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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Tom Hill
Frank Huscroft
Jim Kean

Colin Penn
Ron Peterson
Jack Tapsell

CORRESPONDENCE

All correspondence should be addressed to
Tom Hill
11 Barratt Avenue
Wood Green
London N22

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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From Prague to Chenpao

An Editorial Statement On Soviet Aggression

EARLY IN MARCH of this year, just six months after the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Soviet armoured units crossed the frozen Ussuri river in Heilungkiang province and occupied the island of Chenpao, which belongs to China. Chinese frontier guards defending their own territory were accused by the Soviet revisionists of aggression.

In mid-March, Moscow's Chinese language broadcasts threatened People's China with nuclear war.

Thus we have another example of Soviet revisionist aggression, accompanied by lying propaganda, directed this time against a socialist country.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The occupation of Czechoslovakia, which on the surface looked like a powerful show of Soviet strength, in fact signified great weakness on the part of Soviet revisionism. It was undertaken as a last ditch attempt to prevent the Dubcek revisionists from pulling Czechoslovakia completely out of the revisionist controlled bloc. The defection of Czechoslovakia from the Soviet revisionist orbit would have completely upset the already wobbly East European apple-cart. The invasion was an act of aggression which had nothing whatsoever to do with the defence of socialism for the very simple reason that in neither Czechoslovakia nor the USSR does socialism exist. Socialism can only exist under the rule of the working class, and in neither country does the working class rule. In both countries there has been a bourgeois restoration; a peaceful transition from socialism to capitalism. The Soviet revisionists are no more capable of acting against their class interests — ie capitalist interests — than is the British "Labour" government capable of acting against the interests of monopoly capitalism here. Just as British armed force, employed anywhere in the world is always reactionary and counter-revolutionary, so is the employment of armed force by the Soviet revisionists reactionary and counter-revolutionary.

The strategic interest of the Soviet revisionists is opposed to revolution all over the world. They have a common interest with the US imperialists in preserving the respective spheres of domination.

Thus they need to collude with US imperialism. Their strategic interest also demands that they protect their own spheres of domination — mainly their European neo-colonial empire — against encroachment from US and other imperialists. In pursuit of their strategic objectives the Soviet revisionists resort to deceit and demagoguery in an attempt to disguise the fundamentally reactionary and aggressive nature of their actions. They try to cover up their occupation of Czechoslovakia by describing it as a defensive action in the interests of socialism. Thus, a blatant act of imperialist aggression is passed off as an anti-imperialist act.

AGGRESSION AGAINST CHINA

The armed attacks by Soviet frontier units against Chinese territory on the Soviet Union's eastern borders, and the occupation of Chenpao island on the Chinese side of the Ussuri river, are part of a similar pattern of aggression, and can be seen as a continuation of Soviet strategy. By ignoring the facts concerning the eastern frontier demarcation lines and by distorting the facts about the armed clashes, Soviet propagandists turn the truth on its head, presenting their own aggression as 'defence of Soviet territory' and describing China's defence of its own territory as 'aggression'. The Soviet leaders employ the same methods that imperialists have always used to cover up their aggression. Their actions, first against Czechoslovakia and now against China, (whatever may be the differences in each case), are similar to those of Hitler against Czechoslovakia, and to those of US imperialism against Cuba, Dominica and Vietnam. **The representatives of the new bourgeoisie in the Soviet Union have joined the ranks of world imperialism. They are the enemies of the peoples of the world.**

SOVIET REVISIONISTS' MOTIVES FOR ATTACKING CHINA

The Soviet dominated East European bloc is in disarray. With each passing day the Soviet revisionists multiply their problems. They desperately need to hold together their European colonial empire, which is rent with irresolvable contradictions. Relations between the revisionist states are the relations between different and conflicting bourgeois

national interests. Each tries to blackmail the other and they all try to blackmail the Soviet overlords. They all engage in double-talk and deceit like a bunch of gangsters and the whole sickly masquerade is conducted behind a smokescreen of 'Marxist' phrases.

What are the Soviet revisionists' motives in attacking Chinese territory at this time? Actually **The Guardian** came close to the answer in its editorial on March 20. 'If the rights and wrongs on the Ussuri do not justify or explain the dispute, there must be other motives behind the Russians' obvious desire to keep up the tension. It may be to reinforce unity in their own camp, or perhaps it is to try to convince the Americans that Moscow cannot afford to be other than peaceful in its intentions towards the West'. These factors are connected and they both figure in the revisionist scheme. The Soviet leaders' objective is to further their collusion with the US imperialists in order to oppose the world revolutionary movement and in particular, to oppose China, which is the main bulwark of world revolution, and which, needless to say, presents the biggest single obstacle to the development of Soviet/US 'friendly relations'. To this end they need to present a united revisionist front to the US. That is their major pre-occupation at the moment. In order to extend their co-operation with the US imperialists they have to demonstrate to the US that they both have the same enemy — People's China. If a 'peace zone' can be established in Europe on the basis of a mutual recognition of each other's 'spheres of influence' then the basis will be laid for a further extension of Soviet/US collaboration to oppose China and dominate the world. This aim was at the centre of the March meeting of Warsaw Pact parties in Budapest. It explains the revisionist overtures to Western Europe proposing a conference to discuss 'European Security', which would have as its aim the establishment of a phoney 'peace zone' in Europe.

Soviet attacks on Chinese territory must be seen in this context.

The facts on the border clash

Concerning the Sino/Soviet frontier itself, the revisionists have not presented a shred of evidence in support of their claim to Chenpao island. Instead they have resorted to the propaganda methods employed by all aggressors — the stirring of chauvinistic and racist passions amongst the people. To this end they have enlisted the services of the anti-communist poet, Yevtuschenko, who has provided the appropriate verses warning of 'the yellow peril.' Further evidence they do not seek.

On March 12, the Information Department of the Chinese Foreign Ministry issued a press re-

lease which set out the facts concerning the Heilungkiang border with the Soviet Union. The following passage is key:

'Even according to the unequal "Sino-Russian Treaty of Peking" (1860), Chenpao island is indisputable Chinese territory. The "Sino-Russian Treaty of Peking" stipulated: "From the estuary of the Ussuri River southwards to the Hsingkai Lake, the boundary line runs along the Ussuri and Sungacha Rivers. The land lying east of these rivers belongs to Russia and the land west of these rivers belongs to China." According to established principles of international law, in the case of navigable boundary rivers, the central line of the main channel should form the boundary which determines the ownership of islands. Chenpao Island and the nearby Kapotzu and Chilichin Islands are all situated on the Chinese side of the central line of the main channel of the Ussuri River and have always been under China's jurisdiction. Chinese frontier guards have always been patrolling these islands and Chinese inhabitants have always been carrying on production on these islands. During the Sino-Soviet boundary negotiations in 1964, the Soviet side itself could not but admit that these islands are Chinese territory.'

The Soviet revisionists have not attempted to deny these facts; they simply ignore them.

On March 11, an article appeared in **People's Daily** entitled **Soviet Revisionist Renegade Clique can Only Be Digging Its Own Grave in Rabidly Opposing China**. Dealing with the anti-Chinese demonstrations staged in Moscow, the **People's Daily** commentator was at pains to stress that China made a distinction between the Soviet people and their rulers. 'A profound friendship exists between the Soviet people and the Chinese people. The Soviet Revisionist renegade clique can never succeed in trying to disrupt the revolutionary friendship between the Soviet and Chinese peoples by the shameless methods of spreading lies and deception. . . . The Soviet revisionist renegade clique also raised a hue and cry branding as "anti-Soviet" the Chinese people's counter-attack against the clique's provocation and the Chinese people's exposure of its social-imperialist crimes. This is out-and-out the trick of a thief crying "stop thief". It is precisely you yourselves, a pack of renegades, and nobody else, who are anti-Soviet.'

If the Soviet revisionists really believe that China will submit to nuclear blackmail, then they understand nothing at all. The Chinese people were never cowed by nuclear threats from US imperialism even

(continued on page 15)

comment

STRIKES AND DEMONSTRATIONS, called in protest against the Government White Paper **In Place Of Strife**, took place in the first week of March, mainly on Clydeside and Merseyside.

They involved upwards of 80,000 workers, and were excellent reminders to the ruling class that, whatever the leaders may be doing, large important sections of the working class are aware of what is taking place in the sphere of union-employer relations, and are determined not to surrender rights which have been won over many years of struggle. The almost complete blackout on news of these events may be an indication that the ruling class are concerned lest it set off more protest actions, possibly of a more deep-seated character.

Opposition to the White Paper, centred around the penal clauses in it, has both positive and negative aspects.

The employers have never at any time taken kindly to a strike in their own establishment, but in present day conditions a strike of a few workers can disrupt production in other factories, and involve serious losses to many employers.

Further, the need to plan production has been forced on the larger concerns and, for them, one of the most important elements is the forward planning of production costs. Therefore any disruption of production must be eliminated at all costs.

