

Gang of Four Trial Temporarily Postponed

Chinese Rulers Slug It Out: Crude Capitalist Roader vs. Wishy-Washy Revisionist

Intense infighting raging within China's revisionist ruling clique is being highlighted dramatically by what the *New York Times* called "its first serious political crisis since Mao's death four years ago"—the recent no-holds-barred attack on nominal Party Chairman Hua Guofeng by forces led by Chinese real top-dog Deng Xiaoping. Several reports had slightly different versions of the story. Hua had been forced out as party chairman, or will be forced to resign in the near future; some even claim Hua already has been placed under arrest. In any case, Hua has not been seen in public since November 27. At a December 14 reception for the visiting Greek Communist Party delegation, a Foreign Ministry spokesman did not deny rumors about Hua, saying simply, "I don't know." Meanwhile Deng told some visitors that party General Secretary Hu Yaobang was in for a "big promotion." Real subtle. An article in the most recent issue of the party's theoretical journal, *Red Flag*, written by a high-level party official, contained blasts widely regarded as being aimed at Hua. "Poor leadership" and "unsavory styles of work" should be corrected, the article declared, "no matter what persons are involved," and that "Quite a number of party leaders are not up to standard." Quite obviously, the way is being prepared for Hua's slide into oblivion, or oblivion with bars.

When the "gang of Four" was arrested in the reactionary coup four years ago, they were charged with bringing "anarchy," "disruption," "chaos" and "disorder" to China. There would be "no peace" with these revolutionaries around, it was said. Instead it was to be time for "great order across the land," "unity and stability" and a "stable group of leaders" who would take care of business. Well, so much for that! Once again, capitalism has brought with it its constant companions—dislocation, crisis and anarchy.

An Associated Press report reveals that Hua was brought before the Party Discipline Inspection Committee in late November, right before the start of the trial of the "Gang of Four," and confessed to making political and economic errors. There probably were very careful negotiations at this point over how to construct the case against the Four—especially over how far to go in making explicit what everyone already knows: that Mao is really on trial as the head of a "Gang of 5." An open attack on Mao would have a direct bearing on whether Hua would be implicated in the trials. In the period immediately after the revisionist coup, Hua derived his power from his bogus claim of being Mao's "true successor." The final indictments against the Four do not include Hua among the revisionist merit roll of those "persecuted" by the Four, like Deng, Liu Shaoqi, Zhou Enlai, and others. But neither do the charges directly implicate Hua. This, according to some reports, is the favor Hua received in return for agreeing to resign as Chairman.

However, the flaring up of Deng's power play against Hua right in the midst of the trial of the Four, a trial around which the whole party and the whole country was supposed to be united, can only mean that contradictions of all kinds are sharpening and the compromise reached before the trial has broken down. Originally scheduled to reconvene on December 15 after a two-day recess, the trial has been postponed for several days. The delay is due in great part to Chiang Ching's (Jiang Qing's) heroic and dramatic revolutionary stand on the 12th, when she

turned the trial upside down, denouncing the revisionists, and ending up being dragged out of the courtroom. The stunned revisionists needed a few days to recover and try to control the situation. But the confusion about Hua's status no doubt played no small part in the delay.

Actually, by bringing out clearly (for example, by the use of the Chinese proverb, "If you are going to strike a dog, think first of its master") that the only "crimes" she and the others are really being accused of is following Mao's revolutionary line, Chiang Ching has sharpened the contradictions between Hua and Deng. Although some of this has shown through despite the revisionist censorship and the revisionists' hypocritical attempts to pretend they are upholding Mao, Deng has also deliberately let some of Chiang Ching's statements out to step up attacks on Mao. This, of course, can only lead to a very dangerous situation for Hua.

