

**Gotfred Appel**

## **The Devious Roads of the Revolution**

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*Why did China have its Cultural Revolution? What were and are its basic aims? What has it meant the future of China? In order to answer these questions we have to investigate why China had the revolution that won victory in 1949, why Russia had its revolution in 1917, why revolutions happen at all in this world.*

There are many reasons for individual persons to want revolution and socialism (and there are serious views as to what in fact this socialism is, but let that be as it may). Some people want socialism because the present society leads to war, because USA is waging a war against the Vietnamese people. Other people want socialism because there is no spirit of community in the present society, because there is too much inequality under capitalism, because the "rich world" exploits the "poor world", because there is too much unemployment, because there are not enough day nurseries and kindergartens.

There are also people who want socialism because capitalist exploitation itself. (the production of surplus: value in industry) appears to be "unjust" and "must" be abolished, or because the working class does not get their "full share" of what they are producing. Such people usually call themselves "communists", and often they are organised in so-called "Communist Parties", even if their motives for wanting socialism are sheer tripe that has nothing to do with socialism. We live in a capitalist society ruled by the commodity economy and the law of value, and as long as the workers in this society are paid the value of their labour there is, as already Engels clearly pointed out, nothing "unjust" in that!

Experience has shown that without anger and indignation, without burning feelings and enthusiasm, without an urgent desire to change the world, it is not possible to construct what is called "the subjective forces of revolution", the revolutionary organization. But experience has also shown that socialism and revolution do not come about because people want them. Revolution and socialism come about as a necessary and regular part of the social development of humanity.

Karl Marx started his exhausting studies in order to help the oppressed and impoverished working class in Europe of his time - and during his studies he

discovered the objective laws that determine social development. Together with Engels, he also discovered that the effect of these social laws can be delayed or advanced by people in society, but they can never be repealed!

Marx and Engels discovered the foundations on which class struggle in all previous societies has taken place. With this they laid the foundation of historical materialism.

*"Classes struggle, some classes triumph, others are eliminated. Such is history, such is the history of civilization for thousands of years. To interpret history from this viewpoint is historical materialism; standing in opposition to this viewpoint is historical idealism. (Quotations From Chairman Mao Tse-tung, p. 8)."*

In the Communist Party Manifesto from 1848, Marx and Engels for the first time summarized this point of view. They say in the first chapter:

*"The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guildmaster and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now sudden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes." (Marx and Engels: Selected Works, Vol. I, p. 33)*

### **The Main Social Contradiction**

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles". It was not this discovery that was Karl Marx's merit par excellence. He himself says expressly that he did not discover class struggle. His merit lies elsewhere - in his discovery of the main social contradiction, of which class struggle is an expression and a manifestation.

Mao Tse-tung writes in "On Contradiction":

*"When Marx and Engels applied the law of contradiction in things to the study of the social-historical process, they discovered the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, they discovered the contradiction between the exploiting and exploited classes and also the resultant contradiction between the economic base and its superstructure (politics, ideology, etc.), and they discovered how these contradictions inevitably lead to different kinds of social revolution in different kinds of class society.*

*When Marx applied this law to the study of the economic structure of capitalist society, he discovered that the basic contradiction of this society is*

*the contradiction between the social character of production and the private character of ownership. This contradiction manifests, itself in the contradiction between the organized character of production in society as a whole. In terms of class relations, it manifests itself in the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat." (Selected Works, Vol. I, p. 328-329)*

The contradiction between bourgeoisie and proletariat the two basic classes in capitalist society - is the class expression of the very contradiction which *defines* capitalist society. That is, the contradiction between social production large-scale industry and extensive division of work both between concerns and the individual workers - and private ownership of the means of production, the private appropriation of the products.

Mao Tse-tung writes further in "On Contradiction":

*"In human history, antagonism between classes exists as a particular manifestation of the struggle of opposites. Consider the contradiction between the exploiting and the exploited classes. Such contradictory classes coexist for a long time in the same society, be it slave society, feudal society or capitalist society, and they struggle with each other; but it is not until the contradiction between the two classes develops to a certain stage that it assumes the form of open antagonism and develops into revolution." (Selected Works, Vol. I, p. 343)*

Since class contradiction is the class expression of the basic contradiction of society, it is obvious that what ultimately decides when the class contradiction "assumes the form of open antagonism and develops into revolution," is the development of the basic contradiction - the contradiction between the forces of production and the relations of production.

Only when the prevailing relations of production - which in the main means the conditions of ownership of the means of production and products - enter into really serious conflict with the forces of production - which means machines, technology, technical skill, etc. - only when the relations of production really delay the development of the forces of production to such an extent that society ends in a national, economic and political crisis, will the class contradiction be sharpened so much that a revolution will arise, or at any rate a revolutionary situation.

No system of society will perish, said Marx, until all the possibilities for development of the forces of production which this system provides are exhausted.

Lenin described the revolutionary situation as follows:

*"To the Marxist it is indisputable that a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation; furthermore, it is-not every revolutionary situation that leads to revolution. What, generally speaking, are the symptoms of a revolutionary situation? We shall certainly not be mistaken if we indicate the following three major symptoms: (1) when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the 'upper classes', a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes burst forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for 'the lower classes not to want' to live in the old way; it is also necessary that 'the upper classes should be unable' to live in the old way; (2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual; (3) when, as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in 'peace time', but, in turbulent times, are drawn both by all the circumstances of the crisis and by the 'upper classes' themselves into independent historical action." (Lenin: Collected Works, Vol. 22, p. 213).*

A revolutionary situation as it is here described by Lenin, has not existed at any time in capitalist Denmark and hardly at any time in industrialised Western Europe and North America. Today the necessary conditions for a revolutionary situation have not occurred at any place in the imperialist world, and they are nowhere immediately at hand. Therefore we have not had a revolution here, nor is there yet any prospect of it. But such conditions did occur in Russia in the time before October 1917, and they did occur in China in the time before 1949. That is why we have seen the revolutions there.