Militant opposition to the anti-strike legislation brings workers more into confrontation with the capitalist state than ever before, and is positive, therefore it must be persisted in.

The negative aspect of concentrating solely on the penal clauses is that the enemy will achieve their objective by other means.

There are more ways of killing a cat

A reading of this document will show that its authors are well aware of the pitfalls likely to be encountered by them when they attempt to suppress strikes.

Paragraph 88 states:

'A majority of the Royal Commission recommended that, to reduce the number of unofficial strikes, the protection given by section 3 of the Trades Disputes Act 1906 and by the Trades Disputes Act 1965 in relation to inducement of a breach of contract of employment should be limited to registered trade unions and those acting on their behalf. The implementation of this recommendation would mean that unofficial strike leaders could be sued by employers for inducing strikers to break their contracts. The Government does not believe that this would improve matters. First, the great majority of employers would probably not be prepared to sue unofficial strike leaders. The change would therefore be ineffective in practice, while, by creating uncertainty, it would worsen the general atmosphere of industrial relations. Second, unions could declare strikes by their members to be official unless they decided otherwise, thus bringing the leaders of such strikes once more under the protection of section 3 as amended.

Other paragraphs make similar points, and it is plain that the Government, taking into account the overall interests of the ruling class, has, for the present, decided that whilst some moves must be made to limit the most economically damaging strikes, the main emphasis must be on strengthening the hold of social democracy over the workers.

Role of the unions

It used to be thought that as the crisis of capitalism became more acute the capitalist class would muster their forces to smash trade union organisations. The evidence does not point in this direction.

Modern capitalism finds it necessary to deal with organisations which can negotiate the sale of labour power, but it demands that these organisations shall not push the price of this labour power beyond the limits determined by the needs of the system at any particular time.

It is the main strategy of the capitalist class to proceed along the path already started on of turning the trade unions into such organisations.

The fundamental purpose of **In Place Of Strife** is to lay down the main lines of advance in this sphere. Indeed, it can well be used by Marxists as a study in the theory and practice of social democracy. Propagation of the idea that the state is above classes is expressed in a different form, but it is still there. Paragraph 36 '... its work (Commission on Industrial Relations) will represent a novel extension of public involvement in industrial relations in this country.'

Paragraph 3 (on page 1) reads:

'The Government places the following proposals before Parliament and the nation convinced that they are justified on two grounds. First, they will help to contain the destructive expression of industrial conflict and to encourage a more equitable, ordered and efficient system, which will benefit both those involved and the community at large. Second, they are based on the belief that the efforts of employers, unions and employees to reform collective bargaining need the active support and intervention of the Government'.

Many workers, through their experience, sense that these proposals are not in their interest. It is for Marxists to give this a clear theoretical expression by constantly explaining the true nature of the State. In this way we are carrying out Mao's advice to work with living ideas.

The correctness of the Marxist view that, in capitalist society, the State represents the interests of the employing class is illustrated by the White Paper when it comes to deal with the actual reforms in collective bargaining which they favour.

Paragraph 24 (page 11) states:

In most of the public sector, including national and local government service and the nationalised industries, and in a few industries in the private sector — for example, electrical contracting,* — effective industry-wide collective bargaining still exists. There, actual wages and conditions continue to be settled by the national officials who bargain on both sides. There is no equivalent of the disordered pay structures, or the chaotic and inflationary shop

floor pressures that are so pronounced a feature of some of our major industries.'

Bearing in mind that the main threat to the Government's wage control policy arises from shop floor pressure, in which stewards and convenors play a leading role, and that, in industries such as engineering, wage levels are determined by such activity, reflected in local agreements, then the purpose of these reforms is evident.

Attempts to control this situation take several forms; the institution of joint government/management/union schemes for the training of shop stewards is a way acceptable to management; the introduction of more full time officials, particularly at lower levels, in order that the union hierarchy shall be better able to control shop floor militancy; the involvement in the collective bargaining machinery, of a number of Government controlled and inspired committees.

To facilitate this development it is proposed to establish a Commission of Industrial Relations whose functions will be to draw up model rules and agreements for the 'guidance' of the unions.

There is much more in the White Paper than can be adequately dealt with on this occasion, but the substance lies in the setting up of machinery that will regulate the conduct of worker — management relations in a manner advantageous to the employing class.

What is really fundamental and often overlooked, is the battle being waged in the field of ideas. It is easy to see that penal clauses and cooling off periods constitute a direct threat to our conditions.

We must not concentrate all our attention on the obvious issues and ignore the insidious erosion of class consciousness which this attack is calculated to bring about.

VOICE FROM THE PAST

'It is necessary for the trade unions to end all collaboration with capitalism. . . . It is necessary for the trade unions not to regard increased productivity as the solution to its problems in this situation, but to note that because of increased productivity wages now represent a constantly diminishing proportion of the product of labour; and that wages policy must change radically from merely defending real wages to fighting for a much greater proportion of the total product.'

Les Cannon, April 1955.

*The Joint Industry Board for the Electrical Contracting Industry was referred to on page 10 of the Marxist, issue number one.

Lessons of the Cultural Revolution

The working class must lead in everything

by Jack Bradley

ONE OF THE CRUDEST distortions shared by Palme Dutt, the Trotskyists and the revisionists of the Soviet Union, is that Mao Tse-tung underestimated and played down the role of the working class in the Chinese Revolution. Thus, N Kapchenko (International Affairs, Moscow, February 1968) asserts that "The Mao Group has no exact or definite class mainstay, it does not express or reflect the interests of the working class or other working sections of the population" and Dutt refers to 'the potential weaknesses which lay in the class background of the (Chinese) revolution'. (Whither China' p 11).

Lenin maintained that a major problem for a revolutionary party is to elucidate the correlation of classes in the impending revolution.

It was just such an analysis of classes in Chinese society which Mao Tse-tung made in one of the first articles he wrote (March, 1926) in which with great precision he distinguishes the leading force, the most reliable allies, the vacillators and the outright enemies. In this article he states that 'though not very numerous, the industrial proletariat represents China's new productive forces, is the most progressive class in modern China and has become the leading force in the revolutionary movement'.¹

Stalin, gave as one of the three circumstances which facilitated the development of the revolution in China, the fact 'that the national big bourgeoisie in China is weak, weaker than the national bourgeoisie was in Russia in the period of 1905, which facilitates the hegemony of the proletariat and the leadership of the Chinese peasantry by the proletarian party'.

From the time of writing his article of 1926 to the carrying through of the Cultural Revolution forty years later, Mao's policy and practice have been strikingly consistent, never deviating from the principle of the leading revolutionary role of the working class — 'the most far-sighted, most selfless and most thoroughly revolutionary'.² This did not prevent Mao from laying great stress on the role

of the poor and lower-middle peasants which, together with the workers comprised over eighty per cent of the Chinese population.

With Liberation in sight, the question of class alignments and of the leading force in the seizure of power brought Mao Tse-tung into conflict with Liu Shao-chi and other deviationists. Reporting to the Central Committee in March, 1949, Mao asks 'On whom should 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 . . .' Later in this report he stressed that 'after the victory of the people's democratic revolution, the state power of the people's republic under the leadership of the working class must not be weakened but must be strengthened'.³

Problems of Construction

The first years after Liberation were occupied with stabilising prices and the currency, organising land reform and restoring production in what little industry had existed in China before 1949.

Referring to the problems of economic development Mao Tse-tung wrote in 1957:

' . . . With barely seven years of economic construction behind us, we still lack experience and need to accumulate it. . . . What we must demand of ourselves now is to cut down the time needed for gaining experience of economic construction to a shorter period than it took us to gain experience of revolution, and not to pay as high a price for it. Some price we will have to pay, but we hope that it will not be as high as that paid during the period of revolution. We must realise that there is a contradiction here — the contradiction between the objective laws of economic development of

a socialist society and our subjective understanding of them — which needs to be resolved in the course of practice. . . .’ (**On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People**)

In those early years Soviet influence in economic matters was strong — through both material and technical aid and through the loan of Soviet technicians to China and the training of Chinese experts in the Soviet Union. The principle of self-reliance was not fully appreciated and only partially practised. There was some stress on material incentives, differentials in salaries began to widen, bonuses and piece-rates were applied as a stimulus to increased output. Technicians and experts occupied positions of special authority. Factory rules and regulations were frequently little more than translations from the Russian.

Many of these non-socialist features were exposed, attacked and to some extent cleared away by the Great Debate and Rectification Movement of 1957 and the Great Leap Forward which followed, beginning in the Spring of 1958.

But in the years immediately following the Great Leap two factors were to exercise a major influence on the development of the revolution in China. First, the revelations from April, 1960 of the extent and character of revisionism, first in Yugoslavia and later in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Discussion of the issues posed in the polemic greatly heightened the political awareness of the Chinese people. Recognising that the main source of revisionism is internal not external, the Chinese began to look to their own situation and, with the example of the Soviet Union before them, to examine with critical eyes the development of the revolution in China itself.

