

On the Class Struggle in China

—Revolutionary Communist Party, USA

The trial of the "Gang of Four" in Peking once again focused world attention on the developments in China since the death of Mao Tsetung, and more precisely on the struggle for power which resulted in the arrest of the "Gang of Four" and the coming to power of Hua Guofeng and Deng Xiaoping. In many ways the trial has clarified certain issues which the Chinese revisionists, for their own ulterior motives, had until recently tried to obscure and befuddle. Gone is any pretext that the current rulers are acting on Mao's behests, or that the arrest of those who led the Cultural Revolution was somehow a continuation of that great struggle. Now it is openly proclaimed that the Cultural Revolution was a great "disaster," that "nothing positive" occurred between 1966 and 1976 and that Mao himself was fundamentally in error at least since 1956. Not only do the reactionary inquisitors proclaim these counterrevolutionary theses from the trial and every other conceivable forum, but the two central figures in the trial, Chiang Ching through her revolutionary speeches at the trial, and Chang Chun-chiao through his defiant silence, are standing firm in the face of the new reactionary rulers, defending the Cultural Revolution, upholding Mao Tsetung Thought and calling on the masses to resist the revisionist usurpers. Thus in the trial one sees clearly the opposition of two lines and two classes: that of those who are dragging China onto the capitalist road, repudiating the teachings of Mao, selling out to imperialism and betraying the world revolution, and exercising a brutal bourgeois dictatorship; and, on the other hand, those who fought them tooth and nail, who fought to maintain the dictatorship of the proletariat and advance toward communism.

Cultural Revolution and the International Movement

Simple, one might hope. But the developments in China have proved to be anything but simple for the international communist movement. It was the events of October 1976 which initiated and brought to a head the crisis in the international movement and served as the impulse for a great portion of the erstwhile communist forces to retreat to one form or another of revisionism. And it remains no less true today that an inability to come to terms with the developments in China, to distinguish revisionism from Marxism, and to support revolutionaries and oppose counterrevolutionaries, remain "simple questions" which if answered incorrectly will (and have already in the case of no small section of the international movement) lead into the revisionist quagmire, or can, if resolved correctly, play a vital role in advancing further along the road to communism.

In Lenin's famous definition of proletarian internationalism he writes, "There is one, and only one, kind of real internationalism, and that is—working whole-heartedly for the develop-

ment of the revolutionary movement and the revolutionary struggle in *one's own* country, and supporting (by propaganda, sympathy, and material aid) *this struggle*, this, *and only this*, line, in every country without exception." (1)

This citation, while often quoted, has been frequently distorted by separating his call to wage revolutionary struggle in "one's own country" from his insistence on supporting this same struggle in *all* countries without exception. And certainly one revolutionary struggle that cannot be made an "exception" and which requires support from all genuine revolutionaries by "propaganda, sympathy and material aid" is the struggle of the proletarian revolutionaries in China and, more specifically, two of their foremost leaders who are clearly and courageously fighting for a revolutionary line in a very difficult situation.

Given that the Cultural Revolution had so much to do with the birth and growth of the new communist movement, it is not surprising that the defeat (if temporary) in China would have so much to do with its near collapse. On the part of many Marxist-Leninist parties and groups we have witnessed for several years now the step-by-step and systematic repudiation of the very principles on which they were founded and long claimed to uphold.

It is clear that Mao and the revolutionaries in China saw the Cultural Revolution as part of the international revolutionary movement and the march toward communism. Mao spoke clearly on this point in October 1968:

"We have won great victory. But the defeated class will still struggle. These people are still around and this class still exists. Therefore, we cannot speak of final victory. Not even for decades. We must not lose our vigilance. According to the Leninist viewpoint, the final victory of a socialist country not only requires the efforts of the proletariat and the broad masses of the people at home, but also involves the victory of the world revolution and the abolition of the system of exploitation of man by man over the whole globe, upon which all mankind will be emancipated. Therefore, it is wrong to speak lightly of the final victory of the revolution in our country; it runs counter to Leninism and does not conform to facts." (2)

Nor can one forget that, in line with the quote above, Mao constantly emphasized that only by liberating all mankind can the proletariat liberate itself. (3)

Despite the growing strength of the Right even before the coup d'état of 1976 and despite errors Mao and the revolutionaries may have made regarding certain questions of international line, China under Mao remained a bulwark of world revolution.

The main importance of revolutionary China, however, to the international movement was the political and theoretical devel-

opment and clarity Mao Tsetung and the revolutionary headquarters in China shed on a number of vital questions which had long been misunderstood or distorted or had never been systematically addressed in the international movement. Further, the very action of millions of people rising up to protect the victory of the revolution and push it forward, attacking everything old and outmoded in society, attracted a whole new generation of revolutionaries to Marxism-Leninism and helped to rescue our revolutionary science from the pits of revisionism or sterility.

