eastern Studies*, No. 10, 1954. p. 46.

<sup>22</sup> "Za Dalneishyi podyom Sovetskovo Vostokovedeniia" (For a Further Upsurge in Soviet Eastern Studies), *Kommunist*, No. 8, 1955, pp. 74-83.

<sup>23</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works* (4th Edition), Moscow, Vol. XX, p. 384.

not the circumstances of 1925 in the Eastern countries, but the exigencies of Soviet policy in the world situation of 1955.

The new approach obviously has far-reaching implications for Soviet Orientalology. It means, in effect, that the whole recent history of the East has to be rewritten. To take India as an example, it means that Gandhi, denounced as a traitor in Volume I of the *Most Modern History of the Countries of the Foreign East*, will have to be elevated, in later volumes yet to be published, to the role of patriot.

This rewriting of history, indeed, was begun without delay. The occasion was Prime Minister Nehru's visit to Moscow in June 1955, and those chosen for the task were, certainly not by pure coincidence, Balabushevich and Dyakov, the main culprits in the anti-Gandhi and anti-Congress campaign of the past. Jointly reviewing Nehru's book, *Discovery of India* (just published in Russian translation) in *Kommunist*, Balabushevich and Dyakov cited with evident approbation Nehru's affirmations that Gandhi's activities were the turning point of the Indian national liberation movement; that Gandhi deeply studied and understood the masses, spoke in a language which they understood, and thus was able to awaken and spur them on in the struggle for freedom.<sup>24</sup>

The new Orientalist journal, *Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie*, also adjusted itself, though apparently somewhat half-heartedly, to the revised party line. A leading article in the second issue expressly acknowledged, for the first time, that it was the determined efforts of the national liberation movements which had wrung independence from the imperialist powers for such Asian countries as India, Burma, and Indonesia. Curiously enough, this implied admission that they had attained national sovereignty quite independently of Leninist doctrine was couched in an editorial on the importance of Lenin's ideas.<sup>25</sup>

There are as yet only a few documents which sketch out the broad ideological outline to which Soviet studies will be expected to adhere in the new phase of Kremlin Eastern strategy. One is a highly illuminating article which appeared in the August 1955 (No. 9) issue of *Kommunist* under the title "Novaia Azia" (New Asia). In it non-Communist Asia, excluding the few remaining colonies, is divided into "independent countries"—India, Burma, Indonesia—and countries described as only "formally independent", such as Pakistan, Turkey and the Philippines. The position of foreign capital is acknowledged to be still

<sup>24</sup> *Kommunist*, No. 9, 1955. p. 103.

<sup>25</sup> *Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie*, No. 2, 1955.

strong in the "independent" group owing to "specific historical conditions," but it is suggested that they, too, may somehow be able to free themselves from Western economic tutelage.

The "formally independent" (that is, dependent) countries are treated with sorrow rather than with anger. Their "militarization" is deprecated as quite unnecessary because nobody threatens them. Time and again, the Asian peoples as a whole are pictured as "desiring to achieve one and the same goal—to guarantee their national independence and peaceful development, and to realize a decisive improvement of their living standards and a renaissance of their old cultures."

The old basic division between Communist and non-Communist countries is glossed over. In the latter, the once-abhorred landowners are now acknowledged to be by no means all reactionaries; for instance, in Indochina and India, "a considerable proportion of the landowners did not support the colonizers but joined the national movement from the very beginning." Also, "the Communist parties in these countries support all progressive measures taken by the national governments."

#### From Fifth Column to Loyal Opposition

**T**HE new Communist tactical line of Asian unity in place of Communist exclusivity holds, for the USSR, great advantages which are too obvious to require discussion. But it entails difficulties and dangers as well.

There are the difficulties which it creates for the Communist parties in the non-Communist Asian countries now being courted by the USSR. Hitherto dedicated to the overthrow of the existing governments, these parties now find themselves reduced to the unaccustomed and less rabble-rousing role of a

loyal opposition. There are also the difficulties which Soviet Orientalists face in rewriting most of their basic works.

The dangers lurk on the higher international political level. In the past, the Soviet Communists were wont to take a favorable view of most opposition movements in Asia and Africa as long as they remained in opposition; once they attained state power, they became constructivists and hence political enemies. From now on, however, the constructivists, too, are to be treated as friends—misguided, perhaps, but not lost to salvation.

In all this, there is the distinct danger, for the Soviet Union, that the newly independent nations of Asia and Africa will prove really assiduous in pursuing independent policies; that they will try to play the USSR and the West against each other for their own interest—seeking "a rapprochement with the Soviet Union merely to strengthen their own position," the same accusation that was directed against Chiang Kai-shek and other Eastern nationalist leaders by Comintern writers in the early 1930's.<sup>26</sup> This may be a calculated risk, but a risk it remains.