This was given added point and immediacy by the second factor — the years 1959, 1960, 1961 of China’s climatic difficulties, with poor harvests and severe shortages and with the withdrawal of the Soviet technicians in July, 1960 adding to the burden.

Attacks On Mao’s Line

It was in this situation that certain of the landlords, bourgeois and rightists thought the moment to be opportune to exploit the economic difficulties, to challenge Mao’s revolutionary policy and to put a brake on the pace of socialist advance; eventually to set it in reverse. They were supported overtly or aided indirectly by certain elements in the Communist Party who were opposed to Mao’s revolutionary line and chose this moment to attack it.

One such clash took place at the Lushan meeting of the Central Committee in August, 1959 when, according to Chou En-lai:

‘The Central Committee of the Party and Comrade Mao Tse-tung firmly refuted such bourgeois points of view of certain people both inside and outside the Party as those calling for the ‘consolidation of the new democratic order’, ‘long-term coexistence between socialism and capitalism’ and the ‘guaranteeing of the four great freedoms in the rural areas — freedom of sale and purchase, letting and renting of land, freedom of employing farm hands, freedom of borrowing and lending money and freedom of trading’.⁴

Mass Line In Construction

The journal of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party “**Red Flag**” in November, 1959 published a policy statement which examined the application of the mass line on the industrial front.

Taking as its starting point that ‘the workers are the decisive factor in the social productive forces’ and recalling Marx’s dictum that ‘Of all the instruments of production, the greatest productive power is the revolutionary class itself’ (**Poverty of Philosophy**), the article exposed and criticised those who maintained that ‘mass movements are all right for revolutionary struggles but not for construction’. Bureaucracy, over-emphasis on material incentives, lack of confidence in the creativeness and wisdom of the working class were severely attacked. It seemed that the stage was set for a political campaign of a radical kind which would have a profound effect on the industrial front.

The years of difficulty and the weighty economic problems demanding urgent attention must have delayed this process. But, at the same time, these difficulties exposed even more sharply the deep-going character of the problem.

In early 1962 Liu Shao-chi was attempting to reverse the decision of the Lushan Conference and the attacks on Mao Tse-tung’s line, particularly the Great Leap Forward and the commune movement were intensified by certain members of the Party supported by thinly-disguised attacks on the literary and cultural fronts.

The Central Committee in September, 1962 warned that ‘the class struggle is complicated, tortuous, with ups and downs and sometimes it is very sharp. This class struggle inevitably finds expression within the Party’.

The Chinese economy turned the corner with the good harvest of 1962 and in 1963 the socialist education movement was launched, focussed especially on the countryside. This, we can now see, was something of a precursor of the Cultural Revolution which opened up in the Spring of 1966.

Students' Choice

As with earlier revolutionary movements in China, it was the students and intellectuals who fired the opening shots. But from the very beginning the orientation was clear. "Among the educational workers, the youth and students everyone must choose for himself", said the People's Daily, "which side you are on in the life and death class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie . . . to be a proletarian revolutionary or a bourgeois royalist."⁵ So much for the nonsense retailed by O. Lvov in a recent (January 11, 1969) article in Pravda that "the Mao group was deceiving the young people and terrorising the working people with their help. . . ."

The class issues involved in the Cultural Revolution at this time were explained in "Red Flag" of 3 June, 1966:

"to foster what is proletarian and eradicate what is bourgeois in the superstructure" . . . "Truth has its class nature. In the present era, the proletariat alone is able to master objective truth because its class interests are in complete conformity with the objective laws . . . There can be no equality whatsoever between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, between proletarian ideology and bourgeois ideology, between proletarian truth and bourgeois fallacy. . . ."⁶

By September, 1966 the Red Guards and the revolutionary students were being reminded that they "should take the workers, peasants and soldiers as their examples and learn from them modestly. They should learn from their way of working hard and diligently, learn from the simplicity and modesty of their style of work, learn from their revolutionary quality of being relentless towards the enemy and kind to comrades, learn from their high sense of organisation and discipline, learn from their revolutionary spirit of upholding the truth, correcting mistakes and daring to make self-criticism."⁷

From the early Autumn of 1966, the debate on the two lines — capitalist or socialist — developed with great intensity among the workers, spreading from one factory to another, until it encompassed the entire working class of China.

The Chinese Factory

What had been the character of the Chinese factory before the Cultural Revolution began to set in motion these thorough-going discussions?

Although the Cultural Revolution was to expose many features of factory life and organisation which were distinctly hangovers from feudal and capitalist society, foreign observers, taking as their basis of comparison the factories of the Soviet Union and of capitalist countries, were nevertheless impressed with the worker-management relationship; the participation of workers in technical innovations and improvements of production methods as well as the political and social motivation of most of the Chinese workers.

For example, Barrie Richman, Canadian specialist in management and industrial relations, who had studied methods of industrial management in the Soviet Union and India, spent some time in China in the Spring and early Summer of 1966, and visited thirty-eight factories. He had this to say:

" . . . the Chinese enterprise is not viewed as a purely economic unit where economic performance clearly takes priority. In fact, Chinese factories seem to pursue objectives pertaining to politics, education, and welfare as well as economic results. . . . The Chinese factory is a place where much political indoctrination occurs both at the individual and at the group level, with the aim of developing the pure Communist man as conceived by Mao. It is a place where illiterate workers learn how to read and write, and where employees can and do improve their own work skills and develop new ones through education and training. It is a place where housing, schools, and offices are often constructed or remodelled by factory employees. It is also a place from which employees go out into the fields and help the peasants with their harvesting.

Hence if supplies do not arrive according to the plan, Chinese factory workers generally do not remain idle or unproductive — at least by the regime's standards. In factories I visited where this type of situation arose, workers undertook some education or training during the period of delay in order to improve their skills; or they studied and discussed Chairman Mao's works or, as was the case at the Tientsin Shoe and Wuhan Diesel Engine factories, they undertook various construction and modernisation activities; or they worked on developing new or improved processes and products."⁸

Not surprisingly, Richman from his capitalist standpoint, does not believe in the effectiveness of political motivation or "ideological extremism" as he calls it, in raising production. He contends that to eliminate self-interest and material gain as key motivating factors would be to fly in the face of world history and experience. From his observations, however, he does draw some interesting comparisons.

He remarks that in a Soviet or American factory there are generally clues — salaries, dress, education, working and living conditions, personal relations — whereby a visitor can distinguish top managers from the workers. But, he says, in Chinese factories there are less clues than probably any other country in the world. And these observations were made when the Cultural Revolution had made only its initial impact.

Richman found that in China there seemed to be no 'substantial differences in the housing conditions of managers, technicians, Reds or workers;' all eat together in the same canteen, whereas in the Soviet Union upper level managers have for years been paid substantially better than workers, live significantly better in favoured housing and with an allotted car and are now an elite. In Soviet factories according to Richman, directors in an average enterprise drew four or five times more salary than the workers; in some the ratio was as high as nine to one. These, he says, are 'similar to relative pay differentials found in numerous US industrial firms.' He adds that 'Soviet managers can augment their basic salaries each quarter by as much as fifty per cent — and in some cases even more — by earning bonuses.'

By contrast, in China at the time of Richman's visit the ratio between directors income and the average factory pay was less than two to one. In fact, in eight of the thirty eight factories visited workers were the highest paid. He remarks: "The pay scale differentials between the top paid people and the average wage and the lowest wage in China's industry are about the smallest in the world to begin with. But they were cutting pay more, especially of the experts, while I was there in a number of instances."

"Hereditary Diseases"

While foreign observers were impressed, even before the Cultural Revolution, with Chinese factories in comparison with those of the Soviet Union, it was clear to Mao Tse-tung and his colleagues as to many politically advanced workers, that many customs and attitudes, the 'hereditary diseases' of the old society still remained and that unless these were eradicated it would be impossible for China to continue along the socialist road.

Mao had explained the problem in dialectical terms:

"Socialist relations of production have been established; they are suited to the development of the productive forces, but they are still far from perfect, and their imperfect aspects stand in contradiction to the development of the productive forces. There is conformity as well as contradiction between the relations of production and the development of the productive forces; similarly there is conformity as well as contradiction between the superstructure and the economic base." (**On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People, 1957.**)

The Liu Line

The control of some sectors of the Party and economic apparatus by Liu Shao-chi and his followers in the years prior to 1966 had encouraged the growth of many bourgeois ideas and practices.

His conceptions of an 'elite' and his advocacy of 'iron discipline,' 'unconditional obedience' to authority and the 'principle of submission' had exercised a pernicious influence in many factories, as in other spheres. It had fostered a 'boss' outlook in many Party leaders and directors in the factories and created a separation between workers and technicians. This attitude encouraged the "authorities" to surround themselves with 'yes-men' and toadies. Already in 1959 **Red Flag** had said that since some cadres were affected with bureaucratic airs left over by the exploiting classes and were not good at solving problems by persuasion and education, the masses had little confidence in them and this hampered some workers from looking on socialist labour as their own business. The revisionist line played on the egoism and self-interest which thousands of years of Chinese society, slave, feudal and capitalist — all based on private ownership — had engendered in the outlook of the people, including the working class.