### **Only One Way Ahead**

Why was the Russian Tsarist regime overthrown by the revolution in February 1917? Why was the bourgeois government resulting from this revolution overthrown itself by the October Revolution in the same year? Essentially, the answer is in short as follows: because the Russian working class and the enormous majority of the Russian population of destitute peasants "forced by the ruling class" rose up in desperate self-defence and demanded two things: peace and bread! And only because the October Revolution under the leadership of the Bolsheviks was able to fulfil these demands.

The Tsarist regime had led Russia into World War I. This resulted in inconceivable suffering both for the soldiers in the mud and filth of the

trenches and for the civilian population in the hinterland. They simply would not go on, they simply *could* not go on. The soldiers threw down their weapons, left the front and dragged themselves home, hungry and exhausted. The peasants revolted, the workers struck. And it is necessary to note that this was not the work of the Bolsheviks. It was the Tsarist regime itself and the structure of Russian society that created this situation. The old Russian society was already poor, dirty and alarmingly backward in comparison with the other European great powers. The war only provided the last straw.

After the February Revolution, the Kerensky government made desperate attempts to carry on the war against Germany on the side of the Western allies, and therefore his government fell, therefore the October Revolution became necessary. And it is because Lenin and the Bolsheviks had realized this that the October Revolution won victory. Russia was in a situation which in reality it was only the power of the working class and the poor peasants - and with power is meant rifles and cannons - that could get the country out of the war. The working class and the poor peasants supported Lenin and followed the Bolsheviks because they alone were willing to and able to show them the way to the fulfilment of the imperative demand for peace. The fulfilment of this demand was an absolute necessity for the fulfilment of the other demand: bread.

Expressed in another way, what we have said is that, in view of the actual situation in Russia and the world of 1917, in view of the actual historical development up until then, a new power in the country - the power of the Bolsheviks, the Communist Party on behalf of the working class and the poor peasants - was precisely at that time the only force that was able to create the conditions for setting the wheels of industry turning - for making possible again the development of what is called the forces of production.

Of course one can discuss at great length (and that has been done too) whether or not a bourgeois-democratic development after a Western European pattern could have led to the same development in industry, in agriculture, in the cultural life which occurred after October Revolution, civil war and war of intervention. The discussion, however, is completely without any meaning, simply because the spokesmen of this bourgeois-democratic road of development in the acute situation in the autumn of 1917, when everything had reached a deadlock, refused to do the necessary thing: to obtain peace for the country! Only a government that obtained peace for the country was able to lead a people that did not want to continue the war, and which had already risen in spontaneous rebellion. In the autumn of 1917 there was in reality no other possibility of setting the wheels of industry turning than to overthrow the spokesmen of the bourgeois-democratic development, who had come into power in February, but who wanted to

continue the war. Nobody today will deny that precisely by obtaining peace with Germany, Lenin and the Bolsheviks obtained the opportunity of leading the Russian people in a new development of the country's forces of production. New industry, new technology, new scientific knowledge, and on the basis of this, a hitherto unprecedented rise in the living standards of the population were the results. It was precisely all this which the old "relations of production", the combination of the Tsarist regime of landlords, big capitalists and foreign capital during World War I, had been desperately unable to create the framework for.

### **Spontaneous Self-defence**

Basically the revolution in China was caused by exactly corresponding causes - here too, the need to break the irksome fetters of the forces of production caused the revolution. Here too, a new power, which under the prevailing circumstances could only be the power of the workers and the poor peasants - through the Communist Party - was a necessary condition to set the wheels of industry turning again and to remedy the miserable lot of the population.

In reality, considering the situation China and the world as a whole at that time, only the power of the working class was able to disrupt the old relations of production and so liberate the forces of production and lead China into a modern technological development.

Mao Tse-tung wrote in 1939 in his book "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party":

*"... Chinese feudal society lasted for about 3.000 years. It was not until the middle of the 19th century, with the penetration of foreign capitalism, that great changes took place in Chinese society." (Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 309).*

This penetration by the Western capitalist, which started in seriousness with the Opium War in 1840, had two effects on Chinese society. Mao continued:

*"As China's feudal society had developed a commodity economy, and so carried within itself the seeds of capitalism, China would of herself have developed slowly into a capitalist society even without the impact of foreign capitalism."*

(Let us add, for the sake of clarity, that one of the basic characteristics of capitalism is the violent development of the forces of production!)

*"Penetration by foreign capitalism accelerated this process. Foreign capitalism played an important part in the disintegration of China's social*

*economy; on the one hand, it undermined the foundations of her self-sufficient natural economy and wrecked the handicraft industries both in the cities and in the peasants' homes, and on the other, it hastened the growth of a commodity economy in town and country.*

*Apart from its disintegrating effects on the foundations of China's feudal economy, this state of affairs gave rise to certain objective conditions and possibilities for the development of capitalist production in China. For the destruction of the natural economy created a commodity market for capitalism, while the bankruptcy of large numbers of peasants and handicraftsmen provided it with a labour market." (Op. cit. p. 309-310).*

That was one effect of the forcible penetration of western capitalism into China. Mao Tse-tung formulated the other effect in these words:

*"However the emergence and development of capitalism is only one aspect of the change that has taken place since the imperialist penetration of China. There is another concomitant and obstructive aspect, namely, the collusion of imperialism with the Chinese feudal forces to arrest the development of Chinese capitalism.*

