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Red Pages is a publication of the Maoist Communist Union (MCU), an organization dedicated to advancing the principles of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism in the struggle for revolution in the United States.

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Contents

The Looming Economic Crisis	1
The U.S. Defeat in Afghanistan	7
On the Importance of Learning from the Revolutionary Movements in India and the Philippines	21
Key Lessons from Recent Translations on Mao's Directives from the Final Years of the GPCR	26
Chairman Mao's Primary Directives	32
A Few Opinions of Mine	39
Chairman Mao's Talk with Members of the Politburo who Were in Beijing	43
A Summary of Views on the Problem of the Inner-Party Bourgeoisie	53

The Looming Economic Crisis

There is something looming on the horizon. The warning signs of the coming crash, crisis, and prolonged depression are flashing bright, even as speculative bubbles grow bigger by the day. The U.S. ruling class has shown itself to be incapable of resolving the ever-growing supply chain backlog—at least in the short to medium term—and many banks and financial analysts are now forecasting coming major inflation and a significant economic downturn. Reading through the lines of the predictions of bourgeois economists it is clear that the ruling class is growing very worried indeed.

The fundamental reason for this crisis is the overproduction inherent to the capitalist mode of production.¹ Since the Dot-Com bubble and subsequent crash the U.S. economy has been mired in stagnation. While the government manipulates basic economic statistics to mask this reality, simply going back to the older methods they used for calculating inflation and GDP growth shows that the U.S. has had negative real growth most years since the year 2000.² Of course, even within such a protracted period of stagnation, there are ebbs and flows, economic ups and downs of a relative degree, but localized growth in sector or another does not contradict the overall trend.

Even with negative real growth, the U.S. ruling class has so far been able to stave off a major economic collapse akin to the Great Depression. However, the methods that they have used—primarily money printing, austerity, taxing the masses more and more, deficit spending, and promoting massive debt creation—have only kicked the can down the road, so to speak. These measures not only fail to address the underlying problems which create crises in the first place, they actually deepen the structural issues with the U.S. economy and, in so doing, set the stage for a

more severe economic crash in the future.

Combined with the current supply chain crisis—itsself a result of the anarchy of capitalist production—we are rapidly approaching a major economic crisis, despite the ongoing bailouts and recent passage of Biden's Infrastructure bill. Now, with interest rates³ at zero percent and trillions of dollars being printed every year and handed to the banks, there is little more the ruling class can do to stave off the crisis. The ruling class will doubtless try everything they can to contain this, but with the threat of prolonged inflation battering at the door, they are in a bind from which they cannot escape. The coming crash will provide major openings for Maoists to build up the working class movement in the U.S. and around the world, provided that we seize the time.

In order to understand the present situation, it is helpful to provide a brief overview of some economic and financial developments in the past few decades.

In the 1990s there were a series of changes to the regulatory framework in the U.S. banking system which culminated in the repeal of the Glass-Steagall Act. This allowed investment banks to use commercial deposits from individuals' bank accounts (such as savings or checking accounts) as capital to carry out various speculative ventures and thereby opened the door to rapid consolidation and concentration of capital in the banking system. In the wake of Dot-Com crash, the U.S. ruling class cut interest rates significantly, a move aimed at preventing widespread failures in the banking system. This provided new lines of cheap credit to the banks from the Federal Reserve. This combination of slashed interest rates and more consolidated financial institutions helped to fuel the massive

- 1 This is overproduction relative to what the masses can consume given their exploitation under the system of wage labor. For more on crises of overproduction see the series of entries on the subject in The Dictionary of Revolutionary Marxism: <http://www.massline.org/Dictionary/O.htm#overproduction>
- 2 While the economic statistics of bourgeois governments should always be viewed with skepticism and analyzed critically, in the last half century the U.S. ruling class has taken the manipulation and fabrication of this data to new levels. According to the formula that the government used before 1980, inflation right now is over 15%, compared with the official number of 7%. Similar discrepancies exist for GDP growth, unemployment, and more. For more on the changes that have occurred in the last few decades in calculating inflation see the comments made by John Williams (an economist who is critical of the extreme dishonesty and blatant manipulation of data which is now ubiquitous in the U.S. government) on his website Shadow Stats: <http://www.shadowstats.com/article/no-438-public-comment-on-inflation-measurement>
- 3 Interest rates in this sense refers to the rate at which the U.S. Central Bank, the Federal Reserve, lends to the Big Banks known as the Primary Dealers – a few dozen multinational financial institutions like Bank of America, Deutsche Bank, Goldman Sachs, Wells Fargo, J.P. Morgan, and so on. This sets the floor for interest rates across the economy as these banks in turn lend to other institutions at slightly above this rate to make profit off the difference in interest rates.

speculative bubble in housing which popped in 2008, nearly taking the world's economy down with it. To avert a global economic depression, the government colluded with other countries around the world to engage in an unprecedented series of bank bailouts, interest rate cuts, and money printing. This included the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008, a \$700 billion taxpayer funded bank bailout in the U.S.; Maiden Lane I, II, and III in which the Federal Reserve helped a few of the big banks buy their failing counterparts by taking the toxic assets off their hands with printed money; lending to the banks at negative real interest rates;⁴ three rounds of quantitative easing⁵ in the U.S. alone; and much more. All of this staved off the immediate threat of an economic free fall, in which a cascading series of defaults would have torpedoed production around the world.

However, these policies did not address the underlying issue of overproduction which has been plaguing the U.S. and global economy for some decades now. And printing money and providing free credit to the big banks has serious economic consequences. In effect, doing so is a form of borrowing from the future. Inevitably, the debt has to be paid off, and the money printing leads to inflation. From 2007 to 2020 global debt has increased from \$57 trillion to \$281 trillion, an increase in the ratio of debt to GDP from 98% to 356%.

4 When the Federal Reserve lends to banks at negative real interest rates, the money still has to be paid back. However, the value of repayment is less than that of the original loan. They may borrow \$100 million today and pay back \$100 million in a year, but that \$100 million repayment will be worth less because of inflation.

5 Quantitative Easing is the name for a program in which a central bank like the Federal Reserve prints money and uses it to buy assets such as Mortgage-Backed Securities, Government Bonds, Corporate Debt, or even stocks from the big banks. While the official justification for this is to prevent liquidity issues, it actually amounts to a massive transfer of wealth to the big banks, and also creates tens of billions of dollars a month in demand in troubled asset markets to prop them up via money printing. In reality the various rounds of Quantitative Easing undertaken by the Fed and other central banks have been aimed at preventing the inevitable solvency crisis from consuming the major financial institutions around the world.

It is interesting to note that while it is illegal for the Federal Reserve to directly lend to the U.S. government (e.g. directly purchase U.S. government debt from the U.S. Treasury which issues this debt), a significant portion of the money that the Fed lends to the banks is used by them to purchase U.S. government debt. In this situation, the banks basically function as intermediaries, allowing for a degree of debt-monetization by the Federal Reserve, and are compensated based on the difference in interest rates (e.g. they borrow at 0% from the Fed and lend the same money to the government at 2%, thus yielding a 2% profit a year). What's more, with Quantitative Easing, the Federal Reserve then goes on to buy tens of billions of dollars of U.S. government debt back from the banks, at slightly above market rates, nominally to "stimulate demand" and provide the banks with liquidity. This functionally leads to the Federal Reserve "monetizing the U.S. government's debt", known less euphemistically as printing money to pay for the deficit. This inevitably leads to the inflation that we are only beginning to see today. As of August, 2021 the Federal reserve owned 18% of the outstanding U.S. government debt, around double the 9% or so that it usually owned before the 2008 crisis. <https://wolfstreet.com/2021/08/17/who-bought-the-5-trillion-piled-on-top-of-the-monstrous-us-national-debt-in-15-months/>

6 In recent weeks and months the U.S. ruling class has grown very concerned about runaway inflation domestically and internationally. To combat this, the Fed has indicated that it will begin tapering its Quantitative Easing program and tightening monetary policy via a series of interest rate hikes. While most among the U.S. ruling class have acknowledged that this is necessary, there is great concern that this will trigger a major economic crash in the next few months.

7 For example, see this New York Times article, which notes that in 2021, U.S. startups raised \$330 billion in funding nearly double the record \$167 billion they raised in 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/19/technology/tech-startup-funding.html> The recent craze around cryptocurrencies and NFTs is part of the same speculative fervor.

In September 2019, before the Coronavirus Pandemic, the Federal Reserve provided a \$400 billion bailout to the big banks because of the deteriorating economic situation and a crisis in the inter-bank lending market known as the repurchase and sale market. At the start of the pandemic the U.S. ruling class was faced with another crash of the stock market and a potential cascading wave of defaults in major banks and corporations. To stave this off they passed a massive \$2.2 trillion bailout, by far the largest in the history of the world. Altogether in 2020 the Federal Reserve provided around \$10 trillion in bailouts to the big banks. This money printing spree saw the Federal Reserve increase the dollar supply by over 20% in one year. Quantitative Easing continues to this day to the tune of around \$120 billion per month, with nominal interest rates still at 0%.⁶

Needless to say, this is not sustainable. It has fueled an even larger speculative bubble. However, due to the underlying crisis of overproduction, it is not very profitable to invest in expanding production in most industries. Markets for most consumer goods are saturated. So this, in conjunction with money printing and extremely easy credit, has led capitalists to pour money into startups and companies which are not profitable and may never become profitable.⁷ The degree of speculation at present is perhaps best exemplified by comparing the market

capitalization (number of outstanding shares times the price of each share) of Tesla to the other automakers. In late October, 2021, Tesla's market capitalization reached \$1.01 trillion. This was more than that of the next ten most valuable automakers combined, despite the fact that the company was projected to deliver less than one million cars globally in 2021, compared with more than seventy-five million for all other auto manufacturers combined. At the time that Tesla reached this peak, its price to earnings (PE) ratio reached 332. Generally PE ratios of between 10-30 are considered favorable for investing; the higher the ratio the more expensive a company is relative to its revenue.

While Tesla is particularly absurd, it is not so unique; many other big startup companies such as Uber and Lyft are not profitable, and admit in their own Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filings that they may never become profitable. Yet the flow of speculative money into these companies has kept them afloat for years. It is important to reiterate that this is a result of the ongoing crisis of overproduction—which makes investment in expanding production generally less profitable except in a few sectors—and the extremely easy credit which central banks around the world have been providing to the big banks, who in turn pass this on to other major corpora-

tions.⁸ This money has to go somewhere, and has flowed into speculative ventures like Tesla and Uber, as well as into hot housing markets in numerous cities around the world.⁹

The U.S. ruling class is now growing more and more worried about the dangers of inflation and the related supply chain crisis, which continues to worsen by the day with no end in sight. Treasury Secretary, and former Chair of the Federal Reserve, Janet Yellen has repeatedly raised concerns about deficit spending.¹⁰ In a recent speech Biden finally acknowledged the issues with inflation;¹¹ prior to that point his administration had toed the line that inflation was just transitory. For example, in a TV appearance on CNN, White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki had downplayed concerns over inflation saying that inflation was actually a good thing because it supposedly was just driven by increased demand and people getting back to work. In her deflection of criticism over inflation she stated, "The fact is the unemployment rate is about half what it was a year ago. So a year ago, people were in their homes. Ten percent of people were unemployed. Gas prices were low because nobody was driving. People weren't buying goods because they didn't have jobs. Now more people have jobs. More people are buying goods. That's increasing the demand. That's a good thing."

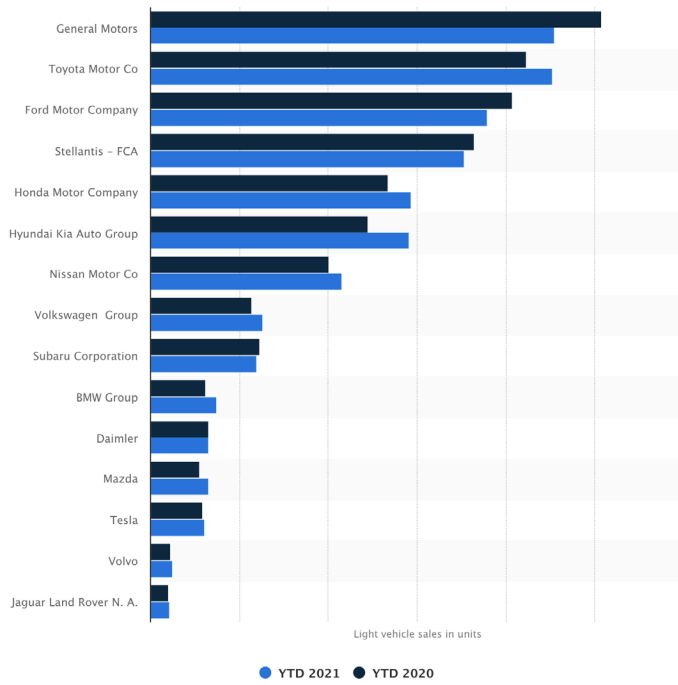
8 It's worth noting that most central banks around the world are pursuing a zero-interest rate policy (ZIRP) meaning that they lend to the big banks at zero or near zero percent interest. This is the nominal rate, but when inflation is taken into account, this is actually a negative interest rate policy, meaning in real terms (i.e. when adjusted for inflation) the central banks are paying the big banks to borrow money from them. For example, with the current inflation rates if a bank borrowed \$100 million from the Fed for a year, it would only have to pay back \$93 million in a year when adjusted for inflation, in addition to having been able to use that money in various profit-making schemes for the whole year. Since this money is created by the Fed, this amounts to diluting the money supply, which transfers wealth from the people to the big banks in a hidden fashion. The dilution of the money supply tends to increase the value of stocks and other financial assets faster than it devalues the currency. So it benefits the wealthy, while harming those who own few or no financial assets. Since the creation of the Federal Reserve in 1913, it has been charged with maintaining a stable inflation level, basically ensuring that there is a continued dilution of the purchasing power of the dollar, without having it spiral out of control.

9 The housing boom in the suburbs and in the cities (the latter especially post-2008) is also tied to the need for banks to create AAA-rated securities which can be used as a collateral in the inter-bank lending markets (the repo markets in particular) without having to take a "haircut," the industry term for receiving a loan for less than the value of the security offered as collateral. This means that a bank using these as collateral can receive 100% of the net present value of the security as a loan. This allows for theoretically infinite leverage in these markets. For more on these dynamics in the inter-bank lending markets and how increasing "haircuts" on previously AAA-rated mortgage-backed securities triggered a bank run in these markets in 2008, see Gary Gorton and Andrew Metrick's famous article "Haircuts": <https://files.st-louisfed.org/files/htdocs/publications/review/10/11/Gorton.pdf>

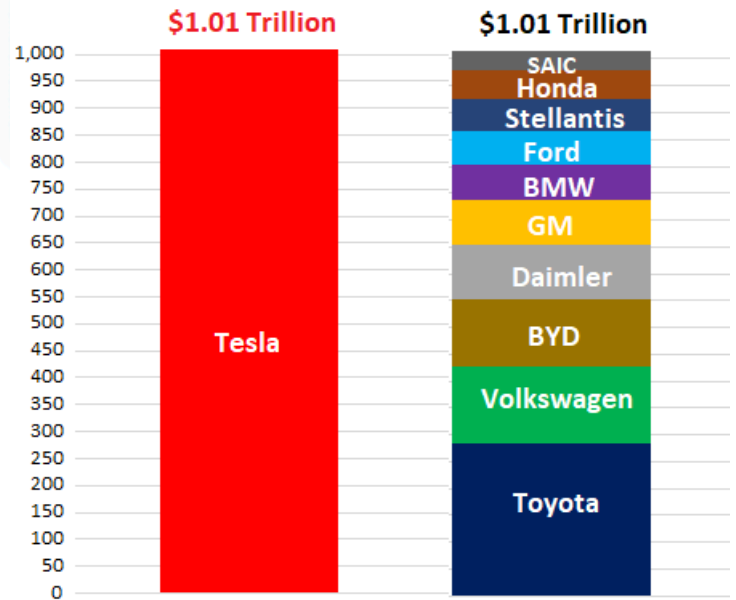
The same basic conditions which allowed for the bank run by banks in 2008 continue to exist in the inter-bank lending markets today. The overall fragility in the economy as a whole, and the speculative markets in particular, has only intensified since 2008 with the massive amount of debt creation around the world. Real estate speculation in the inner-cities has helped to fuel this bubble, as trillions of dollars of new asset-backed securities (including rent-backed securities) have been created based on the assumption of perpetually rising property values (the very same assumption baked into the models about mortgage-backed securities prior to the 2008 crisis) and related future revenues to be generated by new luxury developments in newly gentrified neighborhoods as well as already wealthy ones. But in the coming economic downturn these fever dreams of unlimited speculative riches will shatter upon the hard reality of the objective laws of the capitalist system. In this crisis, many city neighborhoods currently slated for gentrification will be abandoned by capital investment, left to rot much as they were during the crack era.

10 <https://prospect.org/economy/janet-yellen-deficit-preoccupation-could-bring-down-biden-agenda/>

11 <https://www.cnn.com/2021/12/10/economy/consumer-price-inflation-november/index.html>



Market Capitalization, USD, Oct 25, 2021 Tesla v. Next 10 Automakers



Tesla’s sales numbers relative to other automakers contrast strongly with the company’s market capitalization, showing clearly how Tesla’s share price is driven by speculation..

To fight off potential runaway inflation, which is currently being driven primarily by currency debasement, deficit spending (and the related stimulus checks), and the supply chain bottleneck, not by an increase in consumption, the Federal Reserve is planning to taper asset purchases and raise interest rates in the next year or so, but has been cautious about doing so because of concerns about triggering a market crash. It is a very unstable situation when, in order to prevent a crash, the central bank has to purchase \$120 billion of securities from the banks each month (as part of its Quantitative Easing program) and lend to them at negative real interest rates.

This fragile and unstable equilibrium is now increasingly being disrupted by the supply chain crisis, which continues to intensify day by day. A series of factors have left global supply chains incredibly vulnerable. Decades of offshoring production to weaken the U.S. labor movement and engage in international labor arbitrage—facilitated in part by various free trade agreements—have left the U.S. economy extremely dependent on global supply chains for basic goods. The shift to “just in time”¹²

delivery has seen most companies work to reduce their warehousing of goods as much as possible, and the construction of megaports has routed much of global trade through a very small number of choke points. What’s more, even in normal times, these megaports generally operate very slowly, with truck drivers often waiting days to pick up a single container.

The current bottleneck at the Port of Los Angeles is indicative of the global issues. As of early November, 2021 there were around 540,000 containers on the 93 vessels waiting in the harbor. Each day 18,000 containers are loaded into the port from these ships, but in September 29,000 new containers arrived each day on average.¹³ Despite promises from the port and the Biden administration that the port would be able to clear the backlog, things only continue to get worse. The only “solution” to this crisis they have been able to come up with is to have container ships wait forty miles offshore in a new queuing system so that they technically don’t count as waiting at the port.¹⁴ While this has helped to shift the media focus off the traffic jam at the ports, it has done nothing to alle-

12 The basic idea of “just in time” delivery is to reduce warehousing costs and increase the rate of capital turnover. In this logistical paradigm, many retail companies place an order with their manufacturer only once consumers have ordered the good from them but otherwise keeping very little or no inventory in stock. Although this does reduce warehousing costs, it also creates extreme vulnerabilities to supply-chain shocks as firms have very little margin of error. In the case of large scale logistical disruptions, as we see right now, companies cannot fall back on warehouse stock to meet consumer demand and are at risk of quickly going bankrupt.

13 <https://www.visualcapitalist.com/visualizing-congestion-at-americas-busiest-port/>

14 <https://www.freightwaves.com/news/california-pileup-still-piling-up-but-out-of-sight-over-horizon>

viate the logjam.¹⁵

A trend towards consolidation and monopolization of the shipping industry has also played a significant role in the present crisis. The top eight freight liner companies now control 81% of global shipping capacity, 83% of all new containers are produced by just three Chinese companies, and five companies control 82% of the world's leasing capacity.¹⁶ These companies are all benefiting tremendously from the current crisis, and have a real incentive to keep prices high.

Shortages of key goods such as microprocessors have already massively disrupted production in numerous industries across the U.S. and around the world.¹⁷ As these shortages intensify, inflation for producers of key goods has surpassed 20% year-over-year, with consumers likely to see similar price shocks in the near future.¹⁸ The present shortages are spreading across a whole series of essential goods and causing growing outrage.

What's more, in the U.S. and many other countries, most retail businesses typically operate at a loss for the first three quarters of the year, and only turn a profit yearly because of a massive spike in consumption during the holiday season. However, with key shortages of goods across the board, many companies were not able to sell nearly enough to become profitable for the year. This, combined with skyrocketing inflation, could push many companies

into bankruptcy. Given the massive amount of debt and high leverage ratios in the economy as a whole, a huge number of companies and financial institutions will be exposed to the danger of a rolling series of bankruptcies. In such a situation, the state may look to intervene as it did in 2008 and 2020 with a series of new bailouts and more money printing, but this strategy will only exacerbate the existing inflationary crisis. And with many banks already predicting serious inflation will continue in the U.S. within the next few years, a massive bailout of the whole economy could potentially send things spiraling out of control.

This looming crisis provides a major opening to expose to the masses of people the rotten and decadent nature of the capitalist system and the bourgeois state. With their purchasing power rapidly eroding and shortages of key commodities across the board, mass outrage will grow; however this will not automatically lead to growing class consciousness. In fact, it can easily be co-opted into support for various forms of U.S. chauvinism and fascist politics. The ruling class has already been aggressively pursuing new repressive measures in the name of fighting domestic terrorism and white supremacy, which will certainly be used to repress mass protests and movements during this crisis. This will provide further openings to expose the antagonism between the masses and the state. That being said, the dangers of mass popular support for a shift to a fascist form of bourgeois class rule does not just

15 "Solutions" such as these betray the underlying impotence of the U.S. ruling class: their fundamental inability to extricate themselves from the crises which are slowly engulfing them. The capitalists as a class always have limited subjective freedom, confined as they are by the objective laws of the capitalist system, but seventy-plus years as the most powerful empire in the world have bred decadence and corruption to new heights within the U.S. state and ruling class as a whole. Still, a dying beast is the most dangerous, and while not yet dying as a class, the capitalists who run this country are certainly on the decline. They will struggle ruthlessly to maintain their standing and power domestically and internationally, even if they are increasingly unable to resolve key contradictions like shipping logjams. Hence the importance of remembering Mao's emphasis that imperialists have a dual aspect; they are both paper tigers and real tigers.

16 <https://www.freightwaves.com/news/shippings-extreme-consolidation-could-prolong-supply-chain-pain>

17 The overall reliance on production in China and other countries around the world has the U.S. ruling class worried for a variety of reasons. It is a major risk to produce so many essential goods in China, which is their main imperialist rival. Some within the U.S. ruling class have been trying to address this issue through shifting production to India, Mexico, and Vietnam (as well as other countries) while simultaneously pushing for increased investment in production within the U.S. However, the contradictions among the U.S. ruling class have made this difficult, especially because in the last seven decades or so there has been a proliferation of regulatory changes and loopholes which give free reign to individual U.S. capitalists to do as they please with their capital abroad, even if their investments and business ventures negatively impact the ruling class as a whole.

In this sense problems getting corporations to shift their production out of China reflect long-standing challenges for the U.S. state. Even the huge tariffs imposed by Trump, and continued under Biden, have been unable to really resolve this issue. These basic difficulties in making such a shift show the deeply moribund nature of the U.S. ruling class: on the one hand they are aware that China is their major strategic competitor and biggest rival imperialist power, and on the other hand, they are unable to get their ducks in a row, so to speak, and break their dependence on production in China.

One example of these dynamics was covered by a recent Wall Street Journal investigation which documented the present inability of the U.S. state to curb U.S. capitalists' and companies' investment in Chinese production of semi-conductors. These investments have been key to China closing the gap with the U.S. in production of this crucial technology. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-firms-aid-chinas-bid-for-chip-dominance-despite-security-concerns-11636718400>

18 <https://wolfstreet.com/2021/11/09/further-up-the-producer-price-pipeline-inflation-rages-at-over-20-heading-for-consumers/>

come from white supremacist groups and related forces. Right now a series of liberals are lining up to support the new War on Domestic Terror and a massive expansion of the power of the state to suppress dissent in the name of “fighting fascism.” This is related to a significant shift in the opinions of Democratic Party voters, who have in the last three years come to view government and corporate censorship and repression in much more favorable terms.¹⁹

With this looming crisis, there is a need for Maoists to dare to think and dare to act. Ready made formulas and sloganeering are of little use in the face of the seismic shifts beginning to develop both domestically and internationally. In fact, they are worse than useless, they confuse and mislead the people obfuscating the basic reality and the ways in which things are changing before our very eyes. In order to understanding the shifting terrain beneath our feet there is a need to proactively identify new contradictions emerging within the society, both among the masses and within the ruling class. In order to build up the proletarian revolutionary movement, communists must seize the time and work tirelessly to develop genuine mass organizations under communist leadership and take key steps towards developing a Maoist Party. It is necessary to deepen our links with the masses, craft clear exposures of the outrages of bourgeois society, and clarify the

need for socialist revolution. We hope that other organizations and individuals who see the basis for MLM politics will reach out and link up. There is an urgent need to share experiences, discuss and debate political line strategy and tactics, and work together to advance the proletarian revolution in the U.S.

Unless Maoists provide leadership to mass struggles and work to systematically expose the nature of the bourgeois state, spontaneous protests will be repressed, co-opted, and fizzle out, just as the George Floyd protests did. During a major crisis and years-long depression such a vacuum of proletarian leadership will allow the ruling class to draw a significant section of the masses towards fascist politics.

We must dare to struggle and dare to win, or the openings provided by the coming crisis will be lost.

