

MAO'S LAST BATTLE



The
next
stage

by
BRUCE
SMITH

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LAST BATTLE**

The Next Stage

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Mao's Last Battle: the next stage

1. Introduction

This essay sets out to discuss some of the developments in China since the death of Mao Tse-tung. Two things about the Chinese revolution are particularly well known: the years of the revolutionary wars, when leaders and people shared the same living conditions and went through struggles and hardships unprecedented in history before; and the Cultural Revolution which began in 1966, a movement to prevent the emergence of a new privileged class and preserve that revolutionary ideal of the earlier years. Among the Chinese revolution's millions of heroes and many outstanding leaders, Mao Tse-tung personified more than anyone that special character of Chinese communism which has made it quite a fresh and new experience in world history. Thus it is very important to decide what "direction" Chinese politics are taking in the period after Mao.

Perhaps it seemed when he died in September 1976 that the Chinese revolution would somehow have to move into a lower gear, but as it happened the Chinese Communist Party almost immediately got a new chairman, Hua Kuo-feng, and expressed a determination to do even better than before. All eye-witness accounts agree that this determination met with tremendous popular support.

At the same time as all this was happening, in October of the same year, a group of people described as the "gang of four" were ousted from the top leadership. These four (Wang Hung-wen, Chang Ch'un-ch'iao and Yao Wen-yuan who became well-known in Shanghai in the early part of the Cultural Revolution, and also Chiang Ch'ing, Mao's wife from whom he had been separated for a number of years) were subjected to a very strong expression of popular criticism and indignation. Their removal is usually seen in China as the most important reason *why* it is now possible for the revolution to do still better than before.

2. China's Development

Naturally there have been changes since Mao's death, because any society, if it is to advance, is bound to encounter and solve new problems. Karl Marx spoke of the need for society to get "upon the right track for the discovery of the natural laws of its movement" (*Capital*, Book I Preface), and this is what Chinese society is doing. While there has been change and development over the past year-and-a-half, there has also been a process of confirming an established political line, which the Chinese see as a guide in responding correctly to whatever unexpected situation may arise.

By understanding the direction of society's development, the Chinese mean understanding what are the obstacles, or contradictions, which have to be overcome and resolved. One of these is the old world order dominated by the rich Powers, from which China has particularly suffered in the past. An understanding of this obstacle is something which the Chinese share with the other peoples of the Third World; so this "anti-imperialism" has been a long-standing part of China's revolution.

In the period since the founding of New China in 1949, the Chinese have been breaking new ground by contributing to resolving the division between the rich and the poor parts of the world on which the system of great-power oppression is based. If China can really manage to transform a large part of the world from being under-developed into being developed, and at the same time do without economic crisis, safeguard the environment and remove the antagonism between town and country, this will have world-historical significance. The Chinese want to demonstrate to the rest of the world the advantages of their social system, but this can only be done if China's politics are applied successfully to her own particular problems.

This determination had a very broad popular consensus behind it, but recently, particularly during late 1975 and most of 1976, there was a counter-trend, identified with the "gang of four" apparently, of talking about "politics" and "revolution" in a purely abstract way without paying much attention to

what should be revolutionised. Now this trend is being set right, China's socialist politics are being applied to the task of resolving the major problems of contemporary society which capitalism cannot resolve.

3. Against Capitalism

It was the Communists who went beyond the stage reached by the early Chinese revolutionaries who understood the problem of great-power domination, and gradually introduced the notion that China must also make revolution against capitalism. Mao Tse-tung saw capitalism as something which was on the decline, even in a sense obsolete; but he combined this idea with a very strong feeling of urgency, like Lenin when he wrote: "Ten or twenty years sooner or later makes no difference when measured by the scale of world history; from the standpoint of world history it is a trifle that cannot be calculated even approximately. But precisely for this reason it is a howling theoretical blunder to apply the scale of world history to practical politics" (*Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, ch. VII). Thus in terms of practical politics Mao considered that capitalism on a world scale and in China will create all sorts of difficulties, just because this is the period of its decline. Hence the concern with speed in constructing a new system in China. Hua Kuo-feng, the Chinese Communist Party's new head, was confirming this line when he said "The question of the speed of construction is a political rather than purely economic question. When viewed in the light of the international class struggle, the political nature of this question stands out still more sharply" (Speech at the national conference on learning from Tach'ing in industry, May 1977).

The change which must take place in China, according to Mao, is partly a social change whereby the ordinary working people come step by step to take the initiative and master both political science and the natural sciences as a guide to running society and the economy. This is bound to meet with resistance from those with a vested interest in preventing change. If the Chinese see class struggle in international relations as being expressed in a conflict between the oppressed and oppressor nations, they also consider that class struggle exists within each national society, including countries with a socialist system. In

China, society's political and cultural life (known as the "superstructure" in the Marxist terminology) on the whole serves the working class, but there is an opposing class force which tends to try and assert its control. This idea was worked out by Mao about twenty years ago, when he analysed the forces then still hindering China from making an economic and political "leap forward" of the kind which eventually took place in 1958. The writings in which he set out this point of view were published in April 1977, in Volume V of his Selected Works.

In the early '60s Mao went on to argue that this class struggle is concentrated in an acute conflict of interest between the great majority of the Chinese people and a bureaucratic elite, a handful of individuals occupying leading positions in the Communist Party and government and taking what he called the "capitalist road". *Thus the problem of economic development must be approached first and foremost from a political angle.* This is the sort of background against which Hua Kuo-feng said "That part of the relations of production which is not suited to the productive forces and that part of the superstructure which is not suited to the economic base both hamper the development of the productive forces. That is why we must take class struggle as the key link. . . ." (Speech at the national conference on learning from Tach'ing in industry, May 1977).

4. Working People Solve Political Problems

The situation today is a good deal more complex than any faced by the Chinese revolution in the past. For this very reason the leadership tries to spread as widely as possible throughout society the function and responsibility of decision-making and policy-making, not only on questions of economic management but on major questions of political orientation. This is felt to be one of the fundamental advantages of the socialist system in solving society's problems. "The more the masses are mobilised, the better the situation will be", as Hua said during an inspection tour last year. The Cultural Revolution which began in 1966 gave a big impetus to this process of involving a large proportion of the Chinese people in running the country's affairs.

