

## **The Renewal of the World Communist Movement Resulting from the Growth of People's War Internationally**

With this pamphlet the Workers' Party of New Zealand presents what is essentially a new point of view on the rebirth of communism in the world today, in 1999.

In June 1998 the Party received an invitation to send a delegate to an international Seminar on Mao Tse-tung and People's War sponsored by the Communist parties of three countries in which each was leading a people's war. The countries were the Philippines (CPP), Turkey (TKP/ML) and India (CPI ML PW). We replied that we lacked the resources to attend although we would like to do so. However, thanks to assistance extended to us by the Communist Party of the Philippines we were able to send our Party Secretary, Daphna Whitmore, as a delegate.

Besides this, we were asked to send a paper on the subject of the Seminar. This we duly provided. It was written by our Party Chairman, Ray Nunes, and entitled: *Overcoming Theoretical Chaos - Problems of Building a New World Communist Movement*. It expressed our collective Party opinion on the issues facing Marxist-Leninists at the present time.

When Lenin began the formation of a revolutionary party of a new type in Russia at the turn of the century, he aimed to unite the country's Marxists around an agreed ideological-political programme. There were many Marxist study circles in existence but they had only the most primitive forms of organisation based on widely differing ideological standpoints, Marxist more in name than in fact.

At the outset, Lenin declared: 'Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement'. He was opposed by people who made a dogma of Marx's well-known saying, 'A single step of the real movement is worth a dozen programmes'. To this he responded: 'In a situation of theoretical chaos this is like wishing mourners at a funeral many happy returns'.

The situation confronting the adherents of Marxism-Leninism after the death of Mao Tse-tung was unquestionably one of theoretical chaos. The former World Communist Movement nurtured by Lenin had disintegrated. The once-great Communist Party of the Soviet Union had succumbed to bourgeois ideology dressed up in Marxist phraseology, a trend known as revisionism. This became dominant in the communist parties of most socialist and of nearly all Western countries. Not so in China, however.

From the mid 1950s onward, Mao led a great ideological struggle against revisionism and its supporters. A new, non-revisionist international movement was created on the basis of defence of Marxism-Leninism. Its forces were led by Mao and the Communist Party of China (CPC) and at the time included the Albanian Party of Labour led by Enver Hoxha.

That movement lasted only until Mao's death and the subsequent restoration of capitalism in China in 1976. A denunciation of Mao by Hoxha followed soon after as the latter sought to become the leader of the movement, succeeding in most part because of the confusion sown by him.

For a time Hoxha was able to deceive many, but the dogmatism he stood for soon gave way to revisionism so that as Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union took the final path of restored capitalism Albania soon followed suit.

Here was ideological chaos with a vengeance. Into this picture stepped the Communist Party of Peru, a new Maoist party which adhered to Mao's teachings and began a people's war to overthrow the corrupt state of the exploiters and carry out, as had happened in China, a New Democratic Revolution.

A people's war was also being waged in the Philippines but had gone astray ideologically until the imprisoned founding chairman was released. Later, this situation was rectified by him, but in the meantime the Communist Party of Peru (PCP) was waging people's war with great success. Its example was closely watched worldwide, and as it appeared close to the seizure of political power, other Marxist-Leninist parties became convinced through this and their own experience of the class and national-liberation struggle, that this was the correct revolutionary path for the renewal of world communism.

Thus, in recent years, a whole group of parties, largely in third-world countries exploited by imperialism, took the road of people's war.

The Workers' Party of New Zealand (WPNZ) from its birth in 1991 gave, first the PCP, then the other people's war parties full support. It was critical of certain trends within the new Maoist movement but publicly criticised no people's war party, taking the view that correction of such errors as existed had to be done by the parties concerned, as a result of summing up of their own experiences.

That is still the WPNZ view. Nevertheless, our Party felt that it would be correct to air its opinions in a general way. This is the viewpoint expressed in the WPNZ reprinting of its Seminar paper which constitutes this pamphlet.

At the Seminar itself, our delegate gave a brief speech summarising our growth and development and our support work (which actually began some years before) for the people's war waged now by not one, but six communist parties leading mass movements.

We are convinced that the road of people's war will be taken by a growing number of parties, undermining world imperialism and preparing the ground for its eventual overthrow.

We do not see the people's war parties as achieving this on their own. Rather, we consider that the class struggle of the workers in the economically-developed countries, latterly quiescent, will grow anew to the point where the two great revolutionary streams of our era will combine to write finis to the world system of capitalist imperialism.

Our Seminar paper follows.

# Overcoming Theoretical Chaos

## Problems of building a new World Communist Movement

A paper by R. Nunes,

**Chairman of the Workers' Party of New Zealand**

September 1998

### **Introduction**

First of all let me state that I joined the Communist Party of New Zealand (CPNZ) in January, 1941, when the Party was only semi-legal. In those days, up unto the time of Khrushchevism, there was a world communist movement, founded by Lenin and headed by Stalin until his death in 1953. I only mention my membership in the CPNZ to indicate that I am not without lengthy experience of the struggle for international socialism.

I would prefer to have made this paper shorter, but because of the loss of socialism in China I felt I had to sketch out some of the main features leading up to it. Also, some participants in the Seminar may need to get a general picture, some of which may not be known to them.

## **The fight against revisionism**

As everyone knows, the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1956 signaled the onset of a revisionist attack on the principles of Marxism-Leninism by the CPSU. These principles were defended by Chairman Mao Tse-tung and the Communist Party of China, together with Marxist-Leninists the world over, leading to the great ideological-political polemic from 1961 which ended in 1964 with a formal split in the world movement.

Mao gave the only scientific explanation for the rise of Soviet revisionism. Khrushchev's usurpation of power was not solely a matter of an individual's actions but the outcome of the growth of a definite class, the new bourgeoisie, which had grown up within the framework of socialism to the point where it was ready to challenge for power. Khrushchev was their man.

Seeking the cause of the revisionist degeneration in the USSR, Mao analysed Soviet experience and concluded that Stalin had erred in prematurely declaring (1936) that there were no longer antagonistic classes in the USSR. Correctly, he sought the origins of the revisionist trend not simply in the personality of Khrushchev but in the material conditions which arose during the construction of socialism in the USSR. He pointed out that Stalin had concentrated attention on the dangers of imperialism using the old remnants of the defeated bourgeoisie to foment counter-revolution. That is, he considered only the danger from outside.

In fact, even in Stalin's time, a new bourgeoisie had been growing in the USSR, comprised of highly-paid bureaucrats, managers of state enterprises, professional people divorced from the masses, and a labour aristocracy based on excessive incentive payments. This privileged stratum constituted the social basis of Khrushchev and his revisionist clique.<sup>(1)</sup>

## **Communist Party of China (the CPC)**

Under Mao's leadership the CPC exposed the revisionism of the CPSU. It summarised the main revisionist theses of the CPSU as the three 'peacefuls' and the two 'entires'. These were: peaceful transition to socialism, peaceful competition, and peaceful coexistence. The two 'entires' were 'the state of the whole (entire) people and the Party of the whole (entire) people.

The three 'peacefuls' rejected socialist revolution, pretended that socialism would come out of 'peaceful competition' between capitalism and socialism and not through revolutionary class struggle by the workers and oppressed peoples, rejected Lenin's theory (well-proven) on the inevitability of imperialist wars and distorted all Marxist-

Leninist teachings on war and peace. The two 'entires' replaced the dictatorship of the proletariat which Marx and Lenin had firmly held would be necessary for the *whole*, lengthy transition period from capitalism to communism (classless society), and the necessity of a working class party to head this proletarian dictatorship while it existed.