With the notion of 'authority' and 'discipline' and the failure to rely on the initiative of the workers, came an unnecessarily large body of administrators depending for their authority on long-winded rules and regulations which the workers were expected to observe. "Some comrades," said **Red Flag**, "would love to have a set of regulations and systems which can meet every changing circumstance so that after one spell of work they can spend their lives in peace and tranquillity . . . Such people always blame the masses, saying 'The regulations and systems have just been worked out, now you've upset them.'" 'One example exposed and then cleared away by the workers of the Chenfeng Machinery Plant, Lang-

chow, during the Cultural Revolution was of sixty written regulations running to 140,000 words concerning the factory management. In this factory raw materials passed through twenty procedures before getting to the workers. There were sixty pages of technical data for making a common machine part.

In trade union work also there had been a running conflict from the time of Liberation between the two lines; Liu Shao-chi, Peng Chen and their followers constantly seeking to play down the class struggle in the workers' movement. Putting politics in second place, they argued for 'productive construction,' echoing Krushchov. For them, once the workers spent their time concentrating on production, their orientation was essentially correct. Liu Shao-chi maintained that 'the movement for production is in itself the workers' movement.'

He argued that whereas the Communist Party includes only the advanced sections of the working class, the trade unions embrace almost the whole working class. With this conception, comparable to the 'All-People's State' and 'Party of the Whole People' fantasies of the Soviet revisionist leaders, the proletarian Party should be relegated to assist but not exercise leadership over the trade unions. This syndicalist trend ran directly counter to Mao's principle of putting 'politics in command.'

'Education should be conducted among comrades in the trade unions and among the masses of workers to enable them to understand that they should see not merely the immediate and partial interests of the working class while forgetting its broad, long-range interests.'

These were some of the problems affecting conditions in the factories at the start of the Cultural Revolution. In the last analysis they can be concentrated into one central issue — the question of political power — could the working class assert its authority as the leading force and strengthen and consolidate its dictatorship or would the bourgeoisie by stealth and cunning stage a come-back.

Factory Rebels

In some factories the attack by 'rebels' against the 'capitalist roaders' in authority in the enterprise began as early as June, and July, 1966 when Liu Shao-chi and his followers were in control of certain sections of the Party apparatus.

Liu Shao-chi sent 'work teams' from the party headquarters into the factories with the intention of suppressing those workers who were bold enough

to 'dare to think, dare to speak, dare to act' a slogan much used during the Great Leap Forward and now revived.

These work teams sought to protect the factory Party leader or Director who were, in most cases, the target of the rebels' criticism and to suggest that the Cultural Revolution was principally of concern to intellectuals and youth and of little moment to the factories where the concentration should be on production. The work teams tried to represent the critics as counter-revolutionaries, who were opposing the Party, the Central Committee and even Mao Tse-tung himself.

Lenin remarked in 1919 that 'with luck the (capitalist) institutions can be smashed at once, but habit can never be smashed at once whatever your luck.'⁹ This proved to be true in China's Cultural Revolution. At first the rebels in the factories were in a minority, frequently just a few of the advanced, politically far-seeing comrades who had to contend not only with Liu Shao-chi, the work teams and the factory 'authorities' but also with the resistance and, at times, outright opposition of those work-mates in whom a 'conservatism' and unquestioning and uncritical loyalty had been engendered in recent years by the Liu Shao-chi line which played on the inhibitions, superstitions and feudal prejudices and fears left over from the old exploiting society.

Force of Habit

As it developed during the next two years, the Cultural Revolution was to demonstrate, with one striking example after another, how persistent are the ideas, customs and attitudes inherited from the past society and with what cunning the bourgeoisie and other reactionaries, changing their tactics and their appeal — now 'right', now 'left' — will exploit the 'force of habit' for their own purposes in each changing situation until they are finally crushed. How correct had been Lenin's warning that 'the danger threatens every ruling party, every victorious proletariat, for it is impossible at once to smash the resistance of the bourgeoisie or to set up a perfected apparatus.' The apparatus, said Lenin, 'will sometimes cover up all kinds of rogues who call themselves Communists.'¹⁰

Let us follow the course of events in this early phase of the Cultural Revolution in one enterprise — the Peking Machine Tool Factory — where a group of only 18 'rebels' in June, 1966, were the first to put up posters criticising the factory authorities for failing to follow a truly revolutionary, proletarian line. Immediately after this the first work team arrived (8 June) but met with much opposition

and criticism from the workers and then withdrew. A second team was sent in from the Peking Party apparatus — at this time under Liu Shao-chi's control — and was also rebuffed. They left on 22nd and the next night, the 23rd, the eighteen rebels organised a meeting of all the workers to discuss the criticisms. Then a third work team arrived. They had learned from the experiences of the first two teams and were more cunning. They assailed the rebels and set about cajoling other workers to oppose them. The rebels, they said, were ambitious, self-seekers, wishing to usurp the authority in the factory and set themselves up as leaders; they were counter-revolutionaries. The meeting on 23rd, they said, had been 'a small Hungarian incident,' an attempt at counter-revolution. Many workers were misled by these arguments, just as some British workers are misled by Powell's racialism, despite his patently anti-working class policies.

In this factory the debate on the rights and wrongs of the criticisms went deep and wide and continued over a period of nearly five months. Using the methods of direct democracy, discussions were held at all levels in small groups, on the workshop floor and at the level of the whole factory. In 'large-character posters' which lined the walls of the workshops, filled the corridors and the factory canteen, individual workers or groups of workers explained their ideas, voiced their criticism or counter-criticised the critics, put forward their suggestions for change.

These discussions and statements were not concerned with generalities or abstractions. They dealt with matters directly affecting the everyday life of the workers, the conditions in this factory, the character of the management, the methods of production; the quality and suitability of the production — did it truly 'Serve the People?'; the bonus systems and material incentives; the political life of the factory, the character of the Party leadership in the factory — questions on which every worker could speak from experience of his own. It was in the back and forth debate on such matters that the rebel minority were able to open the eyes of their colleagues to the actual features of the bourgeois line as it was being applied in their own factory; to extend their political understanding in the specific terms of their daily working lives.

This phase in this factory — the pace was uneven from factory to factory and from one part of China to another — came to an end with a mass meeting of all the workers on 21 October. The meeting started after work at 4 pm and continued until after 9 pm. The rebels stated their case. Many of

the workers who had been misled explained how their viewpoint had changed, and why. The factory authorities had an opportunity to defend their position or to examine their past policies self-critically. The meeting showed that the five months of debate had had their effect. The rebels received the overwhelming support of their workmates and were elected with some others to a Cultural Revolution Committee for the factory. In the following months factory committees of this kind were being formed all over China. Procedures for elections had been laid down by the Central Committee of the Party: "Members of these organisations must not be appointed from above nor is behind-the-scenes manipulation allowed. A system of general election must be instituted in accordance with the principles of the Paris Commune . . . The members can be replaced through election or recalled by the masses at any time."

With a literary agility to be wondered at, but not admired, the Pravda article by Lvov already mentioned comments on these 'rebels', 'whose organisations, as is generally known, are formed mainly from politically immature workers who have not been tempered from a class point of view . . .' Would that in all countries there were many more such 'immature' and untempered workers.

To Liberate Themselves

During June and July, 1966, Liu Shao-chi and the work teams, using the prestige of the Communist Party, had been able to pass themselves off as the true spokesmen of the Central Committee; the real revolutionaries in contrast to the 'counter-revolutionaries', the rebels. This situation changed dramatically when on August 5, Mao Tse-tung published his own poster in which he directly accused 'some leading comrades from the central down to the local levels . . . adopting the reactionary stand of the bourgeoisie . . . have enforced a bourgeois dictatorship and struck down the surging movement of the great cultural revolution of the proletariat.' 'They have', said Mao, 'puffed up the arrogance of the bourgeoisie and deflated the morale of the proletariat.'

Within a few days, the Central Committee issued its Communiqué — the 16 Points — which emphasises among other things that the only method is for the masses to liberate themselves and 'any method of doing things in their stead must not be used.'

'It is normal,' the Communiqué stated, 'for the masses to hold different views. Contention between different views is unavoidable, necessary and beneficial. In the course of normal and full debate, the

masses will affirm what is right, correct what is wrong and gradually reach unanimity . . . In the course of debate, every revolutionary should be good at thinking things out for himself and should develop the communist spirit of daring to think, daring to speak, and daring to act. . . .'

Political Power

Contending views argued out in debate had brought greater political enlightenment. But there remained the crucial question of political power.

With the formation of the Revolutionary Committees by mass action in the factories, there was for a short time, a duality of authority since responsibility for production and finance remained in the hands of the former factory managements. This obviously could not continue and the question of political power in the factory now came into sharper focus. By December, 1966, workers in the more politically advanced factories began to take the next step — to seize power. Through their Revolutionary Committees they took over from the former authorities the functions of production, finance and administration. The workers were taking their destiny into their own hands.