There have been unconfirmed rumors that Hua has not been taking these sneak blows from Deng quietly, but in fact tried to organize some kind of support, especially in the army. This, in

turn, prompted Deng to open up attacks against Hua in the middle of the "Gang of Four" trial. Although this is still unconfirmed, it is known that back in April of this year at a conference on political work in the military, Hua had raised the slogan, "Political work is the lifeline of economic work." Of course, Hua was merely camouflaging his opposition to revolutionary politics with his bluster about political work as the lifeline. The real question is what do you mean by "politics"—and Hua definitely means *revisionist* (capitalist), not revolutionary, politics. However, this was quite a bold move on Hua's part—a different revisionist formula than Deng's slogan of economic work according to "economic laws" (i.e., laws of capitalism). Hua's speech is said to have received a favorable response from some quarters in the army. In response to this, there was a series of articles in the press criticizing Hua's slogan as a leftover of the Cultural Revolution period.

Marriage of Convenience on the Rocks

Actually, Hua has been on the defen-

sive for some time, and his eventual fate was unmistakable. He had already been stripped of his post as Premier at the latest session of the People's Congress two months ago. At the same congress, Chen Yongqui, the former peasant leader from the model agricultural commune Dazhai (Tachai), who rose to the post of Vice-Premier, was ousted and accused of "falsifying figures" and of sponsoring frame-ups and even deaths while he was in charge of local work. This was an ominous sign for Hua, who rose to national prominence at the First National Learn from Dazhai Conference a year before the coup and also led the second conference right after the coup. (In both of these, Hua perverted the revolutionary lessons of Dazhai into a model for capitalist development of agriculture.)

The conflict between Hua and Deng may be intense and vicious, but then factional struggles within any bourgeoisie do get extremely volatile sometimes (witness Watergate). Still, they are both revisionists, and the common bond between them is opposition

Continued on page 22



Everybody's Bookstore, San Francisco's Chinatown.

Wishy-Washy

Continued from page 3

to Mao's revolutionary line. Hua's apparently imminent political death puts an end to a certain phase in the development of the revisionist regime. This phase has been marked by the marriage of convenience between Deng, the crudely up-front capitalist-roader, and Hua, the wishy-washy revisionist. Now faced with the necessity to take even further steps in open capitalist restoration, Deng is set to unload this excess baggage. But far from bringing the loudly advertised "great order to the land," this is only the start of a lot more of the anarchy and dislocation, politically and economically characteristic of capitalism.

The roots of the marriage of convenience between these forces represented by Hua and Deng, and their inevitable break-up, go back to the period before

the October 1976 coup, when the different forces among the right were coalescing to form a powerful bloc against the revolutionary Left led by Mao and the Four.

Zhou the Rallying Center of Revisionists

During the upsurges of the Cultural Revolution, Mao was able to exploit with the utmost skill the different contradictions among the revisionists in order to aim the mass movement against the main and most powerful target, Liu Shaoqi. But the exposure of Lin Biao, who had been closely associated with Mao and the Cultural Revolution, as a traitor, gave an opening for the revisionists to regroup their forces and counterattack. In the name of attacking Lin Biao's "ultra-leftism" (which was merely a thin cover for his thoroughly revisionist line), the revisionists began hammering away at the achievements and the correct verdicts of the Cultural Revolution. At the head of

this emerging revisionist camp was the powerful figure of Premier Zhou Enlai (Chou En-lai).

Zhou was the rallying point for several different forces. First were those like Zhou himself, and Ye Jianying, Li Xiannian, then others of the "old guard" in the State Council under Zhou's protection. These people hated the turmoil and the mass upsurges of the Cultural Revolution. Mao nevertheless struggled with them, partly out of hope they would change, but more because they were a powerful force that Mao needed to partly win over or at least neutralize in order to hit at the main bourgeois forces under Liu. While Zhou and others were struggled with not to engage in all out and open opposition to the Cultural Revolution, and even to take certain positive positions during this period, still, they tried to stall, short-circuit or reverse the Cultural Revolution whenever the opportunity came up.

Another force consisted of die-hard

capitalist-roaders like Deng who were knocked down during the Cultural Revolution, then brought back after the Lin Biao affair under Zhou's sponsorship. Because of the strength of the revisionists as well as the necessity to deal with Lin Biao's influence, Mao was forced to agree to the return of some of these counterrevolutionaries, although certainly not to the extent pushed for by Zhou.