A senior person in the leadership told some foreign visitors in the spring of 1977 that of all the achievements of the Cultural Revolution the greatest was the way scientific socialism was diffused very broadly among the people, for example through the workers' and peasants' study groups. Workers in these groups, he said, were discussing such problems as: How has the imperialist bloc headed by the United States come to break up into the "first" and "second" worlds? (the first world" consists of the two superpowers, the United States and Soviet Union, the "second world" of the less powerful capitalist countries), What is the real character of the "third world" (bearing in mind that only a few countries in it are socialist)? How can it happen that a socialist country reverts to being a capitalist one? About six months after this conversation the Chinese press published a very comprehensive article discussing some of these questions—evidently the fruit of collecting and distilling the ideas raised in these widespread popular discussions

Such events in China are part of a process taking place all over the world, in which ordinary people are finding themselves obliged to raise their ability to analyse very complex situations where things are often the opposite of what they seem on the surface. For example in the Horn of Africa the working people of Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia are keen to build a socialist society, yet in doing so find themselves struggling against the Soviet Union which claims to be socialist. In China, emphasis is placed on the need to grasp consciously the method (known as the dialectical method) of analysing concrete situations in an all-round way, so as to take the initiative and not just react by going from one extreme to the other.

5. Problems of Leadership

Mao Tse-tung's view was that leaders should not be preoccupied with retaining their own position at the top; they should stand at the front of the mass movement, they should promote the movement and not try to restrict it so as to stop it overtaking them. This is a difficult but important point, which helps a lot in understanding contemporary Chinese politics. Mao studied what Lenin had said about a pre-revolutionary situation: "the strength of the present-day movement

lies in the awakening of the masses (principally the industrial proletariat), and. . . its weakness lies in the lack of consciousness and initiative among the revolutionary leaders" (*What Is to Be Done*, ch. 2), and applied this perspective to various stages of China's socialist construction, for instance in 1955 when he said "the leadership should never lag behind the mass movement. Yet the present situation is precisely one in which the mass movement is running ahead of the leadership, who cannot keep pace with it. This state of affairs must change" (*On the Question of Agricultural Co-operation*).

Out of the attempt to correct that situation came the Great Leap Forward of 1958, an event which had a very big impact on China in changing the way people thought, in building confidence that the objective world can really be transformed in accordance with a conscious plan so long as that plan accurately reflects the real conditions. The Leap Forward, a period of greatly accelerated development in all fields, was a necessary step in pushing China's society forward, and gave everyone a broader horizon and a longer perspective.

References which have recently been made to the importance of leadership really reflect a concern with ensuring that the leadership measures up to the strength of the mass movement. At present, there is a lot of talk about the possibility of a new "leap forward". This reflects a feeling that for a while the leadership had been lagging behind and restricting the mass movement, and that this problem is now in the process of being resolved.

Hua Kuo-feng acquired a reputation for being among other things a technician of leadership, someone who is skilled in promoting the mass movement, who does not seek to maintain his own position by restricting popular initiative. The Shao-shan irrigation system, constructed in the early '60s at a time when Hua was in overall charge in Hunan Province (south central China) is very interesting in that it is built and managed almost entirely by the ordinary peasants themselves. It is actually a case of the ordinary working people deciding on the shape of the future society and implementing their decision. At the same time, skilled leadership is needed to release this degree of popular initiative and co-ordinate it into an integrated large-scale project.

One aspect of the leadership problem has been the existence of conspirators like the "gang of four" who are opposed to the fundamental aims of the Chinese revolution, while another aspect is the failure of the central leadership as a whole to grapple with this danger effectively and prevent serious harm from being done. Speaking of counter-revolutionaries who manage to get into leading positions, Mao argued in 1967: "Some of them we have already seen through, others we have not. Some are still trusted by us and are being trained as our successors, persons like Khrushchev, for example, who are still nestling beside us." (Quoted in the 1967 pamphlet edition of the *Circular of the CC, CPC, May 16 1966*). The extent of the problem is shown by the fact that one-third of the 21 members of the Political Bureau (top party leadership) elected at the Ninth National Congress of the Communist Party in 1969 are now regarded as having been counter-revolutionaries, opposed to the interest of the working class (four people implicated in the attempted coup by Defence Minister Lin Piao in 1971 and three members of the "gang of four").

Hua Kuo-feng himself used the scientific Marxist method to analyse the situation, and pointed out during the recent 11th National Congress of the Communist Party, "*Whoever antagonises the people is bound to be overthrown by the people. . . . Together with their bourgeois factional setup the hotchpotch of theory, line, policy, ideology and press propaganda of the "gang of four" formed a most reactionary and decadent superstructure. . . . The working people didn't like it, nor did the oxen and machines, because the working people who used them didn't like it at all*" (author's emphasis).

6. Need for Marxist Theory

The "gang of four" themselves represented the main weakness in China's leadership. But others were also at fault for not being well enough prepared theoretically to understand and resolve the problem. In 1971 the Chinese people received a considerable shock when Lin Piao, who was known throughout the Cultural Revolution as Mao's "close comrade-in-arms", attempted a coup d'etat aimed at assassinating Mao and seizing

power (he was killed in a plane crash while trying to escape in the direction of the USSR). Mao Tse-tung described Lin Piao as a "political swindler", and called on people to study Marxist theory. This theory is important because it gives a scientific understanding of the development of human society, and particularly the question of class struggle.

But Mao's warning was not heeded. "In the five years from the time Chairman Mao gave this instruction up to his death . . . there was no fundamental change in the situation", as Vice-Chairman Yeh Chien-ying said recently (*Peking Review*, 1977 No.43). Thus everyone bears a share of responsibility for not giving sufficient prominence to politics. Party Schools are being used to help remedy this. This is not at all a matter of studying behind closed doors, it is a question of developing what is known as a Marxist style of leadership and of "carrying forward the cause pioneered by our predecessors and forging ahead into the future." As Yeh said in the same talk,

During his lifetime, when a revolutionary stage drew to a close or when a major task was completed, Chairman Mao invariably used the method 'from the masses' to sum up the experience in good time and on this basis formulate new policies and methods and take them to the masses to be put into practice. Repeating this process again and again has helped us raise the level of our Marxist leadership from time to time. This is a Marxist method for educating cadres and raising their level. We must inherit from Chairman Mao this Marxist method without fail.

The Marxist philosophy, according to Frederick Engels, one of its founders, is "simply the conception of the world as it is, without any reservations". It is often called "dialectical materialism", meaning treating concrete facts as the basis and analysing them from all their different contradictory angles and aspects, the aim being not just to understand the world but to *change* it. Sometimes misleadingly described as "moderate", the approach of the present Chinese leadership is in fact to re-establish Mao's way of doing things, taking an all-sided view of problems, combining a firm sense of direction with the necessary tactical flexibility. Mao himself criticised the idea that one should act in a measured way and never outstep the proper limits. He put forward the principle "Go all out, aim high!", and this is precisely the spirit of the Chinese people now.