There are other risks and danger inherent in the new Soviet course, and it will be interesting to see how the re-energized Eastern experts of the USSR propose to exorcise them. Their fifteen-year hibernation had its advantages, for they thus avoided the necessity of taking sides on all kinds of ticklish international issues. Now a new period has dawned, in which they will have to shoulder heavy responsibilities. They will have to walk the swaying tight-rope of the new party line—ever mindful of what may befall them, as it befell their predecessors, should there be a sudden shift in the Soviet political wind.

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<sup>26</sup> See footnote 12.

# Trade Unions in Mao's China

By H. ARTHUR STEINER

CONTROL of the labor force is a *sine qua non* of the present-day Communist state. With rapid industrialization as its major goal, the Chinese Communist regime has imposed on its working population one of the most rigid sets of controls ever devised by a dictatorial system. Industrial labor has been harnessed to the point where it can be manipulated to serve the political and economic purposes of the state and the party. Intensive indoctrination has been employed to establish in the workers' minds a "correct Communist attitude toward labor." Disciplinary pressures to speed up production and improve its quality are aggressively applied.

The principal instrument for these purposes is the elaborate, party-controlled trade union apparatus. Trade unions in the People's Republic of China (CPR) are officially defined as "mass organizations of all manual and non-manual workers living entirely or mainly on their wages"; and the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) is designated as "the supreme leading body of the trade unions."<sup>1</sup> The total membership of the Communist-controlled trade unions has reportedly increased from 800,000 in 1945 to 12,450,000 in 1955, more than trebling since the establishment of the CPR in 1949.<sup>2</sup> The continuation

<sup>1</sup> Constitution of the Trade Unions of the CPR (May 10, 1953), Preamble and Article 12, published in *The Seventh All-China Congress of Trade Unions*, Peiping, Foreign Language Press, 1953, pp. 127-141; also Hsü Chih-chen, "Report on the Amendment to the Constitution of the Trade Unions of the CPR" (May 3, 1953), hereafter cited as Hsü, "Report," *ibid.*, pp. 85-86.

Prior to May 1953, the Chinese name of the organization was customarily translated as "All-China Federation of Labor" (ACFL); thereafter, "All-China Federation of Trade Unions" (ACFTU) became the preferred translation. In this study, "ACFTU" is uniformly used as the English abbreviation of the organization.

<sup>2</sup> Figures from *Hsin-hua jib-pao* (New China Daily), Chungking, March 20, 1945; the annual report of the ACFTU, May 1, 1950, as translated in *Current Background*, Hong Kong, No. 24, p. 3 (hereafter cited as CB); Lai Jo-yü, in *Kung-jen jib-pao* (Daily Worker), Peiping, April 30, 1955, (hereafter cited as *Daily Worker*); and the New China News Agency's *Daily News Release*, Peiping, May 1955, p. 9 (hereafter cited as NCNA and DNR).

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of present trends would produce about 14,000,000 trade union members by the end of 1957 out of an estimated total working force of 16,150,000.<sup>3</sup>

ACFTU membership includes, in addition to manual workers in the 23 principal industries, various staff employes—clerks, custodians, stenographers, typists and lower-level management personnel. The "proletariat" in Communist China would therefore be substantially smaller than the 12,450,000 membership in the trade unions. On the other hand, although the ACFTU often speaks for "the Chinese working class," many actual working-class elements are excluded from membership; (1) peasants and (2) small handicraftsmen, because they are not paid in wages; (3) handicraft workers, because "handicrafts are different from modern industry"; and (4) certain professional workers, because they are "non-working-class elements."<sup>4</sup> This somewhat inconsistent pattern shows that the ACFTU is a special form of "mass organization" for those particular elements of the Chinese working class which play a critical role in the industrial policies of "the period of transition to socialism."

## Needed: A Doctrine for the "Working Class"

AS a mass organization, the ACFTU seeks a large membership and sets minimal standards for admission; it is thus distinguished from the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which safeguards its own distinctive character as the highly disciplined, elitist "organized vanguard of the Chinese working class." The actual number of CCP members in the ranks of the ACFTU is surprisingly small. At the end of 1952, for example, when the CCP had some 6,250,000 members and the ACFTU a membership of about 10,200,000, the ACFTU included only 450,000 CCP members.<sup>5</sup> Not more than 7.2 percent of the CCP membership could then claim a direct affiliation with wage-earning workers; and only 4.4 percent of the

<sup>3</sup> This calculation is computed approximately on the data given in Li Fu-ch'ün's report on the First Five-Year Plan to the National People's Congress, July 5-6, 1955, in CB, No. 335 (entire).

<sup>4</sup> Hsü, "Report," pp. 90-91.

<sup>5</sup> Data by Lai Jo-yü, NCNA, Peiping, April 24, 1953, DNR, April 1953, p. 171. Comparable data for later dates have not been released.