



Chairman Mao making a report at the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in 1949.

'THE CLASS STRUGGLE IS BY NO MEANS OVER'

Chairman Mao's contributions to Marxism-Leninism on the class struggle under socialism

by Eileen Klehr

"Never forget classes and class struggle." These instructions by Chairman Mao Tsetung stand as a beacon to the world's people in their struggle for national liberation and proletarian revolution. In China, Chairman Mao's call sums up the basic line that guides the Chinese people in building socialism and consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It is in the area of waging class struggle under the conditions of socialism and the proletarian dictatorship that Chairman Mao Tsetung made his greatest contributions to the teachings of Marxism-Leninism. While he based himself on the writings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, Chairman Mao was also able to sum up both the positive and negative experiences of the international communist movement of the last 50 years. He derived the correct theory for continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, guarding against the restoration of capitalism and safeguarding the victory of socialism.

The transformation of the Soviet Union from a socialist to a social-imperialist country and the degeneration of over one hundred communist parties throughout the world struck a tremendous blow to international communism. It was under Chairman Mao's leadership that the Chinese Communist Party, along with the Albanian Party of Labor and other fraternal parties, saved communism and resisted the attacks on Marxism and socialism at the hands of the modern revisionists. The existence of an international anti-revisionist communist movement today can be largely attributed to the stand of Mao Tsetung and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in defense of the fundamental principles of Marxism-Lenin-

ism and their exposure of modern revisionism and social-imperialism.

What are the characteristics of the period of socialism? What is the principal contradiction and its relationship to other contradictions in a socialist society? Do classes and class struggle exist under socialism and what is the material and social basis for the existence of a bourgeoisie after socialist economic transformation has occurred? How does the proletariat safeguard and maintain its dictatorship once it seizes power from the bourgeoisie? Why did capitalist restoration take place in the Soviet Union?

The great teachers Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin had all spoken, to some extent, to most of the above questions. But, lacking the concrete experience in building socialism over a long period of time and lacking the historical experience of actual capitalist restoration in a socialist country, these questions had not been thoroughly answered and summed up for the international communist movement.

CHAIRMAN MAO'S CONTRIBUTIONS

Chairman Mao's contributions in this area were recently summarized by Chinese Communist Party Chairman Hua Kuo-feng in this way:

"For the first time in the history of the development of Marxism, Chairman Mao explicitly pointed out that there are still classes and class struggle after the socialist transformation of the ownership of the means of production has in the main been completed, put forward the thesis that in socialist society there are two types of contradictions—those between ourselves and the enemy and those among the people themselves—and advanced the great theory of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat."

And further:

"The constant defeat of subversion and sabotage by imperialism, revisionism and reaction, the upholding of socialism and the consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the People's Republic of China, a populous country with a vast territory—this is a great contribution of world historic significance made by Chairman Mao Tsetung to the present era and has at the same time provided the international communist movement with new experience in combating and preventing revisionism, consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, preventing capitalist restoration and building socialism."¹

When the modern revisionists came to power in the Soviet Union, they proclaimed that antagonistic classes no longer existed. From their powerful positions in the highest ranks of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), they launched a vicious attack on the proletarian dictatorship, proclaiming the new Soviet state a "state of the whole people." But these flowery phrases only provided a cover for the bloody suppression of the Soviet workers. In reality, this new Soviet bourgeoisie

carried out the complete restoration of capitalist ideology and culture in every area of the superstructure and seized the ownership of the means of production out of the hands of the working class. Today, these "new tsars" live as parasites off the profits created by Soviet labor.

The new Soviet bourgeoisie rose to power under the conditions of socialism, approximately 20 years after the socialist transformation of the ownership of the means of production had in the main been completed in the Soviet Union. Chairman Mao summed up this experience and recognized that to prevent a capitalist restoration such as the one that took place in the Soviet Union, it was essential for the proletariat to recognize that the principal contradiction in socialist society was between itself and the bourgeoisie. This was necessary in order to wage an ongoing class struggle against the bourgeoisie and its influences throughout the entire period of socialism.