That is the background to the splits that took place in the world movement while it existed. Various parties, both in the Soviet bloc and in the West, went the Soviet way. Actually, the CPNZ was the only western party that kept to the Marxist-Leninist road. Marxist-Leninist groups split from the old, now-revisionist parties, and, along with the CPC and the PLA of Albania, formed a Marxist-Leninist world movement, though not bound by any formal organisational ties. In 1993 the CPNZ changed its name and merged with Trotskyism.

Taking into account the Soviet experience and that of its followers, Mao saw that a new bourgeoisie also existed in China, and had influence in the upper ranks of the Party. He generalised the experience of the Soviet Union, China and the other countries which had comprised the socialist camp in a theory of 'continued revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat' in order to block any further triumph of revisionism over revolutionary Marxism-Leninism. This was fully in line with the teachings of Marx and Lenin. It was an outstanding theoretical achievement aimed at preserving socialism once it had been won.

Among the CPC leadership there were various people such as Liu Shao-chi, Deng Xiaoping and Peng Chen who pushed for staying at the existing state of society. But as Mao stated, New Democracy is not socialism. A two-line struggle had to be waged in order to combat revisionist policies and to raise a generation of successors which would bar the door to a revisionist takeover and firmly establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The weapon Mao chose for this purpose was a cultural revolution. In 1962 Mao made a speech to an Enlarged Work Conference at which he stated:

**Unless we fully promote people's democracy and inner-Party democracy in our country, and unless we fully implement the system of proletarian democracy it will be impossible to achieve a true proletarian centralism, it is impossible to establish a socialist economy. If our country does not establish a socialist economy, what kind of situation will we be in? We shall become a country like Yugoslavia, which has actually become a bourgeois country; the dictatorship of the proletariat will be transformed into a bourgeois dictatorship, into a reactionary, fascist type of dictatorship. This is a question which demands the utmost vigilance. (2)**

In the same speech Mao pointed out that the CPSU and Khrushchev continued attacking the CPC, referring to the surprise CPSU assault at Bucharest in 1960 and subsequent conferences ending with the 81-parties meeting in 1961.

In the course of this speech Mao referred to the clash between the CPSU and the CPC, saying 'Its roots lie very deep in the past, in things which happened very long ago. They did not permit China to make revolution: that was in 1945. Stalin wanted to prevent China from making revolution, saying that we should not have a civil war and should cooperate with Chiang Kai-shek, otherwise the Chinese nation would perish. But we did not do what he said. The revolution was victorious'. (3)

It should not be thought that Mao was opposed to Stalin all along the line. On the contrary, in his pamphlet *On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat* (4) Mao restored Stalin to his position as a great Marxist-Leninist, emphasising his great positive achievement. In the polemical pamphlet *On the Question of Stalin* he went deeper into the question, allotting Stalin 70 per cent for achievement, 30 per cent for mistakes. (5)

The October Revolution in Russia had been a directly socialist one, the proletariat seizing power in the cities in a working-class insurrection. China's revolution, however, had been a two-stage one. The first stage had been a democratic revolution under working-class leadership which triumphed with the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949 after 28 years of war and civil war.

Right from the beginning Mao had proclaimed (and continued to proclaim) that when the first stage had been completed the revolution would be continued into the second, socialist stage. Because of the correct strategy and tactics followed under Mao's leadership the first stage proved to be much shorter than anticipated, the basic social ownership of the means of production being completed by 1957.

During the ideological dispute the question of the restoration of capitalism in the USSR became plain. Mao's answer was the Cultural Revolution (hereafter referred to as CR). This was a vast, turbulent movement which eventually involved the great mass of the Chinese people, though beginning with the youth. After great difficulties this movement enabled the exposure and defeat of some of the leaders of the revisionist bloc within the Party, but when Mao died in 1976 it soon became possible for a leading group of the new bourgeoisie to usurp power in a coup d'état which overthrew the leaders who had succeeded Mao. They arrested Mao's four principal supporters.

At the time of the coup d'état Albania recognised it as the overthrow of socialism in China. Although the setback in China was a further heavy loss to the international

working class it seemed that the Marxist-Leninist parties and groups which had rejected Chinese as well as Russian revisionism would now stay united and rebuild.

But this was not to be. The Party of Labour of Albania and specifically its leader, Enver Hoxha (now defunct), launched a sudden, wholesale denunciation of Mao and of the Chinese Revolution. In 1979 Hoxha published a book entitled *Imperialism and the Revolution* (6) in which he asserted that China had never had socialism, that Mao had been a lifelong revisionist, that the Communist Party of China had never been a real Communist party, that Mao's writings on philosophy – among the best of their kind – were not Marxist-Leninist, and that Stalin had made no mistakes.

The CPNZ Political Committee was invited to send a delegation to Albania for bilateral discussions. The writer was the leader of the delegation of two which went to discuss the differences which had emerged. The writer did a conspectus of *Imperialism and the Revolution* prior to leaving, and also drew up a statement of the CPNZ's position which upheld Mao, the Cultural Revolution and the Chinese Revolution. This statement formed the basis for the delegation's discussions with the PLA. These ended with both sides adhering to their previous positions.

In his book Hoxha had made many errors on fundamental questions such as political economy, philosophy and socialism. He thoroughly distorted the views of Mao on the Chinese Revolution, war, and the world situation.

In his last published work, *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*, 1952, Stalin had declared China, to be a socialist country. Hoxha had, previous to the rightist coup in China hailed Mao as a great Marxist-Leninist and paid tribute to his work in combating revisionism and developing the theory of continued revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. In asserting that Stalin made no mistakes he 'corrected' history, Stalin having admitted making several at different times, making Hoxha's assertions ridiculous in view of Stalin's recognition that China was a socialist country.

Of course, China never claimed to have completed building socialism. Mao often pointed out that the struggle between the socialist road and the capitalist road would last a very long time before it was decided – perhaps one or two hundred years. Partial measures did not serve to improve the situation in the ideological and political superstructure in relation to pressing on with the socialist revolution. Because of reactionary trends shown to be current in these spheres, Mao called for a cultural revolution to be carried out with the aim of removal of the top Party persons in authority taking the capitalist road. The Party Central Committee set up in October 1965 a group of 5 under Peng Chen to begin carrying out this work. The group was dissolved when it was found that except for two of its members they were suppressing revolutionary criticisms and actions.

Thus, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, as it came to be called, although officially launched in April 1966, really got under way in August with the issuing of a special 16-point programme adopted by a plenum of the Central Committee. This programme was used as a guide through most of the subsequent period. However, certain aspects of the Cultural Revolution (CR) got out of hand and the programme was not adhered to as the CR developed, particularly avoidance of violence. Mao himself was taken by surprise by events. The Red Guard Movement, begun in the universities in June, 1966, rapidly swelled to immense proportions after Mao openly declared his support for it. It developed after a big-character poster put up by a lecturer at Peking University, Nieh Yuan-tzu, was widely published and broadcast on the radio on Mao's orders.

The mass Red Guard movement swept the country. It was a movement no-one had anticipated. Universities and middle schools were closed while teachers and students actively took part in promoting the CR. While a certain degree of order reigned at the beginning, different factions soon developed within the Red Guards, even though all were declaring their support for Mao. Indeed, they tended to hold centre stage for much of the CR.

It is not possible here to chronicle the ebbs and flows of the Cultural Revolution, the whole sequence of events and forces at work were too complex; one can only deal with general tendencies and some of their consequences.

