

The Dictatorship of the Proletariat and The Great Cultural Revolution

by Chung Shih

THE proletarian revolutionary teacher Lenin once made the famous statement: "The further that great day recedes into the past, the more clearly we see the significance of the proletarian revolution in Russia, and the more deeply are we led to reflect upon the practical experience gained in our work as a whole." (*The Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution.*) The same can be said for China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. As time recedes into the past, the far-reaching influence of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution on consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, promoting the development of the cause of socialism and other aspects will become clearer and clearer.

Great Revolution for Consolidating the Proletarian Dictatorship

The theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat is the quintessence of Marxism. Lenin pointed out: "The dictatorship of the proletariat is a most determined and most ruthless war waged by the new class against a more powerful enemy, the bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased tenfold by its overthrow (even if only in one country), and whose power lies not only in the strength of international capital, in the strength and durability of the international connections of the bourgeoisie, but also in the force of habit, in the strength of small production. For, unfortunately, small production is still very, very widespread in the world, and small production engenders capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale. For all these reasons the dictatorship of the proletariat is essential." (*"Left-Wing" Communism, An Infantile Disorder.*) Lenin stated very clearly that after the proletariat has seized political power, the overthrown landlord and capitalist classes will always turn their hopes for a restoration into attempts at restoration and that new bourgeois elements will also continuously be engendered who will attack the socialist system. Without the proletarian dictatorship, therefore, the proletariat will not be able to maintain its political power, defeat the bourgeoisie and build and consolidate socialism. Consequently, throughout the entire historical

period of socialism, particularly after the socialist transformation of ownership of the means of production has been completed in the main, whether or not to recognize that there are still classes and class struggle and whether or not to uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat are fundamental questions concerning the future and destiny of the Party and the state and of the proletariat and other working people.

It is precisely on these fundamental questions that the Soviet revisionist renegade clique has utterly betrayed Marxism-Leninism and converted the world's first socialist country into a social-imperialist country. Chairman Mao has waged a tit-for-tat struggle against this clique and inherited, defended and developed the Marxist-Leninist theory of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Chairman Mao has comprehensively summed up the historical experience, both positive and negative, of the dictatorship of the proletariat, advanced the great thesis of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, formulated for our Party the basic line for the entire historical period of socialism and led the whole Party and the people of the whole country to struggle for the consolidation and strengthening of the proletarian dictatorship, thus guaranteeing China's continual advance along the socialist road.

Personally initiated and led by Chairman Mao, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is a great political revolution carried out under the conditions of socialism by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes; it is of tremendous significance to consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat and preventing capitalist restoration. After the socialist transformation of ownership of the means of production had in the main been carried out in China, Chairman Mao led the whole Party and the people of the whole country in a series of struggles against the bourgeoisie and against revisionism. From the struggle against the bourgeois Rightists in 1957 to the struggle to shatter the Peng Teh-huai anti-Party clique in 1959 and from the great debate in regard to the general line for building socialism to the socialist education movement in the

cities and countryside, great victories were scored one after another.

However, just as Chairman Mao pointed out in a speech in February 1967: "In the past we waged struggles in rural areas, in factories, in the cultural field, and we carried out the socialist education movement. But all this failed to solve the problem because we did not find a form, a method, to arouse the broad masses to expose our dark aspect openly, in an all-round way and from below." Summing up the experience of the successive struggles in accordance with the theory of the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, Chairman Mao has finally found the form — the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution — which is the inevitable result of the protracted and sharp struggle between the two classes, the two roads and the two lines in the period of socialism. This great revolution has forcefully pushed forward the struggle carried out by the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, Marxism against revisionism, and has in theory and in practice enriched and developed the Marxist theory of the proletarian dictatorship. The practice of the Chinese people has completely proved that "the current Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is absolutely necessary and most timely for consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, preventing capitalist restoration and building socialism."

Two Bourgeois Headquarters Shattered

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has smashed Liu Shao-chi's and Lin Piao's plots to restore capitalism and has consolidated the dictatorship of the proletariat in China. The history of class struggle since the founding of New China shows that the toppled landlord and capitalist classes at home invariably try for a comeback, that new bourgeois elements may arise and that the struggle between the two classes and the two roads in society is bound to find expression in our Party. Internationally, imperialism and social-imperialism which want to carry out aggression and subversion against our country are bound to look for agents inside our Party. Representatives of the bourgeoisie who have sneaked into our Party will do whatever they can to push a counter-revolutionary revisionist line in an attempt to change the Party's basic line and the socialist system. When the opportune moment arrives, they will come forth to seize political power and replace the dictatorship of the proletariat with the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao were such representatives of the bourgeoisie. In their attempts to restore capitalism in China, they shouted themselves hoarse to advocate the theory of "the dying out of class struggle" and the theory of productive force. Wielding that portion of power they had usurped, they not only exercised the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in some spheres of the superstructure but also tried to change the nature of

socialist ownership in the economic base. Just as Chairman Mao pointed out at the First Plenary Session of the Ninth Central Committee of the Party: "Apparently, we couldn't do without the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, for our base was not solid. From my observations, I am afraid that in a fairly large majority of factories — I don't mean all or the overwhelming majority — leadership was not in the hands of real Marxists and the masses of workers." The question was that the leadership in these factories "followed that line of Liu Shao-chi's."

During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the two bourgeois headquarters with Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao as their ringleaders were crushed, their counter-revolutionary revisionist line was deeply criticized and a handful of renegades, enemy agents and absolutely unrepentant persons in power taking the capitalist road who had wormed their way into our Party were expelled from our ranks. Thus their plots to restore capitalism were completely destroyed. This was a great victory for the Great Cultural Revolution.

