

Letter to Central Committee of the Communist Party of China

Letter sent to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in order to discuss the Chinese media's coverage of Western Europe.

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Central Committee of the Communist Party of China

Dear Comrades,

The present financial crisis of the capitalist world, and the problems to which it gives rise have made it necessary for us to write you once again. The questions this time are more urgent than those raised in our letter of September last, 1967.

The publishing house of FUTURA wrote a letter recently to comrade Ting Hao, chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China to Denmark, in connection with the publication in the "Bulletin" of the Embassy of an article by Renmin Ribao Commentator of March 23, 1968. Part of the contents of that article seemed to us to be not in conformity with actual facts, and it gave expression to evaluations of the present situation in the western world, to which we cannot agree.

The following point was stressed in that letter, and we want to stress it again:

We are, of course, in complete agreement with the general descriptions, which your publications have been giving (seen by us from Hsinhua News Agency and/or Peking Review) of the financial crisis now haunting capitalist-imperialist world, and of the prospects of an economic crisis in its wake. We are in complete agreement with the analyses given of the futile measures taken to stave off the dollar crisis, and in general from a long-term point of view we are in complete agreement with

the view that this development will sharpen class contradictions in the capitalist-imperialist countries and hasten the inevitable doom of imperialism. Let there not be the slightest doubt about that.

Also we want to stress, that we are, in no way being pessimistic about prospects in our part of the world. We fully agree with the view that in general the revolutionary situation of the world is getting better day by day, and we agree with you that imperialism and modern revisionism are at the end of their tether.

We also know, and we are constantly trying to live up to that knowledge, that all of a sudden developments may run very fast. That is why, we are keeping as close to the ground as we can, that is why we are constantly re-examining our views and standpoints in the light of new practical experience and new knowledge obtained through our "antennae" among the masses. Let there be no doubt about that, either.

And now to the points we want to raise:

First some quotations from recent articles from China.

Hsinhua item 040222:

"In serious financial difficulties, the Indonesian fascist military regime ruthlessly exploited the broad masses of the working people and bled [?] them white [?] in order to meet increasing military and administrative expenditures for maintaining its military dictatorial rule ...

.....

As a result of the reduction in industrial and agricultural production and inflation, the prices of commodities have long sky-rocketed unbridledly.

.....

The 100 million industrious and courageous Indonesian people who are deep in suffering are awakening....."

Hsinhua item 040103:

"..U.S. monopoly capital has intensified its exploitation of the Latin-American people.

Apart from the huge export of capital, U.S. imperialism has also been sucking the blood of the Latin-American people

.....

In the last analysis, U.S. imperialism is digging its own grave by its brutal exploitation and plunder of the Latin-American people...."

Hsinhua item 033004:

"Meanwhile, the Labour Government, the tool of the British monopoly capitalist, repeatedly took ruthless measures at the expense of the people in order to prolong the feeble existence of the pound.

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In such a perilous state, the Labour Government recently proposed a 'crisis budget' to redouble its efforts to squeeze people and subsidize the capitalists.

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The stagnation of industrial production in France is mainly attributed to the steadily diminishing purchasing power of the labouring people,....

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Unemployment has become increasingly more serious as a result of the desperate efforts of the (West German) capitalists to shift the burden of the decline in production onto the working people.

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In addition to mounting unemployment, prices keep soaring all the time and the purchasing power of the working people keeps falling accordingly.

.....

As a result, class contradictions are being greatly aggravated in West Germany."

Renmin Ribao Commentator, March 23 (Peking Review, no. 13, page 23):

"The American and British people have absolutely no common interests with the monopoly capitalist groups which bleed them white and with imperialism and colonialism which commit aggression against and plunder the peoples.

.....

Lenin pointed out: The imperialist countries 'regulate economic life' in such a way as to create conditions of wartime penal servitude for the workers (and partly for the peasants) and a paradise for the bankers and capitalists. Their regulation consist in 'squeezing' the workers to the point of starvation."

Are U.S. and British imperialism not behaving in exactly this manner?

....

Ruthlessly exploited by U.S. and British monopoly capital, the masses of the American and British working people have already too many sacrifices, and their belts are already too tight."

Dear Comrades, let us put it frankly:

We do not agree with the evaluation of the present situation in our part of the world which teems to underlie the use of exactly the same wording to describe the situation in Indonesia and Latin America on the one hand and the situation in Great Britain and Capitalist West Europe on the other hand, and we earnestly request you to consider the need to differentiate.

Actualy there is an abyss of difference between the economic conditions and the material and spiritual life of the broad masses of the working people in our capitalist-imperialist countries, and those of the broad masses of the working people Indonesia and of Asia, Africa and Latin America as a whole. They cannot and they should not be treated or described alike.

The belts of our working class are not too tight already.

Our monopoly capitalists are not bleeding the working class white.