*It is certainly not the purpose of the imperialist powers invading China to transform feudal China into capitalist China. On the contrary, their purpose is to transform China into their own semi-colony or colony.*

*To this end the imperialist powers have used and continue to use military, political, economic and cultural means of oppression, so that China has gradually become a semi colony and colony." (Op. cit. p. 310).*

For three thousand years, the social system in China had apparently stagnated in an imperial squirearchy based on the land ownership of the few and the sweat and toil of the many to bring home a miserable harvest with primitive tools. Consequently, the history of China for many centuries is one of peasant rebellions. After the Opium War in 1840, a new factor was introduced in the development of China - western capitalism/imperialism. The two biggest peasant revolts in the recent history of China, Taiping's Heavenly Kingdom a little later than the middle of the 19th century, and the Boxer Rising around 1900 were crushed - not only by the empire and the landlords, but in reality first and foremost by English, French, German and other foreign troops. The Great western powers and later Japan, which made a direct colony of great parts of China - forced the empire to surrender considerable parts of its sovereignty. A number of Chinese towns were divided up into foreign concessions. The foreigners took control of the customs and communication, and totally dominated China's exports and imports. At the same time the foreigners, as pointed out by Mao, kept alive

the empire and the squirearchy - and later the warlord regime and Chiang Kai-shek. And with all this they impeded the development of the forces of production in China to an extent which, under the conditions where the old economic order had been broken, led to a hitherto unprecedented impoverishment of the millions of the population.

The peasants continued to revolt. They revolted simply in self-defence, as the last and only way of surviving and not perishing of disease and starvation. This spontaneous struggle, had, as things actually stood, to be a struggle not just against the landlords, but also a struggle against the foreigners who kept the landlords in power. At the same time, a new class of industrial workers entered the arena with the beginning of industrial development, which was, however, either monopolized by the foreigners or smothered by the flood of industrial products entering China from the western countries. The workers were in an even worse position, if possible, than the poor peasants.

The great masses of the Chinese people rose up spontaneously - it was not the work of the Communist Party - with two basic demands: Foreigners out, set the wheels turning.

Again, as in connection with the Soviet Union, one could discuss whether or not a bourgeois-democratic road of development for China could have led to the modernizing of agriculture and the development of industry and cultural life, which has been going on since 1949. Again the discussion is completely without any meaning - quite simply because no one else but precisely the Communist Party was able to show the masses of workers and peasants the road to the fulfilment of their basic demands.

Taking into consideration the actual situation of China and the world in the twenties, thirties, and forties, only the power of the working class and the poor peasants, the armed forces of these classes themselves under the leadership of the communist party, was able to force through the necessary conditions for a development of the forces of production of China. Such a development of the forces of production was necessary, acutely imperative, because the rulers of the old society and the foreigners together had placed the country in a situation of hitherto unprecedented poverty and want. Since at other forces of society, the landlords, the great capitalists, the petty bourgeoisie, either resisted because of their own narrow economic interests, or were too weak in relationship to the united forces of the foreigners and the landlords, there was no other road to the growth of the forces of production than forcibly to remove the rulers of the country, forcibly to remove the foreigners and forcibly to keep out their influence. That is why the revolution came, and because Mao Tse-tung had realized this and thoroughly analysed the conditions for revolution, it won victory in 1949.

Only protected by this power the armed forces of the people itself under communist leadership - was it possible for agriculture and industry to enter upon a modern, technological development. And no one will deny the fact that such a development has taken place since 1949, just as no one will deny the fact that hunger and the worst backwardness have been unknown phenomena in China ever since. The forces of production had destroyed the restrictive relations of production - which is just another way of describing the revolution under the leadership of the Communist Party and the creation of new conditions of ownership - the new relations of production advanced the renewed and vigorous development of the forces of production.

### **The Forces of Production and Socialism**

Does the creation of a new power under the Communist Party (on behalf of the working class) and new conditions of ownership ensuring the development of agriculture and industry, of education, health service, social welfare of every kind does the creation of such a new power automatically mean the creation of socialism? Of course not.

Let us return to the Soviet Union after the victory of the October Revolution and after the civil war and the wars of intervention. Under firstly the New Economic Policy - NEP and later under the Five Year Plans and the collectivization of agriculture, the productive forces of the Soviet Union made an enormous leap forward. Everyone below a certain age learnt to read and write, more and more people received a higher education (this is also part of the forces of production), new heavy industries were built up, agriculture was mechanised.

Protected by the new power, the Soviet people raised the new country out of backwardness, made it strong enough to defeat Hitler's war-machine, rebuilt it after the destruction of the war and raised its science and its industry to quite a new level.

At the beginning of the thirties, the Soviet Union, under the new power - the soviet power, the dictatorship of the proletariat - had abolished private ownership of the means of production (land had been nationalized as early as 1917), created collective forms of production in agriculture and built up modern heavy industries. Then the Soviet Union solemnly proclaimed itself a socialist country, a view which was endorsed by everyone except by people, who had cast doubt on the very possibility of leading the peasant-country of the Soviet Union out of backwardness and poverty under the soviet power, and who had fought against the policy which actually gave these results.

It is only (recent) developments in the Soviet Union after the death of Stalin and especially the Cultural Revolution in China which make us question this assertion. Has the Soviet Union ever been socialist in the proper sense of the

word? Hardly - at the same time we strongly emphasise the fact that this does *not* mean that the policy that was carried out was "wrong". After all, we have the words of both The Communist Manifesto and later Lenin, that a valid socialism is only possible when the proletariat in a number of - Lenin even says all - advanced countries have seized power.

