

"Sweep Away All Monsters and Ghosts"

by the Ceylon Communist Party (Sri Lanka)

It is now twenty years since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (GPCR) personally initiated and led by Comrade Mao Tsetung unfolded in China. The Cultural Revolution is without doubt not only the greatest epoch-making event in history, even more profound in its influence than the October Revolution but also the highest peak yet achieved in the worldwide battle of the proletariat for Communist Society.

One of the greatest contributions of Comrade Mao Tsetung to the treasure house of Marxism-Leninism is the theory he initiated of continuing classes and class struggle even after the socialist revolution, and the necessity to continue the revolution even under conditions of working class power until we reach the stage of communism. He taught that the capture of state power by the working class was only a beginning. Summing up the experience of the revolutions in China and other countries, he concluded that classes and class struggle exist throughout the entire historical epoch from socialism to communism; that there existed the danger of capitalist restoration and the danger of the dictatorship of the proletariat being lost and subverted.

Capture of state power is one thing. Consolidating that power is yet another and even harder task. As the "Chinese Liberation Army Daily" pointed out: "We know from historical experience of the proletarian revolution that the basic question in every revolution is that of state power. We conquered the enemy in the country and seized the

power by the gun. They can all be overthrown, be it imperialism, feudalism or the bureaucrat capitalist class; millionaires, billionaires, trillionaires can be toppled, whoever they may be and their property can be confiscated. *However, confiscation of their property does not amount to confiscation of the reactionary ideas in their minds.* Daily and hourly they are always dreaming of a comeback, dreaming of restoring their lost 'Paradise.' Although they are only a tiny percentage of the population, their political potential is quite considerable and their power of restoration is out of all proportions to their numbers.

"Socialist society emerges out of the womb of the old society. It is not at all easy to eradicate the idea of private ownership formed in thousands of years of class society and the force of habit and the ideological and cultural influence of the exploiting classes associated with private ownership. The spontaneous forces of the petite bourgeoisie in town and country constantly give rise to new bourgeois elements. As the ranks of the workers grow in number and extent, they take in some elements of complex background. Then, too, a number of people in the ranks of the party and state organisations degenerate following the conquest of state power and living in peaceful surroundings." This is extremely well put.

Under the guidance of their great leader, Comrade Mao Tsetung, the Chinese Communists were conscious of the threat they faced. They

took warning, in particular, from the tragedy that befell the Soviet Union where capitalist restoration was effected peacefully, without even a shot being fired. They, therefore, consciously took steps to prevent a similar happening in China.

The Cultural Revolution was an attempt to uproot the old feudal and bourgeois ideology — habits and thoughts — which had existed in China for thousands of years and had continued to exist even after the socialist revolution had been successful, and to transplant in its stead proletarian ideology. It was a mass movement in which 700 million people had become critics of the old world and the old ideas connected with the old system of exploitation — "the old customs and habits which imperialism and the exploiting classes used to poison the minds of the working people." It was an endeavour to bring the superstructure in line with the changed socialist economic base. Why the revolution unfolded in the cultural field was because of the fact that political counter-revolution is always preceded by ideological counter-revolution. This is what those in China who had become revisionist and decided to follow the path of capitalist restoration undertook to do. A number of these people had high positions in the party and state. Their main organising centre was the former municipal party committee in Peking.

Wu Han, Vice Mayor of Peking, had tried to lay the foundation for cultural counter-revolution in a series of articles and dramas. Best

known among these was his drama entitled "Hai Jui Dismissed from Office." The story is about a feudal official in the Ming dynasty who was dismissed 400 years ago. Wu Han used that story to satirise the present. He tried to tell the people that the dismissal of a handful of rightists in 1959 was wrong. He wanted that verdict reversed.

The party's leading bodies decided to expose Wu Han's reactionary nature. But the former Peking party committee did nothing about it. Then on November 10th, 1965, the Shanghai daily "Wen Hui Ba" published an article by Yao Wen Yuan exposing the anti-party and anti-socialist nature of Wu Han. Yet no Peking paper would reproduce the article. Nevertheless, the battle had begun.