Then there were those like Hua, part of a new generation of bureaucrats that rose to high ranks during the Cultural Revolution. Hua himself was knocked down early in the Cultural Revolution but came back rather quickly. He was like many opportunists who went along with the Cultural Revolution to the extent that they were able to step into the shoes of the high-ranking officials toppled by the masses. These people, therefore, even in the period leading up to the coup when the revisionist camp was coalescing, as well as after the coup,

Continued on page 25

Wishy-Washy

Continued from page 22

had a certain stake in preserving some aspects of the Cultural Revolution, particularly some of the organizational changes. But in essence, they had a revisionist line, opposed the real achievements of the Cultural Revolution, and when push came to shove, fell right in line with the revisionist camp.

Mao was acutely aware that these forces were coming together, as he launched a series of mass political campaigns after the Lin Biao affair to spread and deepen an understanding of revisionism and the danger of capitalist restoration. The first of these, the Criticize Lin Biao and Confucius movement, exposed the reactionary, rightist roots of Lin Biao's political and ideological line and program. The movement also used historical analogies to expose the counterrevolutionary activities being carried on right at that time by the top revisionists in the party. One main Confucian slogan held up for analysis and criticism was, "Restrain oneself and restore the rites." This was Confucius's admonition to the old declining slave-owning class—don't fight each other ("restrain oneself") but act in unity for the common reactionary program ("restore the rites," i.e., the rites of the Western Zhou dynasty, an ancient slave society). This very aptly describes the efforts of the revisionist camp to smooth over their differences in order to bring back the modern-day "rites of Zhou," in this case, Zhou Enlai. This was a program of reversing the correct verdict of the Cultural Revolution, in direct opposition to Mao, and of subordinating everything to economic development with specialists and experts in command. As the revisionists' indictment against the Four is forced to reveal, the revisionists were precisely "restraining oneself and restoring the rites," when Zhou held late night meetings with Deng, Ye, Li Xiannian and others as he lay ill on the hospital bed in 1974.

Deng Knocked Down

The campaign against Lin Biao and Confucius was followed by others in which Mao and the Four led the masses in grasping deeply the questions involved, distinguishing the revolutionary from the revisionist line and thereby unleashing their strength and initiative. When Zhou died in January 1976, the revisionists were not able to get Deng, who was then the First Vice-Premier, to replace him, because the movement to criticize the "right deviationist wind" was exposing this program and Deng in particular. The revisionists were not willing to risk an open confrontation yet with Mao and the forces of the Left. At the same time, Mao and the Four were not strong enough themselves to get Chang Chun-chiao (Zhang Chunqiao), one of the Four, named to the post. Hua Guofeng therefore became the compromise choice as acting premier. The revisionists backed Hua because he was politically in their camp but was a bland character not saddled with a well known history of brazen revisionism, like Deng.

Actually, Mao's tactics here were quite masterful. Mao knew that organizationally the Left could not hope to directly confront all the revisionists at that time. The best they could do right then was to block Deng's rise. But Mao had no illusions about where Hua stood politically, and therefore put him in the position where he had to go against the right deviationist wind that he was, in fact, a part of and denounce Deng as a counter-revolutionary. This created the split within the revisionist camp. Meanwhile Mao counted on the political campaign against Deng and his line to take deep hold among the masses so they could clearly distinguish the two basic sides, proletarian revolutionary and revisionist and rise up against the capitalist-roaders.

Of course, like all class struggle, this was a real battle and the revisionists had powerful forces aligned on their side. In April, 1976, the revisionists organized a counterrevolutionary riot at Peking's

Tien Anmen Square. While this incident was justly put down by force, the revisionists managed to make considerable advances through it. First of all, the incident hoisted the banner of counterrevolution and served as a rallying call for the revisionist forces. Secondly, it forced the revolutionaries to resort prematurely to organizational measures, to officially dismiss Deng from his post. This actually had the effect of cutting short the political campaign against Deng before it could develop fully among the masses and expose his line through intense ideological struggle. Organizationally, the revisionists were still able to get one of their people, Hua, named as Premier and First Vice Chairman, while Deng retained his party membership and a chance to bounce back.

