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**far
east**

Reporter

**MARXISM
AND THE
CULTURAL REVOLUTION
IN CHINA**

75¢

**A New Kind
of Revolution**

By *Dr.* Ruth Gamberg



"A People's Government"

**MARXISM
AND THE
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IN CHINA
A New Kind of Revolution**

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Far East Reporter note:

This is an essay that will help non-Marxists - and maybe some Marxists - understand China's ongoing cultural revolutions.

MARXISM AND THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION IN CHINA A New Kind of Revolution

By Ruth Gamberg

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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"Bombard the Headquarters!" It was with these words, issued on August 5 1966 by Mao Tsetung, Chairman of the Communist Party of China, that the Cultural Revolution, which up to this point had been more of a rumbling in the background, was placed fully in the centre of China's political and social life. Three days later, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party adopted guidelines concerning the Cultural Revolution. The document starts off in this way: "The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution now unfolding is a great revolution that touches people to their very souls and constitutes a new stage in the development of the socialist revolution in our country, a stage which is both broader and deeper."(1)

One is immediately struck by this unique way of launching a revolution. Revolutions have always been made by those who felt that their interests were being trampled upon by the existing government in power and who saw no way of achieving a meaningful voice in matters directly affecting them short of a major transformation of their society. Revolutions have always been and still are the last resort of the disinherited to gain access to the power they require in order to right the injustices they judge themselves victims of. In China this historical precedent was broken with the proclamations from Mao and the Party's Central Committee. Never before had the need for a revolution been articulated to the people by those in the highest reaches of power; never before had the guidelines for conducting a revolution been set forth by those in established leadership positions.

Why would the top levels of the Communist Party and the Government in China decide that such a revolution was necessary? What kind of leadership is it that invites the people to bombard its own headquarters? How can a revolution be considered successful, as the Chinese consider the Cultural Revolution to be, when for the most part, the essential features of the political and economic structures remain the same after the revolution? And what kind of revolution is a cultural revolution? The answers to these questions will provide us with the perspective necessary for an understanding of China today. Without them, any understanding would be superficial and partial because in the eyes of the Chinese the Cultural Revolution is indeed "a great revolution that touches people to their very souls" and as such constitutes "a stage which is both broader and deeper" in the development of the socialist revolution in China. While political and economic organization has not been fundamentally altered by the Cultural Revolution, this does not make it any less a revolution. But it does make it a new kind of revolution.

The Chinese for their part do not think that history develops willy-nilly, that anything can happen at any time under any circumstances, or that any explanation of events has as much merit as any other. Basing their judgment largely on their own historical experience, they - the great majority of the Chinese people and not just their leaders - appear to be in fundamental agreement that the vast body of economic, political, social and historical analysis known as Marxism-Leninism provides the tool for a scientific comprehension of the dynamics of societies as well as as the guide for action to bring about thoroughgoing social change.

Unfortunately, much of what has been written and said about China has either ignored or paid scant and often distorted attention to Marxist-Leninist concepts. Virtually all of the "China-watchers" of the recent past (who did their "watching" mainly from Hongkong) and many present-day observers of China rely on projecting their own theories of people and societies and their own ideology onto China. But such theories and ideologies are bred and nurtured in societies that promulgate completely different individual and collective objectives

and, therefore, have developed completely different values and ways of life from those of present-day China. That kind of ethnocentrism perhaps makes such writers and some readers feel more secure, but it does not help us understand the realities of Chinese existence. To even begin to understand the China of the Chinese people, it is necessary to discard imposed models, and to look, at least briefly, at a few of the central features of Marxist-Leninist theory - a theory which the people of China have accepted and on which they base their development and their destiny.

Class Struggle

The oft-quoted opening line of The Communist Manifesto remains the linch-pin of Chinese thought and political action.. "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles." To Marxists this is a fundamental and accurate summing up of all recorded history without which an understanding of the dynamics of societies and how they change cannot be grasped. Whether they look at slave societies, feudal societies, or capitalist societies, the main feature they see is the existence of classes.

While recognizing that the class structure in any society is always more complex, in its skeletal outline there are two main classes - be they slave and master, lord and serf, or capitalist and worker wherein the life patterns of the one are intrinsically linked to those of the other. But this linkage is always seen as an antagonistic one because the interests of the two stand in direct opposition; the interests of the one unavoidably clash with the interests of the other.

To capture the workings of this antagonistic relationship called class struggle, let us look at the capitalist system.

The description that follows is an oversimplification when applied to today's world because this is the period of imperialism, a period in which capitalism is no longer competitive in the same way it was in the

nineteenth century and in which it is no longer confined to national boundaries. The relationships, therefore, are much more complex. But the same essential features of class struggle still hold for present-day Marxists, and in this case, for the Chinese. It is these essential features that serve the purpose here of delineating and explaining how the Chinese analyze societies and change today.

In a capitalist economy there are, on the one side, the capitalists, those who own the means of production - factories, machines, raw materials, land, etc. However, the coal in a mine is of value only after miners dig it out and make it available for human use; the value of land is realized only after the farmers plant and harvest, other workers process it, and it is then made available for human consumption. On the other side stands the proletariat (the working class), those who by applying their labour to the means of production are essential for producing the goods required by all classes for their continued existence. A class then is defined by its relationship to the ownership and control of the means of production.

In the capitalist class system, the goal of the capitalist is to maximize profits. This is achieved by paying the least possible for what he buys and getting the most possible for what he sells. In other words, he maximizes his profits by minimizing his expenses. It is, therefore, in his best interests to pay the workers - those who give value to his holdings - as little as he possibly can. This is clearly in direct opposition to the interests of the workers who want to increase their ability to purchase those goods which they have produced. Because of the competitive nature of capitalism (even in its monopoly phase) the efforts of the capitalist class must be not merely to maintain but to continually increase the profits by holding down what it pays out to the working class by way of wages and benefits. This process of profit-making, which Marxists call exploitation, is independent of the will of any particular capitalist. A capitalist can be a "good guy", but if this inclination carries him to the point of refusing to exploit workers, or, to put it dif-

ferently, if he were to pay the workers the full value for the labour which they put into goods when they produce them, he would automatically eliminate his own profits and hence just as automatically cease to be a capitalist. The exploitative relationship of the capitalist class toward the working class then is an **intrinsic** feature of any capitalist or, for that matter, any class system.

Accordingly, the two classes are in constant and antagonistic opposition to each other; Marx and Engels called this opposition "class struggle". This is not to say that the struggle is always overt or violent. Sometimes it is, but often it is not. What this analysis does say is that by the very nature of their conflicting interests, each class is necessarily in a position where it must struggle, through a wide variety of means, for its own class interests and, therefore, against the interests of the class in opposition.

Since China was never a fully developed capitalist country, the alignment of forces in the class struggle differed somewhat from the simplified outline just given. A precise Marxist summation of class forces during the period preceding 1949 is provided by George Thomson.

At the beginning of the present century China was a semi-feudal, semi-colonial country in which the masses of the peasantry were exploited by the feudal landowners and by a number of colonial powers which had occupied the ports, seized control of the banks, and established a commercial network for plundering the country. In this they were supported by the rich merchants, money-lenders and financiers who constituted the big bourgeoisie--the comprador or bureaucratic capitalists. These two classes, the feudal landowners and the comprador bourgeoisie, formed the social base for imperialist oppression in China.