7. Progress to Communism

According to Marxism, socialism is a particular stage in the development of society towards communism, an initial stage of communism which has its own special characteristics. Whereas eventually it is thought that people will perform work according to their ability and receive according to what their needs are, during the transitional, socialist stage, people are rewarded according to the amount of work they do. This is still somewhat like the system which capitalism claims to apply (though in practice doesn't, since people with capital can grow rich without working).

As Mao saw it, the most important thing to understand about socialist society is the contradiction between capitalism and socialism, and its gradual resolution. In 1938 he had written on the subject of "protracted war". Now under socialism, there was to be a protracted struggle of a different kind, where it was still necessary to despise the enemy strategically and take him seriously tactically. "It is impossible to swallow an entire banquet at one gulp" (Mao Tse-tung's speech at the 1957 Moscow Meeting).

The Chinese Communists have handled this problem by carrying out an extensive series of political and economic "campaigns", each one (rather like a military campaign) capable of uniting overwhelming forces against a particular aspect of surviving capitalism. Time and again Mao emphasised the need to unite at least 90 or 95 per cent of the people. This would eventually mean compromising with some aspects of capitalism for the sole purpose of hitting the main target more effectively, particularly the very small number of people in top positions in the Party "taking the capitalist road". The important thing was to understand the strategic direction, society's eventual evolution into communism.

Again in late 1974, Mao Tse-tung described how socialist society's way of distributing its products still bears some of the character of capitalism. It is a paradox that a socialist state should enforce a partially capitalist distribution—this is the problem referred to by Karl Marx as "bourgeois right" or "bourgeois law". In launching a campaign on this question, Mao considered that if the Chinese working people are to

come to an understanding of the laws governing society's development, they must learn to view socialist society as a transitional stage whose own internal contradictions provide the driving force in the gradual progress to communism. This understanding should serve as a guide to action, to changing the world. The present Chinese leadership has applied Mao's Marxist line of taking account of the capitalist element and at the same time restricting it in sensible ways. Thus towards the end of 1977 the government took measures to raise the lower levels of wages—distribution is still according to work, but the discrepancies between the remuneration for different kinds or quantities of work are smaller.

8. Effect of the "gang of four's" line

However, during 1975 and 1976, the "gang of four", particularly their theoretician Chang Ch'un-ch'iao, used this campaign as an excuse for launching an indiscriminate campaign against anything "bourgeois" (or which they chose to label as bourgeois), quite contrary to the principle of uniting 90 or 95 per cent of the people.

Lin Piao in his time had departed from the view of socialist society as a transitional stage on the road to communism. He put forward policies aimed at bringing about so-called "true socialism" which would have meant dividing up much of the collective property among individuals. These ideas were subsequently criticised, but since Lin Piao had never translated them into practice the criticism remained at a somewhat abstract level.

What is important about the criticism of the "gang of four" at present is that some of their ideas actually were practised in some areas, so it is possible for the Chinese to get a concrete idea of "capitalist restoration". In China, most of the land is owned collectively by groups of peasants living in a certain area, and its produce (or the money they obtain by selling it to state purchasing agencies) belongs to them collectively. According to the Marxist understanding of socialism, after allowing for people's needs an important and increasing proportion of the socialist product is accumulated in the interest of the collective for the purposes of investment, welfare funds

etc.; after these deductions are made, the remainder is distributed to individuals on the basis of the work they have done. And this is in fact what the Chinese peasants have done ever since the establishment of the co-operative system in agriculture in the mid 1950s. But in some rural areas where the line identified with the "gang of four" was dominant, people who advocated accumulation of funds were attacked for following the 'capitalist road', with the result (notably in Chekiang Province) that the product was divided up amongst families and the collective economy virtually broke down.

Were the "gang of four"—Wang Hung-wen, Chang Ch'un-ch'iao, Chiang Ch'ing, Yao Wen-yuan and their immediate followers—"leftists" who hopelessly failed to understand the need for tactical flexibility? This is not how they are seen by the Chinese people; on the contrary it is emphasised that the Four and their close associates were opposed to the basic strategy of the Chinese revolution, but they *did* on the other hand have a shrewd understanding of tactics—the tactics to be employed in winning state power for themselves. They made use of some "left" slogans in order to profit from the genuine hatred of capitalism held by ordinary Chinese workers, and to stigmatise as "capitalist roaders" those people who stood in the way of their winning state power.

9. Character of the Chinese State

Chinese political theory throws very great emphasis onto the question of who holds power in the state, since this will determine the strategic direction. This emphasis on the state is undoubtedly one of the key elements which the communists introduced into the Chinese revolution, from the time in the 1930s when they agreed that the semi-fascist state machine of the Kuomintang (Chiang Kai-shek's party) would not be capable of solving China's problems, up to the present movement which aims to avoid the re-emergence of a fascist state which would be likely to arise if China "changed its colour" (in this sense fascist state should be seen as one representing the interests of a small group of bureaucrats at the head of a highly concentrated state-capitalist economic system, ruling by terrorism but using a socialist signboard to

confuse people—which is roughly the way Mao analysed the system in the Soviet Union after Khrushchev).

The Marxist-Leninist theory which guides the Chinese revolution attaches great significance to what is known as the “dictatorship of the proletariat”, meaning the working class organised as ruling class. The capitalist state, a parasitic growth on society, must be dismantled and replaced by a new kind of state system in which this bureaucratic growth is unnecessary for the very reason that ordinary working people are responsible for the day-to-day decisions and also the long-term planning concerning all the issues which affect their lives. Calling it a dictatorship means that the working class has unrestricted power to run society and shape its new order.

As in other parts of the world, the “dictatorship of the proletariat” has become a topical issue in China. Not long before he died, Mao Tse-tung also argued that this question should be studied. The kind of point he had in mind was that it was not enough that power should be held by some individuals who claim to represent the working class. It is a very well-known fact that there are some people who talk with a working-class accent but don't really represent that class's point of view, particularly when they get into positions of power. Taking up Lenin's point about the existence of a “worker aristocracy” which actually represents the bourgeoisie, Mao advocated a concerted attempt to investigate how this problem arises at a time when the construction of a new social order is already under way.