The revisionists' grip on various levels of the state and party apparatus became stronger as more and more bureaucrats knocked down during the Cultural Revolution were brought back to life. Another powerful stronghold of the Right was the army. The Cultural Revolution did not penetrate deeply into the army, and the Lin Biao affair, as well as certain particularities about conducting political movements in the military, were used as excuses to put further limits on line struggle among soldiers.

Mediocre Man Put to Use

Mao's death on September 9 was a signal for the revisionists to move. On October 6, the Four and their close supporters were arrested, putting a temporary stop to proletarian rule in China. The coup was mainly planned by Ye, who had deep ties in the military and the bureaucracy, with Deng playing a powerful role behind the scenes. Hua was characteristically sensitive to which way the wind was blowing, and willingly and actively participated in the coup. As the introduction to the book *And Mao Makes 5* puts it, "One of (Hua's) biographers has cited a statement by Marx that certain historical moments turn the most mediocre of men into heroes. Actually a man of enormous mediocrity has emerged as one of history's most despicable scoundrels and traitors."

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Hua's mediocrity was put to good use by the revisionists in carrying out the coup! The revisionists would have met much stiffer resistance if the coup had been carried out under the direct and open guidance of the unrepentant capitalist-roader, Deng. As it was, with Hua on their side, Ye and Deng were able to preserve a semblance of continuity from Mao and carry out a relatively smooth takeover. Right after the coup, Hua announced plans to build a memorial hall containing Mao's body and to publish Vol. 5 of Mao's *Selected Works*. So while destroying Mao's line, they preserved his body. Besides carrying out this feudal practice, denounced by Mao, the revisionists reportedly even did a lousy job preserving the body. (How convenient.) And as for Volume 5, it has since been recalled for "re-editing." But at the time, with his posture as successor to Mao, Hua was able to confuse and cause some wavering among the intermediate, even among supporters of the Four, enabling the revisionists to consolidate in the crucial weeks after the coup. For example, in Shanghai, some leaders were called into Peking right after the coup, where Hua assured them that things were not so serious. Apparently divisions and delays resulted. The planned armed uprising in Shanghai was stalled while leaders struggled to sort out what was going on in Peking, until finally the initiative was lost and the massive uprising was averted.

While Deng had some conflicts with other coup leaders, including Ye and Hua, he also realized that his own interests were best served by a back stage role at the time. At the time of the coup Hua called for keeping up the criticism

of the "revisionist, counterrevolutionary line of Deng Xiaoping." A few months later, Deng was seen in a Peking restaurant. When some of the crowd applauded him he laughed and said, sarcastically, "Keep on criticizing Deng Xiaoping." This was not only bitter sarcasm directed at those who had been doing so, and were now shifting with the wind. It was also a form of tactical advice for his fellow revisionists. Keep up the show for a while, and we'll harvest the full crop later, he was saying. Hua reportedly shuttled back and forth to southern China several times in the heat of the struggle of 1976 to consult with Deng, even while he was "criticizing" him.

Promised Unity

Hua's mediocrity and the image of him consciously created by the revisionists as a moderate, stable bureaucrat, also appealed to a section of the masses and a large percentage of the cadres and intellectuals who had a tendency to tire of the tumultuous twists and turns of two-line struggle in China and wanted an end to it.

One of the pieces of bait that the revisionists used to hook and reel in a significant portion of the intermediate masses—even as they stirred up trouble—was their promise of "stability and unity" as opposed to turmoil of class struggle under Mao and the Four. But once the proletarian line is thrown out the window, all kinds of conflicting interests come to the fore—differences between regional military commanders, between different ministries, between different sectors of the economy, etc. On top of this is the dislocation and anarchy caused by the capitalist economy, domestically and internationally. Differences in living standards among the people, which Mao and the Four had fought to restrict, are becoming wider, sharpening up the contradictions among the people (the revisionist attack that the Four turned contradictions among the people into contradictions between the people and the enemy, is an outright lie to cover this up). The infighting that has culminated to a certain point with the attack on Hua shatters any remaining semblance of revisionist "stability and unity."