As far back as the eve of China's nationwide liberation in 1949, Chairman Mao had explicitly pointed out at the CCP's Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee that, after the victory of the new-democratic revolution, the principal contradiction in China was "the contradiction between the working class and the bourgeoisie." He said, "Consequently, after the victory of the people's democratic revolution, the state power of the People's Republic under the leadership of the working class must not be weakened but must be strengthened."²

During the period of China's transition from new democracy to socialism, the state apparatus took the form of the people's democratic dictatorship, which was a dictatorship of all patriotic and anti-imperialist classes under the leadership of the proletariat over the landlord class and the comprador bourgeoisie, who acted as agents of imperialism. In essence, this form of state was the proletarian dictatorship.

PROLETARIAN DICTATORSHIP AS A WEAPON

Chairman Mao saw the need to strengthen the newly established proletarian state precisely for the purposes of waging class struggle against the enemies of the Chinese revolution. During the initial transition of China's economy from capitalist to socialist, this dictatorship proved to be an essential weapon in the exposure and defeat of several early attempts at capitalist restoration, including the anti-party cliques led by Kao Kang, Jao Shu-shih and Hu Feng.

These early capitalist-roaders had opposed the movement to transform Chian's economy into a socialist economy and had undermined the proletarian dictatorship with the theories of "consolidating new democracy" and "free development of capitalism." Opposing the line of Chairman Mao and the CCP that called for mass movements to wipe out the influences of capitalism in the government (such as bribery, tax evasion, theft, etc.), the capitalist-roaders preached that "today's capitalist exploitation, far from being a sin, has a merit," and "the more one exploits, the greater one's merits are."

The campaign to achieve the socialist transformation of the ownership of the means of production was in the main completed in China by 1956. This was to a great extent based on the successful defeat of these bourgeois representative within the CCP.

Did this accomplishment signify that classes and class struggle no longer existed in China? Was the principal contradiction no longer between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie? Did antagonistic class contradictions continue to exist?

Soon after the socialist transformation of 1956 was accomplished, the revisionist Liu Shao-chi came forward with his line that "the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie has been basically resolved" and that the principal contradiction in China was no longer between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, but between "the advanced socialist system and the backward social productive forces."³

CAPITALIST OFFENSIVE

While preaching in word that classes and class struggle were "dying out," Liu Shao-chi and his followers intensified the class struggle. During the late 1950s, the Chinese revisionists sabotaged the collectivization of over 200,000 farming cooperatives.

Chairman Mao responded to this capitalist offensive in his article "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People" written in early 1957:

"In China, although in the main socialist transformation has been completed with respect to the system of ownership, and although the large-scale and turbulent class struggles of the masses characteristic of the previous revolutionary periods have in the main come to an end, there are still remnants of the overthrown landlord and comprador classes, there is still a bourgeoisie, and the remoulding of the petty-bourgeoisie has only just started. The class struggle is by no means over. The class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the class struggle between the different political forces, and the class struggle in the ideological field between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie will continue to be long and tortuous and at times will even become very acute. The proletariat seeks to transform the world according to its own world outlook, and so does the bourgeoisie. In this respect, the question of which will win out, socialism or capitalism is still not really settled."⁴

In this article, Chairman Mao refuted the revisionist line of Liu Shao-chi. Chairman Mao elaborated the theory that, even after the socialist transformation of the ownership of the means of production, classes and class struggle would continue to exist. He also pointed out that this class struggle would be reflected "in the ideological field," meaning that struggle between two lines—Marxism and revisionism—would continue and "would become very acute."

In this same article, Chairman Mao answered the question "who are the friends and who are the enemies" of the proletarian revolution during

the period of socialism."

"At the present stage, the period of building socialism, the classes, strata and social groups which favor, support and work for the cause of socialist construction all come within the category of the people, while the social forces and groups which resist the socialist revolution and are hostile to or sabotage socialist construction are all enemies of the people.