Between these two exploiting classes and the masses of the people stood the middle, or national, bourgeoisie. These were industrial

capitalists whose efforts to build native industries were frustrated by feudalism and imperialism. From that point of view they were inclined to side with the people, but at the same time they were themselves exploiters, afraid of the proletariat, and so they tended to vacillate.

The only consistently anti-feudal, anti-imperialist classes were the peasantry and the proletariat. The vast majority of the peasantry were poor peasants, that is, rural proletarians and semi-proletarians. The industrial proletariat was small, but after the First World War, and more after the October Revolution, it grew rapidly in strength. (2)

The Chinese talk about "the three big mountains" - feudalism, bureaucratic capitalism, and imperialism" - that weighed heavily on the workers and peasants and against which they waged their revolution. Given the semi-feudal, semi-colonial nature of the country at the time, and the existence of a vast, largely landless peasantry, the first demands they had to agitate for were national independence, land reform and basic democratic rights. This is considered the necessary first stage of a two-stage revolution and is called "New Democracy." It was not until the encroachments made by imperialist powers were neutralized, until the land that had always been monopolized by landlords was distributed to the peasants, and until the working people gained the democratic rights they had always been denied that the conditions for the next stage - socialist revolution - could be set.

The national bourgeoisie could be looked to for support of the new democratic revolution since their interests were also inhibited by the tremendous power of "the three big mountains". However, they would have to oppose the second stage because as capitalists, they had to make profit, which comes from only one source -

the exploitation of workers. In the era of advanced capitalism and imperialism, then, the proletariat, according to the Chinese is the only class capable of the consistent and tenacious leadership necessary for conducting either the new democratic or the socialist revolution.

For any country to have true national independence in the age of imperialism, the Chinese believe that it is impossible to stop after the democratic revolution. Since the underdeveloped countries are kept underdeveloped by the imperialist nature of advanced capitalism's relationship with them, only a complete rupture with capitalism will unleash the productive forces of their societies. Without an advance to socialism, the economic and political power of imperialism will be able to maintain control and keep such countries in continued subjection. Thus the socialist revolution is seen as absolutely essential.

The new democratic revolution was completed in a relatively short period of time. The class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the struggle against bourgeois capitalism and for proletarian socialism is the one that is currently being waged in China; this struggle is forecast to last for a long time -- until the disappearance of capitalism and imperialism the world over.

The State

Political power, according to Marxist theory, goes hand in hand with economic power. The possessing class, exactly because of its economic power, is able to organize and control the machinery of the state-- the executive and legislative bodies, courts, police, armies, etc. It naturally organizes this machinery in such a way as to protect its own interests. It will go to great lengths to maintain political control because only in this way can it safeguard its economic control. It is this analysis of the inner workings of the class struggle and the absolute requirement of the class in power to maintain its power if it is to survive that led Lenin to observe that no ruling class in history has

ever given up its power voluntarily.

As a leader of the exploited classes in China it was this same analysis that led Mao to say that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." (3) This statement has often been quoted in the West to "prove" that communism is no different from fascism and that the leader of the Chinese Revolution is no more than a bloodthirsty lunatic. What Mao is saying, however, is that those who hold economic power also hold political power, which means that they control the repressive instruments of the state apparatus -- the police and the armies. They can and do marshal these instruments when their class rule is threatened. Their political power, then, ultimately resides in the barrels of the guns at their command. This analysis corresponds to the realities of violence during China's centuries of feudal rule as well as to the imposed control by foreigners during the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century.

Mao's statement further means that in order for the exploited classes to effectively challenge the ruling class and bring about the changes necessary whereby they can fulfill their class interests, they must likewise ultimately resort to the use of force. This position is based on an acceptance of Marx's and Lenin's analysis that fundamental economic, political and social transformation is necessary if the exploited classes are to cease being exploited, and that the relationship between the classes will not change of its own accord. It means that the only way for the transformation to come about is through revolutionary means in which the exploited take up arms against the already armed exploiters. This is precisely what happened in the most organized fashion in China during the 1920's, 30's and 40's.

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat

Does the successful overthrow of pre-existing state power in 1949 mean that the class struggle no longer exists in China? It is in answer to this

question that the Chinese consider they have deepened their understanding of Marxism - Leninism and, in so doing, have begun to avoid what they see as the disastrous effects of the Russian experience.

The Chinese do not view their liberation as the final or ultimate event in the class struggle. They say that the class struggle will be over only when there are no more classes; that there still are classes in China as well as outside, and that, therefore, there is still class struggle in all countries, including their own. What they say has changed, however, is that a new class, the proletariat, is in power. This they see not as a substitution but as a qualitative change that makes a basic difference in the lives of all the people in all classes. It must be remembered that Marxist analysis contends that in order for any class which is in power to remain there, it has no choice but to suppress the interests of the opposing class or classes. This suppression, for Marxists, constitutes a dictatorship.

This should not be confused with the Western connotations of the word "dictatorship". We are accustomed to applying the term to those situations where the suppression of those not in power is conducted by those who are through the most extreme and blatant methods, as, for example, in the military regimes in Latin America and other overtly fascist regimes like the one in Spain. For Marxists, on the other hand, the term "dictatorship" does not refer to the severity of the methods employed by a ruling class; it refers instead to the fact of class power which has no choice than to suppress other classes - at one time, perhaps gently, at another violently; at one time covertly, at another time overtly - but which, regardless of the intensity or means of suppression at any particular moment, remains suppression nonetheless.

In China before 1949, there was, say the Chinese, a dictatorship by the two classes, the feudal landlords and the comprador bourgeoisie which in alliance with foreign capitalists, shared power. Today there is

a dictatorship of the proletariat. The earlier dictatorship of the landlords and bourgeoisie suppressed the great majority so as to serve the interests of the two very small allied and privileged classes. The present dictatorship of the proletariat does just the opposite. This is one major difference, a difference which at first glance may appear to be merely quantitative. But even in terms of the sheer numbers involved, it is bound to have qualitative ramifications.

A second difference lies in the ownership of the means of production. Whereas previously they were privately owned by the small ruling classes, now under the dictatorship of the proletariat they have become collectively owned. Thus, though all injustices and inequalities cannot be eradicated immediately during the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the major injustices of the past, "the exploitation of man by man will have become impossible" (4) (emphasis in the original) because no individual can any longer profit by exploiting the labor of others.

Equally as significant when considering any qualitative change from the old dictatorship to that of the proletariat is that the class struggle under the dictatorship of the proletariat aims at the eventual proletarianization of all, so that at some future time all people will have the same economic and hence social-political interests. At that time, but not before class struggle will end, because if there is only one class, there are, in effect, no classes. Marxism claims that for the proletariat, the final victory of its class rule will be in the elimination of all classes, whereas there can be no final victory for the dictatorship of the exploiting classes; their objective is only to retain their class power as long as possible, a power which will inevitably, by the nature of the class struggle, be eventually challenged and overthrown by those who are exploited.

