



Number 5  
May, 1979

# the COMMUNIST

*Theoretical Journal of the Central Committee  
Of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA*

- **Beat Back the Dogmato-Revisionist Attack on  
Mao Tsetung Thought**  
*Comments on Enver Hoxha's  
Imperialism and the Revolution*
  
- **Some Notes on the Study of *What Is To Be  
Done?* and its Implications for the Struggle Today**
  
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- **China, The Dictatorship Of The Proletariat and  
Professor Bettelheim**  
*or How Not to Criticize Revisionism*

\$2.50

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P.O. Box 3486 Merchandise Mart  
Chicago Illinois 60654



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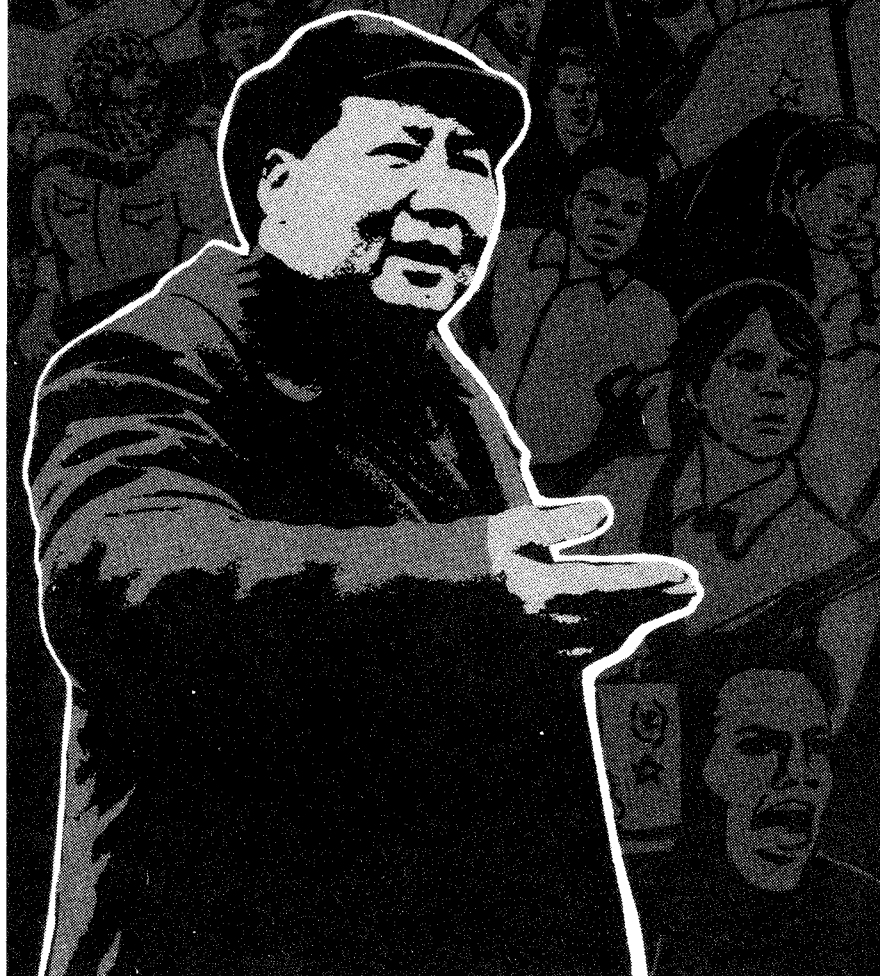
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### Publisher's Note

Beginning with this issue we are changing to a consecutive numbering system. This is number 5. The previous four issues have been numbered Volume 1, numbers 1 and 2, and Volume 2, numbers 1 and 2.

# Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions

by Bob Avakian



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\$4.95

## Beat Back the Dogmato- Revisionist Attack on Mao Tsetung Thought

Comments on Enver Hoxha's  
*Imperialism and the Revolution*

by J. Werner

Upon first examining Enver Hoxha's new book, *Imperialism and the Revolution*, one is tempted to dismiss it as a petty and shallow hatchet job and refer the reader to the works of Mao Tsetung, which make clear that most of the charges hurled at Mao are simply the worst type of blatant misquotations, distortions and downright lies, and also refer the reader to the many Soviet criticisms of Mao which, while sharing the same method and most of the same arguments as Hoxha, at least have the virtue of a more systematic and well-rounded presentation of the revisionist line.

However, the current situation in the international communist movement makes such a course impossible to follow, no matter how tempting. The capture of revolutionary China by the capitalist-roaders led by Hua and Teng has led to the capitulation of some erstwhile Marxist-Leninists and the demoralization of many more. The eyes of the international movement have focused on Hoxha and the Party of Labor of Albania in the hopes that amidst the turmoil and confusion in the ranks of communists the PLA would continue to play a leading role in the fight against revisionism. Indeed, Albania's initial response to the coup in China, riddled though it was with eclecticism and contradictory theses, gave cause for such hope.

But Hoxha and the leadership of the PLA chose a different course—lending the prestige of the PLA (a prestige that, ironically, was gained in large degree because Hoxha had united with Mao and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution at a time when it was under attack from revisionists everywhere) to those who would *retreat* from the advances forged in the battle against modern revisionism in the past two decades and erect a revisionist political and ideological line based upon sanctifying and raising to the extreme, errors of revolutionaries since the mid-1930s. And all this is done in the name of the “purity” of Marxism-Leninism.

Of course this is not the first time in history that revisionism has posed itself as “orthodox” Marxism and tried to paint the genuine revolutionary communists with the brush of “deviationism,” or

even fanaticism. Karl Kautsky was the orthodox Marxist of his day in his battle against Leninism. And, likewise, Trotsky posed as the "proletarian" and "pure" Marxist as he did his best to undermine and wreck the world's first socialist state.

For, contrary to the outlook which permeates the writings of Enver Hoxha, the world does not advance in a smooth, direct line. And what is true of the world itself is equally true of Marxism-Leninism, which is, after all, a science based upon understanding the contradictions in nature and society and a tool for advancing society in accordance with the laws of motion of these contradictions—a science which is, and can only be, continually enriched and deepened in the course of revolutionary practice.

Enver Hoxha makes numerous indictments of Mao Tsetung, arguments that we will attempt to address one by one, but what comes through most clearly is Hoxha's complete inability to understand the living science of dialectics, a bewilderment he was willing to keep to himself as long as revolutionary China was continuing to advance and battling enemies that Hoxha recognized as foes also, but a bewilderment turned to antagonism that he now seeks to pawn off on the whole of the international communist movement since the forward advance in China has been temporarily reversed.

In fact, one of the very few relatively accurate characterizations of Mao's line given by Hoxha is when he says, "he [Mao] regards [revolution] as an endless process which is repeated periodically throughout the whole period of the existence of mankind on earth, as a process which goes from defeat to victory, from victory to defeat, and so on endlessly."<sup>1</sup> Of course, in this passage, Hoxha is trying to imply that Mao sees no *advance* in human society but merely the cyclical repetition of things. But what comes through much more clearly (since this vulgarization of Mao doesn't wash for anyone who has studied any of his writings) is *Hoxha's own view of revolution* as an unfortunate if occasionally necessary disruption that history imposes on society at rare instances, and a disruption that will cease for all time as soon as the working class (or condescending saviors having its interests at heart) can seize power from the old exploiters and begin its "uninterrupted advance" along wide and straight Nevsky Prospect to some goal which bears much in common with the religious vision of the Kingdom of God on earth, where all conflict, struggle and discord will be replaced by the realm of perfect harmony and stability.

Hoxha wants to attack Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought and at the same time distinguish himself from modern revisionism. The result is his embracing not only of a basic revisionist outlook but a wholesale adoption of many time-worn revisionist theses—all thinly covered by a dogmatist veneer. Hence the label *dogmato-revisionist*.

*Imperialism and the Revolution* covers many topics, and to deal with all of the errors and distortions of Marxism contained in it would require a book much longer than Hoxha's. The present article deals almost exclusively with Part II, section III: "'Mao Tsetung Thought'—An Anti-Marxist Theory," and even here, not every aspect of Hoxha's distortions, errors and slander is gone into—although even so, what's written here is of sufficient length and detail to give more than a taste (in fact more than a bellyful) of Hoxha's counter-revolutionary line!\*

## I. Hoxha on the Course of the Chinese Revolution

According to Enver Hoxha, the Chinese Communist Party has been dominated by the revisionist "Mao Tsetung Thought" since 1935, the year in which Mao's leadership was basically established within the Party. Apparently, the correct line, according to Hoxha, was represented by the line of Wang Ming, although the name of this renegade doesn't appear in his book. Wang Ming was the leader of the Chinese Communist Party for several years until the defeat of his line in 1935, and his career in the Party was marked by two features: first, he was consistently wrong in his political line, making both right and "left" opportunist deviations; and, secondly, he enjoyed the confidence and support of the Communist International and, presumably, Stalin.

Those in the leadership of the Chinese Party who shared Wang Ming's line (who called themselves the "internationalists," and sometimes were referred to as the "28½ Bolsheviks"—a reference to Wang's claim that he and his handful of students returned from Moscow were "100% Bolshevik") came to the fore at a crucial juncture in the Chinese Revolution. They refused to recognize that the Chinese Revolution had suffered a period of temporary setback following the defeat of the 1924-27 Revolution, and that, as a result, a protracted period of strategic defensive was necessary.

Mao had analyzed the concrete conditions in China on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and also the fundamental theses of Lenin and Stalin on the Chinese Revolution, and had determined that while the revolution had been set back, various circumstances existed that allowed the establishment of rural base areas surrounded by the enemy in different parts of China. Closely connected to this was the question of the peasants, whom Mao correctly stated

\*Hoxha tries, like the current revisionist rulers of China, to pin Mao with the reactionary "three worlds" strategy. The RCP has dealt with this question in the article, "'Three Worlds' Strategy: Apology for Capitulation," in *Revolution*, November 1978. Nor does this current article address Hoxha's portrayal of the current world situation or the increasing convergence between Hoxha's views and the machinations of the Soviet social-imperialists.

had to be the *main* (not leading) force in the revolution during its democratic stage. Central to building up these base areas was mobilizing the peasantry under the leadership of the Communist Party and carrying out the agrarian revolution.

Wang Ming bitterly opposed Mao on these basic theses, as well as on numerous political and military questions that flowed from them. Like Hoxha, Wang Ming railed against Mao's thesis that in China the cities must be encircled by the countryside. Like Hoxha, Wang could not understand the ebbs and flows of the revolution and instead presented a picture of a constantly favorable objective situation with only the subjective factor being necessary to lead an immediate successful onslaught on reactionary power. Wang Ming led the Party in a wrong military, political and ideological line that led to defeat by Chiang Kai-shek in his Fifth "Encirclement and Suppression Campaign," a defeat which forced the Red Army to retreat in the famous Long March. As a result of this "left" opportunist line, large numbers of the Communist Party and revolutionary army, as well as base areas, were wiped out.

Of course this is well known, and the political summation of these deviations comprise an important part of the works of Mao Tsetung. Further, it is on the basis of repudiating this line in particular that the Chinese Communist Party was able to carry through successfully the famous Long March and indeed the Chinese revolution.

But Enver Hoxha, like Wang Ming and the Soviet revisionists, accuses Mao of "nationalism," of a "peasant mentality" and of opportunism because he applied Marxism-Leninism to the concrete conditions in China and developed an all-around political line capable of leading that revolution to victory.

Listen to some of the profound arguments Hoxha conjures up for his attack on Mao:

Mao Tsetung expressed this petty bourgeois theory [not recognizing the leading role of the proletariat] in his general thesis that the "countryside must encircle the city." ". . . revolutionary villages," he wrote, "can encircle the cities. . . rural work should play the primary role in the Chinese revolutionary movement and urban work a secondary role." Mao expressed this idea also when he wrote about the role of the peasantry in the state. He has said that all other political parties and forces must submit to the peasantry and its views. ". . . Millions of peasants will rise like a mighty storm, a force so swift and violent that no power, however great, will be able to hold it back. . .," he writes. "They will put to the test every revolutionary party and group, every revolutionary, so that they either accept their views or reject

them." According to Mao, it turns out that the peasantry and not the working class should play the hegemonic role in the revolution.<sup>2</sup>

Such is the thinking of Enver Hoxha. *Where*, we will ask, does it ~~say~~ that in every country the main center of the Party's work must be in the cities? If one is making revolution in a country in which the peasantry is 80% of the population, if the revolution has been *driven out* of the cities, if the movement is temporarily declining, and if the *possibility* exists for forming red political power in the countryside—as it did in China—how can it be said that it was wrong to "make the main center of the Party's work" the rural areas, or to develop a strategy of surrounding the cities by the countryside? In these conditions, to fail to do so could only mean, as it did, a policy of rash adventurism which quickly led to capitulation in the face of the enemy, exactly because the "left" line of concentrating in the cities, refusing to "encircle the cities by the countryside," meant a line which could not mobilize the forces for revolution in the concrete conditions of China at the time.

Hoxha's blustering about Mao's famous quotation from *Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan* where he ~~says~~ that the mighty storm of the peasant movement "will put to the test every revolutionary party and group" is also revealing. This classic work of Mao has also come under attack by revisionists historically, from Chen Tu-hsiu and Wang Ming to the Soviet renegades.

What Mao is arguing in his *Investigation of the Peasant Movement* is not that the *proletariat* should not lead the peasantry, but precisely the opposite. He was arguing against the mainly *right* tendencies (in form as well as content) within the leadership of the Party who argued that the peasants' movement was terrible, or that it had "gone too far." Those who argued that it "had gone too far" felt that it was endangering the alliance with the national bourgeoisie (in the form of the Kuomintang), and therefore should either be opposed, ignored or at least hemmed in.

When Hoxha quotes Mao saying that "Every revolutionary party and every revolutionary comrade will be put to the test to be accepted or rejected as they decide," he deliberately omits the immediately following sentences which reveal Mao's whole purpose in writing the essay:

There are three alternatives. To march at their head and lead them? To trail behind them, gesticulating and criticizing? Or to stand in their way and oppose them? Every Chinese is free to choose, but events will force you to make the choice quickly.<sup>3</sup>

So it is clear that what Mao is talking about (when you don't butcher his quotes, as Hoxha is wont to do throughout his attack) is not the peasants leading the Party, but precisely the *opposite*, of the Party stepping forward and putting itself at the *head* of the surging torrent of the peasants.

Stalin himself spoke to the same errors that were being committed by leading members of the CCP:

I know there are Kuomintangists and even Chinese Communists who do not consider it possible to unleash revolution in the countryside, since they fear that if the peasantry were drawn into the revolution it would disrupt the united anti-imperialist front. That is a profound error, comrades. . . . I think it is high time to break down that inertness and that "neutrality" toward the peasantry. . . .<sup>4</sup>

Enver Hoxha's disdain for the peasantry and his underestimation of their central role in the revolutionary process in countries like China is linked to his inability to understand the very nature of these revolutions. It was not Mao, but Lenin and Stalin, who first expounded the theses that revolutions in the countries of Asia were *bourgeois-democratic* revolutions, which had as their goal two main objectives: the driving out of foreign imperialism and the defeat of those sections of the capitalist class bound together with it; and the solving of the land question—the wiping out of the feudal survivals and the implementation of "land to the tiller."

Once again, Stalin was quite clear on this question: "The Comintern was and still is of the opinion that the basis of the revolution in China in the present period [1927] is the agrarian-peasant revolution."<sup>5\*</sup>

\*The same thesis can be found at several points in Stalin's writings on China, as well as in Comintern resolutions on the Chinese revolution. See, for example, the Resolution of the Eighth Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI) Plenum on the Chinese Question (May 1927), which held that:

Agrarian revolution, including confiscation and nationalization of the land—that is the fundamental internal socio-economic content of the new stage of the Chinese revolution. . . and the communist party should put itself at the head of this movement and lead it.<sup>6</sup>

Or, again, the June 1930 ECCI Resolution on the Chinese Question:

The agrarian question lies at the centre of the Chinese revolution. The revolution develops in the form of peasant wars led by the proletariat.<sup>7</sup>

This is not to say, of course, that either Stalin or the Comintern were always correct in their analysis of, or recommendations for, the Chinese revolution.

Hoxha charges that:

Mao Tsetung was never able to understand and explain correctly the close links between the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the proletarian revolution. Contrary to the Marxist-Leninist theory, which has proved scientifically that there is no Chinese wall between the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the socialist revolution, that these two revolutions do not have to be divided from each other by a long period of time, Mao Tsetung asserted: "The transformation of our revolution into socialist revolution is a matter of the future. . . . As to when the transition will take place. . . it may take quite a long time. We should not hold forth about this transition until all the necessary political and economic conditions are present and until it is advantageous and not detrimental to the overwhelming majority of our people."<sup>8</sup>

By now the astute reader will ask, what exactly did Hoxha leave out with his two sets of three dots (ellipses). The first . . . is to obliterate one sentence in which Mao writes, "In the future the democratic revolution will inevitably be transformed into a socialist revolution." The second . . . wipes out the phrase that appears in the sentence, "As to when the transition will take place, *that will depend on the presence of the necessary conditions, and it may take quite a long time.*" (Omitted phrase in italics.)<sup>9\*</sup>

Thus we see that Hoxha omits two critical points of Mao's: 1) that the transition to the socialist revolution is inevitable, and 2) that this transition depends on the "presence of the necessary conditions."

Hoxha goes on to state:

Mao Tsetung adhered to this anti-Marxist concept, which is not for the transformation of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into socialist revolution, during the whole period of the revolution, even after liberation. Thus, in 1940, Mao Tsetung said: "The Chinese revolution must necessarily pass through. . . the stage of New

\*Whether the Albanian translators deliberately cite the *Albanian* edition of Mao's works to prevent the reader from checking Hoxha's hatchet jobs against the original, or whether it is simply a case of taking an extremely irresponsible course in the light of such an important question, we will leave to the reader to decide. In either case, it makes it *virtually impossible* for the great majority of the readers to refer to the original, especially when the articles in Mao's *Selected Works* are not cited.



Democracy and then the stage of socialism. Of these, the first stage will need a relatively long time. . . ."<sup>10</sup>

For the reader's convenience, the whole of the paragraph Hoxha "quotes" is reprinted below, from the authorized Chinese translation and without his handy ellipses:

Without a doubt, the present revolution is the first step, which will develop into the second step, that of socialism, at a later date. And China will attain true happiness only when she enters the socialist era. But today is not yet the time to introduce socialism. The present task of the revolution in China is to fight imperialism and feudalism, and socialism is out of the question until this task is completed. The Chinese revolution cannot avoid taking the two steps, first of New Democracy and then of socialism. Moreover, the first step will need quite a long time and cannot be accomplished overnight. We are not utopians and cannot divorce ourselves from the actual conditions confronting us.<sup>11</sup>

So once again it is clear, even from the *very passages* Hoxha tries to twist and distort to back up his slanders, that Mao is clear that the new-democratic revolution *leads* to socialism once the necessary conditions have been met, which he specifically notes are the defeat of imperialism and feudalism.

Hoxha is quite correct when he says that "no Chinese wall" separates the two stages of the revolution, but what he really seeks to do is in fact negate the fact that there are *two distinct stages* of the revolution, which of necessity involve different alignments of class forces and have different tasks. What Hoxha attempts to do is mush everything together, to combine two into one, and he comes up with an amorphous democratic-socialist revolution whose characteristics are fundamentally the same in imperialist and oppressed nations alike.

Hoxha's line is so eclectic and confused it is impossible to figure out exactly what he is saying. Is it that the Chinese Revolution prior to 1949 was (or should have been) a *socialist* revolution? Is he parroting the line of some leaders of the Chinese Party (with some support of the Comintern) who argued that the bourgeois revolution was transformed into a socialist revolution with the capture of power in one or two key provinces? Or is it that Mao did not recognize that the revolution would be transformed into a socialist revolution with the seizure of power on a nationwide scale? In any case, we will see that it is Mao, not Hoxha or Wang Ming, who was

correct.\*

Hoxha deliberately confuses the fact that the socialist revolution can accomplish democratic *tasks* (the October Revolution being the outstanding example) with the concept of the bourgeois-democratic revolution itself. It is not surprising that in the earlier part of his book, in which Hoxha lays down his recipes for revolution in every country of the world (though, it is true, not specifically for each country), there is no real understanding of this question, and in fact a giant muddle.

This connection [between proletarian revolution in the West and the struggle in the colonies and dependent countries—J.W.] has become even clearer and more natural today, when, with the collapse of the old colonial system, most of the peoples have taken a big step forward towards independence by creating their own national states, and when, following this step, they are aspiring to go further. They want the liquidation of the neo-colonialist system, of any imperialist dependence and any exploitation of foreign capital. They want their complete sovereignty and economic and political independence. It has now been proved that such aspirations can be realized, such objectives attained only through the elimination of any foreign domination by

\*Of course the other possibility is that Hoxha is deliberately throwing what he very well knows is slander at Mao. In any case, it is obvious that the revolution in Albania was of a two-stage nature, and the PLA, in its official history, seems to understand this quite well, noting that the Albanian revolution was at first "an anti-imperialist democratic revolution" which later developed into a socialist revolution, and explaining that "...in the first stage of the revolution the strategic objective of the Party was to ensure national independence and the establishment of the order of people's democracy..."<sup>12</sup> Further, the Albanian Party's line following the liberation of Albania is explained as follows:

Under the new conditions, the Party advanced the slogan of national unity. Besides the broad masses of the people who had taken an active part in the war for national liberation, this union should include also all those who had been deceived by the reactionary chieftains or had stood aloof but now could make their contribution to the building of our new society.<sup>13</sup>

This would certainly seem to amount to consolidating a stage which is rather far removed from socialism! Actually, this may have been a correct line for the Communist Party of Albania (as it was called at the time) to take. The point here is not whether it was correct or incorrect (although the Albanian Party itself admits to a series of rightist errors during this period);<sup>14</sup> the point is that for Hoxha to have played a leading role in a revolution which had a clear democratic stage, one which Hoxha and the Party saw at the time as a stage lasting for a while after power was seized, and for him then to turn around and accuse Mao of some sort of heresy for his development of the theory of the new-democratic revolution—this begins to smack more of deliberate subterfuge than of mere confusion on Hoxha's part.

and dependence on foreigners and the liquidation of oppression and exploitation by local bourgeois and big landowner rulers.

Hence, the linking and the interlacing of the national-democratic, anti-imperialist, national liberation revolution with the socialist revolution, because, by striking at imperialism and reaction, which are common enemies of the proletariat and the peoples, these revolutions also pave the way for great social transformations, assist the victory of the socialist revolution. And vice-versa, by striking at the imperialist bourgeoisie, by destroying its economic and political positions, the socialist revolution creates favorable conditions for and facilitates the triumph of liberation movements.<sup>15</sup>

Despite Hoxha's passing reference here to "big landowner rulers," what is strikingly missing in this passage, and indeed Hoxha's whole book, is any discussion *whatsoever* of the anti-feudal character of the revolution in many of the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. For it is the struggle against feudalism, especially, that gives the democratic revolution a *bourgeois* character.

In the above statement, Hoxha deftly *combines* the socialist revolution with the bourgeois-democratic revolution by saying that independence, sovereignty, etc. can only be achieved with the "elimination of oppression of the local bourgeois and big landowner rulers." Of course, it is true that in the final analysis, real liberation from imperialism is dependent on the socialist revolution. Mao made this point many times, including in his famous statement that "only socialism can save China." But the fact remains that the socialist revolution and the bourgeois-democratic revolution are *not the same*, and in the latter certain *bourgeois* (i.e. exploiting) forces can play a positive role.

Ironically, despite the attempts of Hoxha to claim the mantle of Stalin, it is Stalin, in writing of another renegade, who succinctly sums up Hoxha's basic errors on the Chinese revolution:

The basic error of Trotsky (and hence of the opposition) is that he underestimates the agrarian revolution in China, does not understand the bourgeois-democratic character of that revolution, denies the existence of the preconditions for an agrarian movement in China, embracing many millions, and underestimates the role of the peasantry in the Chinese revolution.<sup>16</sup>

Hoxha's protestations to the contrary, it was precisely Mao who explained the relationship between the bourgeois-democratic and

the socialist stage of the revolution. First, Mao built upon the basic Leninist theses that in the era of imperialism and the proletarian revolution (that is, since the October Revolution in Russia in 1917) the bourgeois-democratic revolutions in the dependent countries and colonies were no longer part of the *old* bourgeois revolution, but part of the new world proletarian revolution.

Mao stressed again and again that the national bourgeoisie in China and in countries like it *could not lead* the bourgeois-democratic revolution to victory, that because it was bullied by imperialism this bourgeoisie had some contradictions with it and would, from time to time, join the ranks of the revolutionary struggle, but precisely because the national bourgeoisie was a weak and flabby class economically and politically, because it was still tied in to a certain extent to the big (comprador) sections of the bourgeoisie and also to landed property, it would always vacillate at best and at times capitulate to the forces of imperialism and domestic reaction.

Because of this it fell to the *proletariat* to lead the people, first and foremost the peasantry, in carrying the democratic revolution through to its completion. Indeed, Mao points out that what made the Chinese revolution a *new* (as opposed to old) democratic revolution was precisely the fact that it was led by the proletariat and its vanguard, the Communist Party, and that this democratic revolution would not lead to "establishing a capitalist society and a state under bourgeois dictatorship," but rather that "this revolution actually serves the purpose of clearing a still wider path for the development of socialism."<sup>17</sup>

Mao further explained:

Although the Chinese revolution in this first stage (with its many sub-stages) is a new type of bourgeois-democratic revolution and is not yet itself a proletarian-socialist revolution in its social character, it has long become a part of the proletarian-socialist world revolution and is now even a very important part and a great ally of this world revolution. The first step or stage in our revolution is definitely not, and cannot be, the establishment of a capitalist society under the dictatorship of the Chinese bourgeoisie, but will result in the establishment of a new-democratic society under the joint dictatorship of all the revolutionary classes of China headed by the Chinese proletariat. The revolution will then be carried forward to the second stage, in which a socialist society will be established in China.

This is the fundamental characteristic of the Chinese revolution of today, of the new revolutionary process of

the past twenty years (counting from the May 4th Movement of 1919), and its concrete living essence.<sup>18</sup>

Mao constantly emphasizes the real link between the bourgeois-democratic and the socialist revolutions, that only the completion of the democratic revolution—i.e., the defeat of imperialism and feudalism—paves the way for the socialist revolution, that the latter cannot be accomplished without these preconditions. But *furthermore*, Mao affirmed, the leadership of the proletariat and the Party is what makes it possible to carry the revolution beyond the democratic stage and into the socialist stage.

It is not surprising that since Hoxha is incapable of understanding (or pretends not to understand) the class nature of the first stage of the Chinese Revolution, he also attacks the military line of Mao Tsetung—people's war—that was based on exactly understanding the conditions of the revolution in China. Here is what Hoxha has to say on this subject in the course of writing a prescription for the revolution in every country:

In accord with the concrete conditions of a country and the situations in general, the armed uprising may be a sudden outburst or a more protracted revolutionary process, but not an endless one without perspective, as advocated by Mao Tsetung's "theory of protracted people's war". If you compare the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin on the revolutionary armed insurrection with Mao's theory on "people's war," the anti-Marxist, anti-Leninist, anti-scientific character of this theory becomes clearly apparent. The Marxist-Leninist teachings on the armed insurrection are based on the close combination of the struggle in the city with that in the countryside under the leadership of the working class and its revolutionary party.

Being opposed to the leading role of the proletariat in the revolution, the Maoist theory considers the countryside as the only base of the armed insurrection and neglects the armed struggle of the working masses in the town. It preaches that the countryside must keep the city, which is considered as the stronghold of the counterrevolutionary bourgeoisie, besieged. This is an expression of distrust in the working class, the negation of its hegemonic role.<sup>19</sup>

Interesting indeed! Hoxha's above statement makes clearer his protestations cited earlier that Mao held that the new-democratic stage of the revolution would take a "long period of time."

Hoxha's claim that Mao called for an endless war "without per-

spective" is patently ridiculous. What Mao made very clear is that the war (or actually, in the context of China, a series of three distinct periods of warfare—first against the KMT, then against the Japanese, and then against the KMT again) would be the basic form for carrying out the revolution until it completed its first goals, specifically the driving out of imperialism and solving the land question, a very clear "perspective."

In Hoxha's criticism of people's war the rightist essence of his "leftism" begins to come into sharper focus. One would like to ask Hoxha, what course *should* the Chinese Revolution have taken following the defeat of the 1924-27 Revolution—when the counter-revolution triumphed in the cities and the communists were being ~~manacred~~? Apparently it was all right to form base areas in the countryside as long as it was not being done "without perspective"—which we can only take to mean the perspective of a quick victory (a few years)—over the forces of reaction. This line was, in fact, the line of Wang Ming, who ordered the Red Army to go on a continual offensive, preached that the enemy was disintegrating, and predicted a quick victory. The results of this policy was a giant setback for the Chinese Revolution, the loss of all the base areas in southern China and the necessity to embark on the Long March.

One can only assume that, according to Hoxha, if it is not possible to have a clear perspective of victory immediately on the horizon, it is wrong to carry out armed struggle. If it is not possible to take the cities quickly, then to maintain red political power in the countryside is to desert the working class and lose faith in its hegemonic role. This is truly mechanical thinking approaching hitherto almost unknown "heights." For while opportunists during the Chinese Revolution argued along similar lines (above all the Trotskyites) it was really only Wang Ming, operating safely from his perch in Moscow, that would repeat such fallacies long after history had proved him wrong.

Hoxha would have had the Chinese Communist Party dissolve the Red Army, or failing that, simply wage rash and suicidal attacks on the cities, when the conditions were not ripe for nationwide victory, which would have also meant the dissolving of the Red Army. Does Hoxha really believe that the "hegemony of the proletariat" would have been better exercised if there had been no base areas in the countryside, if the Communist Party under the blows of the White terror had been reduced to scattered forces conducting illegal and legal work in the cities? Is it really true that such a situation would have hastened the development of a new upsurge in China? Or was it not Mao's policy of building up revolutionary base areas which in fact helped prepare through struggle for the taking of the cities at a later date?

One cannot help but ask Hoxha in passing where in the writings

of Marx, Engels, Lenin or Stalin, is a clear line presented on how to wage the armed seizure of power in a country like China? Of course, there is no such prescription, for unlike Hoxha, the great leaders of the proletariat were not into speculating on hypothetical situations that had not yet arrived. Since there had never been a revolution led by the working class in such a country prior to the Chinese Revolution, isn't it really rather silly to tell us to compare Mao's writing with the military writings of the earlier Marxist-Leninist leaders to discover Mao's mistakes? Actually, when we do make such a comparison we discover that Mao, more than any of the previous great teachers, analyzed not only the process of revolutionary war in China but also made invaluable contributions to the Marxist line on military affairs generally.<sup>20</sup> This is not surprising, since Mao had much greater experience than any of the previous leaders in waging revolutionary war. Hoxha should also be reminded of Stalin's statement on this subject in 1926 that "In China the armed revolution is fighting the armed counter-revolution. That is one of the *specific features* and one of the *advantages* of the Chinese Revolution."<sup>21</sup>

Hoxha's dogmato-revisionism makes it impossible for him to correctly understand the relationship between politics and warfare. Since in his view opposites cannot be transformed into one another (more on this later), he cannot understand how the revolutionary war itself was in China the principal means to carry out broad scale political work among the masses. Mao made this point clearly in assessing the importance of the Long March:

... the Long March is the first of its kind in the annals of history, ... it is a manifesto, a propaganda force, a seeding machine. . . The Long March is a manifesto. It has proclaimed to the world that the Red Army is an Army of heroes, while the imperialists and their running dogs, Chiang Kai-shek and his like, are impotent. . . The Long March is also a propaganda force. It has announced to some 200 million people in eleven provinces that the road of the Red Army is their only road to liberation. Without the Long March, how could the broad masses have learned so quickly about the existence of the great truth which the Red Army embodies? The Long March is also a seeding-machine. In the eleven provinces it has sown many seeds which will sprout, leaf, blossom, and bear fruit, and will yield a harvest in the future. . . Who brought the Long March to victory? The Communist Party. Without the Communist Party, a long march of this kind would have been inconceivable.<sup>22</sup>

It can be seen then that the revolutionary war was not simply a

military undertaking but the main form of the class struggle in China. Those who would have insisted that the revolution had to be waged along the model of the Russian Revolution—i.e., a long period of preparation, in which the struggle took principally a political and not military form, followed by insurrection and civil war—would have condemned the Chinese working class and people to no revolution at all.

Hoxha declares that Mao's whole line of encircling the cities by the countryside meant abandoning the hegemony of the proletariat. The truth is that *not* to have launched the armed struggle in the countryside would precisely have meant *abandoning* the leadership (hegemony) of the proletariat in the revolution, specifically over the hundreds of millions of Chinese peasants.

The hegemony of the proletariat means above all the leadership of its vanguard political party, the communist party. It does not mean that the proletariat is necessarily the main force in the revolution (as Hoxha himself is forced to admit). The leadership of the proletariat means the rallying of the masses of the oppressed to the banner of the working class, to its program for the revolution. In the concrete conditions of China, this meant for the proletariat through its Party to step to the front of the struggle against imperialism and feudalism, while at the same time building up the independent political strength of its Communist Party, which alone could lead the revolution to victory and forward to socialism. With this perspective, to have not embarked upon the war in the countryside would have meant that the proletariat would not have been leading the peasantry, and the possibility for revolution would have been lost.

Why couldn't the revolution triumph first in the cities and then spread to the countryside as the revolution did in Russia, for example? Because cities were not only *considered* (as Hoxha puts it) the stronghold of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, they were *in fact* such a stronghold. The cities contained the concentration of the enemy's troops, and they were easily reached by the troops of the imperialist powers, who were able to most effectively aid the domestic reactionary forces in the cities. The working class was also concentrated in the cities, but it was not strong enough and the conditions were not ripe for it to succeed in launching insurrections and holding power. Indeed the workers attempted such insurrections, which were drowned in blood.

To draw an analogy, one can consider the situation in the world as a whole. Marx and Engels felt, and it was an accepted "principle" of Marxism, that revolution would first come in those countries of Western Europe with the highest development of capitalism. It was not until Lenin and the October Revolution came along that the thesis was developed that revolution would develop first at the *weak link* of the imperialist system. Lenin was

accused by the "orthodox Marxist" Kautsky of abandoning the proletariat for believing that a proletarian revolution could, in fact, first be made in the still predominantly peasant society of Russia. Of course the October Revolution proved Lenin right. Similarly, in China it was not only the case that it was in the countryside where the central contradiction that had to be solved to complete the democratic revolution was concentrated (the land question), but it was here that the power of the reactionaries was weakest and here that the proletariat could lead the masses of people in establishing and holding on to political power.

Hoxha tries to make it sound as if Mao held that in every country the road to victory lies in surrounding the city by the countryside. Quite the contrary. Mao held specifically that the model of the October Revolution, of insurrection in the cities, would be the road to power in the imperialist countries. Furthermore Mao never held that in *all* dependent and colonial countries the revolution would develop along this path. At first, he was of the opinion that such a possibility was only true in China for a number of specific reasons which he analyzed at length (including the fact that China was not a colony but a semi-colony with various imperialist powers competing to subjugate it; China's vastness which allowed maneuvering room; etc.). However it has been proven conclusively by the development of the revolutionary struggle, especially in Asia, that Mao's line on people's war, of surrounding the cities from the countryside, and so on, has a greater applicability than simply to China. Although the path to power will never be exactly the same in any two countries, it is clear that, for example, the armed struggle in Vietnam essentially developed along the lines first laid out by Mao.

While it is certain that the path of people's war in which the countryside surrounds the cities will not be universal for *all* the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, it is equally certain that it is the path many peoples have embarked on and will be the road to victory in many, if not most, such countries. To make a principle of opposing Mao's line of people's war is to oppose the revolution in the oppressed countries. Hoxha charges that

the peasant class, the petty-bourgeoisie, cannot lead the proletariat in the revolution. To think and preach the opposite means to be against Marxism-Leninism. Herein lies one of the main sources of the anti-Marxist views of Mao Tsetung, which have had a negative influence on the whole of the Chinese revolution.<sup>23</sup>

Of course Hoxha cannot offer any evidence that Mao thought the peasantry should lead the working class—indeed the whole of Mao's writings make his opposite view crystal clear, and this point

is restated literally dozens of times in Mao's works. All Hoxha can do is say that since Mao believed that the concentration of the Party's work had to be in the countryside, since Mao believed that the agrarian question was the principal internal contradiction that had to be solved by the democratic revolution, then for these reasons Mao must have felt that the peasantry was leading the workers!

Mao stated clearly and correctly that "in the revolution in semi-colonial China, the peasant struggle must always fail if it does not have the leadership of the workers, but the revolution is never harmed if the peasant struggle outstrips the forces of the workers."<sup>24</sup> To argue that the "leadership" of the proletariat requires that the peasant struggle be abandoned or stifled until the workers' movement is in an upsurge is to betray the revolution.

In fact, Mao waged a fierce struggle to make sure that proletarian ideology—Marxism-Leninism—exercised hegemony in the Party and ceaselessly fought every kind of deviation, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois, that appeared in its ranks—in both stages of the revolution. He analyzed the different deviations and showed their *class basis* in society (something we will find Hoxha is completely incapable of when it comes to analyzing the class struggle under socialism). In hitting at the *actual* petty-bourgeois deviation in the Chinese Communist Party (represented especially by Wang Ming, Hoxha's apparent hero), Mao makes some points which are very relevant in discussing Hoxha's outlook. This passage is worth quoting at length:

First, mode of thought. Generally speaking, the petty bourgeoisie, when tackling a problem, thinks in a subjective and one-sided way, that is, it starts not from an objective, complete picture of the relative strength of classes, but takes its subjective wishes, impressions and idle fancies for actual conditions, a single aspect for all the aspects, a part for the whole and a tree for the woods. Petty-bourgeois intellectuals detached from the practical processes of production have a tendency toward doctrinairism, which we have already mentioned, because they have only book-learning and lack practical knowledge. Petty bourgeois associated with production have a tendency toward empiricism which we have also mentioned, for although these people are not without perceptual knowledge, they suffer from narrowness, indiscipline, isolation and conservatism characteristic of the small producer.

Secondly, political tendency. Politically the petty bourgeoisie tend to vacillate between the "Left" and the Right because of their way of life and their consequent subjective and one-sided mode of thought. Many typical

petty-bourgeois revolutionaries long for a quick victory of the revolution, which will bring about a radical change in their present status; consequently, impatient of protracted revolutionary endeavour, they are keenly interested in "Left" revolutionary phrases and slogans and are apt to become sectarian or adventurist in sentiment and action. Such a petty-bourgeois political tendency, when reflected in the Party, gives rise to the above-mentioned "Left" mistakes on the questions of revolutionary tasks, revolutionary bases, tactical direction and military line.

But under different circumstances, the same or another group of petty-bourgeois revolutionaries may express pessimism and despair and, tagging after the bourgeoisie, entertain Right sentiments and views. *Chen Tu-hsiu-ism* in the latter period of the 1924-27 revolution, *Chang Kuo-t'aoism* in the latter period of the Agrarian Revolution and the expedient of running away from the enemy in the early period of the Long March were all reflections of such petty-bourgeois Right ideas in the Party. And once after the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War capitulationism appeared. . . Petty-bourgeois ideology reveals its bad side under the stress of changing conditions in vacillation between "Left" and Right, a tendency to go to extremes, wishful thinking or opportunism. All this is the ideological reflection of their economic instability.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, we see in this passage that Mao was *acutely* aware of the problem of deviations from Marxism-Leninism in the Party and clearly pointed out their class basis. Elsewhere in the same work quoted above, for example, he addresses the question of those of petty-bourgeois origin who "joined the Party organizationally, but not ideologically or in the full sense, and are often liberals, reformists, anarchists, Blanquists, in a Marxist-Leninist guise and are therefore incapable of leading to victory not only China's communist movement of tomorrow but even the new-democratic movement of today." He stressed the need to "educate them and struggle against them in a serious but appropriate and patient manner" or else such people will "try to mould the Party's features, the features of the vanguard of the proletariat, in their own image and to usurp the leadership in the Party. . ."<sup>26</sup>

This, of course, was to be a long-term and serious problem facing the Chinese Communist Party which contributed in no small degree to its capture by the capitalist-roaders in the coup of 1976. It is clear that Mao recognized this problem early on, and devoted

serious attention to finding the appropriate forms for preserving the proletarian character of the Party.

It is Hoxha, and not Mao, who puts forward a petty-bourgeois, not proletarian, line on the Chinese Revolution—precisely the line Mao summarized above, which in practice can only call for quick victory and reckless advances at one stage of the struggle, and when that does not yield an immediate "prospect" for victory, call for the communists to abandon the leadership of the peasantry, concentrate their work in the cities, and wait (i.e. capitulate) until "more favorable conditions" emerge.

### Mao, the Comintern, the USSR and Stalin

In his efforts to paint Mao as a narrow nationalist and a Chinese chauvinist, Hoxha tries to make a case that Mao disobeyed the directives of the Comintern over the basic line of the Chinese revolution, did not regard the Soviet Union as the "fatherland of the world proletariat" and had the nerve to criticize Stalin. Hoxha's views on this subject are a muddle (which we soon find to be typical for him) of wrong views, half truths and outright lies.

The fact of the matter, again apparent to anyone who has studied Mao's works, is that Mao and the Chinese Communist Party constantly upheld the Soviet Union and Stalin. He repeatedly referred to the USSR as the homeland of the international proletariat and trained the Chinese communists and the people in this spirit. This is beyond question. Mao correctly understood the earth-shaking importance of the October Revolution and the importance of the existence of a powerful socialist state in the USSR in changing the entire political complexion of the globe. Mao pointed out that the "salvoes of the October Revolution brought Marxism-Leninism to China." And it certainly cannot be said that statements like the following underestimate the importance of the Soviet Union to the success of the Chinese Revolution:

China cannot possibly gain her independence without the assistance of the land of socialism and the international proletariat. That is, she cannot do so without the help of the Soviet Union and the help which the proletariat of Japan, Britain, the United States, France, Germany, Italy and other countries provide through their struggles against capitalism. Although no one can say that the victory of the Chinese revolution must wait upon the victory of the revolution in all of these countries, or in one or two of them, there is no doubt that we cannot win without the added strength of their proletariat. In particular, Soviet assistance is absolutely indispensable for China's final victory in the War of

Resistance. Refuse Soviet assistance, and the revolution will fail.<sup>27</sup>

As far as Stalin and the Comintern were concerned, Mao did in fact agree with the *basic line* set forth by Stalin on the Chinese Revolution. We have already seen with regard to the cardinal questions of the Chinese Revolution—specifically the key role of the peasantry and the agrarian revolution, the bourgeois-democratic character of the revolution, the fact that armed revolution directly confronted the armed counter-revolution—that it is Hoxha and not Mao who has departed from the basic principles formulated by Stalin.

What Mao *did* insist is that the Chinese Revolution could not be a carbon copy of the Russian revolution, as some dogmatists insisted, and further that the task remained to integrate the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete conditions of the Chinese Revolution. Furthermore, it is quite clear that Stalin, and especially the representatives of the Comintern in China, made numerous and serious mistakes regarding the Chinese Revolution when they attempted to map out more particularly the direction of the Chinese Revolution.

This can be seen on several occasions. At the time of the 1924-27 Revolution, the Comintern representatives in China—particularly Borodin—played a very bad role in the revolution, supporting the line of “unity above all” with the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek. As Mao was to say, “Borodin stood just a little to the right of Chen Tu-hsiu, and was ready to do everything to please the bourgeoisie, even to the disarming of the workers, which he finally ordered.”<sup>28</sup> Although it must be said that Borodin went to the right of many of the actual positions officially held by the Comintern, this alone cannot explain his errors. Chiang Kai-shek had been made an honorary member of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, a position which he held well into 1927, after his nature was clear. Furthermore Stalin himself held out unrealistic expectations that the Wuhan government of the KMT (which he incorrectly characterized as petty-bourgeois) would continue the alliance with the communists after Chiang deserted the revolution.

It is quite clear that the Comintern gave bad advice to the Chinese Party, as is openly admitted by everybody except Enver Hoxha. Borodin himself told Anna Louise Strong in 1939 that “I was wrong, I did not understand the Chinese Revolution. . . I made so many mistakes.”<sup>29</sup>

Even after the massacre of tens of thousands of communists and workers had begun, the right opportunist leadership, with the support of Borodin and the other Comintern representatives, and over the opposition of Mao, ordered the workers to disarm and tried to stop the peasant movement, all in the hopes of appeasing the so-

called “left wing” of the KMT.

Stalin, who we have seen held a generally correct line on the key role of mobilizing the peasantry, himself made a serious mistake when in October 1926 he sent a telegram to Shanghai stating that until Shanghai was captured, the agrarian movement should not be intensified and urging “caution and restraint.” Stalin admitted that the telegram was a mistake and pointed out that he “never regarded and do not now regard the Comintern as being infallible.”<sup>30</sup>

Stalin cancelled the telegram several weeks later and in November the Comintern resolution correctly emphasized the need to mobilize the peasantry. But the telegram played a seriously damaging role, lending the prestige of the CPSU and the Comintern to the right wing line being pushed by Chen Tu-shiu and Borodin.

Stalin made an important statement in regards to the relationship of the Comintern to the Chinese Revolution which should also help to illustrate Hoxha's wrong views:

Notwithstanding the ideological progress of our Party, there are still, unfortunately, “leaders” of a sort in it who sincerely believe that the revolution in China can be directed, so to speak, by telegraph, on the basis of the universally recognized general principles of the Comintern, *disregarding* the national peculiarities of China's economy, political system, culture, manners and customs, and traditions. What, in fact, distinguishes these “leaders” from real leaders is that they always have in their pockets two or three ready-made formulas, “suitable” for all countries and “obligatory” under all conditions. The necessity of taking into account the nationally peculiar and nationally specific features of each country does not exist for them. . . .

They do not understand that the chief task of leadership, now that the Communist Parties have grown and become mass parties, is to discover, to grasp, the nationally peculiar features of the movement in each country and skillfully co-ordinate them with the Comintern's general principles, in order to facilitate and make feasible the basic aims of the Communist movement.

Hence the attempts to stereotype the leadership for all countries. Hence the attempts mechanically to implant certain general formulas, regardless of the concrete conditions of the movement in different countries. Hence the endless conflicts between the formulas and the revolutionary movement in the different countries, as the main outcome of the leadership of these pseudo-leaders.<sup>31</sup>

Compare Stalin's statement with Hoxha's typical jumble:

In this period [since 1935—JW] Mao Tsetung and his supporters launched a "theoretical" campaign under the slogan of the struggle against "dogmatism," "ready-made patterns," "foreign stereotypes," etc., and raised the problem of elaborating a national Marxism, negating the universal character of Marxism-Leninism. Instead of Marxism-Leninism he preached the "Chinese way" of treating problems, and the Chinese style "...lively and fresh, pleasant to the ears and eyes of the Chinese people," in this way propagating the revisionist thesis that in each country Marxism should have its individual, specific content.<sup>32</sup>

Before showing what Mao *actually* said in the passage Hoxha is "quoting," it is worth noting that Hoxha completely negates the struggle against dogmatism that Stalin called for, and simply ridicules the idea that "foreign stereotypes" or "ready-made patterns" could be a problem in the Party and the revolutionary movement. His purpose is clear, in that he wants to impose the Albanian Party's own stereotyped line on the entire international communist movement. As far as the charge that Mao negated the "universal character of Marxism-Leninism," once again we will let Mao speak for himself—and once again from the *very paragraph* (and the one that precedes it) which Hoxha is "quoting":

*The theory of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin is universally applicable.* We should regard it not as a dogma, but as a guide to action. Studying it is not merely a matter of learning terms and phrases but of learning Marxism-Leninism as the essence of revolution. It is not just a matter of understanding the general laws derived by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin from their extensive study of real life and revolutionary experience, but of studying their standpoint and method in examining and solving problems. Our Party's mastery of Marxism-Leninism is now rather better than it used to be, but is still far from being extensive or deep. Ours is the task of leading a great nation of several hundred million in a great and unprecedented struggle. For us, therefore, the spreading and deepening of the study of Marxism-Leninism present a big problem demanding an early solution which is possible only through concentrated effort...

...Being Marxists, Communists are internationalists, but we can put Marxism into practice only

when it is integrated with the specific characteristics of our country and acquires a definite national form. *The great strength of Marxism-Leninism lies precisely in its integration with the concrete revolutionary practice of all countries.* For the Chinese Communist Party, it is a matter of *learning to apply the theory of Marxism-Leninism to the specific circumstances of China.* For the Chinese Communists who are part of the great Chinese nation, flesh of its flesh and blood of its blood, any talk about Marxism in isolation from China's characteristics is merely Marxism in the abstract, Marxism in a vacuum. Hence to apply Marxism concretely in China so that its every manifestation has an indubitably Chinese character, *i.e., to apply Marxism in the light of China's specific characteristics,* becomes a problem which it is urgent for the whole Party to understand and solve. Foreign stereotypes must be abolished, there must be less singing of empty, abstract tunes, and dogmatism must be laid to rest; they must be replaced by the fresh, lively Chinese style and spirit which the common people of China love. *To separate internationalist content from national form* is the practice of those who do not understand the first thing about internationalism. We, on the contrary, must link the two closely. In this matter there are serious errors in our ranks which should be conscientiously overcome.<sup>33</sup>

Thus we can see through the disgusting deceit that Enver Hoxha is trying to perpetrate, as well as the fact that he himself understands nothing of this question. Mao is stressing that Marxism-Leninism is universally applicable because it *can and must be applied* to the concrete conditions of each country. Of course, this is not a new discovery of Mao's, but a basic principle of Marxism—although a principle which has not found its way into Hoxha's thinking. To argue differently—that the analyses, strategy and tactics developed by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, or for that matter Mao, forged in the course of their revolutionary practice, can simply be *imposed* on any set of circumstances—is really to "negate" the real process of integrating Marxism with the revolutionary movement, as well as being a total liquidation of the meaning of dialectical materialism. This will only lead to the defeat of the proletarian party and the surrendering of leadership in the revolution.

We can also see from Hoxha's hatchet job the deliberate effort to misrepresent what Mao is actually saying. Hoxha claims that Mao is "propagating the revisionist thesis that in each country Marxism should have its individual, specific content." But Mao says



very clearly that the content of Marxism and internationalism acquire a definite "national form." Is Hoxha incapable of understanding the difference between form and content, or does he choose to lie just to confuse matters?

### Mao, Stalin and Khrushchev

Unfortunately 1927 was not the last time in the history of the Chinese Revolution that the Comintern gave poor advice to the Chinese communists. We have already pointed out that the Wang Ming line, which Hoxha so stubbornly defends long after it has been proven to be wrong, was to varying degrees supported by the Comintern and perhaps by Stalin as well. From 1935 onward, during the period of the war against Japan, Wang Ming generally proposed a capitulationist line, and once again had the support of the Comintern in doing so. Wang Ming called for a "united government of national defense" in direct opposition to Mao's call for a "people's republic" and for a united front against Japan. Wang Ming at this time supported Chiang Kai-shek's condition for unity with the Communists—namely that Chiang be given control over the Red Army. Of course Mao vigorously fought—and defeated—this.

This same tendency came out in much sharper form in 1945, following the defeat of Japan. At that time Stalin argued strenuously that the Chinese Communist Party should cast away any perspective of completing the bourgeois-democratic revolution in the near future and should instead fight for a legal role in a bourgeois republic led by Chiang Kai-shek. In response to the situation following the defeat of Japan, Mao did, correctly, enter into negotiations with Chiang, but at the same time he made very clear that any coalition government that was formed would have to be on the basis of preserving the independence of the Communist Party, its base areas, and its army. It was in 1945 that Mao put forward his famous statement "without a People's Army the people have nothing" as a direct rebuke to those who would have had the People's Army dissolve and be absorbed unconditionally into a Chiang government. It should be noted that this policy, which was being urged on the Chinese Party, was the line that many of the parties of Western Europe (in France, Italy and Greece, for example) followed at the time, with the result that any immediate prospect for revolution was lost.

And in 1946, when the revisionist wind was blowing full force in many of the communist parties in the world under the cover of the compromises the Soviet Union was making with the major imperialist powers it had been allied with during the war, Mao made a very salient observation:

Such compromise does not require the people in the countries of the capitalist world to follow suit and make compromises at home. The people in those countries will continue to wage different struggles in accordance with their different conditions. The principle of the reactionary forces in dealing with the democratic forces of the people is definitely to destroy all they can and to prepare to destroy later whatever they cannot destroy now. Face to face with this situation, the democratic forces of the people should likewise apply the same principle to the reactionary forces.<sup>34</sup>

The rest is history. Mao led the Party in waging the civil war against Chiang Kai-shek (in reality a war of liberation against U.S. imperialism and its domestic props, represented by Chiang) that led to nationwide victory in 1949. Up until the very end Stalin doubted their ability to seize power and continued to deal with Chiang's government (including the granting of military aid) as though it would last for a long time.

Unlike Hoxha, however, Stalin was quick to admit his error in underestimating the strength of the Chinese Revolution and the possibility of its victory over the reactionary KMT regime. Stalin said straightforwardly that he was glad to have been proven wrong.

But despite Hoxha's charge that Mao "casts the blame on the Comintern and its representatives in China" for the defeats and deviations in the Party,<sup>35</sup> in fact Mao put the blame on those Chinese "Communists" who insisted on blindly following others and who attempted to use their support from the Soviets as capital with which to promote incorrect lines. Again, it is worthwhile to look at Hoxha's excerpt from Mao and compare it to the actual text. Hoxha notes that Mao said that Stalin made "a number of mistakes in connection with China. The 'Left' adventurism pursued by Wang Ming in the latter part of the Second Revolutionary Civil War period and his Right opportunism in the early days of the War of Resistance Against Japan can both be traced to Stalin."<sup>36</sup>

This quote, along with some other points, is, according to Hoxha, an example of Mao's "attack against Stalin... intended to disparage his work and authority, to raise Mao Tsetung's authority to the rank of a world leader, a classic of Marxism-Leninism, who allegedly has always pursued a correct and infallible line!"<sup>37</sup>

In fact the quotes that Hoxha uses are far from an attempt to "disparage" Stalin's work, but rather taken from a passage of Mao's *defending* Stalin against the attack of the Khrushchevite revisionists. The paragraph Hoxha quotes (selectively) from actually reads like this:

In the Soviet Union, those who once extolled Stalin to the skies have now in one swoop consigned him to purgatory. Here in China some people are following their example. It is the opinion of the Central Committee that Stalin's mistakes amounted to only 30 per cent of the whole and his achievements to 70 per cent, and that all things considered Stalin was nonetheless a great Marxist. We wrote "On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" on the basis of this evaluation. This assessment of 30 per cent for mistakes and 70 per cent for achievements is just about right. Stalin did a number of wrong things in connection with China. The "Left" adventurism pursued by Wang Ming in the latter part of the Second Revolutionary Civil War period and his Right opportunism in the early days of the War of Resistance Against Japan can both be traced to Stalin. At the time of War of Liberation, Stalin first enjoined us not to press on with the revolution, maintaining that if civil war flared up, the Chinese nation would run the risk of destroying itself. Then when fighting did erupt, he took us half seriously, half sceptically. When we won the war, Stalin suspected that ours was a victory of the Tito type, and in 1949 and 1950 the pressure on us was very strong indeed. Even so, we maintain the estimate of 30 percent for his mistakes and 70 per cent for his achievements. This is only fair.<sup>38</sup>

Several things are worth noting about this statement. First, it was written in April of 1956, only months after Khrushchev's "secret speech" condemning Stalin and at a time when the Albanian Party, including Hoxha, had not yet seen through Khrushchevite revisionism. Secondly, in outlining Stalin's errors in regards to the Chinese revolution, Mao was not telling anybody anything that wasn't well known in China. What he was emphasizing was that *despite* these errors Stalin had to be upheld as a "great Marxist." And he was criticizing those who were following Khrushchev's wild and hysterical revisionism.

It is interesting to note that in Hoxha's book he doesn't dare repeat the lie that is found in some of his other statements of the past several years (and which some of the sects who follow him have broadcast)—that the Albanian Party initiated the struggle against modern revisionism. Such a claim is completely at variance with the facts based on public statements. In a backhanded way, however, Hoxha tries to slip it in the back door by saying the ties between the Albanian and Chinese Parties became closer "especially when the Communist Party of China, too, entered into open conflict with the Khrushchevite revisionists."<sup>39</sup> The follow-

ing statement by Mao in November 1956 makes very clear what Mao's attitude was toward Stalin and Khrushchevite revisionism:

I would like to say a few words about the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. I think there are two "swords": one is Lenin and the other Stalin. The sword of Stalin has now been discarded by the Russians. Gomulka and some people in Hungary have picked it up to stab at the Soviet Union and oppose so-called Stalinism. The Communist Parties of many European countries are also criticizing the Soviet Union, and their leader is Togliatti. The imperialists also use this sword to slay people with. Dulles, for instance, has brandished it for some time. This sword has not been lent out, it has been thrown out. We Chinese have not thrown it away. First, we protect Stalin, and, second, we at the same time criticize his mistakes, and we have written the article "On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat." Unlike some people who have tried to defame and destroy Stalin, we are acting in accordance with objective reality.

As for the sword of Lenin, hasn't it too been discarded to a certain extent by some Soviet leaders? In my view, it has been discarded to a considerable extent. Is the October Revolution still valid? Can it still serve as the example for all countries? Khrushchov's report at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union says it is possible to seize state power by the parliamentary road, that is to say, it is no longer necessary for all countries to learn from the October Revolution. Once this gate is opened, by and large Leninism is thrown away.<sup>40</sup>

'Thus we can see clearly that Mao understood the essence of the Stalin question and the essence of Khrushchevite revisionism at a time when, by their own admission, the nature of Khrushchev was "not well recognized" by the Albanian Party, which "was not yet fully convinced" of Khrushchev's revisionism.<sup>41</sup> We search in vain through Hoxha's *Selected Works*, looking for anything during this period in the late 1950s which evinces an understanding anywhere near Mao's of the meaning of what was happening in the Soviet Union. All that is to be found is the recognition that after the 20th Congress the imperialists and others (like the Yugoslavians) took advantage of Khrushchev's attack on Stalin to attack socialism, and complaints that the Soviet Union had softened its stand on Yugoslavia;<sup>42</sup> and even here, while it was of course correct to at-

tack Tito's blatant revisionism, Hoxha's concern often has overtones more of narrow nationalism than of proletarian internationalism, with Hoxha expressing the fear of "... intervention by the Yugoslav army under the pretext of saving socialism in Albania."<sup>43</sup> The point is not that this fear was unwarranted—for it did have some foundation—but that the works from this period which the Albanian Party has chosen to reprint do not show Hoxha making any attempt at an analysis of the general line coming out of the CPSU's 20th Congress.

Of course there is at least one work by Hoxha which is referred to in the notes of his *Selected Works* but is not printed there. This is a speech delivered "at the solemn meeting on the 15th anniversary of the founding of the PLA, on November 8, 1956."<sup>44</sup> This would appear to be the same, or the same in substance, as "the article 'The Party of Labour of Albania Completes its 15th Year', written by comrade Enver Hoxha and published in the newspaper 'Pravda', on November 8, 1956,"<sup>45</sup> which, Hoxha notes, "... was published in full in 'Pravda', without any alteration."<sup>46</sup> Actually it is not too surprising that the Albanian Party preferred not to republish this, for in fact, while attacking Yugoslavia and Titoism, it gives virtually unqualified endorsement to the 20th Congress!<sup>47</sup>

Of course, it is not that everyone has to be absolutely clear on every question right from the beginning or else be branded a renegade. The question is, rather, how can Hoxha justify puffing himself up and pretending to be the grand old man in the fight against Soviet revisionism when the evidence shows that he vacillated, betrayed a very partial understanding of what was going on, and could not offer anything approaching the level of the analysis of the revisionist takeover in the USSR which the Chinese Communist Party made under Mao's leadership.