"The contradictions between ourselves and the enemy are antagonistic contradictions. Within the ranks of the people, the contradictions among the working people are non-antagonistic, while those between the exploited and the exploiting class have a non-antagonistic aspect in addition to an antagonistic aspect."⁵

PLACE OF ANTAGONISM

Here Chairman Mao pointed to the place of antagonism in the class contradictions in China. The methods of resolving the antagonistic contradictions between the people and the enemy, in particular the imperialists, landlords and bureaucrat-capitalists were "a matter of drawing a clear distinction between them and ourselves."⁶

As for the non-antagonistic contradictions among the people, Chairman Mao saw the resolving of them "a matter of drawing a clear distinction between right and wrong." Chairman Mao advanced a particular policy to deal with the contradiction between the working class and the national bourgeoisie: "Uniting with, criticizing and educating."⁷ He pointed out that this contradiction would only become antagonistic if the proletariat did not carry out the above policy or if the national bourgeoisie refused to accept this policy.

REVISIONISTS PROMOTE CAPITALIST RESTORATION

Even though Chairman Mao had laid out these clear instructions for the socialist period, the Chinese revisionists continued to promote their line of capitalist restoration. In the years 1960 through 1962, China, following the economic successes of the late 1950s, met with temporary economic difficulties arising from three successive years of natural disasters and the scrapping of contracts and withdrawal of experts by the Soviet revisionists.

In the face of economic difficulties, Liu Shao-chi and his followers advocated that "industry should fall back to a sufficient degree and agriculture should do the same, including the fixing of farm output quotas on individual households with each on its own."⁸

This line was a line of national capitulation to imperialism. It called on China to bow down to the threats and bullying of the modern revisionists and to reverse the advances which she had made in transforming the system of ownership from private to collective and state forms.

It was at this point that Chairman Mao issued his call, "Never forget classes and class struggle" at the 10th Plenary Session of the Eighth Party Central Committee convened in 1962. At this meeting, Chairman

Mao further elaborated on the Party's basic line for the entire period of socialism:

"Socialist society covers a considerably long historical period. In the historical period of socialism there are still classes, class contradictions and class struggle, there is the struggle between the socialist road and the capitalist road, and there is the danger of capitalist restoration. We must recognize the protracted and complex nature of this struggle. We must heighten our vigilance. We must conduct socialist education. We must correctly understand and handle class contradictions and class struggle, distinguish the contradictions between ourselves and the enemy from those among the people and handle them correctly. Otherwise a socialist country like ours will turn into its opposite and degenerate, and a capitalist restoration will take place. From now on we must remind ourselves of this every year, every month and every day so that we can retain a rather sober understanding of this problem and have a Marxist-Leninist line."⁹

TIMELY GUIDANCE

These instructions by Chairman Mao summed up not only the existence of classes and class struggle under socialism, but also gave timely guidance on how the class struggle should be waged, emphasizing the need for mass socialist education. Chairman Mao pointed to the danger of capitalist restoration, an event that had already taken place in the formerly socialist Soviet Union, and called on the Chinese people to heighten their vigilance against the bourgeoisie's attempt to restore capitalism in China.

What is the basis for the continuing existence of classes under socialism? Where does the danger of capitalist restoration come from? The answers to these questions lie within the nature of the socialist system itself.

Talking about China, Chairman Mao recently pointed out, "Our country at present practises 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."¹⁰

Chairman Mao realized that the completion in the main of the socialist transformation of the ownership of the means of production in China did not mean that the system of ownership had as yet achieved the conversion of all the means of production into the common property of the whole society. In a socialist society like China, there still exists two kinds of socialist ownership—ownership by the whole people through the state and, on a smaller scale, collective ownership. This means that a socialist country must practice a commodity system, which reflects the remnants of capitalism that still remain in the economic base.

Under socialism, a protracted period of transition is necessary to bring the means of production entirely under the socialist ownership of the whole people. It is necessary to gradually narrow the differences between workers and peasants, town and country and mental and manual labor. In the course of this process, the discrepancies between the various wage grades must also be reduced. Until this process is entirely accomplished,

which essentially marks the abolition of classes and the achievement of communism, bourgeois right—Marx's term for these various inequalities—is bound to exist. Bourgeois right cannot be thoroughly abolished under socialism—only restricted. While the proletarian dictatorship must wage a constant struggle to do away with the remnants of capitalist society, this can only be done gradually and in accordance with the development of the means of production.