19 For example, see this video by journalist Glenn Greenwald, analyzing the shifting sentiments among Democratic Party voters: <https://rumble.com/vnwyhz-the-mountain-of-data-showing-how-authoritarian-democrats-have-become.html> The changes in the last few years alone are quite striking. For example, in 2018, 37% of Republican voters and 40% of Democrat voters supported U.S. government censorship online, whereas in 2021 only 28% of Republican voters and 65% of Democratic voters did. Similarly, as Greenwald notes in his video, while favorable views of the FBI have declined among Republican voters (from 71% in 2010 to 55% in 2021) they have increased among Democrat voters (from 68% in 2010 to 78% in 2021). These shifts indicate a rapid groundswell in support for the U.S. state among liberals, and have provided the Biden administration with a mandate to carry out a series of increasingly fascist policies, such as their War on Domestic Terror.

All of this is also tied up in the ruling class fear-mongering over Covid. Many within the Democratic Party base have become convinced that everyone who has some questions or objections to state measures around Covid (e.g. mask and vaccine mandates, lockdowns, censorship, etc.) is a Trump supporter—despite the fact that Trump has called the vaccine the greatest accomplishment of his presidency and repeatedly told people to get vaccinated—and in turn that every Trump supporter is a fascist. This analysis—reinforced by the mutterings of cable news personalities and algorithmically promoted 280 character “hot takes” on Twitter—has helped to fuel popular support for a whole series of new repressive policies by the ruling class. For example, a recent poll found that 59% of Democratic voters would favor a government policy requiring that citizens remain confined to their homes at all times, except for emergencies, if they refuse to get a COVID-19 vaccine, and that 45% of Democrats would favor governments requiring citizens to temporarily live in designated facilities or locations if they refuse to get a COVID-19 vaccine. https://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/partner_surveys/jan_2022/covid_19_democratic_voters_support_harsh_measures_against_unvaccinated

Many within the Democratic Party base fail to grapple with the real popular anger at the ham-handedness of the U.S. state’s Covid policies. They also ignore the unstable nature of Trump’s popular base. For example, Trump won the largest percentage of the Black and Mexican-American vote of any Republican candidate in past half-century. A comparison of voting patterns in the 2016 and 2020 Presidential elections in New York City shows that Trump did better in almost every neighborhood of poor and oppressed people.

Many of these people, as well as large sections of the white working-class who voted for Trump, are not consolidated to supporting his politics. Nor are they white supremacists or fascists, although Trump did enjoy support of both these groups (although some fascists such as Richard Spencer endorsed Biden). Rather, these dynamics reflect the growing disillusionment of the masses with the Democratic Party, and popular outrage against many of the repressive and poorly implemented measures taken in the name of stopping the spread of Covid.

The U.S. Defeat in Afghanistan

After two decades of war and occupation, the U.S. has officially withdrawn from Afghanistan. While much of the U.S. media attention has focused on the abject sloppiness of the withdrawal and evacuation of U.S. citizens and Afghan civilians and collaborators, the truth is that this sloppiness was not an exception, but typical of the way in which the U.S. waged the war and carried out the occupation of Afghanistan from the very beginning.¹ The inability of the U.S. ruling class to secure basic strategic objectives and develop a stable client state—despite spending trillions of dollars over twenty years—shows their overall decadence as a class.² The moribund state of U.S. imperialism is on display for all the world to see. Now, as the U.S. withdraws, the Taliban has indicated that they hope to pursue a closer relationship with the Chinese government—the main imperialist rival to the U.S.—although the exact nature of the Taliban’s relationship with China is still somewhat in flux.³

Many in the International Communist Movement have noted that the defeat of the U.S. shows that a people who refuse to be controlled by a foreign aggressor cannot be held down forever. This is certainly true. However, the Taliban is not a revolutionary entity; they are a reactionary Pashtun-chauvinist force of bourgeois compradors and feudals. They practice a right-wing form of Islam and are working to impose Sharia law throughout the country, creating a chauvinist theocracy. While they played a leading role in defeating the U.S. imperialist occupation, referring to the will of the Afghan people is not sufficient to explain the victory of the Taliban. What’s more, the Taliban won the war in part through a series of alliances crafted with warlords who were formerly allied with the U.S.⁴

To really get a sense of what happened in Afghanistan,

- 1 <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/27/world/asia/us-is-struggling-in-its-effort-to-build-an-afghan-air-force.html>
<https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2019/05/02/afghan-pilot-training-ends-after-almost-half-went-awol-in-america/>
<https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/10413/the-us-plan-to-give-afghanistan-a-fleet-of-black-hawks-is-deeply-flawed>
<https://www.militarytimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2019/08/12/us-coalition-forces-fall-short-in-training-afghan-tactical-air-coordinators-on-airdrop-operations-report/>
- 2 For example the U.S. spent around \$13.2 billion (around \$136 billion in today’s dollars after adjusting for inflation) on the Marshall Plan between 1948-1952 to rebuild Europe after WWII in a way that tied it to U.S. capital. This was a key part of cementing the U.S.’s role as the dominant imperialist power globally. When compared to the trillions that the U.S. has spent in Iraq and Afghanistan, with next to nothing to show for it, the growing decadence and relative weakness of U.S. imperialism comes into focus.
- 3 <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/9/2/afghanistan-taliban-to-rely-on-chinese-money-spokesperson-says>
<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3160159/china-sends-aid-afghanistan-taliban-grapples-winter-crisis>
- 4 <https://cpp.ph/statements/on-the-taliban-victory-and-defeat-of-us-occupation-of-afghanistan/> The Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan also notes that the Taliban has already begun to accept many former officials from the U.S. puppet regime into their government: https://www.sholajawid.org/english/main_english/the_return_of_the_taliban_sho27_d4.html

and to understand why the U.S. imperialists were unable to secure even their most basic objectives in the country, it is necessary to examine the contradictions internal to the U.S. war effort in general, and between the military and other agencies of the U.S. government in particular. From the start, the U.S. did not have a clear military plan for the invasion of Afghanistan, let alone a comprehensive strategy for setting up a client state that would secure U.S. corporate interests in the country. In fact, from the very first months of the war, different agencies within the government struggled to coordinate on basic tasks, while many within the military repeatedly complained about a lack of any sort of coherent strategy or military objectives beyond orders to “kill the terrorists.” What’s more, many within the U.S. military leadership were too distracted with planning for world war against Russia and China to be bothered with the details of the War in Afghanistan. They failed to grasp, on a basic level, the relationship between U.S. efforts to control Afghanistan and the growing inter-imperialist competition globally, and how establishing a stable client state in Central Asia would have aided their efforts to counter the rise of China.

This confusion was not just about the basic strategy in Afghanistan but also extended to the U.S.’s inability to clearly evaluate its own allies. For example, the U.S. was unwilling to look closely at the role of the Saudi Government in 9/11, and remains unwilling to do so even to this day. Additionally, the U.S. worked closely with Pakistan in Afghanistan under the mistaken belief that because Pakistan was willing to help fight Al Qaeda, they were also helping to defeat the Taliban. In reality, the Pakistani government was working closely with the Taliban to secure their own interests in Afghanistan throughout the entire U.S. inva-

sion and occupation.

The U.S. was also unable to successfully coordinate their military operations with USAID and various related NGO efforts to stabilize their puppet regime in Kabul. USAID and other parts of the State Department were often simply unwilling to coordinate their efforts on the most basic level with the Afghan Government, even when it involved things like road building and developing agricultural production. This led to a patchwork approach to building basic industry and infrastructure, with many of these programs directly benefiting the Taliban, for example, money that the U.S. government spent building roads often ended up being paid to the Taliban.

These problems were never resolved, and over the twenty years of the U.S. occupation they only intensified as the U.S. faced setback after setback. Incapable of understanding their mistakes or addressing the complex problems in Afghanistan, the U.S. ruling class threw more and more money at the problem, hoping in vain that quantity would transform into quality.

Their efforts failed to secure their basic interests in Afghanistan, and they have been forced to withdraw and are now increasingly focused on inter-imperialist competition with Russia and China. However, the war in Afghanistan as well as the withdrawal were carried out in ways that damaged the U.S. imperialists' abilities to effectively compete with their rivals. This is not only because the withdrawal from Afghanistan complicates U.S. plans to encircle China in the region, but also because the sloppiness of the U.S. exit left many of their lackeys worried that they will likewise be abandoned by the U.S. should they face a similar crisis in the future.

The issues in Afghanistan are not unique to how the U.S. government wages war; they reflect the growing dysfunction of a government which increasingly struggles to accomplish basic tasks in the interests of the ruling class.⁵

5 For example, since its initial approval in 2008, the California high-speed rail project has languished for over a decade, plagued by cost overruns, corruption, shoddy construction, and political deadlocks. Even with a potential injection of funds from Biden's infrastructure bill, its future remains uncertain. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-47310215>

Despite half a century of efforts to construct a high speed rail network (such as the High-Speed Ground Transportation Act of 1965, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century of 1998) there is only one "high-speed" rail line in the U.S., the Acela, which runs between Boston and Washington D.C., taking seven hours to complete the journey at an average speed of 70 MPH (which would, in most of the world, not qualify it as high-speed rail).

6 The divides within different intelligence agencies go beyond competition for funding and extend to agency culture and long-standing rivalries. For example, after 9/11 reporter Seymour Hersh was speaking to one of his sources in the CIA and asked him if, in the wake of the attacks, the various spy agencies would take interagency coordination more seriously, after decades of refusing to do so. The CIA agent responded, "Don't you get it, Sy? The FBI catches bank robbers. We rob banks." <https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v40/n18/jackson-learns/i-figured-what-the-heck>

This is the result of a longer-term trend towards greater freedom for companies, as well as individual departments and agencies within the state, to pursue their own interests even when they go against the overall interests of the U.S. state and the ruling class as a whole. This is closely related to deep divides within different departments in the state, where departmentalism is the norm, not the exception. For example, intelligence agencies only begrudgingly share information with each other, as they compete with each other for prestige and funding.⁶ This has created serious issues for the ruling class not only in military campaigns, but also in competition with rival imperialist powers, and has also led to a series of missteps in working with allied countries. That being said, the U.S. is still the most powerful imperialist country in the world. While internal decadence, incompetence, and corruption hamper the ruling class's efforts, their strength should not be understated.

With the U.S. empire on the decline, these contradictions are bound to intensify. As the U.S. weakens relative to China, and with the world economy now in the early stages of a prolonged depression, competition internal to the U.S. capitalist class will only continue to increase as they fight for "their share" of a shrinking pie. While there are some efforts to rein in U.S. capitalists' abilities to go against their class interest as a whole—as well as related efforts to combat bureaucratic inertia and departmentalism within the state—these are patchwork initiatives at best, and they face sharp resistance from powerful capitalists, officials, and bureaucrats.

The spectacular defeat of the U.S. in Afghanistan provides a window into the larger disorder and buffoonery that increasingly characterizes the daily functioning of the U.S. state. It is important for communists in the U.S. and around the world to closely analyze the sharpening contradictions within the U.S. state, and the related factors that are contributing to the relative decline of U.S. imperi-

alism globally. This document is a modest attempt to sum up some of these dynamics through an analysis of the war in Afghanistan. The U.S. defeat shows the growing inability of the U.S. state to secure objectives, but at the same time they are far from collapse. They have a powerful military and are in command of a global financial sys-

tem. However, as inter-imperialist competition intensifies, their inability to set up proper client states points to their global decline and indicates that they will be poorly equipped to deal both with the complexities of competition with China as well as the rising tide of anti-imperialist and communist movements.

“Kill People and Break Things”

There is a saying in military circles that the U.S. lost in Vietnam because it was “fighting the last war” and not the current one. The basic idea is that the U.S. military was trying to fight in Vietnam as they had in World War II, and that the “Green Machine” failed to adapt its strategy and tactics to the realities of a large-scale guerrilla war. Although by itself insufficient to explain the defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam, this assessment rings true in many respects.

One would assume that, given the resounding defeat handed to the U.S. by the Vietnamese people, there must have been some serious reflection and reorganization of the military to prepare it for future wars of this nature, and overcome ideological stagnation within its ranks. However, this was far from the case. In the wake of their defeat, many within the military felt that Vietnam was a kind of conflict that they would never fight again. This was a strange assessment given the recent history of counter-insurgencies (e.g. U.S. in the Philippines, British in Malaysia, Japan in China, and numerous others in the 20th century alone), but this lack of foresight and objectivity is typical among the U.S. imperialists, not exceptional. Many in the military preferred planning for an apocalyptic third world war with the Soviet Union⁷ to taking take a cold, hard look at the reasons for their defeat in Vietnam. So, they did not bother to develop new strategies for counter-insurgency, and unsurprisingly they approached the war in Afghanistan with the same arrogance and lack of basic planning or understanding of the country they were invading.

Despite this arrogance in the military, there were some U.S. officials who were somewhat less stupid. These offi-

cialists tried to assess what went wrong in the U.S. efforts to conquer Vietnam, and figure out how to avoid repeating the same mistakes. Reagan’s Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger’s famous speech *The Uses of Military Power* is an example of one such attempt. In it, he said that the United States “should have clearly defined [its] political and military objectives” before going to war and “should know precisely how [its] forces can accomplish those clearly defined objectives.”⁸ And yet, less than three decades after the end of the Vietnam War, the U.S. charged headlong into Afghanistan, repeating all of these mistakes, and making a few new ones along the way.

From the start, the U.S. war effort in Afghanistan was plagued by issues, despite the apparent success of the invasion. The U.S. state lacked a clear strategy in the war, had poorly defined objectives, and was fundamentally confused about the basic social realities in Afghanistan. The *Washington Post’s* reporting on the Afghanistan Papers shows that many officials and military leaders retrospectively noted that “they adopted fatally flawed warfighting strategies based on misguided assumptions about a country they did not understand.”⁹ Douglas Lute, a three-star Army general who served as the White House’s Afghan war czar during the Bush and Obama administrations, put it more bluntly in his discussions with government interviewers: “We were devoid of a fundamental understanding of Afghanistan — we didn’t know what we were doing [...] What are we trying to do here? We didn’t have the foggiest notion of what we were undertaking.”¹⁰

Lute’s frank assessment of the basic failures of the war is not unique. Dozens of others within the government and military shared a similar view of the war when they were

7 Of course, the imperialists need to plan for inter-imperialist wars, but the U.S. military has often preferred to focus on preparations for these in a way that seriously hampers their ability to carry out occupations of oppressed countries and even to wage successful proxy wars against their imperialist rivals.

8 <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/military/force/weinberger.html>

9 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/afghanistan-war-strategy/>

10 <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/afghanistan-war-confidential-documents/>

interviewed in an internal government assessment carried out by the Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) between 2014 and 2018. However, long before these interviews, officials were well aware of the issues in the war and related efforts to build a stable U.S. client state in Afghanistan.

A review of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's internal memos from the early years of the war show just how inept and disorganized the U.S. plan for the war was from the very beginning. On April 17, 2002 Rumsfeld wrote to Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Doug Feith and a number of generals. His remarks show the total disarray in the U.S. war effort in the initial months:

I may be impatient. In fact, I know I'm a bit impatient. But the fact that Iran and Russia have plans for Afghanistan and we don't concerns me. I keep getting an answers that "the Deputies are working on it." Well I can't believe that it takes many months to figure it out.

If this were something the DoD could do alone, we could get it done. Apparently it is not something that requires an interagency process. Once it goes into the interagency process, it stinks out of sight.

What do you propose we do? How do we get control of the levers so that we can influence what's going on? How do we decide what ought to happen, and then get all the military, diplomatic, humanitarian threats coming through the needle-head? [...]

We are never are going to get the U.S. military out of Afghanistan unless we take care to see that there is something going on that will provide the stability that will be necessary for us to leave.¹¹

These remarks—and many of Rumsfeld's other memos—show that from the start the U.S. had no clear plan

or long-term strategy in Afghanistan, and that many who were leading the war effort were aware of this and the dangers posed by this lack of strategic thinking. And yet, Rumsfeld and others were unable to resolve these basic issues. The memo also highlights the difficulties in coordinating between different government agencies, reflecting the deep divides within the U.S. state. This was a constant reality in Afghanistan, with agencies failing to coordinate on a basic level and often working at cross purposes.

Rumsfeld's view that if the DoD was going at it alone they would be able to handle the situation better should be viewed with some skepticism. This reflects the typical arrogance within the military, an example of the departmentalism and stupidity of those who believe that it was possible to control Afghanistan by military force alone.¹² The challenges of interagency coordination only heightened the DoD's disdain for working closely with other agencies, and many in the military came to view it as little more than an annoyance. And yet, despite their complaints about other government agencies, the U.S. military hardly had anything worthy of being called a strategy in Afghanistan.

Army Lt. Gen. Dan McNeill, who was commander of U.S. forces in the early part of the Afghan War, noted that even within the military "there was no campaign plan in the early days, in 2002," and that "the instructions were to kill terrorists and build the ANA [Afghan National Army]. Also, don't fracture the alliance, and that was it. There was no NATO campaign. There was lot of verbiage[...] There was no campaign plan. It just wasn't there."¹³

This basic strategy of "kill terrorists" was similar to the "kill anything that moves" strategy the U.S. military employed in Vietnam; it amounted to little more than indiscriminate slaughter of the Afghan people.¹⁴ Lieutenant General Michael Flynn noted in his SIGAR interview

11 https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/documents-database/?document=rumsfeld_nsarchive_2002_04_17_to_doug_feith_re_afghanistan. In a redacted section of this brief memo, Rumsfeld apparently expresses concern about what the CIA is doing and the challenges in coordinating with them. It is likely that he was also expressing concerns over the CIA's role in the drug trade.

12 A decade later, the generals and the Obama administration developed a strategy in Iraq which Biden dubbed "counter-terrorism-plus" of trying to withdraw troops (as well a related USAID efforts) and preserve U.S. power and control primarily by means of increased drone strikes. Unsurprisingly, this strategy was an abysmal failure and contributed significantly to the rise of ISIS.

13 https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/documents-database/?document=background_ll_07_xx_xx_undated_mcneill1

14 See for example, Nick Turse's book *Kill Anything That Moves*, which explains in detail how this policy was employed in Vietnam. Seymour Hersh's reporting on the My Lai massacre also detailed how the promotional structure in U.S. military systematically incentivized commanding officers to commit massacres, as their performance was judged based on body count, there were only a small number of higher rank positions available, there was intense competition between the officers to move up, and the COs had only relatively brief deploy-

that basically every single battalion and brigade commander in the Afghan War for years had the same mission (to kill terrorists), and when they finished their rotations they all reported “mission accomplished,” perhaps seeking to emulate Bush’s infamous announcement.¹⁵ Drone pilots were given similarly brutish training with instructors telling them that “your job is to kill people and break things” and the standard operating procedure was to kill civilians first and ask questions later, with many civilian deaths never being officially recorded.¹⁶ This indiscriminate slaughter only served to turn the Afghan population more and more against the U.S. imperialist occupation.

This initial lack of a clear plan in the military was related to the overall disorganization of the U.S. state. During his campaign Bush had promised not to “nation-build,” and in the first few years of the war his administration was hesitant to open the money spigots or develop an overall plan for cultivating a client state in Afghanistan. In fact during 2002, the European Union provided around double as much aid money to Afghanistan as the U.S. did.¹⁷ The CIA worked to fill this vacuum. They handed out huge sums of weapons and money to the Northern Alliance and other warlords, with whom they had long-standing ties dating back to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. These warlords were heavily involved in opium production, the child sex trade, and other black-marketeering which would flourish after the invasion. This dependence on regional warlords undermined the strength of the client state set up in Kabul, and facilitated the rapid growth of opium production which quickly became the staple of the economy.

After initial setbacks in Afghanistan, high ranking members of the military grew increasingly uninterested in fighting the war. Many in the Department of Defense saw preparing for World War III with Russia and China as “the real deal,” and considered the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as little more than a distraction. Former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates elaborated on this dynamic in his memoir *Duty* (in a chapter titled “Waging War on the

Pentagon”):

Beginning in the spring of 2007, I resolved to make senior civilian and military leaders in the Pentagon lower their eyes from future potential wars and turn aside from day-to-day politics and bureaucratic routine to focus on the wars right in front of them, in Iraq and Afghanistan. Effectively waging war on our enemies on those battlefields would also require successfully waging war on the Pentagon itself. [...]

All the services regarded the counterinsurgency wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as unwelcome military aberrations, the kind of conflict we would never fight again—just the way they felt after Vietnam. The services all wanted to get back to training and equipping our forces for the kinds of conflict in the future they had always planned for: for the Army, conventional force-on-force conflicts against nation-states with large ground formations; for the Marine Corps, a light, mobile force operating from ships and focused on amphibious operations; for the Navy, conventional maritime operations on the high seas centered on aircraft carriers; for the Air Force, high-tech air-to-air combat and strategic bombing against major nation-states.

The truth is that the U.S. state has done a very poor job planning for the rise of China as its major strategic rival. Before 9/11 the Bush administration was developing some basic plans to contain China’s rise, but these were scrapped after 9/11 when the U.S. charged headlong into Afghanistan and Iraq. Then, under the Obama administration, a series of plans were developed to withdraw significant numbers of U.S. troops from the Middle East and engage in a “Pivot to the Pacific” to focus more of the state’s resources on inter-imperialist competition with China. However, throughout this whole period the Obama administration and the Pentagon failed to grasp the relationship between these wars and the competition with China and Russia.¹⁸

ments in the field to “prove themselves”: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1972/01/22/cover-up>. See also the recent reporting by the New York Times on the civilian casualties from U.S. drone strikes and air campaigns in Afghanistan, Syria, and Iraq: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/18/us/airstrikes-civilian-casualty-files-pentagon.html>

15 https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/documents-database/documents/flynn_michael_ll_11102015.pdf?v=26 Commanders were strongly incentivized to produce such reports as failing to accomplish one’s mission negatively impacted chances at getting promoted.

16 <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/10789432/drone-operator-brandon-bryant-killed-13-people-child-dog/> and <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/us/civilian-casualty-files.html>

17 Joshua Parlow, *A Kingdom of Their Own: The Family Karzai and the Afghan Disaster*, p. 59

18 The Obama administration’s withdrawal of troops from Iraq in 2010-2011 provides an important window into the contradiction between

After the U.S. invasions, when insurgencies began in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. fell back on the Marines' *Small Wars Manual*—which was written in 1940 and does not account for the capabilities of a modern military or related developments in insurgencies since the early 20th century—to guide the strategy, such as it was, for counter-insurgency. Even when both wars were going south for the U.S. imperialists, many within the military had little interest in making basic adjustments to the overall strategy. A bureaucratic inertia in these departments was described by Gates as a “peacetime mentality”: an unwillingness or inability of the generals and admirals to grasp the basic reality of the fact that they were in fact fighting wars and that the stakes of those wars had implications for the future of U.S. imperialism. Michael Flynn, in his SIGAR interview, contrasted the approach taken in World War II, when the U.S. military trained around 2,000 members of the military to speak Japanese, with the approach taken in Afghanistan, where they failed to

train even five people to speak Dari (the numbers of people they trained for other languages spoke in Afghanistan were similarly abysmal). He noted that the one general who spoke Dari was self-taught and was only in Afghanistan for a few months in the Summer of 2009, before he was transferred to Japan.¹⁹

Given the fact that China now controls the majority of the oil production in Iraq, that Iran also has huge influence in the country, and that the Taliban are now at least partially aligning with China as well, the shortsightedness and stupidity of these military leaders is now on display for all the world to see. Their neglect of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq—which they justified by planning for World War III—has weakened their position internationally and allowed the Chinese imperialists to develop significant influence in these regions as a direct result of the U.S. ruling class' arrogance and idiocy.

Narcotics, Corruption, and Departmentalism

The CIA has a long history of involvement in and control of the international drug trade,²⁰ and has for decades used this as a source of revenue outside of the control of Congress. They have been involved in every aspect: production, distribution, smuggling, and sales. In Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan (known together as the Golden Crescent of opium production) the CIA has played a central role in poppy production and the heroin trade. After the fall of the Shah of Iran in 1979—who had worked closely with the CIA to promote opium production and con-

sumption in Iran—the CIA saw collaboration with the Mujahideen in Afghanistan as a key way to recover their lost production from Iran (the new Islamic regime took a hardline stance against opium and other drugs) while simultaneously countering growing Soviet influence in the region. They worked closely with the Pakistani government to get this opium and heroin to international markets, and the Mujahideen used some of this revenue to purchase hundreds of millions of dollars of American weapons through intermediaries in the Pakistani mili-

the interests of the U.S. ruling class as a whole and the interests of politicians seeking reelection. Obama, seeking to fulfill his campaign promises around the Iraq war, pushed the U.S. withdrawal on an expedited basis before the 2012 elections. However, the basic intelligence assessment showed that the situation in Iraq was unstable and that the Iraqi government would not be able to function without continued support from U.S. troops. Ignoring warnings from Robert Gates and others, the Obama administration pushed ahead with the withdrawal and the “counter-terrorism-plus” strategy of using more drone strikes to fill the void left by the departing troops. Quite predictably, this withdrawal led to an internal crisis in Iraq and directly contributed to the rise of ISIS. It also opened the door for Iran and China to significantly grow their influence and presence in Iraq at the expense of U.S. corporate and state interests.

