

The Rift Widens: Sino-Soviet Competition in the Underdeveloped Areas

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In the years 1965-1966 we are seeing the breach between the Soviet Union and the Chinese People's Republic widen to the point where it seems irreparable. The Chinese have reached the point of claiming that the Soviet Union is secretly co-operating with the United States on such international problems as Vietnam, the India-Pakistan dispute, and Japan, with the Soviet Union completely conforming "with the requirements of U.S. imperialism, and especially with the latter's policy of encircling China." This is a complete circle from the Chinese position up to 1955 which was that China belonged to the side of "the anti-imperial front headed by the Soviet Union. . . ." Much of the competition between the two Communist giants is taking place in the underdeveloped areas of the world.

At the Twentieth Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1956 a decision was arrived at to seek to win over the newly emerging nations by means of economic aid and through encouragement of the development of united fronts formed from Communist and other anti-imperialist groups. This was an attempt to counteract the claim of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) made in 1949 that the successful revolution in China was to be the example for all colonial and semi-colonial nations. Mao Tse-tung proclaimed that the pattern of the Soviet Union applied only to revolutions in the technologically advanced nations of Europe and North America. In 1954 Chou En-lai proclaimed the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence with India and Burma, and in 1955 with the Afro-Asian nations meeting at the Bandung Conference in Indonesia.¹ From this point on the competition

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¹The Five Principles are: (1) mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty; (2) mutual nonaggression; (3) mutual noninterference.

began in earnest and has become increasingly intense to the present time.

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF COMMUNIST CHINA

In order to understand the conflict we must understand why each of the participants has become so involved—at times in areas geographically far removed, such as Africa and Latin America.

Professor George T. Yu has put forth the thesis that China has four basic foreign policy goals.² These are (1) to gain international recognition as the sole legitimate government of China; (2) to view the underdeveloped area as an important "battlefield" where indirect assaults can be made against the United States, the main enemy of China; (3) to break out of isolation and form new allies for support in the battles both against the United States and for control of the international Communist movement; and (4) to build and maintain leadership against colonialism, neo-colonialism, and imperialism in the African-Asian-Latin American world.

The Afro-Asian neutrals such as India, Indonesia, and Ghana apparently accepted the Five Principles partly to ward off the enmity of Red China and charges of being colonialist puppets of the West. In so doing, however, they opened up their countries to the "popular diplomacy" of China. This brand of diplomacy has three basic themes: self-determination, self-reliance, and Asian-African unity.³

Self-determination not only means independence for a particular nation, but independence of all territories still under colonial rule. This has particular appeal in Africa, even though only a handful of areas remain under European control and more than forty African states have gained independence in the recent past. The second theme, self-reliance, encourages breaking of all social, political, and economic ties with the West and

in each other's internal affairs; (4) equality and mutual benefit; and (5) peaceful coexistence.

It is interesting that China condemns the Soviet Union proclamations of peaceful coexistence as being anti-revolutionary on the basis that they are with the imperialist powers and can never be on the basis of respect, equality, and mutual benefit, given the aggressive nature of capitalism.

²George T. Yu, "Sino-African Relations: A Survey," *Asian Survey* V (July 1965), 321-332.

³*Ibid.*, p. 322. See also R. G. Boyd, *Communist China's Foreign Policy* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962), 110-11.

becoming one's own master. The Chinese point to themselves as the prime successful example of such a policy. The third theme, unity among the former colonial and semi-colonial states, finds its basis in mutual experience in subjugation to and exploitation by the European and American "imperialists." The claim is that the underdeveloped peoples are still subjected to threats and interference from the imperialists and must, therefore, unite and cooperate to oppose external interference and safeguard their national independence. Although Dr. Yu's thesis relates primarily to African-Asian relations, the Chinese definitely include Latin America in their schemes, as indicated by the following Chinese declaration:

Many Latin American countries are independent countries but U.S. monopoly capital controls their economics and reduces them virtually to the status of semi-colonies. The U.S. monopoly organizations, like the United Fruit Company (called the "Green Devil" by the Latin American peoples) and its like, form a sort of "state within a state" in quite a few Latin American countries.⁴