Mao stated very directly in 1965 on the eve of the Cultural Revolution, "If China's leadership is usurped by revisionists in the future, the Marxist-Leninists of all countries should resolutely expose and fight them and help the working class and the masses of China to combat such revisionism." (4) However it must be admitted that despite the repeated statements by Mao and the obviously bitter and complex nature of the class struggle in China, the possibility of a counterrevolutionary coup in China was viewed much more as a "theoretical conception" than a matter of life and death struggle. In the main, the seizure of power by Hua Guofeng and Deng Xiaoping came as a shock and a surprise in the international movement.

But surprise or not, the materials to analyse and understand the development of the class struggle in China—above all the writings of Mao and of the revolutionary headquarters upholding his line—were and remain widely available in many languages. Thus all Marxist-Leninist parties and organizations were confronted with the choice of whether to grapple with and deepen their understanding of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought in the course of *applying* this scientific body of thought to a study of the developments in China, or, as has been unfortunately the greater number of cases, in one form or another to use the fact that revisionists had come to power in China to "criticize," retreat from, or outright abandon Mao's scientific theses on the development of the class struggle under socialism. The myriad of forms of this wave of rejection of Mao's most pathbreaking teachings, and the fundamental unity between all of them, is something to which we will return. First it is necessary to examine in some detail Mao's line on "continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat" and how and in what forms it was being opposed in China in the last, bitter struggle that resulted in the temporary reversal of the revolution in that country.

"Lack of Clarity On This Question Will Lead To Revisionism"

On January 11, 1975 an important meeting, the Fourth National People's Congress, was held in Peking to set forward key tasks for the Chinese people immediately and for a period to come. The night before Mao Tsetung reportedly could not sleep. Shortly thereafter he was to issue two brief but profound statements:

"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."

"Our country at present practices a commodity system, the wage system is unequal, too, as in the eight-grade wage scale, and so forth. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat such things can only be restricted. Therefore, if people like Lin Biao come to power, it will be quite easy for them to rig up the capitalist system. That is why we should do more reading of Marxist-Leninist works." (5)

These statements were to cause the revisionists to have a few sleepless nights of their own.

While this is not the place to review the entire history of the Cultural Revolution, it is necessary to situate the above quotes in their proper context. The Fourth People's Congress represented an important nodal point in the struggle that was developing between two rival headquarters in China: one led by

Mao Tsetung and the "Gang of Four"*; the other led directly by Deng Xiaoping with Zhou Enlai playing the behind the scenes role of patron saint. This struggle began to take shape in the wake of the "Lin Biao Affair" which had done serious damage in China and had, for various reasons, led to an increase of strength for the Right, particularly in the form of the "rehabilitation" (around the time of the 10th Party Congress in 1973) of a large number of old cadre who had been overthrown in the course of the Cultural Revolution, led of course by the arch-revisionist Deng Xiaoping.

The Fourth People's Congress established a task which was to be used as the rallying cry of the bourgeoisie in China, the call "to accomplish the comprehensive modernization of agriculture, industry, national defense and science and technology before the end of the century, so that our national economy will be advancing in the front ranks of the world." This call, contained in the report of Zhou Enlai to the Fourth People's Congress, was later to be transformed by Hua Guofeng and the revisionist clique into "China's historic mission" for the next 25 years, a mission which would justify every revisionist deviation imaginable, which would replace the class struggle as the "central task" of the Party and the proletariat, the new "yardstick" with which to measure (and, naturally, reject) the "socialist new things" that had emerged in the course of the Cultural Revolution.

The quotes from Mao given earlier were highlighted in signed articles by Chang Chun-chiao and Yao Wenyuan which were hard-hitting opening shots in the struggle of the revolutionary headquarters against the mounting counterrevolutionary threat. This struggle, known as the campaign to study the dictatorship of the proletariat, focused on Mao's call to understand "why" Lenin had insisted on the proletarian dictatorship. These two articles are not only indispensable for understanding the content of the political line struggle in China at the time, but remain, despite the capitulatory role Yao played during the trial, important Marxist-Leninist works in which Mao's line on the nature of socialist society and the class struggle in it are presented.

These two pamphlets explore a number of extremely important themes. By discussing the actual conditions of socialist society in China, these pamphlets help to illustrate the material basis for the famous statement by Mao that "which will win out, socialism or capitalism, is not really settled yet." (6) In particular they call attention to the continued existence of *bourgeois right*, the term first used by Marx in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* to describe the exchange of commodities at equal values. Lenin pointed out that during the socialist period "bourgeois right" is *not* abolished in its entirety, but only in part, only in proportion to the economic revolution so far attained, i.e., only in respect of the means of production." (7)

Lenin (and Marx) illustrate the bourgeois character of "equal right" by calling attention to the single, healthy worker who under the socialist system would receive the same amount in wages as a parent of five children—formal, legal, bourgeois "equality" which translates into a vast, real inequality in their actual standard of living. This principle also means, for example, that skilled labor is paid higher wages. The existence of "bourgeois right" is inextricably connected with the commodity system, in which the law of value continues, even under socialist society, to be the principal regulating factor in the distribution of consumer goods.