In a speech to a Central Work Conference on October 25, 1966, Mao is reported as saying:

**The Great Cultural Revolution wreaked havoc after I approved Nieh Yuan-tzu's big-character poster in Peking University and wrote a letter to Tsinghua University Middle School, as well as writing a big-character poster of my own entitled 'Bombard the Headquarters' [directed at Liu Shao-chi and his rightist circle]. It all happened within a very short period, less than five months in June, July, August, September and October. No wonder the comrades did not understand too much. The time was so short and the events so violent. I myself had not foreseen that as soon as the Peking University poster was broadcast, the whole country would be thrown into turmoil. Even before the letter to the Red Guards had gone out, Red Guards had mobilised throughout the country, and in one rush they swept you off your feet. Since it was I who caused havoc, it is understandable if you have some bitter words for me. Last time we met I lacked confidence and I said that our decisions would not necessarily be carried out. (7)**

Mao went on to point out that now the central leadership had exchanged experiences things had gone a bit more smoothly and the ideas were better understood adding:

**Our democratic revolution went on for twenty-eight years, from 1921 to 1949. At first nobody knew how to conduct the revolution or how to carry on the struggle; only later did we acquire some experience. Our path gradually emerged in the course of practice. Did we not carry on for 28 years summarising our experience [the meaning here is 'summing up'] as we went along? Have we not**

been carrying on the socialist revolution for seventeen years, whereas the Cultural Revolution has been going on for only five months? Hence we cannot ask comrades to understand so well now ...

**My confidence in this meeting has increased ... I think things can change and things can improve. Of course, we shouldn't expect too much. We can't be certain that the mass of central, provincial, regional and county cadres should all be so enlightened. There will always be some who fail to understand, and there will be a minority on the opposite side. But I think it will be possible to make the majority understand. (8)**

With the mass eruption of Red Guards, however, the movement was increasingly difficult to keep under control, especially as the weight of evidence shows that Mao no longer had a majority on the Central Committee.

From the beginning Mao kept stating that 95 per cent of the Party cadres were good, and enjoining the Red Guards and all CR activists to unite and not to use force against each other.

It must be said, however, that despite Mao's immense prestige, his words often fell on deaf ears.

Red Guard detachments which had begun by reliving the revolutionary experiences of the earlier generation by going on journeys along the route of the famous 'Long March' from South to Northwest China traversed from 1934-1936, gave way to a movement of all-out criticism and denunciation of almost all Party and state cadres, and often transgressed Mao's guidelines about using force. Regrettably, a great deal of harassment of good cadres took place. Some of it was no doubt due to over-enthusiasm for unearthing and combating revisionists and counter-revolutionaries. Of course, in any revolution and the CR was one, excesses are bound to take place. The problem really arises over the degree to which the CR was student-led, not only university, but very largely middle school (i.e., secondary school) student-led. In the earlier stages the August programme called for the students not to spread revolution in factories or rural areas 'at present'. Workers and commune members were to carry on the revolution at their place of work. The programme also stated that 'In the armed forces, the Cultural Revolution and the Socialist Education Movement should be carried out in accordance with the instructions of the Military Commission of the Central Committee and the General Political Department of the People's Liberation Army' (PLA). That is, it was not to be a target of Red Guard clean-up.

The programme was stated to have been drawn up under Mao's direct supervision.

As matters developed, there were increasing signs of petty-bourgeois radicalism among the students. This was not surprising. A substantial proportion were from bourgeois or petty-bourgeois backgrounds, and in any case students lacked the firm

class basis of the workers, their discipline, their concern for collective property and their unwillingness to use unnecessary violence. As well, behind the scenes, an ultra-left tendency was urging on Red Guards to 'drag out' capitalist roaders in the army. Unknown to Mao and his supporters, this tendency urging the students to violence and factional fighting was headed by Army chief Lin Piao, later unmasked as a traitor. Mao had anticipated that the Party upheaval would at first be limited to the cadres at middle and upper levels, and that mass criticism would come from below. However, helped by Lin Piao's speeches at Red Guard rallies demanding that they criticise the Party and Government at all levels, and drag out the capitalist roaders, a wholesale attack developed on all Party cadres down to the lowest levels. Violent clashes, instead of dying away, were increasing by the end of 1966 and early in 1967.

By then Mao had extended the CR to the industrial and agricultural sectors. A major struggle took place among workers in China's biggest industrial city Shanghai, Revolutionary committees were formed among rank and file factory workers to seize power from revisionist bureaucrats and managers. The Shanghai Municipal Party Committee, a stronghold of Liu Shao-chi's organisation, resisted, defending the revisionist line. The seizure of power by the revolutionary Shanghai workers became known as the 'January Storm'. It brought to the forefront of the CR three active ideological-political leaders, Chang Chun-chiao, Yao Wen-yuan, and Wang Hung-wen. Mao's wife, Chiang Ching, was already leading the struggle for combating the dominance of feudal and bourgeois ideas and propaganda in the theatre arts and culture. After Mao's death these four, who were among the new leadership of the Party and state which had emerged from the CR, were arrested in a coup d'état by new bourgeois elements in the Party and state leadership, headed by the new Party Chairman, Hua Kuo-feng. They were denounced by Hua and his new ally, the reinstated Deng Xiaoping as 'The Gang of Four'.

After the January Storm workers and peasants round the country followed the example of Shanghai. Gradually, alliances were formed between the revolutionary committees, the revolutionary cadres actively leading the struggle for the Maoist line, and the cadres of the People's Liberation Army (the PLA). This tripartite grouping was later to form the basis of the people's state power, whose principal leading body was the National People's Congress.

Encouraging mass criticism from below was aimed at teaching the masses revolutionary politics through their own experience. Matters did not go according to plan, however, for all along Lin Piao and his lieutenant Chen Po-ta were organising behind the scenes for the destruction of the Party as an organisation in order to carry out a seizure of power for Lin himself.

As to the PLA, its principal role throughout was as an educational force. At no time was it used (Hoxha makes this false accusation) as a weapon against Mao's opponents. Because of its role in the long armed struggle to liberate China it had immense prestige among the masses. It was the most political army in the world, and the most democratic, having abolished ranks. Besides this, it had a big role in most spheres of the economy; building and construction, transportation, ship-building, hydro-electric schemes and so on. Thus, it was a true people's army. Because of the high level of political consciousness in the PLA the Red Guards accepted – certainly in the early stages of the CR – their advice and tuition. However, as a result of Lin Piao's splitting activities and the growth of anarchistic tendencies among the students, splits and struggles developed among the Red Guards and between sections of the Red Guards and the PLA.

Despite repeated calls by Mao to rehabilitate the majority of Party cadres as the true diehards were only a handful, many were still subjected to harassment and ill-treatment through 1967 and 1968. Divisions still existed among workers, commune members and students. After briefings from Mao personally to thirty thousand top activists, PLA personnel formed Mao Tse-tung Thought propaganda teams (unarmed), and once again descended upon each factory, each commune, to stop the strife, to help form the alliances which in turn would give birth to the revolutionary committees.

The workers united swiftly, far more so than the students. They formed 'grand alliances' and industry picked up remarkably, likewise agriculture. This had its effect. While a militarisation had taken place with the overwhelming PLA presence from 1968 to 1971, by 1973 the army was brought back under Party control. Civilian order was re-established, vindicating ideological leadership.