The final victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat, then, is classlessness, or in other words, communism. Many people outside of China characterize

the country as a "communist state" - which the Chinese dismiss as an absurdity because as Marxists they contend that this is a contradiction in terms. Once communism is achieved, they maintain, there will be no further need for any repressive apparatus - (a state), since there will be no classes to suppress. Once all people have common economic, political and social interests the machinery for repression, the state, as well as all dictatorships will wither away, Three months before the Communist Party came to power, Mao wrote:

Like a man, a political party has its childhood, youth, manhood and old age. The Communist Party of China is no longer a child or a lad in his teens but has become an adult. When a man reaches old age, he will die; the same is true of a party. When classes disappear, all instruments of class struggle---parties and the state machinery---will lose their function, cease to be necessary, therefore gradually wither away and end their historical mission; and human society will move to a higher stage. We are the opposite of the parties of the bourgeoisie. They are afraid to speak of the extinction of classes, state power and parties. We, on the contrary, declare openly that we are striving hard to create the very conditions which will bring about their extinction. (5)

Thus, consistent with the Marxist view, the Chinese see their country as a **socialist** state. This state is a dictatorship of the proletariat under the leadership of the Communist Party. While the eventual goal is to do away with the state - and therefore also all dictatorships including that of the proletariat and all parties including the Communist Party - socialism is defined as a necessary transitional stage in the long historical development toward communism; It is perceived as a process. It is this process and the ideological and economic development effectuating it that the Chinese are referring to when they talk, as they often do, about "socialist revolution and socialist construction."

The Role of the Communist Party

From the vantage point of the West, it often appears that it is Mao, not the proletariat, who is in power. But the prevailing view in China is very different. To the Chinese, Mao is the man most responsible for interpreting Marxist theory and past practices relative to conditions in their country. Using Marxist analysis, he took the lead as early as the 20's in setting guidelines for making a socialist revolution in China, and has uninterruptedly continued to do so up to the present, the guidelines now indicating the direction for continuing socialist construction. The people of China fully believe that they owe their liberation to the clarity with which these guidelines were formulated and the meticulousness with which they were applied.

The Western "cult of personality" interpretation which sees Mao as a near-religious symbol likewise does not correspond with the view held by the Chinese themselves. Their perception of Mao includes both personal and impersonal elements, with increasing emphasis put on the latter. Since Mao's ideas and concrete actions have consistently proved their validity to the Chinese, it is natural that he is respected and admired for all that he has done and for all that he represents. It is significant that the Chinese study his writings and refer so frequently to the thoughts of Mao. On a more personal level he is respected for his remarkable leadership abilities in practice as well as theory, these leadership abilities involving not only a penetrating grasp of strategy and tactics but also personal qualities of humility and selflessness.

Mao, however, is not seen as a solitary figure, but rather as a leader of the Communist Party. The role of the Party is that of the vanguard of the proletariat. Ideologically, Party members are expected to be highly conscious of social, economic and political matters and to apply that consciousness to furthering proletarian interests; personally, they are expected to be exemplary in their attitudes and behav-

iors. Leadership geared to the furthering of self-interests rather than the interests of the masses is not to be countenanced.

At no time and in no circumstances should a Communist place his personal interests first; he should subordinate them to the interests of the nation and of the masses. Hence, selfishness, slacking, corruption, seeking the limelight, and so on, are most contemptible, while selflessness, working with all one's energy, whole-hearted devotion to public duty, and quiet hard work will command respect. (6)

As a vanguard, the Party is expected to lead the proletariat in all struggles. Mao has stressed repeatedly that the Party must be at the forefront of the masses yet always integrated with them. "We Communists are like seeds and the people like the soil. Where-ever we go we must unite with the people, and take root and blossom among them." (7)

The supreme test of the words and deeds of a Communist is whether they conform with the highest interests and enjoy the support of the overwhelming majority of the people. Every Comrade must be helped to understand that as long as we rely on the people, believe firmly in the inexhaustible creative power of the masses and hence trust and identify ourselves with them, no enemy can crush us while we can crush every enemy and overcome every difficulty. (8)

There are two dangers Mao cautions Party members against - commandism and tailism. Commandism is the tendency for leadership to separate itself from the people and thus either to look down on them or to overestimate their consciousness of their condition at any particular time. These mistakes result in the arrogant issuing of commands which do not conform to the realities of people's needs. The opposite danger for Communist Party members, tailism, is the tendency to fear the taking of initiative and bold action therefore to fail to lead the masses but

instead, "to trail behind them, gesticulating and criticising." (9)

The proper relationship of the leaders to the led is referred to in China as "the mass line" which rests on the principle "from the masses, to the masses."

In all the practical work of our Party, all correct leadership is necessarily "from the masses, to the masses". This means: take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas); then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action. Then once again concentrate ideas from the masses and once again go to the masses so that the ideas are persevered in and carried through. And so on, over and over again in an endless spiral, with the ideas becoming more correct, more vital and richer each time. (10)

Underlying the mass line is the rejection of the view prevalent in the West (though not exclusively in the West) that it is individual leaders who make history. Good leadership is seen as a necessary but by itself insufficient component of social change. The Chinese hold the conviction that all real social transformation can come about only through the efforts of the masses. Reiterating the position earlier propounded by Lenin, Mao has asserted that "The people, and the people alone, are the motive force in the making of world history." (11)

It is in class terms, then, that the Chinese see leadership. Individuals, they maintain, always identify with one or another class. Therefore, when any individual under any class system is in a position of power, that person represents the interests of the class with which he identifies. Applying this

analysis to conditions in China, the Chinese say that Mao and the Communist Party identify with and hence represent the interests of the proletariat. They therefore wield state power on behalf of that class, this state power constituting a dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Class Struggle in Ideology

But, it may be objected, if the proletariat - in China, the workers and peasants - are numerically so preponderant, as in fact they are, why must they exercise a dictatorship of any kind? Won't the small classes of landowners and capitalists simply by force of the example of the proletariat (who after all are non-exclusive in that they want eventually to include everyone in their ranks) and by the sheer passage of time - won't they die a natural death? To this, Marxists would answer that socialism presents a society "not as it has developed on its own foundations, but on the contrary, as it emerges from capitalist society; which is thus, in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges." (12) (emphasis in original)

In China the economic base, or infrastructure, has seen quite a rapid transformation. It has been almost completely transferred out of the hands of the former ruling classes. That is, the means of production are no longer privately owned. All major enterprises are owned either by the state or communally. Communal ownership, as typified by the large and diversified communes throughout the countryside, refers to ownership by those directly involved in the day to day operation of them. A commune, owned in common by its members, often numbers several tens of thousands. A higher form of ownership is ownership by the state. This is considered more advanced because the means of production are in the hands of the entire proletariat as a class and not just as a section of the proletariat as in the case of communal ownership. But both of these forms are seen as advancements over prior ownership arrangements because the means of production are owned

by those who work them rather than by the former exploiting classes. This therefore constitutes a major stride in the direction of the total public ownership of all the means of production which will characterize the future classless society.

The initial success of a socialist revolution means that the economic and political power has been seized from the hands of the former ruling classes by the exploited classes. This can happen, as it did in China, in a relatively short period of time. Old ideas, attitudes and behaviours, on the other hand, take much longer to transform. While this is especially true of the over-thrown classes, it is also, although to a lesser extent, true of the proletariat itself. Mao has expressed the Marxist view that no one is above class ideology: "In class society every one lives as a member of a particular class; and every kind of thinking without exception is stamped with the brand of a class." (13) Since all the people in the new society have been part of the old society and therefore largely molded by it, the remnants of the old cannot possibly die quickly, easily or automatically.