On May 10, 1966, the "Liberation Daily" and the Shanghai daily "Wen Hui Ba" raised the question of carrying out a great cultural revolution in the political, ideological and cultural fields. On May 26, the first big character poster criticising the reactionary bourgeois academic authorities appeared in Peking University, whose president was exposed as a revisionist. On June 2nd, Radio Peking broadcast this poster and it was editorially hailed by the "People's Daily" and "Red Flag." That was the call to battle and the Cultural Revolution was on. People were called upon to struggle against and overthrow those in authority who wanted to take the capitalist road, to sweep away all monsters and ghosts, to criticise and repudiate the bourgeois reactionary academic authorities, to criticise all those things in the superstructure which did not suit the socialist economic base, to destroy in a big way the four olds — old ideas, old culture, old habits and old customs of all exploiting classes, and to establish in a big way the new culture, new ideas, new customs and new habits of the proletariat.

On August 1966, the Central Committee of the CCP issued its 16 point communique on the GPCR. By then the Red Guards had come into existence spontaneously in some colleges. With the genius that characterises Mao, he saw in this organisation of the Red Guards the

form through which the Cultural Revolution could be initiated. On August 18th Comrade Mao Tsetung reviewed the revolutionary students and teachers in Peking and, by putting on the Red armband of the Red Guards, he gave public approval to their formation.

From there on the revolution rushed like a torrent sweeping aside everything that was opposed to it. The Cultural Revolution was a great class struggle between the revolutionary forces led by Comrade Mao Tsetung and the handful of scabs and traitors led by Liu Shao-chi who wanted to take China back along the path of capitalist restoration as had happened in the Soviet Union and in the other countries ruled by the modern revisionists. This fierce class struggle was indeed a revolution carried out under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

At many stages it took violent forms. This was to be understood because the imperialists, revisionists and reactionaries of all kinds and their agents inside China had conspired to take China away from its revolutionary road and they were ready to resort to any means. Comrade Mao Tsetung did not attempt to solve this ideological struggle through bureaucratic methods from above. Instead, he invited the participation of the masses in what was to become the greatest mass struggle the world had ever seen. Thereby, he also demonstrated his great faith and confidence in the masses of the people.

Of course, the GPCR did not proceed smoothly like a gently flowing river. There were many upheavals and storms because the enemy put up stiff resistance. The camp of the revisionists against whom Mao led the great fight was not a unified or homogeneous one. It consisted of different factions. One, headed by Liu Shao-chi and Deng Xiaoping, were Soviet-style revisionists who looked towards Khrushchev and the Soviet Union as a model of what socialism should be. On the opposite end stood Chou En-lai, who opposed Soviet domination by pushing for capitulation to the U.S. and the West. In between stood Lin Piao who seems to have been a careerist but who played an important role in

the early part of the Cultural Revolution because he wanted to knock down Liu Shao-chi in order that he himself could inherit the mantle of power.

Mao's tactics were always to narrow the target of attack by isolating the most dangerous of the opponents while making accommodation with the others. He realised that Liu Shao-chi and Deng Xiaoping were the greatest threat to socialism in China and therefore teamed up with Lin Piao and Chou En-lai to strike at Liu Shao-chi and Deng Xiaoping — which he did successfully.

All these revisionist cliques had one political line in common: the line of the "productive forces" and the "dying out of the class struggle." "We have established socialism, so there is no more need to wage class struggle." They also claimed that, "the task now is to concentrate on the economy and make China a powerful modern country."

These revisionists used all kinds of methods against Mao, such as the economist promotion of giving workers more wages and bonuses, etc. In January 1967, hundreds of thousands of workers in Shanghai rose up to overthrow the revisionist municipal party committee and to elect a new one, led by Chang Chun-chiao. Mao hailed this as the January Storm.

