

Forward Along the Mao Tsetung!

by the Committee of the RIM

The following speech has been prepared by the Committee of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement to be used in meetings and other appropriate activities by participating parties and organisations in conjunction with the current international campaign "Forward Along the Path Charted by Mao Tsetung!"

Comrades,

It has been ten years now since the death of Mao Tsetung and twenty years since the opening salvos of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Amongst many who fight for revolution today Mao and the Cultural Revolution are but a distant childhood memory while for others a bit older the bright red images of proletarian rule in China, of the flood of revolutionary energy unleashed by Mao Tsetung, are scorched forever in their memory. Today, the working class and the oppressed people have no state of their own, not a single country in which to begin building the communist future. No, today's world is completely in the hands of imperialist marauders and reactionary clans of puppets and tyrants in league with them. We have seen over and over again that even in the so-called "socialist camp" the situation is basically the same — there, too, the tasks of the workers and peasants is to produce, to be ruled over, to be suppressed, and to get ready to go to war on behalf of their own exploiters. What a far cry from China of only ten years ago, when *our class had power*.

Clearly, we must never allow the imperialists and reactionaries to

besmirch the memory of our great accomplishments. Now, more than ever, the working class and the exploited of all countries *need* to have the confidence, strength and vision that comes from the legacy of our movement. One of our important tasks at present is to carry through this battle to defend and hold high the highest accomplishments of our class. But this is not enough. Our purpose is nothing less than to carry forward the struggle for communism throughout the world, thus the slogan for the campaign that genuine revolutionary communists are carrying out on all continents — Forward Along the Path Charted by Mao Tsetung!

Even before the formation of the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, at the First International Conference of Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organisations in 1980, it was pointed out that "without upholding and building upon Mao's contributions it is not possible to defeat revisionism, imperialism and reaction in general."

This statement is absolutely correct. Without Mao Tsetung Thought we will flounder and go astray. Of course, the class struggle continues to exist and the masses of revolutionary people will continue to rise up and even take up armed struggle — but these efforts, however heroic, cannot and will not enable the masses of the people to take destiny firmly into their hands and begin shaping the future. For it is only Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought which can unleash the torrent of genuine, conscious, revolutionary struggle, only this ideology will clearly enable us to distinguish

friend from foe and with it, determine the character and tasks of the revolution.

Today, when the contradictions of the imperialist system are sharpening, when both the danger of world war and the opportunities for revolution have greatly increased, Mao Tsetung Thought makes the difference between revolution or failure.

Mao Tsetung carried on the work begun by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. Mao came to stand for the defense of Marxism-Leninism in the face of the attacks of modern revisionism whose centre was and is the clique of usurpers who have taken power in the Soviet Union. Mao Tsetung also left us a rich understanding of a whole series of questions which faced the communist movement in China and the world. The most important single contribution of Mao was his analysis of the contradictions in socialist society itself and, flowing from this, his development of the theory — and practice! — of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. We will return to this question later.

In the course of solving, on the basis of dialectical and historical materialism, the problems with which Mao and the communist movement were confronted he *raised the science of revolution itself to a qualitatively new level*; its name, Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, reflects this truth. It is for this reason that it is impossible today to speak of Marxism-Leninism without speaking of Mao Tsetung.

Those who claim in today's world to uphold Marxism-Leninism

Path Charted by



A WORLD TO WIN 1986/7

without upholding Mao Tsetung are imposters or fools. Such a view would strip our revolutionary science of its most advanced elements as well as reverse verdicts on a whole series of revisionist distortions which Mao had to fight against.

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To understand why it is correct to affirm that without upholding and building on Mao Tsetung Thought 'it is not possible to defeat revisionism, imperialism and reaction in general' it is necessary to consider some of the key principles that Mao Tsetung Thought has come to stand for in the contemporary world.

Mao Tsetung has come to represent the armed struggle of the masses. Mao made the profound statement, in keeping with the Marxist-Leninist understanding of the nature of the state, that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." The enemies and false friends of the proletariat never forgave Mao Tsetung for revealing this truth and vilified him as "blood-thirsty." Actually, all that Mao did was speak openly of what has long been the practice by the exploiting classes who maintain their rule through police, prisons and firing squads. As Marx and Engels had put it long ago, "the communists disdain to conceal their aims" and in this same spirit Mao Tsetung boldly called on the people of the whole world to cast away illusions and prepare to take power through armed struggle.

Mao Tsetung developed the glorious theory of People's War, based on applying the science of Marxism-Leninism to the long years of revolutionary armed struggle in China. People's War cannot be reduced to a series of tactics or military policies, it is the military expression of the line of the proletariat in the oppressed countries, it is the key to arousing the broadest masses of the exploited and the oppressed, especially the peasantry, under the leadership of the working class and its party.

Mao stressed, "the revolutionary war is a war of the masses." In today's world there are many who preach the necessity for armed struggle against imperialism and reaction

and even those who sometimes carry out armed actions. But the path of Mao Tsetung alone leads to mobilising, unleashing and *relying* on the masses of people. The opportunist perversion of the armed struggle, of the isolated actions of a handful of individuals or pushing the masses to carry out acts of armed resistance so that opportunist cliques can capitalise on them, sometimes to use the sacrifices of the masses as chips in negotiations aimed at coming to an understanding with reactionaries — all this was anathema to Mao.