Marxists have repeatedly asserted that the classes which have been unseated do not take kindly to the new state of affairs. Although they no longer have control over a repressive state apparatus, their struggle to regain power will be even more energetic than was their earlier struggle to maintain it. They will use any and all possible means at their disposal because as a class it is a life and death struggle. If their class power dies once and for all, so die their privileged positions. "Because they have been defeated, the energy of their resistance has increased a hundred and a thousandfold." (14) So seizing power is not enough according to the Chinese; it must be consolidated and held securely as well. The consolidation of a socialist system cannot simply involve a proletariat resting on the achievements of its newly established power; it cannot mean that the class struggle is over. Rather, say the Chinese, socialism can only be sustained by a newer and more conscious struggle

against older exploiting ideologies; and in the process, the hitherto unchartered course of the society of the future will become clearer and more solidified.

Clearly, the ex-ruling class, especially in its ideological manifestations, is the biggest problem for the new dictatorship and, Marxists would add, the proletariat must discover and combat such manifestations. Only thus can the proletariat transform its own habits of thought and conduct as well, for they too are "stamped with the birthmarks of the old society." (15) If "the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas" (15) as Mao asserted, how then could they be expected to remain untouched by the ideology of the old ruling class?

The Chinese maintain that the transformation of ideas cannot be achieved quickly.

It will take a fairly long period of time to decide the issue in the ideological struggle between socialism and capitalism in our country. The reason is that the influence of the bourgeoisie and of the intellectuals who come from the old society will remain in our country for a long time to come, and so will their class ideology. If this is not sufficiently understood, or is not understood at all, the gravest mistakes will be made and the necessity of waging the struggle in the ideological field will be ignored. (16)

Moreover, the economic conditions of a socialist society in transition also generate inequalities which become breeding grounds for the reinforcement of bourgeois ideology. Such inequalities are unavoidable because socialism must still pay wages partly in terms of labor performed rather than in terms of need alone (as will occur under communism). Thus, while socialism does away with the gross forms of exploitation that exist in capitalist society, it cannot provide immediate and full equality. In still developing countries like China where the overall technical backwardness of the economy makes the transitional period especially long

and hard, it is inevitable that the potential new bourgeoisie will join forces with the older ex-ruling classes to create formidable resistance to the successful development of the new proletarian ideology.

Once the former exploiting dictatorship has been overthrown, the conduct of the class struggle therefore begins to exhibit more distinctly ideological features. This ideological struggle requires an emphasis on education and persuasion which should have definite targets and should be conducted in a reasoned and careful manner.

All erroneous ideas, all poisonous weeds, all ghosts and monsters, must be subjected to criticism; in no circumstance should they be allowed to spread unchecked. However, the criticism should be fully reasoned, analytical and convincing, and not rough, bureaucratic, metaphysical or dogmatic. (19)

The Cultural Revolution in Theory

Class struggle of this type and in these forms has been going on in China since the beginnings of the revolutionary struggle in the countryside and, more especially, since the rectification campaigns within the Chinese Communist Party in the early 40's. The Cultural Revolution must be seen as the continuation of that same class struggle. So, with these new basic Marxist theories of the nature of class struggle in mind, we can now return to the questions raised earlier about the Cultural Revolution.

First, what kind of a revolution is a cultural revolution? A professor at Peking University provided part of the answer when he said that it was necessary "to transform the superstructure and criticize bourgeois ideology." No political or economic revolution can be secure without a corresponding revolution in the super-

structure, that is, in those institutions which influence and shape the way people think. While political and economic power was in the hands of the proletariat in China in the mid-60's, the ideology of the old exploiting classes, although it had been struggled against, was by no means dead. To the contrary, it was gaining strength to the point of threatening in very fundamental ways both the political and economic power of the proletariat. The people of China are convinced that if this process had been allowed to continue unchallenged -- if, in other words, there had been no Cultural Revolution -- the dictatorship of the proletariat would have been eroded to the point where eventually a privileged class would have emerged victorious.

Revisionism

The return of a privileged class to power is precisely the basis of China's rejection of the direction of development in the Soviet Union, which the Chinese sum up in the term "revisionism." Revisionism is the process of revising socialism politically, economically and ideologically, resulting in the restoration of capitalism while still proclaiming to uphold socialist principles. According to the Chinese, political power in the Soviet Union is no longer in the hands of the proletariat but has been usurped by a new privileged elite which uses its power to serve its own interests, not those of the working class. Since there is no real dictatorship of the proletariat, the means of production may be nominally in the hands of the working class, but the new ruling class in practice controls economic power as well. This new elite has also succeeded in propagating an ideology designed to consolidate its power. Therefore, the Chinese judge that the Soviet Union in all significant respects---politically, economically and ideologically---has moved so rapidly away from socialism and toward capitalism that, in effect, there has been a restoration of capitalism.

It became clear to Mao and others that this same process was developing and gaining a firm foothold in China. The deposed exploiting classes of the recent

past were winning ground in the class struggle. This was possible because their methods were subtle and covert. Since for the vast majority of the Chinese people socialism has meant an incalculable improvement in their standard of living and a political voice for the first time in their long history, the opposing classes could obviously not declare open war on the dictatorship of the proletariat. As one student put it, "They wanted to do things harmful to the people's interests, but they knew the people would suppress them. So they didn't do things openly, in the sun; they did them secretly, in the shadows." Only by concealing their real objectives behind the guise of support for that dictatorship could they conduct activities aimed at destroying it. "They waved the red flag to oppose the red flag."

By such techniques, the revisionist forces had fooled many people. Their success in influencing the ideological outlooks of the people was making rapid inroads into proletarian power. It was the revolutionary forces, therefore, which adopted the strategy of "declaring war."

What was at stake was not which individuals, but rather which class would hold power.

This meant that proletarian ideology had to develop to the level where the workers and peasants would see more clearly and more profoundly what their own best interests were and not be taken in by revisionism which claimed to serve their interests but which, the Chinese say, was doing just the opposite.

The specific components of what comprises proletarian ideology in China as opposed to revisionist or bourgeois ideology are highly ramified as they affect all concrete spheres of institutional life. For the moment, however, the statement of a young peasant from Sian should suffice. "We see the bourgeois way of life as teaching people always to think only of themselves, not of others. Every day in China we encourage each other to serve the people, to do more for society, to build our country and to do more for the whole of mankind. When someone meets with difficul-

ties we will try our best to help him overcome them, to do better. There is a saying: "To do more for the people is happiness."

It is this way of thinking which the Chinese call proletarian ideology. And it was only by deepening such basic ideas as "serving the people" in the minds and actions of hundreds of millions that revisionist ideology could be effectively undermined. Nothing short of a revolution was the strategy selected to accomplish this gigantic task. Everyone in China was mobilized for this massive campaign of learning through the direct experience of class struggle and changing themselves and others accordingly.

What The China-Watchers Said

Before proceeding into how the Chinese perceived that they would conduct the Cultural Revolution, it might be useful to recall the interpretations advanced by many HongKong-based "China-Watchers" of the day. Since other views were not readily published during the mid-and-late 60's, their interpretations took on a tremendous aura of credibility, some of which remains with us today.

Headlines in the popular media (19) blared out an incessant barrage proclaiming "Nightmare Across The Land," "The Red Guards: Today, China; Tomorrow, The World." "Dance of the Scorpion." "Muzzling the Dragons," "The Edge of Chaos," "Lurid Tales From Canton." "An Act of Barbarism," "More Violent Than Imagined," ad infinitum.