If the proletarian dictatorship does not restrict bourgeois right, it becomes possible for a small number of people, through the course of distribution and the process of exchange through money, to acquire large amounts of commodities and money, legally and illegally. This provides a material incentive for individuals to amass new fortune. It also provides a material base for the emergence of a new bourgeoisie who can link up with the old, overthrown ruling class and use its power and influence to attempt a complete overthrow of the proletarian dictatorship and bring about capitalist restoration.

The most dangerous effects of bourgeois right are felt within the communist party itself. Chairman Mao, referring to revisionists in the Party, pointed out:

"With the socialist revolution they themselves come under fire. At the time of the cooperative transformation of agriculture there were people in the Party who opposed it, and when it comes to criticizing bourgeois right, they resent it. 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."¹¹

BOURGEOIS RIGHT

Within the communist party, bourgeois right takes the form of high positions, bribes, bourgeois style of life, etc. It is possible for capitalist-roaders to sneak into the party, including the party's highest positions, and wield a large amount of power. In China, this process occurred with Liu Shao-chi, who was followed by Lin Piao and Teng Hsiao-ping. All of these capitalist-roaders wormed their way into the ranks of the party, advocating a policy of extending bourgeois right. Seizing power in various areas of the proletarian party and state, they had used them to promote a revisionist line and a bourgeois world outlook. Summing up this experience along with the rise to power of Khrushchev and the Soviet revisionists, Chairman Mao said, "The rise to power of revisionism means the rise to power of the bourgeoisie."¹²

The only way to prevent capitalist restoration was to target the promoters of capitalism within the party itself and expose their revisionist line. This could not be done successfully unless the masses of people were mobilized in very large numbers to defend and strengthen the proletarian dictatorship and the socialist system. Looking back on the period of the early 1960s, Chairman Mao pointed out:

"In the past we waged struggles in rural areas, in factories, in the cultural field, and we carried out the socialist education movement. But all this failed to solve the problem because we did not find a form, a method, to arouse the broad masses to expose our dark aspect openly, in an all-round way and from below."¹³

By summing up the years of struggle within China and the reversals in the Soviet Union, Chairman Mao found the form—the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. He saw that a socialist revolution on the economic front alone was not enough and could not be consolidated by itself. There had to be a thoroughgoing socialist revolution on the political, ideological and cultural fronts as well. The bourgeoisie had lost hold of most of the means of production, but it still had a superior force in the cultural and educational fields and was bound to make use of its strength to wage an offensive against the working class and ultimately to change the nature of socialist ownership in the economic base.

Chairman Mao personally initiated and led the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. On May 16, 1966, the CCP Central Committee, under Chairman Mao's direction, issued a circular which targeted the main enemy in the revolution as "the representatives of the bourgeoisie who have sneaked into the Party, the government, the army and various spheres of culture" and called on the masses of people to overthrow the "faithful lackeys of the bourgeoisie and the imperialists." The circular described the struggle in this way: "Their struggle against us is one of life and death, and there is no question of equality. Therefore, our struggle against them, too, can be nothing but a life-and-death struggle."¹⁴

THE GREAT PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION

With these directions, the tremendous class struggle of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution unfolded. It represented the direct mobilization of hundreds of millions of people in the fight to combat and prevent revisionism and strengthen the proletarian dictatorship. It was unprecedented in any previous mass movement by its thoroughness and broad character. In the course of this movement, the schemes of the bourgeois representatives within the CCP to restore capitalism in China were resolutely smashed and the portion of state and party leadership that the bourgeoisie had taken over was taken back. But its repercussions were much broader—this mass movement solved, in both theory and practice, the crucial question facing the contemporary international communist movement; how to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and prevent the restoration of capitalism.

In the course of the Cultural Revolution, Chairman Mao set forward the directive that, in building socialism, "class struggle is the key link." Out of the Cultural Revolution came new policies implemented throughout China that are aimed at restricting bourgeois right and creating the ideological and material conditions for a communist society.