The continued existence of "bourgeois right" was a point accepted by all in China, revolutionaries and counterrevolutionaries

* The fact that Yao Wenyuan and Wang Hongwen capitulated at the trial does not change the fact the "gang of four" represented the core of the revolutionary headquarters led by Mao himself within the Communist Party of China. The cowardly performance of Yao and Wang at the trial reduced them to irrelevance, except from an historical standpoint. In fact, their performance only served to highlight the heroism of Chiang Ching and Chang Chun-chiao in their revolutionary defiance at the trial.

alike. The point of struggle was whether this bourgeois right was something that had to be criticized and restricted or whether in fact it was "a socialist new thing" (8) as one revisionist wrote in justifying the coup d'état in China.

The revolutionaries in China pointed out how the continued existence of bourgeois right, as well as the "three great differences" (between mental and manual labor; between town and country; and between worker and peasant) provide the soil on which a new generation of bourgeois can and will inevitably arise.

In his pamphlet Chang Chun-chiao discusses at length the relation between the existence and the regeneration of bourgeois elements and the tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat. He analyses concretely the three component parts of the relations of production—the ownership system, the relations between people in the labor process, and distribution—under the socialist system. He points out that, indeed, the ownership system had been changed in China. The great majority of industrial enterprises were under the control of the proletarian state, and in the countryside private farming had, in the main, been replaced by socialist collective ownership. He concludes from this "we can proudly declare that the system of ownership in China has changed, that the proletariat and other working people in China have in the main freed themselves from the shackles of private ownership, and that China's socialist economic base has been gradually consolidated and developed." (9) Chang Chun-chiao does not stop here. In going on to discuss what is meant by saying that ownership "has in the main been settled," he points out, "this means that it has not been settled entirely, and also that bourgeois right has not been totally abolished in this realm." Besides calling attention to the fact that, in agriculture, ownership by the whole people has not been achieved, he stresses "we should pay attention not only to its form [of ownership] but also to its actual content. It is perfectly correct for people to give full weight to the decisive role of the system of ownership in the relations of production. But it is incorrect to give no weight to whether the issue of ownership has been resolved merely in form or in actual fact, to the reaction upon the system of ownership exerted by the two other aspects of the relations of production—the relations between people and the form of distribution—and to the reaction upon the economic base exerted by the superstructure; these two aspects and the superstructure may play a decisive role under given conditions. Politics is the concentrated expression of economics. Whether the ideological and political line is correct or incorrect, and which class holds the leadership, decides which class owns those factories in actual fact." (10)

As Chang Chun-chiao began his pamphlet: "The question of the dictatorship of the proletariat has long been the focus of the struggle between Marxism and revisionism." Not only has the Marxist thesis on the nature of the state been the key point of departure between Leninism and the social-democracy of Kautsky, it has also been at the heart of both the revisionist triumph in the Soviet Union and in China as well. With each victory of Marxism over revisionism and with the science of Marxism growing in strength, it was not possible for the Chinese revisionists to openly demand the abolition of the dictatorship of the proletariat, as Khrushchev did in the Soviet Union. The struggle around this question took place on a higher level, and the distortions of Marxism involved a higher degree of sophistication.

The revolutionaries in China gave prominence to Marx's famous letter to Weydemeyer in which he stated: "...no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. Long before me bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes. What I did that was new was to prove: 1) that the *existence of classes* is only bound up with *particular historical phases in the development of production*, 2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the *dictatorship of the proletariat*, 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the *abolition of all classes* and to a *classless society*..." (11)

Chang Chun-chiao stressed that these three points are "inter-related and cannot be cut apart. It is impermissible to accept only one of the three points while rejecting the other two. For the sentence gives complete expression to the entire process of the inception, development and withering away of the dictatorship of the proletariat and covers the whole task of the dictatorship of the proletariat and its actual content." (12) This is an extremely important point that was quite germane to the struggle then raging in China and to the debate in the international communist movement.

Viewing the dictatorship of the proletariat as a *transition* to classless society has, of course, always been a cardinal principle of Marxism. But there can also be no doubt that in the history of the international movement and in the experience of building socialism in a number of countries there has been a strong tendency to, in fact, separate Marx's "three points" and especially not to see the link between maintaining the dictatorship of the proletariat and its task as a transition to communism. The Chinese revisionists tell us, "socialism is the first phase of communism, not the higher stage of capitalism" (13), a point which is repeated in almost the same words by Hoxha in his vicious *Imperialism and the Revolution*. By emphasizing this, what the revisionists are trying to do is present socialist society as the basic achievement of communism, that is, that the necessary changes in social relations have been essentially accomplished and all that is really required to reach the classless society is the necessary industrial and technological base. (Hoxha stresses that there is no *qualitative* difference between communism and socialism.)

What Mao and the Four were arguing was exactly the opposite. Unless the dictatorship of the proletariat was actively pursuing the task of "transitioning" to communism, that is, uprooting, as Marx put it, all class distinctions generally, all the relations of production on which they rest, all the social relations which correspond to these relations of production and all the ideas that result from these social relations (what the Chinese revolutionaries referred to as Marx's "four ells"), then it was bound to fail, to be transformed into a dictatorship over the proletariat, which is exactly what has happened in China.