On several occasions, Lenin expressed the opinion that Russia and the Soviet Union at his time had not reached the level in the development of the forces of production which made socialism possible. He sharply criticized the people who drew the conclusion from this fact that the October Revolution had been in vain and "wrong", and that the soviet power would not be able to industrialize the country. For him it meant that since the situation in Russia and in the world as a whole had made revolution necessary and possible, and since it had won victory, it would have to be used, in different ways from the old familiar ones of Western Europe, to give the Soviet Union the forces of production, without which all talk about socialism is nonsense. In 1923 Lenin wrote about the criticism levelled at the October Revolution by petty-bourgeois democrats:

*"Infinitely stereotyped, for instance, is the argument they learned by role during the development of West-European Social Democracy, namely, that we are not yet ripe for socialism, that, as certain "learned" gentlemen among them put it, the objective economic premises for socialism do not exist in our country. It does not occur to any of them to ask: but what about a people that found itself in a revolutionary situation such as that created during the first imperialist war? Might it not, influenced by the hopelessness of its situation, flug itself into a struggle that would offer it at least some chance of securing conditions for the further development of civilisation that were somewhat unusual?"*

*"The development of the productive forces of Russia has not attained the level that makes Socialism possible." All the heroes of the Second International, including, of course, Sukhanov, beat the drums about this proposition, they keep harping on this incontrovertible proposition in a thousand different keys, and think it is the decisive criterion of our revolution.*

*But what if the situation, which drew Russia into the imperialist world war that involved every more or less influential West-European country and made her a witness of the one of the revolutions maturing or partly already begun in the East, gave rise to circumstances that put Russia and her development in a position which enabled us to achieve precisely that combination of a "peasant war" with the working-class movement suggested in 1856 by no less a Marxist than Marx as a possible prospect for Prussia?"*

*What if the complete hopelessness of the situation, by stimulating the efforts of the workers and peasants tenfold, offered us the opportunity to create the fundamental requisites of civilisation in a different way from that of the West-European countries? Has that altered the general line of development of world history? Has that altered the basic relations between the basic classes of all the countries that are being, or have been, drawn into the general course of world history?*

*If a definite level of culture is required for the building of socialism (although nobody can say just what that definite "level of culture" is for it differs in every West-European country), why cannot we begin by first achieving the prerequisites for that definite level of culture in a revolutionary way, and then, with the aid of the workers' and peasants government and the Soviet system, proceed to overtake the other nations? ("Our revolution", Collected Works, Vol. 33, p.477).*

The five-year plans brought the Soviet Union a fair distance forward towards "catching up with the other peoples" and thus creating the "cultural level" and the forces of production which are a necessary prerequisite of socialism. When Stalin in 1936 at the presentation of the new Soviet constitution definitively proclaimed the victory of socialism in the Soviet Union, all communist parties, even the Communist Party of China, even Mao Tse-tung agreed with him in this assessment. Today we can see that in the mid-thirties the Soviet Union probably had created the industrial preconditions of socialism and probably also the cultural preconditions that Lenin spoke of. But we can also see that the "superstructure" - politics, ideology, etc. - had not kept pace, did not correspond to the newly created economic basis but was still influenced in many respects by bourgeois ideology, and that therefore the Soviet Union. at that time had *not definitively* created a socialist society. What it had created was a society which had bigger and better chances than any other country at that time of creating a socialist society (with the imperfections and the lack of consistency which is a consequence of the fact that capitalism was still in power in the greater part of the world!)

This also explains why, even if there was a sharp turn in Soviet domestic and foreign policy with Khrustchov and the 20th congress in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956, then this turn was based on the development of the preceding decades. All the main elements of Khrustchov's and his successors' theory and policy in the first years after the 20th congress can be found as tendencies in the period from Lenin's death in 1924. Khrustchov led the Soviet Union further along one of the two paths made possible by the construction under Stalin. The other path would have

been to carry through a cultural revolution to bring the "superstructure" into harmony with the economic basis of the country.

Taught by experiences from the Soviet Union, Mao Tse-tung chose the latter road for China! China had in all essentials followed the pattern of the Soviet Union in large parts of its "superstructure", for instance in its school- and educational system and its cultural life. It was not until the sharp turn under Khrustchov that Mao Tse-tung saw that it was this very pattern that should be broken if China was to avoid following the Soviet Union's path away from exploiting the preconditions of socialism created by revolution and construction.

The Cultural Revolution in China was aimed at the persons in power in the party, state and production apparatus, in the school and health system, in the cultural life, who wished to take the Soviet road of development. It is in this connection of less interest to examine whether they did it because they honestly thought that exactly that road was the road to socialism, or whether they did it precisely because they saw that it led away from the road to socialism.

### **The Red Guards**

In actual fact, it is impossible to state an exact date for the start of the Cultural Revolution. It developed gradually from the first great Rectification Campaign in 1958 - 59. In 1962 the task of transforming the old feudalistic Peking Opera was started and the first results of this work were presented at a festival in Peking in 1964. At the same time a large-scale so called "Socialist Education Campaign" was developing in the vast rural areas of China, and we now know that all these constituted the forerunners of the "real" Cultural Revolution, experiments to find the correct method. We can set the beginning of this "real" Cultural Revolution to autumn 1965 with the publication of the first of Yao Wen-yuans sharply critical articles against a number of playwrights and journalists, who, with mordant pen and a great talent for camouflage, used the stage and newspaper columns for attacking the Communist Party's leading role in society, the constitution of the country and the process of socialist construction.

Nevertheless, it was not until 1966, when the Red Guards, under the wing of Mao Tse-tung, stepped forward in their millions, that the Cultural Revolution hit the headlines in the world's newspapers. Later, the campaign against the then president, Liu Shao-Chi, dominated the attention.

On the threshold between these two stages in the Cultural Revolution, a number of so-called "receptions" of Red Guards were organized in Peking, at which the young people on the Tien An Men square hailed Mao Tse-tung, and

were themselves hailed by him and the rest of the Party's and State's leading body.