After the defeat of the bourgeois headquarters of Liu Shao-chi, Lin Piao's power ascended to its highest point, as he became Mao's second-in-command. But his careerism knew no bounds and in 1971 he "jumped out" to capture power for himself. In the course of this attempt, he even went so far as to plan to assassinate Mao himself. But Lin Piao was exposed, and, in sheer desperation, he tried to flee to the Soviet Union but wound up crashing in his plane and so died in September 1971.

The death of Lin Piao was a traumatic event for all China and had deep repercussions at all levels of society. After all, he had been the Defense Minister and second-in-command to Mao. Lin Piao's defection gave a big boost to the rightists who used it as a pretext for combat-

ting Lin Piao's "ultra-left." They seized this opportunity to launch an assault on the Cultural Revolution and Mao's line as a whole. Lin Piao's defection in turn brought Chou En-lai to the pinnacle of his authority and, under Chou's tutelage, the rightists succeeded in rehabilitating many of those people who had been struck down during the earlier stages of the Cultural Revolution. One of those so rehabilitated was Deng Xiaoping, who now became the spearhead of the rightists, while Chou En-lai became the rallying point and guardian angel.

The defection of such an important person as Lin Piao forced on Mao and the left the necessity to carry out an intensive ideological campaign among the people. This was the movement known as the Movement to Criticise Lin Piao and Confucius. It turned out that Lin Piao had politically borrowed from Confucius, a reactionary thinker who upheld the slave system in ancient China in opposition to the rising landlord class and feudal system, and whose doctrines had been promoted for more than 2000 years by reactionaries in China.

Criticising Confucius meant striking at the roots of this reactionary philosophy and its enslaving principles, such as: intellectuals are meant to rule over the manual workers, the masses must passively accept their lot for it is not meant to be changed, sons must blindly obey their fathers, all men are naturally superior to women so that the wife must be silently subordinate to her husband, and so on.

This movement also used political and historical analogies to begin a thorough exposure of the revisionists then in top leadership of the party and their whole right opportunist programme.

In August 1975, Mao called for the study of a historical Chinese novel, *Water Margin*, whose main character is someone from the landlord class who is driven to join peasant rebels but ends up capitulating to the emperor and attacking the genuine rebels on behalf of the emperor. Mao pointed out that the book would help the people to recognise capitulationists, people

who join the revolution and may even become among its leaders but are not thorough-going revolutionaries and finally ended as traitors.

Mao also pointed out that, although in China the ownership system had changed and was in the main socialist, in many other important respects China was not much different than a capitalist country. There were different wage grades, the commodity system was still practiced, "bourgeois right" had not yet been eliminated and there were many other inequalities left over from capitalism. Because of all these survivals of the whole exploiting society, if revisionists — people like Lin Piao or Deng Xiaoping — came to power, it would be quite easy for them to rig up the capitalist system.

By now the movement was targeting both Deng Xiaoping and Chou En-lai, who had emerged as the leaders of the right. The revisionists had hoped that Mao would die before Chou En-lai and that the latter could thereafter preside over the transition back to capitalism. But Chou En-lai died before Mao. The revisionists made their first show of strength by staging a large-scale riot in Tien An Men, the main square in Peking, on 5 April 1976, only five months before Mao's death. They directly attacked Mao and the left, praised Chou En-lai and loudly declared their support for Deng Xiaoping. The riot was crushed and Mao came from his sick-bed to condemn Deng Xiaoping and to expell him from his leading positions.

But Mao did not last much longer. He died on September 9th, 1976. His death was the signal for counter-revolution. Without the sanction of the Central Committee or its Political Bureau or Standing Committee, four close associates of Mao, including his widow Chiang Ching, were jailed by Hua Kuofeng, who claimed the doubtful legitimacy of being nominated by Mao. The party and the nation were faced with a fait accompli. From this to the restoration of Deng Xiaoping to power was only a matter of time. The revolution had been temporarily defeated in China. □



The effects of the Cultural





Revolution spread throughout China.

Red Guards distribute leaflets.