The occasional admission that "reliable eyewitnesses are scarcer than dragon's teeth, and, unaccountably, no one has come out of China with a single picture documenting the mass scenes of violence bodies hanging from trees and tanks firing in the streets." (emphasis added) at times led reporters to the logical conclusion that "the news that filters out of Red China is conflicting, fragmentary and often outrageously exaggerated." Strangely enough, however, we just as

often we were told the opposite - that "Hongkong's China-Watchers....tend to keep their conclusions conservative," and that "they have seriously started re-examining whether, in their efforts to report the situation accurately, they have not underestimated the extent of violence and bloodshed in Mao's China." Here follow some typical examples of "underestimation."

"For the hapless Chinese people caught in Mao Tsetung's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, there was no sign of relief from the political convulsions...." The Cultural Revolution was "destructive nonsense," which, we were repeatedly told, was characterized by "unbridled fury and frenzy," "hysteria," "contortions," "indiscriminate beatings," "sharp and bloody clashes" wherein "reason dissipated itself in the mad mobs and....there seemed to be no pattern to the shouted slogans, no rhythm to the dialectical drums," and in which "lawlessness and violence flare each week from Manchuria in the north to the Vietnamese border in the south."

"Mao's mobs," the Red Guards, were "the chosen shock troops of Mao's purge," imbued with "Mao-think." These "teen-age, slogan drunk students (were) turned loose upon the land by Mao Tsetung to spearhead his fanatical Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," "chanting the litany of Mao Tsetung's narrow road to Socialist salvation," "beating drums and gongs and waving their talismanic little red books of Mao..... surging in frenzied rhythm through the streets," "running riot" on "weird rampages," "breaking windows and heads."

Mao Tsetung, "the Red Emperor of China," leader of "a nation more harangued than governed," which without doubt is pathologically concerned about the state of its revolution" - for this man about whom there were "unconfirmed reports" that he "was suffering from throat cancer....the Red Guard-led purge was the last gasp of a dying dictator." True to Time's conception of the nature of a dictator, he was characterized by "inflexibility. The puritanism and self-hypnosis that were born on the Long March and nurtured in the caves of

Yenan have become an obsession. "When the 'Maoist magic' failed, he and his fanatical followers' (became) alienated not only from significant elements of the army but from sizable numbers of the Chinese people, just as they were from the rest of the world."

The media even treated us to some insights into the character of Mao's wife, Chiang Ching, the "vindictive Dragon Lady out for personal revenge, and a frustrated starlet seeking the limelight," who "in the rampaging heyday of the Red Guards (was) their chief cheer-leader, den mother and Joan of Arc."

These are just samples of what passed for information and analysis of the Cultural Revolution. Little wonder that the mere mention of the Cultural Revolution still conjures up vivid impressions of horror and disgust. But perhaps the demon and monster image can best be exorcised by looking to what the Chinese say about the Cultural Revolution.

What The Chinese Said

From the Chinese statements it becomes evident that a sharp distinction was drawn by Mao and his followers between those leading the revisionist forces and those being led, or, as the Chinese perceive it--being misled by them. Great emphasis was put on distinguishing between friends and enemies. Point 5 of the sixteen-point programme of the Cultural Revolution states:

The main target of the present movement is those within the Party who are in authority and are taking the capitalist road. The strictest care should be taken to distinguish between the anti-Party, anti-socialist Rightists and those who support the Party and socialism but have said or done something wrong. The strictest care should be taken to distinguish between the reactionary bourgeois scholar despots and 'authorities' on the one hand and people who have ordinary bourgeois academic ideas on the other. (20) (emphasis added)

This makes clear, contrary to reports at the time, that the Cultural Revolution was not launched against anyone and everyone. There was no randomness about it; the enemies were clearly defined. And the leaders of the enemy forces held very high positions in the Party and in the government - which explains why Mao issued the call to "Bombard the Headquarters!" "Bombard" of course is figurative. What Mao was telling the proletariat was that only by searching the highest levels would they find the leaders of the counter-revolution. It is this small group of leaders of the counter-revolution - those who oppose socialism and want to restore capitalism - that the Chinese refer to as "class-enemies."

Once these "enemies" were found, did the leaders of the revolutionary camp urge indiscriminate violence?

The anti-Party, anti-socialist Rightists must be fully exposed, refuted, overthrown and completely discredited and their influence eliminated. At the same time, they should be given a chance to turn over a new leaf. (21)

Were "mobs" of "teen-age, slogan-drunk" shock troops designated to wage this revolution?

The masses of the workers, peasants, soldiers, revolutionary intellectuals and revolutionary cadres form the main force in the great cultural revolution. (22)

Were they to apply "Mao-think"?

In the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution the only method is for the masses to liberate themselves and any method of doing things in their stead must not be used. Trust the masses, rely on them and respect their initiative....Let the masses educate themselves in this great revolutionary movement and learn to distinguish between right and wrong and between correct and incorrect ways of doing things. Make the fullest use of big-character posters and great debates to argue matters

out, so that the masses can clarify the correct views, criticise the wrong views....(23) (emphasis added)

Were these big-character posters* and debates simply a clever ruse designed to give the appearance of democratic participation while in reality serving the purpose of forcing blind conformity - as the media here indicated?

It is normal for the masses to hold different views. Contention between different views is unavoidable, necessary and beneficial. In the course of normal and full debate, the masses will affirm what is right, correct what is wrong and gradually reach unanimity.

The method to be used in debate is to present the facts, reason things out, and persuade through reasoning. Any method of forcing a minority holding different views to submit is impermissible. The minority should be protected, because sometimes the truth is with the minority. Even if the minority is wrong they should still be allowed to argue their case and reserve their views.

When there is a debate, it should be conducted by reasoning, not by coercion or force.

In the course of debate, every revolutionary should be good at thinking things out for himself and should develop the communist spirit of daring to think, daring to speak, and daring to act. (24) (emphasis added)'

*A big-character poster is a sign or essay that anyone can write and hang up in public places, usually on walls on the streets. It provides a channel for the expression of opinion and was widely used during the Cultural Revolution.

On the very same day that Time was telling its readers that "Mao is attempting...through the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" the same tactics used for flagging revolutions of the past - the tactics of "successive waves of terror" and "purges and mass hysteria," (25) Peking Review was reporting the Central Committee's decision to its readers: "Comrade Mao Tse-tung has repeatedly told us that...in carrying out this great revolution, the struggle should be conducted by reasoning and not by coercion or force." (26)

Unity As An Objective

The Chinese are aiming for unity of thought and action on those central issues that will define the direction in which they move - socialism or capitalism. Through Time magazine and the like we have been given the definite impression that China is a country where "thought control" reigns supreme, where no one makes a move without Mao's say so. As the above quotations make abundantly clear, however, the people are expected to rely on themselves, use their initiative, and through full debate gradually reach agreement among themselves on the questions of basic importance: "On the premise that they have the same general orientation, revolutionary comrades should, for the sake of strengthening unity, avoid endless debate over side issues." (27)

Why, though, so much emphasis on concensus and unity? As in any socialist society, in China the dictatorship of the proletariat is constantly being challenged by the old exploiting classes. They always present the threat of restoring the former dictatorship or a new one equally as exploitative and repressive of the proletariat's interests. Only by agreement among the proletariat as to what their essential interests are and how to best pursue them can the proletariat successfully combat the efforts of the exploiting classes and build a society to serve their own interests.