The dictatorship of the proletariat can be no "holding pattern," it cannot be seen as something that is fixed and established once and for all which needs only to rest in place until the advance of the productive forces comes to its rescue and then makes it unnecessary. The dictatorship of the proletariat must be seen, as Lenin put it, as a bitter class struggle, sometimes peaceful and sometimes bloody, until the conditions are created in which it will be impossible for the bourgeoisie to exist or for it to arise anew.

The question of whether the "birthmarks" of the old society had to be fought against, restricted and dug away at bit by bit colored every aspect of the political struggle in China. Today we all see the program of the capitalist roaders in China—to reintroduce, build up and strengthen every capitalist way of doing things from a system of bonuses and piece work in the factories, to reintroducing expertise (and experts) in command of politics in science and technology and reestablishing a hierarchy in education aimed at training an elite from among the "most qualified" and "brightest" young people—read: the children of the old exploiting classes and, above all, of leading cadre in the Party itself. All this is justified by arguing, in a tautological manner, that since the state is still socialist(!) and the Party Marxist-Leninist(!) any methods used, no matter what effect they have on the actual relations in society, is justified on the basis of "pushing forward" socialism and especially the "historic task" of modernization by the end of the century.

The revisionists in China (and some of their critics as well) argue that since the ownership system in China has been changed, how could one refer to a bourgeoisie? They even went so far as to attack Chang Chun-chiao for wanting to make an analysis of classes in socialist China, claiming that it was unnecessary since Mao had made an analysis of classes in China—in 1926!

In fact, doing a class analysis of socialist society and of the newly engendered bourgeoisie was a crucial task begun by the revolutionaries in China shortly before their overthrow. In several articles, signed by pen names associated with the revolutionaries in China and appearing at the time of the movement to "Criticize Deng" right before Mao's death (14), this question of the newly engendered bourgeoisie was deepened further and linked to the very important question of criticizing bourgeois right first raised in the statements by Mao cited earlier. Several articles published at the same time sum up experience in China where the capitalist roaders were able to transform (to a certain extent, given that the society as a whole remained *socialist*) the actual relations of production in sectors under their control.

One article further explores the question of the material base of the "bourgeoisie in the party" and directly refutes the argument that it is impossible to talk of a bourgeoisie that does not "privately" (personally, legally) own capital:

"Through a class analysis, we can see clearly that Party capitalist roaders in power like Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao and Deng Xiaoping, by the position they occupy in the relations of production in society today, fully represent the decadent capitalist relations of production. As individuals, they may not necessarily own capital, run factories and operate banks like the former capitalists, but their political line which energetically upholds the capitalist relations of production reflects in a concentrated way the economic interests and political aspirations of the bourgeoisie as a whole. If the capitalist is only the personalization of capital, then his soul is the soul of capital." (15)

This article and others describe the dialectical relation between the continual emergence of a bourgeoisie under socialism and the fact that only by overthrowing the dictatorship of the proletariat and seizing power will they be able to fully establish themselves as a bourgeoisie and fully reinstitute the capitalist system. In this way it is easier to see the dialectical relation between the two-fold task the revolutionaries spoke of, on the one hand defeating the continued attempts of the bourgeoisie to seize power, and on the other continuing to dig away at the soil which engenders them. (16)

These two, interrelated, questions were strikingly clear in the last great battle in China where the *political program* of both the proletarian revolutionaries and the new bourgeoisie was concentrated precisely on the question of whether to defend and develop the achievements brought about by the Cultural Revolution, or whether in the name of efficiency and modernization, to reverse these verdicts of the Cultural Revolution and give full play to bourgeois right and the "division of labor" inherited from capitalist society.

It is interesting to examine some of Hua Guofeng's pronouncements on these questions, particularly his speech to the "Learn from Tachai" conference held in October 1975 when the campaign to study the dictatorship of the proletariat was in full swing.

In his speech Hua Guofeng gives no emphasis to the problem of "restricting bourgeois right." He quotes Mao about how China practices a commodity system, the eight-grade wage scale and that such things can only be restricted. What is striking is that he leaves off Mao's conclusion: "Therefore, if people like Lin Biao come to power, it will be quite easy for them to rig up the capitalist system. That is why we should do more reading of Marxist-Leninist works." Thus he robs Mao's quote of its meaning and in fact turns it into its opposite. In fact Hua Guofeng inserts instead his own conclusion to Mao's quote: "Therefore, new bourgeois elements will invariably be engendered continuously. This is true of the countryside as well as the cities. The traditional influence of small production still remains among the peasants, and there are still fairly serious spontaneous tendencies towards capitalism among the well-to-do middle peasants." (17)

In other words, Hua *diverts* attention away from the problem Mao was focusing attention on (the capitalist roaders in the Party) and instead concentrates on the spontaneous tendency toward

capitalism among the peasantry. Later he goes on to give a taste of what was and remains a constant theme of the revisionists in China. "In criticizing capitalism, the spearhead of the struggle must be directed against the handful of class enemies who have committed sabotage." (18) Gone again is any conception that exactly *because* bourgeois right "can only be restricted" "people like Lin Biao" will inevitably develop in the Party, especially at its highest levels, and will seek, and have the material basis for, a capitalist restoration. This is why Chang Chun-chiao was attacked for saying on hearing Hua's Tachai speech, "what's the use in criticizing foxes [petty capitalist elements] when wolves are in power?"