10. Successors to the Revolution

China had a fairly strong force of tried and tested cadres from the revolutionary wars. After the new state power was established in 1949, attention was given to the problem of keeping up the revolutionary drive of these cadres, preventing them from settling down and taking things easy, or falling victim to the “sugar-coated bullets” of the bourgeoisie. Increasingly over the past few years the focus of discussion has shifted to the problem posed by the new generation of people who will soon have to take over all the leading responsibilities.

But a counter-trend developed during 1975 and 1976, of

pretending that the main problem was still that of the senior cadres and that there was hardly any problem with the younger people. The group which came to be known as the "gang of four" argued in effect that it was all right to promote young people to leading positions just because they came from worker or peasant background and had a certain amount of practical experience, even if their grasp of political theory was weak. This tendency encouraged empiricism (a blind concern with practice and neglect of the theory which is in fact necessary if one is to make sense of practical experience), while at the same time the "gang of four" were waging a campaign against the so-called "empiricism" of the revolutionary veterans.

There was a struggle over this question. Wang Hung-wen, a young man in whom the Party undoubtedly placed high hopes when he was elected Vice-Chairman in 1973, began to live in an extravagant and not particularly proletarian style when he came to Peking. On the contrary, Ch'en Yung-kuei, a former poor peasant who was also brought into the central leadership in 1973, wrote critically about the life-style of some cadres, and asked to be allowed to do regular spells of productive labour in his village. Mao had this letter of Ch'en's circulated as a document in the Central Committee. In the Spring of 1975, just when he was leading the movement to study the problem of how some cadres adopt a bourgeois way of life, Mao went to Hangchow (on the east coast) and studied the case of one former worker who had been promoted to a high position and tyrannised over his fellow-workers. The "gang of four" were trying to consolidate their own power by promoting a group of young people, loyal to themselves, who did not have much of a link with the revolutionary traditions, or grasp of political theory.

Since the "gang's" downfall, the Chinese press has been publishing many articles in praise of the revolutionary veterans, many of whom died during the past two or three years, such as Chou En-lai, Chu Teh (former commander of the Red Army) and K'ang Sheng (a leading theoretician since the early days and one of the key figures during the Cultural Revolution). A few such veterans still play an important role today, like Yeh Chien-ying who holds the second leading position after Hua Kuo-feng. The Communist Party is once again

taking a serious attitude to the problem of bringing up a new generation of activists at every level who share the death-defying spirit of the veterans of the revolutionary wars.

11. Crisis in 1976

During 1975, the "gang of four" were encouraging a lot of empty talk about "putting politics in command" of nothing in particular, certainly not about putting politics in command of the living reality of the Chinese revolution. It is in this context that we should consider the affair of Teng Hsiao-p'ing. Teng had very rich experience as a leader both before and after the victory of the revolution in 1949, and particularly in the conflict against the anti-socialist leadership of the Soviet Union in the early 1960s. He also made some mistakes in departing from the "mass line", and thus became an object of criticism in the Cultural Revolution. It seems that the opportunists like Lin Piao, who tried to use the Cultural Revolution to propel themselves to positions of power, also exaggerated the trend against Teng Hsiao-p'ing because he was an obstacle in their way. At the Tenth Party Congress (1973) which came to grips with the Lin Piao trend, Teng was re-elected to the Central Committee. In 1975, when Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai were already both seriously ill, Teng was put in overall charge of the day-to-day work of the Party and government.

In October 1975 a draft document known as the "General Programme" was prepared under Teng Hsiao-p'ing's name which courageously pointed out by implication that the next step for China's revolution was to attack the "gang of four's" dogmatism. Apart from (a) his recent statement about the importance of studying the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat (which some people were talking about in a one sided and abstract way), Mao had also spoken (b) of the need to develop the national economy (the National People's Congress held in January 1975 had put forward a plan for China to become an advanced industrialised country by the year 2000), and (c) of China's need for a period of stability and unity. In order to counter the one-sidedness of the "gang of four", Teng put forward the all-round slogan of "taking the three directives as the key link".

However this document contained some important weaknesses. It did not clearly identify the struggle against the "gang of four" as an aspect of class struggle; moreover it was open to the interpretation that stability and unity would prevail until the year 2000, in other words that China needed to modernise the economy before she could allow the luxury of any intense or acute political and social conflict.

12. "Taking Class Struggle as the Key Link"

At the Eighth Congress of the Communist Party of China, in 1956, a line had been adopted which held that the main contradiction in China lay "between the advanced socialist system and the backward productive forces of society". This implied that it was necessary to "freeze" political change for a time in order to allow the economic base to "catch up". Such an analysis scarcely conforms to the Marxist way of looking at society, according to which human ideas and political institutions reflect the economic base. They cannot on the whole be "too advanced", on the contrary they always tend *in some respects* to lag behind the needs of the situation; this is why political changes and also revolutionisation of people's thinking are continually necessary.

Mao Tse-tung disapproved of this formulation and tried hard to convince public opinion that the key to understanding contemporary Chinese society was in fact to understand the existence of class struggle within it. When the Ninth Congress was convened, 13 years later and after three years of the Cultural Revolution, it should have been possible to settle accounts with that 1956 line. But as it turned out Lin Piao and his supporters argued in favour of a line which in fact was very similar to that earlier one, namely that "the main task after the Ninth Congress was to develop production". This was rejected at the time, but it was not until the Tenth Congress (1973) that the line was explicitly repudiated. The circumstances should then have been right for concluding the first Cultural Revolution and preparing for a period of stability, *while at the same time* "continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat" and not making the mistake of assuming that Chinese politics were now so advanced that one could concentrate on

production and forget about revolutionisation for a time.

However, the emergence of the problem of the "gang of four" immediately afterwards showed that the Cultural Revolution still had one more victory to win. Their line had to be struggled against, but the question was *how*. In his speech at the 1973 Congress, Chou En-lai had said:

It is imperative to note that one tendency covers another. The opposition to Ch'en Tu-hsiu's Right opportunism which advocated 'all alliance, no struggle' covered Wang Ming's 'Left' opportunism which advocated 'all struggle no alliance'. The rectification of Wang Ming's 'Left' deviation covered Wang Ming's Right deviation. The struggle against Liu Shao-ch'i's revisionism covered Lin Piao's revisionism. (...) It is required of us to do our best to discern and rectify such tendencies in time. And when a wrong tendency surges towards us like a rising tide, we must not fear isolation and must dare to go against the tide and brave it through.*

The "gang of four" always posed as representatives of the Left, so it was extremely hard to find a way of opposing them without at the same time laying China open to a counter-move from the Right. It was precisely this difficulty which the Four exploited and which made it seem to them and to many others that it would be impossible to get rid of them. If someone resisted them by putting forward a line which appeared on the surface to be "rightist" then the Four would pose as representatives of the Left and seek to rally public opinion behind themselves.