On the basis of the Five Principles, Communist China has signed a whole series of treaties of friendship and mutual non-aggression with her Asian neighbors and a number of trade agreements outside Asia. This is in sharp contrast to her call for a continuation of the thesis that wars within and between the imperialist states and between them and the socialist states are inevitable. The Chinese further attack the Soviet Union for failing to stress that no socialist state can arise without revolution from within. The Chinese justify this seemingly contradictory stand on the basis of "just" and "unjust" wars. "'Just' wars are those which are the revolutionary struggles of the proletariat and working people of all countries," the "liberation struggles of the oppressed nations," and the "struggles of all peace-loving people and countries." Wars which have been on this basis, they argue, have not led to world war, and when they have been victorious, they have weakened "the forces of imperialism," and actually defended "world peace."⁵ All other wars are unjust.

⁴Kuo Chi-chou, "Hail the Great Victories of the National Liberation Movement," *Peking Review*, V (Jan. 5, 1962), 11-13, 16.

⁵John Wilson Lewis, *Major Doctrines of Communist China* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1964), 258-59.

THE FOREIGN POLICY OF THE SOVIET UNION

The policy of the Soviet Union toward the underdeveloped world begins at the same point as that of the Communist Chinese—the idea of peaceful coexistence. In Khrushchev's speech to the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU in 1956, even the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence of Communist China were praised as having been successfully used throughout the world. The divergency was shown in that Khrushchev preached the new doctrine that war and revolution were no longer necessary because the historical situation had changed radically since Lenin's original analysis of the "objective conditions." Khrushchev said: "The forces of socialism and democracy have grown immeasurably throughout the world, and capitalism has become much weaker."⁶ Therefore, he concludes, a peaceful changeover to communism is possible.

The Moscow Declaration of 1957, signed by both the USSR and Communist China, was very careful to include in the camp of peace, along with the "socialist" countries, "the peace-loving countries of Asia and Africa," "the liberation movement of the peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies," "the peoples of the European countries who proclaimed neutrality," and "the peoples of Latin America"—all as the powerful forces for the cause of peace against the militaristic imperialists rallying around the reactionary United States.⁷

The policy of economic aid and cultural relations with the developing countries was to be on the basis of equality, mutual benefit, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. This policy of assistance, however, was intended to achieve the international ends of the Soviet Union. Replying to oblique Chinese attacks that the USSR was actually cooperating with the West to protect colonialism and to suppress national liberation wars,⁸ the Soviet spokesman said:

But we have a broader understanding of the international duty of our socialist country—we understand it as rendering assistance to those liberated peoples, too, who are not included in the world system of socialism all-round, disin-

⁶The entire speech can be found in G. F. Hudson, Richard Lowenthal, and Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Sino-Soviet Dispute* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1961), 42-46.

⁷Full text in *ibid.*, 46-56.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 88.

terested assistance in strengthening their political and economic independence is the foundation of our relations with the newly-created states. Of course, we do not impose assistance on anyone, but we help when we are asked to do so.

The road to the consolidation of the independence of the liberated countries is the road of developing their national economy, promoting the advance of their culture, and improving the living standards of the people. . . . Understanding this, the Soviet Union is accordingly developing its economic cooperation with them.

A basic drawback in Soviet policy, however, is that the bloc always comes first. She seeks self-sufficiency in the brotherhood of Socialist nations—all centered on the Soviet economy. Thus the developing nations are expected to add to the Soviet economy, even if it means slower industrialization.⁹

We can see, then, that both the Soviet Union and Communist China have as a basic aim of their foreign policy to attempt to influence the neutralist underdeveloped countries. They have each attacked the other for the way the policies are being carried out, and, as we shall see, have competed vigorously in some countries for dominant influence. For the purpose of analysis a brief survey of the competition on each of the three continents of Latin America, Africa, and Asia will be presented.