A rebel revolutionary worker in the Peking Machine Tool Works remarked that there were some who doubted whether the workers were capable of organising production. 'We believe,' he said, 'that from our practical experience we have the ability to organise production economically and effectively, although the way we shall organise it will be different from the old method. We shall break through the straightjacket of the old bourgeois way and get rid of methods copied mechanically from the Soviet Union. These we shall replace by forms of organisation which correspond to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, the Thought of Mao Tse-tung, and to the needs of our socialist system.' This was putting into effect the policy expressed by **Red Flag** that the first thing to do to liberate the productive forces is to liberate the great masses of the workers, smash the chains which fetter their strength and wisdom and sweep away the obstacles restraining the developments of that strength and wisdom.

An American, Charles E. Merriam, wrote that the performance of daily work is 'in a sense a perpetual plebiscite in which the votes are not formally cast but in which the signs and symbols of assent and dissent are clearly understood by skilled observers.' (**Systematic Politics**, Chicago, 1945). In other words, as the bosses well know, the workers have it in their power to 'vote with their hands.' An old Chinese worker expressed the thought more

crisply: 'I have the same pair of hands as I had yesterday. But see with what energy and joy I am working now.'

Counter-Attack

However, the seizure of power was not all plain sailing. In many places the capitalist roaders did not give up without resistance. The Central Committee had to warn leading personnel in the industrial enterprises at the end of 1966 against 'taking revenge because of the masses' criticism and exposures of facts.' Nor, said the Central Committee, must they cut workers pay or victimise workers by forcing them to leave their factories, (**Peking Review**, January, 1967).

In fact the methods of the bourgeois liners varied; at one period frontal attacks on the revolutionaries; at another bribes to win over the gullible and thus split the ranks of the workers. The municipal authorities in Shanghai in January, 1967 pulled out all the stops in the last-ditch endeavour to maintain their positions of authority. Using a variety of bribes and material inducements they tried to wean the masses from the revolutionary rebels and to stem the tide of seizures of power that were spreading from one factory to another. Bonuses and wages-in-advance were paid out; apprentices up-graded to receive full pay; fares granted for travel to other cities 'to exchange experiences,' thus taking workers out of production. Students working in the factories were given relatively high pay to cause divisions between them and the workers. The appeal was to 'those workers who were carried away by the arguments that a kopek added to a rouble was worth more than socialism and politics' (Lenin).¹¹ The Party organ **Red Flag** characterised these manoeuvres as a 'form of bribery that caters to the psychology of a few backward people among the masses, corrupts the masses' revolutionary will and leads the political struggle of the masses along the wrong road of economism, inviting them to disregard the interests of the state and the collective and the long-term interests, and to pursue only personal and short-term interests.'

The attempts in Shanghai failed. The organisations of the rebel revolutionaries answered with the 'January Revolution' which swept the bourgeois liners out and installed a Revolutionary Committee for the municipality of Shanghai.

From the seizure of power by the revolutionary rebels to the creation of 'new organisational forms for the state organs of the dictatorship of the proletariat' was a short step. Quite soon the 'revolutionary alliance' or 'three-in-one combination' became the accepted organ of power in factories,

communes, schools and universities. This brought within the one unit three elements: the revolutionary rebels; the revolutionary cadres and the People's Liberation Army or the militia.

From the beginning of the Cultural Revolution the Central Committee had explained that the majority of the cadres (Party and some non-Party activists and leaders) were sound although some had been misled and others had acquiesced all too easily in following a revisionist, bourgeois policy. Only a small number, said the 16 points, were 'anti-Party, anti-socialist Rightists.'

There were, of course, those cadres who from the beginning had identified themselves with and fought alongside the rebels. Many others, after their errors had been explained to them, through a process of self-criticism, discussion and study, and in most cases a spell of work as ordinary labourers, were accepted back as valuable comrades on the revolutionary alliances.

The People's Liberation Army had always had close links with production and since 1959, when Lin Piao became Minister of Defence, had undergone intensive political education.

And so in the revolutionary alliance, or revolutionary committee as they are now called, were brought together the dynamic and enthusiasm of the revolutionary rebels; the experience of the remoulded cadres and the high political consciousness and devotion to the people of the army-men.

The style of work of these committees was explained by **Red Flag**: 'The members of the revolutionary committees are ordinary labouring people. They should go deep among the masses and not take special privileges. They should consult the masses extensively whenever there are problems and take an active part in socialist productive labour.'

New Forms of Democracy

Dutt, wedded to the British Road to Socialism with its reliance on the British Constitution and the Parliamentary system, has no time for such methods of direct democracy by which the workers elect their own mates to the factory committee and recall and replace them if they are not satisfactory. He says the groups of Revolutionary Rebels have been installed 'without any corresponding basis of popular representation or election.' (*Whither China* p 38).

The transition from capitalism to communism 'will certainly create a great variety and abundance of political forms,' said Lenin and added 'Under

socialism much of the "primitive" democracy will inevitably be revived, since for the first time in the history of civilised society, the mass of the population will rise to **independent** participation, not only in voting and elections, **but also in the everyday administration of affairs.'** (*State and Revolution*)

The revolutionary committees now managing China's factories, communes, schools and universities represent a giant step in this process.

By August, 1968 revolutionary committees had been established in most factories, communes and educational institutions, as well as at the Municipal and Provincial levels. (The process was completed, with the exception of Taiwan by early September) The workers had by this time passed through the revolutionary fires of struggle against the bourgeois line, of argument and counter argument within the factory, of battles against the manoeuvres and duplicity of the capitalist roaders, and had already had some experience of the responsibility of power and authority. This, together with intensive study of the works of Mao Tse-tung, had greatly raised their political understanding and prepared them for the next major step — a development which put more teeth into the dictatorship of the proletariat giving it still greater effectiveness: the decision that 'The working class must exercise leadership in everything.'

Workers' Leadership

In its immediate application this took the form of introducing working class supervision over education (and the management of rural schools by the poor and lower-middle peasants) 'The facts show us' said one Chinese statement, 'that it is impossible for the students and intellectuals by themselves alone to fulfil the tasks of struggle-criticism-transformation and a whole number of other tasks on the educational front; workers and People's Liberation Army fighters must take part, and it is essential to have strong leadership by the working class.' (August, 1968) Although there had been some improvements after Liberation, the schools were still monopolised by bourgeois intellectuals. Attempts had been made for some years to introduce a combination of work and study by which education would be linked with production in factory and commune but these efforts had been only partially successful, not going to the root of the problem and were frequently sabotaged by the capitalist roaders supported by the bourgeois intellectuals at the schools and universities themselves. In future this would no longer remain a policy advocated from above; the workers' teams which now entered the universities, middle schools (14-17) and primary schools would carry out in practice. 'The proletarian educational system under which

theory and practice accord with each other can be brought into being only if the proletariat takes a direct part.' Nor would this be a passing phenomenon — the workers' teams will remain a permanent feature in the management of Chinese schools and universities.

Scrap 'Empty Talk'

The workers teams may vary in size from thirty to forty workers in a middle or primary school to two hundred or more in a large university. The workers in the factory decide which of their numbers are best suited to form the team and the factory continues to pay their wages. The members of one team will remain 'whilst they continue to be effective' and will then return to the factory and be replaced by other workers. Members of the team serve on the school or university Revolutionary Committee and try to steer the school along a correct revolutionary course. Through study classes in small groups, or at the classroom level or in meetings of the whole school, the workers' teams endeavour to give the students a correct proletarian class orientation, bringing their down-to-earth viewpoint and sense of organisation and discipline to the students. The working class 'detests the habit of empty talk and the practice of double-dealing, where words and actions do not match.' (Yao Wen-yuan statement, August, 1968).

The entry into schools and universities of the workers' teams has been welcomed by the students. Even those from working class and peasant families had sensed the growing generation conflict; that in the past as students they had tended to move away from their class origins, and the realities of the class struggle. In place of a political motivation, they worked hard for good marks in order to 'get on', which before the Cultural Revolution usually meant to become an official or an intellectual.

This development has started with the schools and universities but it will not stop there. In time workers' supervision will extend to all 'places where intellectuals are concentrated' and 'In this way the unhealthy atmosphere, style of work and thinking that exist among intellectuals concentrated in groups can be changed and thus there is the possibility for intellectuals to remould themselves and achieve emancipation.'

'In the course of fulfilling this mission, the working class will itself be profoundly steeled in the class struggle and a group of outstanding worker-cadres will emerge, not merely to manage schools but to reinforce every sector of the state organs and the revolutionary committees at all levels.' (Yao Wen-yuan statement).

Thus in China is being fulfilled under the leadership of the Party and with the guiding principles of the Thought of Mao Tse-tung that 'destruction of bureaucracy' envisioned by Lenin in 1917 and made possible 'by the fact that socialism will shorten the working day, will raise the masses to a new life, will create conditions for the majority of the population that will enable everybody, without exception, to perform 'state functions' . . .' (State and Revolution).

