



Since 1911, when the Emperor was overthrown, a reactionary regime has not been able to hold China for long. If there is a Right-wing, anti-Communist coup d'etat in China, then I am certain that those elements will not know a moment of peace.

It is very possible that they will be able to retain their dominance for a while. If the Right-wing seizes power, it will be able to use my words to retain power for a time. But the Left will use other quotations of mine, and organise themselves, and overthrow the Right-wing.

Mao Tse-tung to Chiang Ching, 1966.

NOTTINGHAM COMMUNIST GROUP



IS CHINA STILL SOCIALIST?



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R E D S T A R P U B L I C A T I O N S

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

To even the most casual observer of events, it has become obvious that great changes have taken place in China since the death of Mao in 1976. Four of the most prominent leaders of the Cultural Revolution, the so-called "Gang of Four", have been under arrest since shortly after Mao's death and there have been major purges in the Communist Party of China, the state bureaucracy and the army. One of Mao's long standing political opponents, Teng Hsiao-ping, is now leader of China in all but name, and many of the revisionist ring leaders have been restored to power. Liu Shao-chi, the former disgraced head of state, has now been posthumously rehabilitated with full state honours. These changes in the superstructure of Chinese society have been accompanied by major changes of policy in the economic base; under the slogan of the "Four Modernisations" the new leadership have reversed policies forged during the Cultural Revolution in industry, agriculture, scientific research and culture and education, and are now aiming to develop China into a modern "superpower" by the end of the century.

For Marxist-Leninists, the question of the developments in China since the death of Mao represents one of the most important issues confronting the international communist movement at the present time. The struggle in China has far-reaching implications for the working class and its party in every country, not least in Britain, where a unified Marxist-Leninist movement has yet to be formed. In this country, the Marxist-Leninists have either failed to declare their position or have come out openly in support of the new regime, although in many other countries the Marxist-Leninists have condemned the new regime in China as revisionist.

The position of the Nottingham Communist Group on developments in China since the death of Mao was first presented in Red Star No. 2. As we pointed out in that issue, there was not the space to present in detail the basis for our conclusion that the new regime in power in China were representatives of the new state bourgeoisie who were embarking on a policy of establishing a state capitalist system. In this pamphlet we hope to make clear our reasons for ar-

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iving at such a conclusion, but we should also point out that this pamphlet is in no way intended as a definitive work on recent events in China. For those wishing to make a more detailed study of the issues dealt with here, we recommend those books by the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA listed in the bibliography, which we have found particularly useful in allowing our group to arrive at a clearer understanding of the events which have taken place inside China since the death of Mao Tse-tung.

1. THE FOUR MODERNISATIONS

The main objective of the new line in political economy that has emerged since the death of Mao and the arrest of the Four is the implementation of the four modernisations - in agriculture, industry, defence and science and technology - which the new leadership maintain will provide the basis for China to become a "modern socialist great power" before the end of the century. To this end they have embarked upon the development of a specific form of state capitalism which in its essentials is similar to the system that the revisionist elements have succeeded in establishing in the Soviet Union. The new productivist line being pushed in China is couched in an apologetic and mystifying way, in terms which have more than a little in common with the Soviet ideological system. As in the Soviet Union, Marxism has undergone a degeneration which has resulted in it functioning as a theory of state capitalism.

The basic logic of the new leadership in China can be characterised quite simply: in order to "develop" the economy and especially industry, emphasis must be placed on big, modern and advanced technology which, of necessity, means reliance on the advanced capitalist countries. To pay for this new technology China's raw materials, principally oil and coal must be sold off and profits maximised in the factories and agriculture. To make such profits "scientific management" must be in command, authority centralised, new rules and regulations introduced and an end to the situation where factories were not only production units but the first battlegrounds of the class struggle.

In this context two basic themes have constantly recurred in the Chinese Press. Firstly, no more reference is made to contradictions between the Party and the masses; instead calls for the restoration of all power to the Party Committees at all levels, including the economy, have been made. Secondly, the dictatorship of the proletariat is no longer defined as a dictatorship by the working masses, but as a dictatorship by the Party, with its main objectives being the highest possible rate of the growth of production!

The fundamental line of the new rulers is most clearly expressed in the "Twenty Points" which were put forward by Teng Hsiao-Ping in late 1975, supposedly as a programme for accelerating industrial development, but which is actually a programme for accelerating capitalist restoration. (2) To characterise the "Twenty Points" it is only necessary to repeat the statement attributed to Chang Chun-Chiao who has been quoted as saying:

"The "Twenty Points" put forward a revisionist line, complete with principles and policies; it peddles rubbish that has long ago been criticised, such as material incentives, profits in command, direct and exclusive control of enterprises by the ministry concerned, reliance on specialists to run factories, the theory of the all importance of the productive forces, the "theory of the dying out of the class struggle"; and its application of eclecticism is really unsurpassed". (3)

In fact the "Twenty Points" are only a refurbished version under new conditions of the same revisionist line as the "Seventy Articles" which were dished up by Liu Shao-Chi and Teng Shao-Ping in 1961. These "Seventy Articles" called for reassertion of exclusive control by the central ministries, for cancellation of many construction projects, established the market as the primary object in production and even called for the closure of factories that did not show a profit. They resurrected restrictive rules and regulations that had been reformed, called for instituting piece-work whenever possible and for the restriction of the time workers were to spend in political study. They also demanded an end to the political struggle in the factories.

The fact that in China today these very same revisionist lines are being implemented only serves to illustrate the extent to which the so-called "New Economic Policy" really represents a great leap backward.

DEPENDENCE ON FOREIGN TECHNOLOGY AND INVESTMENT

In order to "modernise" China's economy as quickly as possible, the new leadership have embarked on a programme of importing vast quantities of advanced technology from the United States, Japan and Europe. To earn the foreign currency to buy the new technology China's natural resources, particularly coal and oil are being exported at an increasing rate. More recently, China has announced measures to package and export its most abundant natural resource - manpower. Contracts have already been signed with French and Italian companies to supply Chinese labourers for construction projects abroad.

A further indication of the determination of the new leadership to embark on an all round restoration of capitalism are the special measures which have been taken to encourage foreign investment in China. Two special "economic zones" have been established near Canton to attract foreign firms either on their own or through joint ventures with Chinese companies. These "special zones" are to be modelled on those which have been operating for many years in countries such as Taiwan and South Korea. After paying taxes, firms setting up in such zones will be allowed to transmit their profits abroad through the Bank of China. Is it necessary to add here that China has now in effect re-opened her doors to imperialist penetration and exploitation. Hua, Teng and co are not acting merely as a new bourgeoisie but as a comprador bourgeoisie and all at the expense of the Chinese people.