A similar dynamic played out in Afghanistan where Obama, concerned about his reelection chances, agreed to a 30,000 troop surge in Afghanistan in 2009, but insisted that drawdown begin in 2011 regardless of the situation on the ground. This gives a sense of how the objectives of the U.S. ruling class as a whole—in this case to establish stable client states and puppet regimes in Iraq and Afghanistan—are often subordinated to the interests of particular politicians or parties in their election campaigns. https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/documents-database/documents/petraeus_david_ll_07_64_08162017.pdf?v=26

19 https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/documents-database/documents/flynn_michael_ll_11102015.pdf?v=26

20 While the role the CIA played in heroin production in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War is well known, their more recent activities in the international drug trade have received less attention, at least in the U.S. One example among many is their ties to “Group America,” a major cocaine trafficking network that operates on at least four continents. Mileta Miljanić, a Bosnian-born U.S. citizen, is the leader of this group and lives in New York City, despite being wanted for arrest in Italy. His well known connections to the CIA protect him from extradition. <https://www.occrp.org/en/group-america/powerful-serbian-american-drug-traffickers-may-have-ties-to-intelligence-agencies>

tary.²¹

However, after the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan, internecine warfare broke out between the various warlords in the Mujahideen, and the Taliban ultimately emerged victorious. In line with their interpretation of Sharia law (and also in a bid to receive international aid from the U.S. and IMF), the Taliban worked to systematically eliminate poppy fields and opium production across the entire country. By early 2001 there was almost no opium production in Afghanistan according to both UN and U.S. inspectors.²² However, the U.S. invasion opened the door for a revival of the drug trade, with opium production in Afghanistan going from 185 tons in 2001 to 8,200 tons by 2007, and 9,900 tons by 2019.²³ By the mid-2000s, Afghanistan produced around 90% of the non-pharmaceutical-grade opiates in the world. This shift was supported by the CIA, working closely with their long-time allies, the warlords of the “Northern Alliance,” many of whom were integral to CIA drug smuggling rings during the 1980s.²⁴

The CIA’s influence in Afghanistan was not limited to the drug trade; it went to the highest levels of the government. Hamid Karzai, who became the first leader of the U.S.-backed puppet state, had a long-standing relationship with the CIA during his exile in Pakistan in the 1990s. Immediately after 9/11 he was solicited by the CIA to play a central role in Afghanistan after the upcoming U.S. invasion. Once the war began, the CIA worked with Army Special Forces to bring Karzai into the country and set him up as the President of Afghanistan.²⁵

Given the skyrocketing growth of poppy production in Afghanistan, many elected officials in the U.S. came under intense public pressure to show quick results in eradicat-

ing opium production, as it was hard to sell the American people the lie that the U.S. had brought freedom and democracy to Afghanistan when the invasion had so obviously turned the country into one of the largest producers of narcotics in the world. They tried a series of ham-fisted responses, including paying farmers to burn poppy fields—which lead to many peasants planting poppy fields just to burn them and receive the cash payment—and hiring 1,200 security contractors (including mercenaries from South Africa, veterans of the Balkan wars, and Gurkha soldiers from Nepal) to eradicate poppy largely by walking through the fields with sticks and hitting the buds off the plants.²⁶ Needless to say, these strategies were not very effective. The U.S. government spent billions of dollars on these programs, but opium production in Afghanistan continued to soar to ever increasing heights, in large part because the CIA and nearly everyone in the Afghan government were heavily involved in the drug trade.²⁷

While this enriched warlords and drug traffickers, and helped the CIA pad their off-the-books budget, it undermined the ability of the U.S. imperialists to establish an effective client state in Afghanistan. In 2006 the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime estimated that 52% of the country’s GDP came from the drug trade.²⁸ In this same period, 80-90% of the heroin consumed in the U.S. was produced in Afghanistan.²⁹ The drug trade was closely connected to the hawala system, a traditional Islamic network of money transfer agents in Afghanistan and around the Muslim world.³⁰ The U.S. state department estimated in this period that 80% of all Afghan financial transactions were conducted through the hawala system.

This situation is not so unique and is actually part of

21 <https://www.counterpunch.org/2020/07/10/i-could-live-with-that-how-the-cia-made-afghanistan-safe-for-the-opium-trade/>

22 <https://www.nytimes.com/2001/05/20/world/taliban-s-ban-on-poppy-a-success-us-aides-say.html>

23 <https://www.cnn.com/2021/09/29/asia/taliban-afghanistan-opium-drug-economy-cmd-intl/index.html>

24 https://original.antiwar.com/alfred_mccoy/2019/04/09/americas-self-inflicted-wound/

25 *A Kingdom of Their Own*, p. 44-50. Karzai’s father, Abdul Ahad, also had links to the CIA, and played a key role in smuggling weapons and money to the Mujahideen. This book also notes that the way in which the U.S. government forced Karzai through as “their man in Kabul” angered many powerful forces in Afghanistan, as he had little popular domestic support or influence. It seems he was chosen in part because of this, as it made him extremely dependent on the U.S.

26 <https://nypost.com/2021/08/28/why-the-only-winner-of-americas-war-in-afghanistan-is-opium/> and <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/afghanistan-war-opium-poppy-production/>

27 A former C.I.A. officer with experience in Afghanistan noted “Virtually every significant Afghan figure has had brushes with the drug trade.” <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/28/world/asia/28intel.html>

28 <https://web.archive.org/web/20060627224735/http://msnbc.msn.com/id/10663339/>

29 *A Kingdom of Their Own*, p. 87

30 https://www.unodc.org/pdf/afg/publications/afghanistan_drug_industry.pdf The hawala system posed a series of problems for the U.S., as it was largely outside of their control and oversight. Many wealthy Afghan businessmen took the money they got from drugs, U.S. contracts, and other sources, and used hawala to move it out of the country into bank accounts in the UAE and elsewhere.

long standing pattern in which the CIA, as well as others in the U.S. state, work closely with drug cartels to secure some U.S. state interests (e.g. working with the Contras to crush the Sandinistas in Nicaragua) and line the agency's pockets. However, turning puppet regimes into narco-states does not foster long-term—or often even short-term—stability. Turning the country into the main supplier of opium and heroin to the world worked at cross purposes to other U.S. state endeavors to develop Afghanistan into a stable base for extracting rare earth metals and projecting U.S. power across the region.³¹

One key figure in the drug trade was Hamid Karzai's half-brother Ahmed Wali Karzai, who ran the city of Kandahar and much of Southern Afghanistan and was a well known CIA asset.³² Hamid was relatively impotent politically and heavily dependent on the protection of U.S. forces to travel outside his presidential palace. In contrast, Ahmed Wali was a major power broker in the country, had a series of paramilitary forces under his personal command (including the CIA-trained Kandahar Strike Force, notoriously one of the most brutal forces in the country), and was referred to as "The Godfather" by many in the U.S. army because of his huge role in the heroin trade, child sex trafficking, smuggling operations, and more.³³ A 2006 U.S. embassy cable described Ahmed Wali to the State Department in D.C.:

As the kingpin of Kandahar, the President's younger half-brother Ahmed Wali Karzai (AWK) dominates access to economic resources, patronage, and protection. Much of the real business of running Kandahar takes place out of public sight, where AWK operates, parallel to formal government structures, through a network of political clans that use state institutions to protect and enable licit and illicit enterprises. The overriding purpose that unifies his political roles as Chairman of the Kandahar Provincial Council and as the President's personal representative to the South is the enrichment, extension and perpetuation of the

Karzai clan, and along with it their branch of the Popalzai tribe. This applies equally to his entrepreneurial and his alleged criminal activities. AWK derives authority and legitimacy from his relationship to President Karzai, from the relative discipline and elite position of the Popalzai tribe and from this access to resources. In Kandahar's political realm, he is the unrivaled strongman.

In this and many other cables the Embassy recommended that Ahmed Wali be dismissed and banished from Afghanistan. Many in the military and DEA agreed; they saw him as a key obstacle to establishing a stable client state subordinate to U.S. interests, instead of what they were actually building: a narco-state run by unreliable elements who put personal enrichment above all else and could not easily be reined in.

During the early years of the Obama presidency, Ahmed Wali was seen by many in the administration as *the key obstacle* to U.S. efforts in Southern Afghanistan. After some deliberation, the administration decided that he had to go. However, even when the Pentagon, the DEA, the State Department, and others (including the British Military) combined forces through an International Security Assistance Force³⁴ (ISAF) investigation led by Generals McCrystal and Flynn as well as American diplomat Bill Harris, they were unable to oust Ahmed Wali from his *de facto* rule of Southern Afghanistan. After more than a year of investigation, in March 2010, the investigation into Ahmed Wali folded, nominally because of lack of evidence of his role in illegal activities.

This was in large part because the CIA supported him by refusing to share intelligence on Ahmed Wali's role in the drug trade and other illicit activities with the ISAF investigators. Bill Harris noted that "what went unsaid was that a really in-depth excavation of this guy's life and past would of course unearth his CIA connections, and I think that's what really put the brakes on any serious in-

31 When other parts of the U.S. state have tried to rein in some of the excesses of the drug trade around the world, the CIA has worked to sabotage their efforts, even going so far as to coordinate the killing, in Mexico, of DEA agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena with the Guadalajara cartel in 1985. https://english.elpais.com/elpais/2013/10/15/inenglish/1381856701_704435.html

This history of heroin production in Afghanistan is also rich with examples of the CIA undermining various DEA efforts to reign in the drug trade.

32 <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/05/world/asia/05afghan.html> and <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/28/world/asia/28intel.html>
In addition to the drug smuggling and other illegal activities, Ahmed Wali also helped the CIA run blacksites for torture throughout Afghanistan. *A Kingdom of Their Own*, p. 263.

33 <https://www.newsweek.com/harvest-treachery-108347> and *A Kingdom of Their Own*, p. 129-130.

34 ISAF was the UN military mission active in Afghanistan from 2001 to 2014.

vestigation.”³⁵ The CIA worked closely with Ahmed Wali from the start of the war, and any serious investigation of his involvement in the drug trade and other organized criminal activities would potentially implicate the CIA, or at least damage their highly profitable ventures in these fields. They also stood to lose a valuable asset and collaborator.

After the ISAF failed to oust Ahmed Wali, the Obama administration decided that they had no choice but to work more closely with him at every level. Within months Ahmed Wali went from being the target of a major criminal investigation to the closest collaborator for the U.S. in Southern Afghanistan. This shift came despite years of assessments from the State Department and others that Ahmed Wali was a major obstacle to U.S. state and corporate interests. He was consulted on everything from the sentiments of rural Afghan villages to plans for major military offensives against the Taliban. At each stage, Ahmed Wali provided advice aimed primarily at enriching himself and expanding his influence. Needless to say, his advice was not regularly helpful to the U.S. imperialists, and impeded their ability to understand the situation in the country and carry out successful military operations.

During this period it was estimated that each year \$3-4 billion in cash and gold was smuggled out of the country, most of it bound for bank accounts in the UAE, through the Kandahar airport, which was at the time under Ahmed Wali's direct control. This number dwarfed the total revenue of the government of Afghanistan which amounted to around \$250 million per year at the time. Much of this money leaving the country was American aid to the war and nation building effort; “aid” of which, it is estimated, around half disappeared through corruption of one form or another.

While corruption is a standard part of any imperialist effort, losing 50 cents on every dollar spent in a war effort to bribes, skim, and other forms of corruption is a tremendous waste, even by U.S. standards. Ahmed Wali played a central role in this corruption, especially in Southern Afghanistan. When the U.S. ruling class came to the conclusion that it made sense to stop working with him and find

a cheaper and more compliant lackey, they were prevented from doing so by the CIA, which placed its own internal interests above those of the U.S. state and ruling class as a whole.

Ahmed Wali's corruption is far from unique. Mahmood Karzai (Hamid's older brother) was the founder of Kabul Bank, which was a massive Ponzi scheme that allowed him and other Afghan capitalists to siphon billions of dollars out of the country and into UAE bank accounts.

Kabul Bank was the main institution which handled the U.S. government funding for the salaries of officials of the Afghan government, and played a central role in the country's overall economy. But for the first six years of its existence, U.S. officials were largely unaware of the fact that the bank was cooking all of its books and that Mahmood and his business partners were using the bank as cover to steal as much as they could. When the Ponzi scheme fell apart in 2011, it triggered a major bank run, and the country's economy nearly collapsed. It took bailouts from the U.S. and the IMF to stop the collapse of the Afghan banking system. Kat Woolford, who led the IMF investigation into the Ponzi scheme, noted “I've seen some really, really bad banks, but I'd never seen one with so much fraud...I've never seen anything like it.” This highlights just how much corruption there was in Afghanistan. This corruption repeatedly and routinely created crises which undermined the most basic aspects of the Afghan government and U.S. state and corporate interests in the country.

Despite ignorance and arrogance typical of imperialists, many within the U.S. state were aware of the dangers the unrestrained growth of the drug market and related corruption posed to securing U.S. interests in the region.³⁶ However, much like in the case of ISAF's investigation into Ahmed Wali, efforts to curtail the drug trade and address corruption within the Afghan government were often thwarted by other parts of the U.S. state itself.

Corruption and the drug trade have historically been essential components of imperialist maneuvers to subjugate other countries. This has been true from the British pushing opium into China to the U.S.-backed Marcos dic-

35 *A Kingdom of Their Own*, p. 143.

36 To clarify any misconceptions about the class character of the ideas held by the U.S. officials spearheading these anti-corruption efforts, it is helpful to refer to Frank Calestino, a Treasury Department official who was a leading force in the anti-corruption probe into New Ansari Bank. According to those who worked closely with him “Calestino would muse about going into President Karzai's office in the palace, taking him by the back of the head, slamming his face against his desk, and telling him that the United States is in charge.” *A Kingdom of Their Own*, p. 98.

tatorship in the Philippines, the latter of which famously embezzled billions of dollars. The exceptional thing about Afghanistan was not that there was corruption and drug trafficking, but the scale of it, and the fact that various sections of the U.S. government were unable to coordinate to rein it in even when it became a real threat to U.S. corporate and state interests. In fact, they were often working at cross purposes, with one section trying to stamp out some poppy production while another worked closely with the major drug producers in the country to increase production, all the while shielding them from prosecution.

This led to intense arguments within the U.S. state. One anonymous SIGAR interviewee notes that “There was

violent competition in Washington not only within Congress, between the Hill and the administration but also between different parts of the administration” on how to handle the drug trade in Afghanistan.³⁷ This gives a sense of the deep divides that existed among the U.S. ruling class on how to address (or not) the fact that the drug trade had become the centerpiece of the Afghan economy and how completely the Afghan government was tied up in it. Ultimately, the dominance of the drug trade in the Afghan economy played a significant role in the defeat of the U.S. in the war, as it consistently undermined the legitimacy of the Afghan government and curtailed the development of the country’s economy to an extreme degree.

USAID, NGOism, and Imperialist Arrogance

While the CIA is notorious internationally for its role in the drug trade, torture blacksites, orchestration of coups and genocide, and much more, USAID and its associated assortment of NGOs are generally far less infamous. Despite this, they form an integral part of the imperialist machinery for dominating other countries and transforming them into neocolonial domains that can be easily plundered for the benefit of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class and their allies. This includes working to transform feudal and even pre-feudal production into capitalist enterprises and expanding household debt through micro-loans to ensure multinational banks are able to extract surplus value from informal economies before they can be transformed into more regular commodity markets under the direct control of multinational corporations.³⁸ These NGOs also play a key role in structural adjustment programs pushed by the IMF and World Bank.

These initiatives are often cloaked in progressive language, portraying them as “women’s empowerment initiatives” to cover over their fundamental imperialist nature; however, communists should have no illusions that these programs are essential to the U.S. ruling class’s efforts to establish neocolonial regimes and maintain their dominance glob-

ally. USAID is a key means by which the U.S. state ensures that oppressed countries develop economically in line with U.S. corporate interests.

It was not just the military, CIA, and State Department which struggled to secure these interests in Afghanistan. USAID and their related army of NGOs were also fairly inept in carrying out their efforts due to their imperialist arrogance and ignorance about Afghanistan. USAID generally drew up its plans for the country independent of consultation or coordination with the Afghan government. As a result, numerous initiatives and projects failed to get off the ground, or were unable to provide any sort of meaningful results which would have helped to stabilize Afghanistan into a more reliable client state. Another related issue was that the various NGOs which ran USAID programs were very territorial about their projects, and rank departmentalism plagued the entire USAID effort, with different NGOs competing with each other for funding and resources.³⁹ All of this resulted in a series of piecemeal and diffuse programs which often worked at cross purposes and were never united in an overall plan for transforming Afghanistan in line with U.S. state and corporate interests.

37 https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/documents-database/?document=background_1l_04_xx_05112016

38 Actually, the microloan programs help to endebt the masses in oppressed countries and drive small proprietors out of business, thus paving the way for big capital to move in and corner the market.

39 This is related to the dismantling of the U.S. domestic welfare system and its replacement by the more “market conforming” solution of a series of non-profit organizations all operating on conditional six-month or one-year funding cycles, in competition with each other for money from the government and big capitalist foundations.

The rapid rate of turnover of the leadership of USAID in Afghanistan only exacerbated these issues. In his SIGAR interview, Paul O'Brien—a USAID official who worked in the Afghan Finance Ministry from 2004-2007 and is now the Executive Director of Amnesty International USA—explained how this played out during his time in the country:

A big lesson from 2004-2007 is that on both sides, there was no continuity of strategy. There was a dysfunctionality of strategy and this made formulating a development plan/economic strategy problematic. During this [sic] three years, there were five mission directors [of USAID]. Jim [Brever] comes in at a time when there was a lot of tense relations, too much money, and no Afghan Government capacity. He has got five Ambassadors.⁴⁰ Jim goes exhausted. Patrick [Fine] comes in and breaks some rules[...]

Contractors were rotating so quickly. There was no particular disagreement on private sector led growth. Everyone agreed on the ends, but there was no agreement on who controlled the agenda. The problem was not disagreement. If you want a strong private sector, then you need public institutions to regulate and incentivize. We didn't put a lot of energy in devising a coherent strategy. We needed a collective effort to get the Afghan ministries to get this going. The incentives were misaligned with how success was measured.⁴¹

The testimony of O'Brien and other USAID officials in their SIGAR interviews paints a clear picture of overall incompetence, departmentalism, and a lack of basic strategic thinking. In particular, USAID's inability to understand the dialectical relationship between private enterprises and public institutions is quite striking. Such confusions are tied up with the U.S. ruling class's ideological adherence to the "free market" and a related belief that developing state institutions is "communism." While some in the ruling class have promoted these ideas cynically, many do believe them to one extent or another. O'Brien also notes that the unwillingness of USAID and other parts of the U.S. state to focus more on the development of public institutions in Afghanistan was also tied

to the hesitancy of the Bush Administration to engage in nation or state building given their electoral promises not to do so. As a result, not only were public institutions not developed to the extent that was needed to oversee the Afghan economy, the private sector also floundered in numerous ways without a clear regulatory framework and coherent state strategy for economic development. This incentivized Afghan businesses to operate through various informal and criminal networks, including those tied up with hawala system and Kabul Bank. Relatedly, it strengthened the influence of power brokers like Ahmed Wali Karzai. This in turn contributed to corruption and weakened the legitimacy of the Afghan government. In short, without a coherent and organized state structure in Afghanistan to provide basic public institutional guidance to the private sector, the economic situation in Afghanistan was something of a free for all, with little coherence or cohesion.

As part of the SIGAR process, the U.S. state tried to understand what went wrong with USAID. Senior program directors and other high ranking members of USAID who worked in various initiatives were asked a specific set of interview questions. One such initiative was called Stability in Key Areas (SIKA) program. This was created under the Obama Administration and ran from 2012-2017. It aimed to address the early issues with USAID efforts, build up government capacity, and in particular strengthen U.S. control and influence in sections of the country deemed unstable and insecure. On paper, SIKA emphasized the importance of USAID and "Implementing Partners" (IPs, which were various NGOs and corporations) working closely with the Afghan government at the national and regional level. The whole effort was dressed up progressive sounding language of "providing gender-focused leadership training and capacity building," working to "increase community engagement," and "implementing community-led developments and government initiatives that respond to the population's needs and concerns in order to build stability."⁴² In practice, SIKA differed little from earlier USAID efforts.

The SIGAR interview of Gulla Jan Ahmadzai, a former program manager for USAID and the UN, is quite in-

40 O'Brien is referring to the fact that between 2004-2007 there were five different U.S. Ambassadors to Afghanistan. Each brought with them different policy goals and strategies, and there was little continuity between them.

41 https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/documents-database/?document=obrien_paul_ll_05_e6_02032016

42 <https://www.usaid.gov/afghanistan/fact-sheets/stability-key-areas-sika> and https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/documents-database/?document=ahmadzai_gulla_jan_ll_02152017

structive in this regard. When asked about biggest challenges in the SIKA program his response highlights a number of issues:

First, most of the implementing partners didn't have relevant experiences, for example, AECOM [an American engineering and architecture firm] was implementing the Stabilization program but they didn't have experiences in jointly working with the local governance, stability and community development, all the same time [sic]. Second, most of the times USAID designed programs without full involvement of the government. USAID programs didn't follow the government agenda in the relevant sector. Large part [sic] of the cost used to go to the operation, if you analyze the SIKA program, more 50% got to [sic] the operation cost which affected the program delivery. In the case of SIKA, it is written in the documents that the Afghan partner ministries will be in the lead but in real [sic] the whole program was managed by the implementing partners, operations, human resource, finance, sub-contracting and procurement was all done by the IP. According to the agreement, the ownership of the program was with the Afghan government but in fact, everything was managing by the IP with the consultation of the USAID. On one occasion the government proposed to bring IP in to the government compounds to work closely with its counter parts in the government. But the IP and USAID rejected the idea and the IP worked independently in the center and in the provinces.⁴³

Ahmadzai also notes that the SIKA suffered from only focusing on the “least stable” areas (those largely outside of U.S. control) instead of working to also develop more stable areas that the U.S. had a stronger grip on. As a result, by the end of the SIKA program in 2017, more than half of the districts the program had operated in were under Taliban control. The dams, irrigation projects, poultry

farms, roads, and more that were built under SIKA thus fell into the Taliban's hands.⁴⁴

The SIGAR interview questions for USAID officials involved in SIKA are quite striking, and reveal the underlying arrogance and idiocy of the U.S. ruling class. For example, question 8-a asked if the programs failed in part because Afghans “didn't understand the concept of instability.” As if the people of Afghanistan were too stupid to understand what stability is! The implicit assumption in this question is, of course, that the U.S. occupation was a source of peace and stability in people's lives.

Question 9 wondered, “If the Taliban only provided security and dispute resolution, was it necessary to build up government capacity in the dramatic way that we did? Could we have just focused on security and dispute resolution to compete with the Taliban?” It seems the SIGAR interviewers really believed that the Taliban had no governmental structure, was not tied to various tribal leaders, didn't do any sort of economic or social programs, and provided nothing other than “security and dispute resolution.” Even more stunning is that they were earnestly wondering if the U.S. should have tried to run Afghanistan without setting up any sort of government or public institutions, showing that they had completely failed to understand that so many of their efforts had failed precisely because they had not set up stable and well run government institutions.

Question 14 asked “How much security does a community need to feel safe enough to turn against the Taliban? Daily police presence? Weekly? Why?” This question ignores the clear mass outrage against the U.S. soldiers and the Afghan Police who they trained. Even in the U.S. media there were a myriad of stories about the role of the Afghan police in the kidnapping of young children for molestation, regular rapes of women, massacres of villagers, corruption and demanding bribes, and many other issues. As if the key question of security for the people in

43 https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/documents-database/?document=ahmadzai_gulla_jan_ll_02152017

44 This is far from exceptional. A large number of U.S. infrastructure and development initiatives benefited the Taliban in numerous ways, even before they were ultimately captured by them. For example, anti-war veteran Erik Edstrom has noted how this played out in road construction across the country:

“Whenever a road was blown up—since protecting all the roads, all the time, was impossible—American forces would pay exorbitant cost-plus contracts to Afghan construction companies to rebuild it. It was common knowledge that many of these companies were owned by Afghan warlords guilty of human rights abuses. In turn, the construction companies paid a protection tribute to the Taliban. Then the Taliban would buy more bomb-making materials to destroy the road—and U.S. vehicles. We were, indirectly but also quite literally, paying the Taliban to kill us.”

<https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2021/05/04/afghanistan-war-erik-edstrom-first-person-485227>

Afghanistan was simply a matter of the police showing up enough! By the time of these interviews, significant sections of the population preferred living under the Taliban to the U.S. occupation.

These questions and the failures of SIKa betray the overall confusion within the U.S. state about the reasons for their failure in Afghanistan. They are unlikely to achieve

clarity on the matter anytime soon. Instead, they have shifted their focus to the New Cold War with China, without realizing that proxy conflicts and counter-insurgencies will doubtless be a central part of this inter-imperialist conflict for years to come, and that the U.S.'s inability to set up stable client states will hamstringing their efforts to outmaneuver China on a global stage.

Conclusion

The U.S. defeat in Afghanistan has wide-ranging implications for both countries, Central Asia, and the world. For example, many U.S. lackeys in oppressed countries are increasingly concerned that they will suffer a fate similar to that of the collaborators in Afghanistan and be left out to dry in one way or another. While this document analyzes some key contradictions in the U.S. state which were integral to the defeat of the U.S., it is far from a comprehensive analysis of the war, or the implications of the U.S. withdrawal. Despite these limitations in the scope of our analysis, it is clear that the basic inability of the U.S. ruling class to secure their interest in Afghanistan (and also in Iraq), despite spending trillions of dollars, does not bode well for their fortunes in their growing competition with the Chinese ruling class.

Inter-imperialist competition requires strategic thinking and coordination at a level that increasingly appears to be beyond the U.S. state. This is not to say that the U.S. ruling class is incapable of doing anything, but rather that they will likely continue to be outmaneuvered by China as they have been for the past few decades. Russia has also made significant grounds internationally due in part to U.S. incompetence (for example, Russian support for Assad in Syria has stymied U.S. regime change efforts, and Russia seized Crimea without paying too steep a price).

At present, contradictions internal to the U.S. ruling class and state appear to be growing, not diminishing, and there is no clear force capable of reforming the decadence, departmentalism, and discord that plagues the state at all levels. While the U.S. is far from collapsing, these issues indicate that it is likely to continue its relative decline internationally and suffer related challenges domestically. In the face of falling global fortunes (and also out of concern for their economic dependence on China), the U.S. ruling class is already trying to devise schemes to increase

domestic production and offload some aspects of their decline onto the masses of this country. Combined with the deepening crisis of overproduction and related spike in inflation, the situation for the masses of people in this country is becoming increasingly dire, which will in turn lead to more instability and rebellion domestically. Faced with growing rebellions (as well as emergencies from climate change) at home and with more failed states, inter-imperialist competition, and setbacks abroad, the U.S. military will be stretched increasingly thin, something that they are quite worried about. In this sense, the U.S. defeat in Afghanistan heralds an increasingly favorable situation for communist organizing in this country and around the world.

In Afghanistan itself, the situation is somewhat less clear. To achieve victory, the Taliban has collaborated with many warlords who were former U.S. allies. These warlords are generally very unpopular, given their corrupt and oppressive practices, and many have historically been mixed up in the drug trade and other illicit markets. The Taliban itself is going forward with its plans to create a chauvinist theocracy, imposing Sharia law throughout the country, and generally carrying out its reactionary political program. For example, they have shut down eighty percent of existing media outlets, and women have been barred from working outside, except for in health facilities.⁴⁵ In the face of this program, many have fled the country, especially non-Pashtuns.