Earlier in this article we took a look at a factory in the opening phase of the Cultural Revolution. We will now describe another factory at the end of 1968 when, according to the Central Committee's Communiqué 'this momentous proletarian cultural revolution has won great and decisive victory'.

How It Works

The Peking Printing and Dyeing Factory is typical of many factories set up in 1958 at the time of the Great Leap Forward. The buildings are modern, airy and well laid out; the equipment is modern and the majority of the workers are comparatively young. In this factory the average age is thirty.

The factory has a lively, political atmosphere. Posters abound in workshops, along the corridors, out in the factory gardens with suggestions for the Revolutionary Committee, discussion of the Party Communiqué, a long strip-cartoon depicting the political life of Liu Shao-chi, comments on the Vietnam war and the liberation struggles in other parts of the world. A young worker of twenty-eight, member of the Revolutionary Committee, greets visitors and gives a lively and dramatic account of events at this factory during the Cultural Revolution.

The factory is engaged in printing and dyeing cotton, rayon and synthetic textiles. There are 2,000 workers (40 per cent women) organised in three shifts of eight hours. There is one rest day a week.

This factory experienced the same pressures from work teams which have been described earlier. Many revolutionary workers were at that time branded as 'black gang' and reactionaries.

After Mao Tse-tung issued his poster the process of mass discussion and criticism began with the capitalist roaders going all out to split the workers into factions. By the winter of 1966 the conflict centred on the question whether it was necessary to make revolution or to follow the 'conservative' line; both sides claimed to be the true revolutionaries; The leading cadres stood alongside the 'conservatives'.

In August, 1967 after the pronouncement that there is 'no fundamental political reason why the working class should be split into factions' groups of workers representing both sides were set up to study the works of Mao Tse-tung with the problems of this factory in mind. One of the causes of disagreement concerned the cadres — were they capable of being remoulded and brought back into the leadership of the factory or should they be dismissed from all posts. From study came unity. In September a three-in-one alliance was formed based on the separate workshops.

In April, 1968 the workers began the movement 'to purify the class ranks'. Basing themselves on their experience during the Cultural Revolution, the workers started to examine how many were genuine workers who had been misled and how many former landlords and rich peasants who had sneaked into jobs in the factory to escape the wrath of the local peasants (and often changing their names) had attempted to sabotage the Cultural Revolution to serve their class interests. In this factory some forty were brought to light as a result of a factory-wide discussion and examination. These were put to work on the factory floor 'under the dictatorship of the workers',

Cleanse The Party

This factory was also engaged with the problem of Party building and Party purification. When Liu Shao-chi carried out Party building in the past, the workers said, he did it behind closed doors. He did the same when Party members made mistakes. The investigation was made in secret. This meant, they said, that with Liu Shao-chi's method of building and rectification, the Party got further and further away from the masses.

The method would be different this time. The important thing was to arouse the workers to concern themselves with Party building; the open-door method. Every worker in the factory would be invited to join in. Mao had said: 'Who gives us the power — the workers.' He had also said that 'a proletarian party must get rid of the waste and let in the fresh.' In this factory Party purification would be organised by each workshop setting up its own Party Purification group to study the question and to review the records of Party members — their attitude to the revisionist line; how far they had fought individual self-interest; if they had made mistakes in the Cultural Revolution and how they had corrected them; whether they were 'fresh' retaining their revolutionary vigour or 'stale', settling down into bureaucratic ways. These groups would also consider who were those workers who had

shown their political mettle as advanced revolutionaries during the struggles of the Cultural Revolution.

After discussion the workers in this factory had abolished all piece-rate work and individual bonuses as material incentives inappropriate to the new situation when the main emphasis is on political consciousness to raise production.

The factory rules and regulations had been investigated and drastically reduced. The top-heavy administration had been pruned. The three hundred administrative-technical personnel had been cut to twenty. Many of the former cadres were now working on the shop floor.

The average wage in this factory was fifty yuan a month; there were a very few workers at the lowest level of thirty five yuan and an equally small number on the highest wage of 108 yuan.

The former revisionist trade union unit in this factory had been scrapped and replaced by a workers' representative congress which will exercise supervisory functions on the workers' behalf over the Revolutionary Committee (the political organ of power) and will serve as an additional channel for workers' views, suggestions and criticisms. The factory elects representatives to the district and municipal levels of this Congress.

The Revolutionary Committee is composed of nineteen, of whom eight are standing committee members. The rest are engaged in full-time factory work. The eight standing committee members put in one day a week on the shop floor. Three members of the Revolutionary Committee are women. Fourteen are members of the Communist Party.

The Committee comprises ten members from the workers (the revolutionary masses) 2 People's Liberation army men and seven cadres.

The Revolutionary Committee is the body responsible for factory management. It divides its functions into four:

- production including finance, workshop organisation; payment of wages;
- political — organising the political life and political study in the factory;
- administration;
- welfare including special provision for large families, workers on pension; nurseries; kindergardens.

The effect of the workers taking control in this factory had been to boost production despite the fact that in July, 1968 the factory sent 600 of its workers in one of the first workers' teams to enter the Tunghua University. 400 later returned to the factory leaving a team of 200 at the University.

The working class of China under the leadership of the Communist Party and by the application of the Thought of Mao Tse-tung is asserting itself as the ruling class in ever-widening spheres of production, education and social and political life. The workers' 'inexhaustible fund of creativeness' is finding expression.

But in a sense this is only the beginning of the process for 'when the old contradictions between relations of production and the productive forces and between the superstructure and the economic base are resolved, new contradictions will arise — this is an unending and ever new dialectical process. To answer the demand for the continuous development of the productive forces there must be a continual readjustment of various aspects of the relations of production and, as a result, a constant process of renovation of the various aspects of the superstructure. This is a guarantee for the continuous growth of the productive forces' (**Peking Review** 17 11 1959).

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From Prague to Chenpao

(continued from page 2)

before they had their own nuclear weapons, and now, with the all-round deepening of revolutionary consciousness in the proletarian cultural revolution, they are even less likely to be scared by nuclear menaces, whether from the US or the Soviet revisionists. The Chinese Foreign Ministry statement, quoted above, concludes with these words: 'It is absolutely impermissible for anyone to violate China's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We will not attack unless we are attacked; if we are attacked, we will certainly counter-attack. Should the Soviet revisionist renegade clique cling to its reckless course and continue to provoke armed conflicts on the border, the Chinese people, following the teaching of our great leader, Chairman Mao will certainly wipe out the invading enemy resolutely, thoroughly, wholly and completely.'

There is no longer any room for doubt about the character of Soviet revisionism. Within the revolutionary movement there were one or two communist parties who, while critical of Soviet revisionism, nevertheless supported the invasion of Czechoslovakia on the grounds that it was undertaken in the defence of socialism. Such a belief could only be sustained on the basis that the Soviet Union remains a socialist country. Such a view is wrong. Those who still cling to illusions about the Soviet Union will be unable to do so for very much longer. All revolutionaries must henceforth be judged by their attitude towards Soviet revisionism — and towards the People's Republic of China. Support for the former, whatever the intention, is support for counter-revolution. Support for the latter is support for revolution. It is impossible to support both.

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE welcome comment, criticism and suggestions for future articles. We also welcome letters and communications for publication. Please write to Tom Hill, 11 Barratt Avenue, Wood Green, N22.

School's Action Union

from a member of the executive committee

MOST SCHOOL STUDENTS, and some teachers too, can imagine why people at British schools are organising, through the SAU and other groups, to fight for their interests. The educational mill is frequently a very unpleasant experience. In schools young people are subjected to petty viciousness, intolerance and general academic bullying. Some schools are more liberal than others but everywhere power in the school is concentrated in the hands of one man or woman. At best students and staff have some sort of collective 'advisory' capacity. In these circumstances change comes very slowly, especially as the undemocratic school boards often contain very backward elements in the community.

So in face of this hierarchy of academic bullshit, school students and teachers have begun to create groups dedicated to struggle within and outside schools for various programmes. About a year ago in North London schools branches of the Revolutionary Socialist Student Federation were set up. About the same time in South London the Free Schools Campaign began activity and from members of these groups, other smaller groups and individuals in London and School Unions in Manchester, Scotland, South Wales, Leicester and the rest of the country a national conference took place in January. Then a London conference was held and the Schools' Action Union has crystallised out with about twenty affiliated branches throughout Britain.

In London our struggle is led by an elected Executive Committee and the London Union has set up area branches and branches in individual schools.