For Mao Tsetung, the people represented "the true bastion of iron" and by relying on them even the most powerful of enemies could be defeated in revolutionary warfare. What a far different cry from those who argue shamelessly that the liberation of the peoples cannot be accomplished without the assistance of reactionaries. Mao pointed out that revolutionary warfare throughout history has always been the combat of the poorly armed against their better armed oppressors. Even when it came to defending socialist China against powerful well armed imperialist enemies Mao continued to stress the key role of the masses. When some top leaders of the Communist Party were stressing the decisive role of modern weapons or were ready to capitulate to the imperialists, Mao called on the people "to dig tunnels deep and store grain everywhere" and in this manner be prepared to meet any imperialist aggression with People's War.

In recent times we have seen the debacle of those who have put armaments and technique in command all the while deprecating the decisive role of the masses in revolutionary warfare. In 1966, Mao Tsetung had given the brilliant advice to the Palestine Liberation Organisation that they should follow the policy of "you fight in your way, and I'll fight in mine" but the advice went unheeded and the PLO has suffered repeated defeats in which huge quantities of modern military equipment proved useless and in fact fell into the hands of the Zionist enemy during the 1982 invasion of Lebanon while the resistance of the masses of people was

thwarted and shackled. Compare that to the tremendous progress made by our comrades of the Communist Party of Peru who have shown that by mobilising and relying on the masses it is possible to make great strides forward in the carrying out of people's war without accepting a single bullet from enemies of the revolution!

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Even now, ten years after his death, Mao Tsetung is the symbol of opposition to modern revisionism led by the Soviet Union. It was Mao who led the genuine communists of the whole world to denounce and split with the Soviet Union after that country changed its colour in 1956 with the coming to power of Khrushchev and a new band of exploiters.

When Mao refused to knuckle under to the blackmail of Khrushchev and company the arrogant revisionists of Moscow predicted that he could be forced back to the fold through economic and military pressure as well as by the strong forces within the Chinese Communist Party in league with the Soviets. Indeed, the abrupt withdrawal of Soviet aid and experts in 1960 was a cruel blow to the young socialist state. But Mao showed that the policy of relying on one's own efforts could be carried out and China was able to successfully resist Soviet blackmail. For this, he was never to be forgiven.

Mao Tsetung stood completely opposed to the policy of seeking an accommodation with reaction, of stopping the revolution in return for a few reforms or positions in government. He stood as the great exception to what had become the accepted pattern on the part of the communist parties: occasional references to revolution and socialism while, in deeds, doing nothing but hindering the actual preparation and seizure of power. On the ideological plane, Mao was the merciless opponent of those who declared that Marxism-Leninism needed to be revised (by which they meant, gutted). Through a series of brilliant polemics written under his leadership the Chinese Communist Party exposed the theoretical basis of modern revisionism and laid the

foundation for the contemporary Marxist-Leninist movement.

From the beginning, the world revisionists have vilified and slandered the Maoists of all countries. Often they have even cooperated with reaction to attack the genuine revolutionaries — as they did in India during the Naxalbari period or as they are doing in Peru today. This is because Mao Tsetung Thought stands for *thoroughgoing* revolution and those who see the revolutionary struggle simply as a means to obtain their share in the exploitation of the workers and peasants will forever view it as their mortal enemy.

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In 1956, Mao Tsetung was to shock the world by declaring that “the East Wind will prevail over the West Wind.” To his detractors, this statement is one more evidence of his supposed xenophobia and nationalism. Actually, quite the contrary is the case.

Mao Tsetung, at the head of revolutionary China, came to an insightful and correct view of the times in which he lived. The revisionists were declaring that Leninism was outdated and that a new era of peaceful transition to socialism and peaceful coexistence between socialism and capitalism had come about. Furthermore they tried to claim that the development of horrendous new weapons made it impossible to wage revolutionary warfare. Mao Tsetung, on the other hand, saw that the period following the Second World War had been marked by the shifting of the storm centres of revolution to the “East” (that is Asia, Africa and Latin America) and that the advance of the world revolution depended on the development of the revolution in those areas.

It was this analysis that led him to conclude that the East Wind would prevail over the West Wind. For this reason Mao has been, and correctly so, closely identified with the revolutionary upsurges of the oppressed people that have rocked Asia, Africa and Latin America — from the victory of the Chinese Revolution to the Vietnamese people’s war of liberation. For Mao Tsetung, the liberation struggle of the oppressed

peoples was an integral part of the world proletarian-socialist revolution — a thesis he had upheld in the course of the Chinese Revolution and which was borne out by the policies and path he adopted in China itself from 1949.

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Mao Tsetung, more than any other contemporary figure, came to stand for the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. As one of his close comrades, Chang Chun-chiao, was to put it, the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat has always been at the centre of the conflict between Marxism and revisionism. Mao struggled fiercely against the views of Khrushchev and his Chinese counterparts who argued the possibility of a “state of the whole people,” that is, a state that was not characterised by the dictatorship of one class over another.

Mao understood well that either the working class, allied with other strata of the labouring people, exercises its rule or the bourgeoisie will again come to power and rule over the labouring masses. Further, Mao taught that the proletariat must exercise its *all-round dictatorship*, in other words, that it should strive to occupy all of the commanding heights of society — the political power, of course, but also control of the economy, education, literature and art, sciences, medicine — all aspects of social life. He knew that in whatever sphere the power of the proletariat did not reach, the power of the bourgeoisie would remain and grow. Mao taught that the fundamental right of labour (or the proletariat) was to rule. He pointed out that without this understanding any talk of the “rights of labour” in socialist society were meaningless.

During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution Mao Tsetung led the proletariat in occupying many areas previously jealously guarded by the bourgeois authorities and considered off limits to the proletariat. Higher education, for example, had, even in socialist society, been considered the reserve of “experts” and had changed very little since liberation. Theory was divorced from practice, the student body was recruited mainly from the sons and daughters of the old

privileged classes (or of the cadres), and bourgeois ideology was rampant. In fact, the universities were not helping to build up the socialist system, but were reinforcing and training a new bourgeois strata.