That is what imperialism and local exploiters are doing in Indonesia, yes, in India, yes – but not in Denmark, not in Sweden, not in France, not in Great Britain.

Allow us to give you a few facts from Denmark to illustrate the conditions of the working class to-day under increasing unemployment.

In a certain district of northern Jutland - simply the poorest part of Denmark - there has been constant unemployment for years. What do the unemployed workers do? They raise 50.000 kroner among themselves, and collect money among other people in the district as well, and put an advertisement in the newspaper offering this money as a gift to any capitalist, who would kindly come to the district to put up a factory of his own choice.

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Towards the end of 1967 the workers' representatives at a certain industrial enterprise in Copenhagen approached the management, and a conversation as follows took place – the words may not be the actual words spoken, but the contents were:

Workers: Is what we are working on at present very urgent, or do you have urgent orders for the next few days?

Manager: No, nothing seems to be especially urgent. Why?

Workers: Well, Christmas is almost here, and kind of thought of having a little extra holiday. What about giving us the sack on December 23rd, all of us, so that we can get our unemployment subsidies through the trade unions? But of course, we want to be re-employed after New year.

Manager: That is alright with us. You just remember to be back for work after New Year. We shall take you again, but you may have to work a little harder to make up for the last time.

Workers: Sure, we will do that. Thank you very much.

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A shop steward at a Copenhagen factory to some new workers: We have just seen the wage statistics. Aren't you dissatisfied that your wages here are below the Copenhagen average. Shall I negotiate with the management for a wage increase for you?

The new workers: Well, actually we are quite satisfied, but a little extra might come in handy. Go ahead, we don't mind.

Later in the day the shop steward was furious, because the management insisted that the wage negotiations – which usually take place during normal working hours, with full pay to the shop steward, of course – were to take place after 16,30, although this meant over-time payment amounted to an extra 50 percent.

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It is common knowledge among taxi-drivers in Copenhagen that the trade union offices of the unskilled workers is a good place to get customers, at the time when the unemployed workers go there to collect their subsidies.

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A Machine worker was fired. His wife, who is having a job of her own, commented: Fine, then you shall have time to re-decorate our kitchen.

Another machine worker was fired. His wife is not having an outside job, and they have four children. His own comments were: Well, I might get myself another job right away, I think. But we have talked it over, my wife and I, we shall manage for a time. I have a lot of things to do about our flat. One day he was almost sent to work at a factory, but he was glad to say managed to talk himself out of it. "It was too far away, and I have not yet finished the new wardrobe in our bedroom."

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Two young, unemployed workers told the trade union official that they would not be there to collect their subsidies next week – they were off for a trip to Poland.

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When workers buy TV-sets, tape-recorders, refrigerators, motorbikes etc. on instalments, the normal practice is that contracts contain a clause saying that payment of instalment is postponed during periods of unemployment.

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Before Christmas last year a well-known charity organisation that on the occasion of Christmas families in distress might as usual come to get "baskets", containing food stuffs etc. for the occasion. The advertisements expressly added that people coming to the office in their own motor cars or in taxis would not be given any of the baskets. In a televised interview one of the leaders of the charity organisation declared that past experience had made this necessary.

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We have had occasion to give lectures, take part in discussions and talks on developments in China during the great proletarian cultural revolution. We have participated in such meetings in all parts of the country, and participants have come from all strata of the population, except big monopoly capitalists. This has given us one basic experience: whether those taking part in the discussions are landlords, business men, officers of the army, small and big farmers, civil servants, young conservative employees, students at teachers' colleges from all walks of life, secondary school students, trade union officials or plain ordinary workers – no matter who they are, their arguments are exactly the same. What they say is this: "People are not as free in China as in the capitalist world. What about the Chinese conquest of Tibet? Why did China attack India? Why the worshipping of Mao Tsetung? You cannot 'fight self', human beings simply are not like that, and there will always be someone better off or on the top of the others. When China reaches a higher level of standard of living, thing will go just as in the Soviet Union. Socialism may be necessary for underdeveloped countries until a certain stage. We shall never have socialism here."

We repeat – be they workers, or be they capitalists – their ways of thinking are identical, with individual shadings of course.

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Dear Comrades,

We know that in many ways small Denmark is special. But not that special. We may only call your attention to the demands raised by the new, anti-revisionist parties and groups in France, Belgium, Sweden or Austria on behalf of the working class "in face of intensified exploitation". They are demands for full pension of 75 percent of the best five years for all workers, four weeks of holiday with full pay, 40 hours working week without any cut on wages, etc. This shows, it seems to us, that the situation in these countries, although it may not be as "good" - we should prefer to say as "bad" - as in our country, is basically the same as that of the working people of Denmark.