And later, it was by no means a matter of the CPC "too" entering into open conflict with Soviet revisionism. It was, of course, the Chinese Communist Party (under Mao's leadership, it need hardly be added) which opened the public conflict over the revisionist theses of the Soviet 20th Congress on April 16, 1960, with the publication of "Long Live Leninism!" in the Party's theoretical journal *Red Flag*. The Chinese Party continued this attack at the meeting of the World Federation of Trade Unions in Peking in June 1960. Later that month, at the Third Congress of the Rumanian Communist Party in Bucharest, representatives of various communist parties in attendance there met "... in order to fix the place and date of a meeting of all the parties, at which they will discuss, among other things, the disagreements existing between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of China." This quotation describing the purpose of the meeting is from Enver Hoxha, writing at the time, and he goes on to say: "We must listen not only to what the Soviet comrades

say, but also to what the Chinese say, and then have our say in the discussion."<sup>48</sup> Later that year, when such a meeting was held (November 1960 in Moscow), Hoxha's speech there was clearly oriented toward supporting the analysis and stand of the Chinese Communist Party—supporting the Chinese rejection of the "new" theses of the 20th Congress, a rejection which the Albanians had now decided was correct.

For Hoxha now to present himself as the *leader* in the fight against Soviet revisionism and accuse Mao of "vacillation" is ludicrous.

## II. The Construction of Socialism in China

It is difficult to give a thorough critique of Hoxha's analysis of the development of socialism, or lack of it, in China, as this section of his book is even more riddled with eclectics, cheap shots and deliberate falsifications. His basic thesis seems to be "that the Chinese revolution remained a bourgeois-democratic revolution and did not develop into a socialist revolution."<sup>49</sup>

The heart of Hoxha's argument is that under Mao's leadership the proletariat "shared power" with the national bourgeoisie. He states:

The transition from the bourgeois-democratic revolution to the socialist revolution can be realized only when the proletariat resolutely removes the bourgeoisie from power and expropriates it. As long as the working class in China shared power with the bourgeoisie, as long as the bourgeoisie preserved its privileges, the state power that was established in China, could not be the state power of the proletariat, and consequently, the Chinese revolution could not grow into a socialist revolution.<sup>50</sup>

When, in 1949, the People's Liberation Army succeeded in smashing the Kuomintang and establishing nationwide victory, the democratic revolution was in the main and essentially completed. Mao held, correctly, that all those sections of the people who opposed feudalism and imperialism, who were willing to accept a social order based upon the interests of the working class and the worker-peasant alliance, should be given rights in the new state. In the concrete conditions of China, this meant that sections of the bourgeoisie—particularly the middle, or national, bourgeoisie—which fit these criteria should be included in the democratic dictatorship led by the proletariat and were not, at that time at least, objects of such a dictatorship. This analysis was completely in keeping with Mao's basic—and correct—line on the

nature of the Chinese revolution, its targets, its motive forces, and its allies, however vacillating.

At the same time, Mao laid out the basic policy of the new government for the transformation to the socialist revolution in March 1949, even *before* nationwide victory was won. Mao clearly stated that:

After the enemies with guns have been wiped out, there will still be enemies without guns; they are bound to struggle desperately against us; we must never regard these enemies lightly. . . .

On whom shall we rely in our struggles in the cities? Some muddle-headed comrades think we should rely not on the working class but on the masses of the poor. Some comrades who are even more muddle-headed think we should rely on the bourgeoisie. . . . We must wholeheartedly rely on the working class, unite with the rest of the labouring masses, win over the intellectuals and win over to our side as many as possible of the national bourgeois elements and their representatives who can co-operate with us—or neutralize them—so that we can wage a determined struggle against the imperialists, the Kuomintang and the bureaucrat-capitalist class and defeat these enemies step by step.<sup>51</sup>

This strategy for advancing the revolution was based on the concrete conditions of China, in which modern industry consisted of only 10% of the national economy, while agriculture and handicrafts comprised the other 90%. Mao pointed out that, while this situation required the participation of the national bourgeoisie in the economy and a certain role for it even within the state itself, fundamentally the existence of a modern industry enabled the working class to lead the revolution and carry out socialist construction. He pointed out:

As a result, China has new classes and new political parties—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, proletarian and bourgeois parties. The proletariat and its party, because they have been oppressed by manifold enemies, have become steeled and are qualified to lead the Chinese people's revolution. Whoever overlooks or belittles this point will commit Right opportunist mistakes.<sup>52</sup>

Mao goes on to say that:

China's modern industry, though the value of its out-

put amounts to only about 10 per cent of the total value of output of the national economy, is extremely concentrated; the largest and most important part of the capital is concentrated in the hands of the imperialists and their lackeys, the Chinese bureaucrat-capitalists. The confiscation of this capital and its transfer to the people's republic led by the proletariat will enable the people's republic to control the economic lifelines of the country and will enable the state-owned economy to become the leading sector of the entire national economy. This sector of the economy is socialist, not capitalist, in character. Whoever overlooks or belittles this point will commit Right opportunist mistakes.<sup>53</sup>

Thus Mao's orientation of moving the revolution forward to socialism was not a mere "shibboleth," as Hoxha derisively calls it, but was based upon the actual realities of China and was backed up with a clear view of how to begin the process of socialist transformation of the economy. At the same time, Mao recognized that this could not be accomplished at one stroke. There still remained the huge agricultural and handicraft sections of the economy, in which capitalists still had some role to play and could not immediately be wiped out. He argued that:

In this period all capitalist elements in the cities and countryside which are not harmful but beneficial to the national economy should be allowed to exist and expand. This is not only unavoidable but also economically necessary. But the existence and expansion of capitalism in China will not be unrestricted and uncurbed as in the capitalist countries. It will be restricted from several directions—in the scope of its operation and by tax policy, market prices and labour conditions. . . . The policy of restricting private capitalism is bound to meet with resistance in varying degrees and forms from the bourgeoisie, especially from the big owners of private enterprises, that is, from the big capitalists. Restriction versus opposition to restriction will be the main form of class struggle in the new-democratic state [i.e., during the transition to socialism—J.W.].<sup>54</sup>

'This is the policy which Hoxha calls giving priority to the development of capitalism!

Anticipating that the reader might wonder how he squares his criticism of Mao in the early years of the People's Republic with Lenin's well-known New Economic Policy in the early years of the

Soviet Republic after the civil war, Hoxha quotes Lenin, who said:

There is nothing dangerous to the proletarian state in this so long as the proletariat keeps political power firmly in its hands, so long as it keeps transport and big industry firmly in its own hands.<sup>55</sup>

And Hoxha comments:

In fact, neither in 1949 nor in 1956, when Mao Tsetung advocated these things, did the proletariat in China have political power or big industry in its own hands.

Moreover, Lenin considered the NEP as a *temporary* measure which was imposed by the concrete conditions of Russia of that time, devastated by the long civil war, and not as a universal law of socialist construction. And the fact is that one year after the proclamation of the NEP Lenin stressed that the retreat was over, and launched the slogan to prepare for the offensive against private capital in the economy. Whereas in China, the period of the preservation of capitalist production was envisaged to last almost eternally. According to Mao Tsetung's view, the order established after liberation in China had to be a bourgeois-democratic order, while the Communist Party of China had to appear to be in power. Such is "Mao Tsetung thought."<sup>56</sup>

The typical Hoxhaite mishmash of distortions and lies! First of all, political power, as well as transport and the key sections of big industry, were in the hands of the proletariat immediately following liberation in 1949. The proletariat and the Communist Party played the leading role in the state. As for transport and big industry in particular not being in the hands of the proletariat, apparently Hoxha believes that if he fantasizes something and puts it down on paper, people will accept it uncritically. This may be true of the sorry "international" he is trying to form around himself, but it will never be accepted by genuine Marxist-Leninists.

It is most amusing that Hoxha chose to emphasize the words "temporary measure imposed by the concrete conditions in Russia." The concrete conditions in China were much less favorable for the immediate expropriation of the entire bourgeoisie. As we have pointed out, China was far more backward than Russia, it had been wrecked by not a few years of civil war, but by *three decades* of war, and had been ravaged and held in strangulation and stagnation by imperialism and feudalism. These were the concrete conditions that led Mao to adopt the policies that he did.

As for Hoxha's brilliant observation that Lenin did not see the NEP as a "universal law of socialist construction" (as if Mao did) and his assertion that "the preservation of capitalist production was envisaged by Mao to last almost eternally," all we can do is remind him of the words Lenin directed against an equally brilliant polemicist (namely Kautsky), that attributing to an opponent an obviously stupid position and then refuting it is a method used by none too clever people—and none too Marxist, either, it might be added.

The theory of the new-democratic stage of the revolution in China will be dealt with more fully below, but already we can see that even at the earliest stage of the People's Republic of China, when the emphasis was and had to be on consolidating the victory over the imperialists, landlords, and the big Chinese capitalists tied directly to the former, Mao was already taking the necessary steps to ensure that China's future would be socialist and not capitalist. He did this by taking specific socialist measures to ensure that the *leading factor* of the economy would be the state-owned socialist sector and, more importantly, Mao waged a fierce struggle in the Party to make clear what the direction of the Chinese revolution had to be and to prepare the masses for the struggle to come.

As early as 1952 Mao began to sharply criticize the theory of the "synthesized economic base"—a line promoted by Liu Shao-chi which argued that China's economy would be an harmonious amalgam of socialist industry, private industry, and a peasant economy. While Mao did, correctly, point out that all of the elements of capitalism in town and country could not be done away with at once, and some features would last a relatively long time, he made very clear that the *transition* to the socialist society had begun and that to try to "consolidate" the new-democratic order meant to plunge China onto the capitalist road. Theoretically this took expression in Mao's statement of June 1952 that:

With the overthrow of the landlord class and the bureaucrat-capitalist class, the contradiction between the working class and the national bourgeoisie has become the principal contradiction in China; therefore the national bourgeoisie should no longer be defined as an intermediate class.<sup>57</sup>

Thus Mao clearly pointed out that the national bourgeoisie was a *target* of the socialist revolution. Did this mean, then, that all bourgeois property could be immediately expropriated or that politically the entire bourgeoisie could be disenfranchised at a single stroke? No, the realities of the Chinese economy still required the participation of sections of the bourgeoisie and it was still necessary to win the masses to carry further the socialist

revolution—particularly unleashing the poor and lower-middle peasantry to carry out the collectivization of agriculture, but also utilizing and winning over the bulk of the intelligentsia, which had to a large extent been attached to the national bourgeoisie.

Once again, Mao's own words are much more useful to the reader than Hoxha's characterization of them:

Some people think the period of transition is too long and give way to impatience. This will lead to "Left" deviationist mistakes. Others have remained where they were after the victory of the democratic revolution. They fail to realize there is a change in the character of the revolution and they go on pushing their "New Democracy" instead of socialist transformation. This will lead to Right deviationist mistakes. . . .

"Firmly establish the new-democratic social order." That's a harmful formulation. In the transition period changes are taking place all the time and socialist factors are emerging every day. How can this "new-democratic order" be "firmly established"? . . . The period of transition is full of contradictions and struggles. Our present revolutionary struggle is even more profound than the revolutionary armed struggle of the past. It is a revolution that will bury the capitalist system and all other systems of exploitation once and for all. The idea, "Firmly establish the new-democratic social order", goes against the realities of our struggle and hinders the progress of the socialist cause.

"Move from New Democracy towards socialism." That's a vague formulation. Moving towards the goal and nothing more, moving towards it year in year out and still moving towards it after a lapse of fifteen years? Merely moving towards it means that the goal has not been reached. The formulation sounds plausible but does not bear scrutiny.<sup>58</sup>

The above statement, written in 1953, is further proof of Mao's line that the socialist revolution had begun, and directly contradicts Hoxha's characterization of it. Thus, it can be seen that Hoxha's allegation that Mao advocated the establishment of a "bourgeois-democratic order" "after liberation in China" is, once again, the opposite of the truth. Mao saw the *new-democratic "order"* in China after liberation as nothing less than the *transition to socialism*, characterized in substance by the rule of the proletariat—which was carried out in alliance with other progressive forces (as indeed it was, in somewhat different form, in Russia), most especially the masses of peasants (more on this later). Fur-

thermore, anyone with any familiarity with the Chinese Revolution knows full well that between the years 1952 and 1956 Mao and the Chinese Communist Party led a struggle on a mammoth scale in China that resulted in the *basic* accomplishment of constructing a socialist economic base.

Chief among these accomplishments was the tremendous struggle in the countryside to transform agriculture from an individual owner peasant economy into socialist ownership. Mao led the peasantry in going beyond the primitive "mutual aid teams" that had been set up during the Civil War in the base areas after land reform was carried out and then spread throughout China after the victory in 1949. "Mutual aid" had elements of the socialist future within it, but it still did not fundamentally alter the old property relations, as it left private ownership of land intact. Mao fought to lead the peasants to form higher-level cooperatives and achieve *basic* collectivization and then quickly to form massive people's communes—which represented the basic form of socialist ownership in the countryside for a long period of time, until the development of the productive forces and the rise in the socialist consciousness of the peasants could make possible a leap to state-owned farms with the peasants becoming wage workers.

To carry out this great battle Mao had to fight tooth and nail against the Rightists in the Party who held that "mechanization must precede collectivization" and tried to buttress their arguments by appealing to the experience of the Soviet Union, where collectivization did not take place until the early 1930s, Mao pointed out that to wait on collectivization until after China's weak industrial base could provide the tractors and so forth necessary to mechanize agriculture would spell disaster for the revolution. After land reform was accomplished, polarization among the peasants developed rapidly, with some acquiring a well-to-do status and others remaining relatively impoverished. Mao pointed out that to allow this situation to develop unchecked would lead to the break-up of the worker-peasant alliance, the bedrock of the Chinese revolution in both its new-democratic and socialist stages (though on a higher basis in the socialist stage).

In the cities, those factories that had been operated on a state capitalist basis (which, as pointed out earlier, were never the *dominant* factor in industry in the People's Republic) or on a joint state-private basis were converted into state property. It is true that in many instances the previous owners of these enterprises were given a fixed interest on the property seized from them—in fact, a form of exploitation of the workers' labor. This was done for several reasons. First, because of the particularities of the long democratic stage of the Chinese revolution, many members of the national bourgeoisie had gone along with some of the transformations that had taken place. Even while setting out to overthrow

and eliminate the bourgeoisie as a *class*, Mao saw certain tactical advantages in not treating every individual bourgeois as a die-hard enemy of the revolution. Second, the expertise of the bourgeoisie was still needed to operate certain factories and so on. This policy was not much different than Lenin's well-known policy of "bribing" some of the technicians and managers of the old capitalist class to function for the Soviet state—a policy which continued well into the 1930s, and one which represented a necessary compromise.<sup>59</sup>

The fact that these interest payments continued for several years following the socialist transformation of industry in China is used by Hoxha and others to insist that no genuine socialist transformation ever took place. This, however, is a gross distortion.

Once the nationalization of the means of production previously in the hands of the national bourgeoisie took place, one could no longer say they were capitalist enterprises. The factories belonged to the people as a whole, in the form of state ownership. Production levels and planning were based on the overall needs of society as set forth in the state plans, not by the dictates of the market nor by the need to show a profit. The previous owners could not sell or otherwise transfer their former holdings, and the small amount of interest they received on their previous holdings could not be re-invested as capital. Similarly, even in those plants where the old owners were retained in one capacity or another, they no longer had the decisive say about working conditions, work rules and so forth. The products of the workers' labor could not be appropriated privately. In short, there was no fundamental capitalist relationship in industry.

Of course, the interest paid the capitalists came from the labor of the working class and can thus be considered a form of exploitation. Similarly, when a socialist country imports capital goods from the imperialist countries and must pay interest for it (in one form or another), this represents a form of imperialist exploitation. But only a dogmatist—and mechanical materialist—would argue (as Hoxha has argued) that it is impermissible for a socialist state, big or small, to allow *any* loan agreements with the imperialists. This flies directly in the face of the policy of Lenin, who was willing to enter into a number of such agreements if conditions were right, or Stalin, who, as is well known, imported several whole factories from Western concerns, including Ford Motor Co. (This policy of Stalin's is more to be criticized than emulated, but it is the height of hypocrisy for Hoxha, here as elsewhere, to make a show of upholding Stalin against Mao, while conveniently "overlooking" Stalin's actual practice whenever it suits his purposes; and besides, on the *general* point at issue—the permissibility of loan agreements and the like in certain conditions—it is Stalin who is

right, as opposed to Hoxha.)

The point of raising this is to focus on the fact that even where socialist relations of production have been firmly established, there can remain remnants of what actually amount to capitalist relations, in this case in the form of interest payments. This whole question of capitalist elements existing even within socialism is one which Mao devoted much attention to solving, as we shall see later. And it is also a field in which he again carried through vigorous class struggle against the exploiters.

As is also well known (though Hoxha seems to have "forgotten"), the policy of paying interest to the old owners was abolished completely during the Cultural Revolution. If this were not the case, why do the present Chinese rulers vilify the "Four" (and actually Mao) for "mistreating the national bourgeoisie," and why do they call for all of their property and interest payments to be returned to them?—along with rapidly opening up China to imperialist exploitation for real and on a grand scale!

Naturally the kind of transformation of the economic base that was carried out in China in the first years of the People's Republic could not take place without fierce struggle in the superstructure—in the state institutions, in the Party, in educational and cultural fields, and in the sphere of ideology in general. Mao's prediction that "restriction or non-restriction of capitalism" would be the main form of the class struggle in the newly created People's Republic was borne out. Many of the bourgeois forces who had gone along with the people's regime came increasingly to oppose it as the socialist revolution deepened.

Much of this struggle came to a head during the years of 1956-59, a critical juncture in the class struggle in China. It was during those years that Mao championed the struggle for the people's communes as well as the other aspects of the Great Leap Forward, measures aimed at accelerating the socialist revolution and constructing new socialist relations of production while pushing the economy ahead on a socialist basis. It was also at exactly this time that Soviet revisionism emerged triumphant, marked saliently by Khrushchev's "secret speech" to the 20th Party Congress of the CPSU—which was not "secret" at all but, among other things, was a signal for revisionists in parties throughout the world (and China was certainly no exception) to jump out and fight for a revisionist line. At the same time, in a number of countries of Eastern Europe, notably Hungary and Poland, counter-revolutionaries had emerged and created much havoc under the signboard of opposing "dictatorship" and demanding (bourgeois) democracy. This situation also had its reflection in China, particularly among bourgeois intellectuals.

It was against this backdrop that Mao launched the "100 Flowers" campaign under the slogan of "Let a hundred flowers

blossom, let a hundred schools of thought contend." While offering no real analysis of this movement, Hoxha seizes on the slogan to make it seem that Mao's point was that "side by side with proletarian ideology, materialism and atheism, the existence of bourgeois ideology, idealism and religion, the growth of 'poisonous weeds' alongside 'fragrant flowers', etc., must be permitted." <sup>60</sup> Actually, any real examination of Mao's writings during this period makes clear that the purpose of the "100 Flowers" campaign was exactly the opposite of what Hoxha makes it out to be.

Mao analyzed that in Chinese society there still existed antagonistic classes—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat—and that the class struggle between these two classes was not about to go away or be eliminated by decree. Further, he noted that among the ranks of the people, including the workers and peasants, there were also many contradictions and that, if not handled correctly, these also could turn into antagonism and spell disaster for the revolution. Thus Mao was dealing concretely with the difficult situation of handling two types of contradictions—antagonistic and non-antagonistic—at the same time, categories which were not mutually exclusive but in fact were closely bound up with each other and with the possibility of being turned into their opposites. The contradiction with the intellectuals—who, on the one hand, in their great majority, supported the people's government, yet on the other hand were still unremolded and retained the ideology of the bourgeoisie—was, in the main, a non-antagonistic contradiction—that is, it had to be solved through debate and struggle and not through coercion or the stripping away of rights. At the same time, it was quite obvious that the contradiction between these unremolded bourgeois intellectuals interpenetrated with the antagonistic contradiction with the counter-revolutionaries, and that many of the themes being harped upon by the leading Rightists outside and inside of the Party were aimed at mobilizing these intellectuals as part of a social base with which to attack the socialist system.

Mao's thinking on this subject was also influenced by his summation of the experience of the Soviet Union. This involved not only the rise of Khrushchevite revisionism, but also an analysis of the mistakes Stalin had made, especially in the mid and late 1930s, when, after the basic socialist transformation of industry and agriculture had been accomplished, he declared that there were no longer antagonistic classes in the USSR—nor did he see the possibility of their arising. The basic question of the class struggle under socialism will be dealt with a little later in this article, but even at this early stage of the revolution, when the question of a new bourgeoisie arising from within the ranks of the Communist Party and the state was not principally the question faced by the Chinese Revolution, Mao's criticism of these errors of Stalin's had

an important influence on the direction he was taking. He recognized that to fail to see the difference between the two types of contradictions, to muddle the two together, meant two things—first, negating the possibility of capitalist restoration and the need to exercise the most vigorous dictatorship against those who would try to carry it out; and second, failing to understand that the contradictions among the people had to be dealt with in a different manner—through debate and struggle—and that not to do so would lead to transforming non-antagonistic contradictions into antagonistic ones and thus increasing the possibility that large sections of the people would be won over by the counter-revolutionaries and be mobilized as a social force for capitalist restoration. This problem, not "liberalism," was at the heart of Mao's policy of "let a hundred schools of thought contend."

With the understanding that the class struggle would continue under the new socialist system, and recognizing that a major battle was brewing because of the convergence of the domestic and international conditions cited earlier, Mao issued the call to "Let a hundred flowers blossom, let a hundred schools of thought contend." People were urged to freely air their opinions of the Communist Party, to express what they felt its defects to be, and to debate things out on the cultural, educational and scientific fronts. At the same time, Mao pointed out that the counter-revolutionaries (and here Mao was speaking specifically of those elements who had been uncovered and identified as such in the movements of the early '50s to suppress counter-revolutionaries) should not be allowed this kind of freedom of speech and, more importantly, he drew up guidelines to assist the masses in sorting out "fragrant flowers" from "poisonous weeds":

Literally the two slogans—let a hundred flowers blossom and let a hundred schools of thought contend—have no class character; the proletariat can turn them to account, and so can the bourgeoisie or others. Different classes, strata and social groups each have their own views on what are fragrant flowers and what are poisonous weeds. Then, from the point of view of the masses, what should be the criteria today for distinguishing fragrant flowers from poisonous weeds? In their political activities, how should our people judge whether a person's words and deeds are right or wrong? . . . the criteria should be as follows:

- (1) Words and deeds should help to unite, and not divide, the people of all our nationalities.
- (2) They should be beneficial, and not harmful, to socialist transformation and socialist construction.



- (3) They should help to consolidate, and not undermine or weaken, the people's democratic dictatorship.
- (4) They should help to consolidate, and not undermine or weaken, democratic centralism.
- (5) They should help to strengthen, and not shake off or weaken, the leadership of the Communist Party.
- (6) They should be beneficial, and not harmful, to international socialist unity and the unity of the peace-loving people of the world.

Of these six criteria, the most important are the two about the socialist path and the leadership of the Party.<sup>61</sup>

Mao had no illusions that the bourgeois Rightists would follow these criteria in the ensuing struggle. Quite the contrary. He fully expected them to launch a vicious assault on the leadership of the Party and on the socialist road, as did their counterparts in Hungary. He knew that they would leap out and try to mobilize public opinion for a restoration of capitalism *whether or not* the Party "allowed" them to do so. And by issuing the six criteria (and focusing especially on two of these), Mao was laying the best possible basis for the masses to sort out the flood of various opinions and political viewpoints that was sure to develop.

In the early weeks of the "hundred flowers" campaign during the spring of 1957, an all-out assault on the Party was launched by the Democratic League, a bourgeois political party which had participated in the government of the People's Republic, and by the newspaper *Wen Hui Pao*, closely linked to the former and also representing the political viewpoint of the national bourgeoisie. In addition, there was a phenomenon of members of the Party joining in the hysterical attack. The Rightists called for the institution of a Western-style "democracy," and demanded that the "Communist Party get off of the sedan chair." Posters went up in various strongholds of the Rightists, especially the universities, along the same themes. In addition there were ugly incidents where posters written supporting the Party were torn down, people beaten, and so on.

Mao's policy was to lay back and wait a few weeks, let the bourgeois Rightists jump out and expose themselves, and let those Party members with the same ideas and program rush to their defense. But far from seeing some sort of peaceful "coexistence" between the bourgeois line and Marxism-Leninism, Mao led the masses of people in launching a fierce counter-attack against the bourgeois Rightists. Under the blows of the Party and the masses, the bourgeois Rightists were forced to beat a hasty retreat, and the Party's leadership among the masses was consolidated in the pro-

**COMM.** The Western press and the Rightists in China bitterly accused Mao of having "tricked" them by allowing them to come out with their reactionary program and then stomping on it. Mao pointed out:

The masses could thus clearly distinguish those whose criticism was well intentioned from those whose so-called criticism was malevolent, and thus forces could be mustered to counter-attack when the time was ripe. Some say this was a covert scheme. We say it was an overt one. For we made it plain to the enemy beforehand: only when ghosts and monsters are allowed to come into the open can they be wiped out; only when poisonous weeds are allowed to sprout from the soil can they be uprooted. Don't the peasants weed several times a year? Besides, uprooted weeds can be used as manure. The class enemies will invariably seek opportunities to assert themselves. They will not resign themselves to losing state power and being expropriated. However much the Communist Party warns its enemies in advance and makes its basic strategy known to them, they will still launch attacks. Class struggle is an objective reality, independent of man's will. That is to say, class struggle is inevitable. It cannot be avoided even if people want to avoid it. The only thing to do is to make the best of the situation and guide the struggle to victory.<sup>62</sup>

And guide the struggle to victory is exactly what Mao did during the "hundred flowers" campaign. The masses were aroused and were not about to tolerate the frantic attacks on the victories that had been won in the revolution and the socialist transformations that had been taking place. The bourgeois Rightists retreated, but Mao pursued them and refused to let them worm out of their predicament with a few pious phrases of self-criticism. Those who had engaged in counter-revolutionary activities (and there were instances of beatings, even murder, by the bourgeois Rightists) were arrested and brought to justice. Despite Hoxha's attempts to portray Mao as a liberal who enjoyed having counter-revolutionaries around, Mao stated very clearly in the midst of the counter-attack against the bourgeois Rightists that:

Counter-revolutionaries must be eliminated wherever found. Kill few, but on no account repeal the death penalty or grant any general pardon. . . . [P]unish those whom the public identifies as bad elements. At present, certain functionaries in the judicial and public security departments are neglecting their duties and allowing

persons who should be arrested and punished to remain at large; this is wrong. Just as over-punishment is wrong, so is under-punishment, and these days the danger lies in the latter.<sup>63</sup>

In addition, the bourgeois Rightists outside and inside the Party who were labeled as such suffered a severe restriction of political rights. In fact, it was only after Mao died that the rights of these reactionaries were restored—by Hua Kuo-feng and Teng Hsiao-ping, following their revisionist coup.

The “hundred flowers” campaign continued throughout 1958. However, after the summer of 1957, the bourgeois Rightists were no longer on the offensive and the wall posters and newspaper commentary were instead the property of the broad masses, especially the workers and peasants. Criticisms of the Communist Party continued to come forward, but of an entirely different character, based in fact as well as word on the six criteria of Mao’s. These helped to steel and strengthen the Communist Party. And the widescale debate among the people left them with a much better understanding of the line of the Party and the nature of the socialist revolution and heightened their determination and their ability to carry it out.

As Mao was to point out, the “hundred flowers” campaign was also an important school for the Party itself, as well as for the masses. Mao pointed out:

Marxists should not be afraid of criticism from any quarter. Quite the contrary, they need to temper and develop themselves and win new positions in the teeth of criticism and in the storm and stress of struggle. Fighting against wrong ideas is like being vaccinated—a man develops greater immunity from disease as a result of vaccination. Plants raised in hothouses are unlikely to be hardy. Carrying out the policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend will not weaken, but strengthen, the leading position of Marxism in the ideological field.

What should our policy be towards non-Marxist ideas? As far as unmistakable counter-revolutionaries and saboteurs of the socialist cause are concerned, the matter is easy, we simply deprive them of their freedom of speech. But incorrect ideas among the people are quite a different matter. Will it do to ban such ideas and deny them any opportunity for expression? Certainly not. It is not only futile but very harmful to use crude methods in dealing with ideological questions among the people, with questions about man’s mental world.

You may ban the expression of wrong ideas, but the ideas will still be there. On the other hand, if correct ideas are pampered in hothouses and never exposed to the elements and immunized against disease, they will not win out against erroneous ones. Therefore, it is only by employing the method of discussion, criticism and reasoning that we can really foster correct ideas and overcome wrong ones, and that we can really settle issues.<sup>64</sup>

Thus we can clearly see the two aspects of the “hundred flowers” campaign which has been so maliciously and fraudulently attacked by Hoxha and the other dogmato-revisionists (and, for that matter, by the Khrushchevite revisionists at the time, who also slandered it as “liberalism”). First, it was an effort to head off and beat back a counter-revolutionary trend that was developing in China as a result of socialist transformations and the expropriation of the bourgeoisie in China, and the rise of revisionism internationally—especially in the Soviet Union but also with the counter-revolutionary rebellion in Hungary. Second, the “hundred flowers” was a call for a nationwide debate on the ideological front among the ranks of the people, a debate which could not help but deepen the influence of Marxism-Leninism in the ranks of the Chinese proletariat and people.

One might ask, why do the dogmato-revisionists throw such a tantrum at the “hundred flowers” campaign? Of course, the most obvious answer is that it offers an excellent opportunity for Hoxha & Co. to rip quotes out of context, turn reality on its head and try to make it appear that Mao was a common liberal. But beyond this, the “hundred flowers” campaign drives Hoxha into a frenzy because the political understanding that lay behind it strikes so deeply at the whole mechanical and false view he has of the development of socialism. According to the view now dominant in the Albanian party, the masses will come to embrace Marxism and discard bourgeois ideology not in the course of the fierce struggle between the two lines and the two roads, not through unleashing a torrent of debate and struggle, but through a steady, “uninterrupted” process of the party educating the masses—a view, as we shall see, that leads Hoxha to his counter-revolutionary assessment of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

While a comprehensive analysis of Hoxha’s overall line and the practice of the Albanian party is beyond the scope of this article, it is worthwhile to contrast Mao’s point of view in the “hundred flowers” campaign with the Albanian party’s attitude toward class struggle under socialism. For example, the new Albanian constitution, adopted at the end of 1976, states:

In the People's Socialist Republic of Albania there are no exploiting classes, private property and the exploitation of man by man have been liquidated and are forbidden.<sup>65</sup>

But no matter what is written in Albanian legal documents, and no matter how much Mr. Hoxha may *forbid* it, antagonistic classes still exist in Albania as they do and did in China. This provision in the constitution shows a confusion of legalistic forms with social reality. At the present point in history, it manifests a deliberate *rejection* of Marxism.

Because Hoxha does not recognize the existence of antagonistic classes in socialism after the expropriation of the bourgeoisie (on which more later), he cannot conceive of how to correctly handle the various types of contradictions within socialist society and inevitably falls into a whole series of "left" and right deviations, which lead, for one thing, to non-antagonistic contradictions among the masses being *turned into* antagonistic contradictions and the basis for socialist transformation being undermined.

Closely linked with Hoxha's criticisms of the "hundred flowers" campaign and Mao's alleged "liberalism" toward the national bourgeoisie is Hoxha's criticism of the policy of the Chinese Communist Party of allowing certain bourgeois political parties to exist and even to have a certain say in the ruling bodies of the state. Hoxha quotes Mao: "Which is better *in the final analysis*, to have just one party or several? As we see it now, it's perhaps better to have several parties. This has been true in the past and may well be so for the future; it means long-term coexistence and mutual supervision."<sup>66</sup> (Words in italics not in the English translation of Mao.)

Hoxha goes on to comment:

Mao regarded the participation of bourgeois parties in the state power and the governing of the country with the same rights and prerogatives as the Communist Party of China as necessary. And not only this, but these parties of the bourgeoisie, which according to him "were historical," should wither away only when the Communist Party of China also withers away, that is, they will coexist right up till communism.<sup>67</sup>

Once again it is most useful to let Mao speak for himself, and again from the same section from which Hoxha is "quoting":

The Communist Party and the democratic parties are all products of history. What emerges in history disappears in history. Therefore, the Communist Party will

disappear one day, and so will the democratic parties. Is this disappearance so unpleasant? In my opinion, it will be very pleasant. I think it is just fine that one day we will be able to do away with the Communist Party and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Our task is to hasten their extinction. We have spoken about this point many times.

But at present we cannot do without the proletarian party and the dictatorship of the proletariat and, what is more, it is imperative that they should be made still more powerful. Otherwise, we would not be able to suppress the counter-revolutionaries, resist the imperialists and build socialism, or consolidate it when it is built. Lenin's theory on the proletarian party and the dictatorship of the proletariat is by no means "outmoded," as alleged by certain people.<sup>68</sup>

Thus it can be seen that what Mao is saying has little resemblance to the words that Hoxha tries to put in his mouth. We assume that when Hoxha says the democratic parties "were historical," he is referring to Mao's statement that both the Communist Party and the democratic parties "are all products of history." This is an obvious fact just as it is also true that both the Communist Party and the democratic parties will disappear one day. Mao does not say that the democratic parties will exist *as long* as the Communist Party, that is, until the advent of communism.

The reason for Mao's policy of the "long-term coexistence and mutual supervision" of the Communist Party and the democratic parties is tied in directly with the actual conditions of the development of the Chinese revolution. Because the Chinese revolution went through a long democratic phase, it was natural and correct that some of the bourgeois parties who to one degree or another opposed imperialism and feudalism and were willing to work together with the Communist Party should have been allowed to play a certain role in the new regime. This was not only a question of trying to unite with certain bourgeois personages at the top of these parties, but more importantly, a question of uniting with, winning over and remolding the sections of the people under their influence—a not insignificant social force.

At the same time, Mao made clear that it was only on the basis of the leadership of the Communist Party, and of accepting the transition to socialism, that any kind of cooperation between the Communist Party and the democratic parties could be maintained. The idea that Hoxha proposes above, that the democratic parties enjoyed the same rights and prerogatives as the Communist Party, is absurd. The "right" and the "prerogative" to *lead* the revolution

was of course the responsibility of the Communist Party, and it was only on this basis that the democratic parties played any role whatsoever.

Mao had no illusions about the role of the democratic parties. He pointed out that they opposed many of the policies of the Communist Party as well as having a completely different world outlook. At the same time he pointed out that, "They are in opposition, and yet not in opposition, often proceeding from being in opposition to not being in opposition."<sup>69</sup> Only this process of proceeding to being not in opposition could provide the basis for long-term cooperation, and Mao was willing to hold open that possibility.

But Mao also prepared for another possibility as well, that the democratic parties could turn against the revolution. He pointed out clearly in 1957 at the beginning of the "hundred flowers" campaign that:

It is the desire as well as the policy of the Communist Party to exist side by side with the democratic parties for a long time to come. But whether the democratic parties can long remain in existence depends not merely on the desire of the Communist Party but on how well they acquit themselves and on whether they enjoy the trust of the people.<sup>70</sup>

Thus Mao made very clear what the "historical conditions" for the dissolution and withering away of the bourgeois parties was, and it was clearly not the same as the conditions for the Communist Party itself. "How well they acquit themselves" could only have meant whether or not they were willing to continue to accept the socialist transformations, and "enjoy the trust of the people" meant what attitude they took toward the workers and peasants and whether or not there was still a social base for these parties that had to be united with and won over.

In fact, the democratic parties largely ceased to exist during the Cultural Revolution. The form of their participation in the state, the Political Consultative Conference, became nothing more than a vestigial organ, with no power and usually no meetings. It was clear that in Mao's view and the view of those who made up his revolutionary headquarters, the historical conditions which had required cooperation with the democratic parties no longer existed (except, perhaps, in some limited way in relation to Taiwan).

It should be pointed out that despite Hoxha's attempt to make it appear that the existence of several parties is incompatible with Leninism, there is historical experience of this situation existing in the Soviet Union as well as in other countries. The October Revolution, for example, was launched not only by the Bolshevik Party

(which, of course, was the leading and driving force behind it) but also with the participation of the Left Socialist Revolutionaries. Lenin proposed that representatives of that party participate in the new government (the Council of People's Commissars) and wrote of the basis for this type of cooperation. Lenin pointed out that the Left Socialist Revolutionaries had great influence over the peasantry and to a certain extent represented those peasants willing to join the revolution, and thus he held that they had to be united with during and after the seizure of power. This cooperation between the Bolsheviks and the Left Socialist Revolutionaries was short-lived, not because Lenin and the Bolshevik Party adopted a policy of breaking up the alliance, but because the Left Socialist Revolutionaries rose up against the new regime, in particular in opposition to the treaty of Brest-Litovsk. Under these circumstances, the Bolshevik Party led a vigorous assault on the Left Socialist Revolutionaries who had become *objects* of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Much of the particular reason why the members of this party jumped out in opposition to the proletariat and the socialist regime was the fact that the revolution was on the defensive, under attack from the imperialists and the reactionaries. Had the situation worked out differently, there is nothing in Lenin's writings to suggest that a longer period of cooperation with the Left Socialist Revolutionaries might not have been possible.

Lenin even went so far as to say that "the disenfranchisement of the bourgeoisie is not a necessary and indispensable feature of the dictatorship of the proletariat."<sup>71</sup> While Lenin's statement can by this time be seen to be incorrect (at least if taken to mean over the entire period of socialism), it would be even more wrong—and indeed counter-revolutionary slander—to call him a common liberal on account of it! The point is that upholding and adhering to the dictatorship of the proletariat is a principle for communists, but in carrying it out different tactics may (and will almost certainly) be necessary for different situations, and even if mistakes are made in the choice and use of tactics, this is obviously no grounds for the sort of accusations Hoxha makes (leaving aside the fact that he has not made the slightest case for Mao's having made even tactical errors).

Further, while we are on the topic of "the leading and indivisible role of the Marxist-Leninist party in the revolution and the construction of socialism,"<sup>72</sup> it is worth noting that, as the official Albanian Party history admits, for years after liberation, "... the Party remained in a semi-illegal state even after it had become the leading party in power... the Party program was hidden under the program of the Democratic Front... Party members preserved the secrecy of their membership, and... the directions of the CPA [the Communist Party of Albania, as it was called at the time]

were published as decisions of the Democratic Front. . . ."<sup>73</sup> These policies are brought up in the context of a self-criticism by the Albanian Party itself, and they illustrate some rather blatant errors along the line of "everything through the united front."

Even while Mao, on the other hand, was allowing the existence of the democratic parties and encouraging cooperation with them, he pointed out that if the revolution were to take a different turn, if it were to come under assault from the imperialists on a large scale, for instance, the democratic parties could well turn viciously against the revolution. He warned sarcastically: "Should something happen like atom bombs blowing up Peking and Shanghai, wouldn't these people change? You can't be too sure they wouldn't. . . . many of them are lying low."<sup>74</sup>

Finally on this point, it is necessary to return more fully to one theoretical problem in understanding the nature of the Chinese state during the transition from the democratic revolution to the socialist revolution—the question of "the people's democratic dictatorship." At the time Mao first put forward this slogan—of the joint dictatorship of four classes, the working class, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie—the Chinese revolution was still in its first, democratic phase. Clearly all those classes, to greater or lesser degrees, had objective interests in seeing that revolution completed. Furthermore, one of the particularities of the Chinese revolution was that the long period of warfare and the existence of base areas meant that, in fact, *two regimes* were confronting each other. For instance, in the Third Revolutionary Civil War (the final war against Chiang Kai-shek), the base areas of the Communists (with a population of 100 million) confronted the Kuomintang-controlled areas. Naturally the existence of these base areas meant that it was necessary for the government to be able to suppress counter-revolutionaries, carry out the land reform, raise necessary food and clothing for the People's Liberation Army, keep the economy going, and so on. Mao's policy of a people's democratic dictatorship was implemented in the base areas during this civil war, and the political parties, personages and so forth of all of the four classes were represented in the organs of power. It is quite clear how this was a correct policy given the tasks of the revolution at that stage.

When the People's Republic was established in 1949, it involved the same class forces—basically those forces who sided with the revolution against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism. At the same time, this new government—clearly led by the working class and its Communist Party and based on the worker-peasant alliance—had the task of immediately embarking on the transition to socialism. Thus from the very beginning the "people's democratic dictatorship" had two contradictory aspects—on the one hand it represented the victory of the

democratic revolution and as such included representatives of the national bourgeoisie; on the other hand it was a government led by the political representatives of the working class that was determined to lead the revolution on to socialism and to the ultimate elimination of the bourgeoisie.

In retrospect it is quite clear that the latter aspect—the fact that the new regime was taking the socialist road—was principal and what determined its socialist character. By 1956 Mao was referring to the Chinese state as a "dictatorship of the proletariat" and the "people's democratic dictatorship" interchangeably. And subsequent Chinese literature refers to the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in 1949—i.e., with the victory of the democratic revolution on a nationwide scale.

Thus, in retrospect, it is apparent that the regime set up in 1949 was a *form* of the dictatorship of the proletariat—one which took into account the nature of Chinese society and the historical conditions which developed through the course of the democratic revolution.

Lenin had made an important observation in Russia which helps shed light on this subject. He pointed out that the dictatorship of the proletariat was, in the conditions of Russia, a *special form of class alliance*—specifically the alliance of the working class with the poor peasantry, who together comprised the majority of the people. It is not surprising that the *form* of class alliance necessary for the proletariat to exercise its rule—its dictatorship—in China would be different than in the Soviet Union, owing to the different material conditions and class makeups of the countries and the different paths to power that the revolution had gone through. It is also apparent that this alliance was not a static thing, that as the revolution developed into a socialist revolution, the nature of this alliance would change—hence Mao's statement in 1953 that the "national bourgeoisie can no longer be defined as an intermediate class."

It is also important to note that at the time Mao wrote his major theoretical works on this subject, there was no historical experience of the proletariat and its Communist Party in leading the victory of a democratic revolution and building a new social order on this basis. There was the experience of the People's Democracies formed in Eastern Europe (*including in Albania*) on the basis of the victory over the fascists, which were also distinguished from the dictatorship of the proletariat in the communist literature of the time (and which, incidentally, often included several parties in the government). However, for a number of reasons, this experience could not be summed up by Mao on a theoretical level at that time, and in any case these situations differed significantly from that in China. Thus, Mao was really dealing with a new historical situation, which he handled quite cor-

rectly—and he made new contributions to Marxism-Leninism and proletarian revolution in so doing.

It is the height of hypocrisy for Enver Hoxha to suggest that, especially since the achievement of the basic socialist transformation of ownership in 1956, the regime in China was anything other than the dictatorship of the proletariat. All of the literature put out during the Cultural Revolution until the time of the 1976 coup makes it quite clear that Mao's line and the line of the revolutionaries who supported him was for the proletariat to exercise dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in all spheres of social life. Furthermore, the entire experience of the Chinese revolution showed that Mao was leading the Chinese proletariat and masses in ruthlessly suppressing the bourgeoisie both in the form of the old exploiters dreaming of a comeback as well as new bourgeois elements engendered from within socialist society itself. Yet Hoxha is reduced to repeating the tired and unbelievably puny refrain of the Trotskyites as to why the Chinese state was not a dictatorship of the proletariat—the stars on the flag of the People's Republic!<sup>75</sup>

Having examined Hoxha's attacks on the course of the Chinese Revolution up through the basic establishment of a socialist economy in 1956 and the "hundred flowers" campaign the next year, and before going on to his attacks on the Cultural Revolution and Mao's line of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, it is worthwhile to step back for a moment and ask why Hoxha bases so much of his critique of Mao on that period of the Chinese revolution and tries to hinge almost his whole argument on the fact that, allegedly, Mao "conciliated" with the old exploiters in China.

First, Enver Hoxha likes to remain on what he thinks is firm ground. After all, analyzing the classes and the class contradictions under socialism is not his *forte*, and he hopes that a simple appeal to mechanical, dogmatic thinking coupled with a rewriting of history will win the naive reader to Hoxha's own reactionary conclusions. But more importantly, Hoxha is deliberately trying to steer the discussion *away* from where it has to center—the problem of how to prevent a *new* bourgeoisie, born out of the very socialist society, from seizing power and restoring capitalism. For it is exactly around *this* question that Mao Tsetung made his most vital and brilliant contributions to Marxism-Leninism and proletarian revolution, both in theory and practice. Hoxha does not want to, and cannot, take on Mao's line directly. He knows that on this front he will have even more trouble upholding the mistakes of Stalin as the final word on Marxism. Furthermore, he undoubtedly fears revealing to the world the truly eclectic and muddled formulations of the Albanian party on these questions. So he hopes to divert attention from the question of the Cultural Revolution and the line that lay behind it and instead focus on the old exploiters in Chinese

society, who, in fact, played only a secondary role in the restoration of capitalism in China. In trying to carry out the discussion on this basis, Hoxha is actually standing on the same footing as the current Chinese revisionist rulers, who were anxious to prove that the danger of capitalist restoration came from any place *other* than themselves. It is only now, with their coup completed and their efforts to keep much of a Marxist mask at all diminishing daily, that Huo and Teng have brought back and hailed most every dreg and exploiter of the old society.

### III. On Continuing the Revolution Under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

It was in developing the theory and practice of "continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat" that Mao Tsetung made his greatest contribution to and development of the science of Marxism-Leninism. This truth came to be recognized by all the genuine Marxist-Leninists in the course of the struggle against modern revisionism, and especially in the course of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. In fact, Hoxha and the Albanian Party spoke highly of this contribution of Mao's. It can be said that the recognition of this development of Marxism-Leninism by Mao was, and is, a cardinal point of demarcation between Marxism-Leninism and revisionism. Thus it comes as no surprise that in his attempts to dethrone Mao from the position as one of the great classic Marxist-Leninist teachers and leaders, Hoxha launches an hysterical, frenzied assault on the Cultural Revolution, without, however, ever trying to confront directly the theoretical teachings of Mao and the revolutionaries who fought together with him on this question.

Hoxha's summary of the Cultural Revolution is remarkable for its superficiality as well as its reactionary line:

The course of events showed that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was neither a revolution, nor great, nor cultural, and in particular, not in the least proletarian. It was a palace putsch on an all-China scale for the liquidation of a handful of reactionaries who had seized power.

Of course [!], this Cultural Revolution was a hoax. It liquidated both the Communist Party of China, and the mass organizations, and plunged China into new chaos. This revolution was led by non-Marxist elements [read: the Four], who have been liquidated through a military putsch staged by other anti-Marxist and fascist elements.<sup>76</sup>

Thus we have Hoxha's basic thesis—far from original—that the Cultural Revolution was nothing more nor less than a factional power struggle manipulated by a handful of leaders at the top of the Communist Party. What it shows is that he is unable to understand the dialectical development of socialist society and thus is completely at a loss to understand the Cultural Revolution and its world-historic lessons.

The Cultural Revolution is hated by Hoxha because it went entirely against his deep-rooted metaphysical world outlook, in which stability, unity and harmony are the principal characteristics of the universe and certainly the highest goals to strive for in earthly society. "Chaos" is Enver Hoxha's favorite epithet to hurl at the Cultural Revolution, for the concept of "chaos"—and in fact the struggle between opposites, the class struggle, *revolution itself*—goes against the Hoxha vision of the world and of where it is heading, which, as noted before, has much more in common with the religious conception of "heaven" than it does with dialectical materialism. Before going on with an examination of Hoxha's metaphysical world outlook, which is at the root of his entire attack on Mao, it is useful to examine the particular "chaos" he found so repugnant in China, the Cultural Revolution.

In the Cultural Revolution Mao committed the Ultimate Sin for the dogmato-revisionists—unleashing the revolutionary masses to struggle against and seize power from the leading capitalist-roaders within the Party who had usurped portions of Party and state power. If we are to take Hoxha at his word, he had no quarrel with going after those against whom the Cultural Revolution was directed—namely, Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping's revisionist headquarters (although we will see that his "opposition" to their line is more imaginary than real). But to unleash a torrent of mass struggle on an unprecedented scale, to not conduct the struggle through the orderly processes of the Party and state, and most importantly, to rely directly on the masses—the workers, peasants, soldiers and students—this was something else again!

Here is what Hoxha writes:

When we saw that this Cultural Revolution was not being led by the party but was a chaotic outburst following a call issued by Mao Tsetung, this did not seem to us to be a revolutionary stand. It was Mao's authority in China that made millions of unorganized youth, students and pupils, rise to their feet and march on Peking, on party and state committees, which they dispersed. It was said that these young people represented the "proletarian ideology" in China at that time and would show the party and the proletarians the "true" road!

... This grave situation stemmed from Mao

Tsetung's old anti-Marxist concepts of underestimation of the leading role of the proletariat and overestimation of the youth in the revolution. Mao wrote: "What role did the Chinese young people begin to play since the 'May 4th Movement'? In a way they began to play a vanguard role—a fact recognized by everybody in our country except the ultra-reactionaries. What is a vanguard role? It means taking the lead. . . ."

Thus the working class was left on the sidelines, and there were many instances when it opposed the red guards and even fought them. Our comrades, who were in China at the time, have seen with their own eyes factory workers fighting the youth. The party was disintegrated. It was liquidated, and the communists and the proletariat were totally disregarded. This was a very grave situation.<sup>77</sup>

Imagine that! The Albanian comrades actually saw "with their own eyes" factory workers fighting students! Hoxha's attitude can only be compared to Adam's after taking a bite out of the apple. It's lucky Hoxha didn't himself go to China during the Cultural Revolution, or he may have seen workers fighting workers and dropped dead of a heart attack right on the spot. The truly amazing question, and one we cannot answer at this time, is how Hoxha could actually have gone through a revolution and still utter such inanities.

The fact that during the Cultural Revolution Party committees were dissolved, the regular functioning of the Party's chain of command to a large degree suspended and so on are well known—they have always been harped upon by the Soviet revisionists as proof of Mao's "idealism" and ultra-"leftism". (Wang Ming's writings from Moscow—where he ended his career as an apologist for Soviet revisionism—again are particularly instructive, and after reading them one would suggest that his heirs sue Hoxha for plagiarism!) One understands why the Soviets don't want to talk about what was the nature of the Party committees that were dissolved, what line they were following, and so on, but one would hope for a little better from Enver Hoxha. Instead all we hear is about the form and not the content of the Party committees. And since people know very well what the actual content of those Party committees was and what line they were following, it cannot help but make the reader suspect that, despite Hoxha's protestations, he considers the "communists" so rudely "disregarded" to be none other than the Party bureaucrats aligned with Liu Shao-chi.

The situation Mao was addressing at the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966 is quite clear. The revisionist headquarters in the Party led by Liu Shao-chi had succeeded in usurping power in

many of the key industries, towns and provinces. Teng Hsiao-ping, in his capacity of General Secretary of the Party, held a hammerlock on the chains of command of the Party. Revisionism was dominant on the cultural and educational fronts. The revisionist line was being followed by a great many directors of factories and so on. This situation enabled the bourgeois headquarters to thwart the revolutionary line of Mao, severely hamper the training of the masses in Marxism-Leninism, and use a great deal of the organizational structure of the Party as a weapon to suppress and control the masses. (That this situation was not a result of Mao's "errors" or "liberalism" is a matter we will return to shortly.) The strength of the revisionist headquarters can be seen not only by examining the documents and policies that were prevalent at the time in the Chinese Party, but also by their subsequent strength in China even after being dealt some big defeats in the Cultural Revolution. For it is above all the old Liu Shao-chi headquarters, to which Teng is the rightful heir, together with the part of the bureaucracy loyal to Chou En-lai, that played the central role in the counter-revolutionary coup of 1976. The intensity with which the capitalist-roaders in China have attacked all the gains of the revolution and the speed with which they are restoring the capitalist system both indicate the real strength of this class. The notion that it could have been eliminated by merely reshuffling the make-up of the key bodies of the Party and putting out a directive or two would be laughable if it weren't criminal, especially in light of what has happened in China. Similarly, the *program* of the current revisionist rulers in China makes clear what it was that Mao and the revolutionary Left were fighting, that it was not simply an apolitical battle between "factions" but a battle between *classes* to decide along what line, what road, the bourgeois or the proletarian, China would advance.

It seems that Hoxha's advice to the revolutionaries in China comes down again to the tired refrain of the opportunists of Marx's day on the Paris Commune and Plekhanov's comments on the 1905 Revolution that "they should not have taken to arms." Of course the question wasn't whether to take up armed struggle, but it was a question of whether an actual *revolution* was called for, a political uprising directed against the top people in the Party taking the capitalist road. And, while it had particular features, occurring as it did under the dictatorship of the proletariat, it remains true that, like any revolution, the Cultural Revolution could only advance through turbulent struggle. It could not but have counter-currents within it and involve different sections of the revolutionary masses who brought into the struggle their own prejudices and limitations and, at times, contradictory outlooks and programs. And, like any revolution, it could not help but be met by fierce and stubborn resistance—not only from the targets of the

revolution who represented only a very small percentage of Chinese society and of the Party—but *also* from among sections of the masses themselves, *including even many workers*, who could be mobilized to one degree or another and at certain junctures as part of the social base and the social movement of the reactionaries. This is not simply a feature of the Cultural Revolution, it is a law of class struggle, of revolution in general. Here it might be helpful to recall Lenin's famous comment on the Easter Rebellion of the Irish people in 1916, directed at those who tried to use "Marxism" to ridicule, downplay and slander that heroic uprising as a "putsch" and by so doing ended in objective unity with the imperialist bourgeoisie.

The term "putsch," in its scientific sense, may be employed only when the attempt at insurrection has revealed nothing but a circle of conspirators or stupid maniacs, and has aroused no sympathy among the masses. The centuries-old Irish national movement, having passed through various stages and combinations of class interest, manifested itself, in particular, in a mass Irish National Congress in America... which called for Irish independence; it also manifested itself in street fighting conducted by a section of the urban petty bourgeoisie *and a section of the workers* after a long period of mass agitation, demonstrations, suppression of newspapers, etc. Whoever calls *such* a rebellion a "putsch" is either a hardened reactionary, or a doctrinaire hopelessly incapable of envisaging a social revolution as a living phenomenon.

To imagine that social revolution is *conceivable* without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without revolutionary outbursts by a section of the petty bourgeoisie *with all its prejudices*, without a movement of the politically non-conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against oppression by the landowners, the church, and the monarchy, against national oppression, etc.—to imagine all this is to *repudiate social revolution*. So one army lines up in one place and says, "We are for socialism", and another, somewhere else and says, "We are for imperialism", and that will be a social revolution! Only those who hold such a ridiculously pedantic view could vilify the Irish rebellion by calling it a "putsch".

Whoever expects a "pure" social revolution will *never* live to see it. Such a person pays lip-service to revolution without understanding what revolution is.<sup>78</sup>



Lenin's words strike hard at the dogmato-revisionist line of Enver Hoxha, which leads him to slander *the most massive, sustained and conscious revolutionary upsurge in the history of the world* as "a palace putsch on an all-China scale."

Let us look further at the way Hoxha treats the question of youth, of the role they can play as an *initiating factor* in the revolution. He condemns the Cultural Revolution because "millions of unorganized youth, students and pupils" rose to their feet and marched on Peking. The theoretical basis for this "error," according to Hoxha, is found in Mao's famous work "Orientation of the Youth Movement," where Mao has the audacity to say that "in a way" Chinese youth began to play a vanguard role, which he defines as "taking the lead and marching in the forefront of the revolutionary ranks."<sup>79</sup>

Again, we will have to agree with Mao and not with Hoxha. First of all, it is a fact, undeniable by anyone with the slightest concern for historical accuracy, that Chinese youth did "in a way" play a vanguard role in the May 4th Movement in China and subsequently. It is equally undeniable that this historical experience, of youth "taking the lead," of "marching in the forefront of the revolutionary ranks" has been repeated numerous times and throughout history. Today we see this before our very eyes in Iran, where the youth, including the students and young intellectuals, have stood in the forefront of that mighty movement, helping to arouse the broad masses of the Iranian proletariat and people, and sacrificing their lives in the armed struggle. Indeed, it is difficult to comprehend *any* truly great and profound revolutionary process in which this wasn't true to a large degree.

But for Hoxha, the dynamic role of youth—their daring, their desire to destroy the old world, and so on—is really more of a liability than an asset, something to be attacked and stifled unless it can be "led" (by which he really means *controlled*) by the working class and its party. (As with the peasant question, at issue is not whether or not youth will rise up, but whether *to lead or to stifle* the initiative of the youth.)

What does it mean for the working class and its party to "lead" the youth? According to Hoxha it means that the youth should trail passively at the *rear* of the working class, and heaven forbid the thought that the youth might themselves have a kind of vanguard, that is leading, role to play in mobilizing and organizing the broad ranks of the people.

Mao is, of course, quite clear that in an overall sense it is the working class that must provide leadership in the revolution. In the companion article to the one Hoxha quotes,\* Mao makes quite

\*The short article "The May 4th Movement." Both the article and the speech came out on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the May 4th Movement, in 1939.

clear the basic class relationships:

China's democratic revolution depends on definite social forces for its accomplishment. These social forces are the working class, the peasantry, the intelligentsia and the progressive section of the bourgeoisie, . . . with the workers and peasants as the basic revolutionary forces and the workers as the class which leads the revolution. It is impossible to accomplish the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal democratic revolution without these basic revolutionary forces and without the leadership of the working class.<sup>80</sup>

But it is at this point that Mao and Hoxha part company. For once it is agreed upon that there must be the "leadership of the working class" (and this can only mean, first and foremost, the leadership of the working class *party* and of the working class line, Marxism-Leninism), the question remains, what is the *content* of this leadership, what does it seek to accomplish, along what lines does it steer the youth?

The whole content of Mao's article, "The Orientation of the Youth Movement" (as its title implies), which Hoxha "quotes," is exactly designed *to provide leadership, an orientation, for the youth:*

Our young intellectuals and students must go among the workers and peasants, who make up 90% of the population, and mobilize and organize them. Without this main force of workers and peasants, we cannot win the fight against imperialism and feudalism, we cannot win it by relying only on the contingent of young intellectuals and students. Therefore, the young intellectuals and students throughout the country must unite with the broad masses of workers and peasants and become one with them, and only then can a mighty force be created.<sup>81</sup>

Mao noted that "In the Chinese democratic revolutionary movement, it was the intellectuals who were the first to awaken. . . . But the intellectuals will accomplish nothing if they fail to integrate themselves with the workers and peasants."<sup>82</sup> Here Mao is making clear the correct, dialectical view of the relationship between the fact that the intellectuals, particularly the students, are often the first force in a given revolutionary movement to rise in struggle—and play a vital role in helping to "mobilize and organize" the masses of people—and the fact that it is only by integrating with the workers and peasants that the intellectuals can make a real

contribution to the revolutionary process. And, as he points out repeatedly in his writings, it is only by doing so that the youth can be transformed in their world outlook and become genuine Marxists.

This is an example of *real* leadership. Not Enver Hoxha's concept of strait-jacketing the youth movement and having it march obediently one step behind the workers. Real Marxist-Leninist leadership in the revolution means knowing how to bring to the fore and unleash the factors for revolution and at the same time provide guidance and a correct orientation for the movement overall and its particular parts. Real leadership does not mean ignoring or trying to eliminate the contradictions between (and hence the different contradictory roles of) different sections of the masses, but recognizing and *utilizing* these contradictions to push the revolution forward. Enver Hoxha's concept smacks much more of the "everything at my command, everything at my disposal" concept of Lin Piao than of the Marxist method of leadership shown by Mao.

Only a person hopelessly entangled in the outlook that Lenin described, of waiting for the two armies to appear ready-made, packaged and neatly labeled, would be capable of criticizing Mao for recognizing and utilizing the fact that very often in the revolutionary struggle youth will play a kind of vanguard role. And only someone who is determined that a revolution will never come about, or at least who has no conception of what a revolution is, would want to avoid mobilizing *sections* of the revolutionary masses and *sections* of the workers themselves before the day when the workers as single, monolithic and united whole rise up (a day which, in that sense, will never come in reality). For there will never be a time, as long as there are classes, when workers aren't divided into sections holding revolutionary, non-revolutionary and *even counter-revolutionary* sentiments and lines. And these divisions will lead to conflicts (ideological, political and, yes, even physical conflicts at times) between *sections* of the workers and other sections of the revolutionary masses.