During the period 1967-1971 there was a lot of faction fighting at all levels. In some areas Red Guards seized arms from the militia. Some of those concerned in the seizures were actually counter-revolutionary elements, and criminals released from jails. This required intervention by the army to protect state property. There was widespread disorder which had to be ended. Weapons were also seized from supplies being transported to aid Vietnam. In these cases force had to be used by the PLA to recapture them. Otherwise all their actions were unarmed. In many of the universities armed anarchist groups had seized control and had set up military-type defences, including trenches and barbed wire. By 1968 masses of unarmed workers aided by PLA propaganda teams set out to take control of the universities and schools by reasoning. This they did, though many were killed and wounded. Independent writers Han Suyin and Edgar Snow (who quoted Chou En-lai's figures) who both then supported Mao and New China, reported there were hundreds of thousands of casualties in the PLA during the many PLA struggles (9). In the main, the contradictions were contradictions among the people and not contradictions between

the people and their class enemies. The aim therefore was to resolve them without the use of force, and in general this was done. In cases where force had to be used it was usually as the result of ultra-left forces gaining control over sections of student rebels.

In August, 1968, the press put forward the line for revolutionary youth. It stated that youth were the vanguard but it was the workers and the peasants who were the basic strength of the Cultural Revolution. This may sound all right, but is it? In a socialist revolution it is the workers who are the vanguard. This in my opinion was a repeat of an error made in the August 1966 programme. It had far-reaching consequences. The youth are not in themselves a class. Working-class youth are part of the working class. Student youth can only be considered on a par insofar as they place themselves fully at the standpoint of the proletariat. As matters developed it became plain that most did not do so.

The development of the Cultural Revolution, whether or not the words 'great proletarian' are added, brings us to the question, did Mao make serious errors? In my opinion he did. The vital one was handing the leadership (what else is meant by the 'vanguard role'?) to the students. Could the young workers be regarded as the leadership of the working class? By no means. They were part of the workers in production who were excluded from the CR according to the 'programme', which laid down that the CR should not extend to production. The workers as a whole were headed by experienced cadres.

It hardly needs emphasising that the Red Guards were almost wholly comprised of students, either at university or high school level. The whole history of the CR shows this to be the case. In the author's opinion this led to the situation where petty-bourgeois ideology and actions were predominant. No wonder there were splits, anarchic behaviour and alienation of very many good Party and state cadres. True, Mao kept emphasising that 95 per cent of such cadres were good. But still they were paraded in dunces' caps, abused and humiliated. Mao's words in reality were in fact contradictory. If only five per cent of cadres were not good, as Mao repeatedly stated (to little or no effect), why was it necessary to place so many in the pillory of public opinion? Had the focus of criticism remained the group of top Party persons in authority, this situation would not have arisen. However, it was extended to all and sundry.

A basic question is this: what influenced Mao to hand leadership of the CR to the students? My own experience in China may be of interest here. In January 1968 I was in Peking and had an interview with Kang Sheng. I had had a discussion with him previously when we were both in Albania leading Party delegations to the 5th Congress of the Albanian Party of Labour in 1966. We discussed a number of issues. It was the CPNZ's basic stand that we stood firmly with Marxism-Leninism, the CPC

and Mao Tse-tung. In the course of discussion I informed Kang that as far as we could judge there was a growing feeling internationally that in the circumstance of the time a new International was needed for overall guidance of the world movement. I said it would help unity. He replied 'We can't even get unity amongst the Marxist-Leninists'. Kang did not elaborate but in view of his being in the CPC leadership and close to Mao, I could not avoid the conclusion that he was expressing the considered opinion of the Central Committee. I therefore did not pursue the issue.

At that time I was not fully informed on the CPC's long experience of the Communist International (CI). I acquired more knowledge soon after. Then I looked back to Mao's remarks on the inability of the comrades on the CI to understand the Chinese Revolution. I also discovered that they had found the CI line on China to be wrong, leading to serious setbacks owing to dogmatism, and that they had stopped following the CI since 1935.

I duly formed the opinion that in view of their negative experience of the CI and the directing power of the Executive Committee, the CPC considered it incorrect to have an international executive body which could not understand the specific character of other countries' revolutions and devise at a distance correct strategy and tactics for them. This despite the revolutionary experience of the CI leaders in three great revolutions. All this militated against China setting up a new international with mainly its own appointees as a leading body. If, with all the revolutionary experience of the old CI, it could not adequately lead the various affiliated parties because of distance and lack of concrete knowledge of their conditions, China would not be justified in seeking to form a new International. Although Kang did not go into the question of differences between the CPC and other Marxist-Leninist parties and groups, it was evident that there were some and that they could not be ignored.

All this came to the forefront in the early eighties when an international gathering of Marxist-Leninists declared that Mao had made only one mistake, and that was in not forming a new International. Yet in addition to the negative experience of the CPC with the Third International another important factor had to be taken into account, namely, that an important two-line struggle was shaping up in the CPC, such that it would not be justified to hold any big international conference until the line struggle was settled. As comrades well know, in the early 1980s the ML parties expressed their view that Mao should have formed a new international. The Cultural Revolution turmoil made any international conference hosted by China impossible. These factors taken together make it clear that Mao had made no mistake on this issue but that rather the Marxist-Leninist parties concerned had done so. Plainly, this exemplified an inability to apply materialist dialectics to solve problems. The Leninist principle of the concrete analysis of concrete conditions was not observed.

But during the CR itself there were other, more important considerations bearing on the question of whether Mao made serious errors, such as the aforementioned question of student rather than working-class leadership. My discussion with Kang Sheng in 1968 threw new light on this. Although I had not raised the question of student leadership in the CR, no doubt others had. Kang said that Mao saw the Cultural Revolution as a particular feature of the laws of development of the Chinese Revolution. He considered that the students had a special role to play in the Chinese Revolution. Historically they had shown themselves to be a significant revolutionary force, more so than in the West. This view was based on Chinese experience, particularly the leading part of the students in the May 4th Movement of 1919. They had played the leading, initiating role. This historical experience was a specific characteristic of the Chinese Revolution and accounted for the leading role allotted to the students in the Cultural Revolution then taking place.

A brief explanation of the May 4th Movement is in order here.

At the end of World War I, the victorious Entente imperialist powers met in Paris in 1919 to allocate the spoils of victory. Both Japan and China were Entente allies. However, Japan had a secret treaty with Britain and France agreeing to allocate to it the former German possessions in Shantung, in China. These Japan received. The news of this action caused an explosion of protest in China. In the words of Jerome Ch'en: 'The students of Peking responded not only with words but with a gigantic demonstration on May 4th'. (10)

Mao, in Hunan, organised a students' strike. The movement spread rapidly throughout China. Several of the founders of the Communist Party of China, including Mao, were prominent in it. It gave considerable impetus to the formation of the CPC in 1921.

### **The Dialectics of History**

Was Mao's estimate of the role of the students in the CR correct? In my opinion it was not. Without disputing the importance of the May 4th Movement in China's modern history, the fact remains that a great transformation had taken place in the country since then. China had moved from a semi-feudal, semi-colonial regime to a New Democratic state, and from there on towards a proletarian dictatorship. A socialist revolution was under way, which meant that the proletariat necessarily had to have the leading role. If it did not, the revolution could not be either accomplished or survive. The working class should have been roused from the beginning to have taken the leading role in the CR. That would have avoided the petty-bourgeois, often anarchistic character which attached to the activities of the students in 1967-68 and in the latter half of 1966 and which had a negative and long-lasting impact. It would have developed among the working class a much greater consciousness of its historic

role as the gravedigger of capitalism. The whole character of the struggle would have been altered. The ultra-left moves of Lin Piao would have been obviated, if not wholly at least to a large extent.