PROFIT IN COMMAND

From December 1976 onwards great emphasis has been placed on the importance of enterprises earning profits. The justification used for the new policy is illustrated by the following extract from an editorial in the "Peoples Daily" of August 1977. Entitled "Hard work to increase state accumulation" the editorial expresses the notion of "socialist profit" as follows:

"Socialist enterprises have the noble responsibility of working hard in order to increase state accumulation and make larger profits. In socialist conditions, what a

factory earnings differs in essence from capitalist profit. The earnings of a socialist enterprise are a sign of the conscious efforts of the workers to create material wealth, to supply consumption goods and accumulate capital for the construction of socialism. This is totally different from capitalist exploitation of surplus value. Profit is an important pre-requisite for the continued production of any enterprise and for enlarged social reproduction. Improvements in management and increases in earnings (on the one hand) and the revisionist notion of putting profit in command are entirely different concepts (6)".

At present all enterprises, apart from certain state-authorized exceptions, are obliged to make profits. It is clear that this new direction has necessitated a reinforcement of hierarchical authority in the factories and communes. The Revolutionary Committees which established workers management in the factories during the Cultural Revolution have been rendered toothless and a system of one-man management has been introduced which gives absolute authority to the Party leadership and amounts to a denial of any contradictions between the Party leadership and the workforce.

In order that centralised authority and one-man management is made effective and production increased the new leadership have introduced new rules and regulations along with systems of bonuses and piece-work into the factories. The reinstatement of these rules and regulations are designed to boost production and clearly reverse the breakthrough made by the workers during the Cultural Revolution when they reformed rules and regulations and achieved a more rational division of labour. This broke down the existing conventions and the enslavement of workers to one production post.

The current rulers even try to deny that rules and regulations have a class character and reflect production relations; the idea of "scientific regulation" has been justified as follows:

"We should make a concrete analysis of bourgeois rules and regulations. Bourgeois rules and regulations and the

management of capitalist firms are designed to exploit and oppress workers. They are thus reactionary. We should reject them completely... Certain bourgeois rules and regulations, however, and some aspects of capitalist management are the result of practical experience of the workers and are therefore scientific". (7)

With production as the main objective, factory regulations have become the chief weapon used by the current leadership to establish its order and "disruptive" political movements in the factories are brought to an end and order and discipline established in productive work.

THE NEW AGRICULTURAL POLICY

Although less has been written about agriculture than other sectors of the economy there have been very important and rapid changes in the agricultural sector since 1976. As with the policy in industry the new line in agriculture is orientated towards creating the conditions which will enable the maximum amount of surplus labour to be extracted from the peasants for the benefit of state industry. Now much greater authority is exercised by the Party committees over the peasants and agricultural units have to apply a system of distribution based on norm fixing and recording of work points according to work done, with an overall system of material incentives.

Claims made by the new regime that they would fully mechanise agriculture by the 1980s have proved to be a total flop but there has been an increasing tendency towards the setting up of Yugoslav-type agro-industrial complexes and an encouragement of private enterprise and the revival of rural markets.

While undoubtedly more attention and analysis is needed with regard to the new agricultural policy it is still evident that the new line represents a reversal of Mao's policy which was always to leave as many resources as possible to the rural communes in order to consolidate agriculture - "the basis of the national economy".

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The changes in policy with regard to science and technology are very important, especially as the new regime regards the "modernisation" of science and technology as the key link in the realisation of the "Four Modernisations". In effect the new line places professionalism and expertise in command and this has led to a reliance on Western scientific and technical methods. This is a perspective which leads on to the idea that science and technology are entirely neutral and independent of social relationships.

The line of Mao and the "Four" was that the principal aspect of scientific and technical work should be geared to serving China's developing production needs and that theoretical research and study of the basic sciences, while important, should be secondary. They fought for the line of "red and expert" and for the principle of open-door scientific research, this was a new development which emerged from the Cultural Revolution. By this method work and study in the laboratory was combined with investigation and work in relation to productive labour and scientific experiment by the masses. Under the new leadership there is no longer any attempt to raise the problem of the monopoly of the intellectually productive forces, exercised by a class section of the population other than the direct producers, as Marx presented in "Capital".

THE NEW MILITARY POLICY

In many ways the question of military policy and defense is the key question for Marxist-Leninists to decide on in their appraisal of the policies of the new regime in China. For, if it can be shown that the "Four Modernisations" are essential for developing a defensive system which is capable of countering an attack by an imperialist aggressor, it is plausible to argue that in the final analysis the line of the new leadership may be viewed as correct. In this context it is very important to study Mao's line on the relationship between the modernisation of the economy and the defense of China in the event of

war with the Soviets. While of course stressing that China should develop its national defense and acquiring the most modern weapons possible, Mao insisted that the development of new weapons, including nuclear weapons, did not change the basic principles of war. Mao gave emphasis not only to the development of a regular army, but also to the broad armed forces of the masses of the people, which would be an important force in addition to the regular Peoples Liberation Army in the waging of a guerilla war against imperialist aggression in China.

Mao stressed that if attacked or invaded on anything but a small scale the correct necessary tactic would be to pull back and lure the enemy in, then fighting them by a Peoples War. The "Four" also upheld this line, arguing that a primary component of the preparation for war should be the development of relatively self-sufficient base areas in the interior of the country, which would feed the masses of the people even if large areas of land were invaded and occupied by the enemy.

The new leadership, in placing reliance on modernisation as their basis for the policy of fighting a modern war, have capitulated to imperialism. It is quite erroneous to suggest that by undertaking the Four Modernisations as the key link China can actually catch up and surpass the major military powers - especially the Soviet Union - so as to be able to fight a "war of steel". As Mao said in 1961:

"We will adopt advanced technology. But we cannot, because of this, negate the inevitability of backward technology in a certain period of time. Since the beginnings of history, in revolutionary wars, it has always been people armed with inferior weapons who defeated those with superior weapons. During the Civil Wars, the anti-Japanese War and the War of Liberation, we did not exercise power over the whole country and we did not have modern arsenals. If we must have the newest weapons before we fight then this is tantamount to disarming ourselves".

This emphasis on the creative power of people over things has of course been completely ignored by the new regime.

They place all the emphasis on artifacts, including weaponry, and ignore the revolutionary ardour and potential of the people.

CONCLUSION: THE FOUR MODERNISATIONS

A correct Marxist-Leninist analysis of the "Four Modernisations" must conclude that they are not directed towards resolving the major contradictions in socialist society by strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat, but are essentially aimed at establishing a specific type of state capitalism in China. This will strengthen the position of the new bourgeoisie in the Chinese social structure. During the last years of his life Mao opposed the "Four Modernisations" because, he correctly maintained, they could only lead to lop-sided development and class polarisation, dependence on imperialism and the restoration of capitalism.

The Revolutionary Communist Party of the United States have correctly summed up the fundamental outlook of the new rulers of China as being a bourgeois-bureaucratic approach to every question, including the crucial question of developing the economy:

"Instead of the Marxist-Leninist line, developed and enriched by Mao and fought for by the "Four", which relied on and scientifically sums up the experience of the masses and unleashes their conscious activism, the current rulers whole approach is top - down; at most the masses' role is to carry out the plans sent from the top by methods and people divorced from the opinions, demands and experience of the masses from Marxism-Leninism".