While the conflict over Hua's chairmanship is the most dramatic, there are other deep contradictions causing widening cracks in the revisionist bloc. According to a Dec. 8 *People's Daily* editorial, moves by the revisionists to decontrol prices and let market forces regulate the economy have resulted in "some enterprises not working to raise quality, increase variety of goods, or decrease waste, but instead raising prices as a shortcut to acquire profit, bonuses, and benefits in extra accumulation." Earlier this year, there was a purge of the so-called "Oil Kingdom," a group of officials within the Oil Ministry and the oil industry accused of following a "left" line and held responsible for the death of over 50 workers in an oil rig accident. In fact, the dispute was based on bourgeois struggles over how much capital to invest where and how, as well as on overall influence within the revisionist state.

There is also increasing discontent with the revisionist regime among the army. According to the *New York Times*, one general wrote a letter to Deng this fall laying out the military's dissatisfaction. Deng was reportedly infuriated, and burst out that a third of the army's commanders opposed his programs, a third just didn't care, and only a third supported him. Deng was planning to purge up to two-thirds of the officers at the regimental level and up in the next two years. The army was the key element in the revisionist coup, but, as the *NY Times* points out, "In the top levels of the Communist Party and the government, however, the generals now find themselves outvoted by economists, technocrats, and the new leaders such as Premier Zhao Ziyang, who are close associates of Mr. Deng." The inclusion of the Lin Biao military men in the trial of the Four, while mainly a maneuver to attack the whole Cultural Revolution and confuse the revolutionaries with the proven counterrevolutionaries of Lin's clique, is also an effort to diminish the prestige of the old core of the leadership in the military. Some top army men are reportedly offended by this and some, applying consistent revisionist logic, have even asked what was so bad about Lin, since he at least tried to stop the Cultural Revolution and kill Mao. Knowing full well that this trial is going to cause some ripples, the Deng forces ran several articles right before the trial in the *People's Daily* and the *Liberation Daily*, the army newspaper, urging the

Continued on page 27

Meetings This Week to Uphold Mao's Revolutionary Comrades

In a number of cities across the country, the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA has joined with others to sponsor meetings to uphold the revolutionary stand being taken by Chiang Ching and Chang Chun-chiao, to go deeply into Mao's revolutionary line and the significance of events in China to the world proletarian revolution.

More of these meetings will be held in the next week and a half:

Atlanta—Tues., Dec. 30, 7:30 p.m.

First Existentialist Church, 470 Candler Park Dr. N.E. (across from Candler Park in Little 5 Points).

Los Angeles—Sunday, Dec. 28. Time and place to be announced

For information about the meeting nearest you, contact the Revolutionary Worker (see address box on page 2).

Wishy-Washy

Continued from page 25

army to "study and resolutely support the correct line, principles and policies laid down by the party."

Favorable to Revolutionaries

These contradictions among the revisionists are further intensified by the lingering legacy of Mao that still haunts them, four years after they have mummified his body and locked up his closest comrades. Hua has been perched on a precarious spot at the edge of a cliff, because of the fact Mao had placed him in the position before the coup where he was forced to come out openly against Deng and support the Cultural Revolution, at least in words. Chiang Ching is fully aware of these contradictions and has exposed them to rattle the revisionists and widen the split among them, opening new opportunities for revolutionaries. At one point during the pre-trial hearings when she was pressed about her part in suppressing the Tien Anmen riot, Chiang Ching shot back with biting sarcasm, "I was not responsible for suppressing the Tien Anmen incident. You can go ask the Minister of Public Security at that time to come act as my witness." That "former Public Security Minister" is none other than Hua himself.

Deng, for his part, has had to travel a tortuous path to get to a point where he can more or less openly attack Mao. But even now, he still cannot do to Mao what Khrushchev did to Stalin, and has to keep up an utterly hypocritical mask of supporting Mao's Thought. However, in order to clear away any opposition to more open steps in capitalist restoration, he must get rid of forces like

Hua who still have some stake in moderating attacks against Mao.