While officially the CR was terminated in 1969, by the time of the 9th Congress the turbulence was not over. The Party had been reconstituted (I say reconstituted because as an organised controlling entity it virtually ceased to exist for much of the time, the activists of the CR took their lead from the Central Committee group around Mao). Even after the 9th Congress the struggles on all fronts went on, continually stirred into life by Lin Piao and the ultra-lefts. Rashes of posters appeared in all of China's cities. Turbulence also existed both in the factories and the universities. In Wuhan the students of Wuhan University and the steel workers once again united, as in 1967, and battled a local military commander of the garrison. In other cities there was hooliganism, and worker provosts and the militia patrolled the streets and factories to prevent arson and other violence. Altogether, it would not be too much to say that the CR, and with it, unsettled conditions of living and relative instability lasted for the better part of ten years, contrary to the estimated original time scale of five or six months.

All this certainly had its effect in preparing the ground for the coup d'état. A large part of the population undoubtedly were dissatisfied with the constant turmoil, and, as the rightists were quite evidently aware, wanted relief from it, wanted settled conditions of life.

How much Mao himself realised this in the latter part of his life is hard to say. He still stood for continued revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. But he was also a military commander of great experience who knew the value for troops of a respite from constant fighting. It is worthwhile noting that while in the earlier part of the CR he had said that another would probably be needed in a few years – every ten years or so – he made no mention of this in his later years. This point seems to have escaped various parties and groups even today. After all, if a cultural revolution lasts ten years and one is needed every ten years or so, the obvious inference is that society will exist in a constant state of turmoil in which it would be terribly difficult – if not impossible – to build socialism, if indeed a rightist coup is not carried out in the process. Mao, of course, did not settle this point before death intervened.

Another main error to which I must draw attention is the degree of worship of Mao that developed during the CR. While earlier there was a cult around him it did not reach an extreme. However, as Mao noted in his letter to Chiang Ching of July 6, 1966 the semi-divine character attributed to him was not his own creation but Lin Piao's. Mao gives the reason for his going along with it, that is, to strengthen his hand in the struggle with Liu and his clique of revisionists. Undoubtedly it did that, and

Mao did not allow his head to be turned by adulation, as Stalin did, imagining that the masses and what they thought were not important. On the contrary, he continually emphasised the necessity for Party and other cadres to submit themselves to criticism by the masses and to apply the mass line in all their work.

Nevertheless, the effects of this adulation also alienated many. Bookshops stocked only Mao's works. Repetition of quotations from the Little Red Book became a substitute for studying basic works of Marxism-Leninism. People were told to place Mao Tse-tung thought in absolute command, though no individual's thought can be treated as absolute.

Mao had himself criticised excessive adulation in regard to Stalin as contrary to the organising principle of the Party, democratic centralism, and to the principle of collective leadership. As an expedient it no doubt had its uses, but carried to excess as it was it undermined people's confidence in their own ability to solve problems. It thereby created bureaucracy, the referring of decisions to others, and so in the long run harmed the objective it was designed to attain.

All this does not mean that Mao's theory of continued revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat as a development of fundamental importance in Marxism-Leninism is wrong. Not at all. That remains a great achievement, even though the CR did not itself achieve its objectives. That means it was a failure, however much certain people in the Maoist movement may deny it. This will be given further attention when I discuss the question of dogmatism, which will be done shortly.

I have set out to trace the background of the CR, necessarily at length, and to analyse some of its main features. Here I have to note that even had it been a success, it would still be undialectical to make the necessity of a Cultural Revolution a dogma of world application. Whether such a policy is justified can only be determined by the concrete circumstances in the country concerned.

It might be argued that various mistakes, some of which I refer to above, were also damned by Enver Hoxha, and that this makes his denunciation of Mao justified. But there are very big differences between what is said here and what is said by Hoxha. Hoxha declared, imitating Voltaire's description of the Holy Roman Empire, that the great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was not great, not proletarian, not cultural, and not a revolution; it was a 'factional putsch'.

From what we have surveyed it is plain that this statement is nonsense, a description invented to suit a preconceived purpose – namely, to denigrate Mao as a lifelong revisionist in order to establish that Hoxha himself, a disciple of Stalin (who made no

mistakes, unlike Marx, Engels and Lenin) was the greatest Marxist, the theoretical and practical leader of the Marxist-Leninist world movement, which he implies he himself and the Albanian Party of Labour had created – quite contrary to the facts.

It is not possible here to make a proper analysis of Hoxha's sophistries, distortions and outright falsehoods in his Khrushchev-type attack on Mao after the latter's death. I have done that in four issues of our Party journal *The Spark* back in 1991. It is sufficient here to note that, while trying to be clever, he declares that the CR was no revolution, elsewhere, in his book *Imperialism and the Revolution* he declares that it was actually a political revolution. On the other hand he declares that China had never had socialism, and yet he attacks Mao on the basis that capitalism had been restored in China by the Hua-Deng clique of revisionists who, he asserts, had only been continuing Mao's policies. This reads more like the Eugen Dühring who Engels refuted rather than anything Marxist-Leninist, and indeed, Hoxha demonstrated that he was more a petty-bourgeois dogmatist than anything, his dogmatism in due course predictably turning into revisionism as Albania's collapse showed.

It was a serious shortcoming of many Maoists in this period that almost none undertook a thoroughgoing refutation of Hoxhaism, leaving the field to the dogmatists who followed Hoxha. After Hoxha launched his attack it appeared to various Marxist-Leninist parties which hitherto had supported Mao as the greatest Marxist-Leninist of our era, that the loss of socialism in China meant that Albania was now the only socialist country in existence. Most therefore became its supporters, the CPNZ being one such party, on which I resigned from it.

The fact was that the majority had gone with Hoxha and Co., and the Maoists had lost the leadership of the world Marxist-Leninist movement virtually by default through lack of continued polemic. While a gradual move to recover a following was made, the general tendency was to substitute Maoist dogmatism for Hoxhaite dogmatism. While I sought information and Marxist-Leninist policies in Maoist statements and publications, there was much I did not agree with. I took the view that what was missing was the ability to apply materialist dialectics in order to solve problems. Previously I had acquired a basic knowledge of dialectical materialism through the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. I also had readily grasped the first section of Mao's *On Contradiction on the 'Two World Outlooks'*. This section was commonly known to many Maoists. However, what was not commonly studied or understood was the section which followed, *'The Particularity of Contradiction'*. Yet this section contains the essential requirements for application of materialist dialectics in order to solve problems. It took me quite a lot of time and intensive thought to feel at home in this section. While section 1 could be basically drawn from earlier works on the subject, this one could not; it really broke new ground in Marxist-Leninist theory. My experience of recent years convinces me that this section is little studied and

understood by most – if not all – Maoists, with all due respect to participants in this seminar.

Wherein does the greatness of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao lie? Precisely in the grasp and application of materialist dialectics. Stalin was not quite so good, but it would take us too far afield to go into this here. (I have done it elsewhere in my long pamphlet, *Dialectical Materialism*). I reached the conclusion that the world movement could not be rebuilt on a proper basis if this aspect is not grasped, understood, and applied in practice by the leadership of Maoist parties.

I have not changed that view. One cannot fight dogmatism such as Hoxha's with dogmatic Maoism.

When I reviewed my years in the CPNZ I saw that largely we blindly followed Stalin. Of course one could not reverse the course of history, but I realised we had not properly taken to heart Mao's precept, expressed in *Rectify the Party's Style of Work*, 'Communists must always go into the whys and wherefores of anything, use their own heads and carefully think over whether or not it corresponds to reality and is really well-founded; on no account should they follow blindly and encourage slavishness'.

