

# American - Chinese Dialectic in S.E. Asia

by Howard Moffat

Saigon (CUPI)--It is one of the major ironies of contemporary history that Marxism, rooted in a thoroughly materialistic concept of man, has in the hands of Mao Tse-tung, Lin Piao, Ho Chi Minh and Vo Nguyen Giap become the most powerful spiritual force in Asia - while the United States, which claims a Judaeo-Christian spiritual heritage, has sought to counter that force with increasing amounts of military and material aid.

In country after country of the third world, Mao has sounded the battle cry for a threadbare struggle to the death against U.S. imperialism and its lackeys; and time after time America has called for peace with honor and co-operation among nations, and has poured in more weapons and dollars to check the spiritual tide.

The paradox is rooted in the American view of the world.

American intellectuals often speak of the present as a post-ideological age. One reason, certainly, is the decline in influence of our Judaeo-Christian heritage. Another is that American and European societies are now comparatively free of the internal class conflicts which ideologies are invoked to explain. Historically, our own political and social institutions draw largely on the traditions of Locke, Jefferson, and Tocqueville, each of whom stressed ideas of equality and minimized class divisions.

## Solve Problems

More fundamentally, we have come to view other peoples' ideologies as obstacles to problem-solving, which we have unconsciously raised to the status of a new ideology. Perhaps, for lack of a dialectical content to our own new ideology, American society is increasingly preoccupied with a subtle variation of the 'might makes right' theme; to wit, that technology, emotional detachment and hard work will solve any problem if applied in large enough doses.

The emphasis throughout our culture on problem-solving, techniques, procedures, machinery and cost-efficiency is only the most general example. More specifically, the Viet Nam War is a major problem for us--and we are employing all the technology, emotional detachment, and hard work at our command in order to solve it.

The Asian view of the world - and the war - is often quite different. Much of Asia still has deeply-rooted class conflicts. The gulf between rich and poor - in Hong Kong, Saigon, Calcutta - is so stark that most people do not like to talk about it. At the same time, American technology and our emphasis on the Three E's - effort, efficiency and effectiveness - produce conflicting reactions.

## Americans are Children

On the one hand over-eager American advisors are indulged like children who come running in to tell their parents they have the answer to an insoluble problem. On the other, Asians are impressed by power and prosperity - especially power. They trace past defeats and loss of face to the superiority of Western technology, and they see technology as the key to winning back that lost power and dignity.

Most Asian societies are poor, colored, predominantly agricultural, and anxious to vindicate their national pride. They are watching China very carefully. It is natural that the emotional appeal of Marx and Mao would weigh heavily here, especially to

those convinced of the historical inevitability of the victory of People's War.

The fact that Americans themselves are generally more impressed with their technology and wealth than with their democratic social institutions merely proves to these Asians the bankruptcy of American ideals and the rightness of their own cause.

There are other Asians who seem genuinely to value Western democratic ideals, and who are searching for an Asian idiom in which to express them. Hitherto it has been elusive: objective conditions in Asia are much more favorable to the Marxian interpretation of social history than to the Lockean.

## Technology Tops

Another sizable group of Asians understands full well why Americans are more impressed with their technology than with their democratic social traditions. Practical people, they recognize and seek the perquisites of power. Many of them feel that though Chinese ideology is more fitted to today's Asia, and therefore carries greater emotional appeal, tomorrow's Asia must embrace Western technology, and by implication Western aid, if it is to arrive in the modern world.

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Much of the explosive nature of the conflict between the U.S. and China derives from this last fact. Mao and Ho see the handwriting on the wall, and are desperate to chalk up some advances of their own. They must either match American weapons with Chinese, or push the Viet Cong to a People's War victory using political rather than conventional military force. One way or another, they need to win.

Thus the frantic Great Leap Forward in 1957, designed to broaden the economic base for Chinese technological and industrial development. Thus Ho's eagerness to employ Soviet technicians at surface-to-air missile sites around Hanoi. Thus China's haste to deliver a nuclear warhead, which she now has done. In one of his more didactic moments in 1953, Mao said, 'Political power comes from the barrel of a gun.'

So the race is on, with Asian communists trying to make major breakthroughs in technology or war in time to thwart the immense appeal of Western aid to poorer or underdeveloped Asian nations.

And who is winning? There have been several test cases in the past year. Though the results are not necessarily permanent, they have generally spelled a series of major disasters for the Chinese.

## Chinese Lose

--In Moslem Indonesia, the sixth largest country in the world, the army engineered an anti-Chinese coup with strong support from powerful student groups throughout the country. American advisors here believe it wouldn't have happened but for the U.S. presence in Vietnam; they are probably right. General Suharto now apparently has hopeful feelers out for renewed American aid.

--In August North Korea carefully dissociated herself from the Peking line, and began making overtures in Moscow's direction. One reason no doubt was the continued presence of the Eighth U.S. Army south of the 38th parallel.

--Meanwhile, South Korea and Taiwan are being billed as major American aid success stories.

From what I saw this summer in both countries, the stories are plausible enough.