(Statement from the Revolutionary Communist Party US)

NOTES

- 1) See 'The economic policy of the new Chinese leadership' in 'Capital & Class no 9, pp 39-64.
- 2) For a critique of the 'Twenty Points' see Text 31 of 'And Mao makes 5'. Banner Press 1978.
- 3) Peking Review no 42, 1977.

- 4) Financial Times 22.1.1980
- 5) See 'Red Star' No 2, July 1979
- 6) Quoted in 'Capital and Class' no 9, pp52.
- 7) Broadcast made by Peking Radio, quoted in 'Capital and Class' no 9, page 50.

2. WHY WERE THE REVISIONISTS

ABLE TO SEIZE POWER?

If it is accepted that there has indeed been a counter revolution in China, how are we to explain such a dramatic turn-around in events? How is it possible that a socialist country, once advancing towards a communist society, can now be under the leadership of a revisionist clique whose aim is the establishment of a system of state monopoly capitalism? In this section we shall put forward a somewhat theoretical analysis of how the fundamental questions should be approached, while in the next section the basic arguments outlined here will be supported with more concrete analysis of the struggle within the Chinese Communist Party in the period leading up to and after the death of Mao in 1976.

CONTRADICTIONS WITHIN A SOCIALIST SOCIETY

In order to begin to be able to provide a satisfactory explanation to the questions raised, it is important to understand that the socialist society is a transitional social system, which has been born out of the old system of capitalism, and which must, if it is not to die, advance towards a society in which communism is achieved. Socialist society therefore contains within it many of the contradictions of capitalism. In China there still existed, even before Mao's death, what the Chinese called "The Three Great Differences" i.e. between workers and peasants town and country and mental and manual labour. These were the three principal contradictions in Chinese society, but there were other secondary contradictions which are of particular importance in understanding the underlying basis for the class struggle under socialism.

Once such contradiction concerned the system of ownership in China, this had not reached the stage of being completely socialised in the period before Mao's death. Private ownership still existed, partially in industry, agriculture and commerce. Socialist ownership included both state and collective forms, the latter being the predominant form of ownership in agriculture, the key sector of the Chinese economy. Of course this is not to deny that the

system of ownership in China had been changed so that the proletariat and other working people in China had in the main freed themselves from the shackles of private ownership. It is simply to point out that until the system of ownership is completely socialised there exists a material basis for the reproduction of a bourgeoisie and bourgeois attitudes.

While ownership of the means of production is the most important basic aspect of the relations of production, it is not the only aspect. There is also the question of the relations among people in the process of production and the question of how the goods produced are to be distributed. Both of these aspects of the relations of production under socialism continue to be influenced, to varying degrees, with bourgeois right. If bourgeois right is not continually restricted in both of these aspects of the relations of production and if, in addition, a revisionist line is being taken by the Communist Party, then the contradictions within these aspects will grow and interact dialectically on the ownership system. Chan Chun-Chiao, one of the "Four", summed up the important points as follows:

"It is perfectly correct for people to give full weight to the decisive role of the system of ownership in the relations of production. But it is incorrect to give no weight to whether the issue of ownership has been resolved merely in form or in actual fact, to the reaction upon the system of ownership exerted by the other two aspects of the relations of production - the relations among people and the forms of distribution - and to the action exerted upon the economic base by the superstructure. These two aspects and the superstructure may play a decisive role under given conditions. Politics is the concentrated expression of economics. Whether the ideological line is correct or incorrect and which class holds leadership, decides which class owns the factories in actual fact". (2)

THE NEW BOURGEOISIE IN THE PARTY

Lenin had recognised the tendency for a new bourgeoisie

to arise under socialism because of the contradictions of the ownership system; this is what he was referring to when he said that:

"Small production engenders capitalism and the bourgeoisie continually, hourly, spontaneously and on a mass scale". Mao recognised this tendency and the dangers it posed for the restoration of capitalism; but Mao was constantly pointing out that the leading force of the new bourgeoisie engendered under socialism is engendered not in the economic base but in the ideological superstructure of socialist society, in the Communist Party itself, especially in its top ranks. As the Revolutionary Communist Party of the United States explain:

"This is because of the position of the Party itself in socialist society and of the changes in class relations that arise with the development of socialism, especially after socialist ownership has in the main been established. In these conditions the people who exercise leadership in the allocation of the means of production and means of consumption are, in the final analysis, overwhelmingly party members, particularly those at the top levels. Though in theory they exercise this leadership on behalf of the masses, nevertheless there is a contradiction, which is a reflection of the fact that the means of production have not yet fully become common property of all society and the masses of people have not yet fully become the masters of production and of all society. The divisions, inequalities and other material and ideological remnants of bourgeois society have not yet been completely overcome". (3)

In speaking of the new bourgeoisie under socialism we clearly don't mean that as a class they privately own the means of production, as the old capitalist bourgeoisie did but where, for example, the division of labour in an enterprise is not restricted and therefore leading personnel do not participate in productive labour, and where leading cadre increase their income relative to that of the workers (through expanded wage differentials) then in fact the relation of the leading people to the workers is tantamount to exploitation. These essentially capitalist relations of production are made more explicit where

profit, not the satisfaction of human needs, is made the object of production as is the case in China today. In effect the leadership are appropriating some of the surplus produced by the workers while they themselves have command over the markets and over production without taking part in production.

Again, this does mean that all leading people, by mere virtue of their position, are bound to become bourgeois and turn traitor to the revolution. But some leading people will take to the bourgeois style of life and adopt a revisionist ideological and political line, and they will then have both the necessity and the opportunity to rally a following for an attempt to seize power and restore capitalism. In any revolution there will be people who obtain some benefits from it, and a tendency for some of them not to want the revolution to go further, lest their benefits are endangered. As Chang Chun-chiao put it:

"They do approve of the dictatorship of the proletariat at a certain stage and within a certain sphere and are pleased with certain victories of the proletariat, because these will bring them some gains; once they have secured their gains, they feel it is time to settle down and feather their cosy nests. As for exercising all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie, as for going on after the first step on the 10,000 li long march (i.e. continuing the revolution after the seizure of power), sorry, let others do the job; here is my stop and I must get off the bus." (4)

IMPORTANCE OF THE SUPERSTRUCTURE IN SOCIALIST SOCIETY

Within the economic base of socialist society, that is, the relations of production, there is therefore a material basis for a new bourgeoisie to be formed, because of the contradictions of socialist society as a whole. Under these conditions, the superstructure of socialist society, by which we mean the Communist Party itself, assumes the initiating role, and the policies that are applied to the relations of production become very important. These policies, and the overall viewpoint and program that guide them, find expression as questions of line; if a correct line is carried out by those in leadership, the contradict-

ions within the relations of production can be gradually overcome so that the masses increase their mastery of production and society. But where a revisionist line is in command, which treats the object of production as profit and the role of the workers as being just to work hard, then leadership will be transformed into a position of bourgeois domination and exploitation of the masses.

