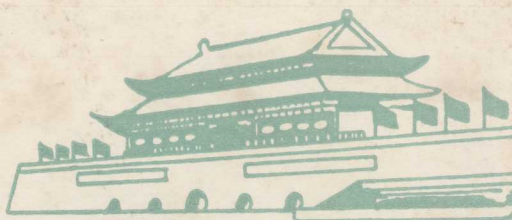


NUMBERS 11—20



Letters from China

by Anna Louise Strong

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*Extra Issue A**

DELEGATES RETURNING FROM MOSCOW MET BY MAO

July 30, 1963

Dear friends,

Peking July 26. When the delegates of the Chinese Communist Party returned to Peking from that Bilateral Conference in Moscow which the West said "failed", they were met at the airport by one of the biggest ovations ever seen there. From Mao Tse-tung down, every top leader of government, party, trade-union and social organization came out, a total of 5,000 people, with bands and banners.

Mao seldom appears in public; this is the first time he has been seen at the airport since he went in 1961 to welcome Premier Chou En-lai back from that 22nd Congress of the CPSU where Chou took exception to Khrushchov's attack on Albania. Mao went informally to the plane-side to shake hands with the delegates as they came down the steps, then he shook hands also with all members of the plane's crew, who were Soviet citizens. Then he circulated informally in the crowd, exchanging greetings, amid drums and cymbals and cheers.

* Two extras were done by mimeograph in the summer vacation.

It was as if they celebrated a triumph. They did. Its nature may be deduced from the presence at the airport of the Embassy representatives from every Socialist nation from the U.S.S.R. right down to Cuba, including all the East European states as well as the three small Asian states — Mongolia, Korea, Viet Nam — that border China. It was further made plain in the banners which proclaimed:

“Long live the Great Unity of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. and China!

“Long live the Great Unity of the Socialist Camp and the international Communist movement!

“Persevere in principle, eliminate differences, strengthen unity and wage common struggle against the enemy!

“Persevere in defense of world peace!”

The joint communique released simultaneously by Moscow and Peking said merely that “the delegations had set forth their views . . . on important questions of principle” and “had recessed until a later date to be mutually arranged”. The AP caustically remarked: “It seems that the two sides did nothing but read lectures at each other.” Quite true! BUT —

- 1) This is the first time in 46 years that the Soviet Party has listened to a lecture on ^{principle} doctrine and behaviour from another Communist Party on a basis of equality! This opens the way to basic criticism within the Socialist camp, without splitting the Socialist states. It means much for the world!
- 2) This is the first time that the Soviet people have been allowed to read a long document presenting China's views — that June 14th “proposal for a

general line for the international Communist movement". This is the first time they learn that a gulf exists. The first step to understanding is to know the position of the other side! This is the step that has been taken.

That it was taken with anger and acrimony on the part of Khrushchov was obvious from the expulsion of Chinese Embassy personnel for circulating the Chinese "Proposal" in their line of duty, from the provocative smashing of the glass case outside the Chinese Embassy that displayed news-photos, and from the "Open Letter" sent out July 14 by the CPSU to all its members, filled with greater invectives against China than had been used in Moscow before. But now even the virulence of the "Open Letter" has a positive side. With every epithet against China, true or false, the CPSU makes clear to the Soviet people the extent of the gulf, whose existence they had not been allowed to know.

So, however angry Khrushchov may have been — and the West reported him "in a rage" at the Kadar reception, though he came up with smiles at the farewell reception to the Chinese—he did not break state relations. He broke relations with Albania in 1961 for a lesser difference; he broke economic relations with China in 1960 in the withdrawal of experts and cancellation of contracts; but when it came to breaking diplomatic relations with China, this was beyond his power. The Soviet people may follow him in much and may be ignorant of much. He may possibly convince them that China is wrong or even crazy. But unless China breaks with them, which China certainly will not do, he **cannot convince them that the U.S.S.R. should break with China.**

They recall too well the great relief when the long "capitalist encirclement" was ended by the Chinese revolution, and the long border, on which Washington had planned to install anti-Soviet bases to bomb the U.S.S.R., became the border of an Ally.

So the net result of the Bilateral Conference is: ideological criticism will continue, but state relations will not break. **Criticism within unity** is a triumph for the entire Socialist Camp and for its survival and progress.

Let the world's Communist Parties, now expelling members, learn!

* * *

Meantime China has published very widely the "Open Letter" of the Soviet Party to its members, July 14, which is a long detailed attack against China but which the spokesman of the Chinese Party urges everyone to read and study carefully "as a negative example". It filled three pages of the *People's Daily* July 24, and was prefaced by a short "editorial note" in an ironic vein with few adjectives.

The "Open Letter", says the editor, is "full of distortions of fact" of which 70 to 80 may be found, but only a few will be mentioned now.