The Problem of the Party

The fact that as the socialist revolution progresses the bourgeoisie is concentrated to an ever greater extent within the ranks of the communist party itself poses important questions for the proletarian revolution. Mao and the revolutionaries have been accused, again from all quarters, of having abandoned the leading role of the party in socialist transformation.

Experience has shown that in socialist society there are always sections of the communist party which are following the bourgeois line and that at particular times this can be an extremely acute problem. During the first stages of the Cultural Revolution it is quite clear that the organizational apparatus of the Party was, in the main, in the hands of the revisionists, in particular Liu Shaoqi's headquarters. Thus it was necessary for the Party to be a target as well as the leader of the revolution at the same time. This contradiction has never ceased to befuddle those who refuse to accept dialectics.

In the final analysis, whether a communist party is in fact or only in name communist depends upon the ideological and political line that leads it. For this reason it is correct and necessary to see the nodal point in China coming in October 1976 when the *line* of the Party was brutally and dramatically changed with the overthrow and the arrest of the revolutionaries.

Chang Chun-chiao's pamphlet is again interesting in this regard. He concludes with "*The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.*" This infinitely bright prospect will surely continue to inspire growing numbers of awakened workers and other working people and their vanguard, the Communists, to keep to the Party's basic line, persevere in exercising all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie and carry the continued revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat through to the end!" (19) Notice the formulation in this quotation (consistent with others that were to appear in China in the short years before the coup): the vanguard is the "Communists" who adhere to the Party's general line. In the section that precedes this quote Chang Chun-chiao gives appropriate attention to the importance of the role of the Central Committee and senior cadre, calling on them to "take the lead and join the vast numbers of other cadres and the masses in reading and studying assiduously. . . ."

Thus a picture is painted of a section of the Party, the "Communists," vigorously taking up Mao's call to persevere in the dictatorship of the proletariat, while the question of the role of the Central Committee and the senior cadres is clearly in doubt. What he is calling attention to here is that the key leading role of the Party is its *basic line* and that at any time there will be sections who carry it forward and others who oppose it. While this is a general truth, this phenomenon, like all others, goes through a spiral-like motion. The degree of unity (organizationally and politically) of the Party varies according to the ebb and flow of the class struggle. Relative unity coming as a result of a major battle against one revisionist headquarters will give rise to a process of the further development of contradiction in the Party, the desertion of new leaders from the basic line, and hence to another struggle. This process is conditioned by the overall class struggle both within the country and internationally. Through this process the basic line of the Party itself, as was the case in China, will

continue to be deepened. The recognition of this law is in no way a departure from the fact that the construction of socialism and the advance toward communism requires the leadership of a genuine Party. Rather it is the key to understanding how the leadership of the Party is manifested in the complex situation in which a section of the Party itself represents the enemy, and to understanding how the Party exercises its leading role precisely in leading the masses at key junctures to overthrow capitalist roaders in its ranks. In so doing, the Party strengthens itself, not only ideologically and politically, but organizationally as well, bringing forward new revolutionary elements in the process.

In the wake of the counterrevolutionary coup in China, it was popular, in some circles, to speak of "three lines" in China. This analysis, which the revisionists in China themselves found useful to maintain for a short period, provided a handy way to support the revisionist usurpers while dodging the real questions involved. According to this theory of "three lines" the "Gang of Four" was "ultra-left" (or "ultra-right"!), and while it may have been correct to oppose the line of Deng Xiaoping they committed many excesses in that struggle, thereby isolating themselves from the masses and the cadre. The correct line, according to this view, was represented by Hua Guofeng who was fighting a battle on "two fronts" against the "Gang of Four" and the Deng Xiaoping forces as well. This theory became more and more untenable as the revisionists in China quickly dropped most of their revolutionary pretensions and began vociferously and vigorously demanding a return to the naked revisionist line of Liu Shaoqi. This flowering of a more naked form of revisionism parallels to a large extent the growing strength of Deng Xiaoping, whose hatred for the Cultural Revolution and Mao's line is uncontested (and whose careerism isn't served by pretending otherwise), and who is universally recognized to be the key political figure in China today. Recently, however, Hua's disappearance from sight during the trial in Peking and rumors of his arrest pumped new life into those who want to discover or invent "three lines."

This "theory of three lines" is perhaps most clearly promoted by *The Forge* (the Workers Communist Party M-L of Canada) which criticizes the revisionists now in power in Peking and many of their lines and policies but refuses to make self-criticism for having supported Hua Guofeng in the first place and is still continuing to denounce Chiang Ching and Chang Chun-chiao as "ultra-leftists." No doubt this eclectic sleight of hand is made easier for them by the absence of any force in Canada that has consistently defended the teachings of Mao Tsetung, a position abdicated by *In Struggle!*, which has allowed *The Forge* to pose as the real upholders of Mao Tsetung Thought in that country.