For this reason Teng Hsiao-p'ing's mistakes threatened to play into the hands of the "four" and thus Mao, at the turn of the year 1975-6, had to criticise these mistakes. In this criticism, Mao particularly made the following important points: "stability and unity do not mean writing off class struggle"; "class struggle is the key link and everything else hinges on this." Hua Kuo-feng was made First Vice-Chairman and head of the government in April 1976, with the difficult task of

* Ch'en Tu-hsiu was the first head of the Communist Party in the 1920s, who failed to allow for Chiang Kai-shek's treachery in slaughtering the Communists; Wang Ming was for a time the leading ideologist in the early '30s, a person with plenty of book knowledge and little understanding of Chinese realities; Liu Shao-ch'i was the Head of State who was overthrown in the early part of the Cultural Revolution.

keeping his head in an extremely complicated situation and "discerning and rectifying" any wrong tendencies.

13. Conclusion of the Cultural Revolution

During 1976 Mao's health grew worse, and the "gang of four" were able temporarily to gain the upper hand, throw their weight around and terrorize their opponents. By accelerating their attempt to seize power they prepared for their own overthrow.

In essence Mao Tse-tung's intervention of late 1975-early 1976 concerned the question of how to return to the traditional line of applying Marxist political theory to the concrete tasks of China's social and economic development, criticising the "gang of four" while at the same time avoiding a resurgence of the mistaken line about the contradiction "between the advanced social system and the backward productive forces", confirming the victory of the first Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, concluding its work and bringing about a period of stability.

The criticism of the "gang of four" since October 1976 has been a popular movement of an unprecedented kind. The new directions to be taken by the Chinese revolution will emerge through a process of summing up all the new ideas and ways of doing things which are now being put forward. If the words of the present leadership had merely been empty slogans like the slogans pronounced by the "gang of four" they would not be particularly significant; but because they are not, because they are part and parcel of a vigorous mass movement, it is important to look at them. If we turn to the crucial passages of the most important policy statement, Hua Kuo-feng's political report to the Eleventh Communist Party Congress (August 1977) we can see that Hua has fully taken account of the points made by Mao in his last major contribution to the political line of the Chinese Revolution :

Stability and unity do not mean writing off class struggle. The victorious conclusion of the first Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution certainly does not mean the end of class struggle or of the continued revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Throughout the historical period of socialism the struggle

between the two roads, socialism and capitalism, continues to exist. This struggle will be protracted and tortuous and at times even very sharp. Political revolutions in the nature of the Cultural Revolution will take place many times in the future. . . .

At this critical moment, the Central Committee of the Party has made the *strategic decision to grasp the key link of class struggle and run the country well*, that is, to achieve stability and unity, strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat and consolidate and expand the achievements of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution *in the midst of acute conflict between the two roads*, so as to bring about great order throughout the country, (author's emphasis).

At the same time as Mao's criticisms of Teng Hsiao-ping's line have been taken to heart, Teng himself has been reappointed to a leading position. This move has met with enormous popular support and is typical of the CPC's approach of "curing the sickness to save the patient". To quote again from Chou En-lai's 1973 report, "a genuine Communist must be ready to accept a higher or lower post and be able to stand the test of going up or stepping down many times". In this sense Teng is uniquely well qualified!

14. Class or Dynasty?

Like Lenin, who said in the last years of his life that things would really have changed when ordinary rank-and-file workers actually took a hand in exercising state power, Mao Tse-tung always insisted on defining a revolution as a change in the class which holds power, not as a change in personnel. The People's Communes formed all over the country in 1958 are not only a way of organising agricultural production, but also function as local organs of state power, a point which peasants in the communes have still been carefully explaining to foreign visitors over recent months. The Cultural Revolution was a further move in that direction, not only because of the new organisational forms which emerged (particularly the Revolutionary Committees) but also especially because of the general way in which the population began to feel itself concerned with affairs of state. The Cultural Revolution was the time when Chang Ch'un-ch'iao, Wang Hung-wen and others associated with them first achieved prominence, but its significance lay not in their coming to power, but rather in the coming to power of the ordinary Chinese workers. Today it is

sometimes said that the Cultural Revolution was a great cleansing tide which at the same time inevitably left behind a certain amount of jetsam in the form of opportunists.

At the end of 1973, a decision was taken to link the criticism of Lin Piao, the plotter of 1971, with a criticism of Confucianism. One purpose of this was to expose old ways of thinking about the superiority of mental over manual labour, of the old over the young, and of men over women—such ways of thinking are quite deep-rooted in every society, and in China take the specific form of Confucianism. Another purpose was to study the class struggle in Confucius' own period because this is the only case in Chinese history before the socialist revolution where one class has replaced another in holding state power.*

However, Yao Wen-yuan and others of the "gang of four" had a powerful influence in the field of culture, and this soon made itself felt. They imposed their own narrow orthodoxy on this study campaign, and the articles published came increasingly to focus on a so-called struggle between Confucianists and legalists in later periods of Chinese history when the struggle was no longer between classes but simply between rival factions of the landlord class.

Such articles were in no sense a contribution to social science, they were written solely for the sake of expressing by innuendo the "gang of four's" claim that they should be the people holding power. They saw social development purely in terms of a conflict between rival dynasties or clans. For example, there was a real conflict between opportunists like Lin Piao or the "gang of four" who came close to power on the crest of the wave of the Cultural Revolution, and Liu Shao-ch'i, the old party boss who was overthrown by the Cultural Revolution. But this was only a conflict between the two rival bureaucratic cliques. The opportunists regarded their own

* Confucius lived in the late 6th—early 5th centuries BC. Chinese historians consider that the process whereby society rid itself of the slave system extended over several centuries before this change was consolidated in the new state power of the Ch'in dynasty and the serf (feudal) system was firmly established. The "legalist" philosophers were representatives of the rising landlord class which had an interest in doing away with the slave system and was progressive in those particular historical circumstances—the legalists opposed the conservative teachings of Confucius, who was an opponent of social change. However once the feudal landlord class was firmly in power, they used Confucianism to support their own rule.

coming to power as a highly progressive change, but this is not how it would be seen from a Marxist point of view.