In considering Hoxha's attack on Mao I realised that it was based on the dogma that Stalin had made no mistakes. Before our bilateral discussions with the Albanian Party of Labour in 1979, and after making a conspectus of *Imperialism and the Revolution* I had reached the firm opinion that the PLA was thoroughly dogmatic. They insisted that any Party which did not accept the totality of their line was revisionist. The negative results of those discussions were fully reported to the CPNZ's leading bodies and the delegation's conclusions were accepted. However, only a few weeks later a few leading members organised an inner-Party factional putsch which reversed this opinion and placed the Party on the same dogmatist path as Hoxha. At that point I resigned, having no intention of denouncing Mao as a lifelong revisionist etcetera.

At that time it would not have been difficult to split the Party and form a new Maoist party. However, as the situation stood this would have without doubt meant forming a party based on dogmatic Maoism, i.e., a party of blind following of Mao. As I wished to obtain clarity on a number of problems before setting up a new party I refused to start a new party until I had thoroughly studied and researched the history of revolutionary developments since Marx and Engels. To be properly objective, this task required that I acquire a deeper understanding of materialist dialectics and how to apply them, which process took a good deal of time.

Having seen how the old CPNZ had blindly followed Stalin, and experiencing the dogmatist line of Hoxhism which was an expression of blind following, I would not

be involved in setting up a further party which could in the circumstances only be one of blind following, i.e., of Mao.

As I saw the dogmatist shortcomings of the attempts to regroup what was left of the former Maoist world movement I did not join any grouping. It was obvious that Maoist parties were weak in Europe. An important factor in this was their dogmatist outlook and policies. This played a part in leading me to consider the related arguments over ideology, which centred on the viewpoints of Mao Tse-tung Thought and Marxism-Leninism-Maoism. (Our Party does not use either description). I have already referred to some dogmas, but there are also others.

Firstly, we must regard as the basic error the placing of students in the vanguard, as already examined. Although earlier I considered this an error that had arisen during the development of the CR, because it contradicted the essential Marxist-Leninist theory I had to consider, on reflection, whether there was a misjudgement before the CR began. While I may rouse a certain amount of hostility in expressing this notion the facts point to it as something basic. The questions must be asked: did Mao not realise the dominance of a petty-bourgeois ideology among students? Did he not recognise that they tended towards anarchism? As he had spent six months in a university working as a librarian he certainly was able to closely observe their practice and the shortcomings I mention.

Evidently what was in Mao's mind at the outset of the CR was a substantial growth of mass democracy through the use of big-character posters, and the development of mass criticism of the cadre force of the Party and the state to expose and combat revisionism where it held back the movement towards socialism. Laudable aims. However, the decision of August 1966 not to allow the CR to be carried out in the sphere of production meant in practice that the industrial workers did not constitute the masses by whom cadres were to be subjected to criticism. Who then did constitute the masses? The students, in particular the Red Guards. This is what was largely responsible for the turmoil and anarchic behaviour. Had the cadres been assessed and criticised by the workers there would have been far less ill-treatment of them, with consequent less resentment. Whatever the past record of a cadre, whether in the army, the state and the professions, he or she was likely to be abused, paraded in a dunce's cap and quite possibly subjected to violence. All this caused a large amount of alienation of good cadres – i.e., the 95 per cent spoken of by Mao.

No doubt it was galling for participants of the Long March to be grilled by youngsters with no experience of the class struggle or civil war, and their record as communist cadres impugned. Hardly anyone was immune. It was no wonder that clashes broke out between Red Guards and different sections of the population. And, of course, there were warring factions among the Red Guards themselves. All played a role in

undermining support for the leadership of the CR, and finally it helped the rightists on the Central Committee to carry out the 1976 coup d'état.

On May 1 1967, Mao made a number of important observations worth recalling, such as the following:

**I had originally intended to train some successors from among the intellectuals, but it would now appear to be impractical, It seems to me that the world outlook of intellectuals, including those young intellectuals who are still receiving education in schools, and those both within and outside the Party, is still basically bourgeois. This is because in the more than ten years since liberation, the cultural and educational circles have been dominated by revisionism, and so bourgeois ideology has seeped into their blood. Thus, revolutionary intellectuals must carefully remould their world outlook during this crucial stage of the struggle between the two classes, the two roads and the two lines. Otherwise they will go contrary to the revolution. Now I would like to ask you a question. What would you say is the goal of the Cultural Revolution? (Someone answered on the spot: It is to struggle against powerholders within the Party who take the capitalist road). To struggle against powerholders who take the capitalist road is the main task, but it is by no means the goal. The goal is to solve the problem of world outlook: it is the question of eradicating the roots of revisionism.**

Continuing, Mao said:

**In order to transform ideology it is necessary for the external causes to function through inner causes, though the latter are principal. If the world outlook is not transformed how can the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution be called a victory? If the world outlook is not transformed, then although there are 2000 powerholders taking the capitalist road in this Great Cultural Revolution, there may be 4,000 next time. The cost of this Great Cultural Revolution has been very great, and even though the question of the struggle between the two classes and the two roads cannot be resolved by one, two, three or four Great Cultural Revolutions, still, this great Cultural Revolution should consolidate things for a decade at least. In the course of one century, it may be possible to launch a revolution two or three times at most.**

In connection with this speech the first question to be asked is, was the world outlook transformed? The answer is obvious, no, it was not! Had it been, had the masses been won to a proletarian socialist outlook, there would have been no possibility of a successful rightist coup after Mao's death. Socialism and the dictatorship of the proletariat would have been continually strengthened.

Thus, those Maoists – and there are not a few – who proclaim that the CR was a great success are simply flying in the face of the facts. They have established a widely-accepted dogma. Should everyone bow down before it, or should they reject it? My answer is the latter.

It should be noted that while at the beginning of the CR Mao was saying that a Cultural Revolution was needed every 8 or 10 years, by 1967 this was extended to (possibly) two or three times a century. Later on still he does not refer to a time

schedule at all. Yet there are still Maoists who stick to a CR every 10 years. What is this other than a dogma with no basis in reality?

While I point to the allocation of the vanguard role in the CR to the students as a serious error, that is because in a socialist revolution the working class is the vanguard; if this is not firmly held to whatever the revolution, it cannot and will not be socialist.

This is not to play down the importance of intellectuals and students in revolutions. They are usually greater in democratic revolutions but they can also play an important role in a socialist revolution, as witness Marx, Engels and Lenin, all bourgeois intellectuals.

As Lenin pointed out intellectuals can be a reliable part of the socialist revolution providing that they place themselves at the standpoint of the working class. While a percentage did this in the CR it is obvious from the growth of anarchic behaviour foreign to workers that most did not.

Mao's remarks in the same speech just quoted return to his earlier analysis of internal and external contradictions and their relations. Just to refresh participants' minds, here is the relevant passage from *On Contradiction*.