It was this understanding that enabled Mao, at the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution, to rely heavily on the initiative and the daring of the youth and the students—not as a *substitute* for the working class, but to help awaken and mobilize the working class in this great battle. Hoxha should be familiar with Mao's understanding of this, since Mao spelled it out quite succinctly to a visiting delegation from Albania in 1967:

The "May 4th" Movement was launched by the intellectuals, thereby fully demonstrating their foresight and awareness. However, we must depend on the masters of the time, the workers, peasants and soldiers, to serve as

the main force in carrying through thoroughgoing revolutions on the order of a real Northern Expedition or Long March. . . . Although it was the intellectuals and the broad masses of young students who launched the criticism of the bourgeois reactionary line, it was, nonetheless, incumbent upon the masters of the time, the broad masses of workers, peasants and soldiers, to serve as the main force in carrying the revolution through to completion. . . . Intellectuals have always been quick in altering their perception of things, but, because of the limitations of their instincts, and because they lack a thorough revolutionary character, they are sometimes opportunistic.<sup>83</sup>

Thus it is clear that in theory (as well as in practice) Mao regarded the role of the students in China as mainly an initiating one. He fully recognized their weaknesses—especially their tendencies toward anarchism, ultra-"leftism," but also toward conservatism at times—and their problems in uniting the revolutionary ranks to carry the struggle through to victory. Without the initial role of the students, especially the heroic Red Guards, revisionism would have triumphed much sooner in China and the Cultural Revolution would never have gotten off the ground; without the fact that the workers became the main and leading force in the Cultural Revolution, initial victories would have turned to defeat, the great accomplishments of the Cultural Revolution would not have been achieved, and certainly not consolidated, and likewise revisionism would have triumphed in China many years before it actually did.

Hoxha leaves out the role of the working class in the Cultural Revolution because it doesn't fit the fantasy he is trying to pass off on revolutionaries throughout the world. But who, may we ask, was the driving force of the January Storm in Shanghai—actually the first and pace-setting example of the revolutionary masses "dissolving" the reactionary Party committees? Everyone with the least familiarity with the events in China knows that it was mainly the organizations of the revolutionary workers in Shanghai, led by Chang Chun-chiao, Yao Wen-yuan and Wang Hung-wen, all of whom are now vilified as members of the "gang of four," that accomplished that momentous uprising. And this scene was repeated in city after city in China.

When it became clear that sections of the Red Guards were, by themselves at least, incapable of carrying the revolution further and their initial role was turning into its opposite, what happened? Again, it is well known that Mao issued his famous directive "the working class must exercise leadership in everything," and workers, in their tens of thousands, marched into the universities and took charge of them. And after marching on to the universities

they stayed there, uniting with the revolutionary students, teachers and cadres, and launching the greatest revolutionary changes on the educational front that the world has ever seen. All these accomplishments are undeniable, Enver Hoxha notwithstanding.

Finally, on the leadership of the Party in the Cultural Revolution. The Cultural Revolution was led by the Party—in the only form that was appropriate in the concrete conditions prevailing at the time. It was led by the *leading line* in the Party and in the Central Committee, the line of its Chairman, Mao Tsetung. The general orientation of the Cultural Revolution was approved by a bare majority of the Central Committee in 1966, and the task of leading it was entrusted to the Cultural Revolution Group.<sup>84</sup> Mao himself refers to having had to “bide my time” until he was able to win a majority on the Central Committee to proceed with the Cultural Revolution. Unlike Hoxha, however, we will not base our opinion of the Cultural Revolution on whether or not it corresponded to the established practice of conducting struggles within Leninist parties. We say unequivocally that even—and in fact especially—if the Cultural Revolution had been opposed by the majority of the Central Committee—that is, if the Central Committee had been captured by revisionists—Mao would have had the responsibility to call on the masses inside and outside the Party to rebel against the Central Committee.

We would like to ask Enver Hoxha, what *should* the genuine communists, the class conscious workers and the revolutionary masses generally, do when the possibility of the triumph of revisionism is imminent? And what stand should the genuine communists and revolutionary masses take if a revisionist usurpation of power does, in fact, take place? Would it have been acceptable to Hoxha if the working class in the Soviet Union had risen up after Khrushchev’s “secret speech” and overthrown him? Or what if just prior to his coup the genuine Marxist-Leninists in the Soviet leadership had mustered a bare majority on the Central Committee and called for a Cultural Revolution? And what if the majority of the working class was still unawakened to the imminent danger of revisionism—would it be permissible for the Party leaders to turn to the students and initiate a revolutionary struggle, or would it be better to suppress and stifle them in the name of the “hegemony of the proletariat”? There can be no doubt that Hoxha’s whole line of argument can only lead to one conclusion—that the revolutionaries should not have taken to arms (or, for that matter, relatively “peaceful” political struggle).

Of course, Hoxha’s arguments are wrapped in the mantle of being the strongest upholder of Marxism and Leninism, but his effort to put *form* (“Leninist norms”) above *content* (which class these forms serve) really has much more in common with the typical song and dance run out about “democracy” in the

bourgeois democratic countries than it does with the revolutionary teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. It is again the practice that Lenin heaped such scorn on—using the letter of Marxism against the spirit of Marxism!

At bottom, Hoxha opposes the Cultural Revolution and the line of Mao Tsetung because he *prefers* the line of those that the Cultural Revolution ousted! True, he mutters a few things about opposing Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping, but there is no content to his criticism of Liu, and as for Teng and Hua’s line, Hoxha starts and stops with the criticism of the “strategy of the three worlds.” We shall see later that Hoxha’s line on the nature of socialism, of the class struggle under socialism, is in its essentials the *same* revisionist line promoted by Liu and Teng, with a very thin dogmatist cover.

Actually, Hoxha does a very poor job in covering his own tracks in his book. The very internal logic of it leads the reader to the conclusion that it would have been better if Liu Shao-chi’s forces (or other pro-Soviet revisionists) had won out. If Mao Tsetung Thought has been a variant of revisionism since 1935, why shouldn’t support go to those who were his most consistent opponents? Hoxha claims that the Party as a whole was *never* Marxist, that none of the various groups in the leadership (at least during the last decade; Wang Ming, of course, is another story) were revolutionary. Then why Hoxha’s professed concern that the Cultural Revolution “liquidated both the Communist Party of China, and the mass organizations”? If it is true that “in the leadership of the Communist Party of China there are no Marxist-Leninist revolutionaries”<sup>85</sup> then who cares if it is liquidated!

But Hoxha’s concern about “liquidation” is real, not assumed. Take his statement about “the mass organizations” being liquidated. It is not just that *any* mass organizations were wiped out. After all only an imbecile could deny that the Cultural Revolution created a whole myriad of *new* mass organizations—Red Guards, rebel worker groups and so on in the early phases—and later led to the reconstruction of the trade unions, women’s organizations and others on the basis of the leadership of the line of Mao and the Left. Thus it is clear that Hoxha’s real concern is that the mass organizations under the *domination of the line of Liu Shao-chi*—such as the Young Communist League—were defeated, and while he supports *those* organizations, Hoxha condemns with a frenzy the *revolutionary* mass organizations brought forward in the struggle.

And further, if the main problem with the Chinese Communist Party was that it departed from “Marxism-Leninism” in the revolution and in the construction of socialism (and by this Hoxha means departed from the experience, the ways of doing things, in the Soviet Union), shouldn’t support go to those in the Chinese

Party who fought to implement these "Leninist" principles in China? One main advantage in reading Wang Ming in the original (as opposed to Hoxha's plagiarism of him) is that he does away with the *deceit* Hoxha still finds it useful to employ. Wang Ming openly claims that the "true internationalists" in the Chinese Party included none other than Liu Shao-chi in their ranks, as well as a host of other traitors now being brought back to power or rehabilitated posthumously by Teng Hsiao-ping.<sup>86</sup> Vietnam, for whom Hoxha's support escalates even as it falls completely under the wing of the Soviet Union, is also clear that it was Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping who were the true Marxist-Leninists in China.<sup>87</sup>

Hoxha's criticism of the Cultural Revolution results from his own failure to understand the nature of socialism, his metaphysical world outlook, and pragmatism. In his own "explanation" for the dramatic and tragic *change* in the line of the Albanian Party toward Mao and the Cultural Revolution, Hoxha inadvertently advertises the pragmatic basis which led to their "re-evaluation" of Mao Tsetung Thought.

Hoxha states:

In judging their [the Chinese's] previous dubious actions, as well as those observed in the Cultural Revolution, and especially the events following this revolution up till now, the rises and falls of this or that group in the leadership, today the group of Lin Piao, tomorrow that of Teng Hsiao-ping, a Hua Kuo-feng, etc., . . . all these things impelled our Party to delve more deeply into the views and actions of Mao Tsetung and the Communist Party of China, to get a more thorough knowledge of "Mao Tsetung thought."<sup>88</sup>

Later he adds:

The chaotic development of the Cultural Revolution and its results further strengthened the opinion, still not fully crystallized, that Marxism-Leninism was not known and was not being applied in China, that in essence, the Communist Party of China and Mao Tsetung did not hold Marxist-Leninist views. . . .<sup>89</sup>

Thus Hoxha makes clear his basic outlook and orientation in summing up the question of Mao Tsetung.

It is clear that Hoxha did not like the "results" of the 1976 *coup d'etat* in China, particularly Hua and Teng's policy of capitulation to and reactionary alliance with U.S. imperialism under the banner of the strategy of the "three worlds." Hoxha's own errors and

outlook made it impossible for him to analyze events in China from the reference point of the class struggle in China and in particular the struggle between the overall revisionist line of Hua and Teng and the revolutionary line of Mao and the Four who fought beside him. Rather than take up the task that history demanded of him, of leading the *defense* of the accomplishments of the Chinese revolution and the contributions of Mao, he chose to proceed from the "results" of the class struggle in China (defined in the most immediate and narrow way) and work backward to try to find the basis for them in the line and actions of the Marxist-Leninists themselves.<sup>90</sup>

They lost, therefore they must be wrong. This, in a nutshell, was Hoxha's starting point. Since Hoxha does not understand correctly the dynamics of revolution, and especially the laws of the development of socialism, it is *inconceivable* to him that revisionism could triumph not *primarily* because of whatever mistakes the revolutionaries may have made (for no one would deny that errors of different sorts are inevitable) but because of the *relative strength of the contending classes*.\*

Unfortunately this has also colored the thinking of some genuine Marxist-Leninists who, while upholding the contributions of Mao, still proceed from the premise that since revisionists triumphed, the *reasons* for their triumph must lie with the mistakes of the revolutionaries.

Such a line of reasoning, on Hoxha's part at least, is tantamount to denying that any *real possibility* of a capitalist restoration exists as long as the party remains "vigilant," i.e., ruthlessly prevents any factions, headquarters or fully developed *lines* in opposition to the leadership from emerging within the party. The problem with this view, and why it runs into such sharp conflict with the teachings of Mao, is that it separates the question of the struggle in the party from any kind of genuine materialist—and dialectical—analysis of the class struggle under socialism.

As Mao's analysis of the class struggle under socialism developed, it came more and more to focus on the question of a bourgeois headquarters within the communist party itself. Let us examine Hoxha's attack on Mao's views on the existence of two lines in the party and the bourgeoisie in the party:

Mao Tsetung himself has advocated the need for the existence of "two lines" in the party. According to him,

\*The reader might ask, if this is true how can Hoxha so uncritically uphold Stalin when revisionism triumphed so shortly after his death? Indeed, this is a contradiction in the Albanian line from which they run like the plague. What is most noteworthy in their writings on this subject is their shallowness and inability to provide any real explanation of the triumph of revisionism in the Soviet Union.

the existence and struggle between two lines is something natural, is a manifestation of the unity of the opposites, is a flexible policy which unites in itself both loyalty to principles and compromise. . . .

These views are diametrically opposed to the Leninist teachings on the communist party as an organized vanguard detachment which must have a single line and steel unity of thought and action.

The class struggle in the ranks of the party, as a reflection of the class struggle going on outside the party, has nothing in common with Mao Tsetung's concepts on the "two lines in the party." The party is not an arena of classes and the struggle between antagonistic classes, it is not a gathering of people with contradictory aims. The genuine Marxist-Leninist party is the party of the working class only and bases itself on the interests of this class. This is the decisive factor for the triumph of the revolution and the construction of socialism. Defending the Leninist principles on the party, which do not permit the existence of many lines, of opposing trends in the communist party, J.V. Stalin emphasized:

"... the communist party is the *monolithic* party of the proletariat, and not a party of a bloc of elements of different classes".

Mao Tsetung, however, conceives the party as a union of classes with contradictory interests, as an organization in which two forces, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the "proletarian staff" and the "bourgeois staff," which must have their representatives from the grassroots to the highest leading organs of the party, confront and struggle against each other.<sup>91</sup>

Hoxha is wrong on several counts: wrong in that he does not understand dialectics; wrong in that he doesn't understand what gives *all genuine Marxist-Leninist parties* life and vitality; and wrong in his conception of the actual position the party occupies in socialist society, and hence the different characteristics that the struggle in the Party takes on.

First we must dispose of Enver Hoxha's silliest argument—that "Mao himself has advocated the *need* for the existence of 'two lines in the party'" and that somehow Mao *preferred* or *allowed* the existence of a bourgeois headquarters in the Party. Of course, Mao never said any such thing. What he did say, and correctly so, is that the existence of two lines in the Party and of the creation of bourgeois factions, or headquarters, in the Party is an inevitable

phenomenon. Most importantly, Mao developed the theoretical understanding of the necessity to fight the bourgeois line and the repeated efforts of the capitalist-roaders in the Party to establish a bourgeois headquarters in the Party, usurp power in key areas of the Party and state, and prepare for an all-out assault on the proletarian leadership of the Party and state. Not only did Mao develop this point in theory, he led the struggle to carry it out, most especially in the Cultural Revolution. To try to extrapolate from this that Mao wanted to let the bourgeoisie *be*, that he was not making war upon them, is at complete variance with the facts.\*

Marxist-Leninists have always upheld the philosophical thesis that "*freedom is the recognition of necessity.*" Man's ability to transform society or nature depends not primarily upon his *will*, but upon his correct understanding of the objective world. For only in acting in accordance with the laws that govern society and nature is he able to influence them. To say that Mao *advocated* the bourgeois line and the emergence of bourgeois headquarters in the party simply because he was the first, in an all-round and systematic way, to *recognize* the laws determining their existence, makes about as much sense as blaming Louis Pasteur for advocating the existence of viruses!

To carry this analogy a step further, it is *because* Pasteur was able to discover the existence of viruses that he was able to develop the first vaccine; similarly, it is because Mao discovered the laws operating within socialist society that give rise to the bourgeois line in the party that he was able to develop the policies, the strategy and tactics, to defeat the bourgeois line and various bourgeois headquarters, not once but repeatedly.

Hoxha may believe that he has made a brilliant contribution to Marxism by applying the principle of an ostrich to continuing the revolution under socialism. But actually all he is creatively applying is the same outlook as the petty-bourgeois humanitarian who believes that by refusing to recognize the division of capitalist society into antagonistic classes he will make that antagonism disappear.

In presenting his vulgarization of "Leninist principles" regarding the party and bandying about Stalin's quote about the "*monolithic party of the proletariat,*" all Hoxha is doing is further revealing his own anti-dialectical, metaphysical world view and hence his own complete lack of understanding of the actual development of any Marxist party. Hoxha claims that Leninist principles "do not permit the existence of many lines, of opposing trends in the communist party." Brilliant! With one sentence Hoxha

\*At the same time, Mao sometimes saw the necessity of, and even advocated, putting known opportunists in certain positions within the Party for tactical reasons. This is discussed below.

wipes out the need to fight revisionism, dogmatism, Trotskyism and every other conceivable deviation that might arise *within* the ranks of the Party.

There is no revisionist *trend* within the Albanian Party of Labor, for instance? We don't believe it! Even if Hoxha were adhering to a Marxist-Leninist line, instead of himself championing a new revisionist tendency, we still would not believe it. Despite Hoxha's yammering about "Leninist principles," Lenin and Stalin devoted a great deal of attention to recognizing, battling against and defeating all sorts of "opposing trends" in the Bolshevik Party.

Actually what Hoxha is doing, in his typical and preferred manner, is combining two into one, as opposed to the dialectical method of dividing one into two. He takes the question of *lines* and *trends* and confuses them with the related but separate question of *factions*. The existence of revisionist lines and trends in a party is not a matter of anyone granting "permission." They are an inevitable reflection of class forces in society, whose existence is also not dependent on the "permission" of Marxist-Leninists, but on the material and ideological conditions in society—including remnants of exploiting class society in the base and superstructure of socialist society.

A revisionist faction in a party can be broken up, its ringleaders expelled and so forth, but this will not and *cannot* mean that revisionist tendencies and revisionist lines do not exist in the party. Not only do they exist in the party as a whole, they exist in the thinking of any one individual! The Albanian Party does somersaults around this question, coming up with an eclectic formulation which allows "class struggle" in the party but which denies the existence of opposing lines. Quite an accomplishment! Apparently Hoxha believes that by liquidating enemy agents, bourgeois elements and degenerates early on he can prevent the emergence of an enemy, alien and bourgeois *line* in the party—as if the existence of a line were dependent on the access to typewriters! Again it is Hoxha, not Mao, who is departing from Marxism-Leninism, which teaches that the question of line, of the struggle over line—which cannot but presuppose the existence of *different* lines—is the soul of the party.

To give a few examples. In the imperialist countries the tendency toward revisionism—particularly in the form of economism, of reducing the struggle of the workers to simply acquiring better conditions for slaves in their slavery—is a pernicious and stubborn tendency. Lenin laid bare the social basis for this trend in his brilliant work *What Is To Be Done?* and in his later writings on imperialism. But simply because this tendency has been identified and genuine Marxist-Leninists have committed themselves to a ruthless and protracted struggle against it, does not mean that it is not reflected within the Party as a *line* opposed to Marxism.

Similarly, in many countries where the immediate task of the working class and the party is to fight for the liberation of the nation, tendencies toward narrow nationalism are a reflection of the actual class forces arrayed in battle, and the communists in those countries must wage a fierce struggle against these deviations including *and especially* as they reflect themselves in the party itself. Again, it is the recognition of the erroneous lines existing in the party, understanding their class basis and historical roots, that *enables* the Marxist-Leninists to combat and defeat them. The question of "permission" is not the point at all.

Is the existence of two-line struggle in the party incompatible with the fact that "the Marxist-Leninist party is the party of the working class only" as Hoxha puts it? <sup>92</sup> Only people incapable of understanding dialectics find it so.

The communist party is the party of the working class because it is guided by Marxism-Leninism—the ideology of the working class; because the working class is the only *class* whose interests lie in the overthrow of capitalism and all forms of exploitation and oppression and in the realization of communism, and because the organizational principles of the party, the "Leninist norms" if you will, reflect the socialized character of production and specifically of the proletariat's role in production. In this sense, and this sense only, it is correct to understand the communist party as the party of the working class.

The party, the working class, and Marxism-Leninism do not appear in a "pure" form. This is obvious when looking at the working class, for example. Only a small percentage of the workers in capitalist society are *conscious* of their role as capitalism's gravediggers. Furthermore there is *division* within the ranks of the proletariat, along political, national, and economic lines—even though all workers objectively share the same *class* interest. Thus to talk of a "pure" proletariat would be the height of absurdity and would, in fact, negate the very need for the communist party itself. And it is no less absurd to talk of the "purity" of the party and of Marxism-Leninism when examining the actual, concrete existence of any particular party, or the line of any particular party. To do so would exactly *negate* the need to carry out struggle in the party. This is why Mao correctly ridicules the concept of "monolithic unity" of the party and of the international communist movement ("some people seem to think that . . . the Party is not subject to analysis, that is to say, it is monolithic and uniform . . .").<sup>93</sup>

Let us examine the quote from Stalin that Hoxha hopes will frighten his readers away from examining this subject critically, from the standpoint of dialectics: "The communist party is the *monolithic* party of the proletariat, and not a party of a bloc of different elements of different classes."

The above quotation is correct in one aspect and incorrect in

another. As a scientific abstraction it can be useful to a degree, but as an analysis of any particular party it is incorrect and harmful. The political line and the organizational principles of the party must proceed from the correct, scientific *abstraction* (which as Lenin put it, reflects nature more “deeply, truly and *completely*”) that the party is the party of the proletariat and only that class. However the *membership* of the communist party does and must include *exactly* “different elements of different classes.” True, they must be brought into the party on the basis of adopting the outlook and line of the proletariat, but can it be said that, *in any party*, the intellectuals, for example, do not bring with them some of the outlook, lines and organizational habits of the bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie? Don’t the peasants bring with them *aspects* of the outlook of the small producer into the party? Is it wrong to make a class analysis of the *membership* of the party and (in a dialectical, not mechanical way) use such a class analysis to help understand what deviations are likely to arise and how they must be fought? Of course *all* members of the party, including workers, bring various kinds of bourgeois ideology and political errors with them when they join the party; hence Mao’s sarcastic remark, “It seems as if people have to be 100% Marxists once they are in the Party.”<sup>94</sup> There are no “100% Marxists,” not Enver Hoxha, and not his hero Wang Ming, who first raised a big hullabaloo in the early 1930s, declaring himself and a handful of students returned from Moscow to be “100% Bolshevik.”

Does the recognition that the party is not “monolithic,” that it is, in fact, full of contradictions reflecting the class relationships in society and the class makeup of the party itself, negate the need to struggle against factionalism or the principle that the party can only be led by a *single* line? Again, this provides a problem only for the metaphysicians, not for Marxist-Leninists.

The recognition that the party contains two lines within it, in a fundamental sense the bourgeois and proletarian lines, is at the same time a recognition that *one* of these lines must be dominant, in other words, principal, and as such determine the *character* of the party. It is also a recognition of the possibility of the two aspects being reversed, of the party going revisionist. As long as the *leading line* in the party—that is, the collective line of the party and the leadership as reflected in its theories, its policies, its press, etc.—is Marxist-Leninist, then it is correct to refer to that party as Marxist-Leninist, as a party of the working class. For such a party to *remain* a Marxist-Leninist party means exactly to wage a vigorous and relentless struggle against all manifestations of the incorrect line. The recognition of this necessity is at the same time a recognition of the need to combat and *break up* bourgeois factions as they emerge in the party.

The history of the international communist movement makes

clear the need to carry on struggle in this manner, to defeat attempts by organized, revisionist groupings within the party to seize control of the party and implement a revisionist line. This was the main task of the Cultural Revolution, to seize power from the top capitalist-roaders and to defeat and break up their revisionist headquarters. Hence the absurdity of Hoxha trying to use the Cultural Revolution to “prove” that Mao “permitted” the existence of bourgeois headquarters in the party.

At the same time, to recognize the existence of two lines in the party and the social basis for the existence of two lines, is also to recognize that the formation of bourgeois opposition factions in the party is not an accidental or freak phenomenon but an inevitable part of the class struggle and the party’s development. Wherever incorrect tendencies exist, wherever an incorrect line exists in embryo (and this inevitably will happen for the reasons summarized), sooner or later individuals will come forward to champion these tendencies, to formulate them into a complete and developed line and program, and fight to have this incorrect line replace the Marxist-Leninist line of the party. Understanding this enables, and does not hinder, the party and all its bodies and members to more quickly recognize this process as it (repeatedly) develops and to take resolute action against it.

Factionalism is itself the manifestation of the incorrect line. It reflects the divisive, competitive and dog-eat-dog nature of capitalism, as opposed to the solidarity and cooperation characteristic of the workers as a class. As such, factionalism must be fought by Marxist-Leninists, as Mao did with his famous three do’s and three don’ts:

Practice Marxism, not revisionism; unite, don’t split; be open and above board, and don’t intrigue and conspire.

But as the revolutionaries in China also pointed out (see Wang Hung-wen’s Report on the Constitution to the Tenth Party Congress), the latter two “do’s and don’ts” are dependent on the first.<sup>95</sup> Marxist-Leninists seek unity and have no need to intrigue and conspire; their strength lies in the fact that their line correctly reflects objective reality, is in the interests of the great majority of the people, and leads to advancing the revolution. Therefore the more the correct Leninist principles of inner-party life are adhered to, the more advantageous it is to the correct line overall. It is obvious that those who uphold a bourgeois line will inevitably go in for splits and for intrigues and conspiracies, for it is in this arena where they find their strength, just as they fear open political struggle like the plague. Thus it is not a question of “permitting” factionalism, intrigues and conspiracies in the party, but of recognizing that the struggle against this is part of “practicing

Marxism, not revisionism," and alerting the party members and masses to the truth that those who follow an incorrect line cannot and will not abide by Marxist-Leninist organizational principles and that vigilance must be maintained. Hoxha's insistence on the existence of "monolithic unity" in the party is a reflection of his refusal, in theory and practice, to make the division of one into two the starting point and basis of his analysis.

Closely linked to this is his adoption in fact of the line of the "Deborin school" of philosophy. (This school is named after a Soviet philosopher, of some prominence in the 1920s especially, who preached, among other things, that a contradiction does not necessarily exist throughout the whole process of development of a thing but only *arises* at a certain stage of its development. For example, the Deborin school of philosophy held that there was no contradiction within the "Third Estate"—those forces who opposed the nobility and the clergy—during the French Revolution, but that the contradiction between the workers and capitalists only emerged *later* as capitalist production further developed.) Mao Tsetung attached great importance to the struggle against the Deborin school and pointed out in his famous work *On Contradiction* that:

Deborin's idealism has exerted a very bad influence in the Chinese Communist Party, and it cannot be said that the dogmatist thinking in our Party is unrelated to the approach of that school.<sup>96</sup>

Thus it is not surprising that Hoxha, in wildly attacking Mao's line and trying to reverse the judgment of history on Wang Ming, would find refuge in the philosophical school in which Wang Ming was a pupil.

How can the phenomenon of the emergence and triumph of revisionism be explained without examining the *internal* contradiction within the party, the contradiction between two lines? Either one has to eliminate the internal contradiction altogether and portray it simply as the capturing of the party by external forces, or (and what really amounts to the same thing) argue that the internal contradictions in the party only appear at a certain stage in its development as a result of external pressures, the "mistakes" of the revolutionaries and so on. Either explanation is metaphysics.

Stalin denied the contradiction, the two lines, in the party. He did not "permit" it. Yet this did not prevent the rise of Khrushchevite revisionism. Were the masses in the Soviet Union *better armed* to understand what had happened and what had to be done because of these mistakes of Stalin? Of course, it is one thing for Stalin to have been one-sided in explaining the life of the party under socialism when there was no previous experience of a genu-

ine communist party that had succeeded in making revolution, turning into its opposite (into a bourgeois party) and restoring capitalism.\* But it is quite another thing for Hoxha to insist on repeating and raising to the level of principle these mistakes of Stalin when historical experience provides the basis for correcting them, and when in fact they have been summed up and advanced beyond by Marxist-Leninists, above all by Comrade Mao Tsetung.

When opportunism triumphed in the Second International during World War 1, Lenin was able, by applying the science of dialectics, to trace the development of the contradiction that led to its betrayal and show its social and historical roots. He showed how social democracy had divided into a revolutionary and an opportunist wing, how this phenomenon had its material basis in the creation of a labor aristocracy in the imperialist countries, and how the long period of peaceful, legal work had, on the one hand, led to the social democratic parties becoming mass parties of the workers in Europe, and on the other hand provided a strong pull toward the adoption of philistine, parliamentary practices and outlook on the part of most of the leadership of these parties. He showed how, with the outbreak of the first world war, the opportunist boil burst.

Hoxha cannot explain the rise of Khrushchevite revisionism because he refuses to recognize that the contradictions in the international communist movement did not emerge with Khrushchev's coup, but only exploded then. And so, Hoxha's "great contribution" lies in *negating* the real advances that have been made in the last twenty years in the struggle against revisionism and insisting that every wrong formulation, every error, and the ideological basis for these errors, be enshrined as holy writ, and that everyone who refuses to go along be condemned as a heretic.\*\*

\*The possible exception to this is Yugoslavia, but it is highly questionable in that case that socialism had *ever* been established, or that the League of Communists of Yugoslavia had ever been Marxist-Leninist.

\*\* While this is not the place to provide an overall critique of Hoxha's political line, it is worthwhile to indicate what some of the other errors are that Hoxha is determined to enshrine. The complete and uncritical endorsement of the line of Dimitroff and the Seventh Congress of the Communist International; the thesis Stalin advanced in the early 1950s that the imperialist bourgeoisie had "dropped the national flag" and it was incumbent on the working class to pick up the national flag and be the best fighters for the nation—even in the imperialist countries; the failure to recognize and take into account the fact that the storm center of revolution shifted from the West to the East (to the colonial and semi-colonial countries) in the decades following World War 2—these are all examples of cases in which Hoxha continues to uphold wrong theses and to defend them against the further advances of Marxism-Leninism.



Finally, in answering Hoxha's attacks on Mao's line on the party, it is necessary to try to unravel some of the confusion he spreads about Mao's policies on dealing with inner-party struggle. Hoxha chooses to quote Mao:

Thus. . . we have two hands to deal with a comrade who has made mistakes: one hand to struggle with him and the other to unite with him. The aim of this struggle is to uphold the principles of Marxism, which means being principled; that is one aspect of the problem. The other aspect is to unite with him. The aim of unity is to offer him a way out, to reach a compromise with him [which means being flexible].<sup>97</sup>

In addition to leaving off Mao's definition of compromise ("which means being flexible"), Hoxha also wipes out Mao's conclusion: "The integration of principle with flexibility is a Marxist-Leninist principle, and it is a unity of opposites."<sup>98</sup>

First of all, it should be pointed out that Mao is specifically *not* talking about the die-hard counter-revolutionaries in the Party, about those who head up bourgeois factions. He says this specifically one paragraph before the one that Hoxha quotes:

However, dealing with persons of another type is different. Towards persons like Trotsky and like Chen Tu-hsiu, Chang Kuo-tao and Kao Kang in China, it was impossible to adopt a helpful attitude, for they were incorrigible.<sup>99</sup>

(Here again we see Hoxha's brilliant polemical style at work. Actually, he accomplishes two things: one, he *forces* any serious reader to try to find the original material, for without doing so it is impossible to understand what Mao is saying from Hoxha's "quotes"; second, he reveals the utter bankruptcy of his own views, which even he realizes cannot stand up to a head-to-head confrontation with Mao Tsetung Thought.)

Thus it is quite clear that Mao is not advocating unprincipled unity with die-hards. And his real point takes on much more significance when the context of his speech is examined, specifically a talk to the Moscow Meeting of Representatives of the Communist and Workers' Parties in 1957. For it was at this meeting that Mao was leading a very complex struggle to defend the principles of Marxism-Leninism, a struggle which involved *tactical* compromises with Khrushchev on the one hand, and also a vigorous effort to win over and find common ground with as many as possible of the more than 60 communist parties present. Mao's point is clear even if made in somewhat Aesopian language.

Hoxha also lambasts Mao for proposing in 1956 "the election of various leaders of right and left factions to the Central Committee."<sup>100</sup> Enver Hoxha chooses not to divulge the names of those leaders, because they would add another hole in his argument—since one of these leaders was none other than our old friend Wang Ming, the "100% Bolshevik" whose line Hoxha's dovetails with. Furthermore, Hoxha will run into problems describing why Lenin and Stalin from time to time agreed to the election of leading opportunists to the Central Committee. First off, it is correct to try to win over former leading representatives of incorrect lines; second, it is not always possible, nor necessarily advisable, to remove opportunist leaders of the party at any particular time. For example, it may be the case that these leaders have not yet been exposed and still command a social base, a base which can be greatly eroded by allowing a given struggle to go on for a particular amount of time. This was the case, in many respects, with the struggles Stalin waged against both the Right and the "Left" in the twenties and early thirties. Furthermore, it may be the case that a particular leading revisionist is not the principal exponent of the revisionist line at any one time and that to launch attack on two or more fronts could lead to defeat. Of course, often in the history of the international communist movement it has been necessary to fight on several fronts simultaneously, but there have also been many instances, from the time of Marx and Engels on, in which there was clearly one internal struggle on which the revolutionaries had to focus their attention, and to have done otherwise could have had serious consequences. We do not know *all* of the particular reasons why Mao considered it advisable to elect Wang Ming and Li Li-san to the Central Committee in 1956, but it is clear that such an action can hardly be said to have violated any sacred principle of Marxism, any more than the election of Trotsky to the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party repeatedly until his final fall in 1927. Or does Hoxha believe that Lenin and Stalin really didn't understand Trotsky's true nature?

Let us look at Mao's reasoning on this question, as laid out in his speech to a preparatory meeting for the Eighth National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. He advocates re-electing Li Li-san and Wang Ming to the Central Committee seats which they hold. These are, of course, two prominent exponents of lines which had seriously bad consequences for the Party in its history. Further, Mao has no illusions about their present lines, particularly that of Wang Ming, who had attempted to back-track on his self-criticism of his past errors. In fact, Mao says, ". . . it is not a question of whether Wang Ming and Li Li-san will mend their ways, that does not matter very much."<sup>101</sup> Rather,

The heart of the matter here is that they are not just a

few isolated individuals but represent a substantial part of the petty bourgeoisie. China is a country with a huge petty bourgeoisie. A considerable part of the petty bourgeoisie vacillates. . . . [He goes on to talk about the different strata of the Chinese petty bourgeoisie.] What does our election of these two persons representing the Wang Ming and Li Li-san lines signify? It signifies that we treat those who have made ideological mistakes differently from those who are counter-revolutionaries and splittists (people like Chen Tu-hsiu, Chang Kuo-tao, Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih). Wang Ming and Li Li-san went about their subjectivism and sectarianism in an open way and with a great fanfare, trying to overwhelm people with their political programmes. . . . Therefore the question of Wang Ming and Li Li-san is not just a question of two individuals, what is important here is that there are underlying social causes.<sup>102</sup>

Mao goes on to point out that the presence of these two on the Seventh Central Committee (elected in 1945) has not caused the proletariat any loss of consequence: "We did not fail in our revolution, nor was our victory delayed by a few months [speaking of the victory of 1949] just because we had elected Wang Ming and Li Li-san."<sup>103</sup>

Mao explains further:

Their mistakes on the Party line are known all over the country and throughout the world, and the fact that they are well known is precisely the reason for electing them. . . . In a country like ours with its very large petty bourgeoisie they are standards. If we elect them, many people will say, "The Communist Party continues to be patient with them and is willing to give up two seats to them in the hope that they will mend their ways." Whether they will or not is another matter, which is inconsequential, involving as it does only the two of them. The point is that in our society the petty bourgeoisie is vast in number, that in our Party there are many vacillating elements of petty-bourgeois origin and that among the intellectuals there are many such vacillating elements; they all want to see what will happen to these test cases. When they see these two standards still there, they will feel comfortable, they will sleep well and be pleased. If you haul down the two standards, they may panic.<sup>104</sup>

So there you have it. Mao's open and shameless admission of

proven opportunists into the party of the proletariat! Mao's reasoning has been quoted at length here, not only to combat Hoxha's misquoting and twisting of Mao's statements, but because this particular case may cause questioning on the part of sincere revolutionaries as well. But what is wrong with Mao's thinking here? In what way does it violate the principles of a Marxist-Leninist outlook or run counter to making revolution? It doesn't do so at all. Mao is saying that the presence of these two on the Central Committee will not harm the revolutionary interests of the proletariat, but will push the revolution forward in the particular conditions of Chinese society.

They were well-known and in fact well-exposed, and this meant that they were not in a position to do much harm at all. On the other hand, they were not (at that time) counter-revolutionaries or splitters, but people who had very openly made ideological errors, and in particular they had made just the sort of vacillatory errors to which the petty bourgeoisie is prone. For this reason they stood as symbols for China's vast petty bourgeoisie, with whom, in general, it was *absolutely necessary* for the proletariat to unite, to struggle with in a non-antagonistic way, and to gain the leadership of, if the revolution in China was to be successful. (To fully grasp this necessity, remember that most of China's hundreds of millions of peasants were part of the petty bourgeoisie.) So to keep these two on the Central Committee would do no harm to the revolution (and indeed it would be hard to make the case that their presence did do any damage). But on the other hand, to knock them down *would* cause some damage, for it would cause unease and alarm in their social base, at a time when the Communist Party was trying to unite with and win over that base.

But, it might still be asked, even if the Chinese Communist Party was trying to win over this base, why did this necessitate putting petty bourgeois representatives on the Central Committee of the proletarian party? For isn't this organization supposed to be exactly a party of the proletariat, and isn't this in fact turning it into "a party of a bloc of elements of different classes" (to use Stalin's words which Hoxha quotes)?

To these questions there are several answers. In the first place, it must be pointed out that the presence in the party, and even on the central committee, of persons who are in effect functioning as representatives of the petty bourgeoisie does not make the party a *bloc* of elements of different classes—that is, it does not necessarily change the basic *character* of the party as the representative and vanguard of the proletariat and as having a proletarian line. And it would have to be admitted by any objective observer that the presence of Wang Ming and Li Li-san did not change the basic character or line of the Chinese Communist Party in the period after their line was exposed and defeated.

Secondly, the specific circumstances of the Chinese revolution must be borne in mind. The first stage of the Chinese revolution was the new-democratic revolution—in other words, the proletariat and its Party had first to lead and win a bourgeois-democratic revolution whose targets were imperialism and feudalism before it could go on to the socialist revolution (for, as Mao said, the new-democratic revolution is a bourgeois-democratic revolution, but one which “... is no longer of the old general type, which is now obsolete, but one of a new special type”—namely, it is “... an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal revolution of the broad masses of the people under the leadership of the proletariat”).<sup>105</sup> Given this fact, it was inevitable that people would come into the Party—which was leading this bourgeois-democratic revolution of a new type—who were genuinely revolutionary at that time and even avowed acceptance of communism but had not really assimilated Marxism-Leninism, and who in fact represented the petty bourgeoisie more than the proletariat. This was a necessity for making revolution in China, and to pretend that it was not shows nothing but a lack of historical knowledge or a desire to escape reality. Given that it was a necessity, wasn't it far better—and far more Marxist—to admit the fact and deal with it (as Mao did) rather than pretend that it wasn't there and talk only of the monolithic purity of the party?

Thirdly, even where a revolution does not face the specific circumstances faced in China, the pretense of the monolithic purity of its revolutionary party—including after state power is gained—is only that: a pretense. Lenin recognized this very well:

Under Soviet rule, your proletarian party and ours will be invaded by a still larger number of bourgeois intellectuals. They will worm their way into the Soviets, the courts, and the administration, since communism cannot be built otherwise than with the aid of the human material created by capitalism, and the bourgeois intellectuals cannot be expelled and destroyed, but must be worn over, remoulded, assimilated and re-educated, just as we must—in a protracted struggle waged on the basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat—re-educate the proletarians themselves, who do not abandon their petty-bourgeois prejudices at one stroke, by a miracle, at the behest of the Virgin Mary, at the behest of a slogan, resolution or decree, but only in the course of a long and difficult mass struggle against mass petty-bourgeois influences.<sup>106</sup>

What! Bourgeois intellectuals will invade the proletarian party! And they cannot be expelled or destroyed! But then, we must

remember that it is the well-known liberal Lenin speaking here, and not a model of steel-like proletarian purity like Enver Hoxha.

Of course it would be preferable not to have to make such compromises. But revolutions, the cloud-dwelling Mr. Hoxha aside, are made precisely through and amidst such tactical compromises—even within the party of the proletariat. What does Hoxha say about the election of Trotsky to the Sixth Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party in August 1917? Didn't Lenin know him for what he was? Can it be argued that he was “pure proletarian”? Or wasn't it precisely the case that uniting with him involved compromises, not the least of which was making him a leading figure, in order to win over his social base, which was, in its outlook and to no small degree in its class composition, more petty-bourgeois than proletarian? And weren't many of these people admitted into the Party along with Trotsky?\*

Finally, there is the following heretical passage, in which Mao is talking about this same matter:

Does their election mean encouragement for people who have made mistakes? “Now that people who have made mistakes are on the Central Committee, let us all make mistakes, then we too will have a chance of being elected!” Will this happen? No it won't. Look, not one of our seventy or so Central Committee members has gone out of his way to make a few mistakes in order to get re-elected. . . Their mistakes on the Party line are known all over the country and throughout the world, and the fact that they are well known is precisely the reason for electing them. What can you do about it? They are well known, but you who have made no mistakes or have made only small ones don't have as big a reputation as theirs.

Hoxha quotes part of this, and he is shocked. His pristine concealment is scandalized. Well, what can we do about it? It seems an utter lack of humor is part of the “Marxist-Leninist [sic] culture” that Hoxha takes Mao to task for departing from.\*\*

\*Of course Trotsky also had organizational skills which the Bolsheviks wanted to use in leading the revolution, and of course Trotsky had made a self-criticism and formally repudiated his past errors (as had Wang Ming and Li Li-san).

\*\*The “heretical passage” from Mao quoted above is from pp. 321-322 of his *Selected Works*, Vol. 5. Hoxha (*Imperialism and the Revolution*, p. 106) complains that articles written under Mao's leadership “were full of typically Chinese stereotyped formulas,” which made them hard for Albanian theoreticians to understand, “. . . because we are used to thinking, acting and writing according to the traditional Marxist-Leninist theory and culture.”

Or we might even look a little closer to (Hoxha's) home. After all, the revolution in Albania first went through the stage of being, as it is officially described, "an anti-imperialist democratic revolution," which established "the new democratic order" in Albania.<sup>107</sup> Isn't it just possible that some people were admitted into the party who had not fully assimilated Marxism-Leninism, who were objectively bourgeois democrats or representatives of the petty bourgeoisie? But we do not have to go simply on conjecture. The Constitution of the People's Republic of Albania (now superseded by a new one adopted in 1976) had one reference to the Party:

The more active and conscientious citizens of the working class and of the working masses join the ranks of the Albanian Party of Labour, the vanguard organization of the working class *and of all the working masses* in their endeavours to build the bases of socialism and the leading nucleus of all the organizations of the working masses, social as well as the state.<sup>108</sup>

Did this mean that the PLA was not "the party of the working class only"? This point is explained a little more in the official *History of the Party of Labor of Albania*, speaking of the First Congress of the Communist Party of Albania, held in 1948:

The 1st Congress decided to change the name of the Party from the Communist Party of Albania to the **Party of Labor of Albania (PLA)**. This change was dictated by the social composition of the country and the Party and did not damage its character or aims. In Albania the bulk of the population (about 80%) was composed of peasants. This was reflected in the Party, too, where the overwhelming majority of its members were toilers of the soil.<sup>109</sup>

Well at least under Mao's leadership the communists did not rename their party the "Workers' and Peasants' Party of China" or the "Chinese Toilers' Party"!

It is not, of course, that a truly Marxist-Leninist communist party cannot, under certain circumstances, have the majority of its members drawn from the peasantry or other strata of the petty bourgeoisie. The point is that here we have Hoxha verging at one point on thinking that the *character* of a party depends on its "social composition" (so that a party in a mainly peasant country, and composed mostly of peasants, must be a workers' and peasants' party rather than a proletarian party)—and the PLA has never criticized itself on this score and continues to keep its "labor" name. For Hoxha to do this at one point, and then to call

down thunderbolts from heaven when Mao deals with the question of representatives of the petty bourgeoisie in a ruling communist party, is a rather glaring instance of Hoxha's hypocrisy and his totally unprincipled and non-Marxist method of argument and polemic.

Perhaps most silly of all Hoxha's charges against Mao and the Chinese Communist Party are his combination of his own bureaucratic and metaphysical approach to inner-party struggle with hypocritical appeals to the *forms* of democracy in the party. He says the Chinese leaders, acting "with guile," "have not made public many documents necessary for one to know the activity of their party and state. They were and are very wary of publishing their documents."<sup>110\*</sup>

If ever in the history of socialist states it has been possible to get a *thorough view* of the line of a party, of how that line has developed in combat against other erroneous lines, of how that line has been manifested in every sphere of revolutionary activity, it has been the Communist Party of China.\*\* One would like to remind Hoxha of the saying, "people who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones." The fact is that it is *impossible* to get any clear picture at all of the struggle over line in Albania, specifically the actual terms of battle between the leadership of the PLA and the various opposition groups that have formed and been defeated in that party. With few exceptions, all their documents say is that this or that "foreign agent," "degenerate," and so-and-so tried to subvert the party. As to what the *political content* of the opposing lines are—at least beyond the briefest and most superficial characterization—is anybody's guess. And if Hoxha wishes to say that there have been no revisionist lines in the PLA we will say again, we don't believe it and nobody else really believes it either—not even your sycophants.

\* In this same section Hoxha raises the puzzling remark that Mao's four volumes "are carefully arranged in such a way that they do not present an exact picture of the real situations that developed in China" but dares not offer *one shred* of evidence to back up this contention. The reason that Hoxha does not care to pursue this argument is that the source is in none other than the Soviet press. See, for example, "The Philosophical Views of Mao Tsetung."<sup>111</sup> This same article also includes many of Hoxha's other slanders against Mao such as "racism" and so on. Similarly, Hoxha raises a hue and cry that "The congress of the party, its highest collective organ, has not been convened regularly," putting form over content and reminding one more of a bourgeois parliamentarian than a communist. (And by the way, one might ask Hoxha, the mighty and uncompromising upholder of the regularity of party congresses, why it was that the Communist Party of Albania did not hold its first congress until 1948, some seven years after it had been founded and more than three years after the liberation of the country.)

\*\* The same could be said for the USSR in the early years of socialism, but from the time of the mid-1930s on it becomes much more difficult to get an all-round picture of the line struggle in the USSR from the printed documents.

We have dealt at length with Hoxha's criticism of Mao's line on the nature of the party since Hoxha's work is being advertised by the orchestra he leads as universally applicable. Actually, it is universally wrong. His thesis on the "monolithic unity of the party" is no more correct for parties out of power than for parties in power. But it must be said that while many of the formulations he offers and the mechanical thinking he promotes are wrong when applied to parties out of power, they are a *recipe for disaster* when applied to a party trying to lead a socialist state.

This is because the nature of the class struggle *changes* qualitatively after the socialist revolution is victorious, especially after the basic socialist transformation of the economic base is completed. Under capitalism, the class struggle in the party is, to use Hoxha's own words, "a reflection of the class struggle going on outside the Party. . ."<sup>112</sup> But Hoxha does not draw a distinction between the struggle under capitalism and that under socialism. He states that "The party is not an arena of classes and the struggle between antagonistic classes."<sup>113</sup> Really? What does Hoxha consider Khrushchev's coup to have been? What, for example, does he consider the period of intense struggle in the two years after Stalin's death in the top echelons of the Soviet party? Was this not the struggle between antagonistic classes and didn't it take place *within* the communist party? Or, for that matter, what about Stalin's struggle against Trotsky, Bukharin and others in the 1920s?—which lasted several years.

Actually, Hoxha's analysis of this point has far more in common with Hua Kuo-feng and Teng Hsiao-ping than he would care to admit. Upon seizing power, Hua & Co. launched a major theoretical attack on Mao's teaching that the bourgeoisie is "right in the communist party." Using a line of argumentation remarkably similar to Hoxha's, Hua made a case that the class struggle in the party was only a *reflection* of the class struggle in society as a whole. While he gave lip service to some of Mao's well-known quotations on this subject, he blamed the "gang of four" (which as everyone knows was led by Mao) for promoting the concept that the *bourgeoisie as a class* existed within the party. According to both Hua's and Hoxha's arguments, if this were true the party could not be the party of the proletariat.<sup>114</sup> Hua Kuo-feng and Teng Hsiao-ping's motivations for taking this line were transparent. They wanted to direct attention away from the main ringleaders of the bourgeoisie as a whole, inside and outside the party, which were none other than capitalist-roaders like themselves.

It is worthwhile to quote at length the Chinese Communist Party on this subject, at the time it was still under the leadership of the revolutionary line of Mao and when the battle against the capitalist-roaders in the Party was nearing its decisive showdown:

The principal contradiction in the entire historical period of socialism is the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. With the balance of class forces having undergone a change, the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie finds expression in the Party in an increasingly profound and acute way.<sup>115</sup>

In the article quoted above and many others the revolutionaries in the Chinese Party provide a *materialist* analysis of the contradictions in socialism, especially the principal contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, a contradiction that Hoxha denies, claiming instead that under socialism "antagonistic classes and the oppression and exploitation of man by man are abolished"<sup>116</sup> (abolished, apparently, because the new Albanian constitution "does not permit" it!).

The Chinese Party article quoted above pointed out:

The revisionist line pushed by the capitalist-roaders in the Party represents in a concentrated way the interests of the old and new bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes, and this determines the bourgeois nature of the capitalist roaders. . . .

Economically, the reason why the capitalist-roaders are the bourgeoisie inside the Party is that they represent the decadent capitalist relations of production. In the socialist period, the proletariat wants to constantly transform those parts of the superstructure and the relations of production which are not in harmony with the socialist economic base and the productive forces and carry the socialist revolution through to the end. The capitalist-roaders in the Party, however, do everything possible to preserve those parts of the superstructure and the relations of production which hamper the development of the socialist economic base and the productive forces; their vain attempt is to restore capitalism.<sup>117</sup>

Another article published at around the same time (during the campaign to "criticize Teng and beat back the right-deviationist wind" in 1976) puts more flesh and bones on this point:

If leadership over a department or unit is controlled by capitalist roaders who energetically push the revisionist line, socialist production will turn into a movement to multiply the value of capital with the pursuit of maximum profits as the only goal, a capitalist wage labor

system. While the socialist system of ownership is reduced to an "outer shell," it will actually become a capitalist system of ownership under the control of capitalist roaders, and the proletariat and the laboring people will in fact lose this part of the means of production.

Judging from the mutual relations between people, the socialist system, which is not based on exploitation and oppression of man by man, is one under which the relations between cadres and masses and between the higher and lower levels within revolutionary ranks should be comradely relations of equality. But after all, the three major differences [the difference between workers and peasants; between the town and the countryside; and between mental and manual labor] still exist and the old practice of division of labor in society and the gradation system [differences in pay scale] exist, and in these respects bourgeois rights still exist to a serious extent. Even those bourgeois rights in the mutual relations between people which must be eliminated today, such as rigid gradation, lording it over and being divorced from the masses, unequal treatment of others, and so forth, often re-emerge after they have been broken. If the leadership of certain departments is usurped by capitalist roaders, they will strengthen and extend bourgeois rights in the relations between people, subject workers to "control, check, and repression," turn the socialist relations between people into capitalist mercenary relations, and enforce the bourgeois dictatorship. This situation is particularly obvious in the Soviet Union of today.<sup>118</sup>

And the article continues:

The appearance of capitalist roaders within the Party in the period of socialism is not strange at all. Everything is divided into two. The political party of the proletariat is no exception. So long as classes, class contradictions and class struggle remain, such struggles will inevitably be reflected in the Party. "The capitalist roaders are still on the capitalist road"—this will be a long-term historical phenomenon. Marxism is different from revisionism in that the latter is afraid of mentioning the existence of the class struggle in socialist society, and particularly the appearance of the bourgeoisie within the Party. Khrushchev, Brezhnev and their like tried to deceive themselves and others

with such fallacies as "The party of the whole people" and "the state of the whole people." And Teng Hsiao-ping is as afraid of hearing the term "capitalist roaders" as Ah Q is of hearing others talk about the scab on his head. This is because if they admit this fact, it is tantamount to admitting that they themselves are the bourgeoisie inside the Party and it means their destruction. This to them is both painful and unthinkable. The proletarian revolutionary party and Marxists not only dare to admit that the bourgeoisie may exist within the Party but also dare to wage the Great Cultural Revolution and arouse the masses in airing views, putting up big-character posters and holding mass debates in a resolute struggle against capitalist roaders. For it is only in this way that we can consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and prevent capitalist restoration and finally send the bourgeoisie to its grave and realize communism. The socialist revolution is a great revolution aimed at burying the last exploiting class ever since mankind came to existence. "Living in such an era, we must be prepared to wage a great struggle which has many features different in form from those of the past." [Mao] This then requires us to apply the method of class analysis to fully understand the features of class struggle and the changes in class relations so as to make clear this important problem—the bourgeoisie being in the Party, persist in the exercise of overall proletarian dictatorship over the bourgeoisie, and thus carry the socialist revolution through to the end.<sup>119</sup>

The quotations appearing above represent, in a clear and concise way, the line of Mao Tsetung on the nature of the class struggle under socialism. It is *this* line that has been overthrown in China and is now also under attack by Hoxha. And, of course, it has been this line that has been feverishly attacked by the Soviet revisionists all along. The Soviet, Albanian and Hua-Teng lines not only join together to attack Mao's great contributions on this subject, but share a great many common features—above all, the negation of dialectics. All three fail to analyze socialism (or what they call "socialism") from the standpoint of its internal contradictions, and refuse—either openly in the case of the Albanians and the Soviets, or not so openly but definitely in essence as in the case of the current Chinese rulers—to recognize that throughout the entire period of socialist transition there remain *antagonistic* classes.

Let us examine Hoxha's contention that there are no antagonistic classes under socialism—i.e. the bourgeoisie as a class

has been eliminated and there only remain "remnants" and the influence of its ideology and so on. This thesis was first expounded by Stalin, who declared that the bourgeoisie as a class had been eliminated in the Soviet Union with the completion of the socialist transformation of ownership. This formulation represented a concentration of Stalin's errors and revealed the ideological basis—the tendency toward metaphysics—that mars his thinking. But Stalin's real heirs, the genuine Marxist-Leninists of the Soviet Union and the revolutionary proletariat worldwide, were taught a very bitter and tragic lesson. The bourgeoisie not only existed, but it succeeded in making a comeback, capturing state power and restoring capitalism. To Hoxha's attempt to resurrect this line which has been disproved by history, one can only respond: "first time tragedy, second time farce."

But unfortunately, this farce is not a laughing matter. Stunned by yet another bitter setback for the international proletariat—namely, the temporary defeat of the revolution in China—large numbers of Marxist-Leninists and revolutionary-minded people have become disoriented. Hoxha offers them a lure, the lure of metaphysics and idealism, and offers them a never-never land where socialism never existed in China because Mao "permitted" the bourgeoisie to exist, so the defeat there amounts to no defeat anyway. But in this fantasy land there is hope—if real, genuine Marxist-Leninists seize power the race can yet be won—marching steadily and "uninterruptedly," the proletariat will not have to go through chaos, fierce struggles and reversals, but will arrive at the land of perpetual harmony and stability. Well, Reverend Hoxha, your vision just won't wash. The working class and the people have had their fill of fairy tales and aren't particularly interested in another one from so-called communists. The workers don't want guarantees—soon they recognize that it is only fools and opportunists who offer them victory without the possibility of defeat—what the class-conscious workers do want is *science*, an explanation of the workings of society that will enable them to change the world in accordance with its laws.

Let us return for a moment to the question of the Soviet Union, in the years before Khrushchev interrupted the "uninterrupted advance." If there were no antagonistic classes, if there was no bourgeoisie, *where* did Khrushchev and the many followers he had come from? Were they sons of landlords and former capitalists, or perhaps "foreign agents" smuggled into the Soviet Union from the imperialist countries? Far from it, Khrushchev and his bunch were raised under the red flag, were high officials in the communist party, and could out-quote Hoxha about the "purity" of Marxism-Leninism.

But they were a bourgeoisie. Not a fully developed bourgeoisie, for that requires state power, but a bourgeoisie nevertheless.\* They grew up out of and thrived upon the remnants of the old capitalist relations of production and distribution that still existed—and could not help but exist—not because Stalin "permitted" those capitalist relationships (although he did not recognize them until the end of his life, and then only partially) but because all of the "birthmarks" of capitalist society, economic, political and ideological, cannot be eliminated at one stroke or willed out of existence. They can only be dug away bit by bit, in accordance with the further revolutionizing of production relationships and the superstructure and, on this basis, the further advance in the productive forces.

The revisionists in the Soviet Party, like their cousins in China, threw on the vestiges of the old capitalist relations and in turn became their *political expression*, fighting to preserve and expand these same capitalist elements. Even while the proletariat was in command of the Party and state and the revisionists were subject to attack, the capitalist-roaders in the party were able to *usurp* leadership in various units, ministries, factories, etc., as well as key sections of the Party itself, cultural, educational and scientific institutions, and so on throughout society. This is undeniable.

What relations does Hoxha think existed in those areas of economic, social and political life dominated by the revisionists prior to their seizure of nationwide power? Does he really believe that in factories run by Khrushchev's crew there was no element of exploitation, of these bureaucrats privately appropriating the fruits of the workers' collective labor? Does he really believe that these factories, for example, were *completely*—in content as well as form—public property? Or was it not in fact the case that the revisionists implemented to the greatest degree possible all the policies that they were able to implement on a full and complete scale only after they succeeded in seizing state power?

No, the revisionists are not classless bureaucrats with some wrong thinking—they were and are capitalist elements sucking the blood of the workers. Politically they tried to enforce a bourgeois

\* Just as it is impossible for the bourgeoisie to exist, under socialism, in exactly the same manner that it does under capitalism, so too the term *proletariat* acquires a different meaning. The proletariat under socialism is no longer a "propertyless class" as it is under capitalism and is no longer dominated by capital. But to draw from this that communists could no longer speak of a *proletariat* under socialism would be the height of absurdity—and revisionism. The point is that with the socialist revolution both the bourgeoisie and the proletariat exist, but take on some different characteristics than under capitalism. It is easy to see how the dogmatist method (applying strict "Marxist" definitions to analyze a situation where those definitions are not strictly applicable) dovetails nicely with the revisionist conclusion (no antagonistic classes).

dictatorship in every realm where they held sway. They used their strongholds in the cultural, educational and scientific fields to promote bourgeois ideology and combat Marxism-Leninism, to prepare public opinion for the course they were determined to follow. In the party, the pivotal point and concentrated arena of the class struggle, they promoted revisionism, demanded the adoption of lines and policies reflecting their own interests in developing as exploiters, and fought to wipe out the Marxist-Leninist line.

All this would seem very elementary in light of the actual history of the victory of revisionism in the Soviet Union. But not according to Enver Hoxha. In his idealist and metaphysical view, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie only comes into being *after* the revisionists have seized power. Once again, the Deborin school of philosophy rears its ugly head. The contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the antagonism between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, only emerges at a certain point—full-blown and from the head of Zeus. And this, no less, in a country where the revolutionaries did not “permit” the existence of a bourgeoisie, of antagonistic classes, or wrong lines in the Party!

Hoxha cannot understand the existence of the bourgeoisie under socialism because he cannot penetrate beneath the surface of things and understand their contradictory essence. He does not understand the essence of capitalism—the domination of dead labor over living labor, the private appropriation of the socialized production of the working class—and instead can see only some of the *forms* and effects of capitalist exploitation—joint stock companies, interest payments, the fact that some people live in *dachaus* and don't ever do any manual labor, etc. Because of this he cannot understand how a bourgeoisie can exist, whether permitted or not, right within the party, in socialist society itself.

The role of the party itself under socialism is full of contradictions. On the one hand, and principally, the party is the political leadership of the working class, which leads it forward in making revolution and attacking every vestige of the old society. But the party is also, objectively, an administrative apparatus under socialism. Most of the people exercising leadership over particular units are party members, the state planning is done under the leadership of the party, and so forth. Similarly, the party must exercise all-round dictatorship in every sphere of society, and it is an instrument of proletarian dictatorship, but at the same time the existence of the party itself is in contradiction to the goal for which the party is fighting—namely the elimination of all class distinctions, and with it the need for any state or party. The party seeks to eliminate all inequality, but finds itself in the position of having to protect, even enforce, vestiges of inequality in the form of wage differences, the division between mental and manual labor, and so

forth, because the party is not free to simply will them out of existence. All these contradictions in the very role of the party under socialism make possible the transformation of the Marxist-Leninist party into its opposite.

