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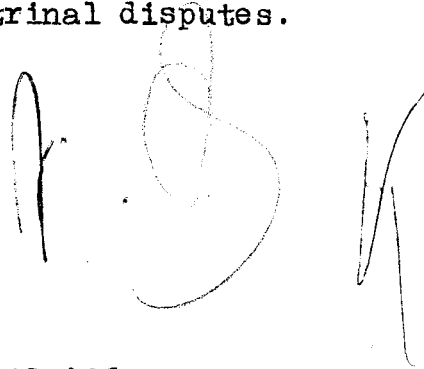
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Mao Tse-tung once said: "Dogma is less useful than cow dung," and Nikita Khrushchev is fond of repeating Lenin's colorful slogan: "Theory, my friend, is grey, but green is the eternal tree of life." These expressions of contempt are accurate reflections of the thought of both men concerning those who conceive of ideology as a body of absolute truths from which action flows. Communist teaching, however, posits a world in which theory and practice are intertwined, and on this level both leaders are intimately concerned with ideology.

Communist doctrine supplies a ritual language through which leaders communicate their intentions, define the razor's edge which divides loyalty from rebellion, distinguish friend from foe, and convey to the initiated an official interpretation of current situations and conflicts. Soviet orthodoxy can make sharp changes, turning yesterday's ideological conformity into today's nonconformity. Despite changes in its content, the functions of Marxist theory in the Soviet system has remained the same: to assure ideological uniformity behind whatever course of action the Soviet Government has adopted at the moment.

Marxist ideology is said to be the cement that binds the Communist world together. This is true, however, only as long as there is but one high priest to expound the new formulations which are intended to interpret changes in objective reality. With the development in China of a willingness to justify courses of action without regard for current Soviet positions, Marxist ideology can become at least a source of confusion rather than certainty, and at most a solvent that loosens the bonds of the Communist world.

Mao's Authority. The Chinese Communists, under Mao Tse-tung's undisputed control, have always sought to apply--"in a creative way"--the general principles of Marxism-Leninism to the actual conditions in China, and in this process they have frequently diverged in their views from Soviet doctrine.

Following the death of Stalin, Mao won increasing praise from Soviet leaders for his creative "originality" as a Marxist-Leninist theoretician. This was an acceptance of claims which the Chinese had been making for years but at which Stalin had boggled; Stalin was jealous of his own prerogatives as the only living creative innovator in Marxism-Leninism, and he recognized the dangers in acknowledging a center outside his control which could interpret and adapt theory for itself.

Immediately after Stalin's death, China's elevation to a position in advance of other bloc countries was made clear when Chou En-lai was allowed to march in the front ranks behind Stalin's coffin along with the surviving Soviet leaders. Mao's position was eloquently recognized when Malenkov published a photograph cropped to show him standing next to Stalin and Mao in 1950. Khrushchev and Bulganin undertook the first public journey of Soviet leaders to Peiping in 1954 and removed the most irritating causes of mutual disagreement that remained from the 1950 treaty. In 1955, Molotov made the Chinese joint leaders with the Soviet hierarchy when, in describing the split

of the world into two blocs, he characterized the Communist world as "the world camp of socialism and democracy, headed by the Soviet Union--to speak more truly, headed by the Soviet Union and the Chinese People's Republic."

Earlier Disputes. A series of Chinese actions and declarations since 1955 reflected and added to the enhanced authority of Mao in the Communist world. When the Soviet leaders revamped Stalin's methods of control and incentive, both for their own people and for their relations with the rest of the Communist bloc, they apparently did not anticipate the divisive effects of the forces they had set in motion. Moreover, they were unable to advance a consistent explanation to counter the logical extension of their indictment of Stalin to Soviet society as a whole.

The Chinese did not fully accept Khrushchev's degradation of Stalin, and they were particularly halfhearted on the issue of the "cult of the individual," which continues to flower around Mao. In this case, although the USSR has retreated from the extremism of its original condemnations, the chasm between the two powers is still wide, as was demonstrated in December 1959, when Moscow and Peiping reiterated their positions on the anniversary of Stalin's death.