**Changes in society are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in society, that is, the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the contradiction between classes and the contradiction between the old and the new; it is the development of these contradictions that pushes society forward and gives the impetus for the supersession of the old by the new. Does materialist dialectics exclude external causes? Not at all. It holds that external causes are the condition of change and internal causes are the basis of change, and that external causes become operative through internal causes. In a suitable temperature an egg changes into a chicken, but no temperature can change a stone into a chicken because each has a different basis. There is constant interaction between the peoples of different countries. In the era of capitalism, and especially in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, the interaction and mutual impact of different countries in the political, economic and cultural spheres are extremely great. The October Socialist Revolution ushered in a new epoch in world history as well as in Russian history. It exerted influence on internal changes in the other countries in the world and, similarly and in a particularly profound way, on internal changes in China. These changes, however were effected through the inner laws of development of these countries, China included.**  
(11)

In his outstanding analysis of the loss of socialism in the Soviet Union Mao examined it from the standpoint of materialist dialectics. While many communists found different reasons for the loss, such as bureaucracy, imperialist pressure or simply flaws in Stalin's personality such as arbitrariness, Mao got to the heart of the matter. He found the cause in the class struggle – an internal contradiction, in particular in the growth of the new bourgeoisie as an antagonistic class. Recognising Stalin's merits,

he did not absolve Stalin from mistakes but held that he made a serious error in claiming that there were no antagonistic classes or class struggle in the Soviet Union. Those Maoists who hold that Mao made no mistakes – or perhaps just one of no great significance – are ignoring materialist dialectics. They are absolving Mao from having any responsibility in the loss of socialism in China. Some are still asserting – or have done so up till very recently – that the loss was caused by imperialism – i.e., an external contradiction. Others claim it was because of an adverse balance of class forces. This latter simply begs the question. The facts of history showed that such adverse balance did not succeed in preventing or defeating the triumph of the revolution. Why then should it have done so in this case? Such people have no answer to this question. They are simply repeating a dogma without being able to explain anything.

It might be thought that in pointing out a number of dogmas still held to by many Maoists that I have concluded on this theme. But there are a few more yet. One of them, by no means unimportant, is the assertion of the universality of people's war. Once more we see the absence of materialist dialectics in this position. In reality it refuses to apply Lenin's dictum, 'the concrete analysis of concrete conditions' as the essential thing in dialectics. What this assertion does is to obliterate the distinction between the levels of economic development and hence the necessary adaptation of strategy and tactics in the specific circumstances of the countries concerned. In the third world countries there is a majority of peasants in the population. Many are landless, suffering oppression and extreme exploitation at the hands of the landlords. They take part in armed struggle to alleviate their conditions; some have reached the revolutionary level of waging people's war. This is developing now in Peru, Nepal, the Philippines and India. More countries will come to it.

Can it be supposed that the same conditions prevail in the advanced capitalist countries? Anyone who thinks so is shutting his or her mind to the objective reality revealed by the statistical evidence. In the USA, for instance, those engaged in agriculture number approximately 3 per cent. In Britain they constitute 11 per cent, in New Zealand approximately 14 per cent. Nearly all are hostile to socialism and the working class. Most are well-to-do farmers, not impoverished peasants. Anyone who imagines that this class would wage people's war to overthrow imperialism, feudalism and local monopoly capitalism is completely deluding themselves. The universality of people's war in such circumstances is just a mirage.

Not all countries belong to the camp of either the developed world or the third world. There are of course intermediate levels of development in a number of countries. Their paths to socialist revolution will undoubtedly vary. It is the task of the proletarian revolutionary party in each of these differing countries to themselves solve the problems of strategy and tactics facing them. To try to foist on them and on the

developed world the universality of people's war can only do harm. It is simply a chimera. Only in one or two cases in the more developed countries, such as Ireland, where there is a long-standing bourgeois nationalist movement involved in an armed struggle against a colonialist power and its local adherents, could there be any sort of viability for continued armed struggle. In nearly all other cases the capitalist state would crush any incipient revolution at high speed. I am, of course, speaking of the present. Later, as imperialism reaches a revolutionary crisis, then matters will be different.

There are those who claim, yes, our revolution will be socialist but it would develop into people's war which could actually win power. There is no question that a socialist revolution, while it would develop into civil war, is far from identical to people's war. The first is an armed insurrection of the working class which seizes power in its own name and in a short time, as in October 1917. The second is the carrying on of a protracted war, true, under the leadership of a working-class party as in the Chinese revolution, but at the head of a broad front of classes, not that of a single class. Attempting to prove that people's war can win in advanced countries is a muddle-headed attempt to straddle the contradiction between two different types of revolution: one a National-Democratic revolution, the other a directly socialist revolution such as the October Revolution. Such an idea shows a high degree of ideological confusion by parties which adopt it.

One other dogma needs to be touched on. This is the universality of the militarisation of the Party. True, for a period in the Soviet civil war this tendency prevailed owing to the precariousness of the revolutionary situation. But to insist that in the present period such a policy should be generally adopted in practice is to replace democratic centralism with actual military discipline.

In a report delivered at a broadly representative Party meeting on December 2, 1923, Stalin considered the question of defects in internal Party life. He goes into the causes of these and says:

**The first cause is that our Party organisations have not yet rid themselves, or have still not yet altogether rid themselves, of certain survivals of the war period, a period that has passed but has left in the minds of our responsible workers vestiges of the military regime in the Party. I think that these survivals find expression in the view that our Party is not an independently acting organism, not an independently acting, militant organisation of the proletariat, but something in the nature of a system of institutions, something in the nature of a complex of institutions in which there are officials of lower rank and officials of higher rank. That, comrades, is a profoundly mistaken view that has nothing in common with Marxism; that view is a survival that we have inherited from the war period, when we militarised the Party, when the question of the independent activity of the mass of the Party membership had necessarily to be shifted into a decisive importance. I do not remember that this view was ever definitely expressed; nevertheless, it, or elements of it, still influences our work. Comrades, we must combat such views with all our might, for they are a very**

**real danger and create favourable conditions for the distortion in practice of the essentially correct line of our Party. (12)**

Thus, without labouring the point, what is justifiable in conditions of civil war and could certainly be applicable in people's war, is not justifiable in conditions of relatively peaceful development; i.e., universality would be wrong.

## **Conclusions**

What I have sought to do in this paper is to explain our Party's ideological position of pro-Mao, Marxism-Leninism. There is no question in my mind of the greatness of Mao's achievements right up to the Cultural Revolution. During the course of the Chinese Revolution Mao solved many difficult problems in the spheres of policy, strategy and tactics. The masses were led by the working class and its Party at the head of which stood Mao Tse-tung, a position requiring firmness in principle and ability to wage inner-Party struggle successfully against both revisionism and dogmatism. In the course of this struggle he cleansed the World Communist Movement of the Augean stables of the CPSU revisionism and also reinstated Stalin as a great Marxist-Leninist, albeit one who made mistakes, some of them serious.

The Chinese Revolution, from the bourgeois democracy of Sun Yat-sen to the New Democracy of 1949 and up to the CR, was an enormously complex revolution, even more so because of China's great population and semi-colonial status than was the October Revolution. Thus, Mao must certainly go down in world history as a great revolutionary leader and one who made lasting contributions to Marxist-Leninist theory. That is why we put the words 'pro-Mao' in front of Marxism-Leninism to describe our ideology.

However, one cannot ignore the fact that when Lenin died, socialism did not die with him but continued under Stalin. That did not happen with Mao. One month after his death the rightist coup restored capitalism. Along with this, Mao made some errors of judgment which I have dealt with in the foregoing text. Because Lenin made very few mistakes, and mostly small ones, and because he developed a new theory of revolution and showed the way to building socialism in one country, Marxism justly became known as Marxism-Leninism. Because of the failure of the Cultural Revolution and the serious error of Mao's handing its leadership to the students, I could not accept that one should put the sign of equality between Mao and Lenin by naming the ideology of the new parties that formed from the debris of the World Communist Movement during its gradual revival either Marxist-Leninist-Mao Tse-tung Thought parties or Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties. To my mind this is a distortion of reality which leaves totally unexplained the undeniable historic fact that socialism was lost in China.