It is simply a matter of strategy. No army could be successful if each soldier on the battlefield made

a decision by himself as to who was the enemy, how to best wage the battle, and then went his own way with his own tactical plan. In the same sense say the Chinese leaders; the on-going class struggle in China - of which the Cultural Revolution is just a high point - requires that the masses of the people, the proletariat and the increasingly proletarianized peasantry be able to identify the enemy, recognize his plans of attack, and act as a unit against him. There are two differences in this analogy between war as we generally define it and the class struggle as waged in China during the Cultural Revolution. First, the battles in the Cultural Revolution did not aim at the physical elimination of the enemy. Second, while there were people who rose to leadership positions at all levels and in all arenas of the struggle, their leadership did not consist of issuing orders for underlings to obey regardless of the extent of understanding or agreement. Unity was to be reached through discussion.

Genuine unity is seen as achievable only through genuine agreement. And unity is seen as essential in China for the successful consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Regardless of the "battlefield" - whether a school, a factory, a commune, a hospital - in China one frequently sees signs which remind the people to "unite to win still greater victories." The "victories" are measured by gains in developing socialist ideology and socialist practice.

The following passage from the Central Committee's sixteen-point programme provides summatory answers to why the Cultural Revolution was deemed necessary, what it was designed to accomplish, and who were the targets.

Although the bourgeoisie has been overthrown, it is still trying to use the old ideas, culture, customs and habits of the exploiting classes to corrupt the masses, capture their minds and endeavor to stage a come-back. The proletariat must do the exact opposite: it must meet head-on every challenge of the

bourgeoisie in the ideological field and use the new ideas, culture, customs and habits of the proletariat to change the mental outlook of the whole of society; at present, our objective is to struggle against and overthrow those persons in authority who are taking the capitalist road, to criticise and repudiate the reactionary bourgeois academic 'authorities' and the ideology of the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes and to transform education, literature and art and all other parts of the superstructure not in correspondence with the socialist economic base, so as to facilitate the consolidation and development of the socialist system. (28)

The Cultural Revolution in Practice

It may be acknowledged that these were the guidelines, but the further question arises - how was the Cultural Revolution conducted in practice? All indications I received were that the guidelines did in fact constitute the characteristic features of the Cultural Revolution. In response to questions about the extent of violence, a young factory worker from Shanghai who is presently studying English in Canada and who actively participated in the Cultural Revolution as a Red Guard stressed that "it was a revolution by mouth not by force; by words, not by guns. The Cultural Revolution was a very big movement throughout the country in which millions of people took part. We went to different parts of the country, to many cities and communes. Through these visits we learned much about the country and the people. We discussed all kinds of problems and wrote big-character posters. We debated with each other. You know, there are different opinions among people on everything. I think everything has two sides; so if you want to solve a problem, you must have a discussion; there must be a debate; this is unavoidable.

"Chairman Mao once said to the Red Guards: You must be concerned about the country's affairs; you must fight selfishness and criticise revisionism.' This is what inspired us and this is what we did in the Cultural Revolution. I never saw any violence, but I did hear that there was some. Most people tried to heed Chairman Mao's words. There were a few people, however who grasped the chance to do bad things. They were opposed to socialism. They were the class enemies of the people. Because all the country took part in the movement and everyone was very busy, they thought that would be a good time to cause trouble. But their tricks were usually discovered by the people before long and they were prevented from doing much damage."

In order for Westerners to correct distorted images of China inherited from the past (and to a lesser extent still being perpetuated) it must be reiterated that by "preventing class enemies from doing damage" the Chinese do not mean doing violence to them. In fact, as the Shanghai worker indicated, **criticism of revisionism, discussion, debate** - these were the weapons in the arsenal of the revolutionary camp. In discussing this question, the Chinese consistently assert that those who followed Mao's line carried out the slogan "Use persuasion, not violence," and that whatever violence there was was **instigated** by the advocates of revisionism. They never claim, however, that everyone who participated in violence was revisionist. This view maintains that some good revolutionaries were, for a time, duped by the revisionists into committing violence against fellow revolutionaries, but that they eventually saw their mistake and united with the revolutionary forces.

Restraint in the use of violence against the top leaders of the revisionist forces appears to have been quite remarkable. Successful bombardment of the headquarters uncovered Liu Shao-chi who, up to then, was President of the Republic. In China he is seen as the main leader of the anti-socialist forces, the chief advocate of revisionism.* "When the masses confronted him with his crimes against the people," said a worker

* see next page for this note

from Canton, "He refused to recognize his mistakes and would not change." His counterrevolutionary activities were traced back to the 1920's and his punishment was agreed upon. In 1969 it was decided "to dismiss Liu Shao-chi from all posts both inside and outside the Party and to expel him from the Party once and for all." (29) Even he, who is considered the archenemy of the revolution, is allowed to live out his years but is barred from any engagement in politics.

In other instances there was even more leniency. The case of Teng Hsiao-ping demonstrated the success of applying the guideline that "anti-socialist Rightists.. should be given a chance to turn over a new leaf." The ex-Red Guard factory worker from Shanghai related that "Teng Hsiao-ping, who was the General Secretary of the Party's Central Committee, was the close running-dog of Liu Shao-chi. In China we called him the number two capitalist-roader.** Through mass criticism he recognized mistakes, wanted to reform, to become a good man. He didn't betray the revolution. He didn't surrender

* from preceding page

Later developments in the Cultural Revolution have led to the unmasking of Lin Piao as another example of revisionist ideology. Often appearing "more left than anyone else," this more sectarian form of ideologizing is commonly found in all great political movements. The Chinese consider that those who openly retard the revolutionary process and those who appear to be speeding it up with "ultrarevolutionary phrasemongering" can both be seen as representatives of revisionist ideology. One or the other presents itself as more or less dangerous at different periods in the revolutionary process.

** Capitalist-roader refers to a person taking the capitalist road rather than the socialist road.

to the enemy in the old days. He did many things beneficial to the people during the Anti-Japanese War and the People's Liberation. But after Liberation, as a result of not studying Marxism-Leninism seriously, he did not understand the class struggle and didn't see through the revisionist line. So he followed Liu Shao-chi closely. But we must judge people by their whole history to distinguish between friends and enemies. What we say is that although Teng Hsiao-ping committed many crimes, he has recognized his mistakes and he is not an enemy. He is still Vice Premier of the State Council and a member of the Central Committee of the Party."

Since many observers date the start of the Cultural Revolution with the appearance of the first big-character poster at Peking University in May 1966 and since much of the activity during the Cultural Revolution emanated from educational institutions, the full interview on the subject with the professor quoted earlier - a professor at Peking University since the start of the Cultural Revolution - might shed more light on the course this Revolution took.

"What happened at Peking University during the Cultural Revolution?"

"Because of the advocacy of the Liu Shao-chi revisionist line, class struggle at the University was very strong. We saw that we would have to transform the superstructure and criticize bourgeois ideology. Following the call of the Party, our school had big-character posters. They were published in newspapers and broadcast on radio. Nearly all the teachers and students were active in exposing the revisionist line. The old administration and Party Committee (of the University) couldn't play the same role. In its place we set up a new organization, a Cultural Revolution Committee elected by the masses.*

"This Committee included students, teachers and workers at the University. In the early stages of this committee it led the revolutionary masses; it organized

* see note on next page.