Mao Tse-tung considered that a united and ideologically sound Communist Party was the focal point of working class power in China, and he put forward a set of principles: "Practise Marxism not revisionism, unite and don't split, be open and aboveboard and don't intrigue and conspire" ("revisionism" means departing from the scientific principles of Marxism—the Chinese see revisionism not just as Marxism "gone wrong" but as a downright anti-working class, anti-popular ideology). In describing the Four as a "gang" (which is a term Mao himself used in this context from 1974 on in criticising them for factionalism), he wanted to stress the clannish character of their organisation, like one of the old criminal secret societies which flourished in Shanghai before liberation. In the way they used code-phrases and metaphors in the articles supposedly criticising Confucius, the "gang" certainly confirmed this judgement.

Particularly serious was the fact that their attacks were concentrated against some leaders, particularly Chou En-lai, who had a very good Party spirit, were close to the working people and always had their interests at heart. Thus, although in one sense the "gang" suppressed the concept of class struggle, in another sense they were in fact engaged in a class struggle—against the interest of working class power.

This situation was very complex and the trends were probably not fully clear to anyone before the conspiracy got under way in earnest during 1976. Even so, in 1975 Mao had already tried to counter the wrong trend by publishing some remarks concerning the classical Chinese novel *Water Margin*. He argued that the important contradiction in feudal society was the conflict of interest between the landlords as a class and the working peasantry. The hero of that book aligned himself with peasants rebelling against feudal oppression, but he did so for the sole purpose of rendering himself valuable to the other side and thus winning a position of power within the feudal system for himself. He didn't oppose the feudal system as such, so he wasn't a revolutionary. According to Mao, one should not regard one faction of the landlord class as being progressive in their power struggles against a rival faction.

15. International Line

Some of the "anti-confucian" articles published under the influence of the "gang of four" were also highly chauvinistic. In fact their line made little direct impact in the field of foreign policy, but its implications are such that had they taken charge of China they would certainly have challenged China's established approach to international affairs.

In world politics, "dynasties" have come and gone. The old imperialist powers which used to rule the roost were ousted by the United States. Now the Soviet Union is making a bid for world domination, posing as the "natural ally" of the developing countries and the national-liberation movement and hoping to be carried to power on the crest of the wave of the anti-US movement. From the Marxist-Leninist point of view held by Mao Tse-tung, the Soviet Union's conflict against the USA is a conflict waged by one group of imperialists against another and cannot in any sense be considered "progressive". Only the struggles of the oppressed people and nations directed against the whole imperialist system as such are really progressive.

China too should be judged by the same standards. China is emerging as a force to be reckoned with in world politics. If she in turn were to assert her full influence by practising traditional-style power politics, this would in turn constitute only a change of dynasty and not a progressive development. China must continue to stand by the oppressed in their struggle against the system of power politics; then her growing influence will be progressive. As Teng Hsiao-p'ing stated at a special session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1974.

If one day China should change her colour and turn into a super-power, if she too should play the tyrant in the world, and everywhere subject others to her bullying, aggression and exploitation, the people of the world should identify her as social-imperialism, expose it, and work together with the Chinese people to overthrow it.

In a major article on international affairs published in November 1977, this sentence is again quoted, with the remark: "is

there any other power today that dares make such a candid and honest statement?"

16. Learning from Experience

“What we must demand of ourselves now is to cut down the time needed for gaining experience of economic construction to a shorter period than it took us to gain experience of revolution, and not to pay as high a price for it.” When Mao said this twenty years ago in his speech *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People* it seemed strange that he should even think that China might again run the risk of paying the same kind of “price” that was paid for the mistakes of the early revolutionary wars. Mao had in mind the internal consequences which would follow if the Chinese state “changed colour”.

Any social change is bound to involve a certain amount of trial and error, and one of the special advantages of a socialist system, as Mao saw it, was the possibility of boldly examining experience and learning from mistakes. Over a long period the Chinese Communist Party evolved the concept of a “rectification campaign”, which Mao, in another speech in 1957, described as a movement

to resolve correctly the contradictions which actually exist among the people and which have to be resolved immediately, by means of a nation-wide debate which is both guided and free, carried out in the urban and rural areas on such questions as the socialist road and the capitalist road, the basic systems and major policies of the state, the working style of the Communist Party and government functionaries, and the welfare of the people—a debate conducted by bringing out the facts and by argument. This is a socialist campaign for self-education and self-remoulding by the people. . . . In future we intend to conduct a rectification campaign every year or every other year (*People's China* Dec. 1, 1957).

One of the essential points which the “gang of four” introduced into the criticism of Teng Hsiao-p'ing's line during 1976 was the idea that Teng represented a trend of writing off the Cultural Revolution and overthrowing all the gains of that period. It is quite possible that such a trend will in fact arise, but the important point is that the main foes of the Cultural

Revolution were in fact the "gang of four" themselves. Why is this? Because they used the notion of "preserving intact" the gains of the Cultural Revolution as an excuse to oppose any critical summing-up of experience. The call for a critical analysis of the experience of the Cultural Revolution, far from being a conservative idea is in fact a progressive one, because without it the Chinese revolution could not possibly advance.

This is roughly how we believe the Chinese are explaining this problem today. The Paris Commune of 1871 was the first proletarian regime in history. Although it failed after only a short time, the Commune helped enormously to push history forward. It was carefully analysed by Karl Marx who gave it a positive appraisal on the whole while indicating the mistakes which were made. On the basis of this experience the Russian Bolsheviks were able to carry out a successful revolution in 1917. Lenin himself thought at that time that there was a chance the Russian Revolution would fail and the capitalist system would be restored, but even so the Bolsheviks were absolutely right to go ahead because they opened up the path; other revolutionaries would follow and improve on what they had done.

After Lenin died, Stalin was one of the few people in the leadership who had the confidence to go ahead in leading the Russians in building a socialist society; the contemporary Chinese leaders approve very much of Stalin on this point. In its endeavour, the USSR was breaking entirely new ground, and mistakes were inevitable. Even though, as the Chinese now see it, a very high price was paid, in the form of the eventual "restoration of capitalism", nevertheless the Russians were right to go ahead in building socialism because in doing so they opened up the possibility for other revolutionaries to learn from their positive and negative experience.

But the Chinese go further than this: they say that it *ought to be possible*, under a system like socialism, for society to learn from *its own* mistakes, and not pay the price of failure. Thus according to an article published by Hua Kuo-feng on May Day 1977, "for a long time he (Stalin) did not look at socialist society from the materialist dialectical viewpoint of the unity of opposites, but saw it as an integrated whole where there is only identity, but no contradiction." In other words,

the Russian leadership during that period did not have a really analytical attitude to their own experience. In a similar way to Teng Hsiao-p'ing in his struggle against the "gang of four", Stalin often objectively upheld the interests of the working class against the bourgeoisie, while at the same time he was not *conscious* of the fact that this was a class struggle, nor did he educate the people in that consciousness.