On Sunday March 2 about 700 came along on an SAU demonstration to the Department of Education and Science and County Hall, headquarters of the Inner London Educational Authority. The slogans of that march summarise issues on which the SAU is fighting for;

- 1 Control of the schools by all students and staff

- 2 Freedom of speech and assembly
- 3 The outlawing of corporal punishment
- 4 The abolition of school uniforms
- 5 Coeducational comprehensive schools
- 6 More pay for teachers

These demands should not be taken as final, all the work of the Union is open to debate and criticism. It should be pointed out that the demand for 'coeducational comprehensive schools' is no blank cheque for many of the schools that masquerade under that name are class and sex discriminatory, elitist and quite reactionary and anti-human institutions. However gathering different sexes and social strata under one roof is a step forward to a decent educational system which serves the people.

How does the Union intend to fight for its demands, demands that we consider reflect the ideas of hundreds of thousands of young people? At the moment we are developing our organisation. Our aim is to have groups throughout the schools which can carry out a propaganda work and lead the bulk of students at their schools to fight unitedly by any means possible — meetings, strikes and sit-ins for instance, all of which have occurred in schools up and down the country.

Nationally the SAU produces a printed monthly magazine 'Vanguard' with news from schools, discussion articles about education, organisational and other material.

New Readers and Subscribers

If you think this journal has value in the political field, will you assist by introducing new readers. We cannot afford advertisements and promotion campaigns. Our reliance is on our readers and supporters.

Please help by

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Sending in names and addresses of people interested in seeing a specimen copy.

Housing is a Class Issue

Phil Dixon

Secretary St Pancras (Camden) United Tenants Associations

THE MINISTER of Planning and Land, Kenneth Robinson stated in Parliament on February 6, that an end to the housing problem was at hand. In fact on February 7 on the BBC TV programme '24 Hours', he stated that there were as many homes as householders (18 million houses, 18 million householders) obviously implying that there was no great problem anyway.

Although he admitted that his party's election pledge to build half a million homes per year had not been carried out, he was optimistic that by 1973 there would be one million more homes than people to fill them. His theory is that when 1973 arrives tenants will be able to pick and choose their flat and also determine a low rent.

'The Governments answer to rising house prices is to build enough houses to create a buyers market and we are well on the way to doing just this' was the way he put it.

We have no great need to take this pack of lies very seriously, as the falseness of this statement is proved by the fact that all home prices are rising now. If we were well on the way to creating a 'buyers market' this trend would have been reversed already. The rising militancy of council tenants and all tenants has come about in response to rising rents which is related to growing actual shortage and to increasing interest rates. Further, how does the growing number of families taken into care fit in with Mr Robinsons picture of a 'growing buyers market'?

His answer is:—

'Local housing shortages are bound to persist particularly in London and more than a million slums would still have to be cleared'.

To understand the real situation we must understand that Robinson's dreams are not only unrelated to the rising interest rates for local councils and owner occupiers, but also ignore the fact of class in housing. How can he speak of one

million more homes than families to occupy them if the mass of the working class will remain in those slums which he admits will persist.

There is actual shortage of increasing dimensions amongst the working class for whom most new building is out of income range. Reports are reaching tenants associations of families, forced to move into new accommodation with terribly high rents, who, not being able to afford the charges for modern heating, are using oil heaters and single bar electric fires to economise. In fact their conditions are no better because of high rents.

How can it be otherwise with the burden of interest charges, high land costs and building charges as they are. These new buildings will not solve the housing problem. They are more likely to increase the number of homes the working class cannot afford which lie empty for long periods of time.

One word of truth

For social democrats and revisionists in the movement, who lay their hope on a government fixed low interest rate in housing, there is one word of truth in Robinsons utterances on February 6. 'The universal rise in interest rates is deplored, However, it is impossible to reduce interest rates unilaterally'.

One cannot expect low interest rates in housing by decree of government. We would add that there cannot be a solution to the housing problem while capitalism exists.

Mr Robinsons dream of tenants waking up one morning in 1973 to find the landlords and councils at their mercy can, in this light, be seen as just another impossible promise to keep the people sweet. This is the sort of promise the working class have become quite used to ignoring.

The Present Situation In The Student Movement

THE CLASS NATURE OF STUDENTS

A Contribution from the Sussex Communist Caucus (ML)

The first part of this article appeared in issue number 9 of the *Marxist*, page 12, under the title 'Report from Sussex Students'.

IN STUDYING WHY certain students have and have not developed towards a revolutionary position, we have been forced to consider their class position, their situation as students in this present time of deepening US and British imperialist crisis, their past and likely future. We have concluded that it is of utmost importance to distinguish between the progressive and reactionary aspects of the student movement in English universities, between the progressive aspect of petty-bourgeois opposition to monopoly capitalism, the reactionary aspect of petty-bourgeois opposition to monopoly capitalism, and the proto-proletarian tendencies.

We must maintain a correct perspective. At present the proletarian forces in England are still weak. This is the stage of cadre and party-building.

Student political activity must, in its own area, be integrated with and brought into correct relation to the developing struggle of the working class, under proletarian leadership and discipline. There is a great difference between conducting intense anti-imperialist political struggles or exposing bourgeois culture or fighting for certain reforms, and giving the utopian impression that the class enemies can be defeated within an institution (university) that exists within imperialist society.

We must never encourage the reactionary aspects of petty-bourgeois radicalism: individualism, syndicalism, careerism, etc. Students have to begin to remould themselves, to fight self-interest and careerism. Thus as strategy we must expose the reactionary concept that shortly after 'the revolution', the university will be 'free to determine its own needs and concerns without any outside interference'. Not at all; the university will then serve the working people under the practical and ideological control of the working class and its representatives. The divisions between intellectual and manual labour, between theory and practice — which is the root cause

of the problems thrown up by the IS and New Left spokesmen — will then be ended.

One NL spokesman writes: 'The revolution is the revolution of all levels and of all classes who participate directly in production'. On the contrary, Marx states that in advanced capitalist society 'of all the classes that stand face to face with the bourgeoisie today, the proletariat alone is the really revolutionary class'.

The proletariat, then, because of its position in relation to the forces of production is the only class destined to take state power, to overthrow capitalism. It may under certain conditions through its party unite with or enter into alliances with certain other strata or classes (after a concrete study of the bearing of the internal and external contradictions in the relationship of class forces) but these alliances are tactical and under conditions in which the hegemony of the proletariat prevails. After the revolution over a period of time these allies will of course be remoulded and integrated into the new socialist society.

Certain strata (some intellectuals for example, but in a country such as England where education is at present relatively elitist, not all that many) will come over to the side of the proletariat: 'they thus defend not their present but their future interests, they desert their own standpoint to place themselves at that of the proletariat' (Marx). Those who come over can, of course, make important contributions.

'Becoming an employee' (ie in a formal sense selling one's labour power) does not necessarily mean 'proletarianisation'. 'These new small producers are inevitably being cast into the ranks of the proletariat. (Therefore) it is natural that the petty-bourgeois world conception will again and again crop up in the broad workers' parties'. (Lenin). This holds true today for intellectuals, technicians, etc. We must look upon class roles in their essence under concrete conditions. Certainly being 'proletarianised' has nothing to do with the supra-class concept of 'not having control of his environment',

as a Sussex IS student argues in an article based on the IS pamphlet, **Education, Capitalism, and the Student Revolt.**'

Let us look at the position of English students in both their present material conditions and in their likely future conditions — ie dialectically.

The overwhelming majority of English university students come from petty-bourgeois or bourgeois homes. They are paid a grant by the capitalist state (its source for the most part is value extracted from working people) while they are at the university they chose to attend for three years. This grant (during term time, and leaving aside pocket money or cars from Daddy) is roughly the same as the basic wage an apprentice received for doing forty hours of work on the job, fixed hours, little job security or prospects for advancement. The university student however has to sign-in for only about three hours a week ('tutorials') and (although certainly too much diffuse or useless reading is assigned) only has to turn in a short essay or two. Between 8 and 5, Monday to Friday he or she can sleep, eat, read, write political manifestos, travel, make love, etc.

In the last three months of the student's third year he will be interviewed by imperialist corporations and by agencies or institutions of the bourgeois state. Most former university students will start off receiving £1,200 a year or one third more than the basic rate for the young working class. Although his life will be 'controlled' by a superior, often in an irrational or bureaucratic way, it is likely that in turn the graduate will boss or supervise or teach others in a 'subordinate' position, and in many cases will exploit their labour or direct the process of exploitation. By forty his salary will be £2,500 or more bearing no comparison with the basic proletarian wage, and in addition, he will have job security, power, prestige and leisure time.

It is foolish to think that when a member of the petty-bourgeoisie in a formal sense sells his labour power (professor, manager, etc) and is no longer self-employed that his class position has necessarily changed in essence. Or by extension, that a simple formal change can mean socialism — look at the tragic example of Russia; the class nature of the bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeoisie as people was not changed by formal expropriation of their property.

These people and their children remained bourgeois in essence (often as managers, or in the uni-

versities especially in the social sciences and the arts)then, under favourable conditions, began the process of restoring capitalism.