LATIN AMERICA

Communist China has practiced a two-headed policy in Latin America. The first is that of seeking to expand trade and cultural relations with the established nations. The vehicle for pushing this program is the Chinese Council for the Promotion of Foreign Trade, which sets up exhibits of Chinese Communist goods. For example, from December 1963 to January 1964, a Chinese Commercial Exhibition was presented in Mexico City. During the exhibition China announced the purchase of \$28 million worth of Mexican cotton. A short time later Mexico agreed to sell 450,000 tons of wheat to China, worth \$30 million. Similar exhibitions and sales have been announced in other Latin American countries. Argentina has announced

⁹Stanley J. Zyzniewski, "Soviet Foreign Economic Policy," *Political Science Quarterly*, LXXIII (June 1958), 206-33. This policy has had repercussion in the Eastern European bloc as Rumania and Poland have increasingly made efforts to build their own economy rather than provide food and raw materials to the other members of the bloc who are expanding their industrial base.

sale of wheat worth \$50 million and expects also to sell meat. Chile is selling nitrates and has even talked of having China build nitrate factories in Chile toward fulfilling a proposed sale of one million tons.¹⁰

These trade agreements all favor Latin America because they are cash or trade deals with the balance of trade in their favor. China's advantage is to obtain new markets.

The second policy of China in Latin America relates to political goals. China encourages anti-Americanism and the establishment of national liberation fronts, with the local Communist party as the vanguard directing the revolution. Although Cuba serves as the recent prototype, China cites her own experiences as the ultimate pattern. To carry out this policy China tries to build fraternal ties with the indigenous Communist parties, but she has had only limited success. The Brazilian Communist Party has had close affiliation with China, and some pro-Peking factions are quite active in Colombia, Argentina, and Peru. One means of influencing the local communists has been to take them to China for training and then "seeding" them back into the movement.

The Chinese try to reach the masses through ten hours of Spanish broadcasts daily and a few hours in Portuguese. The *Peking Review* and *China Reconstructs* are both printed in Spanish and distributed in Latin America. The articles in *Peking Review* are not only anti-United States but are also anti-Soviet.

Soviet policy in Latin America has been along the lines of peaceful coexistence. The official prognosis in 1956 was that due to U.S. neo-colonialism the revolutionary potential in Latin America was nil. The Monroe Doctrine made the area only a tertiary target of Soviet foreign policy. They even abandoned hope of penetrating labor unions and of establishing inter-Latin American labor union popular fronts. The most that was hoped for was that the weak Communist parties would seek to establish broad popular fronts and participate in elections.¹¹ This was the same advice given the Chinese Communists in 1923 relative to the Nationalist coalition led by Sun Yat-sen. The

¹⁰Daniel Tretiak, "Latin America: the Chinese Drive," *Contemporary Review*, CCV (Nov. 1964), 571-76.

¹¹David T. Cattrell, "Soviet Policies in Latin America," *Current History*, XLVII (Nov. 1964), 286-87.

alliance most successful in Latin America has been the Popular Front in Chile, which the Socialists dominate.

The Soviet Union has decided since Castro, and with the increased Chinese activity, that Latin-American nations are in the midst of radical changes, and she seeks to influence them as much as possible. She is seeking expanded trade relations, on the basis that economic progress must precede socialism. On the problem of revolution, Russia agreed at the Latin-American, African, Asian Conference held in Havana in January 1966 to give "all-round assistance" to the national liberation fronts in the Western hemisphere.¹² It remains to be seen whether this was to undermine China's influence among the delegates or actually will be carried out. The Soviets also increased their Spanish broadcasts to 45.5 hours weekly plus 17.5 hours of Portuguese to counteract the Chinese propaganda.

Cuba, as the only Communist nation in Latin America, deserves special mention. Castro has not been an enigma only to the United States; both the Soviet Union and Communist China have found him an uneasy ally. China has consistently used Cuba as the ultimate example for all other Latin-American countries. Castro himself seemed to be parroting Chinese policy by training leaders for and encouraging uprisings throughout the continent. Ernesto "Che" Guevara, Castro's leading theoretician (until his recent disappearance) was an advocate of the Chinese line. When the Soviet Union began criticizing China for deviation, Cuba steadfastly refused to break either government or party relations. This was to change, however.