Mao's important statement, “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,” could well be directed at Enver Hoxha. Hoxha would send the workers on a wild goose chase looking for old exploiters who have long been expropriated when the actual main target of their class struggle is nestling in the very party itself. Instead of concentrating their efforts on uncovering and combatting those instances in socialist society where public ownership and the leadership of the party were a mere shell hiding a situation where the directors and big shots were implementing a revisionist line and trying to reduce the workers once again to the status of wage slaves, Hoxha would have the Marxist-Leninists concentrate on uncovering instances of petty exploiters illegally hiring labor and so forth. Instead of directing the political struggle against the bourgeoisie in the party, as Mao did, Hoxha would direct it against people like Sun Yat-sen's widow and other old bourgeois democrats because they occupied a formal position in a state body that hasn't met in years anyway and holds no real power. Of course all these *secondary* sources of capitalism and the bourgeois state played their role in the reversal in China, as did similar forces in the Soviet Union, but they were not and could not have been the main source of the bourgeoisie and were in fact only a significant force insofar as they were commanded and led by the bourgeoisie inside the Party.

In fact, at a certain stage in the development of the socialist revolution it becomes virtually impossible for the *old bourgeoisie* (i.e. the particular members of the old exploiting classes) to make a comeback—after all, they have been deprived of their means of production, they have been under constant political attack, they have grown old or died and they have become so politically discredited that they command no support in society (and even many of their own children have been won to support, or accept, socialism). Stalin perceived this, he knew that the old henchmen of the Tsar, the kulaks, the former factory owners, would never be able to regain power short of an imperialist invasion. But he drew exactly the wrong conclusions—that the restoration of capitalism was impossible without an imperialist take-over, and the dictatorship of the proletariat was only necessary to protect the socialist state from external enemies. And it is essentially this line that Hoxha is resurrecting, with a few of his own “shibboleths” about the “contradiction between the capitalist and socialist road,” “class struggle” (but no antagonistic classes!) and the “possibility of restora-



tion still exists"—phrases the Albanian Party took from Mao while never really absorbing his Marxist-Leninist line, the line they are now attacking as revisionist.

Stalin's recognition of the need to maintain the dictatorship of the proletariat stood in sharp conflict with his theory of the disappearance of the bourgeoisie and the non-existence of antagonistic classes and antagonistic contradictions under socialism. While he began to tackle some of the problems in this line in his *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR* (written shortly before his death), in which he corrected the view put forward in the 1930s that there was no contradiction between the relations of production and the forces of production under socialism, he still did not reach correct conclusions on the nature of class struggle in the USSR at that time. It remained for Khrushchev to "resolve" the contradiction in the Soviet line between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the supposed non-existence of the bourgeoisie. Khrushchev did this with his infamous theory of the "state of the whole people."

After all, Khrushchev argued (and not unreasonably) that if there is no *bourgeoisie*, if there are no *antagonistic class relationships*, why is it necessary to maintain a dictatorship of the proletariat, a state which by its very definition exists to exercise dictatorship over, suppress by force, the bourgeoisie? Furthermore, if the state is no longer needed to combat an internally generated enemy, but only to fight the external imperialist enemy and the foreign agents, saboteurs and so on who are dependent on this external enemy for their existence, couldn't such a state be more appropriately termed the *state of the whole people*, and actually represent *all* the existing classes in Soviet society (the working class, the peasantry and the socialist intelligentsia), and still fulfill its functions against the external enemy? Of course, Stalin's muddle is infinitely preferable to Khrushchevite revisionism, but it must be said that his muddle contained more than a few elements that could be and were used by Khrushchev in constructing his revisionist theories.

#### IV. Dialectics

We have attempted to show throughout this article that Enver Hoxha's outlook is a metaphysical and idealist outlook. But it is not necessary to extrapolate this from his political views; he confesses quite openly and unabashedly to these views in his criticism of Mao's dialectical materialism.

Hoxha begins by making ridiculous charges against Mao, that "he adheres to a metaphysical, evolutionary concept." But in trying to "explain" Mao's concept, Hoxha only reveals his own utter-

ly metaphysical world view:

Contrary to materialist dialectics, which envisages progressive development in the form of a spiral, Mao Tsetung preaches development in the form of a cycle, going round in a circle, as a process of ebb and flow which goes from equilibrium to disequilibrium and back to equilibrium again, from motion to rest and back to motion again, from rise to fall and from fall to rise, from advance to retreat and to advance again, etc.<sup>120</sup>

Mao, of course, never adhered to a metaphysical, evolutionary concept at all. In his famous work "On Contradiction," he polemicizes directly against the "metaphysical or vulgar evolutionist world outlook that sees things as isolated, static and one-sided." He points out that "They contend that a thing can only keep on repeating itself as the same kind of thing and cannot change into anything different. In their opinion, capitalist exploitation, capitalist competition, the individualist ideology of capitalist society, and so on, can all be found in ancient slave society, or even in primitive society, and will exist forever unchanged."<sup>121</sup>

In this passage, and indeed throughout the work, Mao makes a thorough and profound criticism of the metaphysical outlook, and it is obvious to anyone who reads it that Hoxha's characterization of it is simply swill. But what is interesting is Hoxha's definition of a "cycle" and how he tries to counterpose it to the concept of a spiral.

It is certainly true that things don't repeat themselves in a "circle," but it is just as true that things *do* go from ebb to flow, flow to ebb; from advance to defeat and to advance again and so on. Isn't that how the mass movement develops in the capitalist countries? Yes, it is, and each "cycle," if you will, does not lead back to where it started but in fact, speaking generally, each represents an overall advance in the movement. Isn't it equally true that in a war an army goes from advance to retreat and to advance again? It is precisely through this cyclical process that the overall direction, progress, of the war works itself out. The same is generally true of any protracted, complex process. It is only in Albania (actually it is only in Enver Hoxha's mind) that the class struggle and the revolution develop "uninterruptedly" and go from one victory to another, never suffering a defeat or setback or, God forbid, periods of turbulence and "chaos."

While Hoxha is burning Mao's books, he should burn Marx's *Capital* as well for that work (always upheld by Marxist-Leninists as the classic example of the application of dialectics) is teeming with examples of things that work themselves out not in endless,

unchanging repetition but whose forward motion comes about through cycles. For instance, there is the circulation of capital itself, whose formula is M-C-M', from money to commodity to money, which Marx describes as "the restless never-ending process of profit-making," or as "the circular course of capital," and of which he says, "This process as a whole constitutes therefore the process of moving in circuits."<sup>122</sup> But yet it is this process of "never-ending" cycles which is also the process of the accumulation of capital, the process of movement from competitive capitalism to monopoly capitalism, etc. Or there are the *crises* which recur cyclically in capitalism, but through the cyclic recurrence of which capitalism moves toward its final end. The point is that although these processes take place in cycles, these are not cycles which endlessly return to their beginning points, but what is happening is actually a spiral, and it is precisely through such cycles and circuits that all development takes place and qualitative leaps are made.

It is worthwhile to quote Mao's brilliant summary of the Marxist theory of knowledge as an excellent example of the correct use of dialectics:

Discover the truth through practice, and again through practice verify and develop the truth. Start from perceptual knowledge and actively develop it into rational knowledge; then start from rational knowledge and actively guide revolutionary practice to change both the subjective and the objective world. Practice, knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge. This form repeats itself in endless cycles, and with each cycle the content of practice and knowledge rises to a higher level. Such is the whole of the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge, and such is the dialectical-materialist theory of the unity of knowing and doing.<sup>123</sup>

Thus Mao is clearly putting forward the process of rising to a "higher level" through a series of endless cycles—a spiral! Hoxha confuses the point because the only kind of "spiral" he can understand is one with all of the curves removed. Anyone who thinks that a spiral doesn't contain cycles must be *literally* as well as politically blind.\*

\*We would suggest that Hoxha take his crusade against circles to Lenin, who wrote in his work "On the Question of Dialectics" (a five-page article which Hoxha quotes but has obviously not read): "Human knowledge is not (or does not follow) a straight line, but a curve, which endlessly approximates a series of circles, a spiral."<sup>124</sup>

Dismissing Hoxha's attempt to paint Mao as an astrologist and a believer in ancient mythology with the lack of comment it deserves, we will proceed to examine one of his more serious arguments against Mao. In a typical Hoxhaite compilation of lies and his own muddled thinking, Hoxha says:

Mao Tsetung negates the internal contradictions inherent in things and phenomena and treats development as simple repetition, as a chain of unchangeable states in which the same opposites and the same relationship between them are observed. The mutual transformation of the opposites into each other, understood as a mere exchange of places and not as a resolution of the contradiction and a qualitative change of the very phenomenon which comprises these opposites, is used by Mao Tsetung as a formal pattern to which everything is subject.<sup>125</sup>

Well what have we here! Hoxha, who denies the existence of two lines in the party, who denies the existence of antagonistic classes under socialism, has mounted a high horse to accuse *Mao Tsetung* of negating the internal contradictions in things! This charge almost equals his brilliant thesis that Mao is a "racist" which he then follows by offering example after example of his own chauvinism and narrow nationalism! This statement is truly like that of the thief who hollered, "There is no gold buried here!"

But leaving aside this ridiculous charge as well as Hoxha's attempt to reintroduce his "theory of circles" and pin it on Mao, we come to the heart of the question—Hoxha's contention that the "mutual transformation of opposites into each other" means "a resolution of the contradiction and a qualitative change of the very phenomenon which comprises the opposites." Well, Hoxha is half correct, which is a huge improvement over most of his statements. The transformation of things into their opposites does indeed mean that a qualitative change has taken place. Unfortunately for Hoxha's polemic, however, he is unable—except by mere assertion—to show where Mao denies this. Mao not only has not denied it, he explains it, and, unlike Hoxha, correctly:

We often speak of the "new superseding the old." The supersession of the old by the new is a general, eternal and inviolable law of the universe. The transformation of one thing into another, through leaps of different forms in accordance with its essence and external contradictions—this is the process of the new superseding the old. In each thing there is contradiction between its new and its old aspects, and this gives rise to a series of

struggles with many twists and turns. As a result of these struggles, the new aspect changes from being minor to being major and rises to predominance, while the old aspect changes from being major to being minor and gradually dies out. And the moment the new aspect gains dominance over the old, the old thing changes qualitatively into a new thing. It can thus be seen that the nature of a thing is mainly determined by the principal aspect of the contradiction, the aspect which has gained predominance. When the principal aspect which has gained predominance changes, the nature of a thing changes accordingly.<sup>126</sup>

Thus Mao is very clear: the transformation of opposites in a contradiction is not, as Hoxha (mis)represents Mao's line, "the mere exchange of places," but to use Mao's own words, "the old thing changes qualitatively into a new thing."

No, the difference here—and it is a vital one—is not over whether a qualitative change takes place when opposites become transformed into each other, but whether that transformation "resolves"—i.e. abolishes—the contradiction itself! We have, on Hoxha's part, a sort of flip side of his earlier "Deborin school" error. Whereas in one aspect, as we have previously pointed out, Hoxha's line reflects the view that a contradiction only *emerges* at a certain stage of development, here he is saying that contradiction *disappears* at the moment of qualitative change. What both views have in common is the failure to see contradiction running through the entire process of development of a thing from its beginning to its end.

Hoxha's thesis of the resolution of a contradiction taking place merely because each aspect is turned into its opposite is transparently wrong. Take, for example, the contradiction between war and peace, on a world scale or in any particular country. The contradiction between war and peace has existed from even before the advent of classes and will not be resolved until peace is not only the principal *aspect* but until it "gobbles up" its opposite, war, entirely and on a world scale. At that point there will no longer be any contradiction between war and peace, and the term peace itself will have no meaning, except as an historical factor.

But between the dawn of wars and the dawn of communism is a long historical period, during which these two aspects remain locked in struggle and many qualitative changes take place, in which war is transformed into peace and vice versa. This is why Mao was correct to criticize the Soviet philosophy textbook (which he said reflected Stalin's view) for saying there was no identity between war and peace.<sup>127</sup> World War 2 grew out of a period of relative peace, which in turn grew out of a period of relative war, viz., the

first world war. World War 2 gave rise to a period of *relative* peace on a world scale. Yet in none of these instances was the contradiction *resolved* between war and peace. Each peace still had aspects of war (both the war that had passed and the war that was to come as well as revolutionary wars) within it. And this process has not taken place as the endless repetition of circles, but exactly as a *spiral*, with each cycle from war to peace and back to war again leading to the forward advance of society, as revolutionary wars—wars of the working class and the oppressed peoples, which alone can lead to the abolition of war—have triumphed first in one country and then in several. It was this kind of correct, dialectical understanding that led Mao to say, in the face of Khrushchev's hysteria that another world war would bring the end of humanity, that another world war would lead instead to a revolutionary storm on an unprecedented scale and the real possibility of handing the system of imperialism its greatest defeats ever.

There are, of course, numerous other examples from nature and society of the operation of this principle—in which the principal aspect of a contradiction changes and leads to a qualitative change, yet the contradiction remains and the opposites continue to struggle. Hoxha's thesis is a reflection of his own metaphysical outlook, which holds that once a qualitative change has taken place it is impossible for the aspects of the contradiction to again reverse themselves, because the contradiction itself has ceased to exist. Yea is yea, and nay is nay—such is the bourgeois logical, but anti-dialectical, reasoning of Hoxha. It may do fine for common sense, but it can only lead a revolution to defeat.

Hoxha's point in making a stand on this question is clear—he wants to *invent* a non-existent philosophical principle (that qualitative change means the elimination of the contradiction that gave rise to it) in order to justify his idealist, metaphysical line on the nature of socialism. So Hoxha criticizes Mao for not seeing that "the socialist revolution is a qualitative change of society in which antagonistic classes and the oppression and exploitation of man by man are abolished, but conceives it as a simple change of places between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat."<sup>128</sup> And then he quotes Mao:

If the bourgeoisie and the proletariat cannot transform themselves into each other, how does it come that, through revolution, the proletariat becomes the ruling class and the bourgeoisie the ruled class? . . . We stand in diametrical opposition to Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang. As a result of the mutual struggle and exclusion of the two contradictory aspects with the Kuomintang we changed places. . . .<sup>129</sup>

“This same logic has also led Mao Tsetung to revise the Marxist-Leninist theory on the two phases of communist society.” So Hoxha comments.

Well, Hoxha is getting nearer to the mark. It is true that Mao's same logic, dialectical logic, approaching every question from the point of analyzing its internal contradiction and its contradictory aspects, is the same logic that leads him to *develop* the Marxist-Leninist understanding of socialism and the transition to communism. Hoxha takes great offense at Mao's statement that:

According to dialectics, as surely as a man must die, the socialist system as a historical phenomenon will come to an end some day, to be negated by the communist system. If it is asserted that the socialist system and the relations of production and superstructure of socialism will not die out, what kind of Marxist thesis would that be? Wouldn't it be the same as a religious creed or theology that preaches an everlasting god?<sup>130</sup>

Hoxha may not like it, but we think it's fine!

Isn't it quite obvious that the socialist system is qualitatively different from communism? Hoxha believes that this is not the case, that socialism and communism “in essence, are two phases of the one type, of the one socio-economic order, and which are distinguished from each other only by the degree of their development and maturity[;] Mao Tsetung presents socialism as something diametrically opposite to communism.”<sup>131</sup> Here it is, the revisionist line in all its glory. Not only is it impermissible to divide socialism into contradictory aspects for the purpose of analysis, it is impermissible to recognize a contradiction between socialism and communism.

Not surprisingly, it is Hoxha's inability to understand the contradictions in socialism that makes it impossible for him to understand the contradiction *between* socialism and communism. Since, in Hoxha's idealistic view, the *qualitative change* from capitalism to socialism means the *resolution* of the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, it follows that this transformation means the *basic accomplishment of communism*, albeit on a “lower” stage, and that all that is required is a mere quantitative development, “uninterrupted development” and maturation to achieve communism in its full sense.

The fundamental contradiction in socialist society is precisely the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie which, in turn, reflects the contradiction between “nascent communism” (as Lenin calls it) and the birthmarks—political, economic, social and moral—of the capitalist society from which socialism emerges. When these contradictions are resolved, that is

when the bourgeoisie and the birthmarks of the old society die out under the repeated blows of the proletariat and the advance of socialist transformation, then and only then is it possible to say that mankind has entered the realm of communism, when new contradictions will determine the character of society. The transformation of the working class to the ruling class in society represents a qualitative leap and the elimination of classes altogether represents another, more profound, qualitative leap. This would seem quite elementary, especially in view of the hundred years of experience in socialist revolution since the Paris Commune, experience which has demonstrated that the transition to communism is longer, the resistance of the bourgeoisie more fierce, and the birthmarks of the old society more stubborn, than first envisioned by Marx and Engels, whose writings on socialism and communism were brilliant in their historical sweep but were naturally limited by the lack of experience of the proletariat in building socialism during their lifetime. But Hoxha insists on propagating and raising to the absurd the idea that socialism and communism are the same “economic and social system”!

Well, Mr. Hoxha, is “to each according to his work” a reflection of the same social-economic system as “to each according to his needs”? Is a society in which one class maintains a state, a dictatorship, the same social-economic system as a society in which there is no state and classes have disappeared? Really, even a child could see through Hoxha's stupidity. How can the transition to classless society after thousands of years of class society (*including socialism*) not be a tremendous qualitative leap?

The implications, however, of Hoxha's insistence that socialism and communism are “in essence” the same thing are ominous indeed. They throw the door wide open to that pernicious line that seems to accompany all revisionism—“the theory of the productive forces.” *If* socialism differs from communism only in its degree of “maturity,” *if* the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie has been eliminated by socialism, it follows that it is mainly the level of the development of the productive forces that distinguishes communism from its less “mature” stage of socialism. Indeed, the “theory of the productive forces” is the logical outgrowth and the fitting companion to Hoxha's entire crusade against Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought.

As a result of the tragic loss of China to the world proletariat, the international communist movement is indeed facing its most serious crisis. At stake is whether to remain firm in revolutionary convictions and, on the basis of the science of Marxism-Leninism and the development and enrichment of that science by Mao Tsetung, to continue to advance in the revolutionary struggle. Or must the Marxist-Leninists abandon all that has been achieved in the struggle against Khrushchevite revisionism, the lessons of the

Cultural Revolution and so on, and in one form or another accommodate with revisionism?

After the loss in China, the attention of the Marxist-Leninists focused on Albania and on Enver Hoxha. The PLA had stood together with Mao and the Chinese Communist Party in the struggle against Khrushchev, had supported the Cultural Revolution, had set an example for the world in refusing to kneel down before modern revisionism. But now the very things that must be cherished and defended, the very advances won by the international communist movement through fierce struggle and amidst setbacks as well as advances, have come under attack from a quarter from which we had come to expect something quite different.

It is clear, Hoxha's protestations to the contrary, that the Albanian attack on Mao Tsetung Thought differs in no fundamental way from the chorus raised against Mao by the Soviet social-imperialists and the current Chinese revisionist rulers. All oppose Mao's most important contribution to Marxism-Leninism, the theory and practice of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. To all of them, the Cultural Revolution represented all that filled them with fear—above all the revolutionary torrent of the masses tearing down all that stood in the way of the communist future and daring to shape every aspect of society into the image of the proletariat. The Soviet and Chinese revisionists, and now Enver Hoxha, recoil in horror at Mao's dialectics—at his incisive and relentless efforts to seek out the contradiction at the heart of every process, at his refusal to kneel before any sacred cows, at his recognition that the world advances amidst turbulence and struggle, and his willingness to lead the masses forward through the inevitable storms. Mao's famous call "It is right to rebel against reactionaries!" inspired revolutionaries on every continent, but it strikes fear into the hearts of all the reactionaries and revisionists.

Hoxha's charges of "Asian communism" and "racism" are direct from the preachings of the Soviet revisionists;\* his distaste for the "chaos" of the Cultural Revolution and the poor mistreated "communists" reads straight from Teng Hsiao-ping. He wants to be the center of the international communist movement, to be the representative of the "purity" of Marxism-Leninism—he is in-

\*Consider, for example, the following quote: "The political, economic, philosophical and sociological views and the tactical approach of Mao Tsetung and his followers reflect the influence and are in fact an eclectic mixture of various doctrines, theories and concepts including feudal Chinese philosophy (mostly Confucianism and Taoism), petty-bourgeois socialism, petty-bourgeois and peasant views, bourgeois-nationalist views, great-power chauvinism, Trotskyite and anarchist ideas." Is this from Hoxha or perhaps one of his pitiful parrots? No, this comes from the pamphlet *What Peking Keeps Silent About, Moscow, 1972.*

stead only a queer variant of revisionism and one that shows every sign of steadily losing its distinctive characteristics and merging with the main revisionist current emanating from Moscow. His only importance lies in the fact that he is attempting to drag a certain section of Marxist-Leninists, heretofore opponents of revisionism, into the revisionist quagmire and trying to sugar-coat the bitter pill of capitulation and betrayal. However, he should not get carried away with his delusions of a new International, with his role as the Stalin of such a movement—but a Stalin devoid of his revolutionary essence. The genuine Marxist-Leninists are already deserting him. Others move steadily rightward to become almost indistinguishable from the revisionist parties. Still others are but pathetic sects with not even an occasional thought of revolution.

The comment made in *Revolution* after the appearance of an Albanian press release announcing Hoxha's utter and complete departure from Marxism with the publication of *Imperialism and the Revolution* remains a fitting conclusion after having examined in greater depth some of Hoxha's main attacks on Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought: "At a time when the international communist movement is at a crossroads Enver Hoxha had the opportunity and the responsibility to play the role of a giant. He chose instead to be a pipsqueak."<sup>132</sup>

## FOOTNOTES

1. Enver Hoxha, *Imperialism and the Revolution* (published as an issue of "*Proletarian Internationalism*," Chicago, 1979), p. 113. I use this edition of Hoxha's book because the price corresponds more closely to its political value.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 114-15.
3. Mao Tsetung, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1 (Peking 1975), p. 24.
4. J.V. Stalin, "The Prospects of the Revolution in China," *Works*, Vol. 8 (Moscow, 1954), p. 385.
5. Stalin, "The Political Complexion of the Russian Opposition," *Works*, Vol. 10 (Moscow, 1954), p. 161.
6. *The Communist International, 1919-1943: Documents*, ed. Jane Degras, Vol. II: 1923-1928 (London, 1960), p. 386.
7. *Ibid.*, Vol. III: 1929-1943 (London, 1965), p. 120.
8. Hoxha, *op. cit.*, p. 114.
9. Mao, "On Tactics Against Japanese Imperialism," *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 170.
10. Hoxha, *op. cit.*
11. Mao, "On New Democracy," *Selected Works*, Vol. 2 (Peking, 1975), p. 358.
12. *History of the Party of Labor of Albania* (Tirana, 1971), p. 175.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 253.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 266-67, 321.
15. Hoxha, pp. 48-49.
16. Stalin, "The Revolution in China and the Tasks of the Comintern," *Works*, Vol. 9 (Moscow, 1954), p. 297.
17. Mao, "On New Democracy," *op. cit.*, p. 344.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 347.
19. Hoxha, p. 65.
20. See Part 2: "Revolutionary War and Military Line" in the series, *Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions in Revolution*, June 1978. This series is now reprinted as a book, published by RCP Publications (Chicago, 1979).
21. Stalin, "The Prospects of the Revolution in China," *Works*, Vol. 8, p. 379; emphasis added.
22. Mao, "On Tactics Against Japanese Imperialism," *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 160.
23. Hoxha, p. 115.

24. Mao, "A Single Spark Can Start A Prairie Fire," *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 123, quoting and endorsing a letter from the Front Committee to the Central Committee.
25. From "Resolution on Some Questions in the History of Our Party," printed as an appendix to Mao's article, "Our Study and the Current Situation," in the 1965 edition of Vol. 3 of Mao's *Selected Works* (quote from pp. 215-17).
26. *Ibid.*
27. Mao, "On New Democracy," *op. cit.*, p. 355.
28. Quoted by Han Suyin, *The Morning Deluge: Mao Tsetung and the Chinese Revolution, 1893-1954* (Boston, 1972), p. 114.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 156.
30. Stalin, "The International Situation and the Defense of the U.S.S.R.," *Works*, Vol. 10, p. 18.
31. Stalin, "Notes on Contemporary Themes," *Works*, Vol. 9, pp. 338-39.
32. Hoxha, p. 108.
33. Mao, "The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War," *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 208-210.
34. Mao, "Some Points in Appraisal of the Present International Situation," *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 87-88.
35. Hoxha, p. 120.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 119.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Mao, "On the Ten Major Relationships," *Selected Works*, Vol. 5 (Peking, 1975), p. 304.
39. Hoxha, p. 105; emphasis added.
40. Mao, "Speech at the Second Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China," *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 341.
41. *History of the Party of Labor of Albania*, p. 414; Enver Hoxha, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2 (Tirana, 1975), p. 484, editorial note.
42. See, e.g., Hoxha, *ibid.*, pp. 626, 638, 676.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 637.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 623, note.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 624, editorial note.
46. Hoxha, *ibid.*, p. 624.
47. "Albania Labor Party is 15 years old," *Pravda*, Nov. 8, 1956, p. 3.

48. "Always Follow a Correct Line" (Hoxha's contribution to the discussion at the meeting of the Political Bureau of the CC of the PLA, June 22, 1960), *Albania Challenges Khrushchev Revisionism* ([Translation from Vol. 19 of Hoxha's Works] N.Y., 1976), pp. 2 and 3.
49. Hoxha, *Imperialism and the Revolution*, pp. 115-16.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
51. Mao, "Report to the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China," *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 364.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 367.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*, p. 368.
55. Quoted by Hoxha on p. 117.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
57. Mao, "The Contradiction Between the Working Class and the Bourgeoisie is the Principal Contradiction in China," *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 77.
58. Mao, "Refute Right Deviationist Views That Depart From the General Line," *ibid.*, p. 93-94.
59. See *Red Papers 7: How Capitalism Has Been Restored in the Soviet Union and What This Means For the World Struggle* (Chicago, 1974), p. 15.
60. Hoxha, p. 112.
61. Mao, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 412.
62. Mao, "Wen Hui Pao's Bourgeois Orientation Should Be Criticized," *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 454.
63. Mao, "The Situation in the Summer of 1957," *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 476.
64. Mao, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," *op. cit.*, pp. 410-11.
65. Article 16, *Constitution of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania* (Tirana, 1977), p. 13.
66. Hoxha, p. 111, quoting Mao, "On the Ten Major Relationships," *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 296.
67. Hoxha, *ibid.*
68. Mao, "On the Ten Major Relationships," *op. cit.*, p. 297.
69. *Ibid.*

70. Mao, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 413.
71. Lenin, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28 (Moscow, 1965), p. 271.
72. Hoxha, *Imperialism and the Revolution*, p. 112.
73. *History of the Party of Labor of Albania*, p. 321.
74. Mao, "Talks at Conference of Party Committee Secretaries," *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 353.
75. Hoxha, p. 116.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
77. *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.
78. Lenin, "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up," *Collected Works*, Vol. 22 (Moscow, 1964), pp. 355-56; Lenin's emphasis.
79. Mao, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 245.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 245.
82. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
83. "Speech to the Albanian Military Delegation," Joint Publications Research Service, *Miscellany of Mao Tsetung Thought (1949-1968)* (Arlington, Va., 1974), p. 458.
84. See the "16 Point Decision on the Cultural Revolution" and May 16, 1966 "Circular of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party," printed as pamphlets, Peking 1968.
85. Hoxha, p. 123.
86. Wang Ming, *Lenin, Leninism and the Chinese Revolution*, (Moscow, 1970).
87. See *Manchester Guardian* (October 29, 1978), p. 13, quoting Hoang Tung, editor-in-chief of the Vietnam Party's daily *Nhan Dan*.
88. Hoxha, p. 106; emphasis added.
89. *Ibid.*, p. 107; emphasis added.
90. See the *Letter of the CC of the Party of Labor and the Government of Albania to the CC of the Communist Party and the Government of China* (Tirana, 1978) where the Albanian Party held that the Cultural Revolution "ended in the establishment in China of state power dominated by bourgeois and revisionist elements." (emphasis added) p. 36.
91. Hoxha, p. 109.
92. *Ibid.*

93. Mao, "A Dialectical Approach to Inner-Party Unity," *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 515.
94. *Ibid.*
95. *The Tenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China (Documents)* (Peking, 1973), p. 46; reprinted in R. Lotta, ed., *And Mao Makes 5* (Chicago, 1978), p. 96.
96. Mao, "On Contradiction," *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 311.
97. Quoted by Hoxha on p. 109; the words which occur in brackets are not quoted by Hoxha although they are part of the sentence, as found in Mao, "A Dialectical Approach to Inner-Party Unity," *Selected Works* Vol. 5, pp. 515-16.
98. Mao, *ibid.*
99. *Ibid.*, p. 515.
100. Hoxha, p. 109.
101. Mao, "Strengthen Party Unity and Carry Forward Party Traditions," *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 322.
102. *Ibid.*, p. 320.
103. *Ibid.*
104. *Ibid.*, p. 322.
105. Mao, "The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party," *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, pp. 326-27.
106. Lenin, "Left-Wing" Communism—An Infantile Disorder, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 115.
107. *History of the Party of Labor of Albania*, pp. 275, 277.
108. Quoted by William Ash in *Pickaxe and Rifle: The Story of the Albanian People* (London, 1974), p. 112; emphasis added.
109. *History of the Party of Labor of Albania*, p. 334.
110. Hoxha, *Imperialism and the Revolution*, p. 106.
111. M. Altaisty, V. Georgigev, *The Philosophical Views of Mao Tsetung: A Critical Analysis* (Moscow, 1971).
112. Hoxha, p. 109.
113. *Ibid.*
114. See Hua's report to the CPC's 11th Congress in *The Eleventh National Congress of the Communist Party of China (Documents)* (Peking, 1977).
115. Fang Kang, "Capitalist-Roaders Are the Bourgeoisie Inside the Party," *Peking Review* No. 25, 1976. Reprinted in *And Mao Makes 5*, p. 360.
116. Hoxha, p. 113.

117. *And Mao Makes 5*, p. 362.
118. Chuang Lan, "Capitalist-Roaders Are the Representatives of the Capitalist Relations of Production," *And Mao Makes 5*, pp. 369-70. This article first appeared in *Study and Criticism*, the journal put out in Shanghai under the direct leadership of the Four, and suppressed since the 1976 coup.
119. *Ibid.*, p. 373.
120. Hoxha, p. 112.
121. Mao, "On Contradiction," *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 312.
122. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1 (N.Y., 1967), p. 152; Vol. 2 (N.Y., 1967), pp. 56 and 48.
123. Mao, "On Practice," *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 308.
124. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics," *Collected Works*, Vol. 38, p. 363.
125. Hoxha, p. 113.
126. Mao, "On Contradiction," *op. cit.*, p. 333.
127. Mao, "Talks at a Conference of Secretaries of Provincial, Municipal and Autonomous Region Party Committees," *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 368.
128. Hoxha, p. 113.
129. *Ibid.*, p. 128, quoting Mao, "Talks at a Conference of Party Committee Secretaries," Vol. 5, p. 368, where this passage appears in slightly different form.
130. Hoxha, p. 113, quoting Mao, "Talks at a Conference of Party Committee Secretaries," Vol. 5, p. 377.
131. Hoxha, p. 113.
132. *Revolution*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Jan. 1979), p. 4.



# Some Notes on the Study of *What Is To Be Done* And Its Implications for the Struggle Today

by J.P.

*The workers have no need for socialists in their struggle to improve their conditions, if that is their only struggle. In all countries there are workers who wage the struggle for the improvement of their condition, but know nothing of socialism or are even hostile to it.*

Lenin<sup>1</sup>

*What Is To Be Done?*, written by Lenin in 1901 (first published in February, 1902), is undoubtedly one of the great Marxist-Leninist works of all time—a classic whose value to the international proletariat has not diminished at all through the years. It is a thoroughgoing polemic against the political opportunist trend in the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (at that time the name of the Russian Communist Party) dubbed “economism.” And in thrashing out the difference between this form of political opportunism and Marxism, Lenin created a work which makes a significant contribution on the questions of pragmatism, reformism, the necessity, character and role of a vanguard party, the role of the party press (particularly explaining the indispensable role of nationwide political exposure), the importance of the theoretical struggle to revolution, the importance of and the outlook toward work among non-proletarian strata, and more.

Pivotal to all these questions, the heart of the polemic and what probably stands out as its most important overall contribution, is Lenin’s exposition on the role of consciousness in making revolution—drawing out the relationship between the conscious and spontaneous elements; how proletarian ideology is quite different from trade union consciousness, which is nothing more than

bourgeois consciousness; how the "conscious element," the proletarian party, is just that and must be guided by the most advanced theory and work tirelessly to raise the masses to this advanced understanding and prepare them for revolution. As Lenin put it, "... all worship of spontaneity of the working class movement, all belittling of the role of the 'conscious element,' of the role of Social Democracy [i.e., communists], means, quite irrespective of whether the belittler wants to or not, strengthening the influence of the bourgeois ideology over the workers."<sup>2</sup>

*What Is To Be Done?* was not the first polemic in which Lenin took these "economists" to task. "A Protest by Russian Social Democrats," written in late 1899, "A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy" (1899), "Urgent Tasks of Our Movement" (1900), and "Where to Begin" (1901), all are substantial works that hit this deviation. But *What Is To Be Done?* stands out as the most thorough and decisive blow against these opportunists. The scope and depth of this work shows that this economism was no minor problem to the Russian Party, but in fact was a stubborn trend that threatened to kill the revolutionary character of the young Russian Party unless it was thoroughly exposed and clearly distinguished in outlook, political line and organizational line from genuine revolutionary Marxism.

These notes are an attempt to draw out some of the controversial questions surrounding Lenin's political emphasis in *What Is To Be Done?* and their implications for today's struggle. The scope of these notes is limited. They are not meant to be an exhaustive analysis of Lenin's great work, but instead focus on some of the main political questions raised in Chapter II, "The Spontaneity Of The Masses And The Consciousness Of The Social-Democrats," and Chapter III, "Trade-Unionist Politics And Social-Democratic Politics." (Even in terms of these two chapters, there are important political questions raised by Lenin that are very relevant to today's struggle and warrant serious study which are only touched on in passing or not touched on at all in these notes.)

A very brief analysis of the role of *What Is To Be Done?* in the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (the Russian Communist Party) and a short summation of the central features of the Russian economists' line are included mainly for background purposes. Also included is some initial thinking on the impact of *What Is To Be Done?*, and the handling of the central issues it focuses on, historically in the U.S. communist movement, because lessons drawn from this history help to shed light on the interpretation and application of the work today.

### What Was Economism?

Lenin stated, "It is time to summarize this trend, the substance

of which is incorrectly and too narrowly described as 'Economism'."<sup>3</sup> The essence of "economism" was liberal bourgeois reformism. Among communists internationally there was a fierce two-line struggle being waged between revisionism, as represented by the likes of Eduard Bernstein in Germany, and genuine Marxists. Bernstein and others were trying to reduce Marxism to nothing more than bourgeois reformism, rationalized by empiricism, as encapsulated in Bernstein's slogan, "The movement is everything, the final aim nothing." The economists were the most influential representatives of this trend in Russia (although the "legal Marxists" could also be considered part of this trend; see *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* for more on them).

The economists were not open supporters of Bernstein's overall line. They didn't have to go as far as Bernstein. They could hide behind the two-stage character of the Russian Revolution, which meant that the overthrow of *capitalism* was not immediately on the agenda, to avoid having to lay straight out on the table their belief that Marx was incorrect on important theoretical questions. Bernstein & Co., for example, attempted to prove that capitalism did not inevitably bring about the impoverishment of the masses (in fact, right opportunism was first branded "revisionism" with Bernstein's attempt to revise Marx). The economists did have a strong agnostic streak (see Chapter I of *What Is To Be Done?*) and openly played an eclectic game of adamantly defending Bernsteinism as one of "many proletarian trends" that should "freely" contend within international socialism (and in some cases Bernstein's arguments against Marx's analysis of impoverishment were echoed by the economists of Lenin's time).

As their name implies, the economists' hallmark and contribution to this international trend of opportunism was their worship of the spontaneous struggle, the economic struggle of the working class (and their insistence that the workers should also worship it!). This took more or less blatant forms. They proclaimed that the watchword for the working class movement was "fight for economic conditions," that the economic struggle was the most widely applicable means of drawing the masses into political struggle—or, as they put in somewhat more eclectic and "refined" form, the economic struggle is the most important form of the workers' movement, but "there is no need whatever to conduct political agitation right from the beginning exclusively on an economic basis"\* (in other words, sometimes it might be OK to treat the workers to politics). Their view toward the political struggle was that on the one hand, building the revolutionary struggle against

\*For Lenin's exposure of this eclectic trick, see Chapter III, part A, "Political Agitation And Its Restriction By the Economists," especially page 73.

the tsar was a diversion from getting the most out of the economic struggle, and on the other hand, that it was necessary to lend the "economic struggle a political character" or build the "economic struggle against the employers and government," i.e., strive "to secure satisfaction of these trade demands, the improvement of conditions of labour—by means of 'legislative and administrative measures'" or plain and simple bourgeois reformism a la Bernstein. Their reformism was also reflected in their preoccupation with "palpable results." Some of the economists even openly advocated that the political struggle against the tsar should be left up to the liberal bourgeoisie (though the logical extension of their line would mean this whether one said it or not).

They reasoned that the economic struggle was the "path of least resistance" on the basis that the tsar cracked down too fast when they took on political struggle<sup>4</sup> and that, since the workers are heavily involved in this economic struggle, communists should build it until it turns into social-democratic (communist) politics. They argued not only that the workers learn to fight in their own interests through the economic struggle, but that the workers first had to develop their strength through this struggle before they would be able to take on other battles, and further that the workers learned all they needed to know about the autocracy through these struggles. The newspapers which were key to these economists were of a local character, tuned to the spontaneous struggle and at its service. Strike funds and other union-type organizations, they insisted, were more important to the working class than the party. These economists had disdain for any theoretical work or struggle and firmly held to their conviction that work among any strata other than the proletariat was an unforgivable diversion.

Their outlook was pragmatism. "What's desirable is what is going on and what's going on is what's desirable" was essentially their slogan, and they were fond of using a quote from Marx: "Every step of real movement is more important than a dozen programmes."<sup>5</sup> In the context in which they kept repeating this, it meant exactly, "the movement is everything, the final aim nothing." They prattled on about "tactics-as-process," meaning there should or could be no plans made based on a scientific view of where things were going and what that meant communists had to do. All tasks were determined by the current state of the mass movement. The real world was simply what was happening on the surface, and they had the firmest conviction that revolutionaries should have "close and organic contact"<sup>6</sup> with this "reality"—i.e., they needed to roll with the spontaneous state of the mass movement, not to act on the world, including this movement, to change it! It was against all this (and more) that Lenin directed his fire in *What Is To Be Done?*—and in combatting this trend, he set forth

important principles and guidance for the international communist movement, much of which, however, has unfortunately been ignored or at best half-heartedly taken up, especially in this country.

### The Impact of *What Is To Be Done?* in the U.S.

Three of the tasks put forward by Lenin in *What Is To Be Done?* were at least in form implemented by the Communist Party USA (i.e., the establishment of a vanguard Party, national newspaper and work among other strata), but particularly since the 1930s, the political essence of *What Is To Be Done?* has been largely ignored. There is no serious treatment of "economism" in the *History of the Communist Party of the United States*, by William Z. Foster\* (although, not surprisingly, Lenin's "Left-Wing" Com-

\* In summing up "Marxism-Leninism and the American Marxists" (*History of the Communist Party of the United States* [N.Y., 1952], pp. 151-156), Foster does speak briefly about how Lenin's writings made clear "the road of all-out political mass struggle to socialism," saying this smashed the prevalent "syndicalist ideas that the workers would win their way to power by 'locking out the capitalists' or by means simply of a general strike. . . ." (p. 152). Also, Foster says, "With his historic doctrine that 'Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement,' Lenin struck hard, too, at the traditional American tendency to minimize theory." (P. 153.)

While these important principles are mentioned by Foster and while he also polemicalizes against the Socialist Party for Bernsteinism, at least by the 1930s the program and practice of the CPUSA reflects that they eclectically hung on to aspects of Bernsteinism themselves.

There is one quote from *What Is To Be Done?* in Foster's history of the CPUSA. In chapter 6, "Lefts versus Rights, in the Party" (p. 119), after exposing the Socialist Party for basing itself on middle-class elements (lawyers, doctors, small employers, preachers and even bankers), Foster points out that there is a role for these middle classes in the Party and quotes from *What Is To Be Done?* as to how class consciousness could only be brought from without and that the theory of socialism had been developed by members of the bourgeois intelligentsia, Marx and Engels themselves being from this stratum (see page 120 of Foster and page 17 of *What Is To Be Done?*).

This use of this quote from *What Is To Be Done?* in the context Foster puts it in, is itself somewhat a self-exposure, reflecting the CPUSA's dualism on the question of theory and practice. While division of labor is necessary in all revolutionary parties, the CPUSA had a tremendous separation between their "theoreticians" and the majority of their membership, the practical workers, who were not encouraged to study much beyond the pages of the *Daily Worker*. In *What Is To Be Done?* Lenin does describe this phenomenon of Marxism developing initially among the bourgeois intelligentsia to prove his point that Marxism does not develop spontaneously from the workers' struggle. Lenin's whole point is to show how it is the task of the party as a whole to bring this Marxism to the masses, emphasizing numerous times that the party must be composed of workers trained in Marxism and revolutionary intellectuals, not a party where there are a few intellectuals doing theoretical work while the majority of the party does not bother themselves with questions of theory, which consequently makes it impossible for the party to carry on its pressing task of raising the consciousness of the masses.

*munism, an Infantile Disorder*, is gone into a number of times and is treated in other major works by Foster also). And the fact that a communist party could put out a book called *American Trade Unionism* (Foster, 1947) about its *own* program for struggle (and that the content of this book matches its title all to well!) suggests that this lack of treatment in their official history was not an oversight, but that they missed the whole point!

Clearly, if the CPUSA carried on any serious study of *What Is To Be Done?* they came to the conclusion that the political line in this profound polemic of Lenin's did not apply to the U.S.\* An entire article, if not a whole book, could be dedicated to showing the compromises by the old CP even in its "better days" on the basic questions of principle so vehemently defended and developed by Lenin in *What Is To Be Done?* For now, a quote from Foster's *American Trade Unionism* illustrates this problem very well. This section is from its conclusion, and it is by far not the worst formulation in the conclusion, let alone the whole book. In answering the charge that the communists didn't care about the masses and were involved in the day-to-day economic struggle only to create strife for strife's sake, Foster answers with the following two points:

(a) the Communists, being flesh and blood of the working class, suffer all the hardships of the workers and have the same urgent interest as other workers to abolish or alleviate these hardships, and (b) *only when the Communists, by loyal service in the class struggle, prove to the workers that they are the best and most trustworthy fighters in the daily struggles against capitalist abuses, can they win the workers' understanding and support for their larger objective of socialism.* This is why, all over the world, Communists are the most responsible leaders in strikes and other struggles.<sup>7</sup>

That is Foster's total answer. Unfortunately it shows he had the same stagist and reformist disease as the economists of Lenin's time and did not think the working masses could understand the world and act on it, but needed condescending saviors—in the form

\*There is some reason to believe that by the early 1920s at least a section of the Comintern believed that Russia had been the *exception*, the only place where the political line expounded in *What Is To Be Done?* applied. Much of this focuses around the mis-application of Lenin's "*Left-Wing*" *Communism, An Infantile Disorder*. Although it is beyond the scope of these notes, attention needs to be paid to summing up the impact and mis-application of this work. At least to the same degree that *What Is To Be Done?* has been ignored, "*Left-Wing*" *Communism* has been one-sidedly—and incorrectly—promoted, and in recent history particularly, continues to be used to defend some rank revisionism.

of trustworthy trade union leaders! (A little more on the CPUSA later in this article.)

### *What Is To Be Done?* in the New Communist Movement

In the struggle to forge a new vanguard of the working class in this country, *What Is To Be Done?* has often been at the heart of decisive two-line struggle. From the start, the Revolutionary Union (RU—forerunner of the Revolutionary Communist Party) and other revolutionary pre-party forms were more theoretically inclined than the CPUSA even in the years before its total degeneration. Why was this so? For one, there were a few veterans of the old CP involved in the new revolutionary movement, and among them were those who had *consciously* broken with revisionism (at least to a degree). Part of their criticism was the total lack of theoretical and ideological struggle in the CPUSA, especially by the time of its demise.\*

But much more fundamental than the influence of these veterans is the simple fact that revolutionary intellectuals who emerged from the upsurge of the '60s had to *seek out* themselves the legacy of proletarian revolution for answers to the question of where must the struggle go, because that upsurge had been stripped of scientific socialism by the total betrayal of the CPUSA. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution going on at the time in China was a tremendous impetus for the forward motion of these revolutionaries in the U.S. (as well as many other countries). Revolutionary Marxism went through a concentrated period (in the late '60s and early '70s) of being rediscovered, embraced, defended in the theoretical sphere (against Soviet-style revisionism, neo-Trotskyism, "new working class" theories and Guevarism, e.g. the Weathermen), and brought back to the working class and other strata—though, of course, initially in a primitive, unrefined sort of way.

### The Dogmatists

What is to be done?—this was the issue at hand, and the work by the same name was one important place where answers were sought. It proved to be of great assistance in understanding the correct revolutionary road in this country as opposed to the "ter-

\*With some of these veterans, however, as in the case of L. Bergman, this criticism did not run too deep, for they felt that it was enough to have studied key Marxist works once or twice in their lives and that the majority of the Party's rank and file did not need to study at all!

rorism of the outraged intellectuals" consolidated in, for example, the Franklin line in the R.U.<sup>8</sup> But for a number of years opportunists (of the likes of the October League—now the Communist Party, Marxist-Leninist—and the Communist League—now the Communist Labor Party), and even sincere revolutionaries who had started to go off base, tried to invoke *What Is To Be Done?* (and other material, like certain Comintern resolutions) as the theoretical justification for some rank dogmatism. Forging a vanguard party of the working class was of course a key task, but the refrain rang out from a number of quarters for a number of years that our tasks consisted only or mainly in propaganda work with the very advanced—that any activity among the struggle of the broad masses was a diversion until "a party free from opportunism" was formed.\*

The RU played a key role at all junctures in exposing these trends for what they represented. These dogmatists themselves missed the heart of *What Is To Be Done?*—specifically its emphasis on building revolutionary consciousness among the broad masses, especially through political agitation. Many of them even missed the demarcation between trade unionism and communism—and between reformist and communist politics in general—since they included in their programs some pretty blatant trade-unionist and reformist junk in general. Except for Lenin's emphasis on the importance of building a party, it is hard to see how these forces could even try to raise *What Is To Be Done?* to justify their line—especially since the isolation of the Social Democrats in propaganda circles is hardly held up as a fine thing by Lenin.

But there were errors made in combatting these dogmatists. There was a tendency to downplay party-building as a task in its own right before the actual period of forming the Party began,<sup>10</sup> although the contributions at every point in the propaganda and theoretical spheres around the key burning issues facing the communist movement and the actual practical steps taken in moving toward a party at every turn were a thousand times greater by the RU than any of the forces who were accusing the RU of ignoring this important task.

While overall the early revolutionary programs formulated by the RU (in its theoretical journal *Red Papers*, beginning with issues 1 and 2) were an advance in pointing the way toward proletarian revolution, they were relatively primitive and they did contain some tendencies toward economism. This stemmed from several things: an overreaction to these dogmatists, primitiveness,

\*The various waves of this dogmatist trend are gone into in the RCP history pamphlet cited in note 8, but, in short, their line represented a thin veneer of "leftism" covering a revisionist line in many respects similar to that of the CPUSA.<sup>9</sup>

the pull of spontaneity, and some influence from the "good" period of the CPUSA. (In rediscovering Marxism, there was the inevitable rediscovery of this "good" period of the CPUSA, in addition to Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao). This tendency is evidenced in the "five spearheads of struggle" put forward in *Red Papers* 2 (the spearhead formulation itself reflected the primitiveness of the period), where the fifth spearhead, "Unite the Proletariat to Resist the Monopoly Capitalists' Attack on Living Standards" is described as "the fulcrum for communists and the proletariat as a whole."

A later example of this tendency is the definition of what an advanced worker is in *Red Papers* 5. There the formulation was: "To us the advanced worker is one who has the respect of fellow workers, to whom they come when they are in trouble and need to discuss their problems, whom they rally around when they face a collective problem, and who provides leadership in struggle." This definition was made in direct response to those dogmatists whose line was that an advanced worker was one who was already an avowed Leninist. But the response is off—it tends to describe a cross between a guidance counselor and a militant trade unionist, and not a worker with relatively advanced political consciousness, or at least a thirst for political understanding.

Around the time of the founding of the RCP, this economist tendency was developing into a full-blown trend. This was fostered in large part by the very advances made in linking up with the working class and the greater pull of spontaneity in this situation, but also, of course, by a much more conscious propagation of the line that what we should aspire to be like was the old CPUSA. (M. Jarvis, a leader of the Mensheviks formerly in the RCP, even proposed that at the time of the founding of the Party we should put a wreath on Foster's grave!) Much has already been said in the Party press about the "center of gravity" line.<sup>11</sup> With the objective situation ripening in the world this trend was beginning to do great damage in holding back the revolutionary struggle and actually was endangering the revolutionary character of the RCP.

Some of the Mensheviks in the RCP openly promoted the line that *What Is To Be Done?* should be burned. Even the majority of our ranks—whose vision of the proletarian future was not a big, bad trade union movement transforming itself into meat-and-potatoes communism—were influenced by this line. Many fell into the bag of trying to uphold *What Is To Be Done?* with a dozen "buts" attached. This eclecticism was due to the influence of these opportunists, the heavy pull of spontaneity, and confusion over what the different objective conditions in Russia in 1902 and the U.S. today meant in terms of the emphasis in *What Is To Be Done?*

One of the most common forms of belittling the significance of

*What Is To Be Done?* runs something along these lines: "Yes, even today workers learn more from the political struggle than their economic struggle, but isn't it true that there is no spontaneous upsurge in the U.S. that can be compared to the upsurge of the Russian workers at the turn of the century (with the possible exception of the miners and the California farmworkers)? Currently, the U.S. workers are so bourgeoisified that they lack the simplest of embryonic class consciousness. Not only is any aspiration toward socialism almost non-existent, U.S. workers lack the sentiments of militant trade union solidarity and don't have much of a movement based on this; militant trade union secretaries are few and far between, and in many industries, communists are the only people who come close to fitting this description. Is this not a sorry state? Don't U.S. workers have to lift themselves up from this low level in order to take on their more lofty mission of revolution? Is this not a prerequisite for the working class to 'infuse its strength, discipline, and revolutionary outlook into every major social movement,' as the RCP *Programme* says<sup>12</sup>—i.e., doesn't the working class have to learn from its struggle and *develop* its 'strength,' etc. in order to *infuse* its 'social strength'? Don't American workers have to break from the labor lieutenants to accomplish this, too? Wasn't it the existence of an upsurge against the tsar, a revolutionary-democratic stage in Russia, that made it absurd to raise the economic struggle above the political struggle? And besides, didn't the Bolshevik Party have a different emphasis in writings earlier than *What Is To Be Done?*"

Of course the question is not whether every detail and programmatic suggestion in *What Is To Be Done?* applies to the current situation in the U.S. For Marxist works are not recipes. The point is that the very theoretical heart and the political questions addressed in the work are fundamentals of Marxism—are of lasting value, and what's more are essential to grasp and implement today in order to carry out our pressing task of preparing for the proletariat's overthrow of the U.S. imperialists. We have made great strides in emerging from a semi-dark age where spontaneity did to a degree overwhelm our ranks (but did not extinguish the flame!) and it is essential to continue this great progress forward. Examining some of these eclectics hopefully can be of some assistance.

### Emphasis in Earlier Writings

Let's start with the last point first. There is somewhat of a different bent in some of the earlier writings by Lenin. For example, in "The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats" (written at the end of 1897),<sup>13</sup> Lenin tends to put the economic tasks and political tasks on an equal footing. He also lists two main aspects of the "socialist tasks"—socialist propaganda and economic agitation among the

workers. Great emphasis is placed on political agitation, but this all falls under the heading of "democratic tasks"—i.e., it centers around the struggle against the tsar.

Three things come to mind immediately in studying this article. Lenin emphasizes numerous times that the democratic tasks and socialist tasks must be taken as *inseparable*. So, in separating them under different headings, the principal (immediate) revolutionary political objective—the overthrow of the autocracy—would be outlined under democratic tasks, while the principal revolutionary political objective in the U.S. and the tasks that relate to it cannot be placed under democratic tasks!

Second, in this article Lenin is polemicizing partially against the *Narodnaya Volya* (and not at all against the economists!). The *Narodnaya Volya's* line was that the working class was a totally insignificant factor in the Russian revolution, and in fact they argued that capitalism itself was not necessarily going to develop much in Russia—even though it had already developed significantly! Part of this line struggle included the question as to whether the economic struggle had any significance at all to the revolution in Russia.\*

Finally, articles such as "The Tasks" were written early in the history of Russian Social-Democracy. The RSDLP had spent a great deal of time polemicizing against the Narodniks, and had erred in limiting their own activity to propaganda circles for too long (which in the above-mentioned article, Lenin is still struggling to combat). In other words, the Bolsheviks did learn more about changing the world in trying to change it: that is, there *are some weak formulations* in these earlier articles, although there is much to learn from this material and it was definitely the most advanced, the closest to the truth and most correctly pointed the way forward as compared to anything else coming out of Russia at the time.

Lenin's article "On Strikes" (1899), which is often pointed to by people trying to figure out Lenin's different emphases, was written at the time of the beginning of the struggle against the economists (in fact, the articles, "A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats" and "A Retrograde Trend In Russian Social-Democracy" were written before it). "On Strikes" presents a basically accurate summary of what can be gained and learned from strikes. It is also emphatic in its conclusion that strikes are a "school of war" and not the "war itself." It concludes:

\*By the way, in this very article, Lenin insists on the vanguard role of the workers in the struggle against absolutism, *not* because the workers gain so much strength in the struggle against the employers, nor even because of their strategic position in society, but because the working class was the only class with the most thoroughgoing, uncompromisable interests in the overthrow of the autocracy.

From individual strikes the workers can and must go over, as indeed they are actually doing in all countries, to a struggle of the entire working class for the emancipation of all who labour. When all class-conscious workers become socialists, i.e., when they strive for this emancipation, when they unite throughout the whole country in order to spread socialism among the workers, in order to teach the workers all the means of struggle against their enemies, when they build up a socialist workers' party that struggles for the emancipation of the people as a whole from government oppression and for the emancipation of all working people from the yoke of capital—only then will the working class become an integral part of that great movement of the workers of all countries that unites all workers and raises the red banner inscribed with the words: "Workers of all countries, unite!"<sup>14</sup>

Lenin clearly distinguishes strikes from the class conscious struggle the workers must build, and only ignorance or sophistry could lead to raising an article whose main purpose is to explain a particular phenomenon (strikes—which were very widespread at the time in Russia) against an overall statement (*What Is To Be Done?*) on what is the road to revolution.

In *What Is To Be Done?* Lenin does outline different periods in the Russian movement.<sup>15</sup> What he brings out about these periods in the body of the polemic are two important points. First, he adamantly defends the activity of the young social democrats who in the 1890s "zealously carried on economic agitation . . . , but they did not regard this as their sole task. On the contrary, right from the beginning, they advanced the widest historical tasks of Russian Social-Democracy in general and the task of overthrowing the autocracy in particular."<sup>16</sup> And his second point is his defense of the communists' earlier policy of restricting their forces to work among the workers because these forces were so small. All this was raised in the context of arguing—against the economists—that it was high time the communists start working among other strata.<sup>17</sup> In the above-cited article, "The Tasks of the Russian Social-Democrats," Lenin does put out the line that at that time it would have been incorrect to disperse their forces, but he also dedicates a considerable portion of the article to pointing out that they must pay attention to what's going on among other strata, in order to be able to explain it to the proletariat and to agitate among these other strata if the opportunity should arise (more by accident than by design).

Lenin does make a brief and interesting summation of the developments in the RSDLP which provided favorable grounds for

the economist deviation, in his article, "The Urgent Tasks of Our Movement":

In our opinion the ground has been prepared for this sad state of affairs by three circumstances. First, in their early activity, Russian Social-Democrats restricted themselves merely to work in propaganda circles. When we took up agitation among the masses we were not always able to restrain ourselves from going to the other extreme. Secondly, in our early activity we often had to struggle for our right to existence against the *Narodnaya Volya* adherents, who understood by "politics" an activity isolated from the working class movement and who reduced politics purely to conspiratorial struggle. In rejecting this sort of politics, the Social-Democrats went to the extreme of pushing politics entirely into the background. Thirdly, working in the isolation of small local workers' circles, the Social-Democrats did not devote sufficient attention to the necessity of organizing a revolutionary party which would combine all the activities of the local groups and make it possible to organize the revolutionary work on correct lines. The predominance of isolated work is naturally connected with the predominance of the economic struggle.<sup>18</sup>

Note that at no time in this summation did Lenin say anything to the effect that it was correct at any point to emphasize the economic above the political struggle—he summed up that this orientation was wrong, dead wrong, even at the early stage of the movement, when the Social-Democrats began their practical work among the workers, and in 1901, when the upsurge of the workers was at its high point and the overall situation in Russia was getting sharper.\*

\*In Lenin's "Draft and Explanation of a Programme for the Social-Democratic Party" (written in 1895-1896), he states that "This transition of the workers to the steadfast struggle for their vital needs, the fight for concessions, for improved living conditions, wages and working hours, now begun all over Russia, means that the Russian workers are making tremendous progress, and that is why the attention of the Social-Democratic Party and all class conscious workers should be concentrated mainly on this struggle, on its promotion."<sup>19</sup>

While there is no doubt that the beginnings of this upsurge among the workers warranted great attention by the RSDLP, focusing the RSDLP's attention mainly on the promotion of that struggle itself seems to be a formulation that is a product of its time, reflecting the flipping to the opposite extreme that Lenin sums up in "The Urgent Tasks of Our Movement." In *What Is To Be Done?* he specifically points to the advance in embryonic consciousness in this upsurge to emphatically bring out the point that it is not enough, is still not class consciousness. And in this work Lenin does not describe the activities of the Social-Democrats at the

### What Difference Did the Tsar Make?

The existence of absolutism (the tsar) in Russia was a reflection of the incomplete victory of the bourgeoisie over feudalism. Absolutism was tied to the existence of feudal remnants, keeping the great bulk of the peasantry in semi-serfdom (very similar to the U.S. sharecropping system) and denying political rights to all the toiling masses (workers and peasants). It even posed an obstacle, to a certain extent at least, to propertied classes, including sections of the liberal bourgeoisie. This did mean that there were two stages to the revolution in Russia, a democratic and a socialist stage. As already pointed out, some of Lenin's earlier writings, and even his earliest writings against the economists, do have somewhat of a bent that the importance of the political struggle could be attributed in part to the existence of absolutism. For example, Lenin's "A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats" makes the statement that "the experience of history has, furthermore, incontrovertibly proved that the absence of freedom, or restriction of political rights of the proletariat, always make it necessary to put the political struggle in the forefront."<sup>22</sup>

But in his writing of *What Is To Be Done?*, Lenin seems to have very consciously eliminated any leaning in that direction. In blasting the economists for their reformist "lending the economic struggle a political character," he describes the Social-Democratic view toward reforms: "In a word, it subordinates the struggle for reforms, as the part to the whole, to the revolutionary struggle for liberty and for socialism."<sup>23</sup> There are also numerous other passages where he points out that this economism is tantamount to abandoning socialism, not just the struggle against the tsar.

