

### III

## **FOURTH PEOPLE'S CONGRESS AND THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT CAMPAIGN**

### Introduction

The campaign to Study the Theory of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Combat and Prevent Revisionism was initiated by Mao at the time of the 4th National People's Congress. At this time, in late 1974 and early 1975, the Right was going on the offensive. The campaign was an answer to the forces led by Chou En-lai who were claiming that the achievement of the four modernizations (the modernization of industry, agriculture, science and technology, and national defense) had now become the principal task facing the revolution. The Right had argued that the political struggle had by and large been completed and that it was now time to get down to the business of developing the economy. Mao was emphasizing that it was necessary to understand why the proletariat must exercise its dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in all spheres of society and gradually create the conditions in which it could not exist. He brought to the fore the question, why is it that revisionism constantly emerges—at a time when the Right was saying that this was hardly of any consequence—all that needed to be done was to turn China into a modern country. Shortly after the 4th National People's Congress, he released this directive (see Text 17): “Why did Lenin speak of exercising dictatorship over the bourgeoisie? It is essential to get this question clear. Lack of clarity on this question will lead to revisionism. This should be made known to the whole nation.”

The heavy artillery in this campaign were two signed pamphlets by Yao Wen-yuan and Chang Chun-chiao (Texts 18 and 19), which elaborated on the themes Mao had been stressing, in particular the

relative ease with which capitalism could be re-instituted if political power were seized by Rightists. Attention was drawn in these pamphlets to the very nature and structure of socialist society in China, to the fact that it would require a long historical period before ownership could be completely transformed in the countryside, that there would be continual struggle over which line was in command of different units, and that bourgeois right—reflecting the differences and inequalities still existing in socialist society—had to be restricted in order to strangle newly arising bourgeois elements.

An example of interest is the selection “Socialist Big Fair is Good” (Text 21). It describes a bold initiative in Liaoning province in restricting bourgeois right in the countryside. This example has been the subject of heavy criticism by the current leadership.