The Taliban also faces a dire economic situation domestically, as 20 years of U.S. occupation have left the country devastated. Now U.S. sanctions block Afghan businesses' access to international markets, and a domestic food and inflation crisis threatens to spiral out of control.

While initial signs after the U.S. withdrawal pointed to a

⁴⁵ https://www.sholajawid.org/english/main_english/the_return_of_the_taliban_sho27_d4.html

developing relationship between China and the Taliban, the Chinese ruling class has been somewhat hesitant to work too closely with the Taliban given their fears about how such a relationship could affect the situation in Xinjiang, which remains something of a powder keg. To its north, the Taliban has clashed with Russian-backed forces on the border with Tajikistan, which has reinforced its border with Chinese and Russian help. While it is doubtful Russia would try a full-scale invasion of Afghanistan, even with Tajik proxy forces, this threat of invasion and military pressure can be used to leverage the situation in Russian favor in various ways. To the west, Taliban forces recently clashed with the Iranian military. Both governments have downplayed this as an accident and sought to sweep it under the rug; however, this could be the harbinger of future tensions, as a section of the Iranian ruling class still views Afghanistan as a breakaway province given its historical ties to the Persian Empire. What's more, prior to the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, relations between Iran and the Taliban were very tense, with the two dissolving diplomatic relations in 1998. Now they remain held together in part by a tenuous agreement crafted by the late General Qassem Soleimani in 2015.⁴⁶ However, the Gulf states are competing sharply with Iran for influence in Afghanistan, and should they secure a significant foothold, this would likely sharpen tensions between Iran and the Taliban.⁴⁷

To Afghanistan's east lies Pakistan, which has historically supported the Taliban, to a degree. However, tensions between the two have grown in recent years, especially with the decades-long insurgency of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP, commonly referred to as the "Pakistani Taliban") in the Northwest of the country. While a recent truce has been struck between TTP and the Pakistani government, the basic disagreements, especially on the question of imposing Sharia law throughout the country, remain wide and do not seem likely to be resolved anytime soon.⁴⁸ Should the talks between the TTP and the government of Pakistan collapse, this would further isolate the Taliban regionally.

In this situation, it is unclear if the Taliban will be able to prevent an internal collapse, or if they will be able to navigate a tenuous diplomatic situation and secure the foreign financing necessary to keep their country afloat.

Given that they have not taken the path of genuine social revolution or pursued economic self-reliance, they remain dependent on foreign imperialist sponsorship. They have kicked out the U.S., only to invite in other imperialist and junior imperialist powers to plunder the country. While it is a victory for the Afghan people to be free from U.S. occupation, their ultimate liberation cannot lie with a social force such as the Taliban, which represents the interests of a section of the landlord class, as well as the conservative religious forces, warlords, and domestic capitalists (who are lining up to become compradors for the highest imperialist bidder).

46 <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/afghanistan-taliban-iran-allies-soleiman-deals-relying-on>

47 <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/afghanistan-saudi-arabia-qatar-iran-taliban-vie-influence>

48 <https://www.dawn.com/news/1656033>

On the Importance of Learning from the Revolutionary Movements in India and the Philippines

As the world is rapidly heading into a major economic crisis and prolonged depression—with significant inflation already gripping many oppressed countries and forecast for the near future in the imperialist powers as well—there is overall an increasingly favorable international objective situation for revolutionary developments. These contradictions within the U.S. are developing in a similar fashion, with growing popular outrage at the government, major disruptions of basic supply-chains, skyrocketing inflation, and a revitalized strike movement the likes of which has not been seen in this country in decades. However, in order to seize the time and take advantage of these increasingly favorable objective conditions, communists must get organized, deepen our ties with the masses, and solidify our theoretical understanding of MLM.

An essential part of this is learning from the contemporary revolutionary movements around the world, in particular the revolutions in India and the Philippines. For over fifty years these movements have held high the red flag even in the face of global setbacks and furious attacks from reactionary forces. They have navigated the twists and turns of the revolution, overcome countless obstacles and setbacks, and provided hope and inspiration to the people of the world. The five plus decades of experience that these two parties each have is a treasure trove for communists everywhere. Despite the differences between these countries and the U.S. there is much to be learned from the experiences of CPI (Maoist) and the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Many U.S. Maoists have some familiarity with these

movements, but it is necessary to get beyond a cursory understanding. A thorough-going study of the lessons of the Commune was central to the Bolsheviks' victory in the October Revolution. Lenin's study of the German Party during his life not only taught him valuable lessons about communist organizing, but also allowed him to see the rise of revisionism within its ranks and to lead the struggle against Kautsky and others in the International Communist Movement (ICM). Mao's study of the Soviet Union helped him chart a course forward for socialist construction in China which learned from the success of the USSR's experience while avoiding repeating many of the same mistakes. It is not enough for Maoists in the U.S. to support other parties through declarations, statements, and demonstrations. We must also make a serious study of these movements, as they are a detachment of the world proletarian revolution, just as we are.

Recently both the CPP and CPI (Maoist) lost important members of their Central Committees. In the Philippines 74 year old Jorge Madlos (alias Ka Oris), National Operational Commander of the New People's Army (NPA), was killed on October 29 by the fascist U.S.-Duterte regime on his way to receive medical treatment. In India, 63 year old Politburo member Akkiraju Haragopal (alias Comrade RK) died from kidney disease on October 14. The death of these two comrades is a blow, not only to the movements in their respective countries, but to the ICM as a whole. We pay tribute to them and the leadership they provided. They are a true inspiration to the people of the world.

Ka Oris

Ka Oris originally got involved in the revolutionary movement as a student in the 1970s and was a steadfast communist revolutionary for the past five decades. When martial law was declared by the Marcos dictatorship in 1972 he dropped out of college and joined the struggle full-time. He was arrested in this period and released in 1976, after which he went to the countryside and joined the NPA. During this period he played a crucial role in the growth of the NPA, especially in the southern island

of Mindanao, through linking the national revolutionary movement to the anti-feudal struggles of the peasant masses.

This was a difficult period for the International Communist Movement, as the counter-revolutionary coup in China in 1976 left many disoriented and confused. Many parties and individuals turned revisionist and capitulationist, rallying behind Deng Xiaoping and even giving up the

struggle entirely. In these dark times, the CPP served as a living example and reminder that it was possible to continue on the path of revolution and communism even in the face of grave setbacks internationally. Their struggle provided hope and clarity to communists and the masses of people around the world.

In 1987, Ka Oris was again captured and imprisoned after peace talks with the Corazon Aquino government collapsed after the government carried out a brutal massacre of peasants at Mendiola. It was during this imprisonment that he suffered a severe bladder infection for which the state refused to provide treatment. This resulted in bladder issues which would last the rest of his life, but which never deterred him from the difficult life of a revolutionary.

While he was imprisoned, the Party pursued an incorrect line of premature regularization of the NPA. This was a strategy of trying to move from guerrilla warfare to more regular mobile and positional warfare prematurely. This included a shift from smaller squads of guerrillas as the basic unit of the NPA to larger scale companies (units dozens to hundreds of soldiers) and battalions (units of ~1,000 soldiers).

Such a shift is needed at a certain point in the development of a protracted people's war, and even before that point it is necessary to temporarily concentrate forces for military operations against reactionary forces. However, this shift to regularization is different from the temporary concentration of forces. It has to happen at an appropriate time. The revolutionary movement must be sufficiently developed, the agrarian revolution must have advanced and spread to a sufficient degree that the mass base can support regularized troops, and the forces of the people's army must be strong enough relative to the enemy to fight and win regular mobile and even some positional battles.

If forces are regularized prematurely, it leads to all kinds of challenges, not the least of which is that the reactionary forces are able to eliminate large sections of the people's army because of their numerical and technological superiority. Regularized troops cannot carry out guerrilla warfare in the same way that squads can, and cannot easily evade the enemy forces after fighting battles. Premature regularization prevents a people's army from carrying out the fundamental principle of concentrating forces for fighting the enemy and dividing forces to deal with the enemy. It allows the enemy to more easily track the movements of the people's army and concentrate their forces to destroy companies and battalions.

These mistakes were made in the Philippines in the 1980s in part based on an incorrect line that the Philippines was no longer a semi-feudal society but had developed into an industrial capitalist country. This "left" opportunist line placed too much emphasis on the urban struggle and advocated premature urban insurrections. Some of those in the Party pushing this line argued that the NPA was merely a military adjunct to these urban insurrections. They pushed for the neglect or even abandonment of key aspects of rural mass work, arguing that the urban struggle should be the decisive front of the Party's work. In this sense they repeated many mistakes of the disastrous line advocated by Li Lisan during the Chinese revolution.¹

After the party suffered setbacks due to this line, there was initially not a clear summation of the mistakes that led to the setbacks. Instead, the theory was promoted that the Party was losing ground and mass support due to "deep-penetration agents" (DPAs). While the state always works to infiltrate revolutionary movement and sow discord, the anti-DPA campaign that the CPP launched in this period was disastrous both because it targeted many good comrades and led to a climate of paranoia, but also

1 In 1930, Li Lisan, with support from Moscow, became the chairman of the Organization Bureau of the Communist Party of China. His line involved reorganizing and regularizing the Red Army to prepare for capturing the industrial cities in China. This was based on an assessment that the center of gravity in the Chinese Revolution had to be the cities and that the time was ripe to capture them because of the global economic depression, in spite of defeats suffered during similar attempts in 1927. This was in part based on an impetuosity on the part of Li and others; Li claimed that by following the strategy of protracted people's war in China, "our hair will be white before the revolution is victorious."

In *The Great Road*, a book by Agnes Smedley about Zhu De's life (largely based on interviews of him), Zhu notes "Even if we succeeded in capturing a few industrial cities, we doubted our ability to hold them even with the help of the industrial workers. The counter-revolutionary forces were numerically superior and infinitely better armed than we; and we were more convinced than in the past that the imperialist powers which supported the Kuomintang dictatorship would actively intervene against us to protect that dictatorship[...] Apart from Mao and myself, there was very little opposition to the Li Li-san line. We had no choice but to accept it[...] The strategy was pure adventurism—an effort to leap over great difficulties and problems that had to be faced and solved before China could be emancipated." Attacks against major industrial cities proved disastrous, and the Red Army was forced to retreat after suffering heavy losses. *The Great Road: The Life and Times of Chu Teh*, Agnes Smedley.

because it was part of a larger inability to self-critically appraise the mistaken line of premature regularization and urban insurrections that the Party had been following.

After his release from prison in 1992, Ka Oris played a leading role in the Second Great Rectification Movement to address both the mistakes of the anti-DPA campaign and the line of premature regularization and urban insurrections. In the CPP's statement on his death, they noted:

Ka Oris served as one of the strongest pillars of the Second Great Rectification Movement which the Central Committee declared in 1992 to reaffirm the Party's basic Marxist-Leninist-Maoist ideological principles and its strategic line of people's democratic revolution through protracted people's war. He stood firm against the revisionists and "Left" opportunists among whom were some former cadres of the Mindanao Commission who eventually turned traitors to the revolutionary cause. He would always say that it was not the enemy which almost decimated the NPA in Mindanao in the 1980s and early 1990s, but the NPA's own weaknesses and bad decisions.²

After this rectification movement, he continued to play a key role in promoting MLM and expanding the mass movement. In guiding the protracted people's war in Mindanao, he helped to recover the areas lost due to the mistakes of the previous period and worked to seed the revolutionary movement across the country through sending support from more advanced guerrilla zones to those at a

lower stage of development.

In 2016 the CPP held their Second Party Congress, and Ka Oris was a key organizer of this historic event. His tireless work was central in bringing together about one hundred cadre from all the regional Party committees. The Party had not held a Congress since 1968, but was able to hold the most recent one in the face of an increasing onslaught from reactionary forces. This helped to solidify the Party's basic line and further develop their program. All of this was crucial to their outstanding resilience and determination in the face of Duterte's imposition of martial law in Mindanao, his so-called "war on drugs" (which is really both a war on the people and to solidify his dominance of the national drug trade), and continuously growing military support from the U.S. for the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

Ka Oris' death is a tragedy, a loss that is felt not only in the Philippines, but all around the world. But the fascist Duterte regime is deceiving itself if it thinks that by killing Ka Oris it will defeat the Filipino Revolution. As Black Panther Fred Hampton once said, "You can kill a revolutionary but you can never kill the revolution." Ka Oris devoted the last five decades of his life to serving the people. In this period he made countless contributions to the revolution in the Philippines and to the ICM. While he has been taken from the people by the fascists' bullets, he trained numerous revolutionary successors and helped to advance the Philippines Revolution. His memory and legacy is an inspiration to the people of the world.

Akkiraju Haragopal

Comrade Akkiraju Haragopal, 63 year old Indian revolutionary, a member of the Central Committee and the Politburo of the Communist Party of India (Maoist), passed away on October 14th, 2021 due to acute kidney issues. Haragopal dedicated his life for the revolutionary movement and made immense contributions to the Party and the revolution in a number different capacities over four decades. In his underground work he was known by numerous names, such as Ramakrishna, RK, Saket, Madhu, Srinivas. To the outside world, he is most commonly known as Ramakrishna or Comrade RK.

Comrade RK was born in 1958 in the Guntur district

of Andhra Pradesh. His father was a school teacher and mother was a homemaker. Along with his father, Com. RK worked as a school teacher for some time after completion of his studies in political science. While working as a teacher, he was influenced by revolutionary politics in the areas surrounding his village. At this time—in 1978 after the lifting of Emergency—the Andhra Pradesh Radical Students Union (RSU) was carrying out its "Go to Villages" campaign in which students who supported the Naxalite movement went down to the countryside to join in the people's struggles and support the revolutionary movement.³ Convinced by the political program of the

² <http://bannedthought.net/Philippines/CPP/Sison/2021/Sison-SpecificCharacteristicsOfPeoplesWarInPhilippines-2021-06-27.pdf>

³ In his article on the 2010 killing of CPI (Maoist) Spokesperson Azad, N Venugopal describes this movement: "The village campaigns

erstwhile party, CPI (Marxist-Leninist) (People's War) of which the RSU was an affiliated organization, he got actively involved in their revolutionary campaigns in the countryside. Influenced by this movement, he came to a firm conclusion that protracted people's war was the only way to liberate the oppressed masses in semi-feudal and semi-colonial India.

In 1980, Comrade RK decided to join the Party and became a primary member. From that point on, he stood firm in his revolutionary convictions through all the twists and turns of the Indian Revolution. When he joined the Party there was a massive movement ongoing in the Guntur district from which he hailed. In the cities the masses were occupying unused land to make it into house sites, and land-starved peasants in the countryside were likewise occupying forest and barren lands and bringing it under cultivation. The 1980 Guntur district Party conference was held in the midst of this movement and Comrade RK was an active participant in this important conference. This conference helped the district Party committee solidify their organizing and sum up their experiences.

This conference helped the Party leadership to review the impact of the "Go to Villages" campaign on students and their understanding of the social structure and the mode of production in the countryside. The campaign was a major driving force for hundreds of students to join the movement and realize the revolutionary potential of the masses. For Comrade RK, the campaign helped him to understand and realize the power and prestige attached to his class and "upper" (Brahmin) caste positions in the society and to consciously repudiate them to identify with Dalit and Adivasi masses. He played a very important role in building the anti-caste movement in Guntur district, where caste oppression was brutal. Overall, the conference provided guidance for understanding the relationship between class and caste contradictions, and how the revolutionary movement could effectively address them. Inspired by the conference and subsequent events, he became a full-time Party member in 1982.

In 1986, he was elected as the Secretary of the Guntur District Committee. Due to his steadfast revolutionary

leadership and dedication to the masses, he was promoted to the Andhra Pradesh State Committee in 1992. As a State Committee member, he guided the Party in South Telangana until 1996. His role in building a strong revolutionary movement in South Telangana was remarkable; he worked among the peasants, Dalits, and Adivasis (indigenous people), and played an important role in the Party's efforts to provide proletarian leadership to their struggles. With these experiences, in 2000 he was elected as the Secretary of the Andhra Pradesh State Committee. Shortly thereafter, in the 9th Congress of the Party, he became a Central Committee member in 2001. Even though there was severe repression in the erstwhile united Andhra Pradesh, he led the Party and expanded it to new areas. During this junction he played a key role in building and strengthening a number of mass organizations among students, women, dalits, and adivasis. In the period of severe repression, the development of strong mass organization was crucial as the Party was facing intensified attacks from the forces of reaction and needed support from the legal mass movement.

Comrade RK also led the Party delegation in the so-called peace talks with the Government of Andhra Pradesh in 2004. During the "peace talks," Comrade RK and his team put forward people's demands for discussion. His team clearly declared that they didn't have any illusions about the talks, however they decided to participate in the process to expose the nature of the state to the general public, civil rights activists, and academic intellectuals. His eloquent and clear spoken statements undermined state propaganda that framed the Naxalites as unruly terrorists. Thus, his work helped the Party to not only expose the insincerity of the government in the talks (and their related unwillingness to address the fundamental economic and political issues affecting the masses of people), but also showed a wide section of the public that the Party was working hard to address the fundamental issues facing the masses. This was crucial to shifting public sentiment to increasingly support the revolutionary movement in Andhra Pradesh.

When the state refused to discuss and implement any of the people's demands, RK and his team called off the talks and moved on with their political program. How-

brought about a sea change in the outlook of participating students as well as spread the revolutionary message at the grassroots. The campaign became a prelude to the Karimnagar-Adilabad peasant struggles and the RSU in turn gained strength from it. The "Go to Villages" campaigns directly led to the formation of the Radical Youth League in May 1978 and Raithucoolli Sangham in 1980."

Azad himself was involved in this movement at the time. <https://mronline.org/2010/07/29/killing-azad-silencing-the-voice-of-revolution/>

ever, after the breakdown of the talks, the state targeted Comrade RK in new ways and initiated special army operations to kill him. In this situation, the Party transferred him to the Andhra-Orissa Border (AOB) zone in 2004, and he led its state committee. As a Central Committee member, he guided the AOB committee until 2014. In 2018, the Party took him into its highest committee, the Politburo. Even as a Politburo member, he worked with the rank and file cadre and mass leaders on the ground to develop defensive tactics under brutal oppression in the AOB. While facing encirclement from hundreds of thousands of enemy forces, Comrade RK continued to advance the revolutionary struggle, even in the face of challenges and temporary setbacks that the Party has faced in

recent years. While doing this great revolutionary work, Comrade RK unfortunately developed a problem with his kidneys. The Party provided dialysis treatment, but he eventually went into kidney failure, followed by failures in his other organs. He died among his beloved comrades.

Comrade RK married his partner, Shirisha, in the revolutionary movement. They had one son, Munna. Comrade Munna also joined the Party and was killed in a police encounter near Ramaguda in 2018.

Comrade RK's selfless contribution and his dedication towards building and expanding of the revolutionary movement will never be forgotten. It is a shining example for the people of India and communists everywhere.

Conclusion

The International Communist Movement has lost two great leading comrades. For decades they have served the people. With their passing, we commemorate their immortal contributions to the revolutions in their respective countries. We also call on comrades here in the United States to learn from these comrades and deepen their understanding of the ongoing revolutionary movements in India and the Philippines. For the last fifty years these revolutions have been a beacon of hope for the people of the world. As we enter into an unprecedented capitalist crisis, the openings for revolutionary advances are growing by the day. But we must solidify our organizations, deepen our theoretical understanding of MLM, and overcome our various shortcomings and weaknesses. The lives of these two comrades provide us with decades of experience from which to learn.

Key Lessons from Recent Translations on Mao's Directives from the Final Years of the GPCR

There is a good deal of material available to comrades to aid in understanding the experience of revolutionary China and the two-line struggle waged in the party against the Capitalist Roaders. However, the importance of the late Cultural Revolution is often under-studied and little understood.

Importantly, a key political struggle was waged from 1974-76 against the right that clarified the danger and nature of imminent capitalist restoration in China. Recently a few important documents from Mao and others in the left have been translated, providing unique clarity in exposing the capitalist roaders in their various forms. These include 1) *A Few Opinions of Mine* (August 31, 1970), 2) *Chairman Mao's Talk with Members of the Politburo who Were in Beijing* (May 3, 1975), 3) *Chairman Mao's Primary Directives* (March 3, 1976), and 4) *A Summary of Views on the Problem of the Inner-Party Bourgeoisie* (July 8, 1976).¹

This material presented a threat to the rightist regime that overtook China following the 1976 counterrevolutionary coup. As a result, these documents were suppressed following 1976, have not been widely available, and were only recently translated into English. The lessons provided in these materials are important not just for navigating the path towards communism in future socialist societies, but also for explaining the lessons of the socialist experience to the masses today as they desperately search for an alternative to a world increasingly plunged into crisis and chaos. An examination of these documents can be helpful for revolutionaries seeking to achieve a solid understanding of the Cultural Revolution and of the nature of the socialist state in particular.

The documents we are focusing on deserve to be studied in great depth. In these notes we address a few key issues covered in the material, aided by several discussions on the material conducted by various comrades.²

Internal Struggle Requires Clarity Over Revolutionary Strategy

Of profound importance is the relationship between identifying those promoting the capitalist road within the workers' movement and the need for proletarian leaders to formulate a theory, line, and strategy to bring about the proletariat's victory over the bourgeoisie. One cannot do the former without doing the latter, one cannot accomplish the latter without the former. The result of a series of mass-forums held in Beijing, *A Summary of Views on the Problem of the Inner-Party Bourgeoisie* distills some of the leading insights of the Chinese revolutionary movement in the late-GPCR period. On this question, it states:

In the course of leading the struggle of the proletariat and the laboring people against the bourgeoisie, the guides of the proletarian revolution constantly smash all kinds of strange theories put forward by opportunists and revisionists that provide cover for the bourgeoisie. They constantly resolve questions on how to identify the bourgeoisie, and where to find the bourgeoisie. They do so in every important historical stage, according to new changes in class relations, and according to the new characteristics of the class struggle. They formulate a theory, line and strategy for the pro-

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- 1) <http://bannedthought.net/China/MaoEra/GPCR/Chinese/AFewOpinionsOfMine-1970-English.pdf> or page 39 of this issue.
2) <http://bannedthought.net/China/Individuals/MaoZedong/Mao'sCommentaries/Mao'sTalkWithMembersOfThePolitburo-1975-May3-EnglishWithNotes.pdf> or page 43 of this issue.
3) <http://bannedthought.net/China/MaoEra/GPCR/Chinese/ChairmanMao'sPrimaryDirectives-CCP-CC-1976-Doc4-EngWithNotes.pdf> and page 32 of this issue.
4) <http://bannedthought.net/China/MaoEra/GPCR/SummaryOfViewsOnTheInner-PartyBourgeoisie-English-Partial-OCR.pdf> or page 53 of this issue.
- 2) Topics of conversation have included 1) the question of understanding the relative nature of socialism in representing a break from capitalist society 2) the nature of dogmatism and empiricism as deviations from a revolutionary line, and the need to oppose both tendencies at present and in a post-revolutionary society 3) the essential need for the proletarian revolutionaries to continuously demolish the many erroneous theories of the ruling class and to map out a path forward for revolution 4) the class nature of opportunists and revisionists, and the relationship between these two tendencies.

letariat's victory over the bourgeoisie.

In the Chinese example alone, after the foundation of the New People's Republic, many activists inside and outside the party who had previously supported the New Democratic Revolution broke ranks during the shift to the tasks of the Socialist Revolution, in particular around the questions of mass supervision of officials, the cooperativization of agriculture, and the restriction of bourgeois right. Various erroneous articulations, such as the genius theory supported by Lin Biao and Chen Boda (the idea that individual leaders can promote ideas thousands of times more insightful than those of the masses) or the promotion of "stability and unity as the key link," by Deng Xiaoping in 1975 as part of his overall support for the counterrevolutionary idea of productive forces determinism, reflected the two-line struggle within the party, the struggle of an emerging bourgeoisie in various forms to achieve its goal of capitalist restoration.

As the *Summary of Views* document argues, there is a relationship between the revisionists that worm their way into the workers' movement before the revolution, and those who do so afterwards.

In capitalist society, through infiltration, corruption and bribery by the bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie's ranks are found within the workers' movement and within the Communist Party. However, the bourgeoisie's core, its primary force, and its primary ranks are found outside the workers' movement and outside the Communist Party. At this time [before the establishment of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat—Ed. of translation], the bourgeois headquarters was a bourgeois state machine controlled and manipulated by a small group of the big bourgeoisie. When analyzing the relationship between right opportunist factions and the bourgeoisie, the authors of the classics of Marxism-Leninism always pointed out their common class essence while also heavily emphasizing the dependence and subordination of these factions within the working class movement and within the Communist Party to the bourgeoisie in society. Marx and Engels said opportunists are vassals, tails, and children of the non-monopoly bourgeoisie. Lenin said that revisionists are tools, lackeys, and agents of the monopoly bourgeoisie. In capitalist society, if the proletariat is to defeat the bourgeoisie, it must firstly destroy the bourgeois headquarters, immediately smash the bourgeois state machine and replace the bourgeois dictatorship

with the dictatorship of the proletariat.

This has profound importance for revolutionaries aspiring to build the proletarian headquarters at present. Opportunists within the working class movement present major obstacles to our efforts. However, while combating and struggling against alien class elements within the proletariat's ranks, the central goal of revolution must be very clear—smashing the bourgeois headquarters and establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. Without this framework, combat against forms of opportunism internal to our ranks becomes highly subjective without a clear orientation towards what the struggle is about in the first place—revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie. Rather than struggle serving unity, such struggle risks being plagued by deviations that tend to weaken and isolate the proletariat and its allies. In particular this often manifests in articulations of localism and variations on the old anarchist-revisionist theme of so-called autonomy.