During the Cultural Revolution class conscious workers went to the universities and took charge of them. Uniting with revolutionary elements among the students and faculty, these proletarians were able to use the science of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought to radically transform these institutions. In the place of the old experts who had previously been produced by these types of institutions, new “red experts” were trained, including students recruited from amongst the workers and peasants, who had both a correct world outlook and high level of political understanding as well as proving quite capable of assimilating the most modern science and technique. Time and again these red experts, by linking closely with the workers and peasants and by putting Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought in command, were capable of carrying out feats that the “learned authorities” considered impossible.

The same was true of other fields as well. Many spheres of culture were also radically transformed once the proletariat “took the stage” and the question of “for whom?” was settled. No longer would literature and the arts remain a private preserve for a few, where the bourgeois notions of human nature, pessimism and so forth predominated and where, on top of it all, public opinion was being created to topple the rule of the workers and peasants. By boldly calling for the broom of the proletariat to sweep this area of social life as well, Mao unleashed a revolution in this sphere that not only shattered the domination of the bourgeoisie but also led to tremendous achievements unprecedented in history. The workers and peasants appeared at the centre of the stage and the ideology of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought illuminated a whole series of model works in opera, ballet, symphonic music, film and so forth.

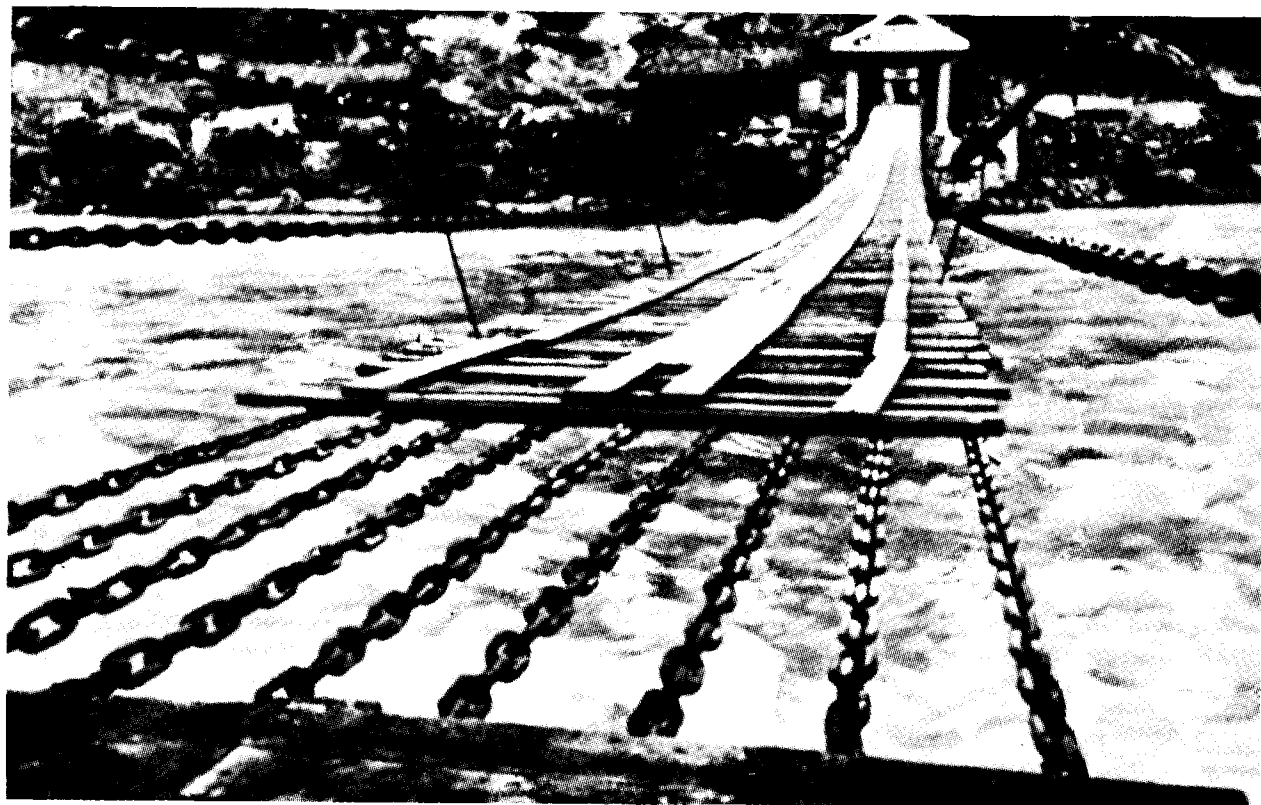
These and other great ac-



"Speaking of the Long March, what is its significance? We answer that the Long March is the first of its kind in the annals of history, that it is a manifesto, a propaganda force, a seeding machine ... It has proclaimed to the world that the Red Army is an army of heroes. It has announced to some 200 million people in eleven provinces that the road of the Red Army is their only road to liberation ... The Long March ... has sown many seeds which will sprout, leaf, blossom and bear fruit, and will yield a harvest in the future."

"On Tactics Against Japanese Imperialism," *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung, Vol I*

Lutting bridge over the Tatu river. While under fire, the Red Army swung from the chains to cross and capture it from Kuomintang troops during the Long March.



accomplishments of proletarian rule in China continue to inspire the workers and peasants the world over who have an opportunity to find out about them. For the proletariat, it is a cause of joy, and certainly nothing to be afraid of, that the workers and peasants — and their worldview — had invaded the heights of society. But for the reactionaries in China and abroad there was nothing more frightening! When those who themselves are forever stained by the blood of innumerable crimes refer to Mao as a “tyrant” or a “dictator,” they mean that he exercised dictatorship over *the bourgeoisie and the reactionaries*. When they say he “stifled” the sciences and the arts they are referring to the fact that he stifled *bourgeois* domination of science and art while opening the floodgates to an outpouring of creation and mastery of knowledge from the workers and peasants. This is the kind of “dictatorship” and “tyranny” we need more of — in China and throughout the whole world!