Was there a different route that could have been taken other than the Cultural Revolution? It was certainly a great risk to place the Party and its leading role in danger of being defeated in a new struggle for power. While it may not have seemed as sweeping to Mao as a Cultural Revolution which would rear a whole generation which could bar the road to a revisionist takeover, there was a somewhat similar critical situation faced by Lenin soon after October, 1917, just after the revolutionary insurrection. A number of Bolsheviks resigned from the Central Committee (CC) and demanded abandonment of Central Committee policy and decisions. In this case there was fierce, popular condemnation of the 'deserters'. Mass revolutionary pressure forced them to submit to the CC decisions.

Not strictly analogous to the situation in the CPC, for the 'black gang' of unrepentant revisionists did not resign. But Mao outweighed all others on the CC in prestige. He would certainly have been upheld by popular pressure of the masses in any struggle.

Another critical situation faced by Lenin was in early 1918 when a complex struggle broke out in the CC on the question of whether to accept peace terms laid down by Germany. Lenin declared at a meeting of the CC on February 23 that if the peace terms were not accepted the CC would sign the Soviet power's death warrant within three weeks. He issued an ultimatum that if the policy of 'revolutionary phrases' [of 'left' communists led by Bukharin] was continued he would resign from the CC and the Government. This ultimatum changed the voting so that Lenin's line was carried.

The point of Lenin's position is that he finally had to use his prestige as a Party leader to win a majority on the CC by means of an ultimatum. The fate of the revolution was at stake. By these means he preserved the unity of the Party as the leader of the working class, even though his opponents went on later to opposition on other questions.

A similar stand by Mao could have possibly defeated the leading clique of revisionists by different tactics from those of the Cultural Revolution.

This may appear hypothetical, but had matters proceeded along such lines Mao's aims, while delayed, could have been realised and left most of the Party intact. I feel it necessary to raise this possibility as a means of avoiding the turbulence and chaos that ensued with the CR. But the CR was Mao's chosen path and it is still quite on the cards that even had he placed the working class in the vanguard it might still not have ensured success in the struggle against the revisionist new bourgeoisie. But it might well have avoided the conditions that enabled the rightist coup to take place as and when it did.

I have referred to a number of dogmas which appear to be dear to the heart of these new parties. I refer to the whole trend as one of dogmatic Maoism. One of the salient features of this trend is almost complete (perhaps wholly complete) lack of recognition of any dogmatism or any serious spirit of self-criticism that takes it into account, on the part of these parties. Of course, there is obvious concern in regard to the struggle against revisionism, but why is there apparently none whatsoever in regard to dogmatism? For years it has to all intents and purposes been relegated into the limbo of non-existent tendencies. Despite their long-standing fight against opportunism and revisionism within the Marxist-Leninist movement, none of the great Marxists ignored the possible dangers from dogmatism; perhaps, because of the experience of the line of Wang Ming and the 28 ½ Bolsheviks, Mao least of all.

Let us briefly recall what this line consisted of and what it referred to. Wang Ming studied in Moscow and returned to China with a group of students which became elevated to the leadership of the Party – i.e., the 28½ Bolsheviks. Between 1931 and 1934 they did immense harm to the revolutionary cause. They were dogmatic followers of all the features of the October Revolution irrespective of any different conditions that existed in China. As is well-known, under Mao's theoretical and practical leadership a large revolutionary base area with a 300,000-strong army had been built up in the South, in Kiangsi province. Thanks to the bull-headed dogmatism of Wang Ming and Co., the Party forces were called on to fight constantly against Kuomintang forces with superior arms, always in costly frontal attacks. Before long, the Chinese Red Army were forced to leave their Kiangsi base and to set out on their historic 'Long March'. Of course this march had enormous influence in rallying millions to the cause of revolution, but the losses were enormous. Of the 300,000 who set out from Kiangsi, only 20,000 survived to reach Yen-an in the North. It was this bitter experience of the dangers of dogmatism that led Mao to write his major ideological pamphlet *On Practice*, later to be followed by *On Contradiction*. In various ideological writings Mao subsequently stressed not only the danger of revisionism but also that of dogmatism. How is it, then, that in the vocabulary of today's Maoists 'dogmatism' is practically a forgotten word? It has disappeared from history. It seems that once there was dogmatism, but there is no longer.

Before concluding, let me recapitulate some of the aspects of dogmatic Maoism which I have mentioned.

- 1) That Mao made no mistakes except for not having set up a new International.
- 2) That the Cultural Revolution was the greatest revolution in history.
- 3) That the Cultural Revolution was a great success.

- 4) That the cause of the loss of socialism in China was imperialism.
- 5) That the cause of the loss of socialism in China was due to an adverse balance of class forces.
- 6) That all Maoist parties should conduct people's war.
- 7) That all parties should be militarised.

As for the main shortcoming of the Maoist movement it is the inability of leading bodies of Maoist parties and groups to master materialist dialectics and apply it in practice in order to solve problems. With that ability sufficiently developed, all problems can be solved.

It is our Party's view that because imperialism is a system in decay, a new revolutionary wave is bound to develop in due course, with the lead being taken in the underdeveloped countries, particularly through the agency of people's war. Both revisionism and dogmatism are anti-Marxist tendencies. Because dogmatism can turn into revisionism it is necessary to fight against both tendencies. If this struggle is carried on correctly, then the present theoretical chaos can be overcome. It is our earnest desire that this will be accomplished.

See: *On the Question of Stalin*, Sept. 13, 1963.

<sup>2</sup>*Speech to an Enlarged Work Conference*, 1962. (Mao forecast exactly the type of bourgeois fascist dictatorship existing in China today).

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *The Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*. 1959

<sup>5</sup> *op cit.*

<sup>6</sup> *Imperialism and the Revolution*, Tirana, Albania, 1979.

<sup>7</sup> *Mao: Talk at the Central Work Conference*, 25 October, 1966, sel. wks. Mao Vol. IX p191.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> See *Wind in the Tower*, Han Suyin, pp 277-278

<sup>10</sup> J. Ch'en, *Mao and the Chinese Revolution*, Oxford University Press, London, p 61.

<sup>11</sup> Mao, *On Contradiction*, English edition, sel. wks. Vol. 1, p314.

<sup>12</sup> Stalin, coll. wks. English edition, vol. 5, p368.

### **About the author**

This pamphlet consists of a paper submitted by the Workers' Party of New Zealand (WPNZ) to an international seminar in December 1998 commemorating the 105th birth anniversary of the leader of the Chinese revolution, Mao Tse-tung, and his establishment of the theory of people's war.

The paper concerned was written by Party Chairman, Ray Nunes, also the editor of its monthly journal *The Spark*. It deals with a number of problems arising within the world communist movement in relation to the renewal of world communism which is taking place as the outcome of the growth of people's war.

Ray Nunes' involvement in the world communist movement spans nearly sixty years. Most of those years he was in leading positions in the Communist Party of New Zealand and was active in the communist movement internationally. The breadth and scope of this paper is a testimony to a lifetime of involvement in the world communist movement. There are few people with such a rich history of experience in the movement still alive and active today.

The Seminar was attended by 27 parties and groups, which included six parties now waging people's war and others such as the Workers' Party of New Zealand giving them full support.

I was the delegate representing the Workers' Party of New Zealand at the Seminar and found the gathering a valuable means for laying and extending the basis for future cooperation between the participants.

Daphna Whitmore

Secretary Workers' Party of New Zealand