In related fashion, the success of the Cultural Revolution was anchored by the dual and interrelated tasks of identifying the capitalist roaders in the party at the same time as mapping out a plan of attack to destroy the new bourgeois headquarters. By the time that the GPCR commenced, Mao had identified that the bourgeois headquarters was found within the party itself. During the first salvo of the Cultural Revolution, Mao and his allies sparked a rebellion against the revisionist elements in the party, bombarding the bourgeois headquarters and then consolidating new forms of revolutionary government with mass oversight. The movement faced a deep setback however with the defection of Lin Biao, who had been a bulwark of left mobilization in the army and who Mao relied on despite his misgivings about Lin's theory and methods, particularly his promotion of genius theory. Following the left's breakthroughs against the party's leading capitalist-roaders in the early Cultural Revolution, Lin Biao was promoted as Mao's "closest comrade-in-arms and successor." Despite the movement's successes in opening the floodgates for mass rebellion, creativity and revolutionary successors, Lin Biao's politics and accolades—left in form, right in essence—then became a new reservoir of political reaction, culminating in their failed 1971 coup, including a plotted assassination attempt against Mao. Turning failure into the mother of success, the setback was used by the left to mount a new offensive against the deeper politics that Lin represented in the form of the Criticize Lin Biao, Criticize Confucius campaign.

Assessing the Gang of Four, Assessing Middle Forces in the Party

Much of Mao's work during the later GPCR ('74-76) was focused on the need to direct attacks of the party on the primary enemies of the revolution and to forge a broad unity around this, in order to prevent a line of attack that aimed to "overthrow all" (i.e. anarchism). Mao worked to win over middle forces such as Chen Yonggui and Wu Guixian who were at odds with the "gang of four." The document *Chairman Mao's Talk with Members of the Politburo who Were in Beijing* clarifies a key question in the ICM—what was Mao's assessment of the "gang?" Did Mao call them a gang of four? In fact, in the document, Mao does refer to Zhang Chunqiao, Jiang Qing, Yao Wenyuan, and Wang Hongwen as a "gang of four." He implores them "Don't function as a gang of four, don't do it any more, why do you still do it? Why not unite with the more than two hundred members of the Central Committee? Functioning as a minority is no good, it is bad at all times." The footnote to the document provided by the editors states:

Chairman Mao's mention of "gang of four" here became the so-called source of Hua Guofeng's accusation against the gang of four. The remark here has nearly universally been understood as directed against Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan and Wang Hongwen. While there is no clarifying note in the transcript to whom this remark replies, we can conclude that it refers to these four revolutionaries based on Zhang Chunqiao's note found in the "Third Materials on the Criminal Deeds of Wang, Zhang, Jiang, and Yao edited by Hua Guofeng" 《材料之三》: "Regarding the Chairman's instructions to not form a gang of four, this certainly was resolutely followed, as this most likely could lead to the successful task of achieving unity. Although not [words crossed out by

Zhang Chunqiao] in the least [we] did not add to the burden on the Chairman."

<http://bannedthought.net/China/MaoEra/GPCR/Chinese/RegardingProofOfTheCrimes-OfG4-CCP-CC-1976-12-10.pdf>. *Chairman Mao elsewhere also criticized Zhou Enlai, Ye Jianying, and Li Xian'nian as a "gang of three." Hua never dared mention this point. Chairman Mao also criticized Hua's Hunan gang (including Zhang Huaping and others) and Ye Jianying's Guangdong gang later in this talk.*

Chen Yonggui, a peasant leader and revolutionary, was an example of the middle forces who supported aspects of the revolutionary line. Chen made tremendous contributions towards the promotion of collectivization in agriculture and self reliance (for which his home village of Dazhai became a national model). But he, like others in this camp, by the later GPCR/mid-1970s were not convinced about the need to struggle anew against rightists such as Deng Xiaoping. This stand was related to dismissing positive aspects of the mass mobilizations in the early GPCR by focusing instead on the shortcomings of the students and the wider movement.³ These views were also related to limitations in understanding the complex nationwide maneuver that was the Cultural Revolution. However, individuals like Chen were not hopeless either. Mao saw such middle forces as potential and important allies of the revolution who could be won over.

3 "The Lin Piao anti-Party clique slandered intellectuals integrating themselves with the workers and peasants and going to the countryside as "reform through forced labour in a disguised form." Young people, full of vigour and imbued with communist consciousness, have gone group after group to the countryside. This is a great undertaking of far-reaching significance for narrowing the three major differences and for restricting bourgeois right. All revolutionary people enthusiastically praise it, but those corrupted by bourgeois ideology, and particularly those fettered by the idea of bourgeois right, oppose it. Whether the integration of educated young people with the workers and peasants is upheld or not has a direct bearing on whether the revolution in university education can be carried on by following the road taken by the Shanghai Machine Tool Plant—enrolling students from among the workers and peasants and assigning them to work among workers and peasants upon graduation. The Lin Piao anti-Party clique's special hatred of this not only showed its opposition to the labouring people but also exposed its scheme to use bourgeois right to attack the Party in an attempt to incite some people deeply influenced by the idea of bourgeois right to oppose the socialist revolution. Its programme was aimed at widening the gap between town and country and between manual and mental labour, and turning educated young people into a new stratum of elite, so as to win the support of those deeply influenced by the idea of bourgeois right for its counter-revolutionary coup d'état." *On the Social Basis of the Lin Piao Anti-Party Clique*, Yao Wenyuan, 1975 <https://www.marxists.org/archive/yao-wenyuan/1975/0001.htm>

On the Relationship and Link Between Dogmatist and Empiricist Deviations

Mao urged the Four to unify with those who could remold in the course of struggle. He contrasted the relatively malleable views of the party's empiricist trend with the hopeless rigidity of the dogmatists, as exemplified by Wang Ming and the 28 ½ Bolsheviks. Mao stated, "I think as for the problems that are not big, don't make minor issues major, but if there is a problem, one must be clear. If it cannot be solved in the first half of the year, let it be solved in the second half of the year; if it cannot be solved this year, let it be solved next year; if it cannot be solved next year, let it be solved in the year after next ... As I see it, those who criticize empiricism are themselves empiricists, they do not have much Marxism-Leninism, they may have some but not so much, about the same as me." Earlier in the talk Mao defended Jiang Qing, stating, "As I see it, Jiang Qing is a small empiricist, and is far from being a dogmatist. She is not like Wang Ming who wrote an article called 'Further Bolshevization,' and she will not act like Zhang Wentian, writing an article about opportunist vacillation."

In opposition to the approach of "overthrow-all"⁴ which would have preferred to oust the middle forces in the party altogether, Mao emphasized the three lines: "Practice Marxism-Leninism, not revisionism. Unite, and don't split. Be above-board and open, don't intrigue and conspire." Despite the rise of anarchist "overthrow-all" approach among privileged students the first years of the GPCR, by 1976, in *Chairman Mao's Primary Directives*, Mao pointed out the rising consciousness of the masses, including among those in the universities, and the ability and need to advance a front line struggle there against Deng and his clique.⁵ Related to the subject of "unite and don't split," in the 1975 *Talk with Members of the Politburo*, Mao argued the thrust of the mass struggle should concentrate on the Criticize Lin [Biao] Criticize Con-

fucius campaign, and not on less targeted offenses, such as an attack on all forms of pulling-strings by officials, as was being proposed by some on the left. In his elaboration of the rationale for the focus on Lin and Confucius, he raised the historical nature of Lin Biao's dogmatist line, including referring back to Lin's dogmatist essay written during the period in which the 28 ½ Bolsheviks were in power in the party, *On a Short and Swift Assault*, in which Lin had praised the disastrous advice of Comintern representative to the CCP, Otto Braun. Mao explained how the empiricists in the party during this time were essential to the aims of the dogmatists.

As the summary introduction to the *Chairman Mao's Talk with Members of the Politburo* translation states on this question (quoting from the 1945 *Resolutions on Certain Historical Questions* by the Communist Party of China):

Even though the points of departures of empiricism and dogmatism are different, they share unity in the essence of their method of thought. They all separate the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism from the concrete practice of the Chinese Revolution; they all go against dialectical materialism and historical materialism, exaggerating partial, relative truths as universal, absolute truths; their thoughts do not match the real situation. Because of this, they have many common erroneous understandings of Chinese society and Chinese Revolution (for instance, the erroneous city-centric view, the view that work in the white-areas is primary, the view of "conventional" warfare detached from real situations, etc). This is the ideological root which allows these two groups of comrades to work along together. As the experiences of the empiricists are partial and narrow, the majority of em-

4 Chairman Mao summarized the features of the dogmatist tendency to overthrow all in his *Arguing Against the "Third Left-leaning" Line* as "First portraying the enemy as one hunk of iron; knocking down the big enemy and small enemy together; then exerting the major force to beat the small enemy specifically—because it is said that these small enemies are the most dangerous ones. Struggling for 'clarifying the class lines' in the Soviet Areas; exercising the so-called 'no land for landlords, bad land for rich peasants' to force them to take up weapons to attack the Soviet Union to death...; the so-called 'Overthrow All' theory is precisely a brilliant 'creation' by these old masters."

5 "At present, the mass debates should be primarily restricted to the schools and a portion of apparatuses. Fighting teams shouldn't be formed, and the party's leadership is primary. Industry, agriculture, commerce, and the military should not be struck. But, it will spread [to these areas]. The level of the masses has risen, they are not fighting for anarchism, to overthrow everything, for an all-around civil war. Now Peking and Tsinghua universities are correcting their course, through the leadership of the university and departmental party committees, and of the branches. In the past this was not the case, with Kuai Dafu, Ni Yuanzi—anarchism. Now the situation is more reliable."

piricists often lack independent, clear, and complete opinions on comprehensive matters. Therefore, when they are connected with dogmatists, they often present themselves as the accessory of the latter; But the history of the party proves that dogmatists find it difficult to “disseminate poisons” among the whole party without collaboration from empiricists. After dogmatism is overcome, empiricism then becomes the major obstacle to the development of Marxism-Leninism within the party. Thus, we should not only overcome subjectivist dogmatism but also subjectivist empiricism.

The historical mutual-development of empiricism and dogmatism—a problem still not resolved at present—adds to the significance of the struggle against revisionism by the revolutionaries in the party and forms the backdrop to the 1975 Talk.

Following Lin Biao’s coup attempt, Mao and his allies argued that Lin Biao did not represent a failure of leftist overreach. Instead, they showed how Lin Biao and his collaborators were a symptom of a bourgeois intent on restoration, bent on converting the public socialist ownership into private ownership. The association of Lin Biao with

leftist overreach was promoted by Zhou Enlai, who following the Lin Biao affair attacked “Lin Biao’s Ultra-left Anarchism” in the People’s Daily, suggesting that the whole party was exercising an ultra-left line (in contrast, according to Chairman Mao, Lin Biao represented an ultra-right line). Zhou Enlai had been a representative of the empiricist trend in the 1930s, which Mao had argued abetted the Wang Ming dogmatists. As the appendix to the document states,

But the history of the party proves that dogmatists find it difficult to ‘disseminate poisons’ among the whole party without collaboration from empiricists ... Chairman Mao believed that the empiricist errors could be considered a problem belonging to the category of contradictions among the people. According to the proletarian policy of ‘curing the disease to save the patient,’ there was thus an attempt to rectify such conciliatory and empiricist mistakes through political education. Consequently, Zhou, Peng [Dehuai] and Zhang [Wentian] later admitted their mistakes and joined the struggle against the Wang Ming dogmatist line.

Against Lin Biaoism and Tendencies Towards Empty Sloganeering

In Yao Wenyuan’s article *On the Social Basis of the Lin Biao Anti-Party Clique*,⁶ Lin is criticized for his tendency to belittle the contributions of the red guards, accusing them of simply being hoodwinked and used. Time and time again, Lin Biao betrayed a skepticism for mass initiative and development. To clarify the deeper issues that supported the rise of Lin’s reactionary camp, a mass struggle was waged against the root servility towards authority pushed by Lin and buttressed by several thousand years of Confucian ideology in China. This was done at the same time that overtures were made to middle forces such as Zhou Enlai in an attempt to break the isolation of the left. These attempts were half-successful at best, as evidenced by the ability of Deng and his allies to maneuver widely to suppress the left from July to October 1975 as part of Deng’s program of “stability and unity.” Deng then contributed to the April 5 counterrevolutionary incident in Tiananmen Square, resulting in his dismissal from all official posts in April, 1976. Following Mao’s death in 1976 the left found itself isolated with the desertion of

key allies to the rightist camp. Despite Mao’s efforts to win over the middle forces, the surviving representatives of the trend, including Chen Xilian, Su Zhenhua, Chen Yonggui, Wu De, and Wu Guixian all supported Hua Guofeng, and did not object to the coup against the leftist leadership and against the revolutionary line.

Both the debacle of Lin Biao’s coup plan in 1971 and the coup in 1976 demonstrate the severe challenges posed to a DoP given the changing contours of struggle in a revolutionary society. As *A Summary of Views on the Problem of the Inner-Party Bourgeoisie* states, opportunists use the changing form of the opposition between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie under socialism to sabotage the masses and the larger struggle:

At the same time as the economic basis for their existence remains unchanged, the forms of the non-monopoly, monopoly, and socialist period inner-party bourgeoisie are in fact constantly changing. Although the class opposition between the bourgeoisie and the

6 <https://www.marxists.org/archive/yao-wenyuan/1975/0001.htm>

proletariat has not changed, the specific form of this opposition is constantly changing. Opportunists and revisionists take advantage of these non-intrinsic changes to engage in political opportunism. They constantly concoct falsehoods claiming that the bourgeoisie is disappearing on its own, or that it has already been eliminated. They thus endeavor to prevent the proletariat and the laboring people from seeing clearly where the bourgeoisie is, and provide cover for the bourgeoisie in its attacks on the proletariat.

Following the victories in the early Cultural Revolution, there was a need to transform mass enthusiasm and participation in the movement into new revolutionary forms, including the revolutionary committees throughout the country. While the initial salvos of the GPCR were launched on the basis of careful work by the party left, a mass movement was then triggered throughout society. Without further direction and consolidation then from revolutionaries, the masses' enthusiasm that had emerged risked being dispersed and led astray. Promotion of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line needed to be deepened, in particular through a grounding in the actual works of Marx, Lenin and Mao. During the buildup to the GPCR, Lin Biao promoted the study of Mao's work through the "Little Red Book," a practice was taken up on a mass level during the first few years of the GPCR. This helped rally the masses to the cause of the revolution, both in China and to a degree abroad as well—the Red Book for instance was studied by groups including the Black Panthers (after initially being used as a fundraising tool). However, the Lin Biao trend and related politics sought to treat Mao's words in a religious manner that harmed the ability of the masses to objectively further the struggle. This led Mao and others to issue directives to stop practices such as routinized morning and nightly readings from the *Quotations* and other such rituals.⁷ Ultimately, Lin Biao attempted to form a new bourgeois headquarters in the party in the aftermath of the defeat of Liu Shaoqi and his allied capitalist-roaders during the early GPCR. His empty sloganeering based on selective use of Mao's words served to disarm the masses. As a worker in a Shanghai Generator Factory stated circa 1973, referring to Lin Bi-

ao's deeds in words but not name:

For many years I have been active in the revolution. I am familiar with revolutionary theory. Thanks to the Cultural Revolution, and thanks to the bitter struggle between the two political lines, I've learned that it's not enough to have working class solidarity and a desire to work hard for the revolution. One must read Marx and Lenin to learn revolutionary theory. I had read a little and I told myself it was enough instead of really trying to understand. Then the companions of Liu Shaoqi advised us to take a shortcut in the study of Marx and Lenin, so I stopped studying those works. They took advantage of our enthusiasm for Mao Zedong's work, and invented fancy slogans like Mao's thought is the ultimate in contemporary Marxism-Leninism, or one word of Mao's is worth 10,000 others. They disguised themselves as the true authorities on Mao's thought. They said there are so many works by Marx and Lenin that they cannot all be read. By claiming to take a shortcut, they tried to separate Mao Zedong's thought from Marxism-Leninism.⁸

At present, similar attempts to pigeon-hole MLM and revolutionary theory in general proliferate. In the U.S., a morass of new poisonous weeds, largely informed by bourgeois academics have obscured basic revolutionary principles, and have circulated through social media format in the forms of memes that reduce the scientific revolutionary line of MLM to reductionist frameworks, memes, and half-truths that serve to divert the energies of activists away from the key task of building proletarian organization among the masses. Despite the new forms and mediums that such trends circulate within, they serve the same aim as that promoted by Lin Biao and similar sorts, the dilution of the coherent and rich arsenal of revolutionary experience in service of opportunism and revisionism. By studying the line struggle of the late GPCR, we can better understand the roots of such outlooks and deviations, and carefully pull them out by the roots.

7 <http://bannedthought.net/China/MaoEra/GPCR/Chinese/RecommendationOnDisseminationOfMaoFiguresAndSayings-CCP-CC-1967-Chinese.pdf> "Recommendation of Chairman Mao to regulate the wasteful and superficial dissemination of figures and sayings of Chairman Mao as well as statue construction and associated Central Committee Document Series 67, Number 219" (Chinese) July 5, 1967.

8 From the documentary *How Yukong Moved the Mountain*, 1974. Available online here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=naDMFxOg-fg&list=PLCr5Mmf-b6BDFZM_Rs8Ur67KqKNoPweCh

Chairman Mao's Primary Directives¹

Background to “Chairman Mao's Primary Directives”

In 1975, in particular between July and October during Deng Xiaoping's program of “stability and unity,” Deng whipped up an all-around wind for capitalist-restoration and for overturning the correct verdicts of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in the areas of politics, economy, culture, military, and foreign relations. He suppressed a large number of revolutionaries, promoted revisionists, and implemented an organizational line of “reviving states that had been extinguished, restoring families whose line of succession had been broken, and recalling to office those who had retired into obscurity.”² On a large scale he promoted “profit in command,” and dictatorial control over various jurisdictions by disparate apparatuses, and a politics of interference, obstructionism and oppression, as well as a philosophy of advocating servility to things foreign. It was just what Chairman Mao, Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan referred to as the “transfer of the capitalist oil crisis to the domestic economy,” and “sabotaging the productive forces with [backwards] relations of production.”³

Deng's program included the creation of serious deficits and disorder, and the cultivation of a new faction of the bourgeoisie. He opposed the proletarian revolution in the arts and literature, and in education, and prepared a barrage of poisonous capitalist works. Throughout the entire superstructure⁴ he sabotaged the “Socialist New Things” (Shehuizhuyi

Xinsheng Shiwu, 社会主义新生事物) such as barefoot doctors, and worker-peasant-soldier teams. In the military he cultivated a tendency for coups, and in foreign affairs he drew close to the U.S., France, Yugoslavia, and other such countries. He begged for “technological imports,” cried out for foreign aid, cut foreign assistance towards semi-colonies and treated revolutionaries from around the world maliciously.

The following document illustrates the nature of the opposition to the GPCR posed by Deng and his allies. At this time, Deng had maneuvered to falsely accuse⁵ associates of Mao engaged in the struggle at Tsinghua University, and also had worked to promote Deng's so-called “Three Directives as the Key Link,” (in opposition to Mao's “Class Struggle as the Key Link”). Chairman Mao dissects and denounces these moves by Deng respectively.⁶ When brackets—[]—are used in the document, these are additions from the translators to clarify the text, and not part of the original document.

For comments, questions, suggestions, or criticisms, contact us at Wengetranslators@protonmail.com.

- 1 This document, newly translated from the original Chinese (<https://www.bannedthought.net/China/MaoEra/GPCR/Chinese/ChairmanMao'sPrimaryDirectives-CCP-CC-1976-Doc4-Chinese.pdf>), is included here for easy reference by readers, along with several other new translations of material from the GPCR.
- 2 Source Confucius' *Analects*. These lines was used by the magazine *Red Flag* (Hongqi, 红旗) to compare Deng's nature to that of Lin Biao, who often quoted Confucius privately.
- 3 On this phrase, see Chairman Mao's instructions on the question of the railway and economy, delivered by Yao Wenyuan while issuing directives upon receiving representatives for lectures on national planning work on July 13, 1976 (<http://bannedthought.net/China/Mao-Era/GPCR/Chinese/PolitburoReceivingRepresentativesOnNationalPlanning-19760713-Chinese.pdf>). As part of his “Consolidation” program (Zhengdun 整顿) in 1975, Deng Xiaoping ordered rebel workers shot to death at several locations, including at the Zhengzhou Railway Bureau. Workers struck back in response. The directive concerning the problem of “sabotaging the production forces with [backwards] relations of production” (*shengchan guanxi pobuai shengchanli* 生产关系破坏生产力) was put forward by Wang Hongwen in this document. In the same paragraph, Yao Wenyuan clarifies that this is in direct reference to the above calamity, which members of the railway spoke about, caused by the “Right-Deviationist Reversal of Verdicts Trend” whipped up by Deng.
- 4 “Throughout the entire structure” (*zhengge shangceng jianzhu lingyu* 整个上层建筑领域) is a concept inspired from by Chairman Mao's words that, “The proletariat must exercise all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in the superstructure, including all spheres of culture,” quoted in article 13 of China's 1975 constitution.
- 5 Liu Bing accused them of abusing their authority and acting out of a motivation for personal power.
- 6 For further background, see Zhang Chunqiao's “On Exercising All-Round Dictatorship Over the Bourgeoisie” (<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/zhang/1975/x01/x01.htm>) and Yao Wenyuan's “On the Social Basis of the Lin Piao Anti-Party Clique” (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/yao-wenyuan/1975/0001.htm>).

Chairman Mao's Primary Directives

Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Document 4 (1976)

Issued by the General Office of the Central Committee

Chairman Mao comments:

Agreed.

March 3. 6:00 pm.

The Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Announces:

To all province, municipality, and autonomous regions party committees, all PLA and provincial military region and field army party committees, all the party committees of the apparatuses of the central committee and the nation, leading small groups, the party's core small groups, all the departments of the military commission, and the party committees of the various military divisions:

The Great Leader Chairman Mao has made multiple important statements in the course of his personally initiated and led counterattack in the struggle against the Right-Deviationist Reversal-of-Verdicts Trend. The Central Committee has compiled "Chairman Mao's primary directives" based on the multiple important statements from Chairman Mao between October, 1975 and January, 1976, which have been reviewed and approved by Chairman Mao. At present we are issuing "Chairman Mao's Primary Directives" to you all, requesting that you organize groups of cadres at the county-level and up, in

order to diligently study, thoroughly grasp, and resolutely carry out the directives. Please report on the overall situation of study and implementation to the Central Committee.

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Central Committee of the Communist Party of China
March 3, 1976

(This document is issued to the county and regiment levels)

Chairman Mao's Primary Directives

Compiled from multiple important statements from Chairman Mao between October, 1975 and January, 1976, reviewed and approved by Chairman Mao.

A letter has arrived sent by Liu Bing⁸ and associates at Tsinghua University, with accusations against Chi Qun⁹ and Xie.¹⁰

I believe the motivation behind this letter is not pure. Its intent is to knock down Chi Qun and Xie. The spearhead of the letter is directed at me. I am in Beijing. Why not write directly to me, and why go through [Deng] Xiaopeng

⁷ Part of these directives were publicized in *Red Flag* magazine and the *People's Daily*.

⁸ Liu Bing was one of the vice secretaries of the Tsinghua University party committee. Liu admitted on November 16, 1975 that his letter (which was disguised as a "letter from the people" to Mao, but actually was orchestrated by Deng) was a false accusation against Mao's associates. Xie Jingyi had confronted Liu Bing over fact that Liu had distributed Deng's revisionist April 3, 1975 "Speech Upon Meeting Delegates from the Primary Industrial Enterprises of National Defense," in party committee meetings at Tsinghua University early August, 1975. Liu then decided to write a letter to Chairman Mao to report Chi Qun and Xie Jingyi's actions. The first accusation letter against Chi Qun (August 13th, 1975) was written by Liu Bing under the instigation from Liu Yi'an, the vice secretary of party committee at Tsinghua University. Deng Xiaoping and his associate Hu Yaobang encouraged Liu's deliverance of the first letter. However, Chairman Mao did not reply to the first letter. The deliverance of the second letter (written by Liu on October 13th, 1975), which extended the attack to Xie Jingyi, was plotted by Deng. For background, see: <http://bannedthought.net/China/MaoEra/GPCR/Chinese/HuYaobangTwiceAssistedLiuBing-20080114-Chinese.pdf>

⁹ Chief of the Workers' Propaganda Team at Tsinghua as well as the vice leader of the Tsinghua Revolutionary Committee and Party Committee.

¹⁰ Xie Jingyi was Mao's personal secretary, member of the Peking and Tsinghua Party committees, and one of the party secretaries of Beijing Party committee. Chi and Xie were leaders of the "Liang Schools' Mass Criticism group," (*Liang Xiao Da Pipan Zu* 梁效大批判组). Liang is a surname with the same pronunciation as "two" as well as "positive," and *xiao* is a homonym for effect, and thus the moniker refers both to the "two" schools of Peking and Tsinghua Universities as well as to a "good effect."

ing? Xiaoping favors Liu Bing. All these problems that touch upon Tsinghua University are not isolated. They reflect the present two line struggle.

Is there class struggle under socialist society or not? What [is this talk of] “Take the three directives as the key link”!¹¹ Stability and unity do not mean writing off

class struggle; class struggle is the key link, everything else hinges on it. Stalin made a big mistake concerning this question. But not Lenin. He said that small production engenders capitalism continuously and daily.¹² Lenin spoke of building a bourgeois state without capitalists to safeguard bourgeois right.¹³ We ourselves have built just such a state, not much different from the old society.