The correct relationship between the economic base and the superstructure in socialist society is therefore one of dialectical interpenetration; the economic base of society is principal over the superstructure in so far as it determines the character of the superstructure and sets the limits to which the superstructure can exercise its influence at each stage of the revolution. Yet, at all times the superstructure reacts upon the base, influencing it enormously by assuming an initiating role. This relationship is expressed in Lenin's well-known dictum that "politics is the concentrated expression of economics", by which he meant that, while class forces in society are overall determined by the relations of production, these relations find concentrated expression in the political power relations of the superstructure, which in turn react upon the base. (5)

Both Mao and the Four constantly emphasised the significance of the contradictions in the economic base, and their expression in the superstructure, if ever the bourgeoisie should seize state power in China. In the article from which we quoted at the beginning of this section, Chang Chun-chiao emphasised the fact that China was still practising a commodity system in which exchange of goods was mediated by money, and where distribution was practised according to work done. Such commodity exchange relationships were bound to be reflected in the exchange of products, even within the state sector itself. And since the state enterprises were still required to maintain a relative independence in accounting, their exchanges with each other were still significantly influenced by the operation of the law of value, the basic law of commodity exchange.

As with the other contradictions of socialist society, all this was unavoidable and would continue to exist in varying degrees for some time. But Mao stressed that the existence

of commodity exchange relationships could be made use of by the bourgeoisie, especially capitalist roaders in positions of power, to excessively widen the scope of the law of value in relations within and between different economic units as a decisive part of their attempts to actually transform socialist relations into capitalist relations and restore capitalism in the country as a whole. This is what Mao meant when he said:

"Our country at present practises a commodity system, the wage system is unequal too, as is the eight-grade wage scale and so forth. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat, such things can only be restricted. Therefore, if people like Lin Piao come to power, it will be quite easy for them to rig up the capitalist system." (6)

CONCLUSION

The key to understanding events in China since the death of Mao is therefore the realisation of the fact that in socialist society the line that is put forward reflects the class interests of those in power - the proletariat or the bourgeoisie - and the implementation of this line will actually determine the essence of the real production relations.

Essentially, the accession to power of the Hua-Teng clique represents a coup carried out in the very top echelons of the Communist Party of China. But by themselves, it is doubtful whether the bourgeoisie in the key positions of the Communist Party could have succeeded in keeping control of the country for as long as they have. However, as we shall show below in the next chapter, the revisionist coup was the outcome of a struggle which had been going on within the Communist Party of China since the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949. During this struggle, the leading revisionists in the Party had been busy securing the support of a vast bureaucracy in the middle echelons of both the Party and the state, as well as the armed forces. Teng Hsiao-ping, especially after he became General Secretary of the CPC in the early 1950's, was instrumental in establishing a system which bribed and bought the loyalty of numerous bureaucrats and party cadres, by, for example, establishing special schools for the children

of cadres. Although the Cultural Revolution succeeded in combatting the worst excesses in the abuse of privilege by the bureaucracy, events have shown that in the final analysis the class interests of the bourgeoisie were much too strongly entrenched for them to be removed by just one Cultural Revolution.

As in capitalist society, so in socialist society, class struggle remains the motive force, and the outcome of that struggle determines whether society continues to advance towards communism, or whether, in the short term, it is dragged back to capitalism. The bourgeoisie in a socialist country may, at certain times, have a more favourable position than the proletariat, in China, after the death of Mao, this was due to the development of internal contradictions within the country and to the relationship of these to the international situation. As Mao himself put it:

"In social struggle the forces representing the advanced class sometimes suffer defeat, not because their ideas are incorrect, but because, in the balance of forces engaged in struggle, they are not as powerful for the time being as the forces of reaction; they are therefore temporarily defeated, but they are bound to triumph sooner or later."
(7)

NOTES

- 1) See Chang Chun-chiao, 'On Exercising All-round Dictatorship Over the Bourgeoisie' reprinted in And Mao Makes Five.
- 2) Ibid., pp. 213-4.
- 3) Avakian, B., Mao's Immortal Contributions, p. 126.
- 4) Chang Chun-chiao, op. cit., p. 217.
- 5) For a good discussion of the relationship between base and superstructure in socialist society, see The Communist, No. 5, May 1979, pp. 187-92.
- 6) Mao speaking at the 4th. People's Congress, Jan. 1975
- 7) Mao, 'Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?', Selected Readings, p. 503.

3. THE STRUGGLE AGAINST REVISIONISM IN THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CHINA

As an aid to understanding the significance of the changes which have occurred in China since the death of Mao, it is helpful to review recent events in the context of the history of the Communist Party of China since the founding of the Peoples Republic of China in 1949. Using such an approach it becomes clear that from the very foundation of the Peoples Republic there has been a conflict within the leadership of the C.C.P., between the proletarian Marxist-Leninist line represented by Mao and the bourgeois, revisionist line represented in turn by Liu Shao-Chi, Lin Piao and now Teng Hsiao-Ping.

MAO'S STRUGGLE AGAINST REVISIONISM

The deep division which had always existed between Mao and Liu Shao-Chi emerged in 1949 over the nature of the principal contradictions in China, once liberation had been achieved; in effect this was a struggle over which road China should take, the socialist road or the capitalist road. In opposition to Liu's formulation that the principal contradiction was "between the advanced socialist system and the backward productive forces", Mao maintained that the principal contradiction was between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and that this was, in essence, an antagonistic contradiction. Later on, in the early 1950s, Liu and his clique opposed the co-operativisation movement through which the countryside was advancing towards socialism, couching their arguments in pseudo-Marxist phraseology and pretending to defend the interests of the masses of the peasants against the "rash leftism" of the cooperative movement. In the same way, hiding his real intentions with pseudo-Marxist arguments, he opposed the accelerated advance of the socialisation of industry, commerce and handicrafts in the cities. In the first Youth Congress of 1949, Liu argued that it was necessary to greatly develop capitalism and that the number of factories, workshops and machines were more important than the ownership system. On another

occasion he declared that "When in the future China has industrial overproduction, then it will be time to construct socialism."

After the elimination of private industry and commerce had in the main been completed in 1956 Liu and his followers changed tactics and began to declare that the class struggle had ended. This line was formulated in the revisionist "forces of production" theory which was actually adopted at the Eighth Congress of the C.C.P. in 1956. Basically the "forces of production" theory maintains that after the transformation of property relationships a "socialist" system has been established and that consequently, the problem becomes one of consolidation by developing the productive forces which will give a solid material basis to the "socialist" system. This line of argument is very similar to the line presently pushed in China by the Hua-Teng clique and also to that used in Soviet revisionist theory. The implications are that the new system is able to reproduce itself according to specifically socialist laws. This is no coincidence for the revisionists in the C.C.P. were undoubtedly encouraged by the victory of the Soviet Revisionists after Stalin's death in 1953.