But what, after all, was happening at these "receptions"? What was the purpose of letting millions of young people go to Peking to "meet" Chairman Mao and, as it was said, to "exchange experience"? To all appearances, the purpose was to give the Red Guards a climax to their activities. These young people had played a role in the first phases of the Cultural Revolution. They had shown things up, they had attacked all obsolete, feudal and bourgeois phenomena in society, they had torn down and criticized. Now was the time to turn them in a positive direction, and that called for a climax, a decent conclusion to the first stormy period. It is hard to imagine anything more ingenious than letting them close with a "reception" in the country's central square by Chairman Mao himself! After these "receptions", less and less was heard of the Red Guards and during the last couple of years they have hardly been mentioned.

### **Expert-Mentality**

One of the things responsible for the creation of privileged strata in the Soviet Union and the promotion of "careerism" was precisely the educational system and higher education. Schools and higher education kept the young isolated from the rest of society, from the physically working population, and instilled into the students a feeling of being "more" and "better" than the common working population. On top of this, their education gave the graduates a prosperity miles above that of the industrial workers. At the same time, education was concentrated upon creating "experts" - not upon educating politically conscious people wishing to serve others, to serve the people. In spite of warnings and admonitions from Mao Tse-tung personally, and in spite of the official passing of instructions for the combination of education with physical labour, the Chinese educational system remained basically of the same nature as the Soviet system right on till the Cultural Revolution, and it was encumbered with exactly the same shortcomings - or, more correctly, with those phenomena which Soviet experience had now shown to be shortcomings. In order to create a new system, and do so fast, the pupils and students themselves had to achieve political enthusiasm for the cause, and this they achieved in the Red Guard movement, this they achieved at the "receptions" and this they achieved by reading the Little Red Book. Only the young man or woman who in practice integrates with the workers and peasants, is truly revolutionary, writes Mao Tse-tung. Serve the people, always put the interests of the whole above the interests of the individual. Under these slogans, hundreds of thousands of young people went to the countryside, gave up the advantages of urban life - poor as they may be in the still poor China - and set to work at their part of the Cultural

Revolution's constructive side to create a new integration of intellectual and manual workers, an integration in one and the same person.

The "expert"-mentality, the barrier between the manual and the intellectual workers also characterized industry to considerable degree. To break down this mentality and its practical manifestations in the planning of production required a change in both parties, both the technicians and the ordinary workers. Here also in the start the Red Guards played their part in setting the process going, big-character posters followed and the workers, the technicians and the administration personnel completed the destruction and started - again based on the Little Red Book and Chairman Mao's directions - to create a new attitude towards work, a new amalgamation and integration of all efforts.

"Self", the individual's material advantages had been centered upon in many ways in accordance with Soviet example: large differences in wage (although the highest were reduced already in 1962-64), "material incentives" to doing more, money rewards and bonus arrangements for good and cost-reducing work etc. Now, emphasis laid upon politics, ideology, the individual's conscious attitude towards the collective and towards the whole society. The workers', the technicians', the leading body's political understanding of the importance of good and diligent work for the whole became the ideal. Experience from the Soviet Union had shown that precisely the "self", precisely thinking of oneself and one's own narrow advantage first, in itself was the embryo of the stratification, the splitting up of the people into groups with opposite interests.

This whole process of adjustment, this whole revaluation of values and norms, this whole gigantic political movement hardly left a single Chinese in the whole immense country untouched. It caused debates and discussions, accusations and counter-accusations and it even caused rather violent physical clashes between different groups. Slowly, and often with great difficulty, two main groups crystallized - the group clinging to the old values, the old way of thinking and its practical implications, and the group which with more or less understanding and consciousness followed the new path.

A tool in this crystallization process was the attacks on those people - headed by Liu Shao-chi - who had been the main advocates of, and of whom some without doubt remained advocates of the Soviet pattern. The whole was simplified. It was simplified into the existence of two lines: Mao Tse-tung's line and Liu Shao-chi's line, the revolutionary and the revisionist, the socialist and the capitalist line.

If people did not follow Mao Tse-tung's line, they were following Liu Shao-chi's line. It was as simple as that! It was correct as far as Liu Shao-chi and

his people had notoriously been following the Soviet line in the course of time, but it is a simplification and will always be one, because Mao Tse-tung *also* up to a certain point followed the same line for the reconstruction after 1949 (more about this in my book: "Mao, Kommintern and Liu Shao-chi", Temabok, Stockholm 1971). It is understandable, and probably quite necessary that during the violent movement there was no room for nuances in the historical process of clarification. The simplification was probably imperative and just in the actual situation, when China was at a crossroads, and when the important thing to do was to cope as fast as possible with the main problems and create a tolerably calm working climate again. The simplification had this positive effect, but it also has its drawbacks and negative sides.

### **Mao Tse-tung Thought**

In this complicated and confused situation, when so many people suddenly had to learn to distinguish between right and wrong in a completely new way, based on quite new international and Chinese experiences, the concept of Mao Tse-tung Thought was once more established, and this time with a vengeance, as the yardstick with which one could and must measure all and everything.

(I write "once more", because Mao Tse-tung's thoughts were emphasized already at the Communist Party's 7th Congress in 1945 - not uninterestingly in Liu Shao-chi's report - as the latest development of Marxism-Leninism, as the most important object for study for the whole Chinese people. Influenced by the 20th Congress in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1956 and the settling of accounts with the "personality cult" which was also approved by Mao Tse-tung, at least officially at the 8th Congress of CCP in 1956, the concept disappeared again. Mao Tse-tung's personal contribution and role in the history and development of the Chinese Communist Party and for the elaboration of the theory of the Chinese revolution and in its practice was hardly mentioned in the reports at this congress!).