China's own line for the building of socialism is based partly on an analysis of the Soviet experience, including the mistakes that were made. This can be seen clearly from the fifth volume of Mao Tse-tung's Selected Works (covering the period 1949-57). For example, Mao makes the point that in order to realise the goal of industrialisation it is necessary first to attend to developing agriculture: this will create a vast market for the products of light industry, and the expansion of light industry allows a rapid accumulation which can be invested in heavy industry. But the most important point which Mao derived from a critical summing-up of Soviet experience, the point on which Hua Kuo-feng particularly insists, is the political point that mutually hostile social classes continue to exist in socialist society and therefore it is necessary to "continue the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Like the Paris Commune and Russia's socialist construction, the Cultural Revolution in China was something entirely new, without any direct historical precedent to serve as a guide. In advocating it, Mao Tse-tung was certainly conscious of the risks: if there was no Cultural Revolution a capitalist system might be restored in China, but because it was the first of its kind, the Cultural Revolution might run into serious trouble. Even so, it was necessary for China to go ahead and break that new ground.

The question now is whether it will have to be left for some future revolution in another country to analyse China's experience and find out where it went wrong, or whether the Chinese revolution will prove to be mature enough to analyse its own experience and correct its negative aspect, so as to carry out further successful cultural revolutions in the future. In fact, Mao Tse-tung never considered that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution which began in 1966 should be prolonged indefinitely, on the contrary he envisaged that it

would be succeeded by a period of relative stability, then by a new cultural revolution, and so on in succession.

The trend identified with the "gang of four" in effect represented the Cultural Revolution "as an integrated whole where there is only identity but no contradiction". They had in fact a vested interest in preserving the negative aspect of the Cultural Revolution (such as the way in which in some fields an arbitrary power came to be concentrated in the hands of a very few people like themselves), and preventing this negative aspect from being submitted to scrutiny.

17. The Road Forward

Today there is a general feeling of confidence. The reason for this was stated by one of the veteran leaders in a recent interview: since the early period when China's revolutionary forces were based in the Ching Kang Mountains in south China during the late 1920s and early 1930s, Mao had worked out a policy of regarding the popular masses as a "true bastion of iron", a guarantee of success even against the powerful forces brought to bear by the enemy. The Cultural Revolution was a logical sequel to that line, making sure that the political theory of the Chinese revolution was diffused fairly broadly among the ordinary people, thus providing the revolution with a sound basis from which further advances can be made.

It has been recounted that when the peasants were beginning to form the very first agricultural co-operatives in the early 1950s, Hua Kuo-feng used to take some of them on visits to historic sites of the Chinese revolution in Hunan province, in order to make the point that the revolution began in the 1920s in a very small way and with small forces, but it possessed the most advanced political line and represented the future trend; similarly the co-operative movement was the first shoot of the future organisation of socialist society. In the mid '60s the Chinese leadership identified some cases which are thought to point the way forward towards the resolution of contemporary society's fundamental antagonisms. These examples are the Tachai production brigade and the Tach'ing oilfield, both in North China.

When some people do the intellectual work and leave others to do the manual work, this is obviously a basis for the division of society into classes. Similarly there has always been a tendency for the rural areas to be exploited by the urban areas. In order to work step by step towards the classless society of the future, it is felt, fragmentation of people will have to disappear; industrial and agricultural work will be very closely related and the same people will share their time between the physical work and the intellectual activity of running society.

This will obviously take a long time to come about, but some of the outlines of the new society can already be seen in China. Tach'ing and Tachai were put forward as models for the whole country to follow because they both show how the contradictions between town and country, between mental and manual labour, can gradually be resolved. The expansion of the movement to learn from these two model units has been one of the most important initiatives of the present leadership, and this by no means merely represents a concern with increasing production. For example, in "learning from Tach'ing" people in the factories all over the country are studying how to give full play to the initiative of the workers, how to develop agriculture in the area around the factory, and so on.

Mao Tse-tung once wrote that "merely talking about linking theory and practice without actually doing anything about it is of no use, even if one goes on talking for a hundred years" (*Rectify the Party's Style of Work*). And indeed it seems that for a time, especially in 1976, it was difficult for workers to apply political theory to practical problems of production because they would be accused of putting production "in command". Production would have to go on in any case—it is, after all, the basis of any society—so if people were prevented from applying politics to problems of production this could only mean that production problems would be handled in a non-political way.

In trying to carry on their productive labour people came up against political obstruction from the "gang of four's" line. This experience gradually brought home to many workers and peasants the fact that it was necessary to understand the current conflict of political line, otherwise they could not possibly do their work. The present slogan of "grasping the key

link of class struggle and running the country well" is derived from just this experience.

18. Revolution and Production

Here we have been discussing the way a society develops and how this development is reflected and influenced by a conflict between classes, and a conflict in the field of political institutions and ideas. Perhaps we have referred to "the Chinese revolution" in a rather abstract way as though "it" were able to think for itself. But of course policy and other methods have to be worked out by people. Their ideas will never fully measure up to the demands of the situation. The real point of the Chinese experience is to mobilise the resources of the collective as fully and as widely as possible.

The Cultural Revolution "worked" economically because it released the initiative and creative energy of the masses in China. It made a great contribution in beginning to transform the old undeveloped China into a developed society of an entirely new kind. The idea put forward in 1956 that the main contradiction was the one "between the advanced social system and the backward productive forces of society" was one way of presenting revolution and production as if they were mutually exclusive. In essence the "gang of four's" way of talking all the time about "revolution" in an abstract and dogmatic way was the same, it also presented the two as mutually exclusive. The Cultural Revolution, on the other hand, started out from the fact that it is continually necessary to have revolution if production is to be promoted. The *Decision of the Central Committee of the CPC* (August 8, 1966) which launched the Cultural Revolution and is always considered to represent Mao's own point of view, states:

The aim of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is to revolutionise people's ideology and as a consequence to achieve greater, faster, better and more economical results in all fields of work. . . .

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is a powerful motive force for the development of the social productive forces in our country. Any idea of counterposing the Great Cultural Revolution to the development of production is incorrect.

By and large, this statement has proved to be correct. Over

the past few months, local Party and government Congresses have been held in many provinces, and in the reports made to these meetings it has been emphasised that the economy flourished in the decade up to 1975, that the Cultural Revolution was basically responsible for this in removing the restrictions on the development of the economic base by liberating the massive energy of the working people. Things undoubtedly went wrong in 1976, but on the whole it was the Cultural Revolution including its last victory, over the "gang of four", which was responsible for the favourable situation of Chinese society today.