Lenin's actual references in *What Is To Be Done?* to Western Europe, even to England where big trade-union movements existed and bourgeois trade-union leaders "lend the economic struggle a political character," show that he clearly understood that, even in democracies, giving way to spontaneity, focusing the workers' attention on the economic struggle, did not bring them closer to class consciousness. In a letter "To Comrade Bell" of Britain, written in 1921, Lenin speaks to the question of the economic and political struggles in the following passages:

It is extremely interesting what you communicate. Perhaps it is the *beginning* of the real proletarian mass

beginning of that upsurge as characterized by concentrating their attention mainly on the promotion of this struggle, as already pointed out in these notes.<sup>20</sup>

There is reason to believe that Lenin himself felt this "Draft and Explanation" did not cut the mustard, because in his "A Draft Programme of Our Party" (1899)<sup>21</sup> he ignores his "Draft and Explanation" of 1895 and develops a new draft based on improving "A Draft Programme of the Russian Social-Democrats," published in 1885 by the Emancipation of Labour Group.

movement in Great Britain *in the communist sense*. I am afraid we have till now in England few very feeble propagandist societies for communism (inclusive the British Communist Party) but no really *mass* communist movement. . . .

Economic measures (like communal kitchens) are good but they are not much important *now, before* the victory of proletarian revolution in England. *Now* the *political* struggle is the most important.

English capitalists are shrewd, clever, astute. They *will support* (directly or indirectly) communal kitchens *in order* to divert the attention *from political aims*.<sup>24</sup>

The non-existence of absolutism in no way lessens the tasks of raising the workers' sights and preparing them for their foremost political task—the overthrow of the capitalist system. And this can only be done through all-round political exposure, focusing the workers' attention on the cardinal issues of the day and not giving way to the outlook that what is most important is the workers' struggle to reform their *conditions of slavery*.

### Trade Unionism is Bourgeois Reformism in 1901 and 1979

A line that tends to say that the working class must develop a strong economic struggle *first* before its attention is turned principally to politics, is nothing more than the stagism Lenin takes the economists to task over. Lenin's emphasis in *What Is To Be Done?* lies in arguing how dangerous the line of the economists was in the context of this upsurge of the workers' economic struggle (and growing signs of renewed revolutionary activity among other strata). The economists whined about how the masses must (or will) only fight for "palpable demands," stating quite openly that politics for the workers should be restricted to demands on the government for reforms like unemployment relief, restrictions in the factories, etc. This obviously would only drag such an upsurge backward, not forward.

But further, the fact of the matter is that the economic struggle by itself lends itself to bourgeois politics, whether the strike movement is at a relative high or low. This is because the economic struggle is a struggle over the terms of sale of the workers' labor power. Thus it takes place totally within the context of the bourgeois relations of production, and will not by itself lead to revolutionary politics—which means abolishing these production relations by first overthrowing the superstructure that enforces them—but to bourgeois politics. The Russian economists and a current American version of the same line (which argues that we need to build the struggle from where the workers are at today) are



both talking about the same non-existent stage—the stage where the workers build up their economic struggle to the point where automatically, or with some effort by communists, their struggle itself will turn toward socialist politics. During an upsurge of economic struggle, when workers have been “putting so much effort into bending a single employer” (as Engels once expressed it), or when the struggle against the bourgeoisie on this front has spread far and wide, it is that much more urgent to work to bring politics to the workers—to work to *divert* the workers’ movement toward a more class conscious political struggle—and not get boiled over by the excitement of the moment and miss very important and pressing opportunities to raise the sights of the workers.

Sharp class struggle, including economic struggle, does open up people’s eyes to bigger questions (and they’ll only find answers to these questions—and even come to think of some bigger questions—if communists take them to them!). But the opposite is not true. If struggle is at a lower level, economics above politics will not bring the workers closer to communist politics. The economic struggle, *by itself*, lends itself to bourgeois politics. Emphasizing it over politics, exaggerating what it will really accomplish, only reinforces reformist illusions, even at this low “stage.” The politics that will be fostered—or reinforced—among the workers with such an approach is the (mis)understanding that what they need is a big, militant union movement to safeguard and protect their interests.

Just look at the history of the working class movement in this country—going from relative ebbs to mighty storms of economic struggle but *never* making the transition to a class-conscious movement for the most part (at least since the ’20s). Objective conditions, of course, have played a big part in holding back this development and transformation of the workers’ movement (i.e., the position of U.S. imperialism in the world giving sway to bourgeoisification among broad sections of the workers). But that, quite obviously, is not the whole reason. U.S. imperialism was not in such great shape during the 1930s depression, and there were plenty—millions—of masses whose illusions about this system had been torn asunder or seriously shaken. But the CPUSA occupied itself with being the safeguarder of people’s conditions under capitalism. They went from a “left” economist stage in the early 1930s (which frankly was a touch better because at least they talked about revolution) very quickly into openly rightist economism and straight-out bourgeois reformism (promoting the CIO drives as an end in themselves, formulating unemployment bills for Congress, seeing the seizing of union positions as a stage, and promoting a program that called for the nationalization of industry, among other things). The unity between these two periods is economism. The objective of raising overall political consciousness

and leading the workers to take on the all-round struggle against the bourgeoisie—not just or mainly the fight for the most immediate needs and not just tagging general propaganda about socialism onto politics that were aimed at legislative and administrative reforms—was not in the forefront. (Bowing to spontaneity also is responsible for their “left” form of economism—capitalism was less able to fulfill these immediate needs, so they talked a little more about overthrowing it.)

Just to illustrate this point, here’s a lengthy excerpt from Foster’s *Toward A Soviet America* (1932), probably his most “revolutionary” work. This quote is from the section, “Present-Day Tasks of the American Revolutionary Movement”:

In the United States—and this is basic in Communist strategy everywhere—the action program of the Communist party has its starting point in the every-day pressing economic demands of the workers. It is not enough that the Party should propagate its general slogans among the masses and then organize them for the eventual revolution. Such a course, as Lenin so forcefully pointed out in his famous pamphlet, *The Infantile Sickness of “Leftism” in Communism*, would condemn the Party to isolation and sectarianism. For the workers the class struggle is a never-ending matter of their daily lives; constantly they are confronted with the most urgent necessity to fight against the employers, in defense of their interests. The Communist party must lead in all these struggles. It is in such fights that the workers become class conscious and organized around the Communist party. Never would the masses recognize as their revolutionary Party one that ignored these daily fights and confined itself to a high and lofty agitation of revolutionary slogans.

... the Communist party always places as immediate demands those manifestly possible of achievement under capitalism and then it makes the most determined effort to win all it can of them in the struggle. This is because the Party has no interests apart from those of the working class; it also realizes that such victories, instead of destroying the militancy of the workers, stimulate it. Lenin called such reforms or concessions forced from the employers “by-products” of the revolutionary struggle. The Party understands clearly that the workers logically expect that a party which proposes eventually to overthrow the whole capitalist system should know how to organize them to defend their interests here and now. . . .

But the Communist party policy is not simply to organize the defense; it seeks also to transform the workers' defensive struggles into a counter-offensive. It strives to unite the scattered fights of the workers into broad class struggles and to give them more of a political character. This politicalization becomes the more urgent with the sharpening offensive of the employers and their increasing use of the State against the workers. The general effects of politicalizing the workers' struggle are to draw larger masses of workers into the fight, to direct this fight against the State as well as against the employers proper, and thus to strengthen the workers' struggle in every respect.

This politicalization is brought about by the raising of political demands which grow out of the very struggle itself, not merely by the active propagation of the ultimate revolutionary program of the Communist party. Thus during a strike demands are made for the right to meet, to picket, to strike, for the release of political prisoners, for the adoption, enforcement or repeal of labor legislation, against government arbitration, for the withdrawal of troops, etc., and the workers are mobilized in various ways for mass action in support of these demands. In this way, not only are the workers educated to the class character of the State, but the broadest class front and most militant action is secured in the struggle. In acute conditions of class struggle this line of strategy leads to the development of the mass political strike, during which the more fundamental political demands may be raised. In the question of political demands, as well as of economic demands, the central Communist strategy always turns around the winning of the immediate struggle in hand.<sup>25</sup>

There is so much wrong in this passage that Martynov (a leading Russian economist) would have been proud to see his line propagated by a "vanguard party" in such a way. It certainly is not enough that "the Party should propagate its general slogans among the masses and then organize them to make revolution." But then again, tagging on some general slogans to unadulterated economism and reformism is nothing but opportunism! To get this very clear, let's listen again to Foster's words—it is in the "economic struggle where the workers become class conscious and organized around the Communist Party," the Party "strives to unite the scattered fights of the workers into broad class struggles and to give [lend—J.P.] them more of a political character." Political demands all grow out of this very economic struggle

itself—like the demand raised by the CP in this period to stop "Hoover's [sic] wage cutting policy"—and "on the question of political demands, as well as economic demands, the Communist strategy always turns around the winning of the immediate struggle in hand"! This is the "palpable results" line pure and simple. It is the exact opposite of Lenin's basis in *What Is To Be Done?* where he flatly states that, "In a word, it [communism] subordinates the struggle for reforms, as part of the whole, to the revolutionary struggle for liberty and for socialism."<sup>26</sup>

Foster's position here, like that of the Russian economists, never tired of pointing out that objectively the masses were at a low level. Here in the severest crisis of imperialism the world had ever known, the CP's outlook and program was totally tailored to the average worker, which frankly doomed the advanced workers to remain average workers and doomed the masses of toilers to never advance the level of consciousness above trade unionist reformism. The CP never really grasped that objective conditions themselves—and the spontaneous struggle which arises from them—will never on their own bring class consciousness.

What is part and parcel of the objective conditions—what does arise spontaneously—is a certain development of the struggle of the masses and more favorable conditions to break through the bourgeois illusions of the broad masses. But to the degree this occurs at any point in the development of the objective situation, it does not automatically develop into class consciousness. At every step of the way the economic struggle by itself will link up spontaneously with bourgeois politics, militant trade unionist politics, and worse (for example, the chauvinist politics promoted among steel workers, auto workers, miners and even the very oppressed garment workers through the "Buy America" garbage of the capitalists and their "labor lieutenants" today).

There is no question that the economic struggle is an important component of the class struggle. Or, for that matter, that the working class learns things through its economic struggles—especially militantly fought ones—even learns some very important things. As Lenin stated in *What Is To Be Done?*,

In a word, economic (factory) exposures were and remain an important lever in the economic struggle. And they will continue to retain this significance as long as capitalism exists, which creates the need for the workers to defend themselves. Even in the most advanced countries of Europe we can still witness how the exposure of evils in some backward trade, or in some forgotten branch of domestic industry, serves as a starting point for the awakening of class consciousness, for the begin-

ning of a trade union struggle, and for the spread of Socialism.<sup>27</sup>

Some workers do move closer to class consciousness, even take their first steps in this direction in some—though certainly not all—cases through the economic struggle. But this can only be developed and brought on in the overall context of carrying out the work, from the beginning and consistently, of fusing socialism with the workers' movement, not where a "pure" or "almost pure" trade-union movement is being built.

Communists do have a role in helping to focus the workers' attention on the major economic abuses (as opposed to the pettier, less significant economic questions), although not in opposition to political questions, and in "fanning the sparks of political consciousness generated in that struggle," as Lenin put it. But this form of resistance can only strengthen the fight toward socialism—these "sparks" can only go somewhere—if the "conscious element" systematically and tirelessly works to divert the working class from the path of bourgeois trade union reformism by taking politics to the working class and mobilizing the workers in political, particularly revolutionary, struggle—exposing every aspect of the state and imperialism, its war moves, national oppression, etc., and mobilizing the workers in struggle around the questions that concentrate these abuses.

The economic struggle, even in its more militant, less petty forms, reflecting more "embryonic class consciousness" as Lenin put it—such as the miners' prolonged battle around the right to strike in recent years in this country—by itself will link up with bourgeois politics (as well illustrated in the recent example of 600 miners demonstrating in Illinois, demanding that Illinois utility companies buy Illinois coal!). Focusing the workers' attention primarily on this struggle, by word or even just by action (communists might keep saying this is not the answer, but if that is mainly what they do...) can only feed the illusion that if the workers bloc together and fight for themselves, building a social movement primarily around these needs, the needs will be met. What's more, the communists will be keeping from the workers the all-around view of the capitalist system and the struggle against it, that will make it possible for the working class to destroy it. Implementing this theory of stages, even with the attitude (illusion!) that, when the working class feels its oats a little more, then the time will be ripe to mainly carry on all-around political agitation—this will indeed be reinforcing this bourgeois ideology and bourgeois politics among not only the average workers, but also among *today's advanced workers*.

### Politics and Spontaneity

And the workers—the oppressed masses of the proletariat—even today do *spontaneously* seek to change the conditions of their lives—and they "*spontaneously*" tend to *look beyond* the fight to add a dollar an hour to their wages or even for the "right to strike" (although workers may still see the economic struggle as the only pure working class politics). The breadth and depth of this phenomenon is of course in the main—but not exclusively—dependent on the objective situation. But even in today's conditions the workers, in their masses, do turn to "politics" to one degree or another. However, they do not turn to class-conscious politics without the aid of communists, who must relentlessly expose bourgeois society, conduct constant education—based on *class analysis*—as to who are our true friends and who and what is our real enemy, break down the illusions and backward reactions, etc., of the masses and bring them a scientific understanding of the world and the road forward.

There is "spontaneous gravitation toward socialism" among the workers even in this country. As Lenin says in *What Is To Be Done?*,

It is often said: the working class spontaneously gravitates towards Socialism. This is perfectly true in the sense that socialist theory defines the causes of the misery of the working class more profoundly and more correctly than any other theory, and for that reason the workers are able to assimilate it so easily, *provided, however*, that this theory does not itself yield to spontaneity...<sup>28</sup>

In this country, the bourgeoisification of large sections of the working class on the basis of U.S. imperialism's top-dog position in the past several decades retards acceptance of revolutionary politics and Marxist science. But thousands from among the most oppressed sections of the proletariat are already ripe for these class-conscious answers, and while bourgeoisification is still strong, it is breaking down. Unless scientific socialism—in all its aspects and political richness (because nothing is sorrier than tagging on socialism to reformism)—is brought to the workers and they are led to take it up and develop the consciousness which comes through the all-around exposure of and struggle against the capitalist system, these masses will not gravitate to it. And making economic struggle the heart of the class struggle, or even "lending it a political character," will abort and misdirect these inclinations among the masses. (What effect, can we imagine, did the CPUSA's demand of nationalization of industry have on the

masses of the advanced who sought fundamental change in the '30s and '40s!)

### Trade Union Secretaries Are Trade Union Secretaries Even If They Are Militant Fighters!

It has been argued that, while being trade union secretaries should not be a communist's aspiration, we have a lot to gain by breaking the workers from the trade union hacks and that can be done most effectively by exposing them as sellouts in the economic struggle. It would, of course, be advantageous not to have the working class tied to these chumps. But to use this as an excuse for putting emphasis on the economic struggle above politics is absurd.

It is true that today there is hardly a union official that fits the description of a militant trade union secretary. But we need to analyze why this is the case. U.S. imperialism's objective position in the world is why these hacks are in the main unmitigated sellouts. Their careers are based on keeping the workers in line, and over the years the bourgeoisie has been able to grant concessions and pseudo-concessions to large sections of the workers. (It does make a slight difference to be given a dental plan when inflation is so high, although these types of concessions are usually in exchange for something more fundamental that the bourgeoisie has stripped away in the contract.) But even the bourgeoisie's ability to make certain concessions has been on the decline as the crisis deepens.

History shows, however, that as the spontaneous struggle intensifies, out of careerism or actual sincerity, militant trade union leaders do start popping up—and they are not that distinguishable from a “communist” who is really an economist. (It's no accident that it's sometimes hard to guess which of the big trade union leaders in the '30s and '40s were with the CPUSA—until the objective position of U.S. imperialism changed after World War II!—and then it was still somewhat hard because of the number of CPUSA trade unionists who “jumped ship” when the other side was winning.) Even today, wherever there are big upsurges, militants come forward, and even higher level officials are more militant and less exposed in the short run—and in the context of the economic struggle alone or as the main thing. If today communists act like these militant trade unionists, who will very likely be a dime a dozen at some future point, how will it be possible to really prepare the masses not to get sucked into a repeat of the '30s and '40s? And to the degree that today's phonies are exposed, why should communists be in essence setting the model of this type for the future?

On top of this, to the degree that these hacks do have a hold,

they work tirelessly to tie the masses politically to the bourgeoisie, particularly to the Democratic Party and around particular legislation on unemployment, health insurance, etc., and such things as their chauvinist “save our jobs” campaigns. There is no way to really expose these politics without bringing to the workers a totally different world view and political understanding than that of the bourgeoisie on *all* the burning issues of the day.

### Most Widely Applicable or Most Widely Applied?

The tendency to think that the economic struggle is the most “widely applicable” means of bringing the workers into political struggle and of raising their consciousness—this is a stubborn tendency to kill. In the ranks of the RCP during the period of making the economic struggle the “center of gravity” of the Party's work, the best interpretation of that line did include taking political questions and struggle to the workers. But it still headed in the direction of the economists' more refined “there is no need whatever to conduct political agitation right from the beginning exclusively on an economic basis”—meaning that the economic struggle is still the most widely applicable means of raising consciousness.

There were, of course, reasons for this more eclectic best interpretation (and the practice guided by it). On the one hand many comrades—and our Party as a whole!—did not lose totally their revolutionary bearings and were striving to one degree or another to fuse *socialism* with the workers' movement. (Even the line of some members of the Menshevik camp, until about the time of the formation of the National United Workers Organization in September 1977, took this eclectic form.) But, at the same time, along with the errors in our formal line, comrades have been influenced by the attitudes of a number of active workers, many of whom would come forward in response to economic agitation and calls to action. This brings to mind the description Lenin gave as to the initial impact of economic exposures—“Even among the most backward worker, a veritable passion arose to ‘go into print’ . . .”<sup>29</sup> Even today some of the masses who gravitated mainly toward the economic work of the RCP (and from that point of departure even joined, to some degree at least, in broader political activities), complain to us that we are not so active anymore, even though our activity has increased immensely.

While many advances can be pointed to and attributed to breaking with this past eclecticism, the road has not been smooth sailing, especially among the better-paid workers (although important breakthroughs can be pointed to on that front also). But this, in itself, does not prove at all that the economic struggle is the “most widely applicable means for bringing the masses into political struggle.” On the contrary, it proves one thing: that the economic

struggle is the most widely applicable form of building the trade union struggle (in the short run), apart from revolutionary consciousness. Lenin states in *What Is To Be Done?* that "Our Economists, including the *Rabocheye Dyelo*, were successful because they pandered to the backward workers."<sup>30</sup> We might add that we were somewhat successful in pandering to backward ideas even among the advanced workers in this country.

Lenin also stated: "We have said that *there could not yet be* Social-Democratic consciousness among the workers. It could only be brought to them from without."<sup>31</sup> And frankly, among the majority of these workers we are *just beginning* to bring them all-around class-conscious politics—after emphasizing the centrality of their economic struggle for 3 years (and perhaps longer) in many cases! What many thought of as the most "widely applicable" is, just as in Lenin's time, really what was most widely applied. And this tradition of most widely applied (and nothing applied at all—when, for a period, there were no genuine communist organizations in this country after the betrayal of the CPUSA) goes back some 40 years in the communist movement in the U.S. (at least). In addition, there is a tremendous amount of illusions about this system among many, even most, workers in this country, together with a legacy of militant worker pressure groups since the '30s, a tendency that has found comfort in the arms of the Democratic Party since the time of Roosevelt.

Yes, we can blame objective conditions for the slowness of the workers to gravitate toward a class-conscious world view, but we also need to blame ourselves. This line of centrality to the economic struggle, in its various forms, has *held back* the revolutionary potential among the workers. In reality, some of the ties to the Democratic Party, and the ties to the labor lieutenants, have been becoming weaker in this last period, maybe the weakest they've been since the 1930s. Yes, workers today (not the majority, but a significant section) do want some basic changes, but as pointed out earlier, these leanings will not automatically go toward class consciousness unless it is "available."

In *What Is To Be Done?* Lenin states, "The fact that the working class participates in the political struggle, and even in *political revolution*, does not in itself make its politics Social-Democratic politics."<sup>32</sup> We can see this phenomenon having happened already in this country in the '60s, when workers from among the oppressed nationalities and young workers of all nationalities came forward and participated in revolutionary struggle mainly based upon and largely reflecting the outlook of non-proletarian forces, while the working class as a class was relatively dormant in these upsurges. (Those individual workers, whose numbers were in the thousands, as well as the thousands more who were influenced by but not active in the upsurges, *were all members of a working class*

*who had not been broken from the trade union leaders in the economic struggle—so much for the "theory of stages"!*)

And what's even more common in this country among the broadest ranks of the workers is the pull toward bourgeois politics—traditional, straight-up identification with the bourgeois-democratic traditions, etc., the working class coming into political activity right behind the bourgeoisie—through various forms the bourgeoisie comes up with to adapt to the objective period.\*

The workers and other oppressed today are seeking answers to this shit-hole the bourgeoisie calls society, and more and more will do as the situation ripens—and as it is ripening today—they will do so at an accelerated pace in the future. There will not be a chance to build on the spontaneous leanings toward socialism unless the class-conscious section—the Party—takes Marxist politics and ideology to the masses of workers. Already the objective situation is outstripping us—mainly because of what our most "widely" applied methods were in the last few years. As in the 1960s, among the oppressed, snipers are beginning to assassinate pigs (to give just one example of the revolutionary elements within the non-revolutionary situation). The neo-populism of things like California's Proposition 13 and the mayor of Cleveland's antics show that the bourgeoisie is adapting politically to the situation. Are the '80s only to be a repeat of the '60s?

To turn an old phrase around, if that were so, while the struggles of the '60s, despite their overall and overwhelmingly positive role, might have been at times *farical* because of their class character and lack of conscious—i.e., Marxist-Leninist—leadership, this would take on more the character of a *tragedy* in the '80s. The "ante will be upped" because the depth of the imperialist crisis gives rise to much greater opportunities for the proletariat—greater opportunities which the proletariat must be prepared, in the broadest political sense, to be able to seize. We must implement the heart of *What Is To Be Done?* including many of its organizational suggestions as we are beginning to do in a way unimaginable two years ago (tactics as plan!).

One last point. Some people have thought that Lenin's ferocity in *What Is To Be Done?* against these opportunists was due to the obvious revolutionary situation impending in Russia. This was not the case. There was indeed an upturn in the struggle—an upsurge of the economic struggle sweeping Russia and signs of increasing

\* It is no accident that in Germany from 1933 through the second World War the bourgeoisie ruled under the name of National Socialist Party. While the advanced section and a large section of the intermediate never rallied behind the crooked cross, still it was able to build a mass following because the oppressed want fundamental changes and the more backward workers and impoverished petty bourgeoisie, with all its prejudices, were inclined to support this "radical party"—which combined a rank appeal to the worst bourgeois prejudices and ideology with anti-capitalist rhetoric.

political activity among other strata. But it was not until 1903 that it was clear that an actual revolutionary situation was developing—two years after the writing of *What Is To Be Done?*\*

In fact, upon careful study of *What Is To Be Done?*, it can be seen that Lenin makes a reference to a Russian bourgeois historical journal being able to get hold of a seized first edition of *Rabocheye Dyelo* in the political police's archives "some thirty years" hence—hardly an indication that Lenin thought then that in two years a revolutionary situation would emerge! But still there is Lenin's emphasis on immediately carrying out the overall political and organizational tasks necessary to prepare for the overthrow of the autocracy. Why? The answer is simple—It is better to begin this work before the revolutionary upsurge is upon you than after—not only because it is not always possible to figure out the exact year (and conditions) in which the situation will ripen (in Russia it had to do with the defeat in the Russian-Japanese War), but because the greater the number of workers who are rallied behind the red flag in these earlier stages, and the more that this *red flag* becomes a social force that challenges the complacency with capitalism of the "average workers" in these earlier stages, and the more the working class mounts the *political stage* and affects the middle strata of society, the better the position the working class and its vanguard will be in as the situation truly sharpens.

### Conclusion

These notes have only been able to represent an initial and partial treatment of only some of the basic questions concerning the revolutionary road that Lenin posed in *What Is To Be Done?* They have been an attempt to answer some of the positions—and in particular a variety of eclectic arguments—that could keep us from making the greatest possible strides toward our revolutionary goal in this period.

In conclusion it is fitting to draw a point from another work of Lenin's, written in the period when the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party was struggling to break with economism, and only three years before a great revolutionary storm started to sweep Russia. It's from the "Preface to the Pamphlet *May Days in Kharkov*," in which Lenin sums up May Day 1900 in Kharkov. While pointing out that the events of that day had been an advance, he takes the Social-Democrats to task for putting the

\* Lenin summed up that this revolutionary upsurge began in 1903 in the chapter "The Principal Stages in the History of Bolshevism" in *"Left-Wing" Communism, An Infantile Disorder*. He says: "The years of preparation of the revolution (1903-1905). The approach of a great storm is felt everywhere. All classes are in a state of ferment and preparation."<sup>33</sup>

demands against their employers on a par with the demand for the 8-hour day and for not bringing out enough the demands against the autocracy (and for not sufficiently using the whole of May Day there to point out the necessity of forging a vanguard party). Lenin tells a short story to illustrate his point:

This year when a factory inspector asked a group of workers precisely what they wanted, only one voice shouted, "A constitution!"; and this voice sounded so isolated that the correspondent reported somewhat mockingly: "One proletarian *blurted out* . . ." Another correspondent put it, "Under the circumstances," this reply was "semi-comical" . . . As a matter of fact, there was nothing comical in the reply at all. What may have seemed comical was the incongruity between the demand of this lone voice for a change in the whole state system and the demands for a half-hour reduction in the working day and for payment of wages during working hours. There is, however, an indubitable connection between these demands and the demand for a constitution; and if we can get the masses to understand this connection (and we undoubtedly will), then the cry "A constitution!" will not be an isolated one, but will come from the throats of thousands and hundreds of thousands, when it will no longer be comical, but menacing. It is related that a certain person driving through the streets of Kharkov during the May Day celebrations asked the cabby what the workers wanted, and he replied: "They want an eight-hour day and their own newspaper." That cabby understood that the workers were no longer satisfied with mere doles, but that they wanted to be free men, that they wanted to be able to express their needs freely and openly and to fight for them. But that reply did not yet reveal the consciousness that the workers are fighting for the liberty of the whole people and for their right to take part in the administration of the state. When the demand that the tsar convene an assembly of people's representatives is repeated with full consciousness and indomitable determination by the working masses in all industrial cities and factory districts in Russia; when the workers have reached the stage at which the entire urban population, and all the rural people who come into the towns, understand what the socialists want and what the workers are fighting for, then the great day of the people's liberation from police tyranny will not be far off!<sup>34</sup>

Obviously, the demand for a constitution and the other democratic tasks Lenin laid out are not directly applicable to our situation in the U.S. today, but the point of the message was that the voice of the "lone worker" did represent where things were headed. Often we are in the position of that lone advanced worker, but already today we've broken through that isolation and have started to rally a mass of the advanced to take up the revolutionary cause of the proletariat. The line that is expressed in the slogans we raise today—such as "Workers Unite to Lead the Fight Against All Oppression," "Hasten Capitalism Into Its Grave"—and the sharpest political battle lines against the bourgeoisie—from "Down with U.S. and Soviet War Moves" to "Down with National Oppression"—"will not be an isolated cry, but will come from the throats of thousands and hundreds of thousands when it will no longer be comical but menacing."

## FOOTNOTES

1. "A Retrograde Trend in Russian Social-Democracy," Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4 (Moscow, 1960), p. 275.
2. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?* (Peking, 1973), p. 46; Lenin's emphasis. It is sometimes claimed that Lenin admitted that he had been "bending the stick" in *What Is To Be Done?*, referring to the following passage in one of Lenin's speeches at the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.: "We all now know that the 'economists' have gone to one extreme. To straighten matters out somebody had to pull in the other direction—and that is what I have done. I am convinced that Russian Social-Democracy will always vigorously straighten out whatever has been twisted by opportunism of any kind, and that therefore our line of action will always be the straightest and fittest for action. (*Collected Works*, Vol. 6, [Moscow, 1961], p. 489.) Obviously Lenin is saying that in order to "straighten out" what had "been twisted by opportunism" he has given special emphasis in a certain direction, but he is not saying that he "went overboard" and said things which were incorrect.
3. *What Is To Be Done?*, pp. 40-41.
4. See the economist "Credo," reprinted in "A Protest by Russian Social Democrats," Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 171-174.
5. Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme," Marx and Engels, *Selected Works*, Vol. 3 (Moscow, 1970), p. 11. See *What Is To Be Done?*, p. 28, for Lenin's explanation of the economists' use of the quote.
6. Lenin, *ibid.*, p. 120.
7. William Z. Foster, *American Trade Unionism* (New York, 1947), p. 370; emphasis added.
8. See *Important Struggles in Building the Revolutionary Communist Party* (Chicago, 1978), section on "The Franklin Opportunist Group," particularly p. 15.
9. See *ibid.*, pp. 24-26.
10. See *ibid.*, p. 26.
11. See *Revolution*, March 1978: "Economic Struggle and Revolutionary Tasks," and "Rectification Is Fine; The Mensheviks' Answer is Terrible," in *Revolution and Counter-revolution: The Revisionist Coup in China and the Struggle in the Revolutionary Communist Party USA* (Chicago, 1978).
12. *Programme of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA* (Chicago, 1978), pp. 102-103.
13. In Lenin's *Collected Works*, Vol. 2.
14. Lenin, "On Strikes," *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 319.

15. See, for instance, the conclusion to *What Is To Be Done?*, pp. 221-225, as well as other passages referred to below.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 38; emphasis in original.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
18. Lenin, "The Urgent Tasks Of Our Movement," *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 367.
19. *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 114; emphasis added.
20. See pp. 35-36 and 38 of *What Is To Be Done?*
21. *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 227.
22. Lenin, "A Protest by Russian Social-Democrats," *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 177.
23. *What Is To Be Done?*, p. 77; emphasis added.
24. Lenin, "To Comrade Thomas Bell," *Collected Works*, Vol. 32 (Moscow, 1965), p. 510; emphasis in original.
25. William Z. Foster, *Toward A Soviet America* (New York, 1932), pp. 241-3, 244-5.
26. *What Is To Be Done?*, p. 77.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 51, note; emphasis in original. This is the same point Lenin is making when he says during the 1905 Revolution, in a passage sometimes quoted in opposition to *What Is To Be Done?*: "The working class is instinctively, spontaneously Social-Democratic, and more than ten years of work put in by Social-Democracy has done a great deal to transform this spontaneity into consciousness." ("The Reorganisation of the Party," Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 10 [Moscow, 1962], p. 32.)
29. *What Is To Be Done?*, p. 68.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 89.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 117; emphasis added.
33. "*Left-Wing*" *Communism, An Infantile Disorder*, (Peking, 1965), p. 9.
34. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 364-365.



# Plato: Classical Ideologue Of Reaction

*by J.S.*

In the sixth, fifth and fourth centuries B.C. there arose in Greece a civilization which has been famous ever since. The bourgeoisie has, throughout its existence, never ceased to pay homage to "the glory that was Greece." The proletariat, too, should study and appreciate the lessons of this episode in human history—but from the opposite point of view from that of the bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie paints an idealist picture of "the Greek genius" creating timeless ideals which (together with the "Judaean-Christian religious tradition") become "the spiritual source" of Western civilization.<sup>1</sup> But the proletariat's world outlook, which is both materialist and dialectical, sees Greek society itself as arising out of the motion of the contradictions between man and nature and within human society, and the creations of that society as very much time-bound, arising from the struggle of the aspects of the contradictions within that society.

The study of Plato offers an excellent example of this contrast. For the bourgeoisie, he is the "grey eminence" of Western thought, the prototype of what a philosopher should be: idealist, engaged in the serene contemplation of eternal Truth, far removed from the everyday world, and somewhat incomprehensible, too—but yet at the same time a font of wisdom and other-worldly ideals to guide and instruct the masses in their humble duties. But the proletariat sees him for what he really was: an arch-reactionary, who was very far from removed from the class struggle of ancient Athenian society, whose idealism was, on the contrary, both an effect of and a weapon in that class struggle—a weapon in the service of reaction. Far from being incomprehensible, Plato's cloudy philosophy and foggy writings are perfectly comprehensible when understood in terms of their material basis and their ideological function in the class struggle.

## The Development of Ancient Greek Society

Plato, who wrote his works during the fourth century B.C., cannot be understood outside of the historical context in which he lived and wrote. This first section will provide the background for this understanding by sketching the outline of the historical development of Greek society through the fifth century B.C. It should be emphasized that this is only the barest outline, and one that is tentative in certain respects as well.

The first civilization which arose in the area of Greece was not created by the Greeks. Minoan society, centered on the island of Crete, southeast of the Greek mainland, grew up during the third millenium (the 2000s) B.C., reaching its height in the first half of the second millenium. The details of Minoan social structure are not clear. In certain respects it was similar to the Bronze Age societies which arose during the same period in Egypt and Mesopotamia, although in other ways it was more similar to the Phoenician and Hittite city-states which flourished along the eastern edge of the Mediterranean during the Bronze Age and after.\*

This was succeeded by Mycenaean society, centered on the mainland of Greece, which lasted from about 1600-1100 B.C. Here there is even less agreement on the nature of the social system, with opinions ranging all the way from characterizing it as "a palace economy under royal control," like that in Egypt, with a class structure which "...rose through serfs or slaves, through the lords or councillors of the villages... to the retainers and agents of the great king, the *wanax*,"<sup>4</sup> on the one hand, to seeing it as a society of "robber chiefs," of princes, vassals and serfs, analogous to that of the primitive Germans at the time of the downfall of the Roman Empire.<sup>5</sup> The question of the social organization and class structure of these societies is not crucial for the purposes of this article (although an answer to this question would be helpful in understanding the historical factors that went into creating later Greek society) and so it will not be pursued here.

In the period from the end of the thirteenth century, B.C., to about 1150, the main Mycenaean centers met with violent destruction. This was associated with the movement of a more primitive people, the Dorians, into Greece ("more primitive" meaning that they were still basically at the tribal stage of social organization, and were thus closer to primitive communism). It was also associated with the beginning of the Iron Age.

Greece was not alone in these happenings. Throughout the eastern Mediterranean, the end of the second millenium was marked by a series of upheavals, migrations, and invasions. Egyptian writings record the destructive raids of what they call "the sea

\*Early human history is often divided by archaeologists into different "ages" with reference to the material used for tools and/or weapons: the Stone Age, the Bronze Age (approximately 3000-1000 B.C.), and the Iron Age. Minoan society has been variously characterized as a "feudal bureaucracy," a "thalassocracy" (i.e., a tribute-collecting empire based on control of the sea), a system of "palace organization" such as in Egypt and Mesopotamia, and "a highly organized, commercial, theocratic state."<sup>2</sup> Even the physical surroundings of Minoan society (it was not located in a river valley) and the physical structures disclosed by archaeology (no monumental architecture, no royal symbolism)<sup>3</sup> indicate that the structure of the society must have been different in certain ways from that of the Egypt of the Pharaohs, and there are many signs that the Minoans were fairly heavily engaged in trade, but the exact social structure remains unclear.

peoples" over the course of more than a century. As one pair of authors puts it:

The great invasions produced an almost totally new political map of the Near East. Egypt survived shorn of its foreign possessions. The empires disappeared for centuries and were replaced by tribes living in the heroic style, familiar to us from Homer's account and from the tales of Saul and David in the Bible, and by petty city-states (Hittite, Canaanitish, Philistine, and Aramaic).<sup>6</sup>

The power of the ruling classes of the Mycenaeans and the other Bronze Age societies which fell or were greatly weakened during this period depended upon their monopoly of the relatively scarce metal, bronze. The invading peoples had mastered the smelting and use of the much more plentiful, durable and efficient metal, iron. The fact that the invaders were at a more primitive, tribal, stage of social organization was actually a help, rather than a hindrance, to their overcoming the Bronze Age societies, for the tribal form of organization meant that it was open to everyone to use the new iron tools and weapons, whereas the whole set-up of the Bronze Age societies was connected with keeping control of metals in the hands of the ruling class.

The destruction of Mycenaean society following the beginning of the Iron Age seems to have been much more complete than that of other Bronze Age societies in the eastern Mediterranean. The period which follows, lasting until the introduction of the alphabet in Greece at about 750 B.C., is usually known as the "Dark Ages." (This is different, of course, from the later European Dark Ages—about 476-1000 A.D.—which marked the downfall of the Roman Empire and the beginnings of the feudal epoch in Europe.) Information about events during these centuries in ancient Greece is sparse (hence the title "dark"), but out of this period emerged the famous civilization, organized into city-states, which is what is usually thought of when reference is made to ancient Greece.\*

Thus although the exact historical events are unclear, the result is known and some fairly certain inferences can be drawn. In some areas, the "Dorian conquest" took the form of an outright subjugation of the original inhabitants, who became reduced to the status of serfs, with the invaders becoming a ruling class. This is what happened in Sparta. As George Thomson describes it:

\*The very cursory nature of this survey of early Greek history should be emphasized again. Not only is it the barest outline, but many topics—the Homeric poems and the society they describe, the Ionian colonization of Asia Minor, for instance—are omitted entirely. The idea is to only touch upon those aspects which are necessary for an understanding of Plato's ideological position.

Since their numbers were few, the Spartans could only hold down the serfs by maintaining their military organisation in a state of constant readiness, and the basis of that organisation was tribal. For the same reason, they had to close their own ranks against the disruptive inequalities that would follow from the growth of private property. Accordingly, they did everything in their power to maintain among themselves the tribal principle of common ownership. The land was divided into family estates, but these estates were inalienable [they could not be sold or given away], and their function was, by exploiting the serfs who worked them to the extent of 50 per cent of the produce, to provide each Spartan with his contribution to the collective food supply, for they continued to eat in common. At the same time, they set their faces against the development of trade, and refused to publish a code of laws, without which organized commerce was impossible. In this way a system which had evolved on the basis of equality was transformed into an instrument of class domination. Its structure was still tribal, but in function it had become a state.<sup>7</sup>

This was the paradoxical origin of that system of common "manly" life, tight discipline and "heroic" warrior virtues so much admired by reactionaries in the ancient Greek world. And the Spartans became more reactionary as time went on. In the early part of the seventh century Sparta conquered neighboring Messenia, reducing its inhabitants to serfs (or "helots" as they were called). This made the serf population several times larger than the Spartans, and from this point on the internal dynamics of Sparta were determined by this contradiction between Spartan and helot, with the ruling class evolving special terroristic institutions for control of the helots, a legal prohibition on productive work by Spartans, and other unique practices alongside those mentioned by Thomson above.<sup>8</sup>

And with the development of class struggle in classical Greece, Sparta became a force for reaction throughout the Greek world, supporting the supremacy of the landowners in other states. Democratic Athens *versus* aristocratic Sparta—this was one of the main contradictions which impressed itself on the Greeks of the classical age.\* And they were not far wrong in highlighting this, for it corresponded to a class contradiction—the class contradiction which was driving forward Greek society at this particular

\*The "classical age" is a term, borrowed from art historians, which is commonly used to designate the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., in contrast to "archaic" Greece of the mid-seventh through sixth centuries and "hellenistic," which applies to the period from the end of the fourth to the first century B.C.

point in history.

Athens was opposed to Sparta. But how had Athens been developing during this time? Athens (unlike Sparta) had been a Mycenaean center, and, furthermore, it was not taken over by the Dorians. However, the Mycenaean city or palace (it was not really a city, but merely a palace and citadel surrounded by agricultural villages) did experience great disruption as the Iron Age was ushered in. Mycenaean social organization (or at least its superstructure) was torn apart at this time throughout Greece, including at Athens.

Whatever this superstructure had been, exactly, it is at least clear that during the succeeding "Dark Ages" the social organization at Athens (and throughout most of Greece) was basically tribal—or, more accurately, that through the course of these centuries classes and the state were emerging out of tribal society. The basic unit of tribal society is the clan (what Engels in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* calls the *gens*); many clans would form a tribe (often with something intermediate between clan and tribe—in Greece the phratry). The foundation of the tribal economy at this point (already quite advanced in the evolution of tribal society) was agriculture. The land was owned in common by the clan, being reapportioned periodically, with the members of the clan living in a village in the midst of the fields belonging to the clan.<sup>9</sup> (It can be seen how the Spartan system preserved this set-up in a perverted form.)

With the introduction of metals, and particularly iron, into this economy, the productivity of labor was raised to the point that it was possible to support different specialists (such as the smith and the tanner) who work for, and are supported by, the community. In other words, agriculture was then able to produce a surplus over and above what was needed for the subsistence of the agricultural workers. But further, as Thomson points out:

The development of these new techniques requires, not merely that there should be some surplus available from agriculture, but that this surplus, which has been scattered hitherto in small fragments among the individual cultivators, should be concentrated so as to make it effective. This is done by placing it in the hands of the chiefs. The chiefs become the recipients of regular tribute in the form of tithes or labour services. Such payments are given freely by the clansmen as a due return for benefits received, whether these benefits be real, such as protection from marauders or successful leadership in war, or imaginary, such as a plentiful harvest or some other good fortune attributed to the magical powers of the chief.<sup>10\*</sup>

But of course this new system of distribution reacts upon the system of ownership. One form of payment to the chief was a piece of the best land, not subject to redistribution—in ancient Greece called the *temenos*.<sup>12</sup> The chief could then enclose it, and cultivate it with the labor of slaves captured in war—for with the increase in productivity of labor it became possible to use slaves (since now the slave could produce a surplus above what was needed for his own subsistence). Other clansmen could not get a *temenos* from the clan, but with increasing productivity of labor some would have available the time to clear and cultivate a piece of wasteland, which then became his. Thus different kinds of private property grew up alongside the communal.

This of course was a relatively protracted process, which passed through several stages, with many twists and turns, and exhibited differences in different places. But private property developed in some such way as this in Athens and elsewhere in Greece. And out of the contradictions of this first development of private property came the state. As Engels says, speaking of basically this stage in the development of Greek society:

Thus in the Greek constitution of the heroic age, we see the old gentile order [the tribal or clan order] as still a living force. But we also see the beginnings of its disintegration: father right, with transmission of property to the children by which accumulation of wealth within the family was favored and the family itself became a power against the gens [clan]; reaction of the inequality of wealth on the constitution by the formation of the

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\* George Thomson's research on ancient Greek society, embodied in his writings on the subject during the 1940s and '50s, is a valuable contribution to a materialist understanding of this period of human history, and is the main basis upon which the analysis of Plato in this article is carried out. Thomson also played a valuable role in the 1960s and early '70s in upholding the achievements of the Chinese revolution and Marxism-Leninism against Soviet revisionism, particularly in his book *From Marx to Mao Tse-tung: A Study in Revolutionary Dialectics* (London, 1971). At the same time, there are weaknesses in all these works—for instance, his rather oracular and esoteric style of writing, which betrays a tendency toward dogmatism in his thinking, a tendency to gloss over real difficulties, as well as making his writings unnecessarily inaccessible to many people. At the same time, it is also apparent that he never fully assimilated Mao Tse-tung Thought, the new and immortal contributions of Mao to the continually developing theory of Marxism. Thus, for example, *From Marx to Mao Tse-tung* shows no awareness of a new bourgeoisie under socialism, but instead sees Liu Shao-chi as someone who served the interests of the old national bourgeoisie (page 152). It is clear that this is a sign of a fundamental failure to understand class struggle under socialism, as summed up by Mao. (See *Mao Tse-tung's Immortal Contributions*, published by RCP Publications, Chicago 1979.) This failure resulted in Thomson's craven acceptance of the counter-revolutionary 1976 *coup* in China as the "successful conclusion" of the Cultural Revolution.<sup>11</sup> By the present time Thomson has taken a qualitative leap—into the camp of opportunism and reaction.

first rudiments of hereditary nobility and monarchy; slavery, at first only of prisoners of war but already preparing the way for enslavement of fellow members of the tribe and even of the gens; the old wars between tribe and tribe already degenerating into systematic pillage by land and sea for the acquisition of cattle, slaves and treasure, and becoming a regular source of wealth; in short, riches praised and respected as the highest good and the old gentile order misused to justify the violent seizure of riches. Only one thing was wanted: an institution which not only secured the newly acquired riches of individuals against the communistic traditions of the gentile order, which not only sanctified the private property formerly so little valued and declared this sanctification to be the highest purpose of all human society; but, an institution which set the seal of general social recognition on each new method of acquiring property and thus amassing wealth at continually increasing speed; an institution which perpetuated not only this growing cleavage of society into classes but also the right of the possessing class to exploit the nonpossessing, and the rule of the former over the latter.

And this institution came. The *state* was brought into being.<sup>13\*</sup>

Engels goes on to talk about the constitution which was ascribed by Athenian legend to Theseus, whereby a central authority was set up in Athens and "... the entire people, regardless of gens, phratry or tribe, was divided into three classes: *eupatrides* or nobles, *geomoroi* or farmers, and *demiourgoi* or artisans, and the right to hold office was vested exclusively in the nobility."<sup>14</sup> Actually, if there was a Theseus, whatever he did was simply the capstone or the formalization of a process which had developed for some time before. This process had been something like the following. With the development of a surplus, the exchange of goods had developed, initially of course in the form of barter. Since the surplus was in the hands of the chiefs, so was its exchange. The central meeting-place

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\* At the time when Engels wrote *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* Monocivilization was totally unknown, and Mycenaean society was just being discovered; the archeological investigations which have disclosed whatever is now known about the Dark Ages had not begun; and of course many other archeological and anthropological discoveries had not been made. Thus inevitably Engels, in his description of ancient Greece in chapters IV and V of this work, is ignorant of many now-known facts and is incorrect in certain details. Nonetheless, the fact that he and Marx had studied Greek literature and history fairly extensively, (as had Morgan, whose *Ancient Society* was Engels' anthropological authority in *Origin of the Family*), and that he had a good grasp of dialectical materialism, enabled Engels to see the essence of the matter and give a basically correct account of the development of Athenian society out of the Dark Ages.

of the whole tribe became a marketplace, where clan-chiefs met to barter. Artisans found it more worth their while to produce for exchange; they produced partly for the marketplace and what they made for their fellow clansmen came to be on a commercial basis. The chiefs pushed for a greater rate of production—they wanted to intensify the rate of exploitation. Both chiefs and artisans quit the local village and set up shop near the market. In sum,

The chiefs have ceased to represent the separate interests of their clans. They are becoming a landed aristocracy united against the poorer clansmen by a common interest of class against class.<sup>15</sup>

It can easily be seen that these developments reach a culmination, and are given formal expression, in the establishment of a central political authority in the central market-town (Athens) and in making the aristocracy the formal political authority over the farmers and artisans, which is what the Theseus-story describes.

The eighth century B.C. saw the rise of aristocratic city-states along these lines throughout Greece. And from the description of the outlines of their formation given above, it should be clear what this term "city-state" (the usual translation of the Greek term *polis*) means: a whole area, ruled over at this stage by a landed nobility centered in a town or city, surrounded by dependent villages occupied chiefly by peasants.

Over the next several centuries, there was a characteristic political development within these city-states. While this development was arrested at various stages in some cities, and went in somewhat peculiar directions in others, overall there was a movement from aristocratic states, to what the Greeks called "tyrannies" (beginning with the mid-seventh century), and then to democracies. As one writer says, in a sentence which holds true with regard to political history,

[T]he chief feature of the domestic history of most Greek cities, from the end of the seventh century forward, is an endeavor, here successful, there frustrated, to establish or maintain popular government.<sup>16</sup>

The "tyrannies" involved a member of an aristocratic family setting himself up in his own right, as a tyrant, in place of the aristocratic political institutions. In doing so, he had the support of the nonaristocratic classes and sectors of society. These tyrannies were transitional—they did not establish a stable or lasting form of the state—and their essential historical function, as is now recognized by most scholars,<sup>17</sup> was to break the power of the old nobility. The democracies which succeeded them were states which

formally recognized the principle of the subordination of the minority to the majority of citizens.\*

But of course, these political changes did not just happen "up in the air," so to speak, but were the result of the struggle of classes, which were themselves the outgrowth of economic changes which were taking place. The main economic change during this time was the growth of trade and commerce, and the consequent growth of commodity production within the Greek city-states. This meant the rise of a class of merchants and traders. Many of these traders were of the aristocracy, it is true. But the most important thing is not their class origins (although that does have importance), but the new relations of production which were coming into being, and the new source of wealth which was being opened up. For the power of the old aristocracy, and its position as undisputed ruling class, had come from its control of land (and the right to appropriate part of the product of the agricultural producer) in an agricultural society organized around the production of use-values—that is, non-commodity production, production not for exchange.

With the relatively great growth of exchange, however, especially as this exchange came to take place over a much wider area, a new source of wealth was opened up within the exchange-process itself—through merchant and trading activities. This also meant greater possibilities for the artisans, too, for they could now produce for broader and broader markets (instead of just for the nobility), and could aspire to become merchants themselves. It was this class struggle between the old aristocracy and the non-aristocratic classes which was reflected in the emergence and growth of the democratic state—for of course the breaking of aristocratic political privilege was not just to the advantage of the merchants, nor just the artisans, but to the peasants and landless agricultural workers as well.

Athens is in most respects the epitome, the pre-eminent example, of this process. It became the leading commercial city of the mainland, and in time came to be no longer self-sufficient in food production (an almost unheard-of phenomenon at that point in history), depending instead on the import of grain from what is now southern Russia, just north of the Black Sea. And Athens also came to be the foremost representative of ancient Greek democracy.

This democratic revolution took place over the course of the sixth century, beginning with what are usually called the "re-

\*As will be seen, the words, "of citizens" are important. As Lenin pointed out "Democracy is a state which recognizes the subordination of the minority. . ."<sup>18</sup> But the minority referred to in this context, as well as the majority, belongs to the ruling class of that society, the class for which alone democracy obtains. Depending on what class the state is an instrument of, this will yield different forms of democracy—for instance, slave-owners' democracy, bourgeois democracy, etc.

forms" of Solon in 594. Although there is disagreement about the precise provisions of these reforms and the exact nature of the economic conditions preceding them, the general picture is fairly clear.<sup>19</sup> The reforms identified with Solon (himself an aristocrat who was probably involved in trade and commerce) resulted in the abolition of the enslavement of Athenians for debt and "uprooting the *horoi*"—stone markers which showed that those who farmed the land had to give a certain percentage to some aristocrat. Probably the land was inalienable (could not be sold), so that the peasants had to pledge themselves as security for loans, and were sold into slavery if they defaulted.\* On the other hand, as he makes clear in the writings that have survived, Solon firmly resisted the peasants' demands for a "redistribution of land" (probably meaning by this the sort of redistribution which had taken place periodically in the old communal system).<sup>20</sup>

These reforms also gave citizenship to non-Athenian traders who had settled or were settling in Athenian territory, and forbade the export of agricultural produce except for olive oil. The former was important in breaking down the identity of citizenship with membership in the old kinship system (clans and tribes), and the latter benefited those farmers who were able to put land aside for olive cultivation (for it takes several decades after planting for olive trees to begin to bear fruit). It can be seen that all of these measures had two main targets: on the one hand, they were blows against special privileges of the hereditary aristocracy, and on the other they were aimed at breaking with vestiges of primitive communism and promoting the growth of private property and commodity production. Thus, although both the possibility and the necessity of taking these steps arose out of the struggles of the masses, and particularly the peasants, their main beneficiary was the newly emerging class of traders and merchants. Many of these were coming from the aristocracy itself—Solon being a prime example of this phenomenon.

Solon also divided the population into four classes, according to wealth measured in terms of grain. The lowest in this classification was the *thetes*, the landless laborer who cannot lay claim to any type of means of production, but who is at the same time not enslaved. Those in this class were excluded from the Council of the Four Hundred (100 from each of the four tribes which had originally settled the area) which Solon's reforms set up. This council was to put forward the resolutions which the general assembly of all the citizens (revived now from the democracy of primitive commu-

\*The ownership of land by a family, rather than an individual, was a stage following the primitive communal ownership by the whole clan. A piece of land could not at this stage be sold or given away, but stayed within the family from generation to generation, so that the land, while no longer communal, was not yet fully private property either.

nism) could debate. Further, the top state positions were now opened up to those in the first one or two wealth categories, whereas previously they had been the monopoly of the hereditary nobility.

Over the next thirty years, with the further development of wealth not necessarily connected to hereditary membership in the aristocracy, splits appeared in the ranks of this nobility. Different parties were formed, headed by different aristocrats, representing different economic and class interests. The head of one such party, Peisistratos, seized power and became a tyrant, and his reign served the usual function of Greek tyrannies: breaking the power of the old aristocracy and preparing the way for the democratic revolution. He may well have seized the estates of his aristocratic opponents and distributed the land to landless peasants. He developed Athenian coinage and export trade, began a large program of public works (hiring the *thetes*), and began the exploitation of Athens' rich silver mines at Laurion under the aegis of the state, probably with slave labor.

His son succeeded him but was overthrown in renewed fighting among the parties. The aristocrat Isagoras led many of his class in trying to use this opportunity to restore their old power, but this reactionary attempt was beat back by a renewed revolution on the part of the masses, and further changes in the direction of democracy were made. (These changes are usually identified with the name of Cleisthenes, the head of one aristocratic faction who, as one writer puts it, "turned the tables on [Isagoras] by making an alliance with the people."<sup>21</sup>) The council was enlarged from 400 to 500, and its membership, now open to all adult male citizens, was based on a new set of ten artificial tribes—50 persons from each tribe. This council was effectively the administrative and legislative body of the state, and exercised certain judicial functions as well. It can be seen that, here again, these measures were blows both against the aristocrats' special privileges and against whatever remained of tribal institutions as well. The reason is that the aristocracy had grown precisely out of the tribal institutions of primitive communism and was still able to use some of these to its own advantage.

Over the next half century these democratic measures were extended even further, with all property restrictions on eligibility for higher state offices being removed and with election to the council coming to be by lot. The democratic revolution, setting up a slaveholders' democracy, was complete—in other words, a new form of the state had come into existence. Engels describes this development as follows:

Commerce and handicrafts, including artistic handicrafts which were being increasingly developed on a

large scale by the use of slave labor, became the main occupations. Athenians were growing more enlightened. Instead of exploiting their fellow citizens in the old brutal way, they exploited chiefly the slaves and the non-Athenian customers. Moveable property, wealth in the form of money, of slaves and ships continually increased, but it was no longer a mere means to the acquisition of landed property as in the old slow days: it had become an end in itself. On the one hand the old power of the aristocracy now had to contend with successful competition from the new class of rich industrialists and merchants; but, on the other hand, the ground was also cut away from beneath the last remains of the old gentile constitution. . . .

Now complete in its main features, the state was perfectly adapted to the new social conditions of the Athenians as is shown by the rapid growth of wealth, commerce and industry. The class opposition on which the social and political institutions rested was no longer that of nobility and common people, but of slaves and free men, of protected persons and citizens.<sup>22</sup>

This was how matters stood when Plato was born in the last half of the fifth century B.C.\* He was born into an old aristocratic family. Some of his relatives were prominently involved in a briefly successful aristocratic counter-revolution at the end of the fifth century. His own writings are filled with venomous hatred of democracy and of the masses of people. His whole work is part of the ideology of reaction in Greek society in this period.

One of his twentieth-century admirers can say of Plato,

Nothing is more characteristic of him than his lifelong conviction that it is the imperative duty of the philosopher, whose highest personal happiness would be found in the life of serene contemplation of truth, to make the supreme sacrifice to devoting the best of his manhood to the service of his fellows as a statesman and legislator, if the opportunity offers.<sup>23</sup>

But Plato was anything but serene, and what he contemplated was not the truth, but an inverted image of the class society in which

\*The date is usually fixed at around 429. It is obvious that there is no room in the brief historical sketch given here for many important aspects of ancient Greek and Athenian development—for instance, what was happening in the Greek settlements in Asia Minor (and in Italy), which had a good deal to do with intellectual developments, and Greek relations with Persia, as well as Athenian “foreign relations.”

he found himself. The “imperative duty” which impelled him toward political theory and practice was the morality of his class—whose members were the only ones he ever saw as “fellows” and tried to serve.

### Socrates and Plato

Plato came out of Athenian society of the late fifth and early fourth centuries. But he was influenced in his development by *Socrates*—the man who has through the ages, and particularly in the era of capitalist society, been looked to as the patron saint of intellectuals. Who was Socrates?

Socrates was born about 470 B.C., his father being a stonemason, an occupation also followed by Socrates as a young man. Later he became what contemporary Greeks called a *sophist*—literally, a “wise man,” but meaning then someone who tried to find out what the nature of the universe, the physical world, and society are.\* After Socrates’ death, Plato, pursuing the same general activity, but from a markedly idealist and reactionary standpoint, preferred to call himself (following the usage of the Pythagoreans) a *philosopher* (in Greek, *philosophos*, meaning “lover of wisdom”). Plato wrote his philosophy in the form of dialogues, making Socrates the main character and teacher in most of them, thus painting the picture of Socrates as the pre-eminent example of a philosopher.

Plato’s most famous portrait of Socrates is the *Apology*, which presents itself as recording Socrates’ defense in court against charges of corrupting the Athenian youth and of impiety. Socrates, of course, was convicted and sentenced to death, and after his death Plato and others of his admirers wrote dialogues, including records of what was supposed to have been his defense before the jury, as memorials to him. Out of these records of his defense came the picture, in later centuries, of Socrates as an intellectual saint, the “gadfly” (as he calls himself in Plato’s *Apology*) of ancient Athens, who never claimed to know anything himself, but simply sought the truth no matter what, questioning everything, puncturing the pomposity of conceited know-it-alls, but in the process exciting the resentment of the philistine mob of ordinary people—their barely latent anti-intellectualism brought

\*At first, in the sixth century when this distinctive sort of intellectual activity first began, they were just as often called “physicists,” because they were trying to discover the nature (*physis*) of things. By Plato’s time, “sophist” usually denoted one who looked into ethical and social matters as well, and who gave classes in these things as well as in the art of speaking and persuading. The sophist movement was generally associated with the democracy; Plato sharply attacked sophists and was always concerned to distinguish himself (and Socrates) from them. (In fact, it is because of Plato’s attack that “sophist” and “sophism” are terms of abuse today.)

out by his untiring and uncompromising search for truth—who then killed him out of spite.

But in fact this was not the content of either Socrates' life or his trial by any means. Plato seeks to remove the trial from history and make it the supposedly timeless confrontation between the intellectual and the mob—and this is why bourgeois intellectuals take Socrates to their bosom. But in fact the trial was charged with political and social content, which had everything to do with the class struggle in Athens at the very end of the fifth century B.C. For this century, which had opened with the victory of the democratic state, had not seen an abatement of the class struggle. The artisans, small farmers and propertyless laborers wanted to push forward from mere equality before the law to a more material equality. The rich merchants thought that things had gone quite far enough. The old nobility saw a chance in this split to get some of its privileges back, and those whose wealth was not increasing were especially bitter and even desperate. The lines became increasingly drawn between the reactionary forces (called by historians the *oligarchs*) and the democratic forces, which broke into two, usually denominated the *moderate* and the *radical democrats*.\*

These contradictions were exacerbated by the Peloponnesian War, which pitted Athens with its allies and dependencies against an alliance led by Sparta. The war had deep ideological ramifications with regard to the class struggle throughout Greece, including within Athens, for it pitted democracy against oligarchy. The Athenian oligarchs wanted to end the war as quickly as possible, on virtually any terms, and two years after Athens finally met defeat in the disastrous Sicilian expedition in 413 (after almost 50 years of on-and-off war), the oligarchs seized the time and were able to institute the extreme reactionary regime of the Four Hundred. In the following years this regime was overthrown, the democracy restored in stages, and the war renewed. In 405-4, however, Athens was decisively defeated and the Spartan-backed oligarchy of the Thirty was installed. Under the leadership of Critias (about whom more below), a reign of terror against prominent democrats was instituted, as well as a good deal of plundering

\*Of course it must be remembered that these democrats, no matter how radical, never advocated extending democracy to the slaves; ancient Greek democracy was always slave-owners' democracy—at most, democracy for a ruling class of slaveholders, with dictatorship for the slaves. Thus, when the opposition is made in this article between the masses on the one hand, and the aristocrats or rich merchants on the other, it is the masses of *non-slaves* that are referred to. The struggle of these masses for democracy for themselves was a progressive one historically, but it must always be remembered that this was taking place within the context of the growth of slave production, and was necessarily linked to this, for it was nothing but a fight for democracy among those who ruled (or wanted to rule) over slaves.

and private enrichment on the part of those in power. In the following three years the democracy was restored again and a general amnesty put into effect for all who had taken part in this civil war. It was scarcely a year after the conclusion of these events that Socrates was brought to trial. Where had he stood in this fierce class struggle?