All-Round Dictatorship Over the Bourgeoisie Strengthened

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has strengthened the all-round dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie in the superstructure including all spheres of culture, and consolidated the socialist economic base. The historical experience gained in China's revolution proves that a socialist revolution on the economic front alone is not enough and cannot be consolidated by itself. There must be a thoroughgoing socialist revolution on the political and ideological fronts as well. The bourgeoisie has lost the means of production but it still has a superior force in the cultural and educational fields, and it is bound to make use of this "hereditary domain" to continue its trial of strength with the proletariat. Before the Great Cultural Revolution, Liu Shao-chi and his gang made desperate efforts to use ideology and the superstructure to serve their purpose of restoring capitalism and frantically exercised counter-revolutionary dictatorship over the proletariat in those departments they controlled. Such a situation was sharply criticized by Chairman Mao who at the time pointed out: "If it [the Ministry of Culture] refuses to change, it should be renamed the Ministry of Emperors, Kings, Generals and Ministers, the Ministry of Talents and Beauties or the Ministry of Foreign Mummies"; the Ministry of Health should likewise be renamed the "Ministry of Health for Urban Overloads." With regard to the field of education, Chairman Mao pointed out: "The domination of our schools and colleges by bourgeois intellectuals should not be tolerated any longer."

Marxism holds that the superstructure is determined by the economic base. Under given conditions, however, the superstructure in turn plays the principal and decisive role. When the superstructure (politics,

culture, etc.) obstructs the development of the economic base, political and cultural changes become principal and decisive. If we had not unfolded the Great Cultural Revolution from below in an extensive and penetrating way, how could we change the situation in which the bourgeoisie exercised dictatorship over the proletariat in the spheres of culture and education? How was it possible for us to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and strengthen the socialist economic base? In the Great Cultural Revolution, the counter-revolutionary revisionist line of Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao was criticized in a deep-going way, the mire left by the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes was cleaned up, and the proletariat seized back the positions previously occupied by the bourgeoisie. Acting in accordance with Chairman Mao's instruction that "the working class must exercise leadership in everything," the working class and its most reliable ally, the poor and lower-middle peasants, mounted the political stage of the superstructure. A vigorous revolutionary situation ensued, with a host of socialist new things growing in strength and profound changes favourable to the proletariat taking place in the entire superstructure.

However, we are fully aware that the struggle in the superstructure is still acute and complicated and that the bourgeoisie is not reconciled to its defeat and will not withdraw from this position of its own accord. Since the Great Cultural Revolution started first in the fields of culture and education, the bourgeoisie is certain to make the first moves in these fields in its efforts to negate the Great Cultural Revolution and launch counter-attacks against us. We must resolutely implement Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line and carry through to the end the socialist revolution in the entire superstructure, including the revolution in education, literature and art and health work.

Building an Iron Wall to Combat and Prevent Revisionism

The proletarian dictatorship is a dictatorship of the masses, a dictatorship of the majority over the minority. This is where it differs fundamentally from the dictatorship of all the exploiting classes, and herein lies the profound source of its powerful strength. Only by fully arousing the broad masses is it possible to build an iron wall to combat and prevent revisionism so that the dictatorship of the proletariat can be really consolidated. One outstanding feature of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is the direct mobilization of the people in their hundreds of millions in the great fight to combat and prevent revisionism and consolidate the proletarian dictatorship.

Chairman Mao has pointed out: "Never before in any mass movement have the masses been aroused so

thoroughly and on so broad a scale." Hundreds of millions of people rising up to speak out freely, air their views fully, hold great debates and write big-character posters are like an avalanche which in no time smashed to smithereens the revisionist "independent kingdoms" in some places and crushed seemingly impregnable bourgeois fortresses in some units. No one can ever eradicate the great historical merits of the mass movement. In the Great Cultural Revolution the broad masses of the people received a very profound education in Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought and came to understand the truth that "the correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political line decides everything." They also enhanced their ability to distinguish Marxism from revisionism and the correct line from the erroneous, and raised their consciousness to continue the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Lenin put it well: "Nothing will ever compare in importance with this direct training that the masses . . . receive in the course of the revolutionary struggle itself." (*Revolutionary Days*.) Since the Cultural Revolution began, more and more comrades upholding Marxism and opposing revisionism have come to the fore on all fronts. This is true even in educational circles where "bourgeois prejudices have struck very deep root." (Lenin: *Speech Delivered at an All-Russia Conference of Political Education Workers of Gubernia and Uyezd Education Departments*.) This will surely be of profound significance to combating and preventing revisionism and to ensuring that the task of consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat is fulfilled right through to the grass-roots level.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has provided us with extremely valuable experience in future struggles to combat and prevent revisionism and consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat. As a form of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the Great Cultural Revolution is of universal significance in the entire historical period of socialism. Chairman Mao has said: "Our country at present practises a commodity system, the wage system is unequal, too, as in the eight-grade wage scale, and so forth. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat such things can only be restricted. Therefore, if people like Lin Piao come to power, it will be quite easy for them to rig up the capitalist system."

This instruction of Chairman Mao's points out to us that the emergence of revisionism is not accidental but has its profound class and social origins. Because of the fact that in socialist society there still are classes, class contradictions and class struggle, there is bourgeois right, there are the soil and conditions for engendering capitalism and a new bourgeoisie and there is the danger of capitalist restoration, it is imperative to carry out the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

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