Red Guards to go everywhere throughout the country; but because those in power still had capitalist ideas, they could not, as Chairman Mao says, 'divide themselves into two'. So they couldn't absorb the criticism of the masses.

"Many factions developed which then coalesced into two. In this case, the two factions were called 'New Peking University Commune Red Guards' and 'Ching Kang Mountain Troop'. (That was a revolutionary base in the 1930's.) The leaders of these two factions gradually became divorced from the masses. The orientation, however, was really the same for both; each faction thought of themselves as revolutionary and the other as reactionary. They called each other 'Kuomintang'.** They didn't see their own bourgeois ideas."

*From previous page

The term "masses" in China can refer to the people of a particular unit, in this case, Peking University. Or it can refer to all the ordinary people. The latter is sometimes expressed by the term "broad masses."

** The Kuomintang was the Nationalist Party, which succeeded in overthrowing the last Dynasty of China and establishing a republic in 1911. It was led by Dr Sun Yat-sen. The Chinese still consider him as a progressive nationalist. Under his leadership the Kuomintang formed an alliance with the Communist Party in 1923, but he died soon after and the leadership of the Party went to Chiang Kai-shek. Under Chiang, the Kuomintang changed its progressive character and became the deadly enemy of the Communist Party. After two civil wars between them which were interrupted from 1939 to 1945 when they formed a shaky alliance against the Japanese invaders, the Communists finally defeated the Kuomintang in 1949 and established The People's Republic of China. The Kuomintang fled to the Chinese island of Taiwan and proclaimed it the seat of government for what they call The Republic of China. For a long while, both regimes claimed to be the sole legitimate government of all of China, but more recently this situation has dramatically changed in favor of the government of the People's Republic in Peking.

"How did the forces line up?" I asked. "Almost all of the students were involved and they were equally divided. Some faculty joined, some vacillated between which faction was more popular at any particular time."

"Did they engage in violence?" "The struggle was very complicated. The young students had revolutionary enthusiasm but lacked the experience of class struggle. So they were easily deceived by bad elements which stirred up dissention. Each faction always thought of themselves as completely right and the others as completely wrong. They attacked each other and called each other names. At first the attacks were only oral. Later they became physical. The reason for the fighting was that the bad elements convinced the students that that was the only way to be a true revolutionary. They said, 'Get ready to fight because they will fight you.'"

"How widespread was the fighting?" "Those who participated in the fighting were very few in number. Most disagreed with this method and urged for discussion. Out of approximately 10,000 students, 2000 teachers and several thousand workers, only one to two hundred took part in any fighting - about one percent."

"How was it resolved?" "After Chairman Mao issued the call for the working class to give leadership to everything, the workers' teams entered the University. They did much to solve these questions. Through patient discussion and persuasion they made it clear that the two factions had the same orientation. Both of them were basically revolutionary, and both of them were making the same errors. Therefore, they must each criticize themselves first. Under the influence of the workers, the students did self-criticisms and returned to class. They 'made revolution in their classes

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"Making revolution in the classroom" was a wide-spread phenomenon at this point in the Cultural Revolution as it is still today in China. It refers to criticizing and revolutionizing the methods and objectives of the educational system.

Very good friends who had been treating each other as enemies now started to recognize their own mistakes and they became friends again."

"Was there violence against the workers as at Tsinghua University?" * "Most welcomed the workers. A handful of bad elements resisted but there was no firing here. No one was seriously injured or killed. You see, the workers' team went to Tsinghua University first. So the students had learned from their experience."

"After the unity of students here, we could prepare for revolutionizing education. Therefore, without the leadership of the workers, we wouldn't have been able to transform our education." **

*Tsinghua, located in Peking, is a renowned university of science and engineering. Essentially the same events took place as at Peking University, but the fighting there was very intense for three months. A small number of students as well as workers from among the workers' teams which entered the campus to stop the fighting were actually killed.

** While the Cultural Revolution made a tremendous impact on the educational system, it was by no means confined to the schools. Workers in factories and peasants on communes participated actively in criticising revisionism. As with the students, the criticism, discussion and persuasion did not constitute a vague or abstract exercise in pure theoretical considerations, but were rather directly related to the circumstances people found themselves in. Many factories, for just one example, had instituted a bonus system; workers in such factories debated long hours about its implications and consequences. Would bonuses deepen proletarian consciousness (was such an arrangement revolutionary?) or would they breed competition, privilege and divisiveness among the workers (was it revisionist?). In this particular case, the verdict that finally emerged was that a bonus system was revisionist, and therefore it was discontinued. This and many other such decisions that were eventually reached are being implemented in practice. Thus the lives of people in all spheres of activity have been profoundly affected as a result of the Cultural Revolution.

Through Cultural Revolutions Class Struggle Continues

Many people outside of China tend to identify the Cultural Revolution with the 1966-1969 period. But the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution of the mid-60's was a stage, a spectacular stage, an ideologically heightening stage in China's process of creating a people's society. This was a stage that has profound, enduring and creative effects on the lives of the people of China. The Cultural Revolution was basically a part of a continuing process in which there will be more stages, more cultural-revolution stages.*

The Chinese have a profound sense of process; they know the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution did not mark the end of the class struggle; they know class struggle has long existed throughout the world and will not end until there is a world-wide end to classes.

The Chinese caution that the Cultural Revolution must not be mistaken as even closely approaching the final battle in the class struggle. Without in any sense whatsoever belittling the significance of the Cultural Revolution they see it merely one of many high points in the ongoing class struggle.

The issue of who will win in the revolution can only be settled over a long historical period, and if things are not properly handled, it is possible for a capitalist restoration to take place at any time.....The struggle between the two classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and between the two roads, the socialist and the capitalist, will be long, complex and acute throughout the period of socialism. This struggle is focused on the question of political power. After the proletariat has seized political power, it is still possible for it to lose it. (30)

* Indeed, the current ideological campaign against the influence of Lin Piao's ideology and the intensification of the analysis of Confucian thought is a part of the ongoing cultural revolution.

In the spring of 1969 Chairman Mao Tsetung reminded the people of China:

We have won a 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.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 does not conform to facts. (31)

Consistent with the analysis of Lenin, the Chinese hold that in the age of imperialism it is impossible to achieve classlessness in one society. Imperialism has given rise to a capitalist class that operates on all frontiers, and this class will continue its efforts to make and maintain inroads into all countries as long as it exists as a class. Thus no revolution is secure until all exploiting classes everywhere have been eliminated.

This analysis has led many outsiders to claim that China is expansionist and "exports revolution". The Chinese, to the contrary, claim that real revolution can only be made by the people concerned, that no one else can do it for them. A visitor to China who spoke to a number of officials on this point reports their position: "We always have believed....that revolution cannot be exported. The people of each country must rely on their own correct line in winning. Only by creating their own revolution, depending primarily on themselves, can a people truly gain freedom." (32)

The Chinese Government has meticulously applied its five principles of coexistence with other countries; since they were first put forth in 1955; mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, mutual non-aggression, mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.