But in doing this, Deng is taking a great risk. The *NY Times* cites a European diplomat who points out that Deng and his backers must be conscious of the damage they are doing by permitting so much absurdity in the party leadership. "They are allowing a terrible erosion of authority, making a joke of the party chairman," the diplomat is quoted as saying. "They must have weighed the risk very carefully. It must be a deliberate strategy to increase the pressure on Hua and those people who support him." Although the revisionists have turned the Communist Party from a proletarian vanguard into a headquarters of the bourgeoisie, it is indeed dangerous for their rule to have serious erosion of the prestige of the party. In what might be a feeble attempt to get around this problem, a recent Politburo meeting decided, according to the Japanese Kyodo News Agency, that the posts of Chairman and party Vice-Chairman will be abolished, and the General-Secretary will head the party, in the style of East European revisionist communist parties.

Deng's attack on Hua also involves not just one or a few persons but opens up a floodgate of attacks on a very significant force at all levels of the party. Half of the present 38 million members of the party were recruited during the Cultural Revolution. Many of these millions, growing up during the Cultural Revolution, are in Deng's eyes lacking the necessary technical and professional skills to be good revisionist party members. And although many of

the conscious revolutionaries and close supporters of the Four have already been driven out of the party, many more party members still cannot go along wholeheartedly with Deng's blatant revisionism and attacks on Mao. In order to get rid of these elements, the revisionists have announced the two-year rectification of all levels of the party, to start next year.

Deng must also challenge the "old guard" in the top leadership associated with Zhou Enlai. There have been unconfirmed reports of a widespread campaign to criticize Zhou Enlai for being too close to Mao and for going along with the Cultural Revolution and the criticism of Liu Shaoqi. Many articles in the press urging an end to the automatic lifetime tenure system for officials are not only an attack on Mao but are also aimed especially at Ye, the "elder statesman" in the State Council, and a big power in the army. Ye has been backing Hua and is apparently still pushing the line of "restrain oneself," calling for the revisionists to unite and go slow in the moves to dump Mao which are causing such deep conflicts among the revisionists. Deng's forces, in turn, are calling on Ye to step down—or to die *quick*.

A further source of the conflict within the revisionist clique that is rapidly increasing in importance as the contradictions leading toward world war sharpen up, is the question of how to look at the Soviet Union. This is obviously a very sensitive question, and little is known of how different individual revisionist leaders actually stand on this question. The dominant line still seems to be to get as much technology and capital from the West as possible, and develop political ties with them at this time, in order to accumulate bargaining chips for a possible shift over to the Soviets at some later date.

But there are powerful forces within the regime, including in the military, which has traditionally been a bastion of pro-Soviet forces like Peng Dehuai and Lin Biao, that point to China's vulnerability to the Russian military threat, as well as the West's unreliability, as reasons for making more concessions right now to the Soviet Union.

What all this adds up to is that the revisionists are trapped in a deep crisis. Deng is like a Mafia boss making a move to expand his territory and muscle out all rivals in one fell swoop. But he is bound to meet stiff resistance from his rivals, who are no pushovers. But, as these revisionists fight it out among themselves, it is going to open up some opportunities for the people they prey upon. As Bob Avakian pointed out two years ago, before the contradictions among the revisionists had flared up to such an extent, "It will be more and more difficult for the revisionists to 'restrain themselves' and remain united around one common program—the rites of Zhou—especially since the Four and Mao are gone, and more so as the grandiose plans for 'modernization' bear bitter fruit and they meet more resistance. Such conflicts among the ruling bourgeoisie are, on the whole, a good thing, providing some turmoil for the revolutionaries to make use of." Of course, the conflicts among the revisionists are not going to automatically give rise to revolutionary struggle by the masses. But the point is that as these internal contradictions in the revisionist regime come to the surface, and as this takes place in the context of the increasing pace towards world war, there is the potential for very rapid and dramatic changes all around the world, including the rise of revolutionary struggle among the Chinese people against their ruling class.