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Dear Comrades,

We think Engels was right, when in 1852 he wrote to Marx:

"The workers seem to have become completely bourgeois after all. It will take a severe chastisement by crises if they are to become good for anything again soon." (Correspondence of Marx and Engels, L&W, London, page 60)

And we think it is a hundredfold more true to-day to say so about our working class.

We think that Lenin's description of a part of the working class together with their capitalists building a paradise on the backs of hundred of millions of people is right, ("Imperialism and the Split in Socialism", Collected Works, Moscow, vol 23, pp. 106-07, 110, 114, 115 – and elsewhere).

And we think that to-day this description holds true for the absolute majority of the working class of the fully developed West European countries.

We are of opinion that it will not only take the present financial crisis and the present cuts in their so-called "meagre" purchasing power to make the workers think in terms of class struggle (Lenin rightly points out the meaning of Marx's words that all class struggle is a political struggle. "Our Immediate Task", Collected Works, vol. 4, page 215-16). It will take much more than that.

World War I was not enough, the crisis of 1929-32 was not enough, fascism was not enough, World War II was not enough.

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No, we have not forgotten that by now we have the all-conquering ideological weapon of Mao Tse-tung's Thought. On the contrary. We are firmly of opinion that only by sufficiently grasping and using this weapon shall we be able to keep in contact with the masses, to forge close links with them, to keep summing up experiences, to carry out the task given us by Lenin:

"To be able to seek, find and correctly determine the specific path or the particular turn of events that will lead the masses to the real, decisive and final revolutionary struggle – such is the main objective of communism in Western Europe and in America to-day." (Collected Works, vol. 31, page 97).

Only by wielding the sharpest of weapons, Mao Tse-tung's Thought, we shall be able to be [?] those

".... people at hand whose minds are theoretically clear, who can tell them (the workers) the consequences of their own mistakes beforehand and make [?] clear to them that every moment which does not keep the destruction of the wage system constantly in view as the final goal is bound to go astray and fail...." (Marx/Engels: Selected Correspondence, Moscow, 1965, page 397),

and we do regard this as our primary task to-day, at a time when the working class – imbued with bourgeois ideology, leading bourgeois lives – is gradually being confronted with new difficulties, to which the workers will react in a bourgeois way to-day, but which will also be “the reason why there will be socialism again”, as Engels put it. (Marx/Engels: Selected Works, vol II, page 378).

Only by constantly studying and striving to apply the works of Chairman Mao Tsetung to the concrete reality of this part of the world, where not only the “upper stratum”, but the majority of the working class answer Lenin’s description of “... the proletariat in the imperialist countries lives partly at the expense of hundreds of millions in the uncivilised nations.” (Collected Works, vol. 23, page 107), we can do our share of the work to unite “the proletariat of all lands for the fight against such opportunism” as described by Lenin in “The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart” (“On Britain”, Moscow, Second Impression, page 69-70).

We see this ideological struggle as our primary task of revolutionary agitation and propaganda to-day.

Dear Comrades,

Should we take your seeming juxtaposition of the sufferings of the working people of Indonesia and the “exploitation” of the working class of the western fully developed capitalist countries to mean that you think us basically wrong on that score? (Details are comparatively unimportant just now).

If that is the case, please tell us – and if you have time please tell us why.

If that is not the case, we hope that ways and means may be found to work out a common understanding of and a common way of describing the realities of our part of the world. We hope that ways and means may be found to work out a common political line for the fully developed imperialist countries of Western Europa.

The situation is like this:

Either the majority of the new, fraternal parties and groups of Western Europe are fundamentally on the wrong track concerning the economic struggle of the working class, still sticking to Stalin’s old definition of the tasks of communist parties here (Interview with Herzog, Collected works, vol 7),

or we are wrong, wrongly interpreting Lenin’s words about the “real task of a revolutionary socialist party” being “not to draw up plans for refashioning society, not to preach to the capitalists and their hangers-on about improving the lot of the workers but to organise the class struggle of the proletariat and to lead this struggle” (Our Programme, Collected Works, vol 4, page 210-211).
We hail the latest statement by Chairman Mao, the great leader of the proletariat, all the oppressed people and of all revolutionaries of the world. We pledge ourselves to follow Chairman Mao’s great call:

"People of the whole world, unite still more closely and launch a sustained and vigorous offensive against our common enemy, U.S. imperialism, and its accomplices!"

We sincerely want to contribute with all our might towards the fulfilment of Chairman Mao's great, scientific prediction:

"It can be said with certainty that the complete collapse of colonialism, imperialism and all systems of exploitation, and the complete emancipation of all the oppressed peoples and nations of the world is not far off."

We regard the solution to the problems raised in this letter as essential for the ability of the revolutionary movement in Western Europe to live up to the responsibility placed on its shoulder by history, by Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tse-tung's thought, by Chairman Mao.

Fraternally yours,

Communist Working Circle (Denmark)

Political Committee

(Gotfred Appel)