To stress Mao Tse-tung Thought as a special, new and higher stage in the development of Marxism is *correct*, if thereby is meant that Mao Tse-tung's application of the Marxist method shows how reality must be studied and acted upon. But it becomes wrong if thereby is meant that Mao Tse-tung's concrete judgements of concrete international and Chinese situations and phenomena at certain moments, can be applied as if they were of universal validity. The latter is to a very high degree what is happening.

This stands out especially in the Chinese's interpretation of the rest of the world. During the May incidents in France in 1968 and generally during the now almost totally waning "youth rebellion" in the western world, the

Chinese hailed the "struggle" of the students with Mao's words that "The student movement is part of the whole people's movement. The upsurge of the student movement will inevitably promote an upsurge of the whole people's movement." (*Sel. Works FLP Peking 1967. Vol. IV, p. 136*). This statement by Mao was correct when he made it about the Chinese students' concrete struggle at a certain time against Chiang Kai-Shek's civil war policy and persecution of all progressive phenomena. But the statement cannot be applied mechanically to the Western European "welfare students" so-called rebellion, and this rebellion can not be combined with the whole people's - i.e. revolutionary - struggle, because such a struggle is not being waged, nor is it in the offing anywhere in the western countries.

In late 1966, the Chinese press, which hitherto had been almost silent about the situation and attitudes of the working class of the imperialist countries, suddenly started writing about the poor, fleeced and extorted western workers who were awakening to revolutionary struggle against the oppressors. Since then, the Chinese papers have again and again told their readers about the working classes of the western countries, who are being forced lower and lower into the deepest poverty and are being more and more oppressed by the ruling class. Mass-rallies were held all over China in support of white American workers' purely economic strike-actions, and the British dockworkers were hailed for their heroic struggle against ruthless exploitation. Year after year this very press has at New Year predicted one more serious crisis for the capitalist countries after another.

The Chinese hang on to Mao Tse-tung's (and to Lenin's still older) statements on the concrete situation in Western Europe and North America and refuse to face the fact that progress has not been at a standstill far the period which has elapsed since these statements were made.

Let us, to cut a long story short, establish that the cultural revolution and the use of Mao's concrete statements as if they were universal truth - a use which is a direct consequence of the otherwise necessary and *fully justified* simplification of the political situation in China itself - have distorted the Chinese's view of the world around them.

### **An Unavoidable Phenomenon?**

It is hardly possible yet to provide a fully satisfactory explanation of the previously-mentioned phenomenon. There are, however, so many formal points of resemblance between this Chinese attitude and the former Soviet attitude under Stalin, that there are reasons to presume that at any rate one important reason is that China in its own opinion has taken over the position in the world occupied by the Soviet Union for a couple of decades in its own and others' opinion - the position as "native country of socialism", as the in

fact "only socialist country in the world". When Lenin in the last years of his life assessed the perspectives for the future of socialism in the Soviet Union, he expressly stressed that the decisive problem was whether Soviet power could hold out until the proletariat in the more advanced countries had accomplished their revolution. From this problem he derived the consequence that the Bolsheviks and the working class in the Soviet Union had to do everything within their power to preserve workers' power. This was rapidly changed by Comintern's parties into the view that the most important task for all Communist was to preserve the Soviet workers' power and from this originated the old thesis that the "touchstone" for a Communist, a Marxist, was his attitude towards the Soviet Union.

Today the Chinese have taken over this thesis. It has been stated many times that today the "touchstone" for a Marxist and Communist is his attitude towards China, towards the Cultural Revolution. Nevertheless, the thesis is just as wrong, when used on China, as it was when it was used about the Soviet Union. The touchstone for a Marxist is still whether he has a revolutionary theory for his own country, solidly based on reality. This was precisely what qualified Mao Tse-tung and China's Communist Party under his leadership in the period when Comintern and Stalin had a quite different theory for the Chinese revolutions. As is known, Mao has strongly stressed that to be a Marxist in China meant to know, understand and correctly influence Chinese reality. It goes without saying that this is valid for all other countries as well.

The use of the term "Mao Tse-tung Thought" in itself also corresponds closely to the corresponding soviet use of the term "Leninism". This conception was created by Stalin and the executive committee of Comintern and they even directly rendered in enumerated points a number of Lenin's concrete solutions to concrete problems in the Russian revolution and the Soviet reconstruction into universal solutions. Mao Tse-tung had to directly oppose this "Leninism" and do violence to it to secure the Chinese revolution's victory (about this, see again: "Mao, Komintern and Liu Shao-chi.")

Stalin created his "Leninism" as a tool in the fight against the people who doubted the possibility of industrializing the Soviet Union and maintaining the union with the peasants. He did it when the Soviet Union stood alone, but with the palms of victory. Lin Piao created his "Mao Tse-tung Thought" as a tool against the people who wished to follow the Soviet way of development and when China stood alone, but with the palms of victory. Is such an adherence to victorious theories inevitable as long as they only are victorious in the individual countries? "Leninism" and "Mao Tse-tung Thought" however correspond to two different stages in the world-wide development of society. The Cultural Revolution has indeed brought China a

step further forward in the direction of valid socialism, which Lenin spoke of, than the Soviet Union attained before it took the "wrong" track. ("Wrong" is in quotation marks because it is meaningless to refer to probably necessary, historical developmental processes as "right" or "wrong.") The Cultural Revolution has given China new possibilities, which the Soviet Union never got, to exploit her basis of politics and power to create a socialist society. With that China finds herself on a higher stage in the total world evolution today than the Soviet Union has ever been.