The Chinese see that their major contributions to revolutionary movements are, first as an example, not to be copied in detail but to serve as an encouragement to others of what can be accomplished within a dictatorship of the proletariat; second, as lending moral support to revolutionary movements; and third, as giving material aid as in Vietnam.

Internally, the long-range view of class struggle looks ahead to more cultural revolutions on the horizon.

The present great cultural revolution is only the first; there will inevitably be many more in the future....No one in the Party or among the people should think that everything will be all right after one or two great cultural revolutions, or three or four. (33)

A SUMMARIZATION

Mao and his followers recognized that old ideas do not die easily. They decided to launch the Cultural Revolution when they saw the growing influence of revisionist ideology. If the ideology of the people were to continue to develop along this road the economic control by the proletariat over the means of production and therefore their own political power, their dictatorship, would likely be undermined and eventually defeated. The revisionist forces were waging a vigorous class struggle, and if the proletariat failed to recognize this and failed to fight back with equal vigor, the Chinese people would have faced the defeat of socialism.

The situation was thought by the revolutionary leaders to be of serious enough proportions to warrant a full-scale mobilization of the population; the people had to see and grapple with revisionist, that is bourgeois, ideology first hand if they were to understand it, and to thoroughly criticize and repudiate it. Only by such means could they heighten their consciousness and deepen proletarian ideology.

None of these objectives would have been achieved if Mao had defined this problem as capable of solution merely through "inner-Party struggle." The problem was great; the path chosen for solving it had to be equal to the problem. That is why Mao and his followers arrived at no less a strategy than revolution, revolution involving the whole people.

Revisionism emanated from and was directed by those holding high positions in the Government and Party who were therefore in positions to wield considerable influence. The Cultural Revolution similarly emanated from and was directed by others, the revolutionary forces, in equally as important positions,

In launching this revolution Mao saw the potential danger of the masses dissipating their energy solely on the criticism and repudiation of officials and leaders in lesser positions. Because revisionist leaders existed at all levels, this was seen as a necessary part of the process, but by itself not sufficient. The leaders of the counter-revolution had to be recognized for what they were and rooted out. This is why Mao directed the masses to bombard the headquarters.

The successful defeat of the leading advocates of revisionism marks the success of the Cultural Revolution. Through this success, the earlier successes in the transformation of political and economic structures have been made more secure, though by no means safe for all time as the Chinese themselves recognize. Revolutions had already been won in these spheres. The danger was not there, as much as it was in the developing ideas of narrow self-interest at the expense of the class or collective interests of the great majority. Unchallenged however, such ideas would have eventually undone economic and political gains, because people would have increasingly put the revisionist ideas of "self first" into practice.

So top priority in this phase of the class struggle was not to change political or economic structures as such, but rather those institutions that most completely, directly and immediately shape ideas - education, literature, art, the popular media, etc. Making the superstructure the focal point of intense class struggle - in other words, having a cultural revolution - represents an entirely new development in the theory and practice of socialist revolution.

This historically unprecedented and perhaps first of many such revolutions in China is called The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. It is considered

GREAT because of the breadth of the people it encompasses and the depth of ideas and practices it challenges; considered PROLETARIAN because that is the class that leads the struggle and in whose interest it is waged; considered CULTURAL because culture in the broadest sense of the superstructure is the arena of the struggle; and considered REVOLUTION because it is a thoroughgoing attack on and overthrow of the ideological power of a potentially exploiting class.
(34)



"Happiness"

FOOTNOTES

1. "Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" p 1
2. George Thomson "From Marx to Mao Tse-tung" pp31-32
3. Mao Tse-tung "Problems of War and Strategy" Selected Works Vol II p 224
4. V I Lenin "The State and Revolution" Collected Works Vol 25 p 466
5. Mao Tse-tung "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship" Selected Works Vol IV p 411
6. Mao Tse-tung "The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War" Sel Works Vol II p198
7. Mao Tse-tung "On The Chungking Negotiations" Selected Works Vol IV p 58
8. Mao Tse-tung "On Coalition Government" Selected Works Vol III p 315
9. Mao Tse-tung "Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan" Sel Wks Vol I p24
10. Mao Tse-tung "Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership" Selected Works Vol III p 119
11. Mao Tse-tung "On Coalition Government" Selected Works Vol III p 257
12. Karl Marx "Critique of the Gotha Programme" (International) p 8
13. Mao Tse-tung "On Practice" Selected Works Vol I p 296
14. V I Lenin "Economics & Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" Collected Works Vol 30 p 115
15. Karl Marx "The German Ideology" (International) p 64
16. Mao Tse-tung "On The Correct Handling of the Contradictions Among the People" Selected Readings from the Works of MTT p 464
17. Mao Tse-tung "Speech at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference on Propaganda Work" Selected Readings p 496
18. For a further understanding of the analysis of class and class struggle, the reader is referred to the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin, esp the Communist Manifesto by Marx & Engels, Critique of the Gotha Programme by Marx, the 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte by Marx State & Revolution (Lenin)

19. All of the following notes are taken from TIME magazine articles that appeared between August 26 1966 and September 19 1968. This is not to imply that TIME was the only one printing such reports; on the contrary it is selected because it is representative of what the mass circulation media was saying. Virtually all of the magazine, newspaper, TV and radio coverage of China during this period seemed to be vying to outdo each other in their negative portrayal of the Cultural Revolution.'
20. "Decision of the Central Committee" pp5-6
21. Ibid p 8
22. Ibid p 2
23. Ibid p4-5
24. Ibid p 6-7
25. Ibid September 9 1966 p 34
26. Peking Review September 9 1966 p 18
27. "Decision of the Central Committee" p 7
28. Ibid p 1
29. "Report to the 9th National Conference of the Communist Party of China" in Peking Review (Special Issue) April 28 1969 p 16
30. "Never Forget Political Power" Editorial in Jiefangjun Bao (Liberation Army Daily) May 20 1967 reprinted in pamphlet entitled "Circular of the Central Committee of the Communist Party: A Great Historic Document" pp 40-41
31. Peking Review May 23 1969 p 2
32. Jack Smith "Unite the Many, Defeat the Few: China's Revolutionary Line in Foreign Affairs" A Guardian pamphlet p 14
33. Circular of the Central Committee p 46
34. In addition to those works already cited, the reader is referred to the following for a fuller understanding of the Cultural Revolution:
 - Turning Point in China (Hinton)
 - The Cultural Revolution in China (Joan Robinson)
 - The Long Revolution (Edgar Snow)
 - China in the Year 2000 (Han Suyin)
 - A History of the Chinese Cultural Revolution by Jean Daubier

For additional detail

On China's

Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution
of 1966-1969

See:

Far East Reporter Issue:

"Some Background on China's
Great Proletarian Cultural
Revolution" by Maud Russell
50¢

For additional detail

on

The Ideological Background of China's
Ongoing Cultural Revolutions

See:

Far East Reporter Issue:

"The Struggle Between
Two Lines" by Mao Tsetung
35¢

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poem on one inside fold

from a poem by
Mao Tse-tung

多少事，
從來急；
天地轉，
光陰迫。
一萬年太久，
只爭朝夕。

四海翻騰雲水怒，
五洲震盪風雷激。
要掃除一切害人蟲，
全無敵。

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

*The Four Seas are rising,
clouds and waters raging,
The Five Continents are rocking,
wind and thunder roaring.
Away with all pests!
Our force is irresistible.*

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