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Mao Tsetung stood for the conscious, dynamic role of people in changing the world. This was true for waging warfare, carrying out scientific experiment, increasing production, transforming literature and art as well as all other aspects of the revolutionary process.

From the earliest years of the Chinese revolution, Mao Tsetung had hammered home the principle that the Party had to arouse the masses and rely on them in all things, and he stressed the importance of applying *the mass line*. This was a principle that he was never to abandon and, in fact, whose importance would grow along with the fierceness and the complexity of the class struggle during the socialist period.

Mao recognised that such things as technique, machinery, and weapons were products of human beings and ultimately dependent on them. This went completely against the revisionist “theory of the productive forces” in the construction of socialist society which held that social transformation trailed passively in the wake of technological progress and that therefore the task was no longer to

make revolution but to increase production.

It is only the revolutionary proletariat that can thoroughly implement the policy of “relying on the masses.” This is firstly because the class blinders that effect even revolutionary elements of the propertied classes (those, that is, who have not taken up the ideology of the proletariat) make it impossible for them to see the dynamic and creative energy that exists among the oppressed and exploited masses. Furthermore, even to the extent that the bourgeoisie is able to partially recognise the potential strength of the masses (for example to wage a national war), these class forces recoil at mobilising the masses since they know that their own privileged position requires that the masses remain passive. Mao knew that only *revolution* could unlock this force that exploitative social relations smothered and shackled. In the construction of socialism, for example, Mao stressed that it was necessary to “grasp revolution, promote production” thus brilliantly expressing the relationship between continuing to wage revolution to further unleash the masses and knock down the obstacles in their way and *on this basis and no other* going all out to rapidly construct the socialist economy.

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Above all, Mao Tsetung stood for communism. This is another “crime” for which imperialism, revisionism and all reaction will never forgive his memory. He knew that seizing power, while a great accomplishment, was only the first step “in a thousand *li* journey.” He refused to mislead others — or himself — with illusions of final victory. He saw that the revolution must continue, that it must go ever deeper in digging up the remnants of the old society, and that it would inevitably meet with fierce resistance, not only from the old exploiters but also from those elements within socialist society itself who would try to reap for themselves the fruits of the revolutionary struggle and in so doing impede the march for socialism and even revert back to capitalism. No, Mao Tsetung promised only struggle for the people.

But not blind struggle. Not the kind of spontaneous, desperate and ultimately hopeless struggle of a class not conscious of its future. With Mao as its teacher, the most revolutionary elements of the proletariat in China and indeed the world had a clearer understanding of the nature of the enemy and of their tasks.

Mao warned that defeat in the revolution was possible. He pointed out that revolution is a complex and protracted process complete with victories and defeats — as Mao put it, “the future is bright, the road is tortuous.” This was also his assessment at the end of his life when he again saw clearly the danger of the capitalist restoration that finally came about after his death. But despite the fact that he was fully aware of the possibility of defeat in the short-run, Mao never lost his confidence — based on his mastery of materialist dialectics — of the eventual victory of communism throughout the world.

This, too, is why Mao has often been attacked as a “utopian” or a “dreamer,” because he refused to lose sight of the final goal of the revolutionary process. The revisionists of all countries had long ago relegated communism to an unobtainable goal with no connection to the tasks of the present or (what amounts to the same thing) had stripped communism of its real meaning — the elimination of all class distinctions and of all the economic and social conditions on which they are based. The Soviets, for example, had tried to redefine communism as simply material abundance (Khrushchev’s famous “goulash”) and left out the struggle to do away with classes themselves.

Mao Tsetung refused to degrade communism by reducing it to simply improved conditions of life for the workers. He called on the proletariat to never lose sight of its lofty mission. It must, he said, “carry out Marx’s teaching that only by emancipating all mankind can the proletariat achieve its own emancipation.” Unless *this* vision guides the thinking and action of the class-conscious workers genuine socialism cannot be built and instead the values and exploitative relations of

the old society will remain fundamentally intact — as is the case in the Soviet bloc countries today.

Mao's correct vision is of vital necessity for carrying through a genuine socialist transformation, but it would be wrong to think that the importance of this political line only comes about *after* political power has been seized. What type of a revolutionary movement are we trying to build — one whose aim is the complete destruction of class exploitation, or one which seeks to "render services" for the oppressed (or sections of them)? Whether the class conscious proletariat and other revolutionary elements are infused with the communist ideal has everything to do with defeating "imperialism, revisionism and all reaction." At a time when the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat and the oppressed is again on the upswing, it is all the more essential that the *vanguard* be clear on the goal, or else the danger will exist of the revolution being aborted or turned from its original ends.

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We often say that Mao Tsetung's most important contribution was his teachings on "continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat." It was in the course of thoroughly summing up the experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union and in China and on that basis developing for the first time a comprehensive understanding of the contradictions of socialist society that Mao was able to find the means and the method for continuing along the path toward communism. The expression in terms of class struggle of the understanding achieved by Mao was the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

While Mao made great contributions in all spheres to the science of revolution it was particularly in tackling the problems of continuing the revolution that he raised Marxism-Leninism to a "qualitatively new level."

The problem of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat first came on the agenda in a very sharp way in 1956, with the coming to power of Khrushchev in the Soviet Union.