In 1956 the Chinese expanded their political and ideological activities with regard to over-all bloc affairs. During that year they encouraged the satellites in their desire for greater independence from Moscow, and in February 1957 Mao enunciated his theory of "contradictions" between the leaders and the led in a "socialist" country. This thesis was almost completely ignored in the Soviet Union; the specific application which Mao had in mind--that the leaders were responsible for this contradiction--was never endorsed. In an interview with CBS reporters, Khrushchev expressly denied that such contradictions existed in the Soviet Union, although his denial was expunged from the TASS account.

Hungarian and Polish leaders in October 1956, driven by developments beyond their control, demonstrated that they were prepared to renege in their fidelity to Soviet leadership of the bloc, and they persisted in exaggerating the degree to which Mao would support them against the USSR. Fundamental internal criticism of Communist rule, brought on by Mao's doctrine of "contradictions" and the concomitant "hundred flowers" campaign, welled up in China in 1957.

These developments caused Mao to reconsider his earlier positions, and in June 1957 he reversed his temporary liberalism. This took the form of an attack on "rightists" within China--followed by a nationwide "rectification" campaign--and solid support for Moscow in a struggle against "revisionism" in the bloc. By 1958, when the second break with Yugoslavia occurred, Mao had shifted to a position far more rigid than Moscow's. Chinese strictures against Yugoslav revisionism have continued to the present, while Soviet output has tapered off.

Mao played a significant role at the meeting of Communist leaders held in Moscow in November 1957. Neither Chinese leaders nor propagandists had ever echoed the formulation that the Chinese were coequal with the Soviet Union in the

leadership of the Communist world, and the Soviet Union itself had dropped the slogan within two years of its appearance. Mao's attitude and actions while in Moscow seemed to reflect the reality of the situation, however: in bloc affairs and in the formulation of doctrinal and programmatic theses both the Chinese and Soviet leaders shared the pinnacle.

Until the Chinese launched the "great leap" and began the development of their commune program in the middle of 1958, Chinese innovations in doctrinal matters were either greeted in Moscow by silence or were adjusted to Soviet doctrine through compromise. In this period, the Soviet succession question was still not settled and the problems of the USSR's control over its European satellites was an overriding one. By 1958, however, the USSR had managed to stabilize Eastern Europe, and Khrushchev had eliminated Marshal Zhukov, the last powerful force that stood between him and firm control at home.

The general claim that emerged from the Chinese programmatic papers on the commune movement was that Peiping had the right not only to work out particular solutions to specifically Chinese problems but also to elaborate the fundamentals of its "path to Communism." Not only did the theoretical justification appear sharply at variance with Moscow's canons, but the Chinese claim included an implication that Peiping's path could be followed by other "socialist" countries and constituted a bolder challenge to the USSR's leadership and pre-eminence as the "first socialist country." Faced with this challenge and strengthened externally by the developments of the previous year and with a personal internal victory behind him, Khrushchev apparently decided it was time to deal with Chinese doctrinal claims.

Commune Aftermath. Although the Chinese abandoned some of their more extravagant claims to an early achievement of Communism through the medium of the communes, they maintained that the commune would be the best form of society for moving into Communism and that the communes themselves contain the "sprouts of Communism" in their supply and messhall systems. Despite Soviet pressure to substitute a less pretentious term for their large agricultural components, the Chinese have preserved the name with all its implications. They have dropped their defensive retrenchment on the question of the communes as the means of achieving Communism at some future date and have moved to re-establish the theoretical foundation for the commune program.

During the early controversy over Chinese claims for the communes, Khrushchev and other Soviet spokesmen raised fundamental objections--based on more customary Soviet views--revolving around the primitiveness of the Chinese economic machine, the necessity for material incentives in building Communism, and payment according to the work performed. Peiping now is claiming that Mao has made new "discoveries" in political economy which run directly counter to the Soviet position.

At the 21st party congress, Khrushchev stressed that the only way to build a base for Communism was to increase the "material interest" of the workers in their labor. Mao now

has "discovered," however, "the decisive principle for the encouragement of positiveness among laborers: politics taking command is first, while material incentives can only occupy the second position." Khrushchev asserted that "under socialism, all people . . . receive payment according to their work." People's Daily, discussing Mao's new "discovery," countered, "The people's Communist working style (is) . . . selfless labor with total disregard for remuneration."

People's Daily asserts that Mao has "discovered" the "definite elements of highspeed development of socialist construction," an outgrowth of Mao's theory of the "uninterrupted revolution." The Soviet Union has never accepted the thesis of "building socialism" by means of a "permanent revolution," stressing instead the building of socialism by stages.