Certainly as the contradictions that beset imperialism intensify some of the people under discussion will come over. Careful attention should be paid to the contradictions faced by the petty-bourgeoisie as they are forced under by moribund monopoly capitalism, but only secondary attention, for the first step toward revisionism is domination of the vanguard party by the concerns or situation of the petty-bourgeoisie or their ideological representatives.

However because most of the IS and New Left authors at Sussex confuse the position of the petty-bourgeoisie with that of the proletariat, they define the revolution in terms of their own class interests and not those of the proletariat.

For example, an article by a NL Sussex student is concerned primarily with the estrangement of the individual petty-bourgeois soul; that is, it is fundamentally bourgeois individualist. Thus it is no accident that whereas Marx begins with man's economic relations and proceeds to materialist analysis of the objective nature of capitalist society, the Sussex student, like Dr Dühring, begins with a supra-class bourgeois idealist abstract situation: 'Two people in relation form a system'.

This Sussex New Left student's chief error lies in his misuse of the concept 'internal contradiction'. Engels, in exposing one of the class ancestors of the new left, Dr Dühring, wrote: 'The real unity (ie unity of opposites in contradiction) of this world consists in its materiality.' In historical materialism — the method of Marxism-Leninism applied to society — internal and external contradictions are objective and material; consciousness is a reflection. The Sussex NL student however sees the motive forces of history as essentially **subjective, supra-class, and psychological**: 'Emotions are the means of production and the mode of private property, the forces of production which forge the structure of the relations in an interpersonal system'. Again and again petty-bourgeois individualism peeps out of the New Left jargon and individual contradictions are equated with class contradictions: 'the contradiction between the elements (classes, individuals) . . .' is how the NL Sussex student analyses the system.

'Not to have a correct political point of view is like not having a soul' (Mao).

What are the implications of these positions? For one thing, note the provincialism of most of the Sussex IS and NL spokesmen. The position of the student in the English university is almost totally isolated from the crisis of international imperialism, from the crisis of British monopoly-capitalism, from the great class struggles which are taking place throughout the world including the proletarian Cultural Revolution in education in China.

Instead we find utopianism, escapism, idealism, individualist supra-class stances toward authority, as these examples show: 'To present a truth which dissolves the lies in which structures of domination hide'; 'To smash bourgeois ideology and transcend it with a theoretical practice which is liberation'. To 'smash' bourgeois ideology within bourgeois society is at best utopian and at worst anarchist or dadaist. To 'transcend it' is indeed a more accurate statement of the implications of this position.

Let us look at another NL Sussex student's concept of revolution in a metropolitan capitalist country such as England: 'The revolution is a "real people's revolution", a revolution of the producers as a whole (but not a unitary whole) mobilised through time and structure behind the advanced class'.

Just who are the people creeping behind 'the advanced class'? Intellectuals, technicians, managers, the strata that in recent years began the restoration of capitalism in Russia, the class whose subversive activities have been recently exposed in the proletarian Cultural Revolution in China. Marx, writing about the revolutionary movement in nineteenth century France, clearly saw that the petty-bourgeoisie are perfectly willing to use the proletariat as shock troops and to pay lip service to their demands, but that they will later seize power for their own interests which they will call 'the people's interests':

'But the "democrat", because he represents the petty bourgeoisie, that is, a transition class, in which the interests of two classes are simultaneously blunted, imagines himself elevated above class antagonism generally. The democrats concede that a privileged class confronts them, but they, along with all the rest of the nation, form the people. What they represent is the people's rights; what interests them is the people's interests. Accordingly, when a struggle is impending, they do not need to examine the interests and position of the different classes'.

The 'new left' of course refer to themselves as 'Marxists' not as 'democrats' but beyond the complicated semantics and the mention of the proletariat, their class position peeps through. Note also that according to one NL spokesman, the revolution takes place 'through time and structure', not through the proletarian revolutionary party and under its iron discipline. Perhaps the revolutionary party of the working class is a nasty old 'structure of domination'! Lenin stressed the role and discipline of the proletarian party as a matter of life and death for to reject it 'is tantamount to completely disarming the proletariat in the interests of the bourgeoisie. It is tantamount to that petty-bourgeois diffuseness, instability, incapacity for sustained effort and organized action, which if indulged in, must destroy every proletarian revolution'.

It is an easy step to slide from petty-bourgeois opposition to 'structures of domination', to identify the enemy not primarily as monopoly capitalism but as monopoly capitalism because it happens to be highly technocratic. Thus Louis Althusser places stress upon 'contemporary positivist technocratic society'. The IS pamphlet, '**Education, Capitalism, and the Student Revolt**', is even more clear on this point. There the enemy is defined as 'technological capitalism' and the technological university'. There is a petty-bourgeois nostalgia for the good old days before monopoly or technocratic capitalism when (according to this un-Marxist myth) the university was free from outside interference. There is a lament that the modern university is integrated into the productive process and with the ideology of society. No clear cut and protracted realisation that technology and ideology are not evils unless they are capitalist technology and capitalist ideology is offered by these spokesmen. They have no understanding that after the revolution the university will not revert to idealised petty-bourgeois isolation and 'freedom' but will be totally integrated into society under the control of the working class so that working people will be served.

Thus an IS spokesman writes: 'We do not wish here to enter into the question of the autonomy of scientific thought. . . but the precondition of any scientific progress is that science should be free to define its own problems and concerns. . . .' Louis Althusser elaborates this point in great detail. 'Traditionally the university represents "liberal" values: critical spirit, freedom of scientific research and discussion'.

However, after the revolution for socialism intellectuals and the university will **not** be 'free' in

this bourgeois liberal sense to define their own problems and concerns: 'Will not Marxism destroy any creative impulses? It will. It will certainly destroy the creative impulses that arise from feudal, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology, from individualism, anarchism, from art for art's sake, from the decadent and pessimistic outlook. Indeed any creative impulse not rooted in the proletariat' (Mao).

Socialist education will not aim at giving a noble and free-thinking elite time and 'freedom' to 'define their own problems and concerns' as scientists and intellectuals, but will be designed to 'serve proletarian politics so as to enable everyone who receives an education to develop morally, intellectually and physically, to become a worker with both socialist consciousness and culture' (Mao).

Therefore in China the universities and technical schools are now under the control of the working class. Students and teachers teach each other, and are taught by the working class and by poor and lower-middle peasants in the university, in factories, in communes, centres for cultural production etc, with which the universities and technical schools are now integrated. Most exams and all bureaucratic procedures have been abolished. Students not only learn the basic subjects; they study Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao Tse-tung. They are taught to serve the working classes and to resolutely fight self-interest and careerism. They learn from the working people and then become workers with both socialist consciousness and socialist culture.

Yes, Althusser, the dictatorship of the proletariat extends over culture and the university. Lenin was very clear on this point: 'All educational work in the Soviet Republic of workers and peasants in the field of political education in general and in the field of art in particular, should be imbued with the spirit of the class struggle being waged by the proletariat for the successful achievement of the aims of its dictatorship'. A complete change in the world outlook of the people is one of the necessary requirements for the victory of socialism.

The question of the dictatorship of the proletariat in all spheres of society is avoided by the New Left, neo Trotskyist and revisionist points of view. From the point of view of the oppressed majority of the population the dictatorship of the proletariat is far more democratic than the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. It is no accident that for Lenin this issue was a litmus test for distinguishing between proletarian and petty-bourgeois ideology: 'Those who recognise only the class struggle are not yet Marxists; they

may be found still within the boundaries of bourgeois thinking and bourgeois politics. To confine Marxism to the doctrine of the class struggle means. . . reducing it to something which is acceptable to the bourgeoisie. **Only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is what constitutes the most profound difference between the Marxist and the ordinary petty-bourgeois as well as the big bourgeois**' (Lenin).

Note: After the original publication of *Capital* and Marx's other basic works both in Germany and England and later in Russia, a number of intellectuals set out to refute Marx. Their arguments bear an amazing similarity to those put forth in highly arrogant, pretentious and mystified language by intellectuals today who call themselves 'Marxists' and claim that they only wish to bring Marx up to date to the latest social development. Thus for a much more complete analysis the reader is referred to Engels *Anti-Duhring* and Lenin's *What the Friends of the People Are*, and to Lenin's writings on revisionism.

The reader is also directed to the excellent articles on the student struggles in the American publication *PL*: Jake Rosen's *From Personal to Social Rebellion* in March-April 1968; John Levin's *Power in the University* in Nov.-Dec. 1967; and on Marcuse by Israel and Rhodes, both in Oct. 1968.

JEAN BABY

In our issue no. 9 we carried an article by this French Marxist writer and lecturer. We regret to have to record his death in January this year, and pay our sincere respects to him. He devoted his life of over 70 years to the cause of Marxism-Leninism. Having made forthright attacks on the revisionism of the French Communist Party, he was expelled from its ranks and continued as a staunch anti-revisionist to his death, fearlessly fighting for the development of French Marxist-Leninist forces, and opposing Soviet revisionism. In the China of Mao Tse-tung he saw the Marxist-Leninist leadership of the world's ordinary people fighting against reaction. The Editors.



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