It is necessary to affirm the positive experience of the Cultural Revolution precisely because the current move to develop production could not otherwise be successful.

19. Trends in Chinese Politics Today

An article of September 1977 marking the first anniversary of Mao Tse-tung's death published for the first time his own assessment of his life's work: he had accomplished two things, "One was defeating Chiang Kai-shek and driving him to Taiwan, defeating Japanese imperialism and driving it out of China; the other was successfully carrying out the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution".

In saying this, Mao pointed to the fact that the Chinese revolution moves forward by overcoming both external and internal obstacles.

Should social-imperialism and imperialism dare to invade us in the future, we will, under the command of the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua, mobilize the people throughout the country and resolutely, thoroughly, wholly and completely wipe out the aggressors by launching a people's war, the method Chairman Mao used in leading us to defeat Chiang Kai-shek, Japanese imperialism and U.S. imperialism.

The first Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has triumphantly concluded, but this certainly does not mean the end of class struggle. So long as there are classes and class struggle, they are bound to be reflected in the Party, and this will give rise to Party persons in power taking the capitalist road. From now on, if persons like Liu Shao-ch'i, Lin Piao or the "gang of four" trying to usurp Party and state leadership should emerge, we will, under

the leadership of the Party Central Committee headed by Chairman Hua, apply the method used by Chairman Mao in launching the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, mobilize the people of the whole country, practise mass democracy and overthrow them. (Lin Chin-yan: *Peking Review* 1977, nos. 37-38).

In contrasting those two periods (the wars of liberation and the Cultural Revolution), Mao Tse-tung had earlier said: "In the past, we fought north and south; it was easy to fight such wars. For the enemy was obvious. The present Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is much more difficult than that kind of war" (*Important Documents of the GPCR in China*, Peking 1970, p. 39). The difficulty was that the enemy was mixed up with people who supported the general direction of China's revolution but might have made a mistake or two. The trend represented by the "gang of four" did more than anything to perpetuate that confusion. By repressing every idea which ran counter to their own narrow orthodoxy, the Gang in fact strengthened those right-wingers who hated China's socialist revolution, by lumping them together with the majority of people who wanted to contribute to socialism in their own way.

Matters came to a head after the death of Chou En-lai at the beginning of 1976. There was tremendous public hatred against whoever was responsible for the media (it was in fact Yao Wen-yuan and others in the "gang of four"), which refused to publish any articles praising Chou. A riot took place in the centre of Peking (the responsibility for which was wrongly attributed to Teng Hsiao-p'ing), in which the vast majority of participants simply wanted to express their feelings for Chou En-lai, who had carried through Mao's political line at all stages, including the Cultural Revolution; but there were also people who profited from the occasion to attack Mao's line.

Now the "gang of four's" way of suppressing everything indiscriminately has definitely been done away with. The current policy is to encourage the expression of all sorts of conflicting ideas, and is designed to help in winning over all those who may have been frustrated in their desire to serve the socialist cause. In these circumstances, some people will certainly try to make use of the criticism of the Four to think up new ways of resisting the development of China along the road to socialism. For example, it may be claimed that the new

favourable situation which exists at present has been attained not because of the triumphant victory of the Cultural Revolution but in spite of it, or because it has "at last" been wound up. In interpreting China's bad experience with the "gang of four" it may perhaps be argued that they were talking a lot of nonsense about "class struggle" and "the bourgeoisie inside the party", that they were making a terrible nuisance of themselves, and now that they are out of the way China can get back to the serious business of increasing production. It is quite natural that a few people should think and say such things; at the same time, it is evident that such a way of thinking goes counter to Mao's ideas.

Thus it is the responsibility of the leadership to emphasise another, quite different interpretation—that there *was indeed* a class struggle, there *was* a bourgeoisie inside the party represented by the "gang of four" themselves. This is why Hua Kuo-feng has stressed on many occasions that the criticism of the Four is an expression of class struggle, and should be taken as the "key link". The Four believed their position to be secure because they thought the Party could not possibly find a way of getting rid of them without at the same time repudiating Mao's theory of class struggle, they had taken out a leftist "insurance policy"—but their calculation was wrong. When they talked about "putting politics in command" they were telling the truth—but at the same time, in order to deflect the spearhead of class struggle away from themselves they took all the guts out of Mao Tse-tung's theory, negated its true meaning and turned it into its opposite.

20. Conclusion

Now in reading Hua Kuo-feng's statements in particular, one is struck by the way the Chinese are in process of negating this negation, wiping out the "gang of four's" distortions and restoring the true sense of Mao's understanding of the laws of development of socialist society. This can only be done by giving these ideas a sound basis, by rooting them firmly through applying them to concrete conditions. On New Year's Day 1978 Hua visited Tangshan, a place which was

stricken in the summer of 1976 by one of the most disastrous earthquakes ever known. He sketched its future development over the next few years. This is also a microcosm of the development of socialist society in China in the immediate future:

In carrying out economic construction, it is all right to think in terms of funds and materials, but the essential thing is to rely on revolutionization and the masses. The key to achieving a high speed of development lies in doing a good job of revolutionizing people's thinking, first and foremost the thinking of the leading bodies. In the battle to rebuild Tangshan, the cadres here should continue to work alongside the masses and truly cement their flesh-and-blood ties with the masses. The city party secretary should set an example in working with soaring enthusiasm. The cadres at the county, commune and brigade levels should make a point of putting in 100, 200 and 300 days a year in physical labour respectively.

After all, there will be twists and turns, setbacks and unexpected dangers. In his own day Mao, despite his prestige as founder of the Chinese revolution, was often in a minority within the leadership, and had to struggle for a time to convince people. The same will undoubtedly happen with Hua Kuo-feng. But the fundamentally important point is that, as a result of the Cultural Revolution, the broad masses making up Chinese society have now acquired through practice some understanding of the laws according to which society operates and changes, and an ability to analyse trends, even very complex ones, in the sphere of politics. This is an achievement of Mao Tse-tung's life's work and a sure basis for the future success of the Chinese revolution.



This booklet examines, without jargon or wasted words, the main features of the policies and methods which brought success to the Chinese Revolution. It gives reasons for the belief that Mao's overall plan is being continued in the changed conditions and will be equally successful in the future.

The legacy of the Cultural Revolution, the damage done by the "gang of four", the debt owed to Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai, the motives impelling China's advance—all are examined in a straightforward, logical way.

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