Until that point, the possibility of the dictatorship of the proletariat being reversed from *within* socialist society was not seriously considered.

This was largely because the *nature* of socialist society was not clearly understood. In the 1930s, for example, Stalin had argued that the bourgeoisie had been eliminated as a class and that socialist society contained no antagonistic contradictions. Although Stalin made some modifications of his views late in his life, he never was able to really understand the dynamics of socialist society.

Mao saw that socialist society itself *generated* new bourgeois elements. This is because socialist society is a *transition* from a society based on class exploitation and oppression to communism. History has shown that this transition period is protracted, complex and difficult. As Marx put it, socialist society comes into being bearing the "birthmarks" of the old society both culturally and economically. In order for this transition to be accomplished it is necessary to establish and maintain, for the entire transition period, the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat.

But the dictatorship of the proletariat is itself a complex phenomenon. We have seen that it is possible to restore capitalism under the guise of the proletarian dictatorship. Even the current rulers in China who have overthrown the line of Mao Tsetung wrap themselves in the garb of working class rule.

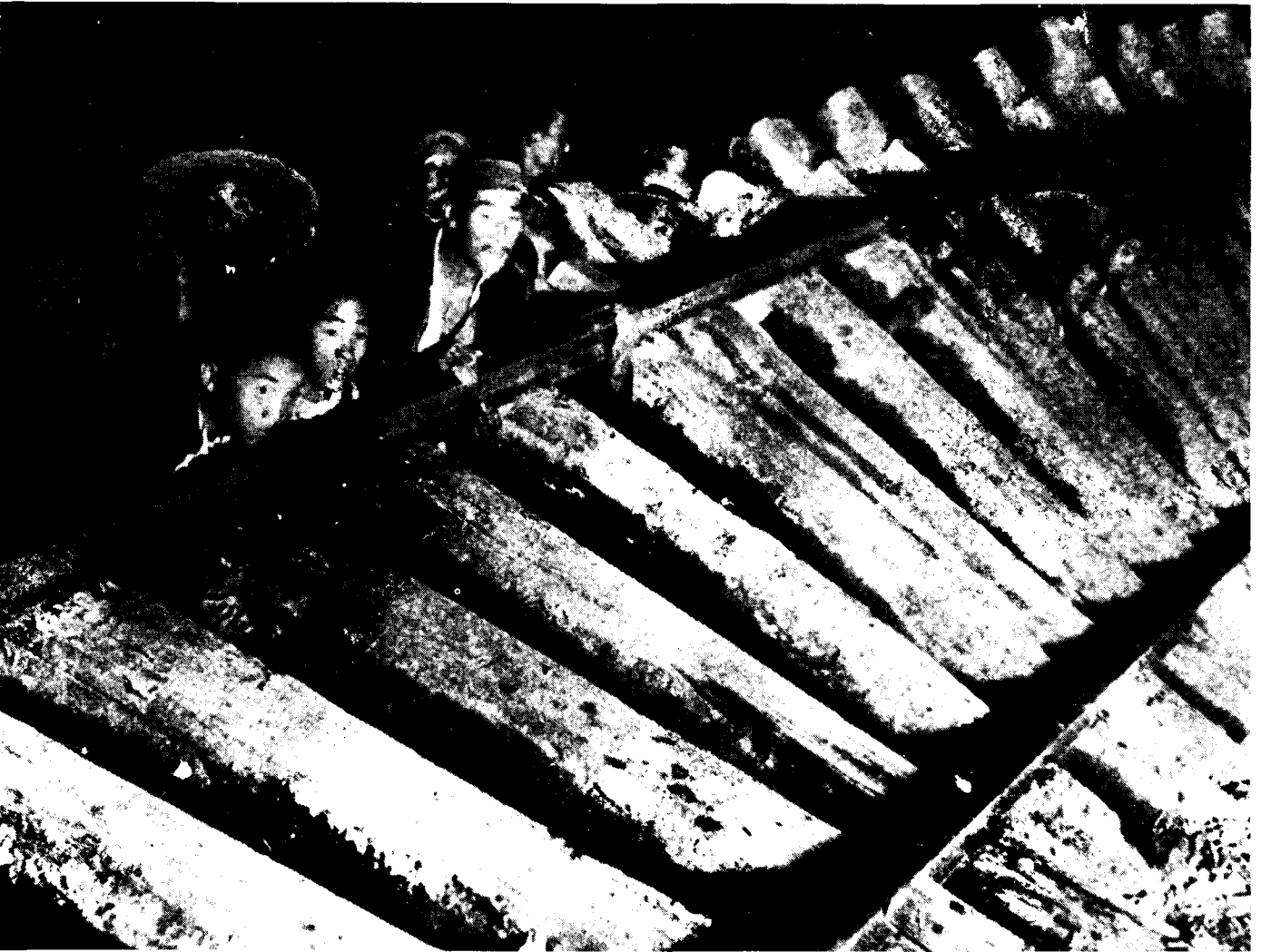
Of course, now that the capitalist roaders in China have all the reins of power at their command it is easy to see the ugly features of capitalism restored. But at the time of their bid for power it was necessary for Deng Xiaoping and especially for Hua Guofeng to conceal their nature and try to confuse, as much as possible, less politically advanced sections of the masses.

Preventing restoration, therefore, is *not* a question of good intentions but of political line. And Mao Tsetung worked tirelessly the last years of his life to train his successors to differentiate between a political line that leads further along the path toward communism and a

line that would reinforce the existing inequalities and lead back toward capitalism — that is, to distinguish Marxism from revisionism.