Mao and the other revolutionaries in the C.C.P. and the Chinese masses struck back at this counter-revolutionary line. In early 1957 Mao made two very important speeches in which, for the first time in the history of the international communist movement, it was explicitly stated that even after the basic achievement of socialist ownership the bourgeoisie continues to exist in socialist society and that:

"Class struggle is by no means over. The class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the class struggle between the various political forces, and the bourgeoisie in the ideological field will still be protracted and tortuous and at times even very sharp. The proletariat seeks to transform the world according to its own world outlook and so does the bourgeoisie. In this respect the question of which will win out, socialism or capitalism, is not really settled yet." (1)

THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD

In 1958 these two fundamentally opposed lines came into even sharper conflict with the movement to establish people's communes in the Chinese countryside. Mao, in opposition to the revisionists in the Party, gave all-out support to the Great Leap Forward. Not only was the scale and scope of land ownership raised to a higher level, but in the people's communes masses of peasants took up on a small scale industrial production. Mao's policy of bringing the consciousness and initiative of the masses into full play drove the revisionists in the Party into the most frenzied opposition, since it flew directly in the face of every bourgeois prejudice and convention. They attacked Mao as an idealist - an attack that was constantly launched against Mao by the revisionists, charging that he "exaggerated man's conscious dynamic role."

Events came to a head in 1959, where at the Central Committee Meeting the revisionists, then spearheaded by Peng Teh-Huai, launched a ferocious attack on the Great Leap Forward, calling the mobilisation of the masses "petty bourgeois fanaticism". Peng Teh-Huai, an open agent of the Soviet revisionists, had already proposed to "modernise" the Chinese army with Soviet weapons to make it dependent on the Soviets, a policy which went hand in hand with the demand that China's economic development return to the policy of one-sided emphasis on heavy industry and military construction at the expense of agriculture and light industry and all-around economic construction. Mao led the revolutionaries in the Party's leadership. He declared that "the chaos caused was on a grand scale and I take responsibility", throwing down the gauntlet to the rightists. Mao threatened to return to the countryside and organise an army against the government if the reactionaries were installed. Such action was unnecessary as the revisionists accepted the sacrifice of Peng Teh-Huai in order to save their position.

In August 1960 Krushchev, acting in coordination with the revisionists in the C.C.P., suddenly pulled out technicians and blueprints from China, leaving a number of vital construction projects unfinished and severely sabotaging

the development of the Chinese economy. Added to this, and in the context of the Soviet-U.S. double blockade of China, there were a series of natural disasters between 1959 and 1961. Taking advantage of these conditions, the revisionists in the C.C.P.'s leadership, launched another attack and were able to gain the initiative in many areas, including significant areas of economic policy. It was during this period that Liu Shao-Chi and his supporters dished up the "Seventy Articles" referred to earlier, for the regulation of industry. These "Seventy Articles" echoed again the "Forces of Production" theory and were re-echoed later in the struggle over economic policy and its relation to class struggle.

THE PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION

In the years leading up to 1966, the two classes, two lines and two roads were clearly on a collision course, which erupted in that year in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. In the first few years of this revolutionary upsurge, which Mao not only championed but gave particular guidance to, the masses smashed the bourgeois headquarters of Liu Shao-chi in the Party, seized back power in various spheres of society where it had been usurped by the capitalist-roaders, upheld and carried out Mao's revolutionary line in opposition to the revisionist line and hit back at the reversals of the gains and correct verdicts of the Great Leap Forward. Through this process further revolutionary transformations were carried out in the superstructure and the economic base.

Revolution in education and culture was carried forward with the overthrow of bourgeois authority in those realms. The study of Marxist theory was promoted on a broad scale and active ideological struggle encouraged at all levels. Revolutionary committees, new organs of power and administration in the basic units as well as at the higher levels, were set up, combining the masses, cadres and technical personnel as well as old, middle-aged and young people.

In management the kinds of revolutionary advances in relations among people in production which Mao had called attention to - such as cadres participating in collective labour, workers taking part in administration, the reform

of irrational and restrictive rules and regulations - all these were further strengthened and developed. Also upheld and strengthened was the principle of politics leading vocational work and non-professionals armed with a correct line leading professionals. This was expressed in the slogan "red and expert", with the "red" aspect in command. In most cases piece-work and bonuses were done away with and disparities in income were reduced to the degree possible in accordance with fostering comradely relations among different grades and types of workers and promoting socialist cooperation and activism in production.

During the Cultural Revolution, Mao concentrated the experience of the Chinese masses in socialist revolution and socialist construction by expressing the dialectical relationship between the two in the slogan "Grasp revolution, promote production". This slogan correctly explains the relationship between socialist revolution and socialist construction, for only by continuously unfolding revolution in the superstructure and making use of its initiating role, is it possible for the proletariat to consolidate and develop the socialist economic base. Similarly, without continuing to revolutionise the relations of production, even after socialist ownership has in the main been accomplished, it is impossible to continue to liberate and thereby develop the social productive forces. Only by arousing the conscious activism of the labouring masses is it possible to transform the material world in accordance with its objective laws and the revolutionary interests of the proletariat.

The gains of the Cultural Revolution were not achieved without a great deal of opposition from revisionists in key positions of the Party, state and army, as well as a very large number of middle-level party and state cadres who defended their petty privileges and were with the revisionists. Although and the Chinese Marxist-Leninists relied on the fervent support of the masses, between them and the masses there was a whole intermediate apparatus that sabotaged their directives, stirred up the contradictions among sectors of the masses, promoted "left" tendencies and, in general, went all out to weaken the content of the Cultural Revolution so as to derail it.

In 1969, at the time when Mao once again spoke to the need to continue the revolution, a major struggle was beginning to develop with Lin Piao, the Defence Minister and Party Vice-Chairman, who had succeeded in having himself appointed Mao's official successor. The first major clash with Lin occurred over a draft Political Report that he and his forces prepared for the Ninth Party Congress in 1969 which basically stated that the Cultural Revolution had achieved its aims and it was now time to push the economy forward.

As the struggle developed, Lin continued to insist on a wider range of participation of the army in the running of China, while Mao was trying to de-emphasise the role of the army and establish the leading role of the party on the basis of its reconstruction. Lin was also openly attacking many of the gains and transformations of the Cultural Revolution, bawling cadre participation in productive labour as "forced labour reform" and declaring that the policy of sending youth into the countryside amounted to nothing more than "disguised unemployment".

Increasingly exposed and isolated, Lin found himself forced to attempt a military putsch in September 1971. The Lin Piao affair was a traumatic one for China and had tremendous repercussions throughout society. In particular the already weak Marxist-Leninist forces in the Party had to put even more emphasis on their temporary compromise with those who had opposed carrying the Cultural Revolution any further or who were openly or secretly linked to the revisionist forces. Forces who had been overthrown as revisionist ringleaders began to reappear, not only in the lower level bodies, as had already begun to happen during the height of the Cultural Revolution, but also in the top leading bodies. In April 1973 Teng Hsiao-ping reappeared for the first time at a public banquet. Shortly afterwards, he regained his post as Vice-Premier and, in August of that year he was reinstated as a member of the CPC Central Committee. By 1974 he had infiltrated the Political Bureau and assumed responsibilities in the reorganisation of the armed forces.