Apparently Castro realized that despite his ideological affinity to China, Cuba's economic survival would ultimately depend on the Soviet Union. He knew that the Soviet Union would have to acknowledge his revolution as being successful and that his fiery image had great influence among all leftists in Latin America. Thus the Soviet Union which had criticized Chinese "adventurism" in the hemisphere had to tacitly acknowledge the validity of Castro's similar tactics. The Soviet Union weighed the demands of Castro that Cuba be recognized

¹²*New York Times*, Feb. 6, 1966. The Communist Chinese were quite upset at the Soviet presence in this conference because they wanted to dominate it. The Soviet Union is trying to be invited to the African-Asian Conference as well (if Algeria ever settles down sufficiently to call it), which China also vigorously opposes.

as taking its own path to socialism¹³ and that Cuba be given predominant influence in training revolutionaries for Latin America (with Soviet material support). The advantage to the Russians would be a check of sorts on the United States (which failed to materialize with their defeat in the missile crisis). The disadvantage might be the inability to control the ebullient Castro and the need to change her official policy away from peaceful coexistence. As late as February 1962, in the Second Havana Declaration, Castro still called for the maximum use of force.

The Soviet Union had sent Anastas Mikoyan to Cuba in February 1960 to begin economic and political cooperation, but it was not until the spring of 1962, in conjunction with the decision to place missiles in Cuba, that Cuba was accepted into Communist brotherhood. In March 1963 orders came from Moscow to Castro via Luis Carlos Prestes, a Brazilian Communist, that armed struggle in Brazil would not constitute the best support for Cuba because it would alienate the masses. Furthermore, he said, "it is possible [to achieve a change of classes in power] in certain countries of Latin America, in present conditions, without civil strife and without armed insurrection."¹⁴

Castro was summoned to Moscow on April 27, 1963, and remained until June. Although he still resisted attacks on China, in his marathon speech in Havana on his return he extolled the virtues of Khrushchev and the military and economic might of Russia. After his visit to Moscow again in January 1964 Castro agreed to cooperate in the Socialist economy, i.e., Cuba would continue in its one-crop economy in return for Soviet bloc material goods.

By January, 1966, Russia was buying Cuban sugar at six cents a pound (world market at two cents) and in return Castro has been anti-Chinese and Guevara has vanished.¹⁵

¹³Under Leninist theory there must be two stages in a revolution—from semi-feudalism to bourgeois nationalism and thence to socialism. Maoist theory (because it happened this way) was that the two stages could be combined into one continuing stage led by the Communists. Castro preferred the latter because the Batista regime had generally been considered semi-feudal and a second stage revolution would necessarily oust Castro.

¹⁴Theodore Draper, "Castro, Khrushchev, and Mao," *The Reporter*, XXIX (August 15, 1963), 28. The Chinese continued to support armed struggle. See *Peking Review*, No. 2, January 10, 1964, p. 18.

¹⁵It is interesting to recall that the United States was "imperialist" for the identical policy towards Cuba.

China reacted to the deal by announcing on January 2, 1966, that it was cutting its trade with Cuba by \$80 million—leaving Cuba with sugar surpluses and great shortages of rice, the Cuban staple. Castro retaliated by accusing China of being “imperialist” and having “contempt for and underestimation of smaller peoples.”¹⁶

AFRICA

The Communist Chinese record in Africa is quite extensive, beginning as early as 1949, with their moral support of the Arabs in North Africa against Israel. This paid off in early diplomatic recognition by the United Arab Republic, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. Of these, only Algeria has maintained a semblance of sympathy toward China.

They have supported the causes of revolution throughout Africa since this first effort. An example is the support of Piere Mulele in the Kwilu region of the Congo, a Peking-trained revolutionary who follows Maoist principles in complete detail.¹⁷

The two-headedness of China's policy again is shown by the great attention paid to advancing trade and cultural relations in Africa. With the independence of so many African states, this was to be expected. The normal treatment is that accorded Ghana. Diplomats were exchanged on March 26, 1961. Kwame Nkrumah then visited Peking in August, receiving a tremendous public welcome. This was followed with the conclusion of a variety of agreements, including a ten year friendship treaty based on the “five principles of Bandung,” a 20-year economic and technical cooperation agreement, which included a five-year \$19.6 million credit and dispatch of Chinese industrial and technical experts, training of Ghanians in China, and Chinese construction of textile mills in Ghana, plus a five year trade and payments agreement. The Chinese technicians who went to Ghana lived and worked with the peasants, teaching them simple cultivation and labor intensive techniques. This was capped off with a visit by Premier Chou En-lai as part of his

¹⁶See *New York Times*, January 3, 1966, January 10, 1966, and February 6, 1966.