Mao Tsetung had analysed as early as 1956 that "socialist society is full of contradictions." He pointed out that conflict as well as harmony existed between the socialist system and the productive forces. In other words, the socialist revolution and the resulting changes in the system of ownership had removed tremendous shackles on the productive forces — especially the most important productive force of all, the proletariat. Still, he pointed out that changes in the ownership system alone did not solve the problem of carrying thorough the genuine socialisation of agriculture and industry. If the leadership of a factory practiced one man management, if the workers were shackled by irrational rules and regulations, if material incentives were promoted, if the workers were treated as mere appendages of the machines — in short, if a revisionist line was in command — then couldn't it be said that an enterprise was socialist in name only? Further, Mao pointed out that such revisionist strongholds would be breeding grounds of capitalism and a new bourgeoisie which would inevitably engage in tests of strength with the proletariat.

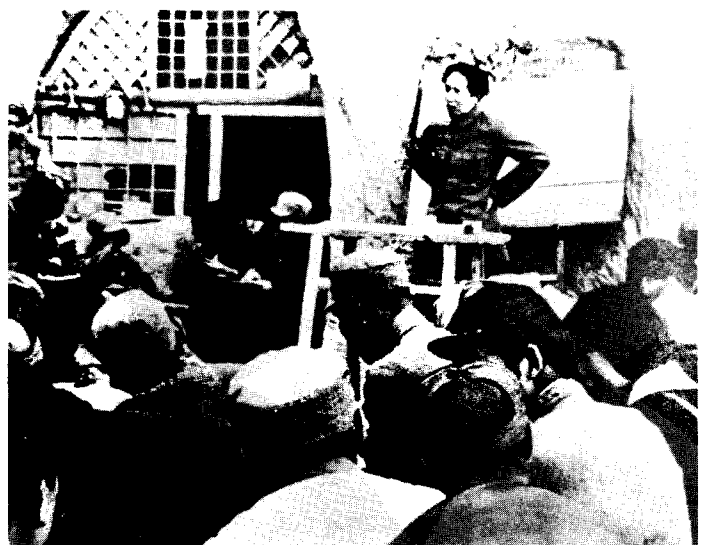
Mao also proved that even if public ownership represented a great advance over private ownership it was necessary to carry through the revolution in all the spheres of social relations. For example, in his last great battle to beat back the revisionists headed by Deng Xiaoping, Mao stressed the importance of restricting "bourgeois right" — by which he meant the principle that each is "paid according to his work" which is itself exceedingly unequal since people have the most *unequal* work abilities and the most *unequal* needs. (The communist principle, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs" can only be implemented when society has reached a much higher level both in terms of productive capacity and social relations than was the case of China in the early 1970s.) A great debate took place over whether to *restrict* "bourgeois right" or



Peasants sabotaged rail lines to prevent Japanese penetration into China during the anti-Japanese war in 1940.



Mao giving his famous talk on literature and art in Yanan.





Officers and fighters of the 8th Route Army. On the blackboard — “We are arming our understanding with Marxist-Leninist theory.”

Revolutionary masses support the anti-Japanese front.



whether, in fact, to expand it — as Hua and Deng ultimately did.

Mao demonstrated that the various contradictions of the socialist system were concentrated within the Communist Party itself. He pointed out that the Communist Party in power is qualitatively different than a party that was still trying to seize power. This is because in a socialist society Party members occupy the key posts in the state and the economy and it is the policy of the Party that determines the basic direction of society. For this reason the centre of the bourgeoisie comes to be located *within the communist party itself*. This is why Mao was to say, in one of his last statements before his death, “You are making the socialist revolution, and yet don’t know where the bourgeoisie is. It is right in the Communist Party — those in power taking the capitalist road. The capitalist-roaders are still on the capitalist road.”

Mao Tsetung has been roundly condemned for the above statement, above all by the new revisionist rulers in China who were stung to the quick by Mao’s exposure of a new bourgeoisie generated within socialist society and centred in the communist party. But others, as well, launched attack after attack on these theses. Some, like Enver Hoxha of Albania, even claimed that Mao Tsetung, the implacable foe of everything reactionary, actually *permitted* the bourgeoisie in the Party!

But Mao’s thesis had nothing to do with permission. Far from “permitting” the bourgeoisie to exist, his teachings are the key for understanding the nature of the bourgeoisie, why it arises even under socialism, and what must be done to repeatedly overthrow it and gradually dig away at the conditions which allow it to arise. Ask Deng Xiaoping and his cohorts in China if Mao “permitted” them to carry out the revisionist line in his lifetime!

One of the most widespread challenges to Mao’s teaching is also the most simplistic — he failed to prevent capitalist restoration, therefore he must have been wrong. First, it must be said that Mao *did* prevent capitalist restoration for a full decade during the Cultural Revolution. And this was no small

accomplishment given the strength that the revisionist headquarters in the communist party had already amassed up to that time. Second, those who say that failure can only result from mistakes are proceeding from the realm of the conflict of ideas and not the battle of actual classes in society. To say that class struggle still exists under socialism means that the *possibility* of losing still exists as well. The fact that Mao Tsetung was aware of this possibility and constantly warning against it did not make the proletariat any weaker in the face of the loss in China — on the contrary. When the proletariat lost political power in the Soviet Union there was little resistance there and great confusion reigned in the ranks of the genuine communists throughout the world. The loss in China, also, was a very brutal shock to the communist movement — but in China, as elsewhere, genuine revolutionary communists have risen up and battled the revisionist usurpers. As Mao correctly predicted, “if the Right stage an anti-Communist coup d’état in China, I am sure they will know no peace.” In particular we must salute our two comrades, Chiang Ching, Mao’s widow, and Chang Chun-chiao, who have held aloft the banner of Mao Tsetung Thought even in the face of bitter defeat and who from the prisoners dock turned their trial into a condemnation of revisionism heard round the world.