Early in his life Socrates had apparently been attracted to the investigation of the physical world and had held classes for others in a manner similar to that of the sophists of the time.<sup>24</sup> This sort of intellectual investigation and activity was associated with the democratic movement. But he later turned away from this and began to turn exclusively toward social and ethical questions. The sophists also explored such issues—and in fact were famous for doing so—but Socrates worked from quite a different perspective. His method of exploring them became the famous "Socratic" style of incessant ironic questioning, engaging someone in a dialogue in order to hold him up to ridicule—a method designed to show, above all, that the vast majority of people do not *know* any of the things they think they do. Simultaneously, the circle of Socrates' friends, pupils and admirers came to be drawn from among the oligarchs and the old aristocracy. Socratic questioning had an ideological and political meaning. As one pair of writers puts it,

Surely it is not difficult to realize that this questioning was not merely goodhumored dialogue or an intellectual game, played *in vacuo*, but represented a positive attack on the most fundamental democratic assumption that politics and ethics should be the career of the average man. It made these primary social functions—ethics and politics—not the concern of *Everyman*, but the private preserve of a highly select, cultivated and articulate minority. In this respect it could only be called profoundly anti-democratic. We can well imagine that the very skill with which this confounding of the vulgar was carried out won the excited and enthusiastic plaudits of the young men of patrician circles, who for years had writhed helplessly under the galling necessity of political submission to men whom they regarded as their social inferiors. . . . We can equally well imagine that the process of questioning and confounding was an infuriating thing not only to the discomfited individual, but also to all those who clung to the democratic way of life. As the war progressed, as the struggle between the two factions grew more and more bitter, as the democracy felt itself more and more vulnerable, the role of Socrates, too, developed; from an amiable, if somewhat irrelevant, nuisance he became a positive menace.<sup>25</sup>



The charges against Socrates were political. But because of the amnesty, which forbade any reference to the oligarchic counter-revolution in litigation, the true charges against him could not be made openly. However, the main accusation, of corrupting the youth, had a hidden but clear political content. As pointed out above, Socrates' circle of admirers came to be made up of young men from the aristocracy. Many of them were probably involved in the political struggles of the latter part of the fifth century, but two known Socratic companions stand out. One was Alcibiades, probably the supreme opportunist in times which were rife with opportunism of various sorts. He was brought up in the household of Pericles, the most famous moderate democrat in the mid-fifth century, and as a young man he became a leader of the radical democrats. He was accused of a crime while helping to lead the ill-fated Sicilian expedition during the Peloponnesian War and ordered to return to Athens, but instead he defected to Sparta and gave them valuable intelligence concerning Athenian military plans and weaknesses. He went to work for Sparta, but then thought he could get a better deal from Persia, which was trying to take over all of Greece. He tried to get back to Athens *via* a Persian-backed oligarchic coup, but when this failed he managed to get back as a general on the strength of his military skills, and through the manipulation of Critias. When he suffered military defeat, however, he fled again, and was finally assassinated, probably at least partly at the instigation of Critias.

And as for Critias himself—he had begun as a leading democratic politician. He ended by becoming the leader—and by all accounts the most reactionary and vicious of any—of the regime of the Thirty. Both Alcibiades and Critias were part of Socrates' circle. Critias' change from democrat to reactionary mad dog was widely attributed to the influence of Socrates. Can there be any doubt about what was meant by "corruption of the youth"?<sup>26</sup>

Plato too, of course, was one of Socrates' companions, although much younger than Critias and Alcibiades. Critias was also related in another way to Plato: he was Plato's mother's cousin. Plato's uncle Charmides was also a member of the regime of the Thirty. Plato grew up in an aristocratic and oligarchic family, and when the oligarchic coup came, he welcomed it. As he explains in an autobiographical letter written in later life: "The constitution we then had, being anathema to many [i.e. to the oligarchs], was overthrown; and a new government was set up. . . . I thought that they were going to lead the city out of the unjust life that she had been living and establish her in the path of justice. . . ." <sup>24</sup>

He goes on to say that he became disillusioned by the excesses of the triumphant oligarchy—and even more disillusioned by the trial and death of his mentor Socrates under the restored democracy.

'This is how he describes his further reflections after this traumatic event:

The more I reflected upon what was happening, upon what kind of men were active in politics, and upon the state of our laws and customs, and the older I grew, the more I realized how difficult it is to manage a city's affairs rightly. For I saw it was impossible to do anything without friends and loyal followers; and to find such men ready to hand would be a piece of sheer good luck, since our city was no longer guided by the customs and practices of our fathers, while to train up new ones was anything but easy. And the corruption of our written laws and our customs was proceeding at such amazing speed that whereas at first I had been full of zeal for public life, when I noted these changes and saw how unstable everything was, I became in the end quite dizzy; and though I did not cease to reflect how an improvement could be brought about in our laws and in the whole constitution, yet I refrained from action, waiting for the proper time. At last I came to the conclusion that all existing states are badly governed and the condition of their laws practically incurable, without some miraculous remedy and the assistance of fortune; and I was forced to say, in praise of true philosophy, that from her height alone was it possible to discern what the nature of justice is, either in the state or in the individual, and that the ills of the human race would never end until either those who are sincerely and truly lovers of wisdom come into political power, or the rulers of our cities, by the grace of God, learn true philosophy.<sup>28</sup>

In other words, since the old aristocracy no longer ruled ("since our city was no longer guided by the customs and practices of our fathers"), something analogous must be instituted, and this replacement must be something not subject to change and decay ("when I . . . saw how unstable everything was, I became in the end quite dizzy"). The nature of this new aristocracy will be discovered by philosophy, which will tell us "what the nature of justice is," and it can be put into effect only if philosophers ("lovers of wisdom") become rulers. This is Plato's project, which he tries to carry out in his famous dialogue *The Republic*, as well as in his later and longer work *The Laws*, and which he "valiantly" strove to put into practice, most notably in the Sicilian city of Syracuse.\*

\*This article will only deal with *The Republic*. Plato's connection with Syracuse came about when his admirer Dion, a wealthy, influential and oligarchic

### Plato's Republic

In *The Republic* Plato has Socrates set out to answer the question, "What is justice?" After the first book of this work, which features some sparring with the sophist Thrasymachus, Socrates' sole interlocutors are Glaucon and Adeimantos (Plato's brothers), and they are a pliant crew indeed as Socrates guides them on their heavenly quest. Saying that it is too difficult to see what constitutes justice in an individual's soul, Socrates proposes to define justice in a city, then move by analogy back to the individual person.

He proceeds to set up a city, then, and what is immediately notable is the stress which he places on the need for a strict division of labor. This is a constant theme in much of Plato's work and is used to justify, above all, the complete division of mental and manual labor. Here it at first appears to be used in a different way; what Plato immediately emphasizes is that a distinction must be sharply drawn between those he calls the *guardians* of the city and the rest of the population. In a passage which can be read as a polemic against the Greek democratic practice of a citizen army, Plato talks about the need for professionally trained soldiers ("guardians" of the city), and says that,

... since the guardian's work is the greatest, it needs more leisure than all the others, and more practice, and further, more skill and care. . . . It will be our business then, as it seems, to pick out if we can which persons and which natures are fitted to guard the city.<sup>29</sup>

He then goes on to spend much of the rest of the dialogue in describing not only their nature, but their education and training. And quite rightly, too, for these guardians are in fact the ruling

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Syracusan, had Plato brought over to teach the young tyrant Dionysius II, who was supposed to become a philosopher-king. This project hit a snag, however, when Dion was banished, and Plato had to flee. Dion later managed to return to Syracuse and take over for a while, until he was assassinated by Callippus, another pupil of Plato's. Plato's Seventh Letter (quoted above) is addressed "to the friends and followers of Dion," and is a reply to a request for advice after Dion had been assassinated. Later in his life Plato wrote *The Laws* (in fact it was his last work), whose content is even more vicious and reactionary than *The Republic* (and less "ideal"). *The Laws* takes the form of a very detailed set of laws for a city-state. Plato also established a school (the Academy) whose pupils were drawn mostly from the old aristocracy and whose purpose was to train the philosopher-kings of which Plato dreamed—and indeed many did go on to political activity (like Callippus). So Plato's theoretical activity was by no means as divorced from the social-political world as the writings of many contemporary scholars might lead one to think. All this shows that while Plato was putting forward an ideal (a reactionary one, of course), it was one that was closely (and very practically!) linked with politics.

class of this "ideal" society Plato is setting up.

This ruling class, these "guardians of a herd" as Plato later characterizes them,<sup>30</sup> are divided into two: there are those who are merely soldiers and police, and then there are those who are fitted to go on to higher things, and become philosophers. These are the real rulers in Plato's conception—his famous philosopher-kings.

Plato then goes on to set up a city founded on this "rational and ideal" social system. But he was sure the masses would be *unruly*, despite the ideal rationality of his arguments, because they were corrupted by the illusory material world. There were always the well-armed guardians to keep them in line, but Plato, cultivated philosopher that he was, preferred more subtle methods. As he explains it:

Is there any device by which we might tell one genuine lie worthy of the name, and persuade the rulers themselves that it is true, or at least persuade the rest of the city? . . . Well . . . this is the story. The training and education we were giving them was all a dream, and they only imagined all this was happening to them and around them; but in truth they were being moulded and trained down inside the earth, where they and their arms and all their trappings were being fashioned. When they were completely made, the earth their mother delivered them from her womb. . . . "So you are all brothers in the city," we shall tell them in our fable, "but while God moulded you, he mingled gold in the generation of some, and those are the ones fit to rule, who are therefore the most precious; he mingled silver in the assistants [i.e. the soldiers]; and iron and brass in farmers and the other craftsmen. . . ." <sup>31</sup>

Having cooked up his own "blood and soil" myth, Plato goes on to investigate the virtues of the city and its classes. The philosopher-king, of course, will be supremely truthful, never willingly admitting a falsehood, but "reach[ing] after all truth with all his might from youth upwards," and hating lies.<sup>32</sup> This may seem a little hard to square with the big lie about different classes being made from different metals. We must remember, however, that Plato is not concerned with mere material, earthly, this-worldly truth, but with the other-worldly realm of the transcendent forms, and no doubt he can work out the problem of combining truthfulness and lying into a package appropriately attractive to the aristocratic mind. And besides, the supreme virtue of the philosophers is not devotion to truth, but *wisdom*, and it must certainly be admitted that, if Plato's philosophers were examples of wise men, then wisdom has little to do with truth!

In fact Plato does have a whole theory about the nature of reality and human knowledge, an ontology and epistemology, which lead to a very other-worldly conception of truth. This is Plato's famous "theory of forms" or "theory of ideas," the theory that the material world around us is, if not totally unreal, at best a pale reflection, a shadow of reality. What is real are the ideas, or forms, on which this poor world is only imperfectly modeled. This is how he explains it in one of his earlier expositions of the theory:

We say, I suppose, there is such a thing as the equal, not a stick equal to a stick, or a stone to a stone, or anything like that, but something independent which is alongside all of them, the equal itself, equality. . . .<sup>33</sup>

In other words, Plato sees the concept or idea of equality as independent and existing separately from the material world. Of course, the general concept of equality is not the same as the particular instances of it ("a stick equal to a stick"); the general idea is an abstraction from the particular instance. But Plato does not think these ideas are abstractions from reality—rather, he turns things upside down and says that the material world is derived from these ideas, which he considers the only true reality. Thus he says later in the same dialogue:

I am going to try to show you the nature of the cause, which I have been working out. I shall go back to the old song and begin from there, supposing that there exists a beautiful something all by itself, and a good something and a great and all the rest of it. . . . What appears to me is, that if anything else is beautiful besides beauty itself, what makes it beautiful is simply that it partakes of that beauty; and so I say with everything.<sup>34</sup>

So these ideas are not only more real, they are the cause of the existence of things in the material world. Moreover, according to Plato, these ideas or abstractions of things actually exist prior to the things themselves.

Clearly this is idealism pure and simple. And, what is more, it is formulated in conscious opposition to materialism. In this same dialogue Plato has Socrates describe his intellectual evolution and how he was disappointed in the materialist explanations of earlier Greek thinkers because they did not explain the phenomena of nature in terms of everything happening for a purpose and for the best.

In *The Republic* the theory of forms is integral to the education of the guardians, and even more, it provides the philosophical underpinning for Plato's political theory. At one point he gives a

concise characterization of the theory as follows:

I think we have usually assumed a general form or idea, one idea, in each class of many particulars to which we give the same name.<sup>35</sup>

In other words, there is one of these pre-existing forms for each group of things called by the same name (like "dog")—and Plato holds that this form is more real than, and is actually the cause of, all the concrete particulars which have that name (the idea of the dog is the cause of all the flesh-and-blood dogs). And in this work he also sketches the well-known metaphor of the cave, picturing the masses as like people chained in a cave, only able to see the shadows of things on the wall. In other words, reality is turned on its head. The material world is for Plato a mere shadow, while the realm of concepts and ideas (which is actually a reflection of the material world) is, for him, reality.

Clearly this has political implications. If the masses of people are hopelessly out of touch with reality, then they deserve a rather lowly status. As one of Plato's modern admirers puts it, the ordinary man

. . . confuses particular beautiful things, which are so only in as far as they participate in beauty, with beauty. The philosopher has knowledge of reality, of the Forms; the others can only have beliefs or opinions (*doxai*). . . . Clearly it is the philosopher, whose mind apprehends goodness, who should rule the state. He alone has the pattern of the good in his soul and thus can use it. . . to try to realize eternal justice in the lives of men, to make the state approximate to the ethical realities of which he alone has understanding.<sup>36</sup>

Obviously, ruled over by the only persons who are or can be in touch with reality, this society is the best possible.

Plato thinks that, since the city is set up more or less perfectly, it must be wise and brave and temperate and just. It is wise on account of the wisdom of the higher class of guardians; it is brave because of the bravery of the soldiers, the second class of guardians; and it is temperate in virtue of the temperance of the rest of the citizenry. So each class has its own virtue. Wisdom and virtue are self-explanatory. The "temperance" (*sophrosyne*, a Greek word meaning essentially *self-restraint*) of the masses consists in their restraining all their base animal impulses and doing what they are told. The justice of this city, on the other hand, consists in the fact that each class does the work and has the virtue appropriate to it. Justice, Plato sums up, is "to do one's own business"<sup>37</sup>—in other

words, know your place and stay there.

Having established what justice in the city is, Plato returns to the individual. He argues that there must also be three parts to the soul, analogous to the three classes of the city, and that justice in the individual must consist in the right relation of these parts to one another. First there is the reasoning part of the soul (whose virtue of course is wisdom). Then there is the part whose virtue is courage, namely the "spirited part." And finally there is the part of the soul "... by which it loves and hungers and thirsts, and is all aflutter about the other desires, the 'unreasoning' and 'desiring' part, a comrade of reptiles and pleasures."<sup>38</sup> Of course the virtue of this part is to restrain itself and be temperate.

Justice, then, will again be the correct relation of these parts of the soul, the subordination of the lower and animalistic to the higher and ideal. This is in essence Plato's argument and definition of justice, which is the explicit goal of the dialogue. He goes on to discuss many other things, some of which will be mentioned below; the goal here, however, is not to outline the whole dialogue, but to discuss the social and ideological meaning of it.

As to this meaning, there can be little doubt. Plato's philosophy was part of the ideology of the old aristocracy at this particular point in Athenian history. Plato, reflecting the viewpoint of his class, was opposed to the entry of merchants and traders into the ruling class, and he bitterly hated the rebellious movement of the masses, which was the driving force behind the democratic revolution of the sixth and fifth centuries. The system Plato outlines in *The Republic* is a purified and idealized analogue of aristocratic society. The ruling class of *The Republic*, the guardians, is an idealized version of the old nobility.

It is sometimes said that Plato's rulers should not be considered a ruling class. Thus John Wild:

Nor is [Plato's social system in *The Republic*] correctly described as "class rule" in the usual sense of this word—government by a privileged group for the attainment of special interests denied to others. Plato's guardians and auxiliaries are not a *class* in this sense. They are civil servants selected by rigorous examinations for the performance of certain functions necessary to the attainment of the common good.<sup>39</sup>

F. M. Cornford seems to have the same thesis in mind when he says,

All these rulers and the subordinate guardians are forbidden to own money, houses, or land. They live in monastic austerity, on a bare subsistence provided by

the third order, the Producers, who have not qualified for the higher education. . . . The Producers, in return for the wages they pay the Guardians, will receive good government at the hands of those who are wiser than they, and who have proved, both by temperament and by training, superior alike to the profit-making and pleasure-loving motives, and to all ambition for worldly power.<sup>40</sup>

These conscientious civil servants are to live like monks. Perhaps Cornford did not know anything about the Middle Ages. Perhaps he was ignorant of the fact that the "monastic austerity" of the monks, abbots and other churchmen of European feudal society did not prevent them from forming an integral part of the society's ruling class. In any European country the feudal church owned a large proportion of the landed property, including the serfs who worked it, and these pious churchmen, "austere" though they might be, hardly hesitated to exact all the manorial dues, fines, monopolies and restrictions which exploited and oppressed the medieval peasants—right down to the lord's claim to his tenant's best beast or movable possession when the man died. And, of course, even without such ownership, the church laid claim (a legally binding one) to its tithes and other ecclesiastical dues—down to taking the *second* best beast or movable possession from the dead serf.

And, of course, these monkish rulers did not lack for ideologists to portray their activities as nothing less than pure conscientious self-sacrifice. As a more contemporary apologist puts it:

In addition to these educational tasks there were, with ever greater importance especially from the eighth century on, heavy secular burdens for the monks. Despite their individual vows of poverty, the monks collectively, as religious communities, played great roles in early medieval economy.<sup>41</sup>

Obviously Plato's guardians are a ruling class, although, equally obviously, an idealized one (more on this below). Indeed it is striking that, even on Plato's idealized and purely spiritual terms, the society he describes is set up to benefit, not the masses of producers, but the guardians. Staying completely within Plato's frame of reference, Wild's assertion that the guardians perform "certain functions necessary to the attainment of the common good," as opposed to acting so as to reach the "attainment of special interests denied to others," can be shown to be false. For instance, as A.D. Winspear remarks,

By abolishing personal property and by breaking up the self-contained autonomous family [measures which are proposed for the guardians], Plato expected that he would attain to a unified state. And yet, if one examines his proposals it is obvious that he has not done what he promises. Only the "guards" feel this sense of unity and common purpose. The rest of the state—artisans, merchants, or peasants—does not share in the vision or in the crusade, but simply basks in the after-glow.<sup>42</sup>

This, while true, is still rather vague. A much more striking instance of the totally self-serving nature (for the ruling class) of the Platonic social set-up becomes apparent at the end of *The Republic*. Here Plato tells a myth of his own making about what happens to the soul after death. In a picture reminiscent of many religious mythologies, good souls go to a heavenly place where they enjoy "bliss and sights incredibly beautiful," while bad ones go to be punished for their sins. After a time, however, both good and bad are gathered together, they draw lots, and in the order determined by the lots, they pick a new life for themselves from all the "models of lives" spread out before them. This is what happens in the case of the first to choose:

After the proclamation, Er [the man who supposedly saw all this happen] said the drawer of the first lot went straight up and chose the greatest tyranny, but in his folly and greed he did not in choosing examine all the details properly, so he never saw that he was fated in it to devour his own children, among other horrible things; when he examined it at leisure he beat his breast and lamented the choice, ignoring the interpreter's forewarn-ing, for he laid the blame for his ills not on himself but on luck and destiny, and anything instead of himself. And he was one of those who had come down out of heaven; he had lived his former life in a well-ordered community, with some share of virtue which came by habit without philosophy.<sup>43</sup>

This might, of course, be one of the masses in Plato's ideal state. For this whole set-up exists to *make* all those in the third class be virtuous out of habit (or fear), for they are, Plato holds, incapable of really reasoning things out. Only the guardians are capable of this, and only the upper level of guardians are capable of philosophy. So in this "ideal" set-up, only the guardians (and probably only those guardians who rise above the auxiliary, soldier, sector) can save their souls—which for Plato is the supremely important object of life.

And the same is true in terms of happiness. Plato goes to great lengths to argue in Book IX of *The Republic* that the just man is the only happy man. However, remember that justice in an individual means the "right ordering" of the soul, whereby the reasoning part is in command. But only the philosopher-kings have souls like this, so only they are just—the auxiliary guardians have the spirited part of the soul predominating, and the masses (of course) have the desiring part in command (which is why they must be *restrained*). So only the top part of the ruling class (*la crème de la crème*) can be happy.

This being true, it is purely fraudulent for Plato to claim, in answer to Adeimantos at the beginning of Book IV, that

... what we had in mind when we founded the city was not how to make one class happy above the rest, but how to make the city as a whole as happy as it could be.<sup>44</sup>

Even in Plato's purely spiritual and ideal terms, the whole point of the set-up is to benefit the philosopher-kings (although Plato, like any reactionary, would claim that he has given the masses as much happiness and autonomy as they are "capable" of).

The extent of Plato's *actual* concern for the well-being of the masses is strikingly and concretely illustrated in the episode of the sick carpenter in Book III:

"A carpenter," said I, "when he is ill expects the doctor to give him a drug to drink and so to vomit out his disease, or he expects to get rid of it by downward purging or burning or cutting. But if a doctor orders a long treatment for him with bandages round his head and all that sort of thing, he says at once he has no time to be ill, and life like that is not worth having, if he is always thinking of disease and neglecting the work which lies before him. Then he says goodbye to that kind of doctor, and goes on with his usual life; he gets well doing his business and lives, or if his body is not strong enough to hold out, he dies and gets rid of his troubles."

"For such a man," [Glaucón] said, "that seems to be the proper way to use the art of medicine."

"Is the reason," I said, "because he had a work to do, and if he did not do it, life was not worth living?"

"That is clear," he said.

"But we don't say that the rich man has any such work laid out for him, from which if he is forced to abstain, life is not worth living?"

"Not so far as I know."

"Why!" said I, "do you never hear the saying of Phocylides, 'As soon as a man has got enough to live on, he should practice virtue'?"

"I think he might do it before too," he said.

"Oh well, don't let us quarrel with him about that," I said, "but let us inform ourselves about this—must the rich man practice this, and is life not worth living if he does not; or is nursing disease no hindrance to him in following the advice of Phocylides, although it is a hindrance to close attention in carpentry and other crafts?"<sup>45</sup>

Plato is here saying, in his usual convoluted style, that each person has his special work, his special place in the social division of labor. This is the theme of the whole *Republic*. But now we can learn its meaning better.

For the carpenter, his special work is his carpenter-labor. And the rich man's special work is practicing virtue. Each one, of course, is made happy by his own special work. In fact, if the carpenter is unable to work, he would just as soon die. The carpenter is made so unhappy by his inability to work that he is willing to give up his very life rather than forego his social labor. Truly must his work make him happy!

In the eyes of Plato, and in the eyes of his virtuous rich man, the carpenter would rather die than cease from toiling. But the carpenter sees things a little differently. He sees that if he does not work, he will get no bread. He sees that if he cannot toil, he will not live. Thus he sees indeed that there is a direct connection between his not working and his death. But what he fails to see is how this connection is an expression of his own perfect freedom and happiness. To see these ethereal facts, one needs the inner vision of the reactionary dreamer, Plato.

### Plato as a Reactionary

And of course it is precisely this contempt and hatred for the masses, his consciously setting himself in opposition to the mass struggles which had been transforming Athenian society, which mark Plato as a reactionary. But let us go a little deeper into the exact meaning of this.

During the years preceding and succeeding World War 2, there was a controversy among bourgeois intellectuals as to whether Plato was a "totalitarian" or not. It was largely stimulated by books written by R.H.S. Crossman (*Plato Today*) and Karl Popper (*The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Vol. I: *The Spell of Plato*). These books, in their turn, were stimulated by the rise of European fascism and World War 2.

In reply, several books and articles were written claiming that, far from being a "totalitarian," Plato had contributed essential elements to "modern democracy." A typical example is a British professor who summed up that "In fact, modern democratic ideas represent a compromise between—or perhaps a synthesis of—Greek democratic ideas and Plato's criticism of them."<sup>46</sup> Obviously this dispute takes place completely within the bounds of bourgeois ideology. The whole concept of "totalitarianism" is a bourgeois category which purports to delineate certain purely formal aspects of a state—usually with the purpose of linking communism and fascism as brother-totalitarianisms. The dispute about Plato in these terms is a battle between two poles of bourgeois political theory . . . and stupidity.

For a proletarian understanding of Plato's political philosophy, it is necessary to look at the substance of what he was proposing, at its class content, at its material basis—in other words, what class interests did it spring out of and serve to promote?

There are many off-hand remarks that Plato made which graphically reveal his class sympathies. The story of the sick carpenter, for instance, is one. Or there is his unconcealed disdain for "all this market business," and the fact that he sometimes identifies the third class in *The Republic* simply as "the moneymakers," revealing his aristocratic contempt for everything connected with commodity production.<sup>47</sup>

Or there is the fact that when Plato ranks different types of states, he puts his own fantasy on top, of course, calling it (significantly) "aristocracy," then ranking next below it "timocracy" (rule by lovers of honor), whose features are much like what the aristocracy conceived their own rule to be. Below this was "oligarchy," or rule by the rich, followed by "democracy," which Plato identifies with rule by the poor; and finally there is "tyranny," which in Plato's description of it seems to be an extreme form of democracy.<sup>48</sup> Plato not only ranks these, but discusses how one supposedly degenerates into another. And his discussion of the timocratic state in this respect is interesting, for here the ruling class looks back with longing to the aristocratic state, but harbors a secret lust for gain, and the oligarchic state comes about when this lust comes out into the open.<sup>49</sup> Timocracy, in other words, is less something in itself than it is a transition between aristocracy and oligarchy. It is not the love of honor which contains timocracy's seeds of destruction, but the lure of money-making, i.e., of the explicit pursuit of riches which assumes predominance in "oligarchy." Plato is clearly making a division between aristocracy and timocracy, on the one hand, and oligarchy, democracy and tyranny, on the other.

However, in order to analyze the ideological content of Plato's work, it is not sufficient just to cite instances like these, where

Plato reveals his attitudes toward the contemporary social situation. Nor is it sufficient to argue in the way that A.D. Winspear does. In his book on *The Genesis of Plato's Thought*, Winspear attempts to analyze Plato's political thinking in terms of the social and historical forces, to some of which Plato was responding antagonistically, and to others of which he was giving expression—and it is virtually the only book, of the thousands written on Plato, which makes this attempt. But unfortunately Winspear, although influenced by Marxism, is no dialectical materialist, and he is thus unable to adequately complete this task.

Winspear argues that Plato's set-up in *The Republic* is very close to that advocated by the Pythagoreans. But the Pythagoreans, he claims, were partisans of the land-owning aristocracy, in opposition to the progressive democratic forces in Greek society. Therefore the actual putting into practice of Plato's system would have involved favoring or putting into power this same social class. Thus he says, for instance: "It is impossible to avoid the well-grounded suspicion that the Platonic 'guards' . . . in practice (if such a scheme could have been put into practice) would have been, and could have been, recruited only from the aristocratic class." Then he describes Plato as an "idealistic, authoritarian reactionary," and says, "The question then remains: what relative weight shall we attach to the idealistic aspects and the more realistic and authoritarian aspects of Plato's thinking?" He concludes that:

It is very difficult to avoid the conclusion that if the Platonic *kallipolis* [cloud-city] had ever come down from the clouds and found earthly realization, it, too, would in practice have been forced to neglect the idealizing aspects of Plato's thinking; it would have necessarily favored the landed aristocracy and equally have incurred the suspicion of the mercantile democrats.<sup>50</sup>

Now everything that Winspear says here is true (although there is some question as to whether the early Pythagoreans were partisans of the aristocracy).<sup>51</sup> But it's all wrong in terms of understanding the meaning of Plato's political philosophy. Winspear's line of thought is the familiar one: "It's fine in theory, but in practice it would work out differently." But all theory is linked with practice, and in Plato's case, his idealistic theory is an integral part of an overall reactionary political practice. The idealistic aspect to which Winspear points is typical in such reactionary ideology.

For in what does this idealistic aspect consist? It consists in things like the philosophers' rule of the city by moral force, in the *unity* and freedom from class conflict which Plato emphasizes

again and again,<sup>52</sup> in the ideal *restraint* of the rulers (who never want more than their bare wage and the opportunity to pursue their serene contemplation), and of the masses (who want no more than their apportioned lot), etc. But this is essential to the ideological function of works like Plato's. For this function is to find, traced in the sands of eternity, the *basic* structure of the society that is being upheld—but *minus the contradictions which are the essence of that society in the real world and which, moreover, are driving history forward and leading to the dissolution of that society*. Such ideologists are like those of whom Marx said that they "... want to retain the categories which express bourgeois relations, without the antagonism which constitutes them and is inseparable from them."<sup>53</sup>

And because this is its function, such a scheme is, of course, impossible. To quote Marx again from the same work: "... it is totally impossible to reconstitute society on the basis of what is merely an embellished shadow of it."<sup>54</sup>

But the impossibility of Plato's project extends even further. He wanted to impose an idealized aristocracy as the ruling class of society. But he wanted to keep intact all of the economic development which had taken place in Athens over the previous several centuries. Thus, when he sets up his city in Book II, he makes sure to include within it every sort of occupation that was to be found in the Athens of his day. Further, although slaves are not prominently mentioned, Vlastos has shown that slavery is an integral part of the society projected in *The Republic*.<sup>55</sup> In short, despite his disdain for trade, commerce, money, and commodity production in general, Plato did not propose to do away with them, even in the ideality of his dreams; nor did he see doing away with any of the forces or relations of production which he found in contemporary Athens. He merely threw all this into the third class—in other words he "merely" wanted to impose *upon the Athens of his day* the political supremacy of a purified aristocracy.

But what was the Athens of his day—what were its forces and relations of production? The old aristocracy had been based upon the exploitation of those who worked the land—peasants, with an intermixture of slaves. The merchants and traders, of course, arose on the basis of *merchant's capital*, accumulated out of the surplus produced by all of the direct producers whose goods they bought and sold. But all of these producers were not of one sort. They encompassed slaves, peasants, and artisans who owned their own means of production. Merchant's capital, because it initially arises out of the development of exchange rather than production, is not necessarily correlated with one particular mode of production (in contrast to industrial capital). As Marx says, "Merchant's capital is originally merely the intervening movement between extremes which it does not control, and between premises which it does not

create."<sup>56</sup>

On the other hand, the formation of merchant's capital will go on to react back upon the production and social relations of the societies which it touches, as Marx goes on to point out:

Of course, commerce will have more or less of a counter-effect on the communities between which it is carried on. It will subordinate production more and more to exchange-value by making luxuries and subsistence more dependent on sale than on the immediate use of products. Thereby it dissolves the old relationships. It multiplies money circulation. It encompasses no longer merely the surplus of production, but bites deeper and deeper into the latter, and makes entire branches of production dependent upon it. Nevertheless this disintegrating effect depends very much on the nature of the producing community.<sup>57</sup>

This is exactly the sort of process that had been going on in Greece, particularly in Athens, and the effect of it had been, above all, to stimulate the growth and development of slavery as the mode of production.<sup>58</sup> It is not until around the end of the fifth century that slavery predominates in production; during the sixth and fifth centuries the relations of production are undergoing a change, coming more and more to be characterized by the process of slavery coming, in Marx's phrase, to "seize on production in earnest" (so that the democratic revolution which took place was necessarily one which instituted a slave-owners' democracy).

This was a process in which both the aristocrats and their opposite numbers, those whom Engels called "the new class of rich industrialists and merchants" (see above, p. 146), participated. Merchants were closely linked with "industrialists"—i.e., those who employed labor, mostly slave, in workshops producing commodities. Aristocrats began introducing slave-labor into agriculture (although the extent to which this occurred is unclear), but even more, they began investing in commercial ventures and buying slaves and renting them out. Of course some aristocrats fell by the wayside. On the whole, however, they adjusted to the new conditions, and once Greece had become quite fully a slave-based society, they were to be found in the ranks of the biggest slave-holders.

But although they adjusted, they of course had to move over to allow the *nouveaux riches* to ascend into the ranks of the ruling class, and they also resented the loss of their special political and general social privileges. But what they most feared and opposed was the mobilization and action of the masses (of non-slaves), for in this they saw the potential for a real loss of their ruling position.

And this was what they most had against the merchants and industrialists—for these latter would to a certain extent champion the struggles of the masses and mobilize them for their own ends, to batter down the door of aristocratic privilege.

Now in all this Plato can be seen—and is only understandable—as an ideologist of his class. It is only from an understanding of the dynamics of the class struggle and the development of the relations of production of the Greece of Plato's time that it can be understandable why Plato would come up with this apparently idle dream of reinstating the vanished aristocratic political supremacy on the contemporary relations of production. It was an idle dream in the sense of being impossible of realization; but it was not idle in the sense of not having the energy and aspirations of a social base behind it.

And at the same time as a dialectical materialist understanding of Plato's thought makes his cloudy meanderings intelligible, it also melts away the last bit of the "grandeur" which the bourgeoisie and its ideologues like to attribute to it. Plato stands nakedly revealed as the puny and contemptible figure that he really was—for his is the futile and petty fantasy of one who would retard history, not even to one epoch or mode of production, but to one tiny fleeting moment which happens to suit him because he and his cohorts are on top. His basic point of view is fear of the forward movement of history, hatred of the masses, and opposition to whatever was progressive at the time. No wonder he has been the favorite of reactionaries through the ages, for his is nothing but the basic stand of all reaction.



## Footnotes

1. For a particularly grotesque example of this bourgeois standpoint, see Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, Vol. I (N.Y., 1965), "Introduction." This "distinguished" classical scholar holds that "our" kinship with the Greeks is not only spiritual, but racial as well, in contrast to "... the Oriental nations, who are both racially and intellectually different from us..." (p. xv). But the idealist sort of view expressed in the text is by no means limited to such as Jaeger, but is a commonplace among classicists (i.e. those who study the "classical" civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome) as well as among run-of-the-mill bourgeois ideologists.
2. "Feudal bureaucracy": H.E.L. Mellersh, *Minoan Crete* (N.Y., 1967), p. 80; "thalassocracy": Sterling Dow, "The Greeks in the Bronze Age," *Rapports du XIe Congres International des Sciences Historiques* (Stockholm, 1960), pp. 8-13; "palace organization": J.B. Bury and Russell Meiggs, *A History of Greece* (London, 1975—4th ed.), p. 9; "commercial, theocratic state": George Thomson, *Aeschylus and Athens* (London, 1973—4th ed.), p. 55. Thomson amplifies his views in his later two-volume *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, referred to below.
3. Richard Mansfield Haywood draws attention to these physical differences: *Ancient Greece and the Near East* (N.Y., 1964), p. 165.
4. Chester G. Starr, *The Origins of Greek Civilization: 1100-650 B.C.* (N.Y., 1961), p. 48. The same opinion is held by Denys Page, *History and the Homeric Iliad* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1966), Ch. V.
5. Thomson, *Aeschylus and Athens*, pp. 57-62. The same sort of picture is drawn by, among others, Thomas W. Africa, *The Ancient World* (Boston, 1969), pp. 75ff, and Finley Hooper, "Minoan and Mycenaean Civilization," *Ancient Civilization: 4000 B.C.-400 A.D.*, ed. Norman F. Cantor and Michael S. Werthman (N.Y., 1972—2nd ed.), pp. 52ff.
6. William I. Davisson and James E. Harper, *European Economic History*, Vol. I: *The Ancient World* (N.Y., 1972), p. 75.
7. *Aeschylus and Athens*, pp. 65-66.
8. See Gustave Glotz, *Ancient Greece at Work: An Economic History of Greece* (N.Y., 1967—orig. pub. Paris, 1920), Pt. II, Ch. III, for a fairly good brief account of "The Economic and Social Life of Sparta."
9. That this is the sort of social organization and system of land tenure that prevailed in Greece at this time is argued by George Thomson, *Studies in Ancient Greek Society*, Vol. I: *The Prehistoric Aegean*, Ch. VIII, "The Land," and in the appendix, "On Greek Land Tenure." This thesis is admitted on a fairly wide scale now: see for instance Bury and Meiggs, *A History of Greece*, pp. 24, 80; Starr, *The Origins of Greek Civilization*, pp. 130-32; Davisson and Harper, *The Ancient World*, p. 98.

10. Thomson, *The Prehistoric Aegean*, p. 355.
11. George Thomson, "The Revolution Continues," *China Policy Study Group Broadsheet*, Vol. 15, No. 10 (October 1978), p. 3. The line of strongly supporting and attempting to give a Marxist cover to the current revisionist rulers of China is actively pursued by the China Policy Study Group and its *Broadsheet*, of which Thomson is a co-editor.
12. This is discussed by Thomson in various places in *Aeschylus and Athens* and *The Prehistoric Aegean*—see indices.
13. Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (N.Y., 1970), pp. 169-70.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 172.
15. Thomson, *The Prehistoric Aegean*, p. 357.
16. Bury and Meiggs, *A History of Greece*, p. 104.
17. See for instance Bury and Meiggs, *ibid.*, p. 112; W.G. Forrest, *The Emergence of Greek Democracy, 800-400 BC* (N.Y., 1966), pp. 104-5, 116, 121; Victor Ehrenberg, *From Solon to Socrates* (London, 1968), p. 83.
18. V.I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution* (Peking, 1965), p. 97.
19. See, for example, W.J. Woodhouse, *Solon the Liberator* (London, 1938); A. French, "The Economic Background to Solon's Reforms," *Classical Quarterly*, (N.S.) Vol. 6 (1956), pp. 11-25; J.V.A. Fine, *Horoï, Hesperia* Supplement 9 (1951).
20. Thomson, *The Prehistoric Aegean*, p. 319.
21. T.J. Cadoux, "Cleisthenes," *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. N.G.L. Hammond and H.H. Scullard (Oxford, 1970—2nd ed.), p. 249.
22. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, pp. 178 and 180-81.
23. A.E. Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work* (Cleveland, 1956), p. 2.
24. This can be gathered from Aristophanes' play, *The Clouds*, Plato's dialogue *Phaedo*, and some of Xenophon's Socratic writings.
25. A.D. Winspear and Tom Silverberg, *Who Was Socrates?* (n.p., 1939), pp. 57-58. It is probably superfluous to note that this book is hardly representative of bourgeois scholarship on the Socratic question.
26. Winspear and Silverberg, *ibid.*, examine more in detail the specifics of just what Socrates was actually accused of, and what the accusations were probably references to. A recent article by I.F. Stone ("I.F. Stone Breaks the Socrates Story," *The New York Times Magazine*, April 8, 1979) brings out many of the same points regarding the political nature of the trial, although (as might be expected) he totally liquidates class struggle and poses the trial in (timeless) terms of democracy vs. tyranny.

27. Plato, Letter VII, 324C and D. Plato's works are conventionally cited according to the standard reference system of Stephanus numbers (i.e. with reference to pages and parts of pages in Stephanus' edition of the Greek text). I will make reference to both the Stephanus numbers and to an English translation—in this case: Glenn R. Morrow, *Plato's Epistles* (Indianapolis, 1952), pp. 215 and 216.
28. Letter VII, 325D-326B; *ibid.*, p. 217.
29. Plato, *Republic* 374D-E; see *Great Dialogues of Plato*, tr. W.H.D. Rouse, ed. Eric H. Warmington and Philip G. Rouse (N.Y., 1956), p. 171. (This English translation is both accurate and readable, and available in a low-priced paperback.) This is Socrates speaking, but in this dialogue he is certainly little but a dramatic device serving as Plato's mouthpiece.
30. *Rep.* 451C; Rouse, p. 249.
31. *Rep.* 414A-415A; Rouse, pp. 214-15.
32. *Rep.* 485C and D, 490B; Rouse, pp. 282, 283, 288.
33. *Phaedo* 74A; Rouse, p. 477.
34. *Ibid.*, 100B-C; Rouse, pp. 503, 504.
35. *Rep.* 596A; Rouse, p. 394.
36. G.M.A. Grube, *Plato's Thought* (London, 1935), pp. 22-23.
37. *Rep.* 433B; Rouse, p. 232.
38. *Rep.* 439D; Rouse, p. 239.
39. John Wild, *Plato's Modern Enemies and the Theory of Natural Law* (Chicago, 1953); excerpted in T.L. Thorsen, ed., *Plato: Totalitarian or Democrat?* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1963); quotation from p. 115 of Thorsen.
40. F.M. Cornford, "The Marxist View of Ancient Philosophy," *The Unwritten Philosophy and Other Essays*, ed. W.K.C. Guthrie (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 130-31.
41. Norman F. Cantor, "The Crisis of Western Monasticism, 1050-1130," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 65, No. 1 (October 1960), p. 48.
42. A.D. Winspear, *The Genesis of Plato's Thought* (N.Y., 1956), p. 247.
43. *Rep.* 619B-C; Rouse, p. 420.
44. *Rep.* 420B; Rouse, p. 218. See also 465D-466A (Rouse, pp. 264-65) and 519E (Rouse, p. 318).
45. *Rep.* 406D-407D; Rouse, p. 206.
46. G.C. Field, "On Misunderstanding Plato," *Philosophy* Vol. 19 (1944), pp. 49-62; reprinted in Renford Bambrough, ed., *Plato, Popper and Politics: Some Contributions to a Modern Controversy*

- (Cambridge, 1967), p. 52. John Wild's book, cited above, was also a reply to these attacks on Plato
47. *Rep.* 425C10 (Rouse, p. 223) and 441A1 (Rouse, p. 241).
  48. *Rep.* 544C-569C; Rouse, pp. 342-369.
  49. *Rep.* 548A (Rouse, p. 346) and 550D (Rouse, p. 348).
  50. *The Genesis of Plato's Thought, op. cit.*, pp. 228, 229; also see pp. 204-5.
  51. See Thomson, *The First Philosophers*, pp. 249-54.
  52. Expressed most graphically at *Rep.* 422C-423A and 462A-B (Rouse, pp. 220 and 260).
  53. Karl Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy* (N.Y., 1963), p. 125.
  54. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
  55. Gregory Vlastos, "Does Slavery Exist in Plato's *Republic*?", *Classical Philology* Vol. 63 (1968), pp. 291-298; reprinted in his *Platonic Studies* (Princeton, 1973), pp. 140-146. Vlastos also showed, in an earlier article, various ways in which (although he would not express it in this way) the production relations of slave society shape both Plato's political and his general philosophical thought, pointing out for instance that "... Plato uses one and the same principle to interpret (and justify) political authority and the master's right to govern the slave, political obligation and the slave's duty to obey his master. His conception of all government (*arche, archein*) is of a piece with his conception of the government of slaves." ("Slavery in Plato's *Thought*," *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 50 (1941), p. 293.
  56. Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III (N.Y., 1967), p. 330.
  57. *Ibid.*
  58. Marx also notes this fact, and cites it as proof that merchant's capital cannot serve as the basis of production:

In the ancient world the effect of commerce and the development of merchant's capital always resulted in a slave economy; [or,] depending on the point of departure, [it may result] only in the transformation of a patriarchal slave system devoted to the production of immediate means of subsistence into one devoted to the production of surplus-value. However, in the modern world, it results in the capitalist mode of production. It follows therefrom that these results spring in themselves from circumstances other than the development of merchant's capital. (*Ibid.*, p. 332.)

# China, the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Professor Bettelheim

(or How *Not* to Criticize Revisionism)

by C.R.

That China is no longer on the socialist road is a fact now widely recognized by people of quite varied political views. Even among those who applaud the changes which have taken place since the death of Mao Tsetung, the assertion is widespread that these represent a departure from Mao's revolutionary line and that what is going on is anything but socialist revolution.

True, the Chinese revisionists have their followers. There are the motley array of social-chauvinist "parties" from Norway to Australia (in the U.S. Mike Klonsky & Co. of the Communist Party Marxist-Leninist are the main, if pitiful representatives of this trend) who warmly welcome the stinking revisionism coming out of China since it matches so perfectly their own Browderite cowardice. And there are some phony "friends of China," people like heads of the U.S.-China People's Friendship Association or the leaders of the China Policy Study Group in Britain, who for years have been "fellow travellers" of China's revolution but now find it more comfortable to travel with its counter-revolution. They see in the Chinese leaders' "opening to the West" (which, as applied by Teng, Hua, *et al.*, can only mean grovelling before U.S. imperialism and its war bloc), a new and unforeseen opportunity to at last cash in on the (blind) "faith" they have long held so stoically—"faith" that whatever went on in China would be good and that eventually things would take a turn in China that would really be good... for business.

But this kind of disgusting sycophancy is definitely overshadowed by a more significant and encouraging trend—a trend of resistance to the treachery of Teng Hsiao-ping, Hua Kuo-feng and company. Although the triumph of revisionism in China has created some confusion and a great deal of turmoil among Marxist-Leninist and other revolutionary forces internationally, which has been multiplied by the disgusting desertion of Enver Hoxha and the leadership of the Albanian Party of Labor from the ranks of revolution and their hackneyed attacks on Mao Tsetung (see the article in this issue of *The Communist* in reply to this), nevertheless there is a growing trend among Marxist-Leninist parties and groups, as well as revolutionary-minded individuals, to firmly

oppose the Chinese revisionists, while at the same time firmly upholding the great revolutionary role and contributions of Mao Tsetung. And among these forces there is a growing recognition of the importance of correctly and deeply summing up the causes and lessons of the bitter setback in China, in order to wage the revolutionary struggle more consciously and resolutely.

In addition, among those who were part of that broader group that was generally friendly to and supportive of socialist China, there is significant opposition to and denunciation of the revisionist reversal in China. Among these forces, too, there are attempts to analyze the basis for this reversal—and some of these analyses have, at the least, touched on some important questions and therefore generated significant interest and controversy. One such powerful voice has been that of Professor Charles Bettelheim, former Chairman of the France-China Friendship Association, and a prominent student of socialist society since 1936 when he first went to work in the Soviet Union. He has been Director of Studies at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in Paris since 1948 and is also Director of the Centre d'Etudes de Planification Socialiste where he edits the journal *Problemes de Planification (Problems of Planning)*. Professor Bettelheim has served as an economic and technical advisor in many former colonial countries, including India, Cuba, Algeria, Cambodia and Guinea.

Since the late 1960s, mainly under the influence of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China, Bettelheim has been engaged in an ambitious project of reinterpreting the political economy of socialist society on the basis of his own summation of experience in both the Soviet Union and China. This effort has so far resulted in the publication of several theoretical books as well as the first two volumes of a history of Soviet society, *Class Struggles in the USSR*, which to date has reached the year 1930. Bettelheim has also published several books and articles about China, including his *Cultural Revolution and Industrial Organization in China*, which did much to reveal the transformations in the relations of production which the Cultural Revolution achieved. Most of Bettelheim's recent work has been translated into English, and he has gained a very broad international readership.

It is not surprising, then, that Bettelheim's May 11, 1977 letter of resignation from the France-China Friendship Association attracted considerable attention. The influential French newspaper *Le Monde* saw fit to publish extracts from this letter which said, among other things, that "The way in which the 'criticism' of the Four has been and is being conducted has nothing in common with Chairman Mao's teachings," and that "an examination of texts published in China during the last few months, as well as what it is possible to establish as to actual practice, has led me to believe that a revisionist line is presently triumphing." From this Bet-

telheim concluded in his letter that "to give approval to the political line presently dominant in China, or even to maintain an attitude that might appear to be approval, is of service neither to the Chinese people nor to all those who are struggling for socialism in China."<sup>1</sup>

Publication of this letter encouraged many who had questions about the new leadership in Peking to further investigate the matter and not be cowed by the campaign of slander and demagoguery overflowing from the pages of Chinese publications. That Bettelheim had struck a raw nerve was further revealed when, a few months later, one Neil Burton, a Canadian living in Peking, wrote him an open letter defending the new regime.\* Burton sent his letter to the editors of the U.S. journal *Monthly Review* and invited them to print the two letters with an appropriate rejoinder by Bettelheim. Bettelheim and *MR* took up the challenge and the July-August 1978 issue of the magazine was devoted exclusively to this exchange. It included a fuller (94-page) critique of the Chinese revisionists by Bettelheim, entitled "The Great Leap Backward." This issue has since been reprinted as a book entitled *China Since Mao*, which has become something of a best-seller and a hot item of debate and discussion among fairly broad circles of radical and revolutionary-minded people.

There is much that is positive about what Bettelheim has written. For one thing, the simple fact that, as a prominent friend of China, he has spoken out forcefully against the revisionist coup and the line and policies of capitalist restoration currently being implemented is in itself a good development. And many of the specific points he raises in criticism are on target. He has pointed to the hollowness and hypocrisy of the charges made against the so-called "gang of four" by the current rulers and in this context

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\*Burton's letter is typical of so much of the pathetic apologist literature published by sycophants of the Hua-Teng gang. Like other apologists for Chinese revisionism, Burton's theses of a year ago are outdated already and merit little comment. For instance, he assures his readers that Tachai and Taching are still being upheld. But the Chinese press has been conspicuously silent about these two models for some time now—with recent articles saying that Tachai is no longer a model—and the new bourgeois wall posters uphold other models: Japan, Taiwan and Disneyland. Indeed, it has been reported that a popular joke in China goes like this: "In agriculture, learn from Tachai, in industry learn from Taching, but the whole country is modeled on America." And as for Burton's contention with respect to the Cultural Revolution that "some of its products will indeed be dropped, others modified," but its most important gains are "in our blood,"<sup>2</sup> we can only note that what has been dropped is *everything* positive, including especially the very notion that the Cultural Revolution was worth having in the first place, and that what has been modified (really reversed) are only the correct verdicts rendered by that revolution. Oh well, Mr. Burton, too bad. But then again you too have probably deepened your grasp of the revisionist line since writing this response to Bettelheim and no doubt have already been drained of your "bad blood."

has exposed how these revisionists have even falsified the writings of Mao where it has not been adequate to quote them out of context and selectively. He has exposed the glaring falsehood of the lie—widely repeated in the bourgeois press everywhere—that China was on the verge of economic collapse as a result of the Cultural Revolution and “interference” by the Four.

He has pointed out how the restoration of “rational” rules and regulations, the struggle against “egalitarianism” in wages, and the bourgeois glorification of supposedly “neutral” science and technology are all part and parcel of an orientation in which “*profit is now to be the central preoccupation.*”<sup>3</sup> He has correctly paid considerable attention to the new policies being implemented in agriculture and has shown how these mark a retreat from the policies of Mao. He has criticized the destruction of the educational reforms instituted in the Cultural Revolution as a “counter-revolution in education,” explaining that the reinstatement of exams as the determining standard for admission to “higher education” and of special schools for the “gifted,” among other changes, will only reinforce “the privileges possessed by those who have money, and, above all, by the sons and daughters of cadres . . .”<sup>4</sup> He has criticized the revisionist abandonment of Mao’s policy of self-reliance in foreign trade and has correctly pointed out that the new leaders cannot achieve their stated goal of modernization independent of the big imperialist powers.

All these are correct and necessary criticisms. However, this is not all there is to Bettelheim’s treatment of the question. There is also much that is disturbing and which itself merits serious criticism in both his resignation letter and, more importantly, in “The Great Leap Backward.” Most immediately noticeable is his striking failure to fully uphold the revolutionary role played by Mao’s closest followers, the Four, and his apparent acceptance of a number of the phony charges made against them.\* In his letter of resignation Bettelheim even chided the current leadership for carrying out “*the necessary criticism of the Four . . . from a revisionist standpoint and not from a revolutionary one,*”<sup>5</sup> although in his later and more lengthy response to Burton (“Leap Backward”) he basically upholds three of the Four while remaining ambiguous at best concerning Chiang Ching. Linked to this is Bettelheim’s tendency, especially noticeable in the final sections of “The Great Leap Backward,” to place a major—if not *the* major—share of the blame for the revisionist takeover on weaknesses in the revolutionary line and on errors made by the revolutionary forces. As he puts it: “If the line suffered defeat, this was because, in a certain way, *it had failed.*”<sup>6</sup>

\*For instance, Bettelheim repeats the baseless slander that Chiang Ching, Mao’s wife and close comrade for forty years, did not enjoy the Chairman’s confidence.

In both his essays Bettelheim also remains conspicuously silent with respect to a very key question in the struggle which raged in China before Mao’s death, the question of culture. In fact, he has next to nothing to say about the serious reversals in this important sphere. This is not at all unconnected with his criticisms of the “authoritarian methods” employed by the Chinese revolutionaries, particularly in dealing with intellectuals, and his calls for expanding free debate and “democracy” under socialism which, as shall be seen, disguise the real political questions involved and conciliate not only to the demagogic “freedom” exalted by Teng Hsiao-ping, but also to hackneyed bourgeois slanders against proletarian rule which have been picked up by every revisionist and every petty-bourgeois “leftist” from Kautsky and Trotsky to Khrushchev, the Russian “dissidents” and their counterparts who scribble and whine on China’s “wall of (bourgeois) democracy.”

These weaknesses are far from minor; nor are they in any way fortuitous. Indeed, while Bettelheim can be said to programmatically stand with those who oppose revisionism, and while Marxist-Leninists should welcome his positive contributions, it must be bluntly stated and emphasized that his stand, viewpoint and method, not only in these articles on China but in all his writings, are not at all those of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought. His work is seriously marred by important ideological and political weaknesses which, if not sharply criticized and thoroughly repudiated, could easily lead to the very same bourgeois destination as the revisionist line he seeks to expose. Moreover, the line that Bettelheim puts forward in opposition to the revisionism of Hua and Teng is a line which not only differs from but is in many respects actually opposed to the revolutionary line of Mao Tsetung.

In a famous and often quoted passage, Lenin once declared:

It is often said and written that the main point in Marx’s teachings is the class struggle; but this is not true. And from this untruth very often springs the opportunist distortion of Marxism . . . Those who recognize *only* the class struggle are not yet Marxists; they may be found to be still within the boundaries of bourgeois thinking and bourgeois politics . . . Only he is a Marxist who *extends* the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the *dictatorship of the proletariat*. This is what constitutes the most profound difference between the Marxist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeois.<sup>7</sup>

Today this must be updated, on the basis of further experience and its summation by Mao Tsetung, to say that to be a genuine

and thoroughgoing Marxist-Leninist means to extend the recognition of the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat to the recognition of the continuing existence of classes, class struggle and the danger of capitalist restoration all throughout the long socialist transition period and the necessity therefore of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat as the means for resolving these contradictions and advancing to communism. As summed up in the article in the December 1978 issue of *Revolution* in the series on *Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions* (now reprinted as a book), "... it is the essential point of Mao's development of Marxist-Leninist theory on the state and the dictatorship of the proletariat in particular that exercising this dictatorship and carrying through the transition to communism can mean nothing less than *continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat.*"<sup>18</sup>

This basic line and theory, which constitutes the greatest of Mao Tsetung's contributions to Marxism-Leninism and the proletarian revolution, is, of course, opposed and attacked in various ways by (open) bourgeois as well as (Soviet and other) revisionist spokesmen. But, especially among those who claim to uphold Marxism-Leninism and stand against revisionism—that of the Soviets and of the Chinese, as well as other varieties—this most important line of Mao's can be, and is, opposed from basically two directions, two positions which are ultimately and in essence united in their actual opposition to the dictatorship of the proletariat. One of these would, in effect, accept the vague notion of continuing the revolution—or at least of the continuing existence of classes and class struggle—while divorcing this from the concrete question of state power, of exercising the dictatorship of the proletariat. The other does the opposite: uphold in words, and even quite emphatically, the concept of the "dictatorship of the proletariat," but deny the continued existence of classes, at least antagonistic classes, under socialism (after ownership is basically socialized) and therefore deny the basis—and need—for the continuing revolution under the proletarian dictatorship. This latter position has been taken by Enver Hoxha and the Albanian Party of Labor. The former is in essence the position of Professor Bettelheim.

Charles Bettelheim is precisely a person who recognizes the class struggle under socialism but does not grasp the need to continue the revolution *under the dictatorship of the proletariat* and how to do so. Because of this his line essentially liquidates this dictatorship, using Mao's revolutionary contributions as a "left" cover for an essentially social-democratic and idealist appeal to petty-bourgeois prejudices about "participatory democracy." It is this appeal which characterizes Bettelheim's errors. It is what links his marked tendency to downgrade struggle in the superstructure, his "forgetting" the cultural sphere, and, most important, his "criti-

que" of the revolutionary line of Mao and the Four. Because Bettelheim does not really take up Mao's revolutionary line, he falls victim, in many ways, to a Trotsky-like petty-bourgeois outlook. His response to the problem of how to struggle against the bourgeoisie under socialism is not to strengthen the proletarian dictatorship by continuing the revolution to deepen the transformation of both the base and the superstructure and as a decisive part of this to repeatedly seize back the portions of power the bourgeoisie has usurped. Instead he raises the by-now hackneyed cry of petty-bourgeois liberalism masquerading as communism—he demands an extension of "socialist democracy" and an end to "coercion" by the proletarian state.

The purpose of this article is to more thoroughly expose and criticize this serious social-democratic and idealist tendency in Bettelheim's work and to reveal the ways in which this incorrect and fundamentally rightist line (no matter how "left" its form may be at times) runs through both his critique of the Chinese revisionists and his other writings as well. Clearly, this is done in the context of also recognizing the positive aspects of Bettelheim's work. But at the same time that Bettelheim is not an enemy, he is also most definitely not a thoroughgoing Marxist. And it is essential to criticize his line precisely because it has had influence in the revolutionary ranks.

Among those who are disgusted by the bourgeois filth oozing out of China, there are many who have taken a somewhat despairing "everybody was wrong" view of how this situation developed. Most people in the category raise their criticisms and questions honestly and if given the choice would not hesitate to side with Mao and the Four against Teng and Hua—and Chou En-lai, though his role remains more hazy to many. Nonetheless they are justly concerned that real errors be summed up so that something positive can come from this bitter setback. And since Bettelheim seems to offer a sober reassessment and criticism from within the ranks of the revolution, people are drawn to his interpretation. But while people can learn some things from Bettelheim, the essence of what they get, and what many, particularly among the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, are spontaneously drawn to, is really a "left" mirror of revisionism. The most thorough and scientific investigation and summation of what has happened in China is, as the Revolutionary Communist Party has declared on numerous occasions, an extremely important task facing the international communist movement—and this is a job that is far from complete. But such investigation and summation will only advance the cause of revolution if it is carried out on the basis of *Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought.*

## Part I. On Bettelheim's "Great Leap Backward"

Bettelheim first notes, by means of examples in area after area, how the lines being officially put forward in China today, and the practices being implemented, add up to the implementation of a revisionist line and to the liquidation of the gains of the Cultural Revolution in both theory and practice. He correctly notes that:

... Hua Kuo-feng's accession to power resulted from a *coup d'etat*. This *coup d'etat* began a political turn leading to the substitution of a revisionist and bourgeois line for the previous revolutionary and proletarian line.<sup>9</sup>

He then goes on to analyze why this happened, his starting point being that the revolutionary line had failed and that he is out to analyze the cause of its failure. And the causes of this failure, it turns out on his analysis, lie primarily in errors of the upholders of the revolutionary line (in other words, of the "gang of four"). Their errors, according to Bettelheim, were that they did not deal correctly with intellectuals, that they conducted struggle in a sectarian way, that they were dogmatic and did not have a correct theoretical understanding of Chinese society, and that the Chinese Communist Party did not have a correct relationship to the masses and to mass organizations.<sup>10</sup>

Bettelheim particularly relates these back to the question of *democracy*. He sums up at one point that "... the predominance of antidemocratic practices [which he claims existed in revolutionary China] contradicts the requirements for the revolution's advance."<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, a kind of "anti-authoritarian" and "democratic" spirit seems to run through the pages of "The Great Leap Backward." But anti-authoritarianism and democracy are not the essence of proletarian revolution. As Marxists have always stressed, "democracy" is a category belonging to class society and can only exist for one class or another.<sup>12</sup> Under socialism there can and must be full democracy for and the increasingly broad participation of the masses of laboring people in all aspects of political, economic and social life. But the purpose of this is to exercise dictatorship—and *authoritarian* dictatorship at that—over the old exploiters and any new exploiters who arise from within socialist society and the ranks of the revolution itself. In his argument with the anarchists, Engels stressed that there is nothing more authoritarian than a revolution. "Have these gentlemen ever seen a revolution?" he asked.