¹⁷Robert A. Scalapino, “Sino-Soviet Competition in Africa,” *Foreign Affairs*, XLII (July, 1964), 641-54.

African tour in January 1964.¹⁸ The same treatment was accorded Guinea, Mali, Somalia, Kenya, Algeria, and others as they achieved independence. As in Latin America, the China News Agency then entered the scene, along with radio broadcasts and film distribution.

Surprisingly, China still continues trade relations with South Africa. She has publicly declared a cessation of trade three times, but each time national interest requirements made it unwise to follow through. China simultaneously supports the South African underground movement, especially in the training and "seeding" of revolutionary leaders.

The Soviet Union has had a traditional policy of support of the national fronts. She has had various programs for expanding her influence such as "seeding" of trained leaders, subsidization of sympathetic journalists, scholarship programs, and large scale economic aid.

The African nations are more prone to accept the Soviet Union because of greater proximity, greater prestige, and greater capacity to aid. Soviet aid is more than twice Chinese aid, as the following figures show. Russian aid and credits to Algeria were \$100 million compared with China's \$50 million. Other figures were: Somalia, \$44 million versus \$20 million; Ghana, \$81 million versus \$20 million; Mali, \$55 million versus \$19.6 million; and Guinea, \$80 million versus \$24 million. When one adds Eastern European contributions, the gap in favor of the Soviet Union widens. In numbers of students being trained, there are 600-1000 each from the various African nations in Soviet bloc countries compared to only 5-10 in China. In neither area has the program proven satisfactory, with few good students going and few returning happy with the experience.¹⁹

The Sino-Soviet competition in Africa is extremely strong, with the Russians sometimes being quite defensive of their program. When Chou En-lai arrived in Mali in 1964, he found Soviet leaflets entitled "Friends and Comrades in Africa" being distributed among the crowd. It accused the Chinese of disruption of "proletarian internationalism" and of using Africa for selfish ends. It naturally played up the great amounts of Russian aid, which has included myriads of projects from the Aswan

¹⁸Jan S. Prybyla, "Communist China's Economic Relations with Africa 1960-1964," *Asian Survey*, IV (November, 1964), 1135-43.

¹⁹Scalapino, *op. cit.*

Dam down. One problem of Soviet assistance is that it is so massive an entire economy depends on it, and any failure of the economy can be blamed on Russia. This could never be the case with the relatively miniscule Chinese aid. The recipient nations, too, can find themselves in a Russian strait-jacket by becoming overly dependent. This is true even though the U.N. Representative, Nikolai Federenko, declared non-interference in internal affairs.

We consider, on our part, that no one—not one country—has the right to interfere in the affairs of other countries and that every people has the fullest right to determine by itself its own policies and future.²⁰

In Africa, as in Latin America, the Soviet Union is coming out on top in the dispute. Whereas China demands the development of African-Asian groups, exclusive of the USSR, the African states themselves favor the Yugoslav-India brand of non-alignment. China seeks turmoil, while the Africans seek stability and economic progress. China inevitably loses because it is the master teacher in warfare but lacks the funds to support development, particularly long-range development.

In January 1966 Egypt took China to task for opposition to the India-Pakistan accord at Tashkent, for opposing Soviet participation in conferences, for giving money to eleven Communists on trial in Egypt, for attempting to establish the "People's Republic of Egypt," and for failing to live up to promises of economic and scientific assistance—including a Chinese refusal to share technical information with Egyptian atomic scientists, while simultaneously demanding the right for Chinese experts to visit the UAR's only atomic reactor, one built by the Soviet Union.²¹

ASIA

China holds the upper hand only in Asia. The Vietnamese war is the result of China's encouragement of wars of liberation. The Communist party forms the core of the National Liberation Front there. The Chinese Committee for African-Asian Solidarity has the function of training revolutionaries and sending

²⁰Nikolai Federenko, "The Soviet Union and African Countries," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, CCCLIV (July, 1964), 1-8.