Such policies can be seen in the "new socialist things," which include

the mass movement of educated youth into the countryside to engage in manual work and the policy of "open-door" education which admits a vast majority of workers, peasants and soldiers into the universities. "New socialist things" also include the May 7th Cadre Schools where party cadres engage in productive labor and renew their ties with the masses, workers' study circles in the factories, and the restrictions placed on wage differentials.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution exposed and repudiated the line of Liu Shao-chi and all revisionists whom Chairman Mao pointed out, "deny the differences between socialism and capitalism, between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie." During the course of the Cultural Revolution, Chairman Mao observed that "Never before in any mass movement have the masses been aroused so thoroughly and on so broad a scale." Through this mobilization, the masses of people received a profound education in Marxism-Leninism through the course of class struggle and came to the understanding, through their own experiences that "the correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political line decides everything." In this process, millions of revolutionary successors have been developed in China—staunch proletarian revolutionaries who are able to distinguish between Marxism and revisionism and are not afraid to "go against the tide" in opposing what is reactionary.

CONTINUES TODAY

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is being continued in China today. It is the concrete application of Chairman Mao's theory of continuing the class struggle under socialism. For the last year, the struggle has been aimed against the line of Teng Hsiao-ping, who advocated a reversal of the "correct verdicts" of the Cultural Revolution in an effort to restore capitalism. In recent months, the masses of Chinese people in every city, factory and commune have been mobilized to criticize Teng's revisionist line and study Marxism-Leninism.

Following Chairman Mao's death, a new capitalist restoration scheme was exposed in the form of the "gang of four." Trying to take advantage of Chairman Mao's death, this anti-party clique made a futile attempt to split the CCP and take power for themselves. This gang—Chiang Ching, Chang Chun-chiao, Wang Hung-wen and Yao Wen-yuan—was repudiated by the masses of Chinese people, who welcomed the gang's exposure and clearly saw through their "left" posture, revealing the rightist essence of their reactionary line.

The mass movements of the Cultural Revolution, which resulted in the overthrow of Liu Shao-chi's bourgeois party headquarters, Lin Piao's anti-party clique, Teng Hsiao-ping's Right Deviationist Wind and the "gang of four" constitute a tremendous body of experience for the international proletariat to learn from in making socialist revolution and consolidating the proletarian dictatorship. These mass movements, guided

by Mao Tsetung Thought, have answered in theory and practice, the question of how to combat capitalist restoration under socialism. The experiences of China and the summations of these experiences advanced by Chairman Mao, have revealed how the bourgeoisie was able to stage a comeback and a successful restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union.

Even though the U.S. proletariat has not yet seized state power and overthrown the rule of the bourgeoisie, there are immediate lessons that can be drawn for the U.S. communist movement. Chairman Mao's theory calling for "taking class struggle as the key link" serves to guide U.S. Marxist-Leninists in the struggle against revisionism in our own country and on an international scale. It has deepened the understanding of U.S. revolutionaries of how the Communist Party USA became a revisionist party and how to carry out two-line struggle within the new party now being built.

Chairman Mao's theory on continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat is a weapon in the hands of revolutionaries in every country in the world. His words "Never forget classes and class struggle" are applicable to revolutionary movements in every stage of development. As a result of Chairman Mao's leadership, the socialist system in China remains socialist today and is a living refutation that tears the mask from the Soviet revisionists' claim that the Soviet Union is today a "socialist" country.

FOOTNOTES

1. "Long Live Marxism-Leninism Mao Tsetung Thought." Speech at Sept. 18 Memorial Meeting in Peking.
2. *Report to the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the CCP*, Foreign Languages Press, 1968, p. 13.
3. *Peking Review*, No. 17, 1976, p. 14.
4. "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," *Selected Readings*, p. 375.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 351.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 352.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Peking Review*, No. 17, 1976, p. 15.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Peking Review*, No. 13, 1976, p. 8.
11. *Peking Review*, No. 11, 1976, p. 4.
12. *Report on the Revision of the Party Constitution Documents of the Tenth National Congress of the CCP*, Foreign Languages Press, p. 47.
13. *Peking Review*, No. 7, 1976, p. 5.
14. *Peking Review*, No. 21, 1976, p. 7-8.
15. *Selected Readings*, p. 401.



Chairman Mao making a speech, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," at the Eleventh Enlarged Meeting of the Supreme State Conference in 1957.