The Question of the Majority

After the seizure of power, the revisionists in China raised a hullabaloo about the "majority," the "95 percent," etc., all in an effort to show that the revolutionaries in China were acting in the interests of a "handful" and not proceeding from the interests of the majority. To bolster this portrayal, the revisionists sprinkled their writings with quotes from Mao regarding the need to unite the great majority, as well as a number of quotations of far more dubious origin in which he is alleged to have cautioned the revolutionary leaders not to be a "gang of four." It is certainly true that Mao (and for that matter the "Four" also) stressed that the revolution and the socialist transformation was in the interests of the great majority. But it is also true that in the writings of Mao one also finds many references to the fact that the masses are always divided into advanced, intermediate and backward. During the initial phases of the Cultural Revolution Mao was quite aware, for example, that the broad grouping of the left remained a minority. This led him to stress the importance of the left uniting its own ranks and with the masses of people who may have been confused or even opposed to the Cultural Revolution at its inception, while *at the same time* he also stressed the necessity to *rely on* the left and instructed the People's Liberation

Army (which was playing a key political role at the time) to "support the broad masses of the left."

The contradiction between the interests of the masses and their political views at any given time should hardly come as a surprise to communists. Isn't it true that in any country revolution is in the *interests* of the great majority, yet under most conditions, the majority (for a number of reasons, especially the influence of bourgeois ideology) follows the political leadership of the bourgeoisie, the revisionists or social democrats?

In fact Mao and the revolutionaries were struggling to resolve this contradiction between the current *understanding* of the masses and their highest interests exactly through the wide-scale campaigns they waged to raise the consciousness of the basic masses, and also Party members at all levels, of the vital questions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of the transition to communism. It is clear that Mao (and the other revolutionaries) felt that the longer the period of mass study and criticism could go on, the broader and deeper the campaigns against the Right could go, the more favorable the situation would be in another showdown with the revisionists. This policy is in keeping with the way Mao unfolded previous struggles in China in which all-out battles were preceded by and accompanied by great efforts to "create public opinion"—that is, through education, propaganda and agitation, and through the struggle itself, to make clear the interests of the vast majority in carrying the revolution forward and uniting with all possible on that basis. After all, we should not forget that it is the *revisionists* who launched a coup d'etat, not the Marxists.

Why Did They Lose?

Many of the arguments against the line of Mao Tsetung and the revolutionaries in China boil down to the simple statement, "they lost, so they must have been wrong." Instead of examining the real fundamental issues as to why there was a reversal, questions that were spoken to at great length by Mao and the revolutionaries, some people insist on emphasizing the role of the revolutionaries, as if this, under all circumstances, is the key to the question of victory or defeat. Theories which were generally accepted as true before the coup, particularly Mao's teachings on the nature of the class struggle in socialist society, all of a sudden are rejected for the simple reason that the very thing Mao was warning against—the possibility of a revisionist coup—came to pass!

This rejection of Marxism has taken a particularly extreme form in the case of the Albanian Party of Labor and Enver Hoxha, who argue that Mao was never a Marxist-Leninist, that he "allowed" the bourgeoisie in the Party and the struggle between two lines, ad nauseum. Others, repelled by Hoxha's counterrevolutionary conclusions, accept a great deal of his argumentation and method. The Cultural Revolution was, in the eyes of some, at best a necessary evil, a sort of payment for the crime of having "allowed" the bourgeoisie to exist in the first place.

But even among some of those who criticize Hoxha correctly in many regards and who uphold the universal significance of the Cultural Revolution, there is a stubborn resistance to admit that it is possible to lose state power in socialist society primarily as a result of the objective situation rather than errors on the part of the revolutionaries.

No one will deny, of course, that a revolution, such as that of 1905 in Russia or the Paris Commune in 1871, can fail because of the balance of forces or because the conditions for its success are not fully mature. But somehow materialism and dialectics vanish out the window when talking about a socialist society in which the proletariat has held power for some time and the ownership system has been fundamentally changed. The problem with this theory, however, as much as its holders might not like it, is that it leads inevitably to the conclusion that once the proletariat has seized power and carried through a certain degree of socialist transformation, the relation of forces is changed irrevocably in favor of the proletariat, barring some mistakes on the part of the

revolutionaries. It also effectively separates the building of socialism in one country from the world revolution.

Mao, on the contrary, argued that while the change of the ownership system was a great victory, in many ways "China is not much different than the old society." In other words, the 10,000 $\frac{1}{2}$ march is exactly that and the basic change of the ownership system is really but a step, however important, on this march. As pointed to earlier, in many domains bourgeois right can and unavoidably will have the upper hand (the commodity system, wage scales, etc.). If in addition one recognizes that the superstructure—the state system, the ideas, customs and habits—is also largely marked by the bourgeois era and the fact that the process of remolding people's thinking is a protracted process involving many generations, it is easier to see how at any particular stage, the bourgeoisie may not only be quite strong but may succeed in mobilizing a substantial section even from among the people to support a restorationist program.

When Marx and Engels first developed the theory of scientific socialism, they conceived the "transition period" between capitalism and communism as a relatively short affair (hence Marx's often misused quote that socialism is the "lower phase of communism"). History has shown that the transition to communism is far more complex, prolonged and bitter than conceived of by Marx. But what stands out particularly sharply about Marx's writings on the subject of communism is precisely his *historical vision*.

