

THE UNQUIET FRONTIER

**border tensions in the
Sino-Soviet conflict**

by George N. Patterson



**International Studies Group
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Preface

The summer of 1963 may be remembered by historians as the period in which the point of no return was passed in the conflict between the Soviet Union and Communist China. From that time the dispute ceased to be a campaign to influence Communist Parties and win left-wing converts; it became instead an organized offensive with total victory for one and defeat for the other as the final objective. The charges and counter-charges hurled by the two countries since then have thrown new light on their past relations, and this growing volume of material has become an invaluable source of background information on the Sino-Soviet controversy.

Before the outbreak of verbal hostilities between the two Communist giants, writers on Communist affairs were regarded as a kind of esoteric elite, gifted with an arcane knowledge which enabled them to detect trends and policies where ordinary individuals saw only sickness or human error, dismissals or promotions. The extreme isolation of Communist countries and their highly secret internal manoeuvrings created a situation in which it very often became necessary for an analyst to fall back upon "reading signs", or "inspired guess-work". This is no longer the case. In phrases cautious and tentative at first, later in what Professor Zagoria of Columbia University has called "Aesopian language", and finally in cascades of sheer vituperation, the Communist Parties of the Soviet Union and China have themselves set forth the details and the dimensions of their dispute.

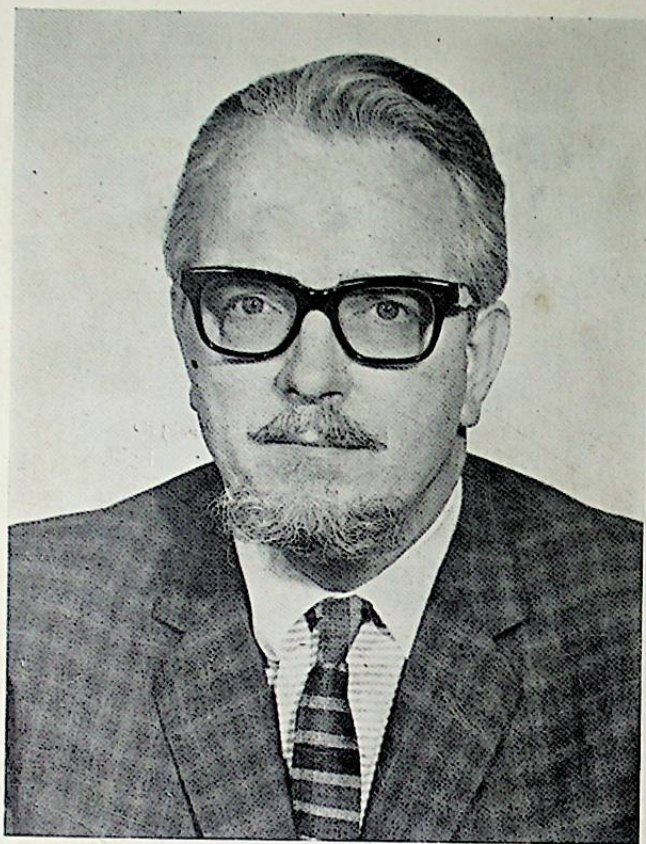
As described in these several inter-Party exchanges, and in the statements of Chinese Communist and Russian leaders, the controversy includes a broad range of problems affecting most relations between the two states. There is first the ideological side of the dispute, involving questions of "de-Stalinization", the possibility of Communist seizure of power by non-violent means, and the controversy centred on the Soviet policy line that war between Communist and non-Communist nations is no longer "fatalistically inevitable". This side of the dispute and the furious epithets hurled back and forth between "dogmatists" and "revisionists", as well as the personal abuse of Russian and Chinese leaders, has captured most headlines in the world press.

But there are other dimensions as well. The Chinese, for example, have accused the Russians of using trade as an exploitative weapon, and of trying to disrupt their economy by the sudden withdrawal of Soviet technical advisers in 1960. And the rest of the world has now learned that, unheralded and unnoticed, a fitful "cold war" situation has existed along the 4,500-mile-long Sino-Soviet frontier since at least 1960. Today, all along this border, from the Sea of Japan to the Pamirs, armed Chinese and Russian troops face each other and not in friendliness. Communist China has signed border agreements with Burma, Nepal, Mongolia, Pakistan and Afghanistan, but not with the USSR. Peking says that there are territorial issues still awaiting settlement with the Soviet Union, just as there are with "running-dog imperialist" India in the Himalayas, with "colonialist" Britain and Portugal in Hong Kong and Macau, and with the "rebel-bandit" Chinese Nationalist Government on Taiwan. Specifically, the Chinese have denounced the Soviet Union for retaining the gains of "unequal treaties" by which Tsarist Russia seized parts

of China in the past. All the lands involved will be reclaimed "when conditions are ripe", Peking has threatened. It is the task of this book to explore this particular facet of the Sino-Soviet dispute, to trace the origins and background of the broader questions between the Soviet Union and Communist China, and to attempt to assess its implications for the rest of the world.

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George N. Patterson, born in Scotland, has been interested in the Sino-Soviet borderlands since first he went to China in 1946. He travelled widely in Tibet from 1947 to 1950, and after the Chinese occupation of that country in 1950, he remained in the Indo-Tibetan border area studying and writing about the Himalayan countries. His other books include **Tibetan Journey**, **God's Fool**, and **Peking versus Dehli**.



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