Counter-Revolutionary Offensive

Since the death of Mao Tsetung and the reversal of proletarian rule in China, imperialism, revisionism and all reaction have gone on a protracted offensive against Mao Tsetung Thought. Of course, the reactionaries always hated Mao Tsetung and everything that he stood for, but during the height of the Cultural Revolution when the proletariat in China was dealing one blow after another against the exploiters in China and around the world — and, linked to this, accomplishing amazing feats in the construction of the new society — these same reactionaries were forced to bite their tongue!

Now that the CPC itself de-

nounces the Cultural Revolution as a “great tragedy” and Mao Tsetung is renounced in all but name, the opponents of Mao feel that they have *carte blanche* to repeat every long discredited slander against Mao and the Cultural Revolution.

It is not surprising that the new rulers in China would be Mao’s most vociferous opponents, even if, for considerations of form, they sometimes pay lip-service to his revolutionary accomplishments — especially those leading up to the liberation of China in 1949. These people, some of whom had fought with Mao in the caves of Yen-an, wanted to see the Chinese revolution defeat imperialism and feudalism, that is, accomplish its first, or bourgeois democratic stage. But if these people and Mao were, for a time, united in carrying through the democratic revolution it was for diametrically opposed reasons. For Mao, the democratic revolution was the vehicle *to advance toward the socialist revolution* — in China and as part of the revolution the world over. But some others, like Deng Xiaoping, only wanted to make revolution so that they themselves could become a new exploiting ruling class.

Mao was to describe this phenomenon as “bourgeois democrats becoming capitalist roaders.” As he put it, “After the democratic revolution the workers and the poor and lower-middle peasants did not stand still, they want revolution. On the other hand, a number of Party members do not want to go forward; some have moved backwards and opposed the revolution. Why? Because they have become high officials and want to protect the interests of high officials.”

It is these same “high officials” who are the source of the “horror stories” of the Cultural Revolution which are gleefully repeated by bourgeois everywhere. Really these charges against the Cultural Revolution boil down to the horror of the bourgeoisie at seeing its privileged position challenged, the horror of seeing the workers and peasants invade the sacred preserves of the capitalist roaders. Mao represented the dictatorship of the proletariat

and so it is logical that those who were the *object* of this dictatorship are now taking their revenge.

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The Soviet Union, also, is gloating at the defeat of Mao Tsetung in China. Mao was their towering opponent who never hesitated to reveal the true features of the Soviet revisionists to the oppressed world over.

Today the Soviets are again masquerading as the "reliable allies of the national liberation struggles" and, in order to be able to bolster this fraud, it is necessary for them to try to definitively bury the legacy of Mao Tsetung.

Even now, ten years after his death, it is Mao who continues to represent the road of genuine revolutionary struggle, of determination to carry through the struggle until the end without stopping half-way. All of this remains anathema to the Soviet Union who hope that, with Mao out of the picture and with his line temporarily reversed in China, enough confusion and demoralisation exists to permit the Soviets to pass off stale revisionism as the only alternative for the oppressed.

Closely linked to the Soviet criticism of Mao has been that which has emanated out of Albania when Enver Hoxha, seizing upon the confusion brought about by the coup d'état in China, used the prestige of the Party of Labour of Albania (gained in large part, ironically, by the PLA's identification with Mao!) to attack Mao Tsetung and his legacy. As the *Declaration of the RIM* puts it, Hoxha's attack represents "revisionism in its dogmatic form."

In his attacks on Mao Tsetung Thought, Hoxha seized on the coup to try to offer an explanation of these events that is really aimed at the simple-minded (or those who cannot grasp dialectics). Mao "permitted" the bourgeoisie in the Party, Mao "advocated" the two-line struggle in the Party (by which they mean that Mao "advocated" the right of the bourgeois line to flourish), etc., etc. In short, Hoxha's attack on Mao is centred squarely on *repudiating* Mao's central thesis of "continuing revolution

under the dictatorship of the proletariat."

Today the Hoxhaite line is less and less in evidence in the world and hardly constitutes an "independent" revisionist trend given its close interconnection with traditional modern revisionist theses and currents. Nevertheless, the Hoxhaite brand of revisionism did considerable damage to the efforts to rebuild the international communist movement after the coup in China and remnants of this type of thinking continue to exist. It is still necessary to thoroughly trounce the erroneous Hoxhaite line if we are to advance forward along the path charted by Mao Tsetung.

In particular, Hoxha hid behind an appeal to "Marxist orthodoxy" to attack Mao, seizing hold of certain erroneous understandings that had previously existed in the international communist movement. For example, a number of Stalin's wrong formulations concerning the non-existence of the bourgeoisie under socialism and so forth were brought forward as a "refutation" of Mao Tsetung Thought. In raising these kinds of arguments Hoxha, and others like him, were doing great disservice not only by trying to deprive the revolutionary proletariat of Mao Tsetung Thought but also to the memory of comrade Stalin who, despite serious errors, is part of the heritage of *revolution* and not of *the repudiation of revolution* that Hoxha and company represent!

The attacks against Mao Tsetung Thought have also come from the West. Of course, the imperialist ruling classes of the Western countries have always hated Mao and all that he stood for, but they, too, were thrown back by the great accomplishments of the Cultural Revolution and consequently were often forced to temporarily tone down or even suspend their most hysterical anti-Mao ravings and seek other tactics to attack his line.