--Unconfirmed reports say General Ne Win in a recent White House visit asked President Johnson for American aid to counter Chinese-supported guerrillas in the northern forests of Burma. To Burma watchers, the xenophobic socialist general's American tour was surprise enough; U.S. aid would indicate a significant shift in Burma's foreign policy, which until now has been very deferential to Peking.

In the face of increasing guerrilla activity in both countries, Thailand and the Philippines seem more firmly attached than ever to American support.

--Even Malaysia, with British ground troops guarding her borders, called the U.S. her 'greatest and strongest ally' during President Johnson's visit Oct. 30. Three days later, Prime Minister Tengku Abdus Rahman announced that 'Peking-oriented terrorists of the "Malayan Liberation Army" were operating again in the peninsula's central highlands, 100 miles closer to Kuala Lumpur than they have since 1960.

And that about wraps up Southeast Asia, except for Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.

Cambodia, with strong support

Minh appear to control eastern Laos (bordering on North and South Vietnam), jointly with the Pathet Lao, who have strong ties with Hanoi.

Massive American aid has kept the western administrative capital of Vientiane conservatively neutral to pro-U.S., under the control of Prince Souvanna Phouma. But as John F. Kennedy is said to have remarked, Laos is not a land 'worthy of engaging the attention of great powers'. Its chief importance for some years has been as a staging base for guerrillas operating in Vietnam.

It is on South Vietnam that China and the U.S. are focusing all the influence and pressure they can bring to bear in a massive struggle for ideological, political, diplomatic, economic and military control over this strategic border land.

The fact that China does not have ground troops operating in South Vietnam, and the fact that private U.S. commercial interests in Indochina are negligible (only about \$6 million in permanent investments), do not lessen the intensity of the conflict.

Similarly, in this international game of power politics, it is academic to argue over whether the Viet Cong is supported or dominated by Hanoi, or Hanoi by Peking. A victory by the Viet Cong would be a victory for Ho Chi Minh and a victory for Mao Tse-tung and Lin Piao.

It would prove the historical inevitability of the Victory of People's War, i.e. revolutionary war against the bourgeois nations, and restore to China her long-lost initiative as the dominant political force in Asia. It would make her a winner.

And it would make the United States the biggest loser in Asian history. It would be a stunning setback to 'capitalist' as opposed to 'socialist' technology. It would demonstrate the failure of Western-type political, economic, and social institutions in Asia. It would allow Mao to write Chinese characters on the wall. Losers don't last.

from France, has been leaning closer and closer to Peking. Observers in Saigon feel the National Liberation Front uses Phnom Penh as a major base for its activities in South Vietnam, and the American military seems increasingly inclined to treat Cambodian territory as an extension of Viet Cong controlled areas. Still, the official line from Prince Sihanouk is strict neutrality, and U.S. diplomats tread as lightly as possible on Cambodian toes.

Laos seems up for grabs, if anybody really wanted it. The Viet

## Centennial "Comes"

by Sex Fiend

Wake up, Canada, it's your birthday!

From April 28 to October 27, seven days a week, Montreal will host Expo '67 the only first category exhibition ever authorized in the Americas by the International Exhibitions Bureau. One part of Expo is the World Festival, a program of the performing arts, spectaculars, sports and folkloric entertainment from six continents.

In the Place Des Nations plaza 8,000 spectators will see seventy countries exhibit displays of their national life. Each country will sponsor an extravaganza of entertainment on its 'National Day'.

From January to December, Festival Canada will bring local, Canadian, and international talent to perform throughout the nation. The Festival has three main components:

--Festival Canada on Tour will feature sixteen theatrical, philharmonic, and ballet companies in sixty cities in all ten provinces and the Northwest Territories.

--Festival Canada at Home will present regional and amateur entertainment as well as competitions in folk arts, music, and theatre. It will be financed by special grants for special centennial performances in the home localities.

--Festival Canada Grants will commission 40 works from Canadian composers and 20 new plays and musicals to be pre-

miered during 1967.

The Confederation Train and eight motorized caravans will bring mobile displays of Canadiana to nearly every community in the country. The train will visit 80 major centres, and the caravans carrying the same displays will go to more than 700 centres.

National athletic events are still in the planning stages. On schedule are the Pan American Games in Winnipeg, the Canadian Winter Games in Quebec, Centenary Mountain Climbing in the Rockies and Laurentians, the Winter Centennial Olympiad in Alberta, and championship competitions in every major city.

Young people between the ages of 15 and 17 who are selected through the provincial departments of education will travel to the distant reaches of the country.

Hardy courriers des bois will trace the 2000 miles of portage, lakes, and rivers travelled by the voyageurs from the fur-trading frontiers to Montreal.

Centennial seminars sponsored by the Canadian Historical Association will be held August 20-26 at five Canadian universities - Victoria, Saskatchewan, Laurentian, Laval, and Memorial.

As impressive as these federal and provincial projects seem, they are not to be the backbone of the Centennial explosion. According to the Centennial Commission, the key to success lies with the festivals and carnivals financed by the villages, towns, and cities.