Seen in the sweeping way that Marx viewed the transition to communism, it is easier to grasp that such things as the commodity system, wage differentials, division between mental and manual labor, etc., are all obstacles, fetters, holding back and hampering the working class from accomplishing its historic mission.

It is wrong to underestimate the vital importance of seizing political power and constructing a socialist economic system, but it is also wrong to fail to recognize that in many ways the proletariat remains the "underdog" in the sense that even while holding power and having won great victories it has only begun the process of transforming the "four ells" Marx described.

These questions have been further complicated by the fact that the two most important experiences of socialist society, in the USSR and China, took place in countries which were relatively backward economically and in which large elements of even precapitalist production relations remained, and they existed in a world still dominated by imperialism. It is certainly true, for example, that the final victory of communism requires a level of the productive forces considerably higher than that found in China. And it is also true that the degree to which some of the birthmarks of the old society and bourgeois right can be restricted depends in no small degree on the level of the productive forces. But it is absolutely wrong to draw from this the conclusion that revolution in class relations and in the superstructure were "outstripping" the development of the productive forces. There can be, and historically always has been in socialist society, varying degrees of harmony and contradiction between the socialist system and the development of the productive forces, but from a sweeping, global view, it is necessary to emphasize that class relations and the superstructure based on them lag constantly behind the needs of the proletariat to liberate all of humanity, and in so doing, itself.

In understanding the complexity of the class struggle under socialism and the possibility of a capitalist restoration, it is important to keep in mind Mao's statement cited earlier, that the final victory of the socialist revolution in one country cannot be conceived of apart from the world revolution and such a conception "runs counter to Leninism." History has shown that the class struggle in socialist countries is inseparably linked with the development of the situation in the world as a whole and the international revolutionary movement.

The existence of imperialism in the world exerts a tremendous pressure on a socialist country and greatly strengthens the revi-

sionists, not only through military aggression, its direct agents, political and cultural influences, etc., but also by forcing a socialist country to maintain a relatively large standing army to protect against external aggression, to enter into various agreements with imperialist countries, and so forth. On the other hand, the revolutionary struggle of the working class and masses of people throughout the world is a direct support for those who want to carry forward the revolution in a socialist country—not only because such struggles strike blows against the imperialists and weaken their ability to invade or interfere but also because such struggles help to clarify and illustrate the truth that the final goal of the proletarian revolution, in all countries, is the achievement of communism which can only be done on a world scale, and are, of course, part of advancing toward it. Giving up on supporting the world revolution means giving up on communism, and in the final analysis can only mean abandoning socialism where it has been achieved. Supporting the world revolution is not a guarantee against reversals, but it does accelerate the advance toward communism and strengthen the international communist movement despite whatever setbacks in this process.

A Final Word On Hua Guofeng and Coups

We have tried to show at several points in this article that Hua Guofeng upheld and promoted the revisionist line in China, that his role was simply to apply a few red ribbons to a thoroughly counterrevolutionary program. In our opinion, any careful study and comparison between the documents of Mao and the revolutionaries on the one hand and Hua on the other, reveals this incontestably.

Hua Guofeng's role *vis a vis* Deng Xiaoping has an historical precedent in the relation between Kautsky and the Scheidemanns and Plekhanovs of the Second International. These latter two, of course, were well-known for their open and undisguised calls to "defend the fatherland" during the first inter-imperialist war and their complete subservience to the bourgeoisie. Kautsky, on the other hand, struck a "centrist" pose. But does history have a different judgment of Kautsky than the open revisionists? If anything, one can only say that Kautsky, by *uniting* with the Right, by drawing up theoretical *excuses* for capitulation, by demanding the Right not be driven out of the socialist movement while attacking the Left bitterly, played a more destructive and vicious role in combatting the revolutionary proletariat. The same can be said for Hua Guofeng.

Hua Guofeng, who claimed to be the "successor of Mao," who claimed to have "brought the Cultural Revolution to a successful conclusion," who has written and spoken many *words* in defense of Mao's line on continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, against modern revisionism, etc.—what has he done as the current regime in China has moved ever further (actually more *openly*) to counterrevolution? As everyone knows, he has gone along with each and every "rehabilitation" beginning with Deng right through to Liu Shao-chi, with the condemnation of the Cultural Revolution, adoption of one revisionist program after another, each more openly reactionary. If he was a revolutionary, why has he remained silent in the face of this? Compare his role to that played by Chiang Ching and Chang Chun-chiao in the trial. Where is his denunciation of revisionism, his calls to rebel? Even if one were to accept *all* the arguments and inventions of Hua Guofeng at the time of the coup, his present performance would still be unexcusable. The only "defense" of Hua Guofeng, as heard on behalf of a bourgeois reformist or liberal imperialist, is that he is doing his "best" under difficult circumstances, serving as a "pressure" against the Right and "working from within" a bourgeois dictatorship.