Shortly after the Tenth Congress in August 1973, the "gang of five" headed by Mao expanded its political struggle against the rightists' growing organisational strength by launching a movement of mass study and criticism: the movement to criticise Lin Piao and Confucius. As part of his overall regressive political line, Lin Piao had even borrowed from Confucius, a reactionary thinker who upheld the slave system in ancient China in opposition to the rising landlord class and the feudal system, and whose doctrines had been promoted for more than two thousand years by reactionaries in China, giving these doctrines tremendous authority as a religious force and code of behaviour shackling the masses of the people.

The criticism movement not only struck at the roots of this reactionary philosophy, but also used political and historical analogies to begin a thorough exposure of the revisionists in the top leadership of the Party. The launching of this campaign was the first major counter-attack by the "gang of five" against the right after the fall of Lin Piao.

MAO'S LAST GREAT BATTLE

Prior to the Tenth Party Congress in August 1973, it was obvious that there was intense struggle between the Right and the Left. The anniversary of the Party's formation in July was not formally celebrated and Army Day in August was extremely low key. But far more indicative of the intensity of the struggle was the fusillade of articles in the press controlled by the Left just before the Congress convened. The results of the Congress represented an overall victory for the Left in that the line adopted was a revolutionary one, although the revolutionaries did not do so well organisationally. Wang Hung-wen was named a Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee but none of the other top leaders of the Left, apart from Mao, were made Vice-Chairman and only one other, Chang Chun-chiao, was on the highest standing body, though all of the Four were on the Political Bureau. Overall, the Right was not ready to take on Mao in an all out fight over line since it was concentrating on putting its people in place to implement its policies through bureaucratic methods.

The Fourth Peoples Congress in January 1975 reflected a situation similar to that at the Tenth Party Congress; the line adopted was an overall victory to the Left, but the Right made gains, especially organisationally. As has been mentioned, Teng was named first vice-premier, ahead of Chang Chun-Chiao and in effect replacing the ailing Chou En-Lai as the acting premier. Mao, while not attending the Congress, counter-attacked the Right by calling for the study of the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat and combating and preventing revisionism. Mao followed this by releasing two articles written and signed by members of "The Four"; these were: "On the Social Basis of the Lin Piao Anti-Party Clique" by Yao Wen-Yuan and "On Exercising All-Round Dictatorship Over the Bourgeoisie" by Chang Chun-Chiao, which made important analyses of the nature of the socialist transition period. (2)

By mid 1975 the Right had even grown confident enough to formulate its own programme in opposition to Mao. This was embodied in "The Three Poisonous Weeds"; there were documents on industrial management, science and technology and a "General Progress" which called for the wholesale reversal of the achievements of the Cultural Revolution. It also called for a return to the revisionist "Forces of Production" arguments which had been abandoned at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. (3) Teng Hsiao-Ping, Hua Kuo-Feng and others were intimately involved in drafting these documents.

Towards the end of 1975 Mao initiated a debate on the educational front to defend the innovations of the Cultural Revolution (The criticism of the novel "Water Margin" campaign) and as the New Year arrived he directly attacked "that unrepentant capitalist roader" Teng Hsiao-Ping, who, Mao bluntly said "does not understand Marxism-Leninism". In an incisive statement Mao pointed out:

"With the socialist revolution they themselves come under fire. At the time of the cooperative transformation of agriculture there were people in the Party who opposed it, and when it comes to criticising bourgeois right, they resent it. You are making the socialist revolution and yet you don't know where the bourgeoisie is. It is right in the Communist Party - those in power taking the capitalist

road. The capitalist roaders are still on the capitalist road."

In April 1976 the revisionist elements in the C.C.P. staged the Tien An Mien riot, which was the largest counter-revolutionary demonstration since the liberation; the riot was staged by the Right not with the aim of seizing power immediately, but to make clear to their social base and followers throughout the country that they were not capitulating just because Mao had openly attacked Teng. As a result of the riot Teng was officially removed from his leadership posts and Hua Kuo-Feng was appointed Premier and Vice-Chairman. The fact that these changes were made while the struggle, in its all-out open form, was still in the early stages, was a definite advantage to the Right, since this had the effect of avoiding a mass political struggle, through which the masses would have grasped the nature of the struggles going on in the leadership.

Shortly before Mao died on the 9th of September devastating earthquakes struck China, causing widespread damage and killing 700,000 people. Under cover of the army's assistance in the relief work, the Right used its military forces to deploy around Peking and prepare for the coup. On October 6th., less than a month after Mao's death and just three weeks after the official mourning period for Mao had ended, the revisionists launched their coup and arrested the Four.

On October 8th., in the most dubious of circumstances, Hua had himself "appointed" Chairman of the Central Committee and Chairman of the Central Committee's Military Affairs Commission, while retaining the posts of Premier and First Vice-Chairman. At the same time he had himself assigned the monopoly on publishing and interpreting the works of Mao. All these decisions were announced in the name of the "Central Committee" which in fact had not met. From October 10th. a slanderous campaign was launched against the "Gang of Four" who were accused of "revisionism" and "weaving plots and intrigues".

For the moment, Hua's "appointment" to the Chairmanship was reported discreetly in the newspapers. Only on Oct-

ober 21st. were great demonstrations announced to "acclaim" the "appointment" of Hua and to "accelerate the crushing of the Gang of Four". Shortly afterwards, in complete conflict with historical truth, it was declared that Mao had been against the Four. On October 28th., Chang, Yao and Wang were stripped of all their functions in Shanghai, although criticism of Teng remained officialy on the agenda. Clearly, the reinstatement of Teng so soon after Mao's death would have made it too obvious what was going on.

THE OCTOBER PURGE

About one quarter of the Central Committee was purged in the wake of the coup, including fifty who were mass leaders from the working class. Six ministers associated with the Four were removed from the State Council and 13 out of the 29 party leaders of the administrative units were ousted. The most sweeping changes occurred in the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee and the central information media, which from the early days of the Cultural Revolution had been a bastion of the Left with Mao's active support. Many of the leading officials now occupying key posts in the reconstituted media apparatus had been overthrown during the Cultural Revolution.

THE REINSTATEMENT OF TENG

By the end of November 1976, all criticism of Teng had ceased. In March 1977, Hua Kuo-feng proposed that Teng be given responsibilities and, shortly afterwards, Teng seems to have returned to political activity in practise. In the summer, Teng returned openly to political activity; at the third session of the Central Committee held in July, Hua was officially appointed Chairman and Teng recovered all his previous powers; just sixteen months after having been removed from all his duties, Teng got them all back.

AFTER THE COUP

It seems clear that there has been, and is, a great deal of popular opposition to the coup, once it became clear what had happened. The PLA had to be called into Shanghai and Peking and other areas as well; in the key railway junction of Paoting, south of Peking, it was reported that thousands

of troops sided with the rebels, and even the new regime acknowledge that it was not until March 1977 that the immediate, open opposition was subdued.