11 For background on the criticism of “Taking the Three Directives as the Key Link” see Peking Review #14, April 2, 1976 (<http://www.massline.org/PekingReview/PR1976/PR1976-14b.htm>). Deng’s “Three Directives” were: 1. Why did Lenin speak of exercising dictatorship over the bourgeoisie? It is essential to get this question clear. Lack of clarity on this question will lead to revisionism. This should be made known to the whole nation. (For original source of this line, see: <http://massline.org/PekingReview/PR1975/PR1975-09a.htm>) 2. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has already gone on for eight years. Now good can come from stability and unity, (for the initial context in which Deng promoted this line in 1975, see: <http://bannedthought.net/China/MaoEra/GPCR/Chinese/HarbinSmallVehicleCo-RemarksByDengAndZhangChunqiao-19750201.pdf>) 3. Push the national economy forward. Deng Xiaoping claimed the phrase “push the national economy forward” was uttered to Li Xiannian by Mao, however there is no written record of Mao stating this. Zhang Chunqiao in the trial document linked here states that he “has never heard Mao speak of this” (<http://bannedthought.net/China/MaoEra/GPCR/Chinese/RegardingProofOfTheCrimesOfG4-CCP-CC-1976-12-10.pdf>). “Taking the “Three Directives as the Key Link” was in fact a repudiation of proletarian politics in command—a repudiation of Marxism-Leninism. It was a promotion of putting profit in command, of the “black-cat white-cat” theory of the omnipotence of productive forces. It was a renunciation of dialectics and Lenin and a promotion of Bukharin’s eclecticism. It was a renunciation of the Party’s Basic Line. (<http://bannedthought.net/China/MaoEra/PoliticalTheory/TheBasicContradictionOfSocialistSocietyAndTheParty’sBasicLine-1976-Chinese-NoOCR-sm.pdf>), a promotion of the theory of the dying out of class struggle (the idea that class struggle ceases rather than intensifies under socialism). Furthermore, it uses “stability and unity” to suppress the proletariat.

12 On “He [Lenin] said that small production engenders capitalism continuously and daily,” see *“Left-Wing” Communism, An Infantile Disorder*: “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, and victory over the bourgeoisie is impossible without a long, stubborn and desperate war of life and death, a war demanding perseverance, discipline, firmness, indomitableness and unity of will” —V.I. Lenin: *“Left-Wing” Communism, An Infantile Disorder* (April-May 1920) (<http://massline.org/PekingReview/PR1975/PR1975-09a.htm>).

13 On “Lenin spoke of building a bourgeois state without capitalists to safeguard bourgeois right,” see *State and Revolution*: “It follows that under Communism there remains for a time not only bourgeois right, but even the bourgeois state—without the bourgeoisie!” —V.I. Lenin: *State and Revolution* (August-September 1917) <http://massline.org/PekingReview/PR1975/PR1975-09a.htm>. Here, Chairman Mao uses the term for capitalists (*zibenjia* 资本家) whereas in Lenin’s original quote, the term used is the bourgeoisie, i.e. capitalist class (*zichan jiejie* 资产阶级). Lenin believed class struggle would exist under socialism, though it was Chairman Mao who for the first time in history argued that socialism would produce a bourgeoisie, primarily the inner-party bourgeoisie, even though capitalists no longer existed primarily “in the open,” (see the “Party’s Basic Line” <http://bannedthought.net/China/MaoEra/PoliticalTheory/TheBasicContradictionOfSocialistSocietyAndTheParty’sBasicLine-1976-Chinese-NoOCR-sm.pdf>). Mao believed that under socialism, capitalists primarily did not exist “in the open” but existed within the party.

Producing the grounds for the inner-party bourgeoisie are the old factors of three aspects of the productive relationships (the system of ownership, inter-relations of people in production, and the system of distribution), which appear in the form of bourgeois right. In order to organize production there still is a need for a measure of bourgeois right, to the extent of including categories of currency (the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* describes a period without commodity production and exchange but in which there is still distribution based on labor as well bourgeois right). The country and political superstructure must have the functioning of forcibly maintaining the restriction of bourgeois right. At the same time, the bureaucratic apparatuses still have the old maladies of bourgeois methods, this is the bourgeois climate formed above the soil of bourgeois right. Within the superstructure, the areas of culture and consciousness are not only composed of thought based on bourgeois right, but also contain all sorts of old feudal, capitalist, and revisionist culture. This is to say that under the dictatorship of the proletariat, although capitalists in the open have been wiped out, it is still possible that the inner party bourgeoisie will seize various areas and areas of leadership, and hence change the qualitative nature of such areas, such as the system of ownership, and reverse the forms of proletarian dictatorship. The entire economic base and the areas of superstructure have a primarily proletarian aspect, and represent the new birth of communism, and secondarily have the essential conditions for the production of the bourgeoisie. It is only through continuing revolution that relies on the proletarian dictatorship that it will be possibly to eliminate class. The inner-party bourgeoisie not only draws in the old bourgeois class, but it also props up society’s illegal (i.e. those who oppose the proletarian dictatorship) newly born capitalist elements. The inner-party bourgeoisie is not only harder to recognize than the capitalists, moreover it represents a greater danger. It has its own political representatives and commanding figures. Developed to a certain extent, it will plot to overthrow the proletarian dictatorship, and transform the political nature overall, furthermore seizing the wealth of socialist property, and promoting a historical reversal of the proletarian dictatorship. Here, we can see the transformation of the primary and secondary aspects of the contradiction. Such is the zigzag course of historical dialectical movement (*editors’ note*).

There are ranks and grades, eight grades of wages,¹⁴ distribution according to work, and exchange of equal values. Money is needed to buy grain, coal, or vegetables. Eight grades of wages [determine where the money is distributed] regardless if you are [buying for] many people or few.¹⁵

In 1949 it was proposed that the principal contradiction within China was that between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Thirteen years later, the question of class struggle was raised again, and the situation began to take a turn for the better.¹⁶ What is the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution up to? Class struggle. Liu Shaoqi promoted the theory that class struggle had died out. In fact he himself had not “died out.” He wanted to protect his bunch of traitors and diehard followers. Lin Biao wanted to bring down the proletariat and staged a *coup d'état*. So has it died out?

Why do some people not clearly see the issue of the contradictions in socialist society? Don't [those individuals from] the old bourgeoisie still exist? Hasn't everyone seen the great numbers of petty bourgeoisie? Are there not many [bourgeois] intellectuals who still have not well remolded? Is the influence of small production, corruption, and speculation not everywhere? Are the anti-party groups of Liu [Shaoqi], Lin [Biao] and others not horrifying? The problem is that they themselves belong to the petty bourgeoisie and their thinking easily turns rightist. The issue is that they themselves represent the bourgeoisie, but say that class contradictions are not recognizable.

The thinking of some comrades, principally the old comrades, remains “standing still” at the stage of the bourgeois democratic revolution. They don't understand, resist, or even oppose the socialist revolution. [In their minds] there are two kinds of attitudes towards the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, one is dissatisfaction, and the

other is “settling accounts:” settling the account of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.¹⁷

Why didn't Lenin “stand still”? After the democratic revolution the workers and the poor and lower-middle peasants did not stand still, they wanted revolution. On the other hand, a number of Party members have not wanted to go forward; some have moved backward and opposed the revolution. Why? Because they became high officials and wanted to protect the interests of high officials. They have a good house, a car, a high salary, and attendants, [this is] more grievous than the capitalists. With the socialist revolution they themselves come under fire. When it came to the co-operative transformation of agriculture there were people in the Party who opposed it, and when it [now] comes to criticizing bourgeois right, they resent it. You are making the socialist revolution, and yet don't know where the bourgeoisie is. It is right in the Communist Party—those in power taking the capitalist road. The capitalist-roaders are still on the capitalist road.

Will there be a need for revolution a hundred years from now? Will there still be need for revolution a thousand years from now? There is always need for revolution. There are always sections of the people who feel themselves oppressed; junior officials, students, workers, peasants and soldiers don't like bigshots oppressing them. That's why they want revolution. Will contradictions no longer be recognized ten thousand years from now? Why not? They will still be recognized.

The general view on the Cultural Revolution: Basically correct, with some shortcomings. What we want to study now is the shortcomings. The ratio is 70:30, 70 percent achievements and 30 percent mistakes, and the views on it are not necessarily consistent. There were two mistakes made in the Cultural Revolution, 1. Overthrow everything and 2. All-around civil war.¹⁸ Regarding “overthrow-

14 The eight grades of wages (*baji gongzi* 八级工资) was a form of distributive relations (one of the three aspects of relations of production) established after the foundation of the People's Republic in 1949. During the Great Leap Forward, the system of piece-rates for work (*jiijian gongzi* 计件工资) was abolished, a system which compensated workers per article or per unit of work, resulting in the de facto privileging of certain work and positions of authority. In comparison to piece-rates, the eight grade wage scale was a leap forward in the struggle to restrict bourgeois right. However, there was still a ways to go in the attempt to restrict bourgeois right, even within this frame of distribution according to work alone.

15 Chairman Mao's reference to “eight grades of wages [determines where the money goes] regardless if you are [buying for] many people or few” likely was influenced by Engel's statement in *Anti-Dubring* that “The bachelor lives like a lord, happy and content with his eight or twelve marks a day, while the widow with eight minor children finds it very difficult to manage on this sum.”

16 Thirteen years later refers to the Tenth Plenum of the Eighth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China that took place in 1962, in which Chairman Mao raised the question of the basic line of the party during the entire historical period of socialism.

17 “Settling accounts” (*suanzang* 算账) here means closing the door on the period and on opposing the policies and leadership of Chairman Mao. The term also means to attain revenge, revenge against those who supported the movement.

18 On “all-around civil war” see the note from the article cited above “The Working Class Must Exercise Leadership in Everything,” an es-

ing everything”, some of the attacks were correct, such as against Liu [Shaoqi] and Lin [Biao]’s groups. Some of them were mistakes, such as those against some old comrades. These people also made mistakes, so some criticism of them is fine. The experience without war has already lasted ten years. During the “all-around civil war,” guns were taken seized [by the masses], [actually] most were distributed.¹⁹ Armed fighting is also an exercise. But beating people to death and not rescuing the wounded, this is not good.

One shouldn’t underestimate old comrades. I am among the oldest. Old comrades still have a bit of use. The old comrades should treat the rebel factions magnanimously, and not tell them to “yield or get lost.”²⁰ Sometimes the rebel factions make mistakes, but don’t we old comrades also make mistakes? In the same way, we still make mistakes. Pay attention to the three-in-one combinations of old, middle-aged, and young in leadership. There are some old comrades who have not been active for seven or eight years, and who don’t know of many things, “the peoples of the peach blossom spring know not of the Han [Dynasty] to say nothing of the Wei or Jin [dynasties].”²¹

There are people who have been the subject of some attack, are unhappy, and angry, and within reason this is understandable. But one cannot direct this anger at the ma-

majority of people, at the masses, thus standing in opposition and denouncing them. Zhou Rongxin and, Liu Bing have wronged many people. They want to reverse the correct verdicts [of the Educational Revolution]. The majority of people were not in support of this—Tsinghua with its more than 20,000 people. They [Zhou and Liu] are very isolated.²²

In the past, the things studied in schools [of the old-style] did not have much use. Then if one would often forget these classes [after graduation], [to forget them] was a bit useful, as one was [at least] left with a bit of culture, could read books and write characters, and occasionally write an essay. Many books I only read later on, and much of scientific knowledge is not learned in the classroom. For example astronomy, geology, and soil science. True abilities are not learned in the classroom. Confucius did not go to university, and there were also Qin Shihuang [first emperor of the Qin Dynasty], Liu Bang, Han Wudi [Emperor Wu of Han], Cao Cao, Zhu Yuanzhang who all did not attend any sort of university. One should not be superstitious about these universities. Gorky only attended two years of primary school. Engels only attended secondary school. Lenin was expelled from university before graduating.

After attending university there are people who do not ac-

say by Yao Wenyan: (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/yao-wenyan/1968/august/30.htm>) “The working class has rich practical experience in the three great revolutionary movements of class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment. It most bitterly hates all counter-revolutionary words and deeds against socialism and against Mao Tse-tung’s thought. It utterly hates the old educational system which served the exploiting classes. It most strongly opposes the “civil war” activities of certain intellectuals in damaging state property and obstructing struggle-criticism-transformation. It thoroughly detests the habit of empty talk and the practice of double-dealing, where words and actions do not match.”

19 The taking of guns refers to the phenomenon during the early stage of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution when the inner-party bourgeoisie tried to arm the conservative factions which supported the revisionists. They did not want to leave proof of this. As a result, they would instruct their associates to pretend to storm military arsenals. Subsequently generals would pretend to be forced to open the arsenals, when in fact they did so willingly. It was generally the conservative factions that seized weapons, and rebel factions seldom did. Chairman Mao thus judged that it would be best for the military—which had in fact already entered the movement, to “support the left.” Mao also spoke on the problem of the militarized left. Rebel factions in Henan subsequently promoted the theory of “attack with words, defend with arms.”

20 *Yield or get lost*, a reference to the transfer from leadership as well as executions of rebel factions orchestrated by Deng Xiaoping and his associates. This occurred during Deng’s so-called “Consolidation” program (*Zhengdun* 整顿). It was opposed in the November 1975 campaign “Counterattack the Right-Deviationist Reversal of Verdicts Trend.”

21 From Tao Yuanming’s work “The Peach Blossom Spring” (*Taohua Yuanji* 桃花源记). This line was quoted by Deng Xiaoping to shirk from responsibility towards the struggle when criticized at a meeting on November 20, 1975. See the *Annals of Deng Xiaoping* (*Deng Xiaoping Nianpu* 邓小平年谱).

22 Zhou Rongxin, a close associate of Deng, was the minister of Education in 1975. The opposition of Liu Bing and others to the Educational Revolution was part of their attempt to reverse the verdict of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution’s criticism of the bourgeois educational line. In response, in November, 1975, Mao launched the Mass Debates on Educational Revolution. This was the initial stage of the “Criticize Deng Xiaoping, Counterattack the Right-Deviationist Reversal of Verdicts Trend.” See: <http://www.massline.org/PekingReview/PR1976/PR1976-07-TsinghuaUniv-MassDebate1.pdf> and <http://www.massline.org/PekingReview/PR1976/PR1976-07-TsinghuaUniv-MassDebate2.pdf> as well as the 1975 Central Party Committee Document #26, “Tsinghua University Report on the Mass Debates on Educational Revolution” (<http://www.bannedthought.net/China/MaoEra/GPCR/Chinese/ReportOnTheMassDebatesOnEducationalRevolutionInTsinghuaUniv-19751210.pdf>).

cept the same status as workers, and want to be the labor aristocracy. And yet the common workers and peasants are also improving every day. The masses are the real heroes, while we ourselves are but childish and ignorant, including me. The tendency is for the lower levels to exceed the higher levels, for the masses to exceed the leaders, and for the leaders to not have the standard of common laborers because they are divorced from the masses, and don't have practical experience. Are not there people [like Deng and his friends like Zhou Rongxin] who say laborers are not equal to college students? I say that I myself am inferior to a laborer. There are people who stand on the stage of the bourgeois intellectuals, and oppose the remolding of the bourgeois intellectuals. Do they not need to remold? Everyone has to remold, including me, including you all. The working class has to unceasingly remold itself in the course of struggle, otherwise, some people will become bad. As such, the English Labour Party is reactionary, and the American AFL-CIO is also reactionary.

At present, the mass debates should be primarily restricted to the schools and a portion of apparatuses. Fighting teams shouldn't be formed, and the party's leadership is primary.²³ Industry, agriculture, commerce, and the military should not be struck. But, it will spread [to these areas]. The level of the masses has risen, they are not fighting for anarchism, to overthrow everything, for an all-around civil war. Now Peking and Tsinghua universities are correcting their course, through the leadership of the university and departmental party committees, and of the branches. In the past this was not the case, with Kuai Dafu, Ni Yuanzi—anarchism. Now the situation is more reliable.

We must reach out to a number of the older comrades, and help them, otherwise they will commit new mistakes.²⁴ In the beginning of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Henan reached out to the prefectural and county party secretaries, in order to correct their reception [of the GPCR]. As a result 80 percent of the prefectural and county party secretaries were not overthrown. We see we have to reach out, and do work, every province should bring about three [groups], there should be old, middle aged, and young, three-in-one combinations of old, middle-aged and young in leadership, the young must be good, they shouldn't include those like Kuai Dafu or Nie Yuanzi. We also must reach out to the youth, otherwise the youth also will make mistakes.²⁵

I recommend that within one or two years one read a bit of philosophy, and read a bit of Lu Xun, and one can read Yang Rongguo's *History of Ancient Chinese Thought* and *A Concise History of Chinese Philosophy*. These are concerning Chinese [philosophy]. We must criticize Confucius. There are people who don't understand the situation with Confucius. They can read Feng Youlan's *Theory of Confucius*, and Feng Tianyu's *A Critique of Confucian Educational Thought*. Feng Tianyu's book is better than Feng Youlan's. They can also read the section on praising Confucianism and opposing Legalism in Guo Moruo's *Ten Critical Books*.

[Deng] Xiaoping has put forward "taking the three directives as the key link." This he did not research together with the Politburo, did not discuss with the State Council, and did not report to me. He just said it as so. This person, he does not grasp class struggle; he has never re-

23 This recommends that unlike 1967, when fighting teams of students sparked the movements in factories and elsewhere, workers instead should come to the universities and schools, survey the big character posters there, and prepare to organize a counterattack on the revisionist tide themselves. This is in the context of the Mass Debates on Educational Revolution, the initial stage of Criticize Deng Xiaoping, Counterattack the Right-Deviationist Reversal of Verdicts Trend.

24 The central committee held a "conference for reaching out" among high-level officials during this period, according to the instruction of Chairman Mao.

25 Kuai Dafu and Nie Yuanzi had made contributions in the earlier stage of the Great Proletarian Revolution, breaking through the white terror imposed by Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping on the movement—including through the form of Nie Yuanzi's big character poster, which Chairman Mao praised as "China's First Marxist-Leninist Big Character Poster" (<http://massline.org/PekingReview/PR1966/PR1966-37o.htm> and https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-9/mswv9_63.htm). However, they engaged in bourgeois factionalism and promoted violent struggle, not grasping that "The Working Class Must Exercise Leadership in Everything," (see essay by Yao Wenyuan: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/yao-wenyuan/1968/august/30.htm>). They did not understand that the campaign that Chairman Mao spoke of had already developed from a student movement into a movement of workers and peasants. It had entered into a period of great unity among the revolutionary forces for the purpose of seizing power. But to protect the "independent fiefdoms" of the petty-bourgeois intellectuals, Kuai and Nie and their factions went as far as violently opposing the entry into Tsinghua University by working class Mao Zedong Thought Propaganda Teams organized by rebel workers, killing five of their members and injuring hundreds in the process. Such demonstrates that Kuai and Nie were representative of the anarchism characteristic of "Petty-Bourgeois Revolutionism" that Lenin spoke of in *Left Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder* (<https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1920/lwc/>). See also William Hinton's text the Hundred Day War for background about Kuai Dafu.

ferred to this key link [of class struggle]. Still his theme of “white cat, black cat,” making no distinction between imperialism and Marxism. He says, “whenever there is a campaign it tends to harm the old workers and the experienced cadre.” So opposing Chen Duxiu, Qu Qiubai, Li Lisan, Luo Zhanglong, opposing Wang Ming, Zhang Guotao, opposing Gao Gang, Peng Dehuai, Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao, this all was harmful? He says, “there is a crisis in education, students are not studying.” He himself has not studied, he does not understand Marxism-Leninism, he represents the capitalist class. He says he will “never overturn the verdicts,” he is not reliable. Xiaoping never speaks heart-to-heart, so others fear him, and don’t dare speak with him, and neither does he listen to the opinions of the masses.²⁶ Serving as a leader, his style is a big problem. His is still a problem internal to the people. If guided well, he can be prevented from going towards an antagonistic aspect, like types such as Liu Shaoqi and Lin Biao.²⁷

Deng has a few differences compared with Liu and Lin. Deng is willing to conduct a self-criticism, which Liu and Lin were fundamentally not willing to do. We should help him. Criticizing his mistakes is help, going along with him is bad. Criticism must be made, but he shouldn’t be bludgeoned [to death]. Towards those who have erred or who have shortcomings, our party has had a policy, to learn from past mistakes to avoid future ones and cure the sickness to save the patient. We should learn from one another, correct mistakes, improve our unity, and improve our work.

26 Being in the party for over forty years, as a result of not having remolded a bourgeois world outlook, I degenerated into becoming the biggest capitalist roader in the party. Because the revolutionary masses exposed a great amount of facts, I was again able to hold up a mirror and see my true reflection. I have completely betrayed the party and Chairman Mao’s long period of trust and hope in me. With heavy emotions I look back on my past. I pledge in my remaining years to repent and make a fresh start, and to become a new person, to energetically use Mao Zedong Thought to remold my bourgeois world outlook. For a type of person like me, whatever way I am dealt with is not excessive. I guarantee to never reverse the verdicts, and resolutely pledge to not be a die-hard capitalist roader. My highest hope is to remain in the party, and beseech the party to give me a small bit of work when it is possible, and to allow me a chance to make amends. I cheer for the great victory of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

27 Chairman Mao pointed out at the nature of the Deng Xiaoping problem had transformed into an antagonistic contradiction following the April 5th Counterrevolutionary Incident (see <http://bannedthought.net/China/MaoEra/GPCR/Chinese/Mao'sWritingOnQuestionOf-TiananmenIncident-19760407.pdf> for the complete record). In response to Zhang Chunqiao’s beratement of Deng (in which Zhang stated “Look at the situation in Tiananmen, they [the inner-Party bourgeoisie] are putting you forward as another Nagy Imre!” (Imre being the former Prime Minister of Hungary who supported protests against the party in 1956), Chairman Mao stated: “Yes! This time; One: The capital; Two: Tiananmen; Three: Burning, beating & smashing. These three, OK. The nature of the problem has changed. According to this, throw [Deng] out! Xiaoping will not attend [meetings], you [Mao Yuanxin] meet some people first, don’t meet Su Zhenhua, don’t seek out Ye (Jianying).” For more background on Deng’s expulsion, see: “Resolution of C.P.C. Central Committee On Dismissing Teng Hsiao-ping From All Posts Both Inside and Outside Party” (<http://www.massline.org/PekingReview/PR1976/PR1976-15b.htm>) as well as “Counter-Revolutionary Political Incident at Tiananmen Square” (<http://www.massline.org/PekingReview/PR1976/PR1976-15d.htm>) on the April 5 incident.

A Few Opinions of Mine¹

August 31, 1970

Mao Zedong

This commentary was written on the works compiled by Chen Boda² in A Few Passages of Sayings of Engels, Lenin, and Chairman Mao Regarding Genius and Directives of Vice Chairman Lin. The title “A few Opinions of Mine” was added by Mao Zedong when reviewing the proofs.

This material is compiled by Comrade Chen Boda. It has deceived not a few comrades.

1. There are no words from Marx.
2. There is only one line from Engels,³ and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* is not a major work by Marx.
3. I have only found five quotes from Lenin.⁴ Of these, the

fifth states that leaders must be tried and tested, professionally trained, schooled by long experience, and work in perfect harmony⁵—these four conditions are brought up.

Not even speaking of others, from the perspective of us on the Central Committee, those who adequately meet these criteria are few. For example, Chen Boda—this ingenious theorist and I have worked together for 30 years, and there have been several important matters on which we have never been in accord. Even less can it be said that we have worked very well together. As an example, in the course of the three Lushan Conferences,⁶ in the first one, he ran over to where Peng Dehuai was.⁷ The second time,

1 Translation, July, 2021. For comments, questions, suggestions, or criticisms, contact us at Wengetranslators@protonmail.com.

2 Chen Boda at the time served on the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. In 1970, after the Second Plenary of the Ninth Central Committee of the Party, a resolution passed for Chen to be isolated and put under investigation. In August, 1973 at the first plenary of the Tenth Central Committee of the Party, a resolution passed to revoke Chen Boda's party membership, and to absolve him of all tasks inside and outside the party.

3 This refers to the sentence in the preface written by Engels for the Third German Edition of Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* which states, “It was in truth a work of genius.”

4 These five lines compiled by Chen Boda are listed in Appendix A.

5 The statement by Lenin is “Political thinking is sufficiently developed among the Germans, and they have accumulated sufficient political experience to understand that without the ‘dozen’ tried and talented leaders (and talented men are not born by the hundreds), professionally trained, schooled by long experience, and working in perfect harmony, no class in modern society can wage a determined struggle,” <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1901/witbd/iv.htm>

«талантливых (а таланты не рождаются сотнями), испытанных, профессионально подготовленных и долгой школой обученных вождей, превосходно спевшихся друг с другом»

6 The three Lushan Conferences refer to (1)—the Enlarged Conference of the Politburo and the Eighth plenary session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China held sequentially from July 2 to August 16, 1959; (2)—A Working Conference Convened by The Central Committee of the Communist Party from August 23 to September 16, 1961; (3) the Second Plenary Session of the Ninth Central Committee of the Communist Party held from August 23 to September 6, 1970.

7 Peng Dehuai, formerly a member of the Politburo and a Vice Chair of the CPC's Central Military Commission, Vice Premier of the State Council, as well as Minister of Defense. In August, 1959 at the Eight Plenary of the Eighth Committee of the Communist Party held at Lushan, Peng Dehuai was labeled as the leading member of an anti-party clique, also consisting of Huang Kecheng, Zhang Wentian, and Zhou Xiaodan. Peng Dehuai had led an attack against Mao and the party center at the Lushan Conference, advocating reversion of agricultural land to family control, and to have families take full responsibility for profits or losses, promoting a full retreat from the entire objective of the collectivization of agriculture that had advanced from mutual aid teams in the early 50s. Peng Dehuai also promoted a normalization of the then highly strained relations with the Soviet Union. At the same time, another reactionary camp revolved around Deng Xiaoping, Liu Shaoqi and associates such as Chen Yun, and Wu Zhipu which advocated that “profit be put in command.” When the trend of commune formation accelerated during this time, the Liu and Deng group tried to use the communalization trend as a pretext to demand adherence to commandist policies geared towards the accumulation of agricultural grain for profit, a policy “left in form, right in essence.” Because the party center was mobilized to deal with Peng's attack first (Peng supported by Huang Kecheng, Zhang Wentian, Zhou Xiaodan and others) Liu and Deng had space to maneuver, contributing to the suffering and famine during this period.