A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing

there is; it is the act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon—authoritarian means, if such there be at all; and if the victorious party does not want to have fought in vain, it must maintain this rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries. Would the Paris Commune have lasted a single day if it had not made use of this authority of the armed people against the bourgeois? Should we not, on the contrary, reproach it for not having used it freely enough?<sup>13</sup>

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was just such a revolution as Engels described, even though it took place under the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the Cultural Revolution the masses rose up and through mass action—which, although (in the main) not violent, was most certainly and most necessarily *coercive*—seized back those portions of power that the bourgeoisie, concentrated in the Communist Party itself under the leadership of Liu Shao-chi, Lin Piao and Teng Hsiao-ping, Hua Kuo-feng and others, had usurped. In doing so the masses took to the streets; they intimidated—even kidnapped—people; they broke into the homes of known Rightists without warning in search of evidence against them; they forced those in authority to wear the dunce cap and parade through the streets before angry, even violent crowds. And, yes, dead bodies really did float down the Pearl River to Hong Kong during this period, although because the working class did hold state power the policy of the Communist Party correctly encouraged the method of reasoned persuasion and mass debate.

But debate and democracy, crucial as they were in mobilizing *the masses themselves* to seize power and on this basis deepen the revolutionary transformation of all of society, were not the essence of the Cultural Revolution, as Bettelheim essentially contends. Toward the beginning of his essay, in pointing out the significance of the Cultural Revolution, Bettelheim states with specific reference to the famous "Sixteen Point Decision" of August 8, 1966 by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China,

that one of the fundamental aims it proclaimed was to promote the development of a political line that would enable the masses to express themselves freely, without being subjected to constraint when expressing minority views, "even if the minority is wrong" (point 6 of the "Sixteen Point Decision"). The activity of the masses was to be allowed to assume many different organizational forms and to lead to the formation of organs of power in the factories, mines, and enterprises, in the various quarters of the cities and in the villages, in the

state organizations, and in educational establishments. All this activity was to culminate in a "system of general elections like that of the Paris Commune." The elected members were to be continuously criticized by those who had elected them, and could be replaced or recalled by the masses (point 9). This aim was not seen as being merely provisional in character, for its "great historic importance" was emphasized.<sup>14</sup>

This was, of course, an important aspect of the Cultural Revolution. But to place this question of "free expression" and popular election to grass roots organs of power first and foremost without even mentioning the political target of the movement and the role of mass participation in advancing the revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie, as Bettelheim does, is to miss the very point of the Cultural Revolution. The principal task of the Cultural Revolution was, as Mao himself put it, to "struggle against the capitalist-roaders in the Party" and its object was "to solve the problem of world outlook and eradicate revisionism."<sup>15</sup>

Arousing the masses to express themselves and participate politically was essential to achieving these goals, but this was not and could not be the goal itself. The new organs of power created by the masses were important, but not in the almost pluralistic and bourgeois-democratic way Bettelheim describes. For a Marxist a proletarian democratic organ of power is not simply one in which the workers "have their say" and are free to be correct or incorrect. Real organs of proletarian political power are forms in which the masses can be aroused and mobilized *under communist leadership* to overthrow and suppress the bourgeoisie and in this context raise their own political consciousness so as to continually deepen the revolutionary transformation of society. This was recognized in the "Sixteen Point Decision" which noted that:

These cultural revolutionary groups, committees and congresses are excellent new forms of organization whereby the masses educate themselves under the leadership of the Communist Party. They are an excellent bridge to keep our Party in close contact with the masses. They are organs of power of the proletarian cultural revolution.<sup>16</sup>

The phrase "under the leadership of the Communist Party" is not unimportant here, and it is significant that Bettelheim all but avoids this. For even at the height of the Cultural Revolution, when the Party was torn apart by the struggle against the well-entrenched bourgeois headquarters within it, Mao never abandoned the important Leninist principle of Party leadership, and on a national level the Party continued to exist and lead the struggle,

including the struggle against the bourgeoisie in its own leading bodies. What Mao recognized was that the Party itself had to be constantly revolutionized and reconstituted by bringing its leaders and members before the masses to receive criticism and supervision. Bettelheim's emphasis on democracy is actually a bit reminiscent of Lin Piao, who demagogically propagated a very left-sounding and quasi-anarchistic line in the earlier stages of the Cultural Revolution—a line which insisted that, spontaneously and in every situation, the masses are always correct—only to prepare the way for his own unsuccessful attempt at installing a right-wing military dictatorship. Indeed, calls for mass participation which ignore the question of *line* and which fail to recognize that the broad category of "the masses" or "the people" includes different classes; that the masses are at all times divided into advanced, intermediate and backward sections; and that the leadership of the revolutionary party is essential to mobilizing them in struggle; general calls of this type always cover, consciously or unconsciously, for rightism and, in the end, *bourgeois* authoritarianism. The proletariat emphasizes the substance, the content. The question is, *for whom*, in the interests of what class? The bourgeoisie, on the contrary, emphasizes the form—and any formalism which simply asks, "were such-and-such procedures followed?" is bourgeois. Thus in dealing with the question of democracy, any purely formalistic approach can only end in promoting bourgeois, and not proletarian, democracy.

Bettelheim repeats the famous statement from the "Sixteen Point Decision" that "the only method is for the masses to liberate themselves, and any methods of doing things in their stead must not be used."<sup>17</sup> But from this he merely concludes that "party leaders at every level must therefore encourage the masses to criticize the shortcomings and mistakes in their own work."<sup>18</sup> Of course, this was very important, but it leaves out just what the masses must liberate themselves from. The target of the movement was not "party leaders at every level" but the "handful of Party persons in authority taking the capitalist road." What the "Sixteen Point Decision" stressed was that in order for the masses to be aroused to defeat these enemies and to learn the crucial ideological and political lessons from the struggle, they had to wage the struggle themselves and even genuine leaders had to be criticized, supervised, even investigated.

But criticism of genuine leaders was surely not the main thing Mao hoped people would do, as necessary as it was and always is. Such criticism was a means to a far more important end—the defeat of the revisionist headquarters and the deepening education of the revolutionary masses. In fact, in the face of exposure and defeat, Liu Shao-chi himself, with more insidious motives of course, took the same line as Bettelheim does to whip up a phony



“left” wind aimed at criticizing all cadres and leaders precisely to get himself and his revisionist cronies off the hook.

In other words, mobilizing the masses does not simply mean encouraging them to criticize leadership and voice opinions, right or wrong. Nor does it mean just getting them to participate more directly in Party and state affairs, although it certainly must include these things. As the series on Mao’s immortal contributions in *Revolution* put it, it principally “means mobilizing and arming them with a Marxist-Leninist line to fight against the class enemy—and enabling them to distinguish the correct from the incorrect line and the actual interests of the proletariat from those of the bourgeoisie through the course of their own struggle and the study of Marxism-Leninism to master its basic stand, viewpoint and method.”<sup>19</sup>

### The Shanghai Commune

Bettelheim incorrectly dates the reversal of forward motion in the Cultural Revolution from the abandonment of the Shanghai Commune and the establishment in its stead of a Revolutionary Committee in 1967. He falsely states that “no real argument justifying this change has ever been set forth,”<sup>20</sup> thus implying that this was a mistake. And he argues in essence that abandonment of this form represented a retreat by the revolutionary forces in the face of opposition by a majority of the Party leaders to the situation as it had developed to that point. Now it is certainly true that “without saying so openly” (though a few did) a majority of the old leaders “were hostile to the Cultural Revolution.”<sup>21</sup> But Mao and the revolutionary forces did not retreat in the face of this. Mao’s line was to isolate the diehards and win over wavering forces. It is at the least very curious that in several places Bettelheim castigates the revolutionaries for failing to make the necessary compromises and unite broadly, even citing Mao in supposed support of such criticism, but then turns right around and (on the very same page, no less!) bemoans that the achievement of broad unity with some centrist elements against the revisionist headquarters was the basis on which the forward motion of the Cultural Revolution was supposedly reversed!

According to Bettelheim:

... the *coup d’etat* of October 1976... was the culmination, in the forefront of the political stage, of a process which had been going on for years. This process was favored by the priority given to forms of organization led from above over mass movements with many different forms of organization. It was connected to the abandonment of the political form of the commune.<sup>22</sup>

Of course, the *coup* was certainly the result of a process—a process of sharp and complex struggle concentrated in the highest levels of the Party. And the battle Mao and his headquarters waged in the Central Committee was an expression of the deep-seated social struggle between classes. Its ebbs and flows resulted from the interaction of numerous objective and subjective factors, mainly internal to China but also heavily influenced by international conditions. Bettelheim, however, writes as if the revolutionaries consciously “gave priority” to “forms of organization led from above” in abandoning the form of the commune. Despite his “democratic” rhetoric, he ends up making the struggle simply one of conflicting “policies” at the top—the elitist and coercive policy of the revisionists versus a revolutionary policy of more democracy. And he faults the revolutionaries for retreating from this latter approach.

But there was no retreat after the abandonment of the Shanghai Commune. Of course, all the revisionists had not been removed from office, and even had they been the basis for the emergence of revisionism could not yet be eradicated. And, of course, unity was being forged with allies who were, at best, wavering. (Significantly Bettelheim fails to mention the most important of such waverers, Chou En-lai, who in the final analysis proved to be an arch-revisionist and traitorous new mandarin.) But how could such unity be avoided? Had the commune not been replaced with the revolutionary committees (which were, by the way, a tremendous advance in involving the masses themselves in the exercise of political power), and had Mao not sought to unite all who could be united, a revisionist coup might actually have taken place sooner, if not in 1967 then certainly when Lin Piao jumped out for his trial of strength with the proletariat.\*

Mao recognized that the kind of mass mobilization which went on during the early stages of the Cultural Revolution could not always take place. After all, history develops in spirals. Leaps like the Cultural Revolution must be prepared in the course of long periods of quantitative buildup. For Mao the Cultural Revolution was not an end in itself, and he recognized that it would have to be repeated, probably quite a few times. Given this, he sought first of all to educate the Party and the masses in dialectical materialist principles so they might better understand the laws governing the continuing class struggle. And, at the same time, he sought more lasting forms of mass involvement and education, more permanent and powerful organs of proletarian dictatorship which correctly reflected the objective stage of the struggle at that time. Of

\* While he pays considerable attention to the Shanghai Commune, it is significant that Bettelheim nearly ignores the role of Lin Piao and the struggle against his line. The Lin Piao affair was a much more significant turning point in the class struggle in China than was the decision not to develop the commune form in the cities. For more on this see *The Loss in China and the Revolutionary Legacy of Mao Tsetung* (RCP Publications, Chicago, 1978).

course, it would have been much “nicer” and more “convenient” had the bourgeoisie not been so strong, had people like Chou En-lai not been such stubborn bourgeois-democrats—in short, had it not been necessary to continue the revolution. Indeed, it would have been “best” had there already been communism and no need for a proletarian state at all! But to act on such “nice” dreams would be in fact to betray the revolution.

This is why Mao questioned and finally rejected the utility of the commune form as initially adopted in Shanghai. While Bettelheim cites a few of Mao’s objections to this form, he significantly fails to mention the most important. There was one basic reason why Mao opposed the formation of the Shanghai Commune and instead counseled the establishment of a revolutionary committee. As he quite bluntly put it: “Communes are too weak when it comes to suppressing counter-revolution.”<sup>23</sup>

Mao’s analysis here is a thoroughly materialist one, based on an understanding of the continuing existence of antagonistic classes and a concrete estimate of the actual state of the struggle between them, of the strengths and weaknesses—material and ideological—of the opposing class forces. Mao’s analysis was—and quite correctly so—that the commune form, while in the abstract, and perhaps in reality for a short time, it might allow for broad democracy among the masses, would also allow too much freedom and maneuvering room for the counter-revolutionary forces, who would themselves make use of this democracy to prepare for an usurpation of power and the imposition of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat and broad masses. The commune form was something which, as a general model, it was correct to hold up as a goal for the future, but which, if implemented in the actual conditions of the time, would bring serious loss to the revolution. If such an analysis strikes some—including those with the outlook of Professor Bettelheim—as “elitist,” that is basically a reflection of the fact that—and is true to the extent that—such people are infected with idealist, utopian and bourgeois-democratic notions of what it means to build socialism and that they fail to grasp the living, and life and death, struggle between classes that characterizes and determines the movement of socialist society. In sum, the necessity to abandon the commune model in 1967 was the result of not only the existence of classes and class struggle in general, but of the actual relation of class forces at that point, of the actual state of the development of the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie at that stage. It was necessary, in short, precisely in order to be able to consolidate gains that had been made by the proletariat through the mass upsurge of the Cultural Revolution to that point and to carry forward the class struggle in accordance with the concrete conditions.

Were Bettelheim only raising his analysis of the Shanghai Com-

mune as part of tracing the shifting balance of forces between the classes in China, and in this context highlighting the fact that things were never simple for the revolutionaries and that the revisionist bourgeoisie had always been stronger, even at the height of the Cultural Revolution, than previously recognized, there would not be as much to quarrel with. (It should be noted, however, that even taken in this way his history of the Cultural Revolution is definitely not an accurate one.) But Bettelheim does not just recount the history of the struggle. Clearly, he is arguing that after January 1967 the revolutionaries increasingly made a big and fatal error—they failed to rely on and mobilize the masses in the spirit of the Cultural Revolution, but instead resorted to “authoritarian” and “coercive” methods, carrying out the struggle on a top-down basis. This, he argues, is in fact the main reason why revisionism triumphed in China.

Such an argument is 100% wrong. There is, of course, abundant evidence that the revolutionary forces did uphold the achievements and lessons of the Cultural Revolution. And it is clear that they did take the struggle to the masses and mobilize them, not just to democratically participate in organs of power, but to struggle in a wide variety of ways against the increasingly arrogant revisionist headquarters. This was done on the basis of educating them in genuine Marxism-Leninism. One can point to the many political campaigns undertaken for this purpose: the campaign to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius, to study the dictatorship of the proletariat, to criticize *Water Margin*, to criticize Teng Hsiao-ping and repulse the right deviationist wind. One can point to places like Shanghai, Hangchow and Liaoning province, among others, where the revolutionaries led various forms of mass struggle—including armed struggle at times—against the capitalist-roaders in and out of power. Of course, these efforts were in the end unsuccessful, but this was due mainly to the balance of forces and the objective situation and not to an incorrect line.

Bettelheim writes as if the revolutionaries always have complete freedom. In the final analysis he in essence denies that class struggle exists objectively, with its ebbs and flows, that the dictatorship of the proletariat is necessary, and that the bourgeoisie really does continue to exist and pose an extremely significant danger under socialism. His line is utopian and idealist to the core since it substitutes the “good intentions” and “correct policies”—or the lack of these—of the conscious forces for the actual movement of events. Indeed, Bettelheim is basically advancing a new version of the “automatically” line. For the revisionists the development of production “automatically” guarantees success at revolution. For Bettelheim “mass participation” based on free and open debate “automatically” guarantees success at revolution. As he puts it, “Only a broad discussion and social experimentation (neither of

which took place) would have made it possible concretely to eliminate the mistakes that were committed by deepening the revolutionary line."<sup>24</sup> This contention is not only false (anyone who claims there was no broad discussion and no social experimentation in China from 1967 to 1976 must have had his eyes and ears closed), it is rightist in essence and to the core. In fact, it is not all that different from classic bourgeois liberalism, which argues that the free exchange of ideas will of itself lead to truth and progress, irrespective of the development of the class struggle. What, it might well be asked, is to guarantee that this social experimentation and discussion will favor the proletariat? The development of production perhaps?

### Class Analysis Must Be Based on Practice

Bettelheim claims that the revolutionary forces in China were prevented from going to the masses mainly because of "the absence of a class analysis of present-day China," which they were incapable of making because they had "an inadequate grasp of the theoretical concepts needed for a class analysis of a social formation in transition."<sup>25</sup> He recognizes that the revisionists have "charged" the Four with striving to carry out such an analysis, and he credits Chang Chun-chiao and Yao Wen-yuan in particular with making important efforts in this direction. But, according to Bettelheim, their efforts were not nearly enough. As he states: "One cannot transform class relations in a revolutionary way if one does not know what these relations are."<sup>26</sup> Without a "serious and rigorous" class analysis, he argues, the various divisions in society can only be "apprehended *intuitively* and *globally*, and so without subtlety. Under these conditions it is impossible to *trace correct lines of demarcation*, to deal properly with the *secondary contradictions* (which may thus assume an antagonistic character), and, therefore, to arrange *compromises* corresponding to the *class alliances* demanded if the transition to socialism is to be carried through."<sup>27</sup>

Now Chang Chun-chiao in particular did insist that an updated class analysis of Chinese society was called for, and he made concrete steps in this direction. But Chang and the other Chinese revolutionaries who, under Mao's leadership, broke new ground in the area of class analysis of socialist society, differed sharply in their approach from that of Bettelheim. They insisted that such an analysis must be linked to and ultimately based on the actual practice of the class struggle as it took place under socialism. Bettelheim, in fact, reverses the correct relationship between practice and theory in the movement of knowledge, arguing essentially that such a class analysis had to be made *before* any progress could be made in carrying forward the class struggle under

socialism.

In class analysis, as in all things, there is the necessary process, as Mao said about armed struggle, of learning warfare through making warfare. By this Mao did not mean that theory was unimportant or could be derived simply by summing up immediate experience. Quite the opposite, he called on and led the Chinese Communist Party to study the laws of warfare as well as the specific features of the various wars in China, in a sweeping and thoroughgoing way. But had he taken the position that no warfare could be waged until all such study had been completed, then both the practice and theory of warfare would have been prevented from developing, and slaughter at the hands of the enemy could have been the only outcome. It was by applying the basic principles of warfare to the actual situation of the warfare in China, and on the basis of experience in warfare further developing military strategy and operational principles and tactics, that both the practice and theory of revolutionary war was advanced. This was the same method Mao and his comrades applied to the relationship between class struggle and class analysis in socialist society.

Had Mao and the Four followed Bettelheim's approach and tried to develop a full and rigorous class analysis of Chinese society under socialism before and apart from engaging in the class struggle to change that society, they would have been acting as bourgeois academics and idealists and not as proletarian revolutionaries and Marxists. Any "analysis" produced in this way would, of course, have been dead wrong and useless to the revolution. Moreover, the tremendous advances they did make in analyzing not only the specific balance of class forces in China but, more importantly, the general laws governing classes and class struggle in the socialist period, were achieved only on the basis of the very sharp class struggle of the two preceding decades. Can one honestly claim that the analysis presented by Chang Chun-chiao in his pathbreaking essay "On Exercising All-Round Dictatorship Over the Bourgeoisie" is not a significant advance over the more primitive (yet still basically correct) presentation in the 1964 polemic "On Khrushchov's Phoney Communism and Its Historical Lessons for the World"? And can it be denied that such advances could only have been made on the basis of what was revealed in the course of revolutionary practice during the Cultural Revolution?

### On Base and Superstructure

More importantly, however, Bettelheim not only downplays such efforts, he fundamentally disagrees with the ideological and political line they represent. Indeed, his bemoaning the "absence" of a class analysis masks a more basic disagreement with the ac-

tual class analysis, and the revolutionary strategy based on this analysis, which Mao and the Four upheld. He finds fault in particular with

the tendency to define the Chinese bourgeoisie of today not by reference to its place in production relations, but by its ideology or its political line—or, at best, by distribution relations conceived as an effect of bourgeois right. At bottom, the bourgeoisie was seen as a product of the superstructure and not of the economic base.<sup>28</sup>

This is actually the very approach that numerous revisionists and Trotskyites have already used in criticizing Mao's line as "idealist" because he allegedly placed too much emphasis on the superstructure. The RCP has several times refuted this criticism, and it will be useful to quote at some length from what we've said in the past. For instance, with reference to the Soviet Union, it was argued in *Red Papers 7*:

The struggle for socialism must be and is a struggle for the *conscious* control of society by the working class. This is why socialism can never grow up spontaneously within capitalism as did capitalism within the bowels of feudal society. This is why socialism is a radically different form of revolution from all previous upheavals in society which simply brought forward a new system of exploitation.

To build socialism and advance to communism the "lever" that makes possible the production, accumulation and utilization of the surplus cannot be commodity production and the law of value, but can only be *ideological and political line*. That is, socialism, and even more fully communism, can only be built by the workers in society (under socialism the working class through its state power and under communism the whole population, no longer divided into classes, and all acting as both workers and administrators) *consciously and collectively determining a plan* for producing and distributing the material requirements of life.

This in turn can only be accomplished by first drawing on the experience and collective wisdom of the masses of people, and applying the scientific principles of Marxism-Leninism to summing these up. Under socialism this is accomplished by the Party, through the application of the mass line. Under communism it is done by the whole of society, since by then *everyone* will have reached the stage of consciously striving to apply

communist principles to all phases of life.

Even under socialism, the dictatorship of the proletariat, commodity production continues and there is some scope for the law of value. As Lenin pointed out, this provides the material basis for capitalist relations, even in socialism, and provides the material basis for capitalist restoration. Class struggle in socialism continues between those who want the law of value and blind market forces to regulate production, and those who want to subject production to class conscious control of the proletariat. Increasing the power of subjective class conscious forces over production, narrowing and finally eliminating the law of value, is the task of socialism as the transition from capitalism to communism. This is why it is not idealist to stress the importance of proletarian ideology as the leading blow against capitalism, and why it was essential that [for Khrushchev & Co. to restore capitalism] Stalin's and Lenin's proletarian line be smashed *first*, to disarm the working class and make possible the extension of the law of value instead of its constriction.<sup>29</sup>

And, in the course of sharp struggle against a revisionist clique formerly within our own Party, which stubbornly, if pitifully, attempted to defend revisionism in China, we argued:

As pointed out before, the economic base of any given society consists of the relations of production, while these are ultimately determined by the level of development of the productive forces. The socialist economic base cannot grow spontaneously out of the old system of capitalism nor can it advance under socialism without decisive interventions by the working class itself. What is required in the first place is a revolution in the superstructure which is the seizure of state power by the working class. This constitutes only the first step of its historic mission, which is to wipe out all class distinctions and achieve communism. In order for this to happen the working class must subject production to conscious control, and this requires grasping the economic laws of society and acting in accordance with them. This, however, is possible only by sweeping away ideological influences, the force of habit and other remnants of capitalism which stand as obstacles to understanding and transforming the world on the basis of the proletariat's interests. Hence, the working class must carry out revolution in all spheres of the

superstructure as well as in the economic base. . . .

In sum, the economic base of society—that is, the relations of production—is principal over the superstructure. It is principal in so far as (a) it determines for the transitional period as a whole the character of the superstructure, and (b) at each stage of development of the revolution it sets the limits or terms in which the superstructure can exercise its influence. Yet, at all times the superstructure reacts upon the base and influences it enormously. This can be seen in the very powerful role that the Party of the working class and its line plays. The relationship between the base and the superstructure can be seen as one in which the base is the principal or *determining* factor and the superstructure is the *initiating* one.<sup>30</sup>

And it was further pointed out that often, and especially when the question of which class will actually rule comes to the fore, the superstructure plays the principal and decisive role in socialist society.

Bettelheim stands in fundamental disagreement with this approach. In essence, he denies the dialectical interpenetration of base and superstructure, and on this basis it is he who retreats from materialism to idealism. Mao's line recognizes the material basis for capitalist restoration in the still incomplete transformation of the economic base under socialism and the persistence of commodity production which gives to the socialist relations of production certain bourgeois aspects. But Mao also argued that the seizure of state power (and its continuing defense) and, on this basis, the subsequent transformation of the system of ownership also create the basis for deepening the revolution and overcoming the bourgeois aspects step by step—providing that the proletariat continues to use its state power and its ideological and political line to mobilize the masses in struggle against the bourgeoisie, including and especially against the new bourgeoisie which emerges in the highest levels of the Communist Party itself. While there is the basis for every leading cadre to degenerate, there is also the basis for them to overcome the bourgeois pull of their position. And it is the revolutionary line of the Party, the consistent struggle against revisionism, which enables many to do so and enables the masses to struggle against and overthrow those who do not.

Bettelheim denies the central role played by ideological and political line. Instead he bases his analysis on a metaphysical treatment of very real contradictions under socialism—the division of labor, particularly between mental and manual labor, etc. And this goes hand in hand with a metaphysical approach to the contradiction between the economic base and the superstructure,

tending to separate the two absolutely instead of recognizing their interdependence and interpenetration, and in particular negating, or seriously downgrading and distorting, the reaction of the superstructure on the base.

In this Bettelheim goes against the essential spirit of Lenin's well-known dictum that "politics is the concentrated expression of economics." By this Lenin meant that, while class forces in society are overall determined by the relations of production, these relations find expression, in fact concentrated expression, in the political power relations of the superstructure, which in turn react upon the base. In fact, Bettelheim's method would lead to obviously erroneous conclusions even when applied to capitalist society. For example, according to his view, would it not be incorrect to classify many politicians—and all of the bigshots in this category—as part of the bourgeoisie? Yet, clearly, they are part of this class, acting as its political representatives, even if they are not owners of capital.

In socialist society, moreover, the reaction of the superstructure on the base has far greater importance, including in the analysis of classes. This is precisely because of the character of the socialist economic base, in particular socialist ownership, in which the state is the central and most important economic unit. In this situation, the question of what policies are applied with regard to the other aspects of the relations of production—the relations between people in the process of production and the distribution system—assume great importance. And, in turn, these policies, and the overall viewpoint and program that guide them, find expression as questions of line—which is part of the superstructure.

This takes us back to the point made earlier—Bettelheim's metaphysics in dealing with such things as the mental/manual contradiction, etc. Instead of viewing these as things in motion—instead, in other words, of looking at them as things which will either be restricted or expanded, depending on which class holds power and which line is in command—Bettelheim basically treats them as static and absolute. Thus, the logic and implication of Bettelheim's position is that every cadre who holds a privileged position in the division of labor would have to be considered bourgeois, part of what he calls the "state bourgeoisie." This, he would argue, is more materialist, because it defines class position not by ideology but by position and role in the process of production. But, as noted, it is actually metaphysics, mechanical materialism, and ends up being idealist as well, since it separates politics from economics, the superstructure from the base.

Such a "class analysis" fails to grasp that the implementation of one kind of line or another—representing one class or another, the proletariat or the bourgeoisie—will actually decide what the real production relations are. And, similarly, for cadre in leadership

positions, the line they apply, the ideological and political content of their leadership, will determine their actual relations with the masses they lead and whether that leadership is as a political representative of the proletariat or as the personification of capital. And Bettelheim's "class analysis" of socialist society can only lead to programmatic dead-ends—to defeatism and ultimately defeat itself. For if every cadre, manager, etc. is *ipso facto* bourgeois, who in the Party and positions of leadership and authority can ever represent the working class? The difference between the line of Mao, and the Four, and that of Bettelheim here is—perhaps ironically in light of Bettelheim's accusations of sectarianism against the Chinese revolutionaries—the difference between the orientation of identifying the *capitalist-roaders* in authority as the main target of the revolution on the one hand and on the other hand the line of "overthrow all"—that is, *everyone* in authority is a capitalist-roader (or a member of the "state bourgeoisie," to use Bettelheim's term).

Bettelheim's metaphysics and idealism lead him further to negate the existence of the socialist system so long as mental/manual differences and other aspects of the division of labor persist. He even denies that a distinct form of socialist ownership exists. According to Bettelheim, there is not even such a thing as the socialist system!<sup>31</sup> This formulation is totally undialectical, not in the least Marxist therefore, and its essence is rightist to the bone. Bettelheim holds that as long as commodity production, and on this basis social classes, exist there can only be a "transitional" system. This concept of "transitional society" has been borrowed by Bettelheim from the repertoire of the Trotskyites, among whom the notion of "transitional society" or "transitional social system" is currently quite fashionable—and of course it goes right back to Trotsky's original position that there cannot be socialism in one country, from which it follows that a "workers' state" can only implement a transition toward socialism in the period before a worldwide revolution.\*

### Recognize Stages, Avoid Stagism

Central to the Marxist-Leninist understanding of the continuing class struggle under socialism is the recognition that the socialist stage is but a long transitional period during which all relations characteristic of class society are uprooted and finally eliminated through revolutionary struggle until classless society, communism, is achieved worldwide. But Marxist-Leninists also

\*The term "transitional society" appears in much of Bettelheim's work, including "The Great Leap Backward." His *The Transition to Socialist Economy* and *Economic Calculation and Forms of Property* are based on this Trotskyite notion, which will be examined below.

recognize that socialism remains a particular stage in the development of society—a stage defined mainly by the existence of the dictatorship of the proletariat and characterized by its own laws, laws which reflect the contradictory and transitional nature of this stage. The establishment of socialism, the rule of the proletariat, and on this basis the elimination of capitalist exploitation as the first step in the transformation of the relations of production, is a distinct and qualitative advance over capitalism. Key to this advance is the revolutionary seizure of political power by the working class and its establishment of the proletarian dictatorship, which takes place in the superstructure. As Mao put it:

In socialist society the basic contradictions are still those between the relations of production and the productive forces and between the superstructure and the economic base. However, they are fundamentally different in character and have different features from the contradictions between the relations of production and the productive forces and between the superstructure and the economic base in the old societies. The present social system of our country is far superior to that of the old days. If it were not so, the old system would not have been overthrown and the new system could not have been established.<sup>32</sup>

In other words, the Marxist view is to recognize the stage of socialism without falling into *stagism* and forgetting that this stage is itself transitional. The Trotskyites, with their latest "theory" of "transitional social systems," as with all their trash, do not recognize stages. They see only the "transition," since they have always denied that socialism is even possible in one or a few countries. One of their leading ideologues, Ernest Mandel, argues that this whole period of transition from capitalism to "socialism" is on a world scale characterized by forms which combine socialist and capitalist aspects; that "there is a hybrid combination of elements of the past and elements of the future." Because of this, Mandel claims, "the relations of production of a society in transition between two modes of production can decompose of their own accord, evolve in various directions without necessarily experiencing revolutionary perturbations of the same type as the social revolutions necessary for the passage from one mode of production to another."<sup>33</sup>

At the heart of this position is a profound disbelief in the ability of the masses to actually seize power and, step by step, destroy the old society and build up a new one. Such snobbish and ivory-tower disdain for the masses has been characteristic of Trotskyism all along. Completely absent from Mandel's analysis is the class

struggle waged by the proletariat under socialism. (Mandel argues, of course, that socialism did not really exist in countries like China when it was under the rule of the working class.) Nor is there any room for revolution in this view. Mandel never breaks with the economist "theory of the productive forces." Hence his "transitional period" is one where the development of production gradually creates the conditions for socialism and, with fits and starts and no doubt "assisted" by condescending saviors like the Trots, pushes forward the transformation of the relations of production. In other words, his "transitional systems" are not all that different from the peaceful development of socialism prophesied by more openly reformist social-democracy. For if his notion of a "hybrid," "transitional" system describes the Soviet Union since 1917, doesn't it also describe contemporary Sweden? Don't they too have a social system which combines capitalist and "socialist" aspects?

In a number of important respects, Bettelheim presents a similar theory—dressed, however, in "Maoist" garb. He recognizes that there is a leap involved in moving to socialist society (although he, of course, will not admit that it is socialism, but only "the transition to socialism"), but he fails to understand the nature of the leap. He recognizes that the proletariat has seized power, but he does not see any decisive change in the economic base—whereas in actuality the proletariat's state power is (and must be) applied to carry out the socialization of ownership as rapidly as possible, which in turn provides the base for the consolidation and extension of the dictatorship of the proletariat (which in turn reacts back on the base to remold it). Bettelheim does not really grasp this dialectical relation between base and superstructure. And therefore he is incapable of grasping the real basis for—and the actual possibility as well as necessity of—carrying out further transformations both in the base and superstructure. The dictatorship of the proletariat, for Bettelheim, neither rests on any material foundation in the economic base nor has any real role to play in determining the nature of the base.

Hence, in Bettelheim's "class analysis" and his analysis overall, recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat—indeed, recognition of the centrality of revolution and revolutionary struggle—is sorely lacking. Again, like the Trotskyites, he is led to very "left" sounding anti-authoritarian and anti-bureaucratic appeals for "democracy." But, also like the Trotskyites, the essence of this line is quite rightist. For by failing to recognize the centrality of the proletarian dictatorship in the socialist stage and by belittling the role of the superstructure—particularly the main aspect of the superstructure, political power—Bettelheim ends up depriving the proletariat of its key weapon against the bourgeoisie. Thus, Bettelheim's stated recognition—and attempted analysis—of the con-

tinuing presence of the bourgeoisie in the economic base is quite hollow. For, if one follows his position to its logical conclusion—in particular his separation of base and superstructure—then there is no need to struggle politically against this bourgeoisie; or if, somehow, this necessity is allowed, there remains, nevertheless, no way to wage struggle against and overthrow this class.\*

### On the Intellectuals

Because Bettelheim does not recognize the centrality of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, he is reduced—again, very much like the Trotskyites—to criticizing the proletarian forces for being too harsh and "coercive." In particular, Bettelheim castigates the Chinese revolutionaries for their allegedly sectarian attitude toward intellectuals. He argues this way:

The supporters of the revolutionary line showed themselves able to build various *forms of alliance* between the working masses and the intellectuals (in particular, in the different forms of "three-in-one combination"), but they did not always manage to *deal correctly with the contradictions within this alliance*. Consequently, they tended to *substitute coercion for political leadership*. . . . Furthermore, even the leaders of the Left took a sectarian attitude toward scientists and artists. Consequently, obstacles were placed in the way of the development of scientific and technical knowledge and of the full progress of literary and artistic activity. . . . Under such conditions it became inevitable that a majority of the intellectuals declined to support the revolutionary line, or only gave it lip service.<sup>34</sup>

This is wrong on several counts. First of all, it is a distortion and blames the proletariat for the sabotage of the bourgeoisie, to say—referring to the policies of the Left—that "obstacles were placed in the way of the development of scientific and technical knowledge and of the full progress of literary and artistic activity." Of course, Mao and the Four led sharp struggle against any attempts to develop *bourgeois* methods in science and *bourgeois* art, but, by and large, the period after the upsurge of the Cultural Revolution saw a great flowering of *proletarian* art and

\*For more on Bettelheim's line on the "transitional society" and on his kinship with certain Trotskyite formulations, see part two of this article. A more thorough analysis and refutation of the theory of "transitional society," which takes a variety of forms and has had a certain influence among revolutionary-minded intellectuals, especially in Europe, is beyond the scope of this article.

literature and of a *proletarian* approach to science. What the revolutionary line emphasized in the development of science and technology was the involvement of the masses, to the greatest degree possible at this stage, in this sphere. Thus, access to scientific literature was restricted only in the sense that professional scientists were not permitted to retreat to their studies and alienate themselves from the workers and peasants, and ape the bourgeois methods of plagiarism, turning knowledge into "private property," seeking after fame and money, etc.—all of which *obstruct* scientific development. And on the basis of uniting with the masses, Chinese scientists and technicians achieved many breakthroughs—some of which were at "advanced world levels"—during this period. For instance, if the development of science was so blocked how did China manage to launch earth satellites? How was it that Chinese medical researchers were the first in the world to synthesize insulin? And how did the Shanghai workers construct a 10,000-ton ship on a drydock equipped for only 5000 tons? Many other examples of the flowering of science under the guidance of a proletarian line during this period can be found simply by leafing through the pages of Chinese periodicals published during those years.

As for art and literature, it is nothing but a bourgeois lie and a slander on the culture of the masses to argue that the "full progress of literary and artistic activity" was hindered by the "sectarian" application of Mao's revolutionary line in this field. In fact it would have been really sectarian—toward the masses—had Mao and the Four conceded to the pressure which did come from many petty-bourgeois intellectuals (and which was consolidated and refined into a full-fledged opportunist political line by the revisionist headquarters) for more emphasis on traditional works and foreign classics and less emphasis on developing the revolutionary culture cherished by the masses of laboring people. As our Party's response to the Mensheviks documented, these years saw the production of literally thousands of new revolutionary literary, dramatic and other artistic works.<sup>35</sup>

Moreover, while many intellectuals did oppose the revolutionary line championed by Mao (we shall discuss why in a moment), the revolutionary line also succeeded in winning over significant numbers of intellectuals. After all, it should not be forgotten that a good deal of the initial abuse heaped on the Four immediately after the coup had a distinct anti-intellectual flavor to it, describing them as useless "thinkers" who knew nothing of production. While this was mainly a pragmatic attack on Marxist theory, it is true that the Four, especially Chang Chun-chiao and Yao Wen-yuan, were indeed intellectuals themselves—proletarian revolutionary intellectuals. And, as a British intellectual friendly to the Four noted, their Shanghai journal, *Study and Criticism*, which

has been shut down by the current leadership, was "the most lively and dialectical of all Chinese journals."<sup>36</sup>

For an outstanding example of how the revolutionary line did unite with intellectuals let's look briefly at the case of Yu Hui-yung, Minister of Culture before the coup, whom the revisionists intimate has since committed suicide by swallowing drain cleaner (no doubt he has been murdered). A recent "biography" of Teng Hsiao-ping published by Hong Kong mouthpieces of the current leadership contains a thumbnail sketch of Yu's life. Yu, a Shanghai music teacher and *erh-hu* (traditional Chinese instrument) player, was, even in the opinion of these revisionist hacks, "not an untalented musician."<sup>37</sup> He had been active in left-wing intellectual circles since the Civil War but only really began to come forward during the Cultural Revolution. On the basis of grasping Mao's revolutionary line on culture, Yu played an important role in arrangement and writing of the two model operas *Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy* (recently withdrawn from performance in China) and *On the Docks*. He was a member of the writing groups Chu Lan and Chang Tien, which made significant contributions to defending and developing the revolutionary line. Clearly, Yu was himself an intellectual who was able to unite with the proletarian line and, on this basis, become a revolutionary communist.

Of course, most intellectuals were not like Yu. Most, as Mao pointed out several times, still retained to a significant degree their bourgeois world outlook. However, in addition Mao pointed out that the majority of intellectuals were willing to support and work for socialism, while a minority on the one hand were actually Marxists and on the other hand a minority were die-hard reactionaries. The correct policy toward the great majority of intellectuals, Mao said, was to unite with, utilize *and remold* them. But this required firmly following the line of politics, not expertise, in command, struggling against the tendency for the knowledge of the intellectuals to be turned into capital, and carrying out a consistent ideological struggle against the influences of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois thinking that are particularly strong among intellectuals. And it also required popularizing examples, and presenting models in culture, of intellectuals who did take up the stand of Marxism, who stood firmly with the masses and truly became proletarian—communist—intellectuals.

As a whole, intellectuals, even in socialist society, should be considered part of the petty bourgeoisie, and there is a strong basis for the proletariat to unite with the great majority of them. Only socialism and ultimately communism can offer a future to the intellectuals.

The bourgeoisie seeks just to use them, pervert or suppress what is most advanced and inspiring in their work, and turn their ideas into commodities and their persons into slaves of the cash register.



But, at the same time, the intellectuals, like other members of their class, exhibit a very strong and exceedingly stubborn tendency to retain their independence of the proletariat and their privileged position, even when they do unite with the workers. They tend to try to turn their ideas into "private property" which they can use to lord it over the masses. And it is clear that all the traditional practices and customs of class society, the "tried and true" ways of getting things done, only feed and strengthen these weaknesses. All this is why the proletariat cannot unite with the intellectuals without at the same time waging a persistent and protracted struggle against their bourgeois tendencies.

The bourgeoisie will also seek to unite with the intellectuals against the proletariat and, at times, will have considerable influence among them. Hence the struggle to both politically win over and ideologically remold the intellectuals cannot help but be a very sharp one at times, and waging this struggle is a crucial and difficult task of the proletarian dictatorship.

That, in the last battle, the revisionists were able to win support from a significant section of the intellectuals is a fact. This, however, was not mainly due to errors on the part of the revolutionaries—though they may have made some in the acute and complex struggle which raged particularly sharply on the fronts of culture, education, science and technology—but primarily to the strengthening of conditions favoring the bourgeoisie in the battle to win over middle strata, including the intellectuals. This includes as a major factor the international situation and the decision of the revolutionaries, in the light of the growing Soviet danger to China, to make certain compromises, agreements, etc., with the imperialist and reactionary countries of the U.S. bloc—all of which strengthened bourgeois forces and tendencies in China politically and ideologically and which was seized on with full force by the revisionists to promote bourgeois standards and values and capitulation to the imperialists in all spheres, not the least being culture and education. It is significant that Bettelheim, in attempting to explain the triumph of revisionism in China, makes no analysis of this very important aspect.

It is also significant, and consistent with his own erroneous analysis, that Bettelheim is silent on the reversals taking place today in China in the sphere of culture and fails to defend the revolutionary line in this area. He does not explicitly raise the argument, but his readers cannot avoid the impression that Bettelheim opposes the struggle which was waged to revolutionize and proletarianize culture and that he feels petty-bourgeois intellectuals should have been left "free" to develop all sorts of cultural works, regardless of their class content. This, he seems to think, would have in and of itself insured their loyalty and, since Bettelheim obviously does not believe the superstructure can real-

ly exert influence on production relations, it would not have done much harm. Once again, this whole approach smacks of bourgeois liberalism, specifically of the idealist notion that in the "free exchange of ideas" truth will inevitably win out. This is closely linked, of course, with the vulgar economist notion that transformation of the economic base will "automatically" transform the superstructure, so little or no struggle is needed to do this. That Bettelheim essentially shares this view propagated by the Chinese revisionists is revealed in part by his liberal line on culture as well as his overall emphasis on—and petty-bourgeois view of—"democracy." But, as Mao put it, "where the broom does not reach, the dust never vanishes of itself," and "Everything reactionary is the same [including "ideas"—C.R.]; if you don't hit it, it won't fall."<sup>38</sup>

But, it may be protested, didn't Mao also call for letting a hundred flowers bloom? And wasn't it Mao who declared that "All attempts to use administrative orders or coercive measures to settle ideological questions or questions of right and wrong are not only ineffective but harmful,"<sup>39</sup> and that, "Questions of right and wrong in the arts and sciences should be settled through free discussion in artistic and scientific circles and through practical work in these fields"?<sup>40</sup> Yes, Mao did say these things—and he really meant them. But such statements, and the hundred flowers policy Mao initiated, must be placed in their proper context. And the context in which these policies were developed was the struggle, yes, *struggle*, against the bourgeoisie and its influence in the ideological sphere.

As early as 1957 Mao declared that "In the ideological field, the question of who will win out, the proletariat or the bourgeoisie, has not yet been really settled. We still have to wage a protracted struggle against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology."<sup>41</sup> And Mao also noted that:

Those who demand freedom and democracy in the abstract regard democracy as an end and not as a means. Democracy as such sometimes seems to be an end, but it is in fact only a means. . . . Both democracy and freedom are relative, not absolute, and they come into being and develop in specific historical conditions. Within the ranks of the people, democracy is correlative with centralism and freedom with discipline. They are the two opposites of a single entity, contradictory as well as united, and we should not one-sidedly emphasize one to the exclusion of the other.<sup>42</sup>

The "specific historical conditions" under which freedom and democracy developed for the intellectuals in China under Mao's

leadership included the fact that until the Cultural Revolution educational and cultural affairs were very strongly influenced—in fact, dominated—by revisionism. In 1967 Mao himself declared that:

As I see it, the intellectuals, including young intellectuals still receiving education in school, still have a basically bourgeois world outlook, whether they are in the Party or outside it. This is because for seventeen years after the liberation the cultural and educational circles have been dominated by revisionism. As a result, bourgeois ideas are infused in the blood of the intellectuals.<sup>43</sup>

In this context it is not surprising that there was indeed considerable resistance to the revolutionary line and that the bourgeoisie was quite influential among many intellectuals.

This is the context in which the policy of “letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend” must be understood. This was never a liberal policy of letting intellectuals and artists “do their thing.” Rather, it was a method of waging the class struggle in the sphere of arts and sciences. Much of its purpose was to get bourgeois ideas out into the open so they could be combatted and uprooted.<sup>44</sup>

Further—and especially in regard to artists and intellectuals who aspire to be revolutionaries and communists—Mao’s line was never one of spontaneously letting ideas “blossom” forth. His line on this was elaborated as early as 1942 in the famous “Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art,” a work the revisionists have always attacked—openly or indirectly, depending on their necessity—and the revolutionaries, especially Chiang Ching, have always sought to propagate. In this work Mao enunciated the stand that the primary task of revolutionary artists and writers is “to understand people and know them well.”<sup>45</sup> And decisive in this, Mao declared, is the question of *intellectuals integrating themselves with the masses*, a concept completely absent from Bettelheim’s analysis.

In a famous passage Mao described his own ideological transformation. He recalled that, as a result of bourgeois (even feudal) education, he

used to feel it undignified to do even a little manual labour, such as carrying my own luggage in the presence of my fellow students, who were incapable of carrying anything, either on their shoulders or in their hands. At that time I felt that intellectuals were the only clean people in the world, while in comparison workers and

peasants were dirty. I did not mind wearing the clothes of other intellectuals, believing them clean, but I would not put on clothes belonging to a worker or peasant, believing them dirty. But after I became a revolutionary and lived with workers and peasants and with soldiers of the revolutionary army, I gradually came to know them well, and they gradually came to know me well too. It was then, and only then, that I fundamentally changed the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois feelings implanted in me in the bourgeois schools. I came to feel that compared with the workers and peasants the unremoulded intellectuals were not clean and that, in the last analysis, the workers and peasants were the cleanest people and, even though their hands were soiled and their feet smeared with cow-dung, they were really cleaner than the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intellectuals. That is what is meant by a change in feelings, a change from one class to another.<sup>46</sup>

Since this was hardly an easy change for Mao, and since he did not accomplish it overnight and without considerable struggle, could it be said then that such a transformation would be any easier for the masses of Chinese intellectuals? And is it in any way conceivable that such a massive transformation of the intelligentsia can be carried out without some “coercion,” that is, without the dictatorship of the proletariat?

For example, let us take the movement of educated urban youth to the countryside in China. Could this massive movement “up to the mountains and down to the villages” have been accomplished without a certain amount of coercion? This was a very important step in building socialism and moving toward communism. It was a concrete and necessary step in beginning to break down the contradiction between town and country which has been a part of all class society—and it also attacked the other two of the “three great differences,” namely those between worker and peasant and between mental and manual labor. It was something that had to be actually implemented, and not simply left to spontaneity. Of course, the principal aspect of this implementation was persuasion and winning people to it politically; but this was not the only aspect. It also had to involve a certain amount of coercion directed against a part of the masses.

Or let us take culture. Here Mao not only put forward the policy of “100 flowers blossoming” but also insisted that the proletariat must exercise dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in the sphere of culture as well as all other aspects of society. This does not mean that dictatorship should be exercised over the great majority of intellectuals—a line the Chinese renegades in power have falsely at-

tributed to the Four, and by clear implication to Mao himself, in order to cover their own revisionist line. What it does mean is that the proletariat must struggle to occupy such spheres with Marxism, to expose and defeat the reactionary ideas of the bourgeoisie and drive its culture from the stage through this struggle. It is this struggle itself that the Chinese revisionists hate and are now suppressing, in order to exercise dictatorship over the proletariat in this as in all fields. And here their line finds a supporter (however unwilling) or at least an echo (however unintentional) in Professor Bettelheim.

According to Bettelheim, the "sectarian" weaknesses of the revolutionaries in China in dealing with the intellectuals affected the Party's relationship with all strata of the masses. "As soon as the element of coercion enters into what ought to be an alliance," he argues, "it tends to spread. In the end, coercion was brought to bear upon a section of the masses as well, and gave rise to discontent. . . . Unity of the masses therefore failed to develop."<sup>47</sup> In this context, Bettelheim claims, the revisionist line "*seem[ed] less coercive.*"<sup>48</sup>

But alliances concluded by the proletariat with other classes and strata, including and especially with the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, are not simply voluntary agreements or compromises. The proletariat must *lead* such alliances. And to do so it must not only extend the hand of comradeship to its allies, it must also fight unyieldingly for its own class interests. Thus, in a certain sense, there *must* be an element of "coercion" in any revolutionary class alliance, although what must be primary is political unity forged in the common struggle against the common enemy.

Even among the masses of workers there are always advanced, intermediate and backward elements. The proletarian party must at all times seek to unite the advanced to win over the intermediate and raise the level of the backward, while paralyzing the latter's tendency to act as shock troops for the reactionary line. This is itself an integral part of waging the class struggle. Under certain conditions, even when the proletariat has held state power for some time, the backward—and at times even the intermediate—will be successfully mobilized by the reactionary bourgeoisie, often under the signboard of "socialism," to strike against the revolutionary interests of the proletariat and against the vanguard leadership of the revolutionary headquarters in the proletarian party.

Under these conditions the proletariat must struggle politically to win those who have been deceived away from bourgeois influence. But, in fact, this can never be achieved without a certain measure of coercion, including coercion brought to bear against backward sections of the popular masses. Anyone who has ever been involved in revolutionary political struggle—or even a strike,

for that matter—knows this. Of course, there is a basic difference between coercion directed against the enemy and coercion brought to bear on any section of the masses, however backward. In the first place, such coercion must not be *relied on* in the case of the masses, whereas this is precisely where reliance is placed in the case of the enemy. And secondly, where it is employed against some section of the masses, there is a different objective—for the possibility is not ruled out of winning them over, and doing so remains a strategic orientation. But although there is a real difference here, it is idealist, and in the final analysis reactionary, to think that revolution can be accomplished and continued without coercion—and even violence at times—against some whose overall position in society objectively places them among the masses.

### Democracy in the Party

Given what we have seen of Bettelheim's line so far, it is not surprising that he also raises the old Trotskyite bugaboo of "freedom of expression in the party"<sup>49</sup> to attack by innuendo the fundamental principles of democratic centralism. This is no surprise, since the question of organizational line flows from and is an expression of political line and world outlook. As the pamphlet *Important Struggles in Building the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA* pointed out with respect to the history of such struggles in our own Party:

Opportunism in matters of political line always leads to opportunism in organization affairs; or as Wang Hungwen put it in his report to the 10th Congress of the CPC, "If one practices revisionism . . . one will inevitably go in for splits, intrigues, and conspiracies." The question of whether or not to uphold democratic centralism, "to adhere to party principle," as the Chinese said, is a basic question of world outlook and class stand. It depends on whether you believe that correct ideas come from the experience of the masses in the struggle to change reality, and that it is the masses that make history; or whether you believe that correct ideas come from a few "geniuses" and that "heroes" make revolution. And this applies to reliance on the masses in the communist movement, as well. As Mao said, "We must have faith in the masses and we must have faith in the Party. These are two cardinal principles. If we doubt these principles we shall accomplish nothing."<sup>50</sup>

Democratic centralism is the set of organizational principles based on the Marxist theory of knowledge. Organization according

to democratic centralism makes it possible for the proletarian party to apply the mass line—to gather the scattered experience and ideas of the masses, concentrate what is correct in these and then, in a unified manner, return these ideas to the masses and unite with them to carry them out—and begin this process again, on a higher level. Democratic centralism is the dialectical unity of two opposites. Democracy, the principal aspect in this contradiction, means mainly the initiative of Party members, the flow of ideas, opinions, criticism, etc., from the whole membership to the Party leadership. Centralism means essentially the centralization of correct ideas through the application of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought, and it also includes the discipline of the Party built on its unity of will, unity around its basic ideological and political line.

Bettelheim, however, undialectically separates democracy from centralism. In his view, democracy stands for little more than free expression, while centralism means essentially giving and taking orders. He argues from this that democratic centralism did not work in China because the revolutionary forces did not put the correct emphasis on democracy in Party life. Thus, leadership sealed itself off from the masses through a policy of “self-recruitment” which was favored by the “high degree of centralization.”<sup>51</sup> And because there was no real democracy, the struggles which were waged against revisionism tended to take on an allegedly “hermetic” [sealed off, or hidden] character which, in Bettelheim’s words, “reflected the fact that those promoting them *were not really trying to get the masses to take part.*”<sup>52</sup>

Bettelheim clearly implies that it would have been better had all “factions” in the Party been free to organize openly. As the basis for this revisionist argument he drags out the tired old Trotskyite tale of how the ban on factions instituted at the 10th Congress of the Soviet Party in 1921 was “only a *temporary measure*, which the circumstances of a particular moment could alone justify,”<sup>53</sup> thus intimating that the existence of opposing factions should be permitted, indeed, encouraged, in a communist party.

Of course our historian does not tell us what the particular circumstances were in 1921. Let us then remind him that before this Congress there had been in Soviet Russia a period of virtually unbridled “free expression” for opposing factions of the very kind he seems to advocate for China. The Soviet Party leadership, headed by Lenin and with the support of the overwhelming majority of Party members, opposed this factionalism as a mortal danger to the Party’s very existence as a proletarian revolutionary vanguard. Moreover, while it is true that the Bolshevik Party did not declare any *formal* ban on factions before 1921, this was only because such a ban was not necessary until then. Before the seizure of state power, bourgeois factions eagerly split away from

the Party as struggle against their rotten lines sharpened. But once the Party was in power, this situation changed. Defeated factions were far from eager to abandon the share of power they held. Hence the organizational line of Bolshevism had to be more explicitly spelled out.

This organizational line, Lenin’s line, had always been militantly opposed to the bourgeois-democratic notion of “free expression” for minority *factions* (although not, however, for minority *views* expressed through the appropriate Party channels). Much of the foundation of the Bolshevik line on organization and the fundamental principles of democratic centralism was laid by Lenin in his famous work *What Is To Be Done?* (1902) and more specifically formulated in 1904 in his polemic against the opportunist—and in particular bourgeois-democratic—organizational line of the Mensheviks, *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*. In this latter work especially, as well as others of his writings, Lenin tore into the Mensheviks for their refusal to submit to the democratic will of the majority in the Party, their “feeble whining” about Lenin’s “autocracy,” and, more importantly, he linked this to their opportunism on organizational questions in general, which he attributed to “the individualism of the intellectual.”<sup>54</sup>

While he had not as yet formulated the term democratic centralism, Lenin clearly presented an argument diametrically opposed to what Bettelheim tries to palm off as Leninism. For instance, he pointed out that calls for more democracy and less bureaucracy tend to mask calls for more *autonomy* and less centralism:

Bureaucracy *versus* democracy is in fact centralism *versus* autonomism; it is the organizational principle of revolutionary Social Democracy as opposed to the organizational principle of opportunist Social Democracy. The latter strives to proceed from the bottom upward, and, therefore, wherever possible and as far as possible, upholds autonomism and “democracy”, carried (by the overzealous) to the point of anarchism. The former strives to proceed from the top downward, and upholds an extension of the rights and powers of the center in relation to the parts.<sup>55</sup>

Lenin’s stand here does not go against what was said earlier about the contradiction between democracy and centralism—that the former is the main aspect and the foundation for the latter. For centralism founded on democracy in this way also represents a concentration of democracy, and it is precisely for this reason that it is necessary to uphold the principle that the lower level in the party is subordinate to the higher level, the individual to the collective, the minority to the majority, and the parts to the center. The

center represents precisely the party as a whole, to which its various parts must be subordinate. This dialectical understanding of the relationship between democracy and centralism, and the Marxist-Leninist organizational principles based on it, are worlds apart from the view of "democracy" and "freedom" characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie, including the particular forms of individualism common to the intellectuals, which Professor Bettelheim shares to a significant degree.

Democratic centralism certainly means that the views of the minority must be respected and given a full hearing. It was Mao more than anyone who stressed this. But what Marxists mainly stress is that democratic party debate can only advance the cause of communism if it takes place in accordance with the party's chain of knowledge and chain of command, its organizational structure. Factional activity, even when carried out, as it so often is, under the guise of "freedom to criticize," only breaks this chain of knowledge and command and thus prevents the party from testing its line in practice in a unified way. Factionalism actually prevents the party from relying on the masses and reduces line struggle to the bourgeois realm of intrigue and demagoguery. "Free expression" for opposing factions has no more in common with proletarian democracy than does the "freedom" to choose one's oppressor in bourgeois elections.

Mao's line on this question, like any revolutionary line, gets attacked from what are apparently two sides (although they are in reality one). From one side, people like Enver Hoxha undialectically attack Mao for recognizing the inevitability of two-line struggle in the party, while someone like Bettelheim comes along and, from the other side, attacks Mao (in a more veiled fashion) for not encouraging free expression of opposing views. Damned if you do, damned if you don't! Yet both these criticisms (or outright attack in the case of Hoxha) are wrong because they start from the same erroneous place; each views the class struggle in the party undialectically.

Hoxha's line metaphysically pretends that the party, unlike everything else in life, can be characterized by its "iron unity." What is wrong with Hoxha's position is not that the party does not need unity, nor that it is wrong to fight for the organizational principles of democratic centralism that embody that unity. What is wrong is that Hoxha thinks that the party—and in reality he extends this to socialist society as well—can somehow avoid class struggle within itself by administrative decree and mere suppression of alien elements. Further, Hoxha's metaphysics (and idealism) prevent him from seeing not only the inevitability of class struggle within the party, but also the possibility of turning this necessity into freedom, into a strengthening of the party. Hoxha's metaphysics miss the actual relationship between struggle

and unity, failing to grasp that the former is unconditional and absolute, while the latter is conditional and relative—and is achieved and advanced to a higher level repeatedly *through struggle*.

Bettelheim also denies dialectics by speaking as if two opposing lines can coexist peacefully, with "free expression" guaranteed for all. His position is Hoxha's metaphysics turned inside out, essentially denying that what defines the internal life of the party is the ceaseless life-and-death struggle between the two lines that inevitably exist within it.

Bettelheim's accusations about lack of democracy in the Chinese Communist Party are as unfounded as his other attacks on proletarian dictatorship. They reflect once again his bourgeois-democratic prejudices and his social-democratic line. Mao and the revolutionary leadership of the Chinese Communist Party recognized the existence of two lines within the Party, ultimately reflecting the existence of two classes, and they also recognized that these lines could only exist in contradiction and struggle with each other. In this struggle Mao consistently held to and defended the principles of democratic centralism precisely because he did seek to mobilize and rely on the masses. This is why Mao and the Four fought hard against the revisionist headquarters on the crucial question of the tasks of the basic Party units. At the revisionist 11th Congress of the CPC, the Party Constitution was specifically changed to remove the clause which calls on all units to "wage an active ideological struggle so as to keep Party life vigorous" and replaced it with the instruction to report the opinions and demands of the masses to higher bodies so the new Confucians can "benevolently" respond. The revolutionaries fought hard to retain the language adopted at the 9th and 10th Congresses precisely because they recognized that only on the basis of continued struggle could unity be achieved around the correct line and could the incorrect line—and its die-hard advocates—be exposed and defeated.

Of course, Bettelheim's persistent calls for the extension of democracy and mass participation are addressed to real contradictions which do exist under socialism. For even where the proletarian line is firmly in command and the masses are advancing in the struggle to transform all of society, there remain contradictions in and between the base and superstructure (as well as between the forces and relations of production) which can give rise to relations of oppression and exploitation, and pose the danger of capitalist restoration. As the 1977 Report of the Central Committee of the RCP noted:

And in general the fact that economic units—and the economy as a whole—can be turned from socialist to capitalist is a result of the fact that the means of produc-

tion under socialism are still not completely the common property of all of society and that the masses of people still have not yet completely become masters of the economy and society as a whole. These contradictions will exist all the way throughout the long socialist period of transition to communism and will provide the material basis for capitalist restoration and point to the grave danger that revisionism poses, especially as it emerges at the top of the Party...<sup>56</sup>

The revisionists openly deny or belittle the importance of such contradictions and idealistically declare that the establishment of socialism will eliminate these things as long as production goes up and occasional "adjustments" are made. Bettelheim, to his credit, recognizes the blatant dishonesty of such a view and unites with Mao's important analysis that the struggle to ultimately resolve these contradictions and in this way advance to communism is the central task faced by the proletariat under socialism. But Bettelheim's solution merely represents an apparently strange, but actually rather common, combination of idealism with mechanical materialism. He is idealist in thinking that social contradictions can be overcome all at once and *now*, through the establishment of greater formal democracy and participation. On the other hand, he is a mechanical materialist in his attitude toward the forces of production, thinking that they can be simply developed on their own over a long period of time, and neglecting the interaction of the relations of production (along with politics and ideology) with the productive forces. Thus he actually downgrades the very struggle to overcome these contradictions in the real world.