The fact that China, just like the Soviet Union in the beginning of the twenties, is facing the problem of whether she can "hold out" until revolution comes in the other countries of the world makes it a most important duty for China's Communist Party and for the Chinese people to do everything within their means to maintain workers' power. The other side of this same fact, that revolution has not yet broken out in the other countries of the world, makes it a duty for the Communists of these countries to utilize also the Chinese's experience, to utilize Mao Tse-tung's works to "seek, find and correctly determine the specific way or the exact turn of events, which will lead the masses on to the real, decisive and final revolutionary fight." (Lenin) and to lead them on to victory in this fight when it comes. A prerequisite of this is that they have the courage to oppose "Mao Tse-tung's Thought" just as Mao during the Chinese revolution opposed "Leninism."

### **Postscript August, 1972**

The above article was written at the end of 1970, and events in and around China alone necessitate a few remarks. Among the things we have in mind we may mention the following:

- 1) In the intervening period, China has entered the UN. This was proclaimed by the Chinese themselves as a great victory for all the peoples of the world; but it must not be forgotten that China consented to occupying her rightful seat in this world-wide organisation despite the fact that the conditions she had previously imposed had not been met. At this earlier stage, when there was still no majority in favour of her "admission", China demanded that the UN should first revoke the resolution from the time of the Korean war denouncing China as aggressor, and should pass a new one denouncing the USA as the aggressor in Korea in accordance with the historical facts. China also demanded changes in the UN's structure to effect that Asia, Africa and Latin America should be given far greater influence and representation in the administration.

2) It has caused considerable confusion within so-called 'Marxist-Leninist' parties and organisations in the Western world that China has made no contribution whatsoever to the vigorous propaganda against the Common Market, but on the contrary has come close to considering its enlargement as a positive development, insofar as this will produce a weakening of the two "super-powers" all-dominating position.

3) Naturally enough, it generated agitation among supporters of "Man Tse-tung Thought" when the Chinese government sent an envoy to convey to the Shah of Iran the Chinese people's hearty congratulations during the "Feast of the Century" at Persepolis.

4) Mr. Nixon's legendary visit to China was acclaimed as a popular victory, but it is clear that this visit first and foremost served the interests of those sections of American high finance that are interested in bringing the Vietnam war to a halt and opening up trade with China's 700 million consumers.

Discussions and considerations in connection with the article have also shown, however, that certain of the arguments in it ought to be elucidated upon.

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There are at present two dominating attitudes to China. One is the familiar bourgeois exploitation of weaknesses and oddities in order to preach the foolishness and impossibility of socialism "per se", - and the western "Leftist" revolutionaries' use of the same weaknesses in an attempt to assert that the revolutions in both the Soviet Union and China have been erroneous, belong to the same category. The other is the Maoists' stubborn insistence that China is the epitome of everything socialist - a view that entirely corresponds to the old Communist Parties' conception of the Soviet Union past and present.

None of the evaluations holds water, and they only serve to obscure the objective course of historical development.

As has been shown in the above article, the Soviet Union created, by means of the revolution in 1917, the political preconditions necessary for the creation of the economic preconditions for Socialism by a different path from the usual Western European one. When these economic preconditions had been fundamentally created, the Soviet Union had, - as a result of iron-hard economic contingencies and because of lack of experience and knowledge - jeopardized the political preconditions which she had originally fought so hard to win. With its campaign against "self", against the principle of material incentives and in support of an emphasis upon the importance of ideology at this stage of the revolution, and by pointing out the necessity of

new revolutions in the superstructure as the economic base develops and changes character, the Chinese Cultural Revolution revealed a number of the reasons why the Soviet Union never became socialist.

This, however, does not mean that China today is a socialist country. Of course it is not, of course it *cannot* be socialist. Neither does any blame attach to either Mao Tse-tung or the Communist Party or anyone else on this account. It is not the result of a wrong policy, a fault in the revolution or any other human, subjective element. It results from the same fact that made it impossible for the Soviet Union to become socialist in Lenin's lifetime, namely that the economic preconditions do not yet exist.

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In the history of human societies, Socialism is - as Marx and Engels discovered and propounded it - that form of society in which, under the political rule of the working class (the dictatorship of the proletariat), there is correspondence between social production and a social ownership of this social production and its products. Socialism is a system of society in coordination with and has as its *precondition* a well-organized large-scale industry making use of all the latest scientific results and which plays the all-determining economic role in the society.

Marx and Engels laid bare the laws for the development of society through which the existence of such a large-scale industrial production in society requires and forces through a social ownership. They revealed this law first and foremost through a study of the capitalist England of their time, and they proved unequivocally that the Socialist revolution would be carried through in the advanced countries when the social production came in insoluble conflict with the capitalist ownership of the means of production. This is still valid.

Such as the world appeared to them in their day, Marx and Engels moreover had to assume that the revolution in which the working class will seize power would first be accomplished precisely in these advanced countries - in other words, that this revolution would first take place in those countries where the economic preconditions for socialism were present.

History has shown to excess that this is not necessarily the case. The Russian working class seized power in Russia, under quite special domestic and foreign political circumstances connected with the First World War, *before* the socio-economic preconditions for Socialism were present. The Chinese working class achieved the same just over 30 years later. The same could happen again a third place.