On Peng's alignment to Soviet aims, see Maurice Meisner's *Mao's China and After*, The Free Press, 1999, 266: “The prelude to the drama enacted at Lushan began when Peng, in his capacity as Minister of Defense, led a Chinese military delegation on a visit to the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the spring of 1959. During the course of his travels, Peng expressed to Khrushchev and other foreign Communist leaders his displeasure (which coincided with Soviet displeasure) over the policies of the Great Leap and the leadership of Mao. In Peng's view, a view shared by other military leaders, China's domestic socioeconomic policies were intimately related to its military policies and its relations with the Soviet Union. China's military security required a rational plan of economic development (to modernize the professional army that Peng headed) as well as the sophisticated weapons and the nuclear shield provided by the Soviet Union. The Great Leap

upon discussing the 70 items of industrialization,⁸ according to his own words, he went up the mountain for a few days and then went down the mountain, and didn't know for what reason he went down the mountain, or where it was he ran off to after going down. This time [the second plenary of the ninth Party Congress, held at Lushan from August 23 to September 6, 1970], he was quite easy to work with, deploying a surprise attack, showing a tendency for fanning the flames, hoping for disorder under heavens, the detonation of Lushan Mountain, and the stopping of the earth's rotation. These words of mine do not describe the vast mind of our ingenious theorist (what sort of mind this is I do not know, it's probably one with a conscience, and not one of ambition). As for whether there will be chaos in the world of the proletariat, the detonation of Lushan Mountain, and the stopping of the earth's rotation, I think probably not. A historical figure who climbed Lushan Mountain remarked:⁹ A man of the Qi Nation has no affairs, [spare] worry about the collapse of heaven. We should not follow the example of that man of Qi. Lastly about my remarks,¹⁰ certainly there is not much that can help him. What I was saying was that the primary thing doesn't come from people's genius but through people's social practice.¹¹ I exchanged opinions with Comrade Lin Biao,¹² The two of us both felt the same way about that unceasing debate among historians and philosophers that is commonly spoken of, if history is created by heroes, or if history is created by slaves, whether people's knowledge (talent can also be categorized as the accumulation of knowledge) is innate,¹³ or if it nourished,¹⁴ whether [we accept] idealist apriorism or the reflection theory of materialism, we can only but stand on

the side of Marxism-Leninism, and absolutely must not stand together on the side of Chen Boda's rumors and sophistry. At the same time, the two of us believe, this question of Marxist epistemology must be researched more by ourselves, and truly don't believe that the matter has been researched to a conclusion. I hope comrades will all adopt this sort of attitude, unite to win still greater victories, and not be duped by those who superficially claim an understanding of Marxism, while in reality completely misunderstanding Marxism.

Forward campaign threatened both, for it was undermining industrial and technological development within China [according to Peng Dehuai that is, though in actuality this long-term effort to promote self-reliance in industry and technology was essential to such development—translators] and undermining the Sino-Soviet alliance. And even more directly threatening to the professional army was Maoist talk about reviving the popular militia.”

- 8 The “Regulations on Work in Industrial National Enterprises” (Draft), which included 70 regulations in total and was referred to as the “70 Regulations on Industry” for short.
- 9 Tang Dynasty poet Li Bai.
- 10 In Mao Zedong's notes, there was the additional bracketed sentence “Chen Boda quotes as many as seven or eight lines from Lin Biao, as if he had found his treasure.” The eight lines are listed in Appendix B to this translation.
- 11 Refers to the paragraph excerpted by Chen Boda from Mao Zedong's “On Practice:” “Leaving aside their genius, the reason why Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin could work out their theories was mainly that they personally took part in the practice of the class struggle and the scientific experimentation of their time,” https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/selected-works/volume-1/mswv1_16.htm.
- 12 Lin Biao at the time served as the vice chairman of the Central Committee, and Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission.
- 13 I.e. *a priori*. For an example of this term, see Engels criticizing Dühring: “This is only giving a new twist to the old favorite ideological method, also known as the *a priori* method, which consists in ascertaining the properties of an object, by logical deduction from the concept of the object, instead of from the object itself. First the concept of the object is fabricated from the object; then the spit is turned around, and the object is measured by its reflection, the concept. The object is then to conform to the concept, not the concept to the object.” —Engels, *Anti-Dühring* (1878), MECW 25:89.
- 14 I.e. *a posteriori*.

Appendix A: Chen Boda's Quotations from Lenin

(1) "When you read these opinions, you will think you are—you will feel as if you are—listening in person to the words of this ingenuous theorist." (The Russian text was translated into English as "When you read these opinions of Marx—vividly written, full of passion and revealing a profound interest in all the great ideological trends and in an analysis of them—you realise that you are listening to the words of a great thinker," (*Lenin Collected Works*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962, Moscow, Volume 12, pages 104-112);

(2) "the genius of Marx consists precisely in his having furnished answers to questions already raised by the foremost minds of mankind," "The Three Sources and Three Component Parts of Marxism" from The 1907 edition of *Letters to Dr. Ludwig Kugelmann*," Lenin's *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, 1977, Moscow, Volume 19, pages 21-28;

(3) "The genius of Marx lies in his having been the first to deduce from this the lesson world history teaches and to apply that lesson consistently. The deduction he made is the doctrine of the *class struggle*," Lenin's *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, 1977, Moscow, Volume 19, pages 21-28;

(4) "What genius is displayed in this prophecy!" [on Engels' passage discussing evaluating a future world war] from "Prophetic Words" Lenin's *Collected Works*, 4th English Edition, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972 Volume 27, pages 494-499;

(5) "...without the 'dozen' tried and talented leaders (and talented men are not born by the hundreds), professionally trained, schooled by long experience, and working in perfect harmony, no class in modern society can wage a determined struggle," Lenin, *What is to be Done*.

Appendix B: Chen Boda's Quotations from Lin Biao

(1) This person Chairman Mao is endowed with astounding abilities. His powers of comprehension are very strong, and his abilities of recollection are very strong. His powers of comprehension are very strong regardless of if it is his powers of comprehension when reading, powers of comprehension of material objects, or the ability to see the essence from appearance, all are very strong. His mind is extremely clear, he is extremely gifted. (Speech at the All-Military Conference for High-Level Cadre, September, 1959).

(2) The geniuses of the 19th Century were Marx and Engels. The geniuses of the 20th Century were Lenin and Comrade Mao Zedong. ...if we don't admit this, then we will commit errors. If we don't see this, then we will not know to select the proletariat's greatest genius helmsman as our leader (Expanded Session of the Politburo, May 18, 1966).

(3) Chairman Mao has experienced far more than Marx, Engels, and Lenin. Of course, Marx, Engels, and Lenin are persons of greatness. Marx lived for 64 years, and Engels for 75 years. They had great foresight, and they transmitted down the most advanced ideas of humanity, and foresaw the social development of humanity. But they did

not personally lead the proletarian revolution, and were not like Chairman Mao, personally overseeing the front line commands of so many momentous political operations, especially military operations. Lenin only lived to 54. Six years after the victory of the October Revolution he passed away. He did not experience the sort of long term, complex, fervent and multiple-aspected struggle like Chairman Mao. China's population is eleven times larger than Germany's, four times larger than Russia's, its revolutionary experience is rich, there is none that can surpass it. Chairman Mao is the highest authority in the country and world, he is the most outstanding, and greatest character. Chairman Mao's commentaries, essays and revolutionary practice all reveal his great proletarian genius (Expanded Session of the Politburo, May 18, 1966).

(4) Chairman Mao is the present era's most spectacular proletarian leader, the greatest genius, the one with the greatest sense of revolutionary responsibility, and with the most practical revolutionary spirit (speech on receiving the Cultural Revolution Small Group of the Central Committee, August 8, 1966).

(5) Chairman Mao is much wiser than Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. Right now there is no per-

son in the world that can rise to the level of Chairman Mao (Speech on Raising the Study of Chairman Mao's Works to a New Stage, September 18, 1966). (6) Such a genius as Chairman Mao will only emerge after hundreds of years in the world, and after thousands of years in China. Chairman Mao is the world's greatest genius (Speech on Raising the Study of Chairman Mao's Works to a New Stage, September 18, 1966).

(7) Mao Zedong is the greatest Marxist-Leninist of our era. He has inherited, defended and developed Marxism-Leninism with genius, creatively and comprehensively, and has brought it to a higher and completely new stage (*Sayings of Chairman Mao*, Introduction to the Reprint, December 16, 1966).

(8) One cannot leave the center. The center is the sun. The nine great constellations surround and revolve around the sun, all work surrounds and revolves around the sun. Chairman Mao himself is the sun. Mao Zedong Thought itself is the sun (Talk at the Time of Receiving the General Political Department's Vice Department Head and other Cadre, May, 19, 1970).

Chairman Mao's Talk with Members of the Politburo who Were in Beijing¹

May 3, 1975

This document was provided by The Secretarial Bureau of the Office of the Central Committee.

Chairman Mao convened a meeting with members of the Politburo who were in Beijing. Attendees shook hands with Chairman Mao one by one.

(When Chairman Mao shook hands with Zhou Enlai) Zhou said: “[I] haven’t seen the Chairman for almost one year, I miss the Chairman.”

Chairman Mao asked Zhou: “How is it going? Have you been ok?”

(Zhou said that he had three surgeries, and that his digestion was still alright, and that he had sent his regards to Chairman Mao two days prior.)

(When shaking hands with Ye Jianying) [Chairman Mao] said: “Oh, the old marshal.”

(When shaking hands with Deng Xiaoping) [Chairman Mao] said: “Oh, Xiaoping.”

(When shaking hands with Chen Xilian) Chairman Mao said: “You are to be the marshal in command?”²

(Chairman Mao shook hands with Ji Dengkui.) Ji said: “I recently met once with the Chairman.”

(When shaking hands with Wu De) Chairman Mao said: “Wu De has virtue.”³

(When shaking hands with Chen Yonggui) Chairman Mao said: “Your letter is good. One third [of the time] at Dazhai, one third across the whole nation, and one third at the central committee. Don’t live at the Diaoyutai,⁴ there are no fish there. You and Wu Guixian should both move out. Don’t live at Diaoyutai”⁵

(When Chairman Mao was shaking hands with Wu Guixian) Wu said: “Greetings to Chairman Mao, I am Wu Guixian.”

Chairman Mao: “Oh, I don’t know you.”

Wu: “I met with Chairman Mao in 1964, during National Day when attending the ceremony.”

Chairman Mao: “I don’t know.”

Wu: “The sons and daughters of Yenan greet you.”

Chairman Mao asked: “Are you from Yenan?”

Zhou Enlai: “She is from Henan, and she was a female weaver at Xi’an, in Shaanxi Province. She visited Yenan.”⁶

(When shaking hands with Su Zhenhua) Chairman Mao said: “So handling the navy rests with you, the navy needs to be strengthened—make the enemy afraid. [Now] our navy is just this big.” (Chairman Mao showed his little finger)

Su: “Now it has grown a bit, now it is this big” (Su

1 Translation, July, 2021. For comments, questions, suggestions, or criticisms, contact us at Wengetranslators@protonmail.com. For further context on this document, see the translators’ note in Appendix A below.

2 Meaning Chen was to replace Ye Jianyan and assume leadership of the armed forces.

3 Chairman Mao was making a pun. In Chinese, the surname Wu (吴) shares the same pronunciation with the word for without (无). When *wu* (无) is combined with the second character of the name, *de* (德) meaning virtue, it has the combined meaning of “having no virtue.”

4 Diaoyutai (钓鱼台), which literally means “a platform for fishing,” refers to the state guesthouse in Beijing completed in 1959. It served as the office of the Central Cultural Revolution Group during the GPCR.

5 Chen had proposed in a letter to Chairman Mao that he leave Diaoyutai. Chen Yonggui, a peasant, formerly illiterate, under whose leadership Dazhai of Shanxi (山西) Province made tremendous achievements in constructing socialist agriculture, was elected to the Politburo in 1973 and was appointed vice-premier of the State Council in January 1975. He wrote a letter to Chairman Mao in April 1975 stating his intention to leave Beijing’s Diaoyutai office. In Chen’s letter, he proposed that he would spend one third of his time at Dazhai to study agricultural knowledge through working in the fields, spend one third of the time visiting villages across the country to obtain practical experience in socialist agricultural work, and spend another one third of the time in Beijing to study from and work for the Central Committee. Chairman Mao thought highly of Chen’s letter. To encourage more people to follow Chen’s proposal, Chairman Mao states that there are no fish at Diaoyutai, meaning that office work is less important than working in the fields together with the masses, less important than doing political work in the countryside. Unfortunately, in the October of 1976 Chen Xilian, Su Zhenhua, Chen Yonggui, Wu De, and Wu Guixian all supported Hua Guofeng. They did not object to the coup against the leftist leadership and against the revolutionary line.

6 Chairman Mao and Zhou Enlai differed over their evaluation of Wu Guixian, previously a female worker who was then elected as the Vice Premier of the State Council in 1975. Wu was favored by Zhou Enlai, who disliked alternative women candidates who were affiliated with the left headquarters in Shanghai. This exchange possibly reflects friction between Chairman Mao and Zhou over this issue.

showed his ring finger).

(When shaking hands with Xie Jingyi) [Chairman Mao] said, “You are about to become a high-ranking officer, you must be careful.”

Xie answered: “I do not want to become a high-ranking official, but my official duties are continually increasing.”

Chairman Mao said: “Give it a try, if things go wrong, (Chairman Mao made hand gestures) then roll up the quilt.”⁷

Chairman Mao said: “It’s been a while since we’ve met. There is a problem I want to discuss with you. Some people’s thoughts are at odds with one another—several individuals. I made a mistake myself. [Zhang] Chunqiao’s article, I didn’t see it in that way.⁸ I only heard it read once, I did not read it. I could not read, so I gave up on talking about the problem of empiricism.⁹ [Yao] Wenyuan showed me the document from New China News Agency (*Xinhuashe* 新华社)—Chunqiao, sorry.

Also, Shanghai Machine Tools Plant’s “Ten Experiences”¹⁰ all talked about empiricism, and did not mention [the word] “Marxism” one single time, and also did not talk about dogmatism.¹¹

[Shanghai Machine Tools Plant] established a university. A lot of intellectuals think the moon in foreign countries is better than that in China.¹²

There is a need for stability, there is a need for unity. Regardless of what question, regardless of whether it is empiricism or dogmatism, both are revising Marxism-Leninism, and all need to be treated with educational methods. Now some of our comrades should be criticized for making mistakes. Three arrows are shot together: Criticize Lin Biao, Criticize Confucius, and Criticize Pulling Strings.¹³ [But] the Criticize-Lin Biao and Criticize-Confucius campaign needs actions from these people [who have made mistakes]; without these people, the Criticize-Lin Biao Criticize-Confucius campaign will not work. There are millions of these people who pull-strings—including

- 7 *Juan pugaijuan* (卷铺盖卷), “roll up the quilt” is an expression meaning “to quit.” Unsurprisingly, Liu Bing later wrote a letter according to Deng Xiaoping’s instructions falsely accusing Xie of wrongdoing, and misrepresenting the exchange here as an attack by Mao on Xie.
- 8 This refers to the accusation by Zhou Enlai and Deng Xiaoping that Zhang Chunqiao’s article was an attack against their own empiricist tendencies, and an attack against all the old cadres, a false accusation further described in footnote 51. Deng and Zhou desperately attacked Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, and Jiang Qing on this point, and attempted to put Zhang in grave danger. For instance, Deng Xiaoping characterized Zhang’s errors as analogous to Lin Biao’s coup attempt, attempting to thus put Zhang in the camp of the enemy. Previously in 1972, Zhou raised the idea of “Lin Biao’s Ultra-left Anarchism” in the *People’s Daily* and other publications, suggesting that the whole party was exercising an ultra-left line (in contrast, according to Chairman Mao, Lin Biao represented an ultra-right line). But Zhou in fact used this argument to attack the leftists in the party, an act criticized by Chairman Mao. In 1975, Chairman Mao took the responsibility to protect Zhang Chunqiao by apologizing to Zhang here for not refuting Zhou and Deng’s criticism against Zhang Chunqiao earlier, due to his health ailments.
- 9 Chairman Mao Suffered from hypoxia at this time. His remark here suggests that even though Zhang’s article did not talk about empiricism, Mao had wanted himself to address the question, but his health problems prevented him from doing so. In the *Autobiography of Zhang Chunqiao* 《张春桥传》 prepared by Zheng Chong, Zhang’s daughter and Yao Wenyuan’s daughter state that Mao did provide suggested revisions to Zhang’s articles. In addition, the undertaking of the articles accorded to Mao’s instructions in 1974, “Instructions Regarding Theoretical Problems” 《关于理论问题的指示》 that stated “Why did Lenin speak of exercising dictatorship over the bourgeoisie? Essays must be written. Tell Chunqiao and Wenyuan to find several places where Lenin discusses this problem and send them to me printed in large-sized characters. Everyone first read and then write essays. Chunqiao should write this sort of essay. It is essential to get this question clear. Lack of clarity on this question will lead to revisionism. This should be made known to the whole nation.”
- 10 This refers to Shanghai No.1 Machine Tools Plant’s critical article “Ten Expressions of Empiricism.”
- 11 The article only paid attention to criticizing empiricist revisionism and did not criticize dogmatist revisionism. Chairman Mao was making a criticism over this point here.
- 12 The Shanghai Machine Tools Plant established a university that is often referred to as the “July 21st University,” named after Chairman Mao’s July 21st Directive. The directive pinpointed the importance of combining education and revolution as well as promoted the leading role of proletarian politics in educational affairs. It also advocated the line adopted by the Shanghai Machine Tools Plant that insisted that the new university should recruit students among workers and peasants who had practical experience. The purpose was to combine education with practice in production. See the *People’s Daily* article “See the Path for Training Engineering Technology Personnel from Shanghai Machine Tools Plant,” July 22nd 1968: <https://www.laoziliao.net/rmr/b/1968-07-22-1#378161>. Mao’s remarks here praise the example of the Shanghai Machine Tools Plant in breaking from the general pattern of study divorced from practice and from the people.
- 13 This refers to one speech Xie Jingyi 谢静宜 and Chi Qun 迟群 made during the Anti-Lin Biao and Anti-Confucius campaigns, in which Chi and Xie issued an excessively urgent call to declare war on all types of pulling-strings phenomena in state and party apparatus. *Zou houmen* (走后门) in Chinese literally means “getting in by the back door,” and it means “pulling strings” in English. Xie and Chi’s call upset Ye Jianying. Chairman Mao here is critical of Xie Jingyi and Chi Qun’s attack on these three targets at once (the “three arrows shot together”), which risked losing the opportunity to win over those cadres who had made mistakes but could correct their ways. Instead, he suggests unity can be achieved by opposing Lin Biao’s line, while the pulling-strings phenomenon can be dealt with later.

you (referring to Wang Hairong and Tang Wensheng).¹⁴ I am one of them too, I sent several girls to go to study at Peking University, I had no choice. I asked them to go to school. They had been workers for five years, and now [I] sent them to the university. I sent them there, this is also [a form of] pulling strings. I also have bourgeois right. I sent them, and Xie Jingyi had to receive them, these people are not bad people.¹⁵

I had one conversation here¹⁶ with comrade Xiaoping.

You all only hate empiricism and do not hate dogmatism. The “28-and-a-half Bolsheviks” ruled for four years’ time.¹⁷ They flew the flag of the Comintern to intimidate the Chinese (Communist) Party, attacking whoever disagreed with them and holding a bunch of empiricists captive. You [Zhou Enlai] were one, Zhu De was one, and other people, mainly Lin Biao and Peng Dehuai. It is not enough for me to only speak of Enlai and Peng Dehuai—without Lin Biao and Peng Dehui they would not have power.¹⁸ Lin Biao wrote *On Short and Swift Assault*, an article that praised Hua Fu¹⁹ and opposed Deng, Mao, Xie, and Gu. Deng is you (meaning Deng Xiaoping), Mao is Mao Zedong,²⁰ Xie is Xie Weijun, and Gu is Gu Bo, all other people (except Deng Xiaoping) were martyred, I had just met you once [Deng Xiaoping], you were in fact a representative of the Maoists.²¹

In the fields of education, science, news, culture and art, and many other fields, and in the field of medicine, as

long as a foreigner made a fart it would be perceived as fragrant.

I have suffered for two years without eggs just because the Soviets published an article stating they contained cholesterol. And, later another article said that cholesterol was not a big problem, and said that eating eggs were allowed again. [For these people] even the moon is better in foreign countries. Do not underestimate dogmatism.

Many people hold empiricist views, they are just somewhat illiterate, unable to read Marx and Lenin, they can only act according to their experiences. There is no way to deal with empiricism; I have no way to deal with it, it takes time, and it may improve after ten years, eight years, twenty years, or thirty years. Being too rushed is not good, don't be in a rush [otherwise] some concepts cannot come together.

What I have said is stability and unity, dogmatism, empiricism, revisionism, and also the need to criticize bourgeois right. Don't rush, anyone of you who rushes will fall [Chairman Mao makes a hand gesture]. Don't split—unite. Practice Marxism-Leninism, not revisionism. Unite, and don't split. Be open and above-board, and don't intrigue and conspire.²²

Don't function as a gang of four, don't do it any more, why do you still do it?²³ Why not unite with the more than two hundred members of the Central Committee)?

14 Wang Hairong 王海容 and Tang Wensheng 唐闻生 were previously Chairman Mao's political secretaries. Because of Wang and Tang's collusion with Deng Xiaoping *et al.* Chairman Mao later assigned comrade Mao Yuanxin 毛远新 as his liaison.

15 For background on these personnel, and a repudiation of labels against Chairman Mao and these individuals promoted by jokers like Li Zhisui, consult the memoirs of Qi Benyu and Lin Ke, the latter two of whom had far greater contact and access to Chairman Mao than Li Zhisui. These memoirs offer first-hand materials about the female personnel Chairman Mao sent to school and the motivation behind doing so. These accounts thoroughly repudiate the groundless claim that Chairman Mao was a womanizer, a lie promoted by revisionists. These workers were female comrades who worked as political secretaries and doctors of Chairman Mao and other Politburo members. They were sent to schools to learn about history and culture.

16 This likely refers to Chairman Mao's study in Zhongnanhai where he met with people.

17 The 28-and-a-half Bolsheviks were a dogmatist group founded by Wang Ming and his followers that dogmatically obeyed the instructions of the Comintern in the early 1930s, which put the Chinese Communist Party in mortal danger during the Fifth Encirclement against the Jiangxi Soviet initiated by Kuomintang reactionaries in 1933.

18 For more details, please see the remarks about Chairman Mao's article Arguing against the Third “Left-leaning” Line in the Appendix below. This article by Chairman Mao puts forward the critique that Zhou Enlai's empiricism abetted Wang Ming's dogmatism. Because of this historical argument, the revisionists blocked the publication of the complete version of the article following the coup in 1976. Jiang Qing wanted to read the article after Chairman Mao passed away. Hua Guofeng cited Jiang Qing's request as one of her “crimes.” For this, see *One of the Materials on the Criminal Deeds of Wang, Zhang, Jiang, and Yao* edited by Hua Guofeng: <http://bannedthought.net/China/MaoEra/GPCR/Chinese/RegardingProofOfTheCrimesOfG4-CCP-CC-1976-12-10.pdf>.

19 Comintern representative Otto Braun, who went by the Chinese names Li De 李德 and Hua Fu 华夫.

20 Mao Zedong's younger brother who was martyred in 1935.

21 This comment was initially made by Wang Ming and Bo Gu.

22 This sentence was directed at all members of the Politburo. Unsurprisingly, the Hua Guofeng-Deng Xiaoping clique initiated a coup to carry out revisionism, instill divisions, and instigate conspiracies.

23 Chairman Mao's mention of “gang of four” here became the so-called source of Hua Guofeng's accusation against the gang of four. The

Functioning as a minority²⁴ is no good, it is bad at all times. This time there is a mistake, self-criticism is needed still. This time is different from the Lushan Conference. It was correct to oppose Lin Biao during the Lushan Conference. This time, there are still three lines: Practice Marxism-Leninism, not revisionism. Unite, and don't split. Be above-board and open, don't intrigue and conspire. And this means do not exercise factionalism. I will repeat these three lines: Practice Marxism-Leninism, not revisionism. Unite, and don't split. Be above-board and open, don't intrigue and conspire. Go ahead and discuss other affairs, cure the disease and save the patient, don't persecute anyone, it cannot be resolved in one meeting. [This is] my opinion and my view. There are comrades who do not believe these three lines, don't listen to me, and forget the three lines. The Ninth National Congress and the Tenth National Congress both addressed these three lines. Everyone needs to discuss these three lines again.

In the fields of education, science, literature and art, and medicine, where intellectuals are concentrated, there are some good [people], and there are a few Marxist-Leninists. You [at the] Ministry of Foreign Affairs [are at] a place where intellectuals are concentrated, am I wrong? You two²⁵ are stinking intellectuals, you should admit this, being the stinking old ninth category, the old ninth

category cannot [just] walk away.²⁶

I need to take responsibility, I made a mistake. I did not see Chunqiao's article in that way. Chunqiao wrote the article with reason, was it not because he had written [such] articles in 1958?²⁷ I did not know him during that period, it seems I didn't, (Zhang Chunqiao said: "We met once") did not, I don't have a recollection [of meeting]. I wrote a note on that article,²⁸ and the People's Daily published it—was Deng Tuo [邓拓] in charge of the People's Daily at that time? (Zhang Chunqiao said: "It was Wu Lengxi [吴冷西].") Only two articles were supportive [of Zhang's article], the rest were opposed, so he was angry.²⁹

I think as for the problems that are not big, don't make minor issues major, but if there is a problem, one must be clear. If it cannot be solved in the first half of the year, let it be solved in the second half of the year; if it cannot be solved this year, let it be solved next year; if it cannot be solved next year, let it be solved in the year after next.³⁰ As I see it, those who criticize empiricism are themselves empiricists, they do not have much Marxism-Leninism, they may have some but not so much, about the same as me.³¹ Refusing to self-criticize is not good. Asking other people to do it [self-criticism] but to not do it oneself. Empirio-criticism in China and Russia, [as] Lenin pointed out: these people were all big intellectuals, complete-

remark here has nearly universally been understood as directed against Jiang Qing, Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan and Wang Hongwen. While there is no clarifying note in the transcript to whom this remark replies, we can conclude that it refers to these four revolutionaries based on Zhang Chunqiao's note found in the "Third Materials on the Criminal Deeds of Wang, Zhang, Jiang, and Yao edited by Hua Guofeng" 《材料之三》: "Regarding the Chairman's instructions to not form a gang of four, this certainly was resolutely followed, as this most likely could lead to the successful task of achieving unity. Although not [Zhang Chunqiao crossed out this phrase, indicating he did not believe that the four were the factional clique Deng Xiaoping accused them of being]. In the least [we] did not add to the burden on the Chairman." <http://bannedthought.net/China/MaoEra/GPCR/Chinese/RegardingProofOfTheCrimesOfG4-CCP-CC-1976-12-10.pdf>. Chairman Mao elsewhere also criticized Zhou Enlai, Ye Jianying, and Li Xian'nian as a "gang of three." Hua never dared mention this point. Chairman Mao also criticized Hua's Hunan gang (including Zhang Huaping and others) and Ye Jianying's Guangdong gang later in this talk.

