

still are) trying to make a rapprochement with U.S. imperialism. They are against even the mildly leftist position of the Soviet leaders in many fields.

Chou was thus appealing to a revisionist tendency that was to the right of the revisionists in the USSR, just as he was backing the Czechoslovak "revisionists" (really capitalist restorationists), who he himself had said were to the right of the Soviet leaders. *He was thus blocking with the right against the center.* And by labeling the Soviet leaders "social imperialists" he laid the basis for a different kind of opposition to the Soviet leaders than the Chinese CP had espoused earlier.⁴⁸

But the shift in the Chinese CP's theoretical position, that is, in its class definition of the Soviet state, was thus the result of a very long process which consisted not so much in basic sociological changes in the class nature of the USSR, as in the great-nation chauvinism of many of its leaders and the "imperialist attitudes" of those who should have been communist comrades. But the deep theoretical error the Chinese CP made in 1968 is nonetheless harmful to the working class of the world, including the Chinese People's Republic. Now, according to the Chinese CP, the USSR was no longer a socialist country with a revisionist leadership, it had changed to an imperialist country—all within one week and even within one speech.

If we compare the modern socialist society with a jet plane and the outlived capitalist society with a two-wheeled war chariot, we would have to say that the present Soviet pilots are often incompetent, unimaginative, and lacking in ability, not to say heroism in the use of their wonderful machine. (We have to note, of course, the great things accomplished and the great distance traveled in this machine even with its pedestrian pilots.)

But if we accept the breathtaking switch described above by the Chinese CP, we would have to say that the Soviet jet plane was transformed within one week to the two-wheeled war chariot—and even more miraculous, that the grey-flanneled, meek "flunkies" Brezhnev and Kosygin, were now transfigured into veritable Caesars and Alexanders, boldly calling upon their armies to conquer the world.

Thus, according to the Chinese CP, the Soviet system went backward, and the Soviet leaders went forward—that is, in courage, boldness, and historic viability as leaders of an authentic ruling class. Instead of being a revisionist, privileged

incubus on a socialist state, the privileged "flunkies" of yesterday are the "new Czars" of today.

The border clash

In March of 1969, there occurred an actual border clash between troops of the two socialist countries at the Ussuri—or Wassuli—River and this of course heated up the situation unbearably. The imperialists looked on with glee, the pro-fascist New York Daily News actually saying: "Let's you and him fight!" adding that the USSR and People's China should destroy each other with nuclear bombs and the sooner the better.⁴⁹

"If the struggle continues this way," said Workers World newspaper, "and particularly if it widens, it will not matter that the Chinese CP leaders are revolutionary and the Soviet leaders revisionist. If both sides manage to galvanize the mass of the people behind them in their respective countries, the ultimate effect will be to substitute national for class aims. It will reinforce Soviet revisionism rather than weaken it."⁵⁰

The Chinese took the occasion to claim a million square kilometers (nearly 450,000 square miles) of Soviet land on the basis of the Czars' campaigns against the Chinese emperors a century and more earlier.⁵¹

This position was quite different from that of 1964 for instance. The Chinese CP then said:

*The delegations of our two countries started boundary negotiations in Peking on February 25, 1964. Although the old treaties relating to the Sino-Soviet boundary are unequal treaties, the Chinese government is nevertheless willing to respect them, and take them as a basis for a reasonable settlement of the Sino-Soviet boundary question. (Our emphasis.)*⁵²

To this it should be added that the nations occupying the Asiatic autonomous regions of the USSR are not Russian, but neither are they Chinese. Perhaps there is a great objective need for a number of Chinese to find living space in Southern Siberia, the People's Republic of Mongolia, and the genuinely communist solution may well be for the USSR to share this sparsely settled land with the Chinese.

But the factors preventing this are by no means simply the attitude of the Soviet leaders in Moscow, although they no doubt