Certainly it has been apparent from the beginning that the revisionist rulers of China were rife with internal contradictions. It is not surprising that some are deeply worried at the pace and brazenness of Deng & Co. in restoring capitalism and tearing down Mao. In fact, even many imperialist observers have offered

the Chinese rulers words of caution about going too far, too fast. Those who declared their rule would bring "unity and stability" have shown that like all capitalists, they are jackals and hyenas ready to eat each other up at the first opportunity. But on the crucial dividing lines as they posed themselves at decisive points in the struggle between antagonistic classes—and most importantly whether "modernization by the year 2000" was the "new historic mission" for the next 25 years or whether, as Mao insisted, the class struggle remained the key link—Hua and Deng have been on the same side of the barricades.

Conclusion

As Lenin said "substituting eclectics for dialectics" is a favorite ruse of opportunists. To deny the qualitative change that occurred in October '76, or to refuse to draw conclusions about the nature of the current Chinese regime and that which it replaced is simply a dodge to avoid taking a stand on the life and death questions concentrated in the line struggle in China, questions which are full of complexity but boil down to the fact that revisionism triumphed with the coup d'état of Hua and Deng. Whether this is done on grounds that the "two line struggle is a constant feature in China" (as some argue) or because of the "impurity" of socialist China under Mao (as the semi-Hoxhaites say) is of little interest.

The Cultural Revolution represented the furthest forward point yet achieved by the international proletariat in the march toward communism. The theoretical summation made by Mao Tsetung of the class struggle under socialism remains, more than ever, a vital and indispensable enrichment of the revolutionary science of Marxism-Leninism, without which it is impossible to advance further.

The Cultural Revolution and its lessons are not only important for the proletariat that has achieved power, it is also rich in lessons for the proletariat that is struggling to achieve power. One of the outstanding features of the Cultural Revolution which helped inspire millions around the world was its radical rupture with the legacy of reformism and revisionism which had been slowly poisoning and strangling the international movement for quite a long time. The actions of tens of millions of workers, peasants, soldiers and revolutionary students daring to trample on centuries of "tradition's chains" and to take a great further stride in consciously shaping the features of the future world served—and serve today—as a great rebuff to all those who claim that the workers can never address questions more important than their next paycheck or that the running of society must always remain in the hands of experts or condescending saviors.

The Cultural Revolution emphasized that the proletarian revolution can only be a conscious act, aimed not only at toppling a reactionary regime or improving the conditions of the masses, but most importantly and essentially, a process that must lead to the very abolition of classes. That the working class is capable of realizing its class interest, of grasping its revolutionary science, of focusing its attention on mastering affairs of state, culture, science and so forth, of fighting and sacrificing to achieve its lofty

goal, was demonstrated on a scale unprecedented in history. To take up and advance on the lessons and legacy of the Cultural Revolution, or to compound the reversal in China with erroneous summations and retreat—this remains an important question in our movement.

1. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution," *CW*, Vol. 24, p. 75.
2. Quoted in the *Documents of the Ninth National Congress of the Communist Party of China*, FLP, 1969, pp. 64-65.
3. See for example, "A Letter to the Red Guards of Tsinghua University Middle School," August 1, 1966, in *Chairman Mao Talks to the People*, Stuart Schram ed., Pantheon, 1974, p. 261.
4. Quoted in "Open Letter of the Revolutionary Communist Party of Chile to the Communist Party of China" (November 1977), p. 8 of English translation.
5. Quoted at the beginning of "On Exercising All-Round Dictatorship Over the Bourgeoisie," Chang Chun-chiao, FLP, 1975. Also reprinted in *And Mao Makes 5*, R. Lotta ed., Banner Press, 1978.
6. Mao, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," *SW*, Vol. 5, p. 409.
7. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, FLP, 1976, p. 114.
8. Lin Hung-lin, "To Each According to His Work: Socialist Principle in Distribution," *Peking Review* No. 7, February 17, 1978. Reprinted in *And Mao Makes 5*, p. 519.
9. Chang Chun-chiao, "On Exercising . . .", p. 8.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
11. Marx, "Marx to J. Weydemeyer in New York," *Marx Engels Selected Works*, Vol. 1, Progress Publishers, 1973, p. 528.
12. Chang Chun-chiao, "On Exercising . . .", p. 16.
13. Lin Hung-lin, "To Each According . . ."; *And Mao Makes 5*, p. 521.
14. See, for example, Fang Kang, "Capitalist-Roaders are the Bourgeoisie Inside the Party," *Peking Review* No. 25, June 18, 1976. Reprinted in *And Mao Makes 5*.
15. Chuang Lan, "Capitalist-Roaders are Representatives of the Capitalist Relations of Production," translated from *Study and Criticism* No. 6, 1976. Reprinted in *And Mao Makes 5*, p. 371.
16. See Yao Wen-yuan's pamphlet "On the Social Basis of the Lin Piao Anti-Party Clique" on this point.
17. Hua Guofeng, "Let the Whole Party Mobilize for a Vast Effort to Develop Agriculture and Build Tachai-Type Counties Throughout the Country," FLP, 1975, p. 16.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
19. Chang Chun-chiao, "On Exercising . . .", p. 25.