For example, Bettelheim complains that as a result of the Cultural Revolution, "The *separation* of the immediate producers from their means of production was thus only overcome to a slight degree, and therefore capitalist and commodity relations continued to be reproduced."<sup>57</sup> But wasn't this inevitable? Was it *possible* to overcome this separation fully? No, it was not. And this is a major reason why it was necessary to remain vigilant in exercising the proletarian dictatorship and why it was crucial to recognize that the struggle did not and could not come to an end.

Bettelheim's one-sided denunciation of the "ideological heritage' derived from the degenerated form of the Bolshevik ideological formation dating from the end of the 1930s"<sup>58</sup> also is based upon very real questions. For if the reversals of the proletarian revolution in the Soviet Union and China teach anything, it is that the line of the international communist movement must be critically reviewed and revisionist errors which have infected it since the '30s must be ruthlessly rooted out. But this is not what Bettelheim's critique really does. For under the cover of rooting

out revisionism, Bettelheim really roots out Marxist materialism and dialectics! His blatant condemnation of the "degenerated form of Bolshevism" is undialectical and unproductive and merely feeds the revisionist notion that our only response to "failed history" must be to throw out "old dogma" (like the dictatorship of the proletariat) and adopt supposedly more up-to-date—but really old, incredibly out-dated *bourgeois*—ideas.

#### The Fundamental Error in "The Great Leap Backward"

At first reading it does seem that the fundamental weakness in Bettelheim's arguments is that he believes the mistakes made by Mao and the Four were responsible for their defeat. Indeed, the most objectionable parts of his essay come when he tries "to understand how matters have got to this state."<sup>59</sup> However, the fact that the revolutionaries did not fully succeed in their efforts to rouse the masses does not mean that they did not try or that their failure was due principally to their own errors. As Mao himself put it:

In social struggle, the forces representing the advanced class sometimes suffer defeat not because their ideas are incorrect but because, in the balance of forces engaged in struggle, they are not as powerful for the time being as the forces of reaction; they are therefore temporarily defeated, but they are bound to triumph sooner or later.<sup>60</sup>

This is true as well under socialism, where, owing to the development of internal contradictions as well as the international situation, the bourgeoisie may temporarily gain the upper hand. This is what has taken place in China.

As for the question of mistakes by the revolutionaries, of course they made some—no one can avoid that. But while it is correct to investigate and sum up those errors which may indeed have been made, this cannot be the main thing to focus on in analyzing the setback in China. If one takes this approach one will inevitably end up in the same revisionist swamp as Hua and Teng or, perhaps, the Hoxha variation on the same.<sup>61</sup>

Bettelheim's critical evaluation of the line and policies of the revolutionary forces in China leads away from the real lessons to be learned from this setback, including from the mistakes made by the revolutionaries, although as stated these are secondary. From what has been said so far, it is clear that in the final analysis what is wrong with "The Great Leap Backward" is not simply that its author is "too critical" of Mao and the Four or even that he incorrectly places the main share of the "blame" for the defeat on

their errors. What lies behind the criticisms Bettelheim levels at the revolutionary forces in China is an incorrect, fundamentally rightist, ideological and political line. It is a line greatly influenced by bourgeois-democratic and liberal conceptions, a social-democratic, very close to Trotskyite, line. The fundamental error (and great irony) in "The Great Leap Backward" is that, in the name of Mao Tsetung, its author liquidates, indeed attacks, what Mao fought, above all, to defend and strengthen—and in so doing provided pathbreaking leadership on the road to communism—the dictatorship of the proletariat.

## Part II. Bettelheim's Other Writings

These are harsh words, and to some they will seem unfair. In this critique so far it has been necessary to literally drag Bettelheim's incorrect line out from behind a few seemingly unfortunate phrases and paragraphs, and it might seem that too much is being read into these erroneous formulations. But an examination of other of Bettelheim's works and of his political history reveals that the weaknesses which mar "The Great Leap Backward" very definitely represent a distinct political line, one that runs counter to Marxism, a line built upon a shaky foundation of revisionist and Trotskyite formulations which Bettelheim has espoused in various forms for many years.

Who is Charles Bettelheim? His political biography is quite revealing. While Bettelheim has informed us that he is critical of many of the positions he held before 1968, in fact his past history is not at all what he would have us believe. For he has never made any kind of thorough self-criticism of his past associations with Trotskyism and other petty-bourgeois trends. This is not insignificant. Such a self-criticism would do more than expose past errors; much of what Bettelheim puts forward today is rooted in ideological and political views in which he has persisted since the '30s.\*

A complete account and analysis of Bettelheim's career is inappropriate to this article, but some revealing highlights must be

\*Most of the information on Bettelheim's pre-1968 career presented here is taken from Claude Varlet, *Critique de Bettelheim*, Vol. I: *La révolution d'octobre et les luttes de classes en URSS* (Paris, 1978). This illuminating study, of which only the first volume has appeared, is a quite detailed refutation of many of Bettelheim's propositions from a generally correct standpoint. It is a source of considerable information and makes many perceptive and telling criticisms of Bettelheim's line. However, while definitely upholding Mao Tsetung and the Cultural Revolution and calling correctly for further analysis of Soviet history and the Stalin era on the basis of Mao's line, the book does tend toward a somewhat one-sided defense of Stalin, which is linked also to a tendency to downplay the importance of the superstructure.

touched upon. Bettelheim entered the revolutionary movement during the period of the anti-fascist united front, a period in which the Communists in France and many other countries made serious revisionist errors. But although Bettelheim was affected by the revisionism and economism of this period, this was not his only problem. In 1939 he wrote a study (not published until 1946) of Soviet planning, a study marked by strong tendencies toward Trotskyism. Bettelheim explicitly holds here, for example, that Trotsky was the leader of "the Left" in the Bolshevik Party in the 1920s, and that by the time Bettelheim was writing, in 1939, power was exercised in the Soviet Union by a "bureaucratic-technical oligarchy."<sup>62</sup> Trotskyite tendencies are deep-rooted in Bettelheim.

### Bettelheim as Trotskyite

At the end of World War II Bettelheim became closely associated with a new journal, the *Revue Internationale*, as a member of its editorial committee. This journal was founded by one David Rousset, who split from the Trotskyite Parti Communiste Internationaliste in October 1945. Rousset's platform was summed up by the phrase "one must pass over the corpse of Stalinism to realize the socialist revolution."<sup>63</sup> What this meant was that it was necessary for the Trotskyites to put behind them the struggle of the '20s and move "beyond Stalin." This view had been denounced as a "capitulation to Stalinism" by the orthodox Trotskyites, but it did attract the attention of a number of "left" intellectuals seeking an "independent" (and safe) niche in the revolutionary movement.

The *Revue Internationale*, under the banner of "anti-dogmatism" and "freedom of criticism," united a wide and motley array of prominent Trotskyites, bourgeois academics, social democrats, anarchists and surrealists. What brought these people together was their common ideological hostility to the revolutionary heart of Marxism-Leninism and their concern about questions of Soviet history and politics. The journal rarely concerned itself with practical questions of revolutionary politics, and it virtually ignored the struggle against revisionism which was then beginning to heat up in the international communist movement. Most of its articles dealt, in a wooden and academic way, with Soviet affairs and socialist theory.

Bettelheim contributed several articles on the subject of socialist society to the pages of this politically questionable publication. In these writings he focused on themes destined to reappear in new form in his writings on China today. One subject of concern to Bettelheim was the continuing division between mental and manual labor and the relatively privileged positions en-

joyed by cadres and technicians under socialism. In his articles Bettelheim argued that these inequalities were inherited from capitalism but as the productive forces were developed the basis for their existence would gradually disappear. For example, he wrote:

The upper strata of the working class [cadres and technicians] are henceforth called on to fulfil some functions from which they had been excluded under capitalism. The necessity of these functions is, moreover, closely linked to the complexity of organization of the new society, a complexity which, during this whole period, makes the role of those charged with organizing the new society a decisive one. But clearly when the new society gains a certain stability, that is to say when the functions of organization cease to be as decisive as during the initial period, the role of these organizers will be considerably restrained.<sup>64</sup>

As for the division of labor which increasingly placed managers in command of society, Bettelheim condemned this but, like Trotsky and those who had developed Trotsky's theories in the immediate pre-war period (people like Burnham in the U.S. and Rizzi in Italy)\* he saw no way to fight it, arguing instead that this "managerial society" reflected the transitional character of Soviet society and would ultimately fade away:

This division of labor represents simply the provisional maintenance of a situation which existed already in capitalist society, which survives for technical reasons and can disappear only when, on the one hand, the tasks of management become sufficiently simple and when, on the other hand, the general level of knowledge and of culture has reached a sufficiently high level.<sup>65</sup>

While more openly rightist in its essence, this line is essentially similar in its fundamentals to the line Bettelheim holds today. Today Bettelheim argues that classes and class struggle continue under socialism and even that class distinctions and the division of

\*Bruno Rizzi published *La Bureaucratization du Monde* (The Bureaucratization of the World) just before the outbreak of World War 2. In it he held that the Soviet Union was neither capitalist nor socialist (nor in transition to socialism), but exemplified a brand-new form of exploitation called "bureaucratic collectivism." Rizzi's theory was seized upon by U.S. Trotskyites like Max Schachtman and James Burnham. The latter went on, as an ex-Trotskyite, to write *The Managerial Revolution* (which put forward the same ideas, but without an attempted Marxist cover), and ended up on the editorial board of William F. Buckley's arch-reactionary *National Review*.

labor must be narrowed step by step. But at the same time he fails to see how continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat is the way to do this. In these *Revue Internationale* articles, just as in a different way in "The Great Leap Backward," Bettelheim denies that the political power of the proletariat can be applied to reduce the differences between mental and manual labor and other inequalities inherited from capitalism. In essence, he argues that socialist revolution isn't needed; the development of the productive forces alone is adequate.

In fact in these articles Bettelheim went so far as to *defend the privileges of managers and technicians*. As he put it: "The privileges of the upper strata of the working class are in no way violations of principle but to the contrary they are inherent necessities of the development of socialist society."<sup>66</sup> In other words, the proletariat cannot wage revolution under its dictatorship to step-by-step transform the base and narrow differences; only the development of production will guarantee this. But until the productive forces reach the stage when such inequalities will (magically, perhaps) disappear, the proletariat must continually defend and "regulate" their existence. Isn't this Hua Kuo-feng's line?\*

It is true that, at the time Bettelheim was writing this, the understanding of the international communist movement—including its leaders, like Stalin—was not nearly as developed as it became later, especially through Mao Tsetung's contributions. Bettelheim's positions then were in many ways in line with (or were the "flip side" of) errors being made in the Soviet Union with regard to these questions. But, again, our purpose here in analyzing Bettelheim's earlier writings is to uncover the foundation for erroneous positions that have continued to characterize, and mar, Bettelheim's line up to the present time.

In "The Great Leap Backward" Bettelheim contends in essence that, given the continuation of classes and the inequalities which persist under socialism, the key to defending the interests of the working class at this stage is the extension of democracy. And this theme too can be found in his early *Revue Internationale* writings. He wrote that formal democracy is in fact the answer to the problem of inequality under socialism: "As in all previous societies the proletarian state can assume both authoritarian and democratic forms. The democratic forms will not cease asserting

\*This is strikingly reminiscent of a point made in defense of the Chinese revisionists by a pretentious Menshevik scribbler last fall at the US-China Peoples Friendship Association convention in San Francisco. This puffed-up professor, speaking at a workshop on China's economy, made the "profound" analysis that since bourgeois right can only be restricted, not eliminated, under socialism, the call for its restriction must also be a call for its defense! This unabashed exercise in eclectics is really not so different from the position Bettelheim presents in these early articles.



themselves. . . In proletarian society democracy is based on the existence of different social strata within the dominant class."<sup>67</sup> In other words, what we have here is a kind of "proletarian" pluralism; the various strata of the working class "democratically" resolve their differences just as the capitalists before them used "democracy" to resolve the contradictions which divided them. But such "democracy" is no response at all to the problems of inequality, etc., under socialism. In fact such a view is but a denial of revolution, of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is nothing but bourgeois liberalism.

It is true, of course, that in socialist society there are different strata among the workers and different political tendencies, too. But this is an expression of the fact that, materially and ideologically, socialist society is, as Marx said, stamped with the birthmarks of the old society (there will always be different and conflicting political tendencies in society, even under communism, but in socialist society these are determined by the continuing existence of classes and class struggle). And through all this remains the salient fact that the workers are one class with one class interest, which they can and must grasp and unite around on the basis of consciously applying the science of Marxism. All this does not deny the fact that there is only one correct line and that, while the free expression of opinions and the struggle over ideas, etc., must be encouraged and developed among the masses, still one opinion is not just as good as another. And all this does not deny but on the contrary emphasizes the importance of leadership, of the party's vanguard role based on its correct line—and in this sense of centralism, founded on democracy (as summarized earlier).

#### Bettelheim as Sweezyite

The *Revue Internationale* ceased publication in 1951, its editor, Rousset, having left in 1949 to found the petty-bourgeois Rassemblement Democratique Revolutionaire with Jean-Paul Sartre. Bettelheim then rejoined the Communist Party from which he had exited in 1945, but he continued to orient himself to the world of petty-bourgeois intellectualist "Marxism." Between 1951 and 1968 Bettelheim's politics were an eclectic mish-mash of a number of fashionable leftist trends, including Khrushchevite revisionism (despite his recent claims to the contrary, he was an early apologist for the revisionist theses of the 20th Congress of the CPSU), Trotskyism and "third worldism."

Bettelheim was especially drawn to the ideas being propagated in the United States during this period by Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy (who had also been on the editorial board of the *Revue Internationale*). The Baran-Sweezy line (which was dissected in an ar-

ticle, "Against Sweezy's Political Economy" in *The Communist*, Vol. 2, No. 1) was a specific reflection of the post-WW 2 period. At this time U.S. imperialism was riding high and, despite tremendous losses, the imperialist system overall had temporarily stabilized under U.S. leadership. In this situation the U.S. monopoly capitalists were able to use their increased power internationally to temporarily avoid serious crises at home. The main focus of the international class struggle shifted to the national liberation movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Baran and Sweezy explained all this by arguing that in the monopoly stage the laws of capitalism discovered by Marx no longer apply. They argued that the main problem with monopoly capitalism is not crisis but the tendency of the system to produce a "surplus" which cannot be consumed in a sensible way, thus leading to stagnation, waste and anarchy.

Bettelheim quickly embraced these ideas which were at the time being echoed as well in leading circles of the revisionist Communist Party of France. He applauded the publication of Baran's *The Political Economy of Growth* as "a fundamental contribution to the progress of economic thought."<sup>68</sup> In his 1967 book, *Planification et croissance acceleree* (Planning and Accelerated Growth) Bettelheim expanded upon Baran and Sweezy's notion of the "surplus." Like these writers he based his arguments on the assumption that the inability of the capitalist system to develop production in a rational way can be separated from the fundamental contradiction of capitalist production, the exploitation of the working class by the bourgeoisie.

Like many other petty-bourgeois reformers before him, Bettelheim (as had Baran and Sweezy) confined his criticism of capitalism to its inability to guarantee rational economic growth. In other words, he separated the question of developing the productive forces from the relations of production in which they develop. This led Bettelheim to extol planning, which he treated as the essence of socialism, as the "answer" to the problems caused by the anarchy of capitalism and its market. As he put it:

The market economy and the planned economy are fundamentally opposed to each other. In a market economy real and ultimate economic decisions are made by individual economic agents as a function of their particular material interests. The capitalist economy is the most developed form of the market economy.<sup>69</sup>

Bettelheim applied Baran and Sweezy's reformist theories to the political economy of socialism. And the result of this application was an economist and narrow view of socialism which essentially limited the transformation of society to the spheres of distribution

and management. Bettelheim one-sidedly stressed planning as opposed to the anarchy of the capitalist market. In doing so he abandons the central point of socialism—the rule of the proletariat over society and its use of that rule to transform both base and superstructure and move toward communism. In his hands socialism became little more than an effective strategy for economic growth, especially in the underdeveloped countries. This, by the way, is how he came to serve so many governments as an economic advisor.

### Bettelheim as Khrushchevite

Bettelheim propagated this economist vision of socialism in various ways in a series of essays he published between 1962 and 1967. These were collected in a book, *La transition vers l'économie socialiste* (The Transition to Socialist Economy). In this book Bettelheim eclectically combined a number of Trotskyite and revisionist theses in an attempt to “explain” the course which the Soviet Union and its allies in Eastern Europe had been following since the mid-'50s. As the title itself indicates, the book was based on the incorrect Trotskyite theory of “transitional society,” which, it will be recalled, appeared in “The Great Leap Backward” and was criticized earlier in this article. In this earlier work Bettelheim posited the thesis that there is a long period of transition between capitalism and “socialism” during which there can be no stable mode of production with its own laws. Thus, this entire period of transitional society is inevitably characterized by a non-correspondence between the forces and relations of production,

...and it seems that the specific form of this non-correspondence of the phase of transition to socialism must be the following: the mode of property is formally—for the principal means of production—that of the entire society, while the mode of actual appropriation is still that of limited collectives of workers, for it is only at the level of these collectives that the real appropriation of nature can be effected. . . . When there is a correspondence between the mode of appropriation and the mode of property . . . the phase of transition will end.<sup>70</sup>

It is true, of course, that the continuing existence of the contradiction—or “non-correspondence”—between the forces and relations of production is an extremely important aspect of socialist society, and correctly understanding this, and the results and implications of it, is a very important requirement for advancing the revolution. Bettelheim's presentation of this question, his understanding of the nature and consequences of this contradic-

tion, is, however, by no means entirely correct. He identifies the essence of it as the “non-correspondence” between “the mode of appropriation and the mode of property.” There is, it is true, something to this point. There is under socialism the contradiction between formal state (or collective) ownership and the various aspects of management and administration, etc., as well as of distribution, which still reflect the influence—or, in the case of distribution, the dominance—of “bourgeois right.” And the elimination of these remnants of the old society is a crucial task during the transition period.

But two things here. First, this transition is the transition to *communism*, and not to socialism, which is itself the long transition period between capitalism and communism, characterized politically by the dictatorship of the proletariat. And second, the complete elimination of the “non-correspondence” between “the mode of appropriation and the mode of property,” as Bettelheim envisions it, will never be achieved, even under communism, because to a certain extent it will always be true that “it is only at the level of these collectives that the appropriation of nature can be effected.” That is, there will never be a time when production is not carried out by separate units of society, in one form or another, and when some kind of exchange—though not commodity exchange—is no longer required. Ownership and appropriation by all of society will always be relative and never absolute. And it will always be the case that there will be contradiction (“non-correspondence”) between the forces and relations of production (and the base and superstructure) though these will find different expression in different conditions and at different stages—and under communism specifically they will not find expression in class distinctions. As against this understanding, Bettelheim's metaphysics, and idealism, stand out once again.

Applying his views (including the significant errors contained in them) to socialist society, Bettelheim came to the conclusion that the political economy of socialist countries—or, as he would have it, of “societies in transition”—must begin with the “recognition” of this non-correspondence and of the fact that this means that “fully socialist” relations of production cannot be achieved overnight. And on this basis Bettelheim joined in the revisionist criticism of the Stalin years as characterized by “voluntarism.” As he put it:

If for a long period the changes made in the organization of the socialist sector of the Soviet economy have been due above all to immediate practical considerations, this has hardly been the fruit of a profound theoretical analysis. It is only recently that this has changed and that, at the level of organization of the socialist sector,

the exigencies of the law of correspondence between the relations of production and the character of the productive forces has been taken into account.<sup>71</sup>

Bettelheim thus found himself in unity with Khrushchev's proposals for economic reform. In the spirit of the notorious revisionist economist Liberman, Bettelheim declared that for thirty years socialist construction in the Soviet Union had "neglected, on the tactical level, the exigency of maximizing economic efficiency."<sup>72</sup> On this basis he rationalized many of the economic reforms carried out in the Soviet Union in the early 1960s, reforms which marked the restoration of capitalism in the specific form of state monopoly capitalism in that country.<sup>73</sup>

Now it is true that Stalin did fail to fully recognize the continuing contradictions of socialist society, that, especially after ownership was basically socialized in the 1930s, and up until the last few years of his life in the early 1950s, he tended to argue that the productive forces and the relations of production were in complete harmony, etc. And this did lead, especially in the early '30s, to some "voluntarist" errors, i.e., errors stemming from not fully and correctly recognizing the effects of the continued operation of the law of value in socialism, etc. But Bettelheim turns this criticism on its head. For the very point of *recognizing* the continuing contradictions of socialist society can never be to capitulate to them, but can only be to more consciously struggle to overcome them. And Bettelheim very significantly fails to stress that in today's world the fundamental contradiction between productive forces and production relations (as well as between base and superstructure) finds its principal expression in the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Only the revolutionary victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie can liberate the productive forces. Bettelheim "forgets" this basic principle.

#### Debate With Sweezy

During the 1960s, the Chinese polemic against Soviet revisionism and the outburst of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, and then the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union, apparently combined to force Bettelheim to reconsider many of the political conclusions he had been drawing from his research in political economy, particularly his rationalization of Soviet revisionism. When Paul Sweezy published an essay on the Czech experience which posited that the key to staying on the socialist road was strengthening the dominance of planning over spontaneous market forces, Bettelheim wrote a response which initiated a widely followed debate between the two, which was later published in an important book, *On the Transition to Socialism*.

Bettelheim certainly agreed with Sweezy's condemnation of the Soviet invasion, but he objected to his argument that "whoever acts to strengthen the market instead of struggling against the market is, regardless of intentions, promoting capitalism and not socialism."<sup>74</sup> According to Bettelheim,

... the contradiction "plan"- "market" designates an essential contradiction in socialism viewed as a *transitional* or *passing* form; this contradiction is the *surface effect* caused by a deeper contradiction, by the basic contradiction in the transitional form which is obviously situated at the level of the production relationships and productive forces... What characterizes socialism as opposed to capitalism is not (as your article suggests) the existence or non-existence of market relationships, money, and prices, but the existence of the domination of the proletariat, of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is through the exercise of this dictatorship in all areas—economic, political, ideological—that market relations can be progressively eliminated by means of *concrete* measures adapted to *concrete situations and conjunctures*.<sup>75</sup>

This statement capsulizes the position Bettelheim took against Sweezy, and because he took this stand his contributions to this decade-old debate definitely stand as the high-water mark in his career. In no other work did Bettelheim come closer to the correct line. Especially for their time, the ideas he expressed in this debate were in a sense pathbreaking and what he wrote helped many understand much better the true nature of the struggle for socialism. It seemed then that Bettelheim was destined to make important contributions in summing up the lessons of both capitalist restoration in the Soviet Union and the Cultural Revolution in China. Had he continued in the direction he was heading at this time and had he more thoroughly summed up his past weaknesses, this would have been the case.

But even in this, his best work, there were significant weaknesses. Most importantly, while Bettelheim recognized the dictatorship of the proletariat here, he still did so in the context of the "transitional society" thesis, and thus he failed to really grasp the essence of this dictatorship. In particular, he once again did not understand that this dictatorship in the superstructure can and must be an instrument for transforming the economic base. Instead he undialectically posed the role of this dictatorship as just establishing the political prerequisites for this transformation, which apparently must take place spontaneously or as a byproduct of developing production. As he puts it:

... the essential effect of the dictatorship of the proletariat is to make it possible to establish some of the political conditions that must obtain before the direct producers can achieve collective social control over their means of production and conditions of existence.<sup>76</sup>

According to Bettelheim what distinguishes the proletarian state from the bourgeois state is, once again as in "The Great Leap Backward," the non-top-down character of the workers' government:

The basic *difference* between a proletarian state apparatus and a bourgeois state apparatus is the *non-separation* of the proletarian state apparatus from the masses, its *subordination* to the masses, i.e., the disappearance of what Lenin called "a state in the proper sense," and its replacement by "the proletariat organized as the ruling class."<sup>77</sup>

Of course, Bettelheim acknowledges that such a state must be led by a communist party, but here too he argues that the most important thing is that the party maintain formal democratic ties with the masses:

In brief, a ruling party can be a proletarian party only if it refrains from *imposing orders* on the masses and remains the *instrument* of their initiatives. This is possible only if it submits fully to *criticism on the part of the masses*, if it does not try to *impose* "necessary" tasks upon the masses, if it proceeds from what the masses are prepared to do toward the development of socialist relationships.<sup>78</sup>

And further:

The role of the party, therefore, consists not only in defining sound objectives, but also in grasping what the masses are prepared to do and in leading them forward *without ever resorting to coercion*, and by advancing slogans and directives which the masses can *make their own*, elaborating adequate tactics and strategy, and helping the masses to *organize themselves*.<sup>79</sup>

Here the reader will quickly recognize several of Bettelheim's incorrect themes from "The Great Leap Backward," most especially the appeal to petty-bourgeois democratic prejudices. What is missing, however, is once again the fundamental question of the party's

*line* and its crucial task of educating the masses in Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tsetung Thought so that in the course of struggle they can distinguish genuine from sham Marxism. Once again there is no mention of content, of proletarian ideology, which must guide the party and be embodied in its policies and actions, but only a one-sided emphasis on formalistic criteria.

Bettelheim's party is really just an enlightened educator—a group of condescending saviors who have their fingers on the "pulse" of the people. According to Bettelheim, "The only 'guarantee' of progress along the road to socialism is the real capacity of the ruling party not to become separated from the masses."<sup>80</sup>

Here again, Bettelheim has a point—or part of a point. The tendency for the party, especially its leading cadres, to become separated from the masses and to be transformed in fact into overlords over and actual exploiters of the masses is a serious problem and poses a grave danger under socialism. Mao repeatedly warned of this and more than that developed the scientific thesis that those in power taking the capitalist road become the bourgeoisie right in the party. Obviously, resolving this contradiction between the leadership and the led in a revolutionary way—developing the concrete means to link the cadres with the masses and narrow differences between them to the greatest degree possible at every point, to strengthen the political supervision by the masses over the cadres, and to identify, isolate and overthrow die-hard capitalist-roaders—is a decisive question confronting the party and the masses all throughout the socialist period.

But what is to keep the party in touch with the masses in the first place? "Democratic" institutions? Populist sentiment? And what is the party's *purpose* in fusing with the masses—is it to stand at their head or merely in their midst? The party will remain in close contact with the masses and will continue to lead them on the socialist road only if it continually and concretely leads them in waging sharp political and ideological struggle against the bourgeoisie—including and especially the bourgeoisie in the party—and if such struggle is also carried out inside the party itself. This is the key, the only "guarantee," that the party will not turn color.\*

\*Even when Bettelheim shows signs of recognizing the incorrectness of his line of thought he simply turns around and falls into it with renewed vigor. Thus he says:

Without resorting to the formalistic use of "abstract criteria" posited without any reference to time and place, it can be stated that an extremely important characteristic of non-proletarian state power, or of state power that has largely ceased to be proletarian, is the fact

### Economic Calculation and Forms of Property

After the Czech invasion Bettelheim decided to embark on his mammoth project of reinterpreting Soviet history. Following the debate with Sweezy, his first step was to deal with certain theoretical questions. In his previous work he had stressed two themes. First, he had emphasized in a formalistic petty-bourgeois way the need for more extensive democracy and working class participation in government under socialism. Second, he had continually called attention to the continued existence under socialism of commodity/market relationships and declared that this was why there were still inequalities and privileges in socialist countries. He had argued quite strenuously that socialist planning must recognize the continuing existence of these bourgeois relations and their basis in the continuing operation of the economic laws of commodity production in order to avoid voluntarist errors and thus develop production efficiently.

But these views had led him to welcome the Khrushchevite takeover. He had accepted at face value that bloated demagogue's assault on the "tyrannical" rule of Stalin and his phony promises of greater democracy. He had welcomed the revisionist "economic reforms" as a long overdue recognition of the role played in the planned economy by the law of value. Yet Bettelheim now understood he had been fooled. The Soviet revisionists were not talking *his* language. Thus his problem became to discover just where he had gone wrong.

In a certain sense this is why Bettelheim wrote his 1970 volume *Economic Calculation and Forms of Property*, which is now available in an English-language paperback edition. This work, more than any other, is the "Bible" of Bettelheimism. In its pages Bettelheim set out to do nothing less than "to produce and to specify the concepts necessary for the analysis of social formations in transition between capitalism and socialism, primarily with the aim of determining the meaning of monetary calculation and economic calculation. . . ."<sup>82</sup> While not very long, the book is extremely dense. Difficult to understand and written at a very high level of

that the state apparatus is placed above the masses and acts in an authoritarian manner with respect to the masses.<sup>81</sup>

Although now this "separation" of the state from the masses has been demoted from "the basic difference between a proletarian state apparatus and a bourgeois state apparatus" (which Bettelheim had claimed it was only a few paragraphs previous to this), to "an extremely important characteristic," and although now he warns against using formalistic and abstract criteria, it is plain that he is still putting forward the same incorrect picture. For what is his use of the ideas of separation and coercion except the use of purely formalistic criteria, abstracted not only from time and place, but more importantly from the line and content of the policies of the state and party?

abstraction, it articulates in a very refined way the basic themes, correct and incorrect, of Bettelheim's line. Although it merits a close (and critical) reading by students of the political economy of socialism, a thorough analysis of its strengths and weaknesses is well beyond the scope of this article. However, one specific passage deserves some comment here. This reads:

In effect, during the transitional period, the state (or a political form fulfilling the same functions in this respect) is the support for "social" property. This means that this property *is not social*, since it is exercised by the state "in the name of society." Thus, *even at the level of property, the immediate producers are separated from their means of production: they are only "proprietors" through the intermediary of the state.*

The real significance of state property *depends on the real relations* existing between the mass of the workers and the state apparatus. If this apparatus is really and *concretely* dominated by workers (instead of being situated above them and dominating them), then state property is the legal form of the workers' social property; on the other hand, if the workers do not dominate the state apparatus, if it is dominated by a body of functionaries and administrators, and if it escapes the control and direction of the working masses, then this body of functionaries and administrators effectively *becomes the proprietor* (in the sense of a relation of production) of the means of production. This body then forms a *social class* (a state bourgeoisie) because of the relation existing between itself and the means of production, on the one hand, and the workers on the other.<sup>83</sup>

The significance of this passage lies in its implicit treatment of the forces/relations, base/superstructure contradictions. In the past Bettelheim had determined that bourgeois commodity relations were inevitable under socialism essentially because they reflected the state of development of the productive forces. Only the development of production would make it possible to further transform these relations. Until then, Bettelheim postulated, "socialist democracy" would prove the best defense against any negative effects stemming from the inequalities and privileges which derived from this, although, of course, even this democracy had to be limited because the superstructure must reflect the economic base. In *Economic Calculation and Forms of Property* Bettelheim explicitly rejects this whole view. However, he fails to grasp that the essence of his error lay in his mechanical *separation* of forces and relations and of base and superstructure. Instead of

grasping that the answer lies in a correct understanding of the dialectical nature of these contradictions, he merely turns his previous error upside down. It is economism, he declares, to argue that the productive forces determine the production relations which in turn determine the nature of the superstructure. The truth is the other way around, he says. Under socialism it is production relations that are determined by the superstructure.

This is the meaning of the passage cited. Bettelheim's argument in the debate with Sweezy that it is the existence or non-existence of the dictatorship of the proletariat which will determine whether a society remains on the socialist road or not is here idealistically extended to make the nature of political relations the *determining* factor in socialist society. Now this would seem to "upgrade" the importance of the superstructure and thus run counter to the line in "The Great Leap Backward." But since this line (in *Economic Calculation and Forms of Property*) is really just a *mirror image* and not a fundamental refutation of economism, its essence is still rightist and economist and it is thus very easy to flip from one side to the other. Bettelheim doesn't put emphasis on the *active* and *initiating* role which the superstructure must play in *transforming* the base; he just argues that a state "democratically" controlled and directed by the workers will counteract, so to speak, the existence of bourgeois relations in the base. In other words, despite turning his former economism upside down, Bettelheim remains a prisoner of the theory of the productive forces. He stresses the superstructure only to put more emphasis on his bourgeois-democratic conception of "socialist democracy."

What Bettelheim misses is the dialectical relation between strengthening the masses' control of the state and generally carrying out revolution in the superstructure on the one hand and on the other hand continuing to transform the production relations. The ability of the proletariat to maintain power and continue the advance toward communism, the material base of the proletarian dictatorship, is the socialist economic base, and first and foremost the socialist ownership system. On the basis of the initial transformation of the base, embodied in the socialist (state and collective) ownership system, the workers can and must strengthen their actual control and direction over the state, which in turn enables them to further transform the base. But despite the necessary steps to increase the mastery of the masses over the state organs, it remains true that so long as there is the state, even the proletarian state cannot help but stand above the workers to a certain degree, and, in a certain sense, dominate them. Elementary Marxism teaches that this derives from its very nature as a state.

Only when communist relations of production exist, which have no bourgeois aspects, will the state no longer stand above the workers—it will have withered away. The point is how to get to

this, how to correctly grasp the dialectical relationship between base and superstructure (and forces and relations of production) in order to carry the struggle forward; in other words how to continue the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

### Class Struggles in the USSR

Bettelheim's in-progress study of Soviet history, *Class Struggles in the USSR*, of which two volumes have appeared covering the years 1917-1923 and 1923-1930 respectively, has attracted considerable attention. Many see it as an historic work characterized by both a high level of scholarship and a clear political vision. To some it is nothing less than the most thorough presentation of the "Maoist" position on the degeneration of Soviet society published to date. Yet in actuality these two volumes are quite disappointing to anyone who turns to them in search of either factual information or, more significantly, enlightening Marxist commentary on questions of socialist construction and revolution. First of all, despite their length, when it comes right down to it there really isn't all that much that is new in these books. Bettelheim himself has done little or no original research. Instead he has relied upon published works of bourgeois and Trotskyite historians. He has drawn some very interesting material from these sources, but his overriding tendency is to eclectically and selectively combine this material to simply illustrate (but not really concretize or expand upon) the theoretical propositions espoused in *Economic Calculation and Forms of Property*. Hence the study is at best uneven. In places it is very informative and the analysis is certainly thought-provoking. But elsewhere it is just tedious and wordy. Again, while a full critique goes beyond our task here, some further brief comments need to be made, since some of the weaknesses of this work reflect similar problems in Bettelheim's handling of the China question.

The first point which needs emphasis is that in the more than 1200 published pages of this supposedly "Maoist" study there is not a single reference to the restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union! Indeed, there is as yet no real evidence that Bettelheim actually believes this is what has happened. The introduction to volume one of *Class Struggles in the USSR* speaks about the 20th Congress of the CPSU, at which Khrushchev opened his frontal assault on Stalin and the dictatorship of the proletariat. According to Bettelheim the congress

... seemed to confirm that the Soviet Union, having reached a certain level of economic development, was now about to enter upon a phase of greater socialist democracy, thus opening up vast opportunities for

working-class initiative. This congress seemed to show, too, that the party had retained—or rather, had recovered—the capacity for self-criticism that was essential if errors were to be rectified.<sup>84</sup>

But this was Bettelheim's old line. He now realizes that "this was not at all the case."<sup>85</sup> Nonetheless his criticism of the revisionist line consolidated at that congress is still quite limited and one can only be left to wonder *why* it was not the case. In his current view the congress was mistaken only because:

The contradictory reality of Soviet history and Soviet society was not subject to the least analysis. The aspects of reality which needed to be condemned and transformed were not explained in relation to the inner contradictions of the Soviet Union. They were presented as being "perversions" due to the actions of a certain "personality," namely, Stalin. The acceptance by the Soviet Communist Party of such a pseudoexplanation testified to its abandonment of Marxism as a tool of analysis. This made the party incapable of helping to transform the social relations that had given rise to that which was being condemned in words. The pseudoexplanation given thus fulfilled its task of consolidating the class relations which concentrated economic and political power in the hands of a minority, so that the contradictions engendered by these class relations, far from diminishing, were actually deepened.<sup>86</sup>

This is as close as Bettelheim has yet to come to acknowledging the restoration of capitalism. What *kind* of new "class relations" were consolidated? This he has still to say! In fact this line isn't really very different from the revisionist line taken in the late '50s by Togliatti, the Italian father of the "eurocommunist" trend of revisionism. Togliatti agreed with Khrushchev that everything was rotten under Stalin, but he argued that no real explanation of why this happened was being offered; the "cult of personality" just didn't make it. Now, of course, the "cult of personality" really doesn't explain anything, but the real point to be made in opposition to Khrushchev is that everything was *not* rotten under Stalin! That, in fact, the dictatorship of the proletariat and the building of socialism were carried out under Stalin's leadership after all. And here both Togliatti and Bettelheim remain silent.

Bettelheim also fails to acknowledge the capitalist-imperialist basis of current Soviet foreign policy, which he presents in this introduction as "... more and more like that of a great power seek-

ing to secure as many economic and political advantages as possible for itself by utilizing the close relations it has formed with other countries."<sup>87</sup> What an inadequate, un-Marxist, view! There is no mention at all here of the export of capital, of the *economic* basis of imperialist politics. (Yet another instance of Bettelheim's separation of politics and economics.) In fact he carefully refrains from characterizing the Soviet Union's present role in the world as *being* imperialist.

Far from recognizing that the Soviet social-imperialists, like their U.S. rivals, are driven by the demands of the profit system to seek hegemony abroad, Bettelheim writes as if their expansionism is just a stupid mistake. He says: "In order to have at their disposal instruments of an imperialist-type foreign policy, the Soviet leaders are imposing a heavy burden on the people of the USSR, which hinders the country's economic development."<sup>88</sup> This is ridiculous! One might well ask what it is that makes them imperialists. Do these revisionists just have big ambitions and a great-nation swagger? Don't they like economic development?

A comment is also called for on Bettelheim's discussion of the Soviet New Economic Policy, adopted in 1921, which appears toward the close of the first volume. The NEP marked a "retreat" by the Soviet state in the specific situation that developed after the victorious civil war. During the civil war the economy had been run according to the principles of "war communism," in which economic laws were in effect short-circuited. Grain, for instance, was requisitioned and rationed, and there was no market. Private enterprise in industry was completely wiped out. At the war's end, however, the Bolsheviks were forced to recognize that, while "war communism" had been appropriate to the emergency war situation, it could not be applied to the situation after the war. As the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Short Course)* put it,

War Communism had been an attempt to take the fortress of the capitalist elements in town and countryside by assault, by a frontal attack. In this offensive the Party had gone too far ahead, and ran the risk of being cut off from its base. Now Lenin proposed to retire a little, to retreat for a while nearer to the base, to change from an assault of the fortress to the slower method of siege, so as to gather strength and resume the offensive.<sup>89</sup>

Bettelheim, however, labels the notion of a "retreat" a "misleading metaphor." In his view

... the NEP was not really a retreat, but only apparently so. It corresponded to the abandonment of measures

that were illusory from the standpoint of progress toward socialism (even if necessary in order to cope with the demands of war), because they could not affect the profound nature of economic relations. Abandoning such measures meant not a "retreat" but an "advance," for to take one's stand on real relations instead of on illusory ones is in fact to advance: and such an advance is necessary if the real social relations are actually to be transformed.<sup>90</sup>

But the analogy of a retreat was crucial. The NEP did clarify for the Bolsheviks that commodity relations and economic laws could not be eliminated overnight, that socialism is itself still a form of commodity production. As Lenin was already stressing, this was why a new bourgeoisie could be engendered from various sources under socialism. The NEP was a recognition of reality, as Bettelheim says, but it was also still a retreat. For the Bolsheviks could not lose sight of the fact that the final goal remained the elimination of the commodity system. That this could not come about in the go-for-broke way that war communism seemed to imply did not mean that further struggle, including more revolutionary "frontal assaults" on the fortresses of the bourgeoisie, was uncalled for. In fact Lenin's line on the NEP presupposed a resumption of frontal warfare and the abandonment of this "state of siege." And such a changeover did come about in 1929 with the collectivization of agriculture and the launching of the first five year plan.

But Bettelheim goes further than just holding that the NEP represented recognition of reality in 1921. He claims that it was the recognition of the reality of the entire period of socialism. He goes to considerable lengths to supposedly show that just before his death Lenin himself came to recognize that the NEP was not a retreat but in fact *the* strategy for building (or, in Bettelheim's view, advancing to) socialism, in conjunction, of course, with measures designed to insure greater "socialist democracy." In this he is not very different from both the Soviet and Chinese revisionists, who are also fond of citing Lenin's writings of this period in support of their policies of capitalist restoration. Like Bettelheim they conveniently avoid Lenin's formulation of the NEP as a retreat to get away with contending that its essence was the recognition of the persistence of market relationships, etc., under socialism. As espoused by the Soviet and Chinese revisionists, this serves to rationalize capitalist restoration. As espoused by Bettelheim, it is a line of naive reformism.

What Bettelheim is really saying in his passages on the NEP is this: In building socialism we must recognize that commodity relations, classes, etc., will exist and that our task is a protracted one.

Therefore, to transform society and in the end rid ourselves of these bourgeois holdovers, we must be aware of them. We can't drive them underground but must let them develop. (Are you listening Chinese revisionists? Although Bettelheim is opposed to you on the surface, there is a deeper identity between you on certain key points—bourgeois right is a necessary part of socialism and must thus be defended. As you put it: " 'To each according to his work' is not an obsolete capitalist principle; on the contrary, it is a new-born socialist thing, a socialist principle. . . ." <sup>91</sup>)

This line is nothing but gradualism and lifeless reformism. Bettelheim wants everything to develop in an orderly way. But things don't. There are leaps, contradictions sharpen and come to a head. Lenin's line on the NEP recognized this, and that is why he did refer to it as a retreat to a *temporary* state of siege. In fact one might say that the wave-like development of things virtually guarantees that the class struggle under socialism will always develop in a pattern of alternating states of siege and revolutionary frontal assaults, qualitative leaps forward, on the fortresses of capitalism.

It is clear especially from Bettelheim's second volume that he doesn't grasp this at all. Indeed, he fears the qualitative leaps, the moments of revolutionary upsurge, "coercive" as they so generally are. According to Bettelheim it was the failure of the Bolshevik leadership after Lenin to correctly understand the "true meaning" of the NEP which led to that policy's hasty and, in Bettelheim's view, incorrect abandonment. Bettelheim completely fails to comprehend the new revolutionary leap which took place in the Soviet Union in 1929. In his study the end of the NEP appears more as a disaster than anything else. Although he never states it openly, it is crystal clear to anyone who gives volume two even a superficial reading that Bettelheim would have much preferred the Soviet Party to have followed the line of Bukharin instead of the line of Stalin. Indeed, volume two is little more than an eclectic combination of Mao Tsetung Thought and Bukharinism (sprinkled, of course, with healthy doses of Trotskyism—after all, both Trotsky and Bukharin were essentially social democrats). And in this combination it is definitely the Bukharinism that is primary.

Of course, as gone into earlier, it is not being argued here that Stalin's line, even in the '20s, was flawless, and it is recognized that Bettelheim does make some illuminating criticisms. Mao learned much from the mistakes Stalin made during this time, particularly in collectivization, and the way China handled these problems, even given the differing conditions, was a significant advance. But Mao was in no way a Bukharinist, and whatever Stalin's weaknesses, his line did indeed represent the proletariat in opposition to the bourgeoisie, and the victories won under his leadership were surely great ones.



### Once Again on China

Before concluding it will be useful to look briefly at Bettelheim's writings about China before the coup. He published two books on China before contributing to *China Since Mao*. The first, co-authored with Jacques Charriere and Helene Marchisio, *La construction du socialisme en Chine* (The Construction of Socialism in China) was written in 1965 just as the Cultural Revolution was beginning. The second book, *Cultural Revolution and Industrial Organization in China*, is widely available in English. It first appeared in France in 1973. In these works (mainly, however, in the latter) Bettelheim made positive contributions to building understanding of the Chinese revolution. But in both volumes there are a number of errors which once again reflect the overall weaknesses in Bettelheim's line.

In *La construction du socialisme en Chine* we find the following passages describing the stages of development of the Chinese revolution:

This objective situation, combined with a policy of the popular democratic united front, the policy practiced by the CPC, has permitted the maintenance of the coalition of three classes throughout the course of the stage of people's democracy, up to the stage of the transition toward socialism. This stage . . . has led to the socialist transformation of the economy . . .

Starting from this moment (1956) the true construction of socialism began on the basis of resolving the principal contradiction of the previous period, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, in favor of the proletariat. This contradiction still exists but it is no longer the principal contradiction.

In order to build socialism one must progressively resolve the principal contradiction of the new period, that between the advanced forms of socialist property and the still low level of development of the productive forces.<sup>92</sup>

Here Bettelheim makes two fundamental errors. First of all he essentially denies that the PRC was a proletarian state since 1949. The people's democratic dictatorship is not a transitional form leading to the establishment of proletarian rule. It is itself a form of the dictatorship of the proletariat, suitable to a (formerly) semi-colonial, semi-feudal country, where victory in the new-democratic revolution under the leadership of the proletariat opens the door to socialism. Bettelheim's line here is the precise line which had been defended in the early '50s by Liu Shao-chi (and Chou En-lai too).

Liu (and Chou), like Bettelheim, did not acknowledge that with the founding of the People's Republic in 1949 China had begun the socialist revolution. Instead he argued for a long period of "consolidation of the new democratic society."

Similarly, Bettelheim's argument that the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is no longer the principal contradiction under socialism, having been replaced by the so-called "contradiction between the advanced forms of socialist property and the still low level of development of the productive forces," is also Liu's line. In fact this whole book reeks of the "theory of the productive forces," even where it does a relatively good job of popularizing some of the advances achieved in China.

Some more examples: Bettelheim argues that the comparative lack of inequality in China was mainly a reflection of the still low level of production. He declares that the policy of cadre participation in productive labor "can have no more than a retarding effect on the disappearance of social differentiation, which could only be avoided in a society where the productive forces are very developed."<sup>93</sup> He belittles the principle of self-reliance as appropriate only to the specific situation faced by China in the early '60s. As a general slogan, however, this "simple formulation," he declares, "cannot resolve the theoretical problems posed by the necessary international socialist division of labor."<sup>94</sup>

*Cultural Revolution and Industrial Organization in China* did correct many of these errors and overall was a very positive contribution to understanding the significance of the changes wrought by the Cultural Revolution in the factories and in planning. But here, too, there were errors. The most significant of these lay in Bettelheim's critique of Lin Piao presented in the book's "Postscript." Here Lin's line is characterized as "ultra-left." This reflects the fact that in China at that time such a summation was commonplace and being pushed vigorously by rightist forces hoping to capitalize on the struggle against Lin. It was not until 1973 that Lin's line was correctly summed up as rightist.

Bettelheim's acceptance of this initial incorrect summation is, however, still significant, for it is unclear whether he would repudiate it today. He sums up Lin's line this way:

The ultra-leftist line advanced two kinds of slogans. On the one hand, it pushed measures that did not correspond to the needs and possibilities of the moment, thus trying to represent a secondary contradiction as a principal contradiction [ isn't this also what Bettelheim says of the Four?—C.R.] and dividing the workers by presenting them with objectives that cannot be realized at the moment. On the other hand—and this was more important—it launched petty-bourgeois slogans—slogans cor-

responding to the guise which bourgeois ideology assumes when it is operative among the masses. These slogans obstruct viable transformations by presenting the masses with objectives that appear "radical" but do not lead in the direction of a real transformation of social relationships.<sup>95</sup>

But the main content of Lin Piao's opportunism did not lie in the attempt to skip stages, à la Trotsky, as this implies. Nor was his line generally "ultra-left" in form. It is true that, especially at the early stages of the Cultural Revolution, when he was attempting to use the mass upsurge to "overthrow all" of his opponents and rivals (both bourgeois and proletarian), Lin did advocate some "leftist," anarchist-type slogans and actions. But, especially as the Cultural Revolution advanced and as Lin increasingly found it difficult to manipulate and misuse the struggle of the masses for his own ends, he increasingly came into opposition to and tried to suppress the mass movement. And, by the time of the Ninth Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 1969, Lin had already come into complete opposition to the general orientation and basic principles guiding the Cultural Revolution—and promoted against them the theory of the "dying out of class struggle" (revisionism had already been thoroughly defeated, he proclaimed) and the "theory of productive forces" (production, not class struggle, was the main task, he argued). And, along with this, he attacked and slandered the transformations—"socialist new things"—that were created or strengthened through the Cultural Revolution.<sup>96</sup>

The critique of Lin Piao as an "ultra-leftist" served objectively during the years 1971-73 to cover for a powerful rightist resurgence in China. In particular, the Rightists used Lin's distortions of Mao's correct slogan "Fight self, criticize revisionism" as a means of liquidating such ideological struggle completely.\* Bettelheim also attacks this slogan under the pretext of denouncing the "abstract struggle against self-interest." He claims it "is an illusory substitute for the eradication of bourgeois social relationships."<sup>97</sup> But this tends to pit the ideological struggle against the struggle to transform society, when in fact the two must be intimately linked. As the slogan implies, it is impossible to concrete-

\*An excellent example of how these revisionists opposed the revolutionary thrust of this correct formulation can be found in William Hinton's 1971 interview with Chou En-lai where Chou points out that for there to be a public there must be a self, thereby eclectically defeating the whole point of this slogan—that the ideological concept "self" represents the bourgeoisie, and although (like the bourgeoisie) this concept can't be eliminated under socialism, it still must be fought. Just as Mao was not satisfied to "recognize" the continuing existence of the bourgeoisie without fighting it, so too he did not say "Recognize self, criticize revisionism."

ly criticize the revisionist line without fighting selfish interest. This is not idealism at all. Indeed, if it is idealist to think that the struggle to change ideas will materially influence the struggle to change social relationships, then why would anyone calling himself a materialist bother to write a book in the first place?

It is a fact that Lin Piao did promote the bourgeois line of self-cultivation in the guise of fighting self-interest. He ranted about "setting off an atomic explosion in one's soul" in an attempt to divert the masses' attention inward and away from the larger questions of society and the real revolution—and thereby away from the real target of the revolution, capitalist-roaders like Lin himself (as well as Liu Shao-chi *et al.*). But it was Mao, not Lin, who put forward the slogan "Fight self, criticize revisionism." And, despite Lin Piao's perversion of it, this struggle, correctly understood and carried out, is an important part of the overall struggle against the bourgeoisie.

Bettelheim has formally repudiated some of the weaknesses of his earlier writings on China and other subjects, and the point of bringing these out here has not been to hold him responsible for past errors in a taunting way. But can it really be said that roots of these errors have been dug out? Doesn't "The Great Leap Backward" reveal their persistence in new guise?

### Conclusion

Given his checkered history it is hardly surprising that Charles Bettelheim has proven incapable of correctly summing up the setback in China. At the start of this article we noted the positive effects of Bettelheim's opposition to the Hua-Teng gang of traitors, and in closing we should again acknowledge these. Yet as the Chinese revisionists grow more exposed each day, the importance of Bettelheim's positive contributions continually lessens. When it first appeared, people read "The Great Leap Backward" to help them decide where to stand; and in this context it mainly played a good role. But insofar as people are now turning to Bettelheim for an *explanation* of what happened, his work can only hold them back and set them off the track.

For Bettelheim's line is not now and has never been a thoroughgoing revolutionary line. He appears as a champion of the struggle against economism and mechanical materialism; an opponent of, to use his own phrase, "simplified Marxism." But in reality he is a champion of idealism and metaphysics, and ultimately of reformism and social democracy. Insofar as he articulates a political line, it is, as Marx wrote of Bakunin's politics, "a hash superficially scraped together from the Right and from the Left."<sup>98</sup> But it is also more than this. As we have seen, its essential nature is rightist, a slicked-up version of the economist "theory of produc-

tive forces" turned inside out and masquerading as a critique of this theory. At the heart of his errors lies his consistent and long-standing failure to really grasp dialectics, a weakness manifested in the mechanical *separation* he makes between productive forces and production relations, between base and superstructure, between economics and politics. Bettelheim has never really broken with social democracy; at heart he has always been a petty-bourgeois democrat and a pedantic scholar.

Today the international communist movement is at a crucial turning point. The challenge we face is clear—to uphold Mao Tsetung Thought and continue the forward march along the high road of proletarian revolution in the face of bitter betrayal and cowardly retreat. In words Bettelheim has accepted this challenge, but in fact he has not. In this situation the working class and all oppressed people demand nothing less than a clear and powerful beacon to illuminate the path ahead. Professor Bettelheim does not even offer a flashlight.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Charles Bettelheim, "Letter of Resignation," *China Since Mao* (New York, 1978), pp. 9-13.
2. Neil Burton, "In Defense of the New Regime," *ibid.*, p. 35.
3. Charles Bettelheim, "The Great Leap Backward," [henceforth cited as "GLB"], *China Since Mao*, p. 50; emphasis in original.
4. "GLB," p. 63.
5. "Letter of Resignation," *op. cit.*, p. 12; emphasis added.
6. "GLB," p. 93; emphasis in original.
7. V.I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution* (Peking 1970), pp. 39-40.
8. Bob Avakian, *Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions* (RCP Publications, Chicago, 1978), Chapter 6: "Continuing the Revolution Under the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," p. 310; emphasis in original.
9. "GLB," p. 87.
10. See "GLB," pp. 96-107.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
12. See for instance Lenin's pointed remark: "If we are not to mock at common sense and history, it is obvious that we cannot speak of 'pure democracy' as long as different *classes* exist; we can only speak of *class* democracy." (*The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky, Collected Works*, Vol. 28 [Moscow, 1965], p. 242.)
13. Frederick Engels, "On Authority," in *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism; Writings by Marx, Engels and Lenin* (N.Y., 1972), pp. 203-04.
14. "GLB," p. 40.
15. "A Talk by Chairman Mao with a Foreign [Albanian] Military Delegation," David Milton, Nancy Milton and Franz Schurmann, eds., *People's China* (N.Y., 1974), p. 263.
16. "CCP Central Committee Decision on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution," *The Great Cultural Revolution in China* (Hong Kong, 1967), p. 401.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 398.
18. "GLB," p. 41.
19. Avakian, *Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions*, p. 291.
20. "GLB," p. 102.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 104.

23. Mao Tsetung, "Talks at Three Meetings with Comrades Chang Chun-chiao and Yao Wen-yuan," in Stuart Schram, ed., *Chairman Mao Talks to the People* (N.Y., 1974), p. 278.
24. "GLB," p. 93.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 95-6; emphasis in original.
28. "GLB," p. 94.
29. *Red Papers 7: How Capitalism Has Been Restored in the Soviet Union and What this Means for the World Struggle* (Chicago, 1974), p. 55.
30. "How the Mensheviks Take Revisionism as the Key Link," *Revolution and Counter-Revolution: The Revisionist Coup in China and the Struggle in the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA* (Chicago, 1978), pp. 295-6.
31. "GLB," pp. 69-74, 94.
32. Mao, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 393.
33. Ernest Mandel, "On the Nature of the Soviet State," *New Left Review*, 108, March-April 1978, pp. 28, 29.
34. "GLB," pp. 96, 97.
35. For more on this see *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, pp. 353-361.
36. David Fernbach, "Rejoinder," *China Now*, June 1977, p. 9.
37. Chi Hsin, *Teng Hsiao-ping—A Political Biography* (Hong Kong, 1978), p. 106.
38. Mao, "The Situation and Our Policy After the Victory in the War of Resistance Against Japan," *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 19.
39. Mao, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 389.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 408.
41. Mao, "Speech at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference for Propaganda Work," *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 434.
42. Mao, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 388-89.
43. "A Talk by Chairman Mao with a Foreign [Albanian] Military Delegation," in David Milton, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 263.
44. See Avakian, *Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions*, Chapter 5: "Culture and the Superstructure," pp. 118-30.
45. Mao, "Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art," *Selected Works*, Vol. 3, p. 72.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
47. "GLB," p. 98.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
50. *Important Struggles in Building the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA* (Chicago, 1978), p. 43.
51. "GLB," p. 109.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 100; emphasis in original.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
54. V.I. Lenin, "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back," *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, p. 356.
55. *Ibid.*, pp. 396-7.
56. *Revolution and Counter-Revolution*, p. 11.
57. "GLB," p. 108.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
60. Mao, "Where Do Correct Ideas Come From," *Selected Readings (Peking, 1971)*, p. 503.
61. For a more thorough analysis of how to correctly explain the loss in China see *Revolution and Counter-Revolution and The Loss in China and the Revolutionary Legacy of Mao Tsetung* (RCP Publications, Chicago, 1978).
62. Quoted in Claude Varlet, *Critique de Bettelheim*, Vol. I (Paris, 1978), p. 42.
63. Quoted *ibid.*, p. 44.
64. Quoted *ibid.*, pp. 45-6.
65. Quoted *ibid.*, p. 46.
66. Quoted *ibid.*, p. 48.
67. Quoted *ibid.*, pp. 48-9.
68. Charles Bettelheim, *Planification et croissance accéléré*, (Paris, 1967), p. 67.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
70. Charles Bettelheim, *La transition vers l'économie socialiste* (Paris, 1968), pp. 133-34.
71. *Ibid.*
72. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
73. *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 9, 101, 109, 114, 121, 125, 141, 147, 201.

74. Paul M. Sweezy, "Czechoslovakia, Capitalism and Socialism," *On the Transition to Socialism* (N.Y., 1971), p. 8.
75. Charles Bettelheim, "On the Transition Between Capitalism and Socialism," *ibid.*, pp. 18-19; emphasis in original.
76. Charles Bettelheim, "Dictatorship of the Proletariat, Social Classes and Proletarian Ideology," *ibid.*, p. 57.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 58; emphasis in original.
78. *Ibid.*, p. 62; emphasis in original.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 63; emphasis in original.
80. *Ibid.*, p. 73.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
82. Charles Bettelheim, *Economic Calculation and Forms of Property* (N.Y., 1975), p. x.
83. *Ibid.*, pp. 95-6.
84. Charles Bettelheim, *Class Struggles in the USSR, First Period: 1917-1923* (N.Y., 1976), p. 11.
85. *Ibid.*
86. *Ibid.*
87. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
88. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
89. *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) Short Course* (N.Y., 1939), p. 257.
90. Bettelheim, *Class Struggles, op. cit.*, p. 501.
91. "Refuting Yao Wen-yuan's Fallacy That the Principle 'To Each According to His Work' Breeds Bourgeoisie," Su Shao-chih and Feng Lan-jui, *Peking Review* No. 6 (February 10, 1978), p. 11.
92. Charles Bettelheim, Helene Marchisio, Jacques Charriere, *La construction du socialisme en Chine* (Paris, 1968), p. 14, 16-17.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 194.
95. Charles Bettelheim, *Cultural Revolution and Industrial Organization in China* (N.Y., 1974), p. 107.
96. For a more thorough analysis of this, see *The Loss in China and the Revolutionary Legacy of Mao Tsetung*, especially pp. 52-72.
97. Bettelheim, *Cultural Revolution and Industrial Organization in China*, p. 111.
98. Karl Marx to F. Bolte, November 23, 1871, in *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism: Writings by Marx, Engels and Lenin* (N.Y., 1972), p. 56.



These books, more than anything else now available, provide a basis for understanding the counter-revolution which has taken place in China.

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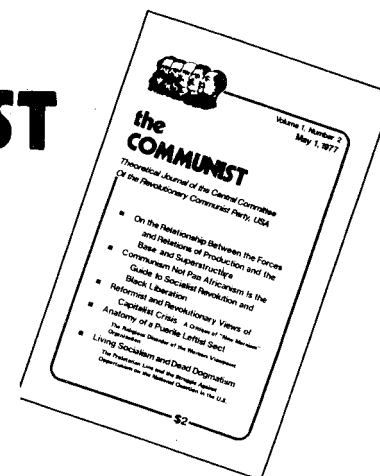
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