Mao, Khrushchev as Ideologues. Concomitantly with the development of a theoretical foundation for its economic programs, Peiping is reserving to Mao the right to be considered the most eminent living Communist theoretician. A recent Chinese listing of classical writers of Marxism set Mao after Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. A provincial Chinese party leader has advanced criteria for the study of Marxism and recognition of a genuine Marxist as follows: "The only correct way to study Marxism is to use Mao Tse-tung's ideology as guidance and Mao Tse-tung's works as the key," and, "The yardstick by which to judge each individual as to whether or not he is a genuine Marxist is his comprehension of Mao Tse-tung's ideology."

Although Soviet spokesmen hailed Khrushchev's report to the 21st party congress as a "shining" and "genuine" contribution to the "theory of scientific Communism" and claimed that the works of the congress belonged with the classical works of Marxism-Leninism, there has been no intense, sustained attempt to build Khrushchev up as a great Marxist thinker. Khrushchev himself has accentuated his pragmatic approach, deriding "theoretical phrasemongers" whose "beautiful words remain empty promises." He wishes to be known primarily as a man who is best at combining theory and practice, who through practice enriches theory.

As a result of Mao's latest claims to eminence as an ideologue--claims which serve to buttress views antipathetic to those in the Soviet Union--Khrushchev may find it necessary to accelerate the development of his role as the arbiter of what is or is not permissible. His style does not lend itself easily to developing a picture of himself as a great and "original" thinker, however, while Mao already has considerable ideological authority as a "creative" Marxist thinker.

Khrushchev probably will rely for the moment on the counterweight of the authority of Soviet accomplishments. To counter Chinese contentions, he will probably call on the authority of Marx and Lenin and use formulations that are part of the baggage of Soviet ideology. He may also hope that continued use of the slogan of "collective leadership" and continued censure of the "cult of the individual" will work to undermine Mao's position in the eyes of Communists throughout the bloc.

Khrushchev probably recognizes, however, that simple outright opposition to the Chinese will not gain his ends. While attempting to contain Mao's challenge and reassert Soviet

ideological primacy, he may offer formulas which, while countering Chinese claims, will still offer the Chinese more than they now have.

A hint of this was contained in his postulate on bloc relations introduced at the 21st party congress: "It would be theoretically correct to assume that socialist countries . . . will more or less simultaneously reach the highest phase of Communist society." While this concept undercut Chinese claims that their attainment of this goal had become imminent, it changed a previous tentative thesis on the "stages of Communism" which held that the Soviet Union would enter Communism first, followed by the European satellites, and finally by the bloc countries of the Far East.

New Soviet Party Program. Even without the Chinese challenge, the logic of Soviet methods of leadership would have required the focusing of doctrinal authority in Khrushchev, once he attained complete power within the Soviet Union. Khrushchev, however, is not a Stalin, keeping himself remote and unapproachable while producing "masterpieces" of Communist thought, or a Lenin, whose philosophical bent was early established. When changes of doctrine are necessary, therefore, Khrushchev's practical and administrative innovations are presented as "enriching" doctrine.

The stage now is set for the next step. A committee under Khrushchev is preparing, for presentation at the 22nd congress, a new Party Program to replace the one under which the regime has theoretically been operating since 1919. This fundamental document will establish criteria for a society "building the basis for Communism," set forth norms of behavior for Soviet Communist party members, and be applicable throughout the bloc. It will be said to be based on the political and economic realities as developed in Khrushchev's practical innovations over the past years. It will become a basic part of Communist theology, but it will not deter the Chinese from the path they have marked out for themselves.

Unity of the Communist international movement under sole Soviet leadership requires a strict conformity and does not allow for polycentrism or deviation. The Chinese, by manipulating doctrine in ways that do not follow a Soviet model so as to increase their prestige and to justify their unorthodox domestic programs, have created both deviation and a rival center of ideological authority.

While the Chinese continue to defer to the Soviet leadership of the bloc and have great need for Soviet scientific, economic, and military assistance, they reserve the right to adopt independent internal and foreign policies along with new doctrinal claims for Mao Tse-tung. By demonstrating an increasing willingness to justify their own unorthodox domestic programs with equally unorthodox doctrinal formulations, and by implying that these formulations could be applied elsewhere in the bloc, the Chinese are in effect boldly challenging Soviet leadership.