The first "distortion" noted is the claim by the Soviet Party that "the Chinese Party would have no scruples about attaining socialism through a third world war at the cost of hundreds of millions of lives". This "charge of bellicosity", says the editor, "is completely false. The Chinese Party has always held that world war and nuclear war can be prevented through the joint struggles of the people of the world."

Examples are given, beginning with Mao's statement in Dec. 1947 in an official report, to the effect that "together with all the democratic forces of the world . . . we can surely prevent . . . the outbreak of a third world war". Ten years later this confidence had grown and become more specific. In 1957, in Moscow, Mao Tse-tung listed ten events by which the "forces of socialism and peace have become stronger than the forces of imperialism and war" and "would be able to prevent world war".

The second "distortion" is the accusation that China "has made a 180 degree turn on the question of the denunciation of Stalin by the 20th Congress of the CPSU". "Nobody knows better than the CPSU that this is not the case," states the editor, for China had many times told the CPSU immediately after the 20th Congress, stating its view that "the Soviet leaders were in error in failing to make an all-round evaluation of Stalin". The Chinese Party made such an evaluation in its editorial "On Historical Experiences of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", but in the interests of solidarity did not publish its direct criticism of the 20th Congress of the CPSU. The CPSU well knew the position of the Chinese Party. (This is a calm but deadly charge.)

The third "distortion" concerns the charge that China was the first to "extend ideological differences into state relations". The fact is that "on July 16, 1960, the Soviet side suddenly notified China of its decision to withdraw all the 1,300 and more Soviet experts within a month, to scrap the hundreds of agreements and contracts it had signed and to discontinue supplies of many important items of equipment and materials. This inflicted incalculable difficulties and losses on **China's economy, na-**

tional defense and scientific research and was the main reason for the reduction of economic and commercial links between China and the Soviet Union. China was the victim yet now the CPSU blames China for 'reducing the economic and commercial links' and 'expanding ideological differences into the sphere of state relations'. This is an amazing reversal of fact".

These editorial comments are made with a terse restraint which a British diplomat might envy. But if that "Open Letter" issued by the CPSU to its members has indeed 70 to 80 "distortions of fact" of this kind, and if the *People's Daily* intends to release them on appropriate occasion, then a recent comment by the *Washington Post* seems apt: "Mr. Khrushchov will learn, as we Americans did, that it is easier to get into a discussion with the Chinese than to get out of one."

However sharp the discussion, the aim is unity. This was blazoned on the banners which in Peking greeted the returning delegates:

Long Live the Great Unity of the Socialist Camp and the International Communist Movement!

Anna Louise Strong

Extra Issue B

CHINESE STUDENTS, HELD IN USSR, BACK IN PEKING

September 20, 1963

Dear friends,

That trainload of Chinese students which was held 52 hours by Soviet troops and then deported, at last got back to Peking, after Moscow had flooded world headlines with charges of their alleged "outrages", such as "smuggling forbidden literature", "imprisoning two customs guards in a compartment five hours" and "committing sanitary violations in the station". At last we have the chance to hear the students speak.

They report that their Peking-Moscow express, with Chinese crew of 19 plus 73 Chinese passengers, mostly students returning for their winter term in the U.S.S.R., reached Naushki, the Soviet customs, at 4.17 p.m. on the 7th. The trouble came over **eleven copies** of a *Hsinhua News Release* which four students and eight crew members had brought for train reading. It contained the Chinese Government's Sept. 1st statement on the Soviet Government's Aug. 21 statement on the Test Ban. The Soviet officials tore up three copies and seized the other

eight. The Chinese demanded their literature, saying they had a right to have and read official news. The train chiefs went to the station authorities to argue; the students argued in the train. They laugh at the "silly lie" that they held any guards "prisoner"; the guards were armed, the students not.

All non-Chinese passengers meanwhile were transferred to a Soviet express. Hundreds of Soviet troops then surrounded the station and cordoned off the Chinese train. Forty-two students were confined in the customs room for over 20 hours without water, food, warm clothing or freedom of movement or chairs to sit on. A large number of troops manhandled them, including forming a circle around them, locking arms and tightening the circle to crush the Chinese. Some of the troops seemed not to want to do this, but a lieutenant colonel shouted orders. Thirty students were made ill, some with high fever, while seven had bruises and sprains. (The cause of any "sanitary violation" seems clear.) After 52 hours detention, the train with all the 92 Chinese was deported, under armed troops in all corridors.

This is the most serious incident so far but not the only one. Five Chinese army captains, returning by another train to study in a Soviet military academy, were also deported for possessing Chinese Government literature. Earlier, some Chinese Embassy personnel were deported from Moscow, and the entire *Hsinhua News Agency* in Prague was deported for circulating Chinese statements, its cable leases Peking-Prague and Prague-Havana being arbitrarily cancelled, breaking China's main news-

connections with Europe and Latin America. It is sad to see such actions in Khrushchov's war on China's ideas. Soviet correspondents in China send cables without censor and hand out any documents they please.