Within many of the Western countries, support for Mao Tsetung and the Cultural Revolution was widespread. At a time when large sections of the youth especially, from among the intellectuals as well as the proletariat, were developing a radical critique of capitalist society

and were increasingly making common cause with the oppressed peoples around the world, it is easy to see why the Cultural Revolution was such a powerful attraction. In particular, the tremendous outpouring of initiative by the masses, the critical spirit and the willingness to go against authority and convention, struck a vibrant cord among the rebels in the West as well as the East.

But it is also clear that the understanding of the Cultural Revolution was incomplete and often wrong on the part of even many of those who wanted to uphold it. The class position of the intellectuals made it difficult for them to grasp Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and hence, they analysed the Cultural Revolution from other ideological viewpoints. In particular, such forces were often tempted to separate Mao Tsetung from Marxism-Leninism and to separate the experience of the Cultural Revolution from the theory and practice of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

After the coming to power of the capitalist roaders in China and their condemnation of the Cultural Revolution, many of those who had been vociferous supporters of the Cultural Revolution joined the ranks of its enemies. Some others refused to go along with the attacks of the Chinese leadership but, without the leadership of Mao Tsetung and his line, were increasingly unable to keep their bearings and developed a series of erroneous, petit bourgeois explanations for the defeat in China that all ended, sooner or later, in liquidating Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought.

It must be noted, also, that the international communist movement itself was greatly affected by the loss in China. The communist movement is not and cannot be impervious to the political and ideological development in society. The loss of such a vital bastion of revolution, one quarter of the world's population; the tidal wave of reaction that was unleashed by the defeat in China; all of these things, combined with new and complex problems posed at the international level would inevitably

and did deal a heavy blow to the international communist movement.

It is also clear, as the *Declaration* points out, that the depth of the crisis of the Marxist-Leninists and the difficulty that the revolutionary communists have encountered in putting an end to it shows that some revisionist deviations were already strong even before the death of Mao Tsetung. Still, it can be said that, based on the teachings of Mao and determined to carry forward along his path, the international communist movement has shown that it will be able to surmount the current crisis and fulfill its responsibilities of advancing the world proletarian revolution.

Forward Along the Path Charted by Mao Tsetung

Mao Tsetung made a profound observation which was later to become a material force of millions of workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals in the turbulence of the Cultural Revolution: "Marxism consists of thousands of truths, but they boil down to the one sentence: it is right to rebel!" In the Cultural Revolution, "It's right to rebel against reaction" meant that it was correct and justified to rise up in struggle against bourgeois authorities. It also means that the proletariat and the oppressed of every nation have the right to raise up and wage revolutionary armed struggle. And it means that it is necessary to hold firm to the Marxist critical spirit embodied by Mao Tsetung, to challenge old ideas and fight to bring the fresh and alive into being.

It is this slogan, and this spirit, that has inspired the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement and other Maoist forces to regroup after the blow of the loss of China and to continue to make revolution.

Today our movement is still weak. Nevertheless, we have rebelled against the old, reactionary order that holds the earth in chains and we will continue to rebel, until communism has been established. We have the path bequeathed to us by Mao Tsetung — he led us far on this path to communism and we are determined to continue along it: to seize state power in many parts of the world in the favourable condi-

tions that history is increasingly providing us with, and to move ahead to build communism worldwide.

Today there are workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals in many countries who are continuing to march along Mao's path. And now, thanks to the Revolutionary Internationalist Movement, we are more and more united in this march, and are learning from each other as we go. Mao Tsetung taught us "to learn warfare through warfare." This is true not only about military matters. Even in those places where it is not yet possible to launch the revolutionary armed struggle for power our movement cannot adopt a position of passive waiting — we struggle, we prepare the revolution, we change the world and, through all of this we learn better how to march forward along the path of Mao Tsetung.

Mao had said, in the course of the the bitter years of armed struggle, that the "future is bright, the road is tortuous." He was also to repeat this assessment shortly before his death when he surveyed, with sober optimism, the class struggle in China. We see no reason to revise this estimate.

No one can overestimate the loss that the communist movement all over the world suffered when Mao died and China changed color. China was a bright red base area for the advance of the world revolution and Mao's support for the struggle of the proletariat and the oppressed throughout the world never faltered. Be it the Naxalbari struggle in India, the struggle of Black people in the United States, the Vietnamese people's war of liberation — Mao Tsetung was always in the forefront of those who said revolution "was fine" and was the fierce opponent of all who tried to block its path or trail behind it, gesticulating and criticizing, saying that the oppressed and the exploited had "gone too far." Ten years without such a base area, without a socialist China with one quarter of the world's population and pregnant with revolution, this weighs heavily on all of us and the road is all the more tortuous for this reason. But even in this period of difficulty, in the face of the offensive of reaction, the flame of Mao

Tsetung Thought could not be extinguished. And from a world historic point of view, when we examine the progress of the world proletarian socialist revolution we realise that ten years is really not that long. We have lost China but the red flag is flying now in other corners of the world, most notably in the Andes mountains where our comrades of the Communist Party of Peru are marching along Mao's path and illuminating it for the world to see.

Today there are ominous clouds brewing that threaten to unleash an imperialist world war with all the horror that would entail. But the contradictions of the world imperialist system which bring about the danger of war also help create favourable opportunities for revolutionary struggle on all of the continents. Mao's statement "Either revolution will prevent world war, or world war will give rise to revolution" is still valid, and we are determined to do all in our power to bring about the first possibility Mao spoke of, of *preventing* world war by shattering the existing world order with revolution!

At this moment of celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution let us end by reciting the poem of Mao Tsetung that was reissued in the midst of the fury of that momentous event:

"So many deeds cry out to be done,
And always urgently;
The world rolls on,
Time presses.
Ten thousand years are too long,
Seize the day, seize the hour!" □