On the previous pages are to be found statements by Lenin, in which he tears strips off those people in Russia and elsewhere who, in their dogmatic narrow-mindedness, interpreted Marx and Engels to the effect that the working-class could not and should never seize power until capitalism had developed large-scale industry and had made it the dominant factor in society. As a supplement to this, it will be pertinent to emphasise that Lenin knew, better than anyone - and expressed it clearly! - that the October Revolution and the victory in the civil war and the war of intervention had not made the Soviet Union socialist. He wrote for example in 1921:

"To make things even clearer, let us first of all take the most concrete example of state capitalism. Everybody knows what this example is. It is Germany. Here we have "the last word" in modern large-scale capitalist engineering and planned organisation, *subordinated to Junker-bourgeois imperialism*. Cross out the words in italics, and in place of the militarist, Junker, bourgeois, imperialist state put also a state, but of a different social type, of a different class content - a Soviet state, that is, a proletarian state, and you will have the sum total of the conditions necessary for socialism. Socialism is inconceivable without large-scale capitalist engineering based on the latest discoveries of modern science. It is inconceivable without planned state organisation which keeps tens of millions of people to the strictest observance of a unified standard in production and distribution. We Marxists have always spoken of this, and it is not worth while wasting two seconds talking to people who do not understand even this (anarchists and a good half of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries).

At the same time socialism is inconceivable unless the proletariat is the ruler of the state. This also is ABC. And history (which nobody, except Menshevik blockheads of the first order, ever expected to bring about "complete" socialism smoothly, gently, easily and simply) has taken such a peculiar course that it has given birth in 1918 to two unconnected halves of socialism existing side by side like two future chickens in the single shell of international imperialism. In 1918, Germany and Russia had become the most striking embodiment of the material realisation of the economic, the productive and the socio-economic conditions for socialism, on the one hand, and the political conditions, on the other.

A victorious proletarian revolution in Germany would immediately and very easily smash any shell of imperialism (which unfortunately is made of the best steel, and hence cannot be broken by the efforts of any chicken) and would bring about the victory of world socialism for certain, without any difficulty, or with only slight difficulty - if, of course, by "difficulty" we mean difficulty on a world-historical scale, and not in the parochial philistine sense." (*"The Tax in Kind"*, *Collected Works. Moscow 1965. vol. 32, pane 334*)

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The revolution failed to occur in the advanced West European countries in the twenties, just when there were signs that it was in the offing. The Soviet Union stood alone with its political preconditions for socialism. The Soviet Union was forced to go through its own special form of state capitalism in order to create the economic preconditions for Socialism, and this fact is the principal reason why the Soviet Union never became socialist.

Today, China stands alone with *her* political preconditions, improved preconditions in relation to those of the Soviet Union. Even though Mao Tse-tung has underlined the fact that Socialism's final victory still lies several generations ahead and although he has also underlined that not one, but several revolutions must take place underway in the superstructure, the fact remains that China must necessarily remain a part of the total world economy, exactly as was the Soviet Union in Lenin's day - a world economy totally dominated by Capitalism. China too must go through her own form of state capitalism in order to create a large-scale mechanized industry. China cannot construct her industry, obtain the necessary know-how etc. without trading with and exchanging with the capitalist countries.

If China isolates herself in order to save her socialist political system, she cannot develop her productive forces at the necessary speed and runs the risk of being overrun. In a capitalist world a China without the economic basis of full-fledged socialism constitutes a part of capitalist world economy and thus has to build up her productive forces under conditions the consequence of which will almost certainly be the jeopardizing of the political preconditions, sooner or later. China has to trade in a capitalist way with the surrounding world and she will of necessity have partly to arrange her production - her selection of commodities etc. - in accordance with the needs of her trade partners, i.e. in accordance with the needs of a capitalist world. As long as the socialist revolution in the advanced countries remains unaccomplished China will be forced by objective circumstances, at any rate partly, to arrange her forces of production and her production along a capitalist pattern, and since it is impossible indefinitely to set up insurmountable barriers between production for the home market and production for export, it is to be assumed that gradually the capitalist needs will infect also the Chinese population.

A whole series of China's foreign-political activities in the course of the last year can only be understood and described as a result of precisely this inevitable state of affairs. Neither China, nor the Chinese leaders, nor Mao Tse-tung is to be blamed for this. It is not their fault that the proletarian revolution has not yet taken place in the advanced countries. It is the course of history. But one can, and one *ought* to blame them for not describing the

situation as it is with the same ruthless honesty as did Lenin in his day - for contributing to the delay in the formation of the subjective forces of revolution in the rest of the world by participating in the general confusion of ideas relating to this course of history and by still claiming to be the base of the revolution, when they neither are *nor can be* such a base!

Communists have never been afraid of the truth, on the contrary, they have always needed the truth and only the truth, and the truth about China is the simple truth that it is a -country which, by means of a glorious revolution, has not only fundamentally altered life for one of the most poverty-stricken peoples of this world, but has also enriched our knowledge about social development and added to the treasury of Marxism. The truth is that the Chinese Revolution, in precisely the same way as the revolution and early reconstruction in the Soviet Union are inestimably important stages in the total..., lengthy world-revolutionary process which Lenin, in the work mentioned above, described in the following words:

*"... that only by a series of attempts - each of which, taken by itself, will be one-sided and will suffer from certain inconsistencies - will complete socialism be created by the revolutionary co-operation of the proletarians of all countries." (Ibid. page 339)*

The Soviet Union and China are each of them experiments of this kind - experiments made possible by history's winding road of development in this century and the specific conditions in Russia in 1917 and in China before and after the Second World War and by the Communist Parties of the two countries, by Lenin and Mao respectively, and by the working masses of people whom they led.

Without the Soviet Union - without the October Revolution no Chinese Revolution in 1949! This is still an unshakeable fact. Without the construction of modern means of production and the harvesting of both positive and negative political experience in the Soviet Union, no Chinese Cultural Revolution. This is also a fact.

Yet another thing must be clear: Without the Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Cultural Revolution - without this new positive and negative political experience - no next revolution!

Whether this next revolution will be yet another "experiment", the day new specific conditions place it on the agenda, or whether it will be the total revolution in a series, or perhaps all of the advanced countries, the future will show.