Yours,

Anna Louise Strong

Letter Number II

GOLDEN AUTUMN IN CHINA

October 25, 1963

Dear friends,

As China swings into its long, golden autumn, the main concerns are these:

1) More than **2,000 foreign visitors** from 80 countries came for the October holidays, the largest number ever. The economy continues upward, with food especially abundant.

2) All hearts turn towards **Cuba's great hurricane disaster**. 9,059 tons of rice, first instalment in some \$30,000,000 worth of emergency relief, reaches Cuban port within two weeks!

3) **Ideological discussion** continues, settles into series of basic pamphlets. Nobody expects it to rupture state relations. (See Chou En-lai's interview, page 22.)

Cautious optimism earlier this year grew into calm confidence in the overall economic and political situation as the Chinese People's Republic entered its 15th year. The cheerful absence of tension was so marked that it surprised the more than 2,000 visitors from over 80 countries plus the 1,000 Overseas Chinese who came to the Oct. 1st National Day celebrations, the largest attendance China has ever had.

A typical first comment by visitors from Britain and West Europe was: "But the two greatest powers on earth are attacking China; how can Peking be so peacefully unworried." A typical action of visitors from Moscow and East Europe was to come loaded with two weeks' bread ration, fearing to be hungry in China; they then dumped the stale bread into the hotel trash and went home with baskets of apples and sausages. Visitors from Africa, Asia, Latin America, Australasia hastened around to see the sights.

Nothing seems more ludicrous here than the quaint American notion that China is "isolated" from the world. I shall discuss below the danger such misconceptions present. That old stand-by *Time*, in a long piece in September called "The Arrogant Outcast", stressed the impossibility of getting information from this "most impenetrable closed-in area", and built its picture of China from five refugees in Hongkong, a Belgian POW from the Korean War who after 13 years went home, an alleged secret army document which fell into Washington's hands and unnamed British industrialists seeking trade. Throwing all this together, *Time* came up with a picture in which any resemblance to China was "purely coincidental".

Yet *Time* could easily have learned that there are 32 registered foreign correspondents in Peking, that *Reuters* and *Agence France Presse* send out thousands of words a month, all uncensored. On National Day, this press corps was augmented by over 100 visiting journalists, including top newspaper editors from around the world.

For me personally the reception for visiting journalists was among the best parties of the year. The resident foreign correspondents and some leading Chinese news-

men met the more than 100 visiting journalists on Sept. 29th, at an informal affair with no speeches except a toast to start the ball rolling. A lavish buffet supper was followed by a program of folk dances and music from different parts of Asia, Africa, Latin America. You sat at any one of a roomful of small round tables and table-hopped whenever you liked.

This time of year in "isolated China" is one of much hospitality to visiting friends; my own routine work was wrecked by three weeks of never-ending parties, banquets and visits. Among foreigners that called at my home were two British economists, seven Australians, a group of Brazilian women, two Indonesian magazine editors, a Chilean, and the American Negro Robert Williams, whose "Voice of Free Dixie" is broadcast from Cuba to his native south in the U.S.A. I took advantage of the presence of visitors to go on one of the specially chartered planes for three days in Yenan.

More than a third of the visitors came to do business. Britain, France, Belgium and the Netherlands all sent trade delegations, some of whom signed contracts before the holidays. Largest and most energetic was the delegation of more than 500 Japanese, representing 600 industries which put on a big exhibition on Oct. 5th, the bulk of it consisting of 5,000 tons of machinery on which the Japanese want orders.

At Chou En-lai's big banquet on the eve of the holiday I sat next to a dark-skinned man from Kenya who proved to be the president of the East African Academy of Sciences, which I didn't know existed. He had been meeting with scientists from 17 countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America and Australasia, as a Preparatory Committee to set up a much larger Scientific Symposium next

August for these areas. These scientists feel that they do not get all the help they need from their colleagues in "imperialist" lands in branches needed to develop their national economy.

The parade of half a million people on Oct. 1st was, as usual, a breath-taking harmony of marching color, largely secured by the thrifty Chinese by millions of tissue paper flowers — red, blue, green, yellow — and tall silken banners of organizations that swept in changing patterns 150 abreast across the great Tien An Men Square, so swiftly that everyone got home for lunch. A tall Brazilian artist standing near me was in rapture: "What color! And they call China a drab monochrome!"

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**PEKING
PRODUCES
OWN
FOOD**

A solid reason for the present joyous mood is the food situation. As direct result of three scarcity years, in which all Chinese cities strove to produce as much food as possible by their own efforts, Peking now produces within her

own enlarged borders practically all the food for her 7.4 million people except for part of the grain.

This emphasis on self-supply is no fetish, but an effort to control the city's food supply efficiently at minimum cost in transport. Tropical fruits like bananas, pineapples, oranges still come from the south, and are balanced by Peking's export of apples, peaches, pears and grapes to other areas. Some grain is more conveniently brought from other areas, balanced in part by export of famous Peking ducks.