²¹*New York Times*, January 31, 1966.

them back to rebel against "imperialism." The apparent targets include the Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand.²² In a warning to North Vietnam, the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee in its ideological journal said that the struggle with the United States could not be won unless cooperation with the Soviet Union ceased. Moscow's aid, they said, only helped the Johnson administration to "realize its peace plots." "Only by drawing a clear-cut line of demarcation between oneself and the Khrushchev revisionists and by carrying the struggle against Khrushchev revisionism through to the end can one wage a successful struggle against U.S. imperialism."²³

In the areas of peaceful coexistence, China has fair relations with Burma, Nepal, Cambodia, and Ceylon, two of which are royalist governments. She carries on trade and has various friendship treaties with these nations.²⁴

The Soviet Union is fighting to maintain some influence in North Vietnam and North Korea and gives massive aid to India, the enemy of China. Aid to Burma resulted in bad feelings as the bartered goods were so inferior they were unusable in some instances.

The interesting case in Asia is Indonesia where China has given massive support to the Indonesian Communist party, which Sukarno has used to balance the military. The military, however, was rearmed largely with Russian aid. Liu Shao-Chi, the Chairman of the Chinese People's Republic, was a great success when he visited Indonesia and has kept the Communist party there on the Chinese side. The army recently overthrew the Communists in government and outlawed the party. Sukarno was subdued for awhile and then fired General Nasution from the new cabinet, leaving the entire issue aflame. Whatever happens, the use of Russian guns against Chinese supporters, as in India, can only exacerbate the Sino-Soviet dispute.

We can see through these cases the reasons for the conflict: first, the struggle for leadership of world Communism, and second, the confrontation of the Soviet policies of "solidarity of socialist states" and peaceful coexistence in the form of united fronts with the Chinese policies of encouragement of economies

²²*Ibid.*, January 14, 1966.

²³*Ibid.*, February 11, 1966.

²⁴C. P. Fitzgerald, "The Sino-Soviet Balance Sheet in the Underdeveloped Areas," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, CCCLI (January, 1964), 40-49.

independent of the Soviet Union and establishment of national liberation fronts in guerrilla warfare. The Chinese desire to lead a colored versus white coalition and the Russians seek to lead a monolithic socialist bloc while influencing the developing countries.

Both of the contestants are experiencing some successes and some difficulties. Both have advantages in the areas of nearest proximity. It is clear, though, that the dispute is too deep-seated to allow for any immediate resolution. It should also be clear that skillful Western diplomacy and maneuvering could leave both of them floundering if the Latin American, African, and Asian nations could see that genuine interest and assistance were forthcoming without the stigma of being imperialistic designs, as each of the Communist giants has so conveniently tagged the other's policies in this area of their conflict.



COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBERSHIP AND POSITIONS IN THE COMMUNIST WORLD*

Country or Area	Communist Party Membership	Sino-Soviet Dispute
Albania	53,000	Pro-Chinese
Bulgaria	528,674	Pro-Soviet
China (Communist)	18,000,000	
Czechoslovakia	1,676,509	Pro-Soviet
Germany, East	1,610,679	Pro-Soviet
Hungary	520,000	Pro-Soviet
Korea (North)	1,300,000	Pro-Chinese
Mongolia, Outer	46,000	Pro-Soviet
Poland	1,614,237	Pro-Soviet
Rumania	1,240,000	Neutral
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	12,000,000	
Vietnam, North	570,000	Pro-Chinese
Yugoslavia	1,030,041	Pro-Soviet

*SOURCE: House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs, Sub-Committee on the Far East and the Pacific. *Sino-Soviet Conflict*, Report on Sino-Soviet Conflict and Its Implications (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1965), pp. 17R-19R.