At the time of writing, further changes in membership of the Central Committee are occurring which are ousting the remaining supporters of the Four still in positions of influence. This purge follows similar recent reorganisations in the army and provinces which have replaced sympathisers of the Four with men who support Teng Hsiao-ping. The most obvious explanation for these changes is that Teng is consolidating his regime in preparation for the appointment of a new chairman to replace Hua Kuo-feng. (4)

NOTES

- 1) Mao Tse-tung, 'On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People', Selected Works, Vol. 5, p. 409.
- 2) See Texts 18 and 19 of And Mao Makes Five.
- 3) The documents which were labelled the "three poisonous weeds" are reprinted as Appendices 1 - 3 in And Mao Makes Five.
- 4) Financial Times, 9/2/80.

4. WHO WERE THE FOUR?

There are many people who will agree that the present leadership in China is reversing Mao's proletarian line on many important issues, but who argue that the "Gang of Four" were ultra-left extremists who deserved to be put down, that they were idealists and were not interested in modernising China or promoting production. In fact, since their arrest in October 1976, so many accusations have been made of the Four that it is difficult to know where to begin in making an objective judgement about them. It is our intention here to give a brief description of the political backgrounds of the Four together with their political views on two important aspects of Chinese society in which they were all deeply involved and in which radical reversals have occurred since Mao's death - namely culture and education. In this way we hope to make it clear why the "Gang of Four" have been so vilified by the present Chinese leadership.

Most people know that Chiang Ching was Mao's widow, but many know little of the other three former leaders - Chang Chun-chiao, Wang Hung-wen and Yao Wen-yuan. Chiang Ching first emerged as a political leader in the early 1960's, though her struggles to reform first Peking opera and later culture in Shanghai, which were fully supported by Mao, even if on occasions she did go to extremes and was criticised and corrected by her husband. Unfortunately for Chiang Ching, as Mao's wife, she became the target of every attack which was aimed at Mao and was constantly being put down or shoved aside and in view of these conditions it is not surprising that she occasionally may have acted in a vindictive way as her critics allege.

Chang Chun-chiao began his revolutionary activities in the 1930's when he was most active in the literary field as part of the underground party in Shanghai. From the mid-1950's, Chang worked very closely with Ko Ching-shih, the Mayor of Shanghai until his death in 1965; Ko was known for his staunch support of Mao and his dislike of Liu Shao-chi. During the Rectification Movement of 1942 in Yen-an, Liu and his supporters attempted to brand Ko as a traitor and spy for the Kuomintang and placed him under arrest for a year, his release only being secured by the

personal intervention of Mao. The fact that Chang openly supported Ko in these conditions is a clear indication of where he stood politically, and indeed Chang suffered for this allegiance until he made his political comeback when Mao made him deputy leader of the Cultural Revolution Group in Shanghai. Chang Chun-chiao was, more than anyone else, the overall leader of the Cultural Revolution in Shanghai.

Yao Wen-yuan came to the fore during the early 1960's, joining with Chiang Ching and Chang Chun-chiao in their struggles against the rightist stranglehold over culture in Shanghai. As a young literary critic attached to the Shanghai branch of the Writers' Union, he had for years been under attack because of his highly effective criticism of the political line which the leaders of the Union were promoting throughout art and literature. Under Mao's direction, Yao wrote a long article in 1965 which attacked the play Hai Jai Dismissed from Office in which the revisionists had attacked Mao, by historical analogy, for his policies in the Great Leap Forward and in particular for knocking down the former Defence Minister Peng Teh-huai, who had led the assault on Mao and the Great Leap Forward at the 1959 Central Committee meeting. This article by Yao, as Mao was to say, was the signal for the start of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution that began in 1966.

The last of the Four, Wang Hung-wen, emerged as a political force much later than the other three. Wang was one of the first people in Shanghai to grasp the significance of the movement against the new municipal leadership in Shanghai after Ko Ching-shih's death in 1965 and he quickly became a leader of the revolutionary forces in Shanghai during the Cultural Revolution. Later, in 1971, after Lin Piao's conspiracy against Mao was discovered, Wang was suddenly transferred to Peking and appointed to the Vice-Chairmanship of the Central Committee, below Mao and Chou En-lai. Such a move could not have been made without the specific approval of Mao himself, particularly since Wang had been promoted above Chiang, Chang and Yao, all of whom were already members of the Political Bureau.

THE TWO-LINE STRUGGLE OVER CULTURE, LITERATURE
AND ART

It has already been mentioned that the struggle between the revisionists now in power and Mao and the Four was especially intense in the cultural arena, and it is significant that the present leadership have made important changes of line in this area.

Mao held that proletarian culture, including literature and art, must represent something qualitatively different from and advanced beyond, all previous culture, and in this he was basing himself on the position put forward by Marx and Engels, in the Manifesto of the Communist Party, where they declared that the communist revolution must be the most radical rupture not only with all traditional property relations, but with all traditional ideas as well. In order for culture to play a progressive role, Mao argued that it had to be consciously guided by the world view of the proletariat:

"In the world today, all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines. There is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes, or art that is detached from or independent of politics." (2)

Mao also made clear the line that art and literature should serve the class struggle when he said that:

"All the dark forces harming the masses of the people must be exposed and all the revolutionary struggles of the masses of the people must be extolled; this is the fundamental task of revolutionary writers and artists." (3)

Of course, Mao's line, the proletarian line on art, literature and culture generally, did not become accepted in the CPC and the revolutionary movement without fierce struggle. The strength of the bourgeois forces in the CPC was centred to a considerable degree in the areas of art and culture. In addition, the educational system was one of their strongholds, a fact which led Mao to say later, in reviewing the course of the first year of the Cultural Revolution in 1967:

"As I see it, the intellectuals, including young intellectuals still receiving education in school, still have a basically bourgeois world outlook, whether they are in the Party or outside it. This is because for seventeen years after the Liberation the cultural and educational circles have been dominated by revisionism. As a result, bourgeois ideas are infused in the blood of the intellectuals." (4)

This assessment by Mao of culture and education being dominated by revisionism for the seventeen years after Liberation until the start of the Cultural Revolution has all along been sharply attacked by the revisionists in China. Since seizing power, they have called this assessment the "two estimates" and attributed them to the "Gang of Four" as an indirect but blatant attack on Mao himself and his revolutionary line.

The Four, and Chiang Ching in particular, played a very positive role overall in transforming art and culture generally. They worked very hard for the correct policy of integrating artists with the workers and peasants although it may be true that in doing so they stifled the initiative of some professional art workers who may have made errors, but who were not counter-revolutionaries. The Four can also be criticised for not allowing sufficient quantity and variety of cultural works, a criticism which Mao is supposed to have made of them.

However, the current rulers have not only criticised lack of variety and numbers of cultural works under Chiang Ching's leadership, but they have also attacked and suppressed good works by her such as Breaking with Old Ideas. It is clear that their criticism is designed to negate the revolution in art and literature by attacking a weak spot in order to kill the whole revolution in culture. In addition to restoring people overthrown during the Cultural Revolution for promoting a bourgeois line in culture, they have also encouraged the revisionist notion of "elevating" the masses to properly appreciate the "classical" works of the "men of genius" of past eras by allowing Shakespeare, Greek mythology and the piano compositions of Beethoven, Chopin and Bach to be widely and uncritically disseminated. In short, the policy of the new rulers is to develop bourgeois intellectual aristocrats with capitalist culture, which is line

with their overall line of establishing a system of state monopoly capitalism in China.

THE TWO-LINE STRUGGLE IN EDUCATION

In education, as in other fields, the gains of the Cultural Revolution are also being attacked and reversed, and a bourgeois educational system is being resurrected which deliberately aims to widen the gap between mental and manual labour. This is in direct conflict with the line of Mao and the Four, who fought for an educational system which enabled people of all classes in China to develop morally, intellectually and physically, with both a socialist consciousness and socialist culture. The revolution in education that occurred during the Cultural Revolution was naturally opposed by the revisionists who declared that working class leadership in the universities and the great increase in workers and peasants who came to the universities was ruining everything because the cultural level of the masses was too low. This struggle between the two lines on education was particularly sharp was particularly sharp in the period prior to and immediately after Mao's death, with the revisionists attempting to cover up their regressive line by attacking the line of Mao and the Four. For example, Chang Chun-chiao made a speech in which the present leadership quote him as saying:

"Bring up exploiters and intellectual aristocrats with bourgeois consciousness and culture, or bring up workers with consciousness but no culture; which do you want? I'd rather have workers without culture than exploiters and intellectual aristocrats with culture." (5)

Now according to the present rulers, this statement showed that Chang did not want the workers to learn anything and that his statements represented "an attempt to stop labouring people from acquiring cultural knowledge their predecessors had created, a futile scheme to keep the workers and the poor and middle peasants for ever in a state of ignorance and without culture."

In the light of what we know of Chang's political views, a more accurate interpretation of the statement would be that Chang was debunking the arrogant bourgeois notion of "cult-

ure", which counts the accumulated knowledge of the working class as nothing and which worships the sterile culture of the exploiting classes.

CONCLUSION

Although we have not attempted, in the short space available, to reply to and counter all the charges and accusations which have been made against the "Gang of Four", (to do so would require a book in itself), we consider that any objective judgement must conclude that there is no substantial evidence to support the slander and lies which have been hurled at them by the current Chinese leadership. Of course we are not saying that the Four did not make mistakes and no doubt it is true that during the Cultural Revolution, especially during the peak of mass upsurge, they did make some serious errors. However, the absence of any serious political basis to the charges that have been made against the "Gang of Four" is scarcely surprising, since the present leadership know full well that the line of the Four was Mao's line, the anti-revisionist line that he fought for all his life and which he entrusted to the Four to uphold after his death.

The simple truth of the matter, which even bourgeois commentators realised long ago (6), is that it was not a "gang of four" at all, but a "gang of five"; in fact, it was not a "gang" at all, it was the core of the revolutionary headquarters of the Communist Party of China. This view is being confirmed by recent reports from China which indicate that the new Chinese leadership are becoming increasingly blatant in their attacks on Mao himself; one recent article in the official press condemned the "evil wind of a personality cult" of both Mao and Stalin, and clearly implied that both these leaders had encouraged idolisation of themselves for their own ends. These attacks on Mao, which we can expect to increase in the coming period, pose the choice for Marxist-Leninists in an even more stark form; either we uphold the Four and condemn the revisionist clique now in power in China, or we throw out the Four, Mao Tse-tung and Marxism-Leninism as well. Which is it to be?

NOTES

- 1) Among the most notable of the people who adhere to this view of the Four is Charles Bettelheim. In his article, 'The Great Leap Backward', Bettelheim places a major part of the responsibility for the revisionist takeover on weaknesses in the revolutionary line and on errors made by the revolutionary forces. See 'The Great Leap Backward' by Charles Bettelheim in China Since Mao, Monthly Review Press, 1978.
- 2) Mao Tse-tung quoted in Avakian, B., Mao Tse-tung's Immortal Contributions, p. 224.
- 3) Ibid., p. 216.
- 4) Ibid., p. 231.
- 5) Peking Review, No. 8, 1977, p. 11.
- 6) B. Levin in The Times, 21/11/78.
- 7) Article in The Guardian, 27/11/79, quoting the Guangming Daily.

CONCLUSION

In a prophetic statement, Mao once said of the revisionists in the Communist Party of China, represented in turn by Liu Shao-chi, Lin Piao and now Teng Hsiao-ping:

"Those representatives of the bourgeoisie who have sneaked into the Party, the government, the army, and various spheres of culture are a bunch of counter-revolutionary revisionists. Once conditions are ripe they will seize political power and turn the dictatorship of the proletariat into a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie ... they are faithful lackeys of the bourgeoisie and the imperialists. Together with the bourgeoisie and the imperialists they cling to the bourgeois ideology of oppression and exploitation of the proletariat and to the capitalist system, and they oppose Marxist-Leninist ideology and the socialist system Their struggle is one of life and death and there is no question of equality. Therefore, our struggle against them, too, can be nothing but a life and death struggle, and our relationship with them can in no way be one of equality."

Our analysis of events in China has shown that the developments Mao predicted have in fact occurred. Just as happened in Russia after the death of Stalin, a revisionist clique has seized power through a military coup and begun a process of restoring capitalist relations of production. In the case of the Soviet Union, the country where the proletariat first took power, the revisionists have not only established a state monopoly capitalist regime, but have also succeeded in establishing their state as an imperialist superpower, currently one of the main enemies of the people of the world. Similarly, if the new regime in China succeeds in establishing an all-round restoration of capitalism, then it must be recognised that China, too, will of necessity become an imperialist power.

The counter-revolution in China places a great responsibility on authentic communists in all countries to formulate a correct analysis of this severe reversal for the international revolutionary movement. As we have shown, socialist society does not and cannot advance to communist society in a straight line, but like all processes through a series of contradictions. In socialist society the class struggle

adopts new forms and becomes more intense than under capitalism, because it is not simply a question of one class replacing another, as in previous systems, but of the elimination of all classes and their ideologies, in order to advance to communism, classless society. Our analysis has shown how representatives of the new bourgeoisie in the superstructure of Chinese society have been able to seize power temporarily, and how it is their abandonment of basic Marxist principle, rather than the failure of Marxism itself, which is responsible for the present reversal in China.

The counter-revolution in China and the history of the struggle within the Communist Party of China which preceded the coup contain important lessons for revolutionaries throughout the world. Mao's struggle against the capitalist-roaders in the CPC shows that the traditional recognition by Marxists of the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat must be extended so that we recognise also the continuing existence of classes, class struggle and the danger of capitalist restoration all throughout the long socialist transition period. Only by carrying the revolution forward under the dictatorship of the proletariat until all the contradictions of socialist society have been resolved, is the only way for the proletariat to achieve its own final emancipation. This is the greatest contribution that Mao and his followers made to the revolutionary struggle of the international proletariat, and if revolutionaries everywhere grasp this weapon, the struggles of Mao and the Four will not have been in vain.

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