24 *Shaoshuren* 少数人, meaning a minority faction, not a minority ethnic group.

25 This may refer to Wang Hairong (王海容) and Tang Wensheng (唐闻生).

26 The old ninth category (*laojiu* 老九) is slang for those old, un-remolded intellectuals, who ranked below eight other negative categories, including landlords (*dizhu* 地主), rich peasants (*funong* 富农), counter-revolutionaries (*fan geming* 反革命), negative elements (*huai fenzi* 坏分子), rightist elements (*youpai fenzi* 右派分子), traitors (*pantu* 叛徒), special agents (*tewu* 特务), and capitalist roaders (*zou zipai* 走资派).

27 See Zhang's article "Eradicate the Thought of Bourgeois Right," 《破除资产阶级的法权思想》 <https://www.laoziliao.net/rmrb/1958-10-13-7#207114>. This article was praised by Chairman Mao who also wrote an editorial note on it.

28 Mao's editorial note stated, "These words of Comrade Zhang Chunqiao were seen in the sixth issue of Shanghai's "Liberation," and now are transferred here, and provided to comrades for discussion. This problem requires discussion, because it faces an important problem. We believe that Zhang's article basically is correct, but it is a bit one-sided. This is to say that its explanation of historical processes is not comprehensive. But it distinctly raises this problem, and attracts attention. This essay is also very easy to understand, it is very easy to read.

29 Chairman Mao was trying to protect Zhang Chunqiao here.

30 As for making minor issues major, Hua Guofeng and Deng Xiaoping thought that Zhang Chunqiao's article was a big problem, one that needed to be solved in the same way as Lin Biao's problem.

31 Chairman Mao mainly refers here to Jiang Qing.

ly [adhering to] the theory of Berkeley.³² Berkeley was a bishop in England. You should go read Lenin's book.

Jiang Qing asked: "Is the Chairman speaking of reading *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*?" Chairman Mao answered: "Yes."

Chairman Mao asked: "Who is that? (Zhang Yufeng answered: "Comrade Jiang Qing.")

[Chairman Mao said:] Comrade Jiang Qing did not participate in more than half of [the history of] the Party. Chen Duxiu, Qu Qiubai, Li Lisan, Luo Zhanglong, Wang Ming and Zhang Guotao, they all did not participate in struggles, and the Long March, so no wonder. As I see it, Jiang Qing is a small empiricist, and is far from being a dogmatist. She is not like Wang Ming who wrote an article called "Further Bolshevization,"³³ and she will not act like Zhang Wentian, writing an article about opportunist vacillation.³⁴ Do not be unplanned, be disciplined, be careful, do not act all on one's own, have discussions with the Politburo. If there is an opinion, discuss it within the Politburo, have it printed into documents and distributed with the name of the Central Committee, do not use individual authorship, for example, and also do not use my name, I never send out any material. I was on leave for ten months this time, and I did not make speeches, I did not publish any opinion, for the Central Committee did not request me to do so. I was outside recuperating, part of the time I recuperated, and during the other part I listened to [people reading] documents, everyday an airplane sent in documents. Now God still hasn't taken me away, I can still think, listen, speak, and even write if I cannot speak. I can still eat and sleep.³⁵

Be disciplined, the army needs to be cautious, members of the Central Committee need to be even more cautious.³⁶ I had a talk with Jiang Qing once, and I had a talk with Xia-

oping once. Wang Hongwen wanted to meet me, and Jiang Qing called me to request a meeting. I said no, if there is meeting, everybody should be invited, that is it. Sorry, I just am like that, I do not have more to say, only three sentences, and the Ninth National Congress and Tenth National Congress were all about the three sentences, "Practice Marxism, and not revisionism; unite, and don't split; be open and aboveboard, and don't intrigue and conspire." Don't organize some sort of gang, some sort of Guangdong gang or Hu'nan Gang.³⁷ The Changsha repair shop on the Guangzhou-Hankou railway does not recruit people from Hunan, it only recruits people from Guangdong, [this is] a Guangdong gang. During the strike, this railway was not yet constructed. In the three years of 1920, 1921, and 1922, I was organizing the workers' movement in Hunan, from Guangzhou-Hankou, in the Anyuan coal mine, in factories in Hunan, in Zhuzhou, Pingxiang, along the Guangzhou-Hankou railroad, the Zhuzhou-Pingxiang railroad, in the Anyuan coal mine, the Shuikoushan tin mine, called a tin mine, but in fact it had no tin.

"Wuxi's [a place name, literally "without tin"] tin mountain is without tin,

Pinghu's [place name, literally "level lake"] lake water on a level lake

Changde's [place name, literally, "everlasting virtue"] virtue mountain is a mountain with virtue

Changsha's [place name, literally, "long desert"] sandy water has no sand."³⁸

I said "I have just drunk the waters of Changsha," this is in fact the water of Baisha well.³⁹ "The fish of Wuchang" is not today's Wuchang, it was the ancient Wuchang,⁴⁰ located between today's Wuchang and Daye, I forgot the name of that county, that place used to produce bream

32 George Berkeley (1685-1753) was a British empiricist philosopher.

33 Chairman Mao is referring to Wang Ming's article "Struggling for the Further Bolshevization of the Chinese Communist Party" written in 1931. The version published during the Yanan era was circulated under Wang Ming's true name, Chen Shaoyu (陈绍禹), the early version of the article was published under Wang Ming (王明), his *nom de guerre*.

34 This refers to Zhang Wentian's article "The Opportunist Vacillation within the Chinese Communist Party during the Fight for the First Victory in One Province or Multiple Provinces" published in *Red Flag Weekly* in 1932. The article criticized Mao's line of consolidating the Yanan Liberated Zone.

35 This is a criticism of Jiang Qing. The "sending out of material" refers to Jiang Qing attributing authorship to herself of the Criticize-Lin Biao Criticize-Confucius documents sent to each work unit.

36 This is a warning against revisionist warlords.

37 This refers to Hua Guofeng's "Hunan Gang" (including Zhang Pinghua 张平化 and others) and Ye Jianying's "Guangdong Gang."

38 Chairman Mao is citing a couplet here.

39 Baishajing 白沙井, White Sand Well.

40 Likely present day Ezhou (鄂州).

fish. Sun Quan (孙权)⁴¹ wanted to move his home, and the common people said, better drink the waters of Yangzhou than eat the fish of Wuchang. So I said “I have just drunk the waters of Changsha; and come to eat the fish of Wuchang.”⁴² Sun Quan later moved to Nanjing, and transported Wuchang’s logs down to Nanjing. Sun Quan was a competent person.

Among all the heroes under heaven who can match him? Maybe only Cao and Liu.⁴³ It is a pity that there is no Sun Zhongmou today.⁴⁴ He [Ye Jianying] looked down upon Wu Faxian. Liu is Liu Zhen (刘震), Cao is Cao Lihuai (曹里怀), that is to say that Wu Faxian is not competent.⁴⁵

(Chairman Mao asked Ye Jianying to read a poem from Xin Qiji. Ye Jianying read Xin Qiji’s *Nan Xiang Zi: Airing My Feelings upon Climbing Beigu Pavilion of Jingkou* :) “From where could I see the land of central region? From Beigu Pavilion the scenery fills the eye. How many times has history witnessed rise and decline? But over time, the immortal Yangtze River keeps flowing and tumbling. Sun Quan commanded an army of ten-thousand soldiers in his youth. He rules the Southeastern land during the endless war. Among all the heroes under heaven who can match him? Maybe only Cao and Liu. To have a child like Sun Zhongmou.”⁴⁶

Chairman Mao said: “This person [Ye Jianying] has some culture. ‘Among all the heroes under heaven who can match him? Maybe only Cao and Liu, it is a pity that there is no Sun Zhongmou today.’ [Ye] looked down upon Wu Faxian. Huang [Yongsheng], Wu [Faxian], Li [Zuopeng], and Qiu [Huizuo] are not Cao and Liu, Liu is Liu Zhen, and Cao is Cao Lihuai, it is just Wu Faxian who is not competent.”

Zhou Enlai said: “How about ending today at this point?”

41 The founder of Eastern Wu during the Three Kingdoms period.

42 This line comes from the Song Dynasty text *Nan Xiang Zi: Airing My Feelings upon Climbing Beigu Pavilion of Jingkou* 《南乡子·登京口北固亭有怀》 by poet Xin Qiji (辛弃疾, 1140-1207). Mao’s response “I have just drunk the waters of Changsha; and come to eat the fish of Wuchang” is stated in his 1956 poem “Swimming—To the Tune of Shui Diao Ge Tou” 《水调歌头·游泳》.

43 This refers to Cao Cao (曹操) and Liu Bei (刘备) of the Han Dynasty.

44 Sun Zhongmou is Sun Quan’s courtesy name.

45 Chairman Mao is warning Ye Jianying here. It seems Chairman Mao is using the figure of Sun Quan as a metonymy for a successor that could be accepted by the left, the center, and the right.

46 Huang [Yongsheng 黄永胜], Wu [Faxian 吴法宪], Li [Zuopeng 李作鹏], and Qiu [Huizuo 邱会作] were diehard followers of Lin Biao. Wu Faxian was an active supporter of Lin Biao’s line. He participated in planning Lin’s failed counter-revolutionary coup. Chairman Mao was attempting to warn Ye Jianying not to follow the path of Wu Faxian. In Xin Qiji’s original poem, Cao is Cao Cao and Liu is Liu Bei of the Three Kingdoms period.

47 This was a warning to Zhou Enlai, referring to the three sentences, “Practice Marxism, not revisionism; unite, don’t split; be open and aboveboard, don’t intrigue and conspire.”

48 This refers to Wang’s frequent wavering.

49 This meant that Chairman Mao still wanted Chen Xilian to replace Ye Jianying to administer the military commission.

Chairman, rest a bit.”

(The attendees shake hands and say farewell to Chairman Mao respectively.)

(When shaking hands with Zhou Enlai) Chairman Mao said: “It’s still the three sentences.”⁴⁷

(When Wang Hongwen shook hands with Chairman Mao) Wang said: “Carry out work according to the Chairman’s instructions.”

Chairman Mao said: “Do not: (Chairman Mao makes a hand gesture, turning his palms up and down).”⁴⁸

Jiang Qing said: “Listen to the Chairman.”

Zhang Chunqiao said: “Carry out work according to the Chairman’s instructions.”

Yao Wenyuan said: “Carry out work in accordance with Chairman Mao’s instructions.”

(When shaking hand with Chen Xilian) Chairman Mao said: “The commander.”⁴⁹

Wu Guixian: “Chairman please take care.”

Appendix A: Translators' Note

This document provides a transcript and commentary of Chairman Mao's talk with members of the Politburo on May 3rd 1975 (hereafter referred to as the 1975 Talk). The 1975 Talk addresses the essential struggle to maintain unity within the party while at the same time fighting against revisionist tendencies that threatened the proletarian revolutionary line. The conversation highlights various aspects of the complex struggle against the headquarters of the inner-party bourgeoisie. It focuses on the need to counter the attacks of Deng Xiaoping and Zhou Enlai on Zhang Chunqiao in a way that does not leave the left isolated and exposed. To map a way forward, Chairman Mao stresses the particular dangers of both empiricism and dogmatism which had served to abet all forms of revisionist tendencies in the Party's history, and which contributed to many setbacks in China's modern revolutionary history.

The 1975 Talk is best understood in the broader historical context of the two-line struggle between the revolutionary line and all sorts of revisionist deviations. The nine-essay compilation *Arguing Against the "Third Left-leaning" Line* by Chairman Mao offers a window into such history. From 1921 to 1976, there were many moments when all forms of revisionist tendencies imperiled the revolutionary unity of the party. In the late 1920s and 1930s, multiple revisionist lines threatened splitting the party. These included Chen Duxiu's Trotskyism, Qu Qiubai's adventurism, Li Lisan's line, Luo Zhanglong's rightist factionalism, and later Wang Ming's dogmatism.⁵⁰ Zhou Enlai, Peng Dehuai, and Zhang Wentian maintained a conciliatory and empiricist attitude towards these deviations, not grasping the danger they represented and the need to address these problems. In view of the political situation of the time, Chairman Mao wrote nine essays to expose

the dogmatism and empiricism that went hand in hand in exerting a detrimental effect on the party. This critique was timely as dogmatist rule had contributed to multiple failures of the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army and almost risked the party's elimination. These nine essays later constituted the long article *Arguing Against the "Third Left-leaning" Line* (Hereafter, the *Third Left-Leaning Article*).

Chairman Mao withheld these documents after writing them because of the disunity they would cause. The logic behind the decision to withhold the documents in the 30s and then release them during the GPCR should be understood. Since the CCP was under constant military attack by reactionary forces in the 1930s, a relatively strong unity was essential to the party's survival during this time. The matter was complicated by the fact that these documents themselves were critical of the tendency to tolerate destructive lines that risked the party's very survival. Chairman Mao saw that there was a need to struggle against all such destructive lines, be they left adventurist or right opportunist, while also uniting party members who committed empiricist errors. Chairman Mao believed that the empiricist errors could be considered a problem belonging to the category of contradictions among the people. According to the proletarian policy of "curing the disease to save the patient," there was thus an attempt to rectify such conciliatory and empiricist mistakes through political education. Consequently, Zhou, Peng and Zhang later admitted their mistakes and joined the struggle against the Wang Ming dogmatist line. Based on this willingness to rectify such mistakes by those in the empiricist camp, Chairman Mao did not subsequently publish these documents.

By the 1960s and 1970s, the situation was different. The

50 On the history of splitting and uniting, Chairman Mao stated in his 1971 "Talks With Responsible Comrades At Various Places During [a] Provincial Tour" (*Selected Works of Chairman Mao, Volume 9*): "You should study the article written by Lenin on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of Eugene Pottier. Learn to sing 'The Internationale' and 'The Three Great Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention'. Let them not only be sung but also explained and acted upon. 'The Internationale' and Lenin's article express throughout a Marxist standpoint and outlook. What they say is that slaves should arise and struggle for truth. There never has been any supreme saviour, nor can we rely on gods or emperors. We rely entirely on ourselves for our salvation. Who has created the world of men? We the labouring masses. During the Lushan Conference I wrote a 700-word article which raised the question of who created history, the heroes or the slaves. 'The Internationale' says we must unite until the day comes when Communism will certainly be realized. If you study Marxism you will see that it teaches unity and not splitting. We have been singing 'The Internationale' for fifty years but people have tried to split our Party ten times. I think it possible that they will do it another ten times, or twenty times, or thirty times. You don't believe it? Maybe you don't but I do. When we reach Communism will there be no struggles? I don't believe that either. When we reach Communism there will still be struggles, but they will be between the new and the old, the correct and the incorrect, that is all. After tens of millennia have passed by, the incorrect will still be no good and will fail."

establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat following 1949 was met with constant attacks from an inner-party bourgeoisie. The counter-revolutionary tendency of the bourgeoisie made this problem no longer one belonging to the contradictions among the people, and defined the two-line struggle within the party. Some empiricists within the party joined the headquarters of the inner-party bourgeoisie organized by those such as Lin Biao and Peng Dehuai. When the revolutionary line within the party was imperiled by this resurgence of revisionists, capitalist roaders, and rightists, Chairman Mao thought it necessary to reiterate the empiricist-dogmatist problem. In the 1960s when Chairman Mao rediscovered this manuscript (thought to have been lost after the 1940s), he decided to edit it, and distribute it to the Politburo for the purpose of political education. The central point of how to correctly handle the relationship between dogmatism and empiricism mentioned in the *Third Left-leaning Article* became a key question throughout the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.⁵¹ The correct way to handle the dogmatist-empiricist problem, as seen by Chairman Mao, was also connected to how to undertake the task to limit bourgeois right under the dictatorship of the proletariat. To unite people and advance the anti-revisionist revolutionary line, in the 1975 Talk, Chairman Mao criticizes dogmatism to stop excessive criticism directed against Ye Jianying, Deng Xiaoping. At the same time, he argues against excessive criticism against old cadres who supported the revolution, while also warning the rightists against their empiricism. The overall principle was still to help comrades who made dogmatist and empiricist mistakes through political education.

Unfortunately, the revisionists blocked the publication of the complete document of the *Third Left-leaning Article*

after the 1976 counterrevolutionary coup. This was likely because of the clarity in which the article outlines how empiricism and dogmatism are two aspects of revisionism, and because of the clarity with which it reveals the disgraceful history of the revisionists since 1921. Only some excerpts from the document are accessible to the general public. Since the *Third Left-leaning Article* provides much historical context to the 1975 Talk, the translators of the document thought it necessary to present several key points made in the *Third Left-leaning Article* from the available excerpts as well as from other documents published by the CCP. The text in quotation marks hereinafter are original words by Chairman Mao taken from the excerpts unless otherwise noted.

During the 4th Plenary of the 6th Chinese Communist Party Central Committee (January 7th 1931), the Central Committee decided to renounce Li Lishan's left-leaning line within the party, under the instruction from the Comintern. Wang Ming used this decision as an opportunity to promote his version of an anti-Li Lisan line and anti-right-opportunist line, only to disguise his seizure of power within the party and to later "formulate a line that is even more an extreme repudiation of Marxism-Leninism ... Compared with Li Lisan's left-leaning line, Wang Ming's dogmatist line was "more 'left-leaning,' and the result was even worse than that of the Li Lisan period." On his road to power, Wang Ming borrowed the authority of Pavel Mif (Chinese name: 米夫/ Russian name: Миф), the Comintern representative in China, to carry out his "personal line" as if it was the direct order of the Comintern. But in fact the Comintern had supported Chairman Mao's line and criticized Wang Ming's line several times during Wang Ming and Bo Gu's rule within the CCP (1931-1935) and, later, during the Yanan Rectification

51 Zhang Chunqiao's article Exercising All-around Dictatorship Over the Bourgeoisie (April 1st 1975 <https://www.bannedthought.net/China/MaoEra/G4/ZhangChunqiao/OnExercisingAll-roundDictatorshipOverBourgeoisie-1975.pdf>) did not mention the issues of empiricism. But Deng Xiaoping and Zhou Enlai used it as the so-called evidence of Zhang Chunqiao's hostility towards empiricism and therefore towards all the old cadres. Critiques against empiricism were mentioned in Zhang Chunqiao's Speech at the Symposium of Directors of Political Departments of Major Units in the Army from March 1, 1975 <http://bannedthought.net/China/Individuals/ZhangChunqiao/SpeechAtSymposiumOfDirectorsOfPoliticalDepartments-1975-03-01-Chinese.pdf> and Yao Wenyuan's On the Social Basis of the Lin Piao Anti-Party Clique <https://www.bannedthought.net/China/MaoEra/G4/YaoWenyuan/OnSocialBasisOfLinPiaoAnti-Party-Clique-YaoWen-yuan-1975.pdf>. In Zhang's speech, he pointed out that after liberation in 1949 there was much criticism against dogmatism but not enough serious criticism against empiricism. The lack of criticism towards empiricism, as Zhang stated, led to Lin Biao's revisionism, for empiricism went hand in hand with Lin Biao's revisionism. Chairman Mao's pre-1949 critique of Zhou's empiricism contributed to Zhou's anxiety about this anti-empiricist critique during the late GPCR. Zhou and Deng's false allegations against Zhang's April 1st article reflects such anxiety. In fact, in response to Zhang's speech and Yao's article, Deng complained to Chairman Mao on April 20th 1975 that he (Deng) did not consider empiricism as the main danger at the time. Deng and Zhou desperately attacked Zhang Chunqiao, Yao Wenyuan, and Jiang Qing, and attempted to put Zhang in grave danger through such accusations, before and after the Politburo meeting on May 3rd, 1975 (this document). In the context of May 3rd meeting, through his apology to Zhang Chunqiao, Chairman Mao signaled that he would shoulder the responsibility of protecting Zhang.

Movement (1942-1945).

In the area of military exercise, the dogmatist line, under the influence of Otto Braun (Chinese name: 李德/华夫), one of the Comintern representatives in China at the time, upheld a theory of decisive battles that imposed the Russian experience on the Chinese Revolution, endorsing a general offensive against the Kuomintang's aggression and a swift takeover of several major cities. In handling the affairs of land reform in the base areas, the dogmatist line attempted to "further develop the internal class struggles," and promote an ultra-left policy indistinctly punishing landlords and rich peasants, which hampered social production and therefore imperiled the consolidation of base areas. In dealing with organizing work in urban areas, dogmatists agitated in order to make every struggle militant without any consideration of the concrete context, expecting that such individualist and heroic-like actions could win an immediate total victory.

At a broader level, the dogmatists' absolutist reading of the primary contradictions in Chinese society contributed to these policies, especially after the Manchurian Incident (September 18th 1931). The dogmatists ignored the objective development of class formations in China, idealistically promoting an absolutist view that denied the need to win over intermediate forces like the left-wing of the Kuomintang to form a united front to advance the New Democratic Revolution in the face of Japan's imperialist aggression. The absolutist view also falsely asserted that the current activities of the CCP were geared towards a decisive battle between revolutionary forces and counter-revolutionary forces and an armed struggle to defend the Soviet Union. Chairman Mao summarized the features of the dogmatist tendency as "First portraying the enemy as one hunk of iron; knocking down the big enemy and small enemy together; then exerting the major force to beat the small enemy specifically—because it is said that these small enemies are the most dangerous ones. Struggling for 'clarifying the class lines' in the Soviet Areas; exercising the so-called 'no land for landlords, bad land for rich peasants' to force them to take up weapons to attack the Soviet Union to death...; the so-called 'Overthrow All' theory is precisely a brilliant 'creation' by these old masters."

Chairman Mao also concluded that "In the Chinese Communist Party, there were obviously two types of 'Marxism and Leninism,' one being the fake Marxism and

fake Leninism, of which the features were bragging, acting arbitrarily, shooting arrows without a target, and being unconcerned with reality—this is the nonsense of subjectivism. Another type is the real Marxism, real Leninism, and the features are seeking truths from the facts, no empty talk, considering the time, place, and condition, this is the materialist, dialectical view of revolution." In general, the history of the Chinese Communist movement during the Agrarian Revolution (1927-1937) proved the falseness of such dogmatist lines. In July 1931, the First Front of the Chinese Workers and Peasants' Red Army led by Mao Zedong successfully broke through the Third Encirclement initiated by Chiang Kai-shek. This military exercise did not follow the theory of decisive battles. However, the total implementation of the Wang Ming dogmatist line that called for a conventional, decisive war against the Kuomintang's Fifth Encirclement after 1933 almost led to the elimination of the Red Army. In view of this history, Chairman Mao did not only criticize dogmatism but also dialectically identified empiricism as the accessory to dogmatism. Two essays in the volume of the *Third Left-leaning Article* criticizing the empiricism of the 1930s mentioned Zhou Enlai, a fact that contributed to the censorship of the publication of the complete document by the revisionists after 1976. It also contributed to Zhou and Deng's anxiety about the leftist criticism against empiricism during the GPCR, to which they responded with false accusations (see footnotes 8 and 51).

Another document from the Party, *Resolutions on Certain Historical Questions* (1945), further elaborated the relationship between dogmatism and empiricism. In general, both dogmatism and empiricism are aspects of revisionism, reflecting the bourgeoisie's world view. Empiricism often presents itself as the accessory of dogmatism: "What differentiates empiricism from dogmatism is that empiricism is not based on books but on narrow experience. It is worth noting that among all comrades who have practical work experience, their positive experiences are very precious. Summarizing and comprehending these experiences scientifically as a guide to future action is not empiricism but Marxism-Leninism; Just like treating Marxist-Leninist theories and principles as a guide for revolutionary action, without treating them as dogma, is in no way empiricism but Marxism-Leninism. However, among all comrades who have experience with practical work, if some people are content with or even only content with their partial experience, and treat these experiences as uni-

versal dogma ... and are obsessed with a narrow-minded, and non-principled so-called “realism” and a mindless and hopeless pragmatism ... not willing to listen to comrades’ criticisms or developing self-criticism, in this way, they become empiricists.

Therefore, even though the points of departures of empiricism and dogmatism are different, they share unity in the essence of their method of thought. They all separate the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism from the concrete practice of the Chinese Revolution; they all go against dialectical materialism and historical materialism, exaggerating partial, relative truths as universal, absolute truths; their thoughts do not match the real situation. Because of this, they have many common erroneous understandings of Chinese society and Chinese Revolution (for instance, the erroneous city-centric view, the view that work in the white-areas is primary, the view of “conventional” warfare detached from real situations, etc). This is the ideological root which allows these two groups of comrades to work along together. As the experiences of the empiricists are partial and narrow, the majority of empiricists often lack independent, clear, and complete opinions on comprehensive matters. Therefore, when they are connected with dogmatists, they often present themselves as the accessory of the latter; But the history of the party proves that dogmatists find it difficult to “disseminate poisons” among the whole party without collaboration from empiricists. After dogmatism is overcome, empiricism then becomes the major obstacle to the development of Marxism-Leninism within the party. Thus, we should not only overcome subjectivist dogmatism but also subjectivist empiricism.” The historical mutual-development of empiricism and dogmatism—a problem still not resolved at present—adds to the significance of the struggle against revisionism by the revolutionaries in the party forms the backdrop to the 1975 Talk.

A Summary of Views on the Problem of the Inner-Party Bourgeoisie

This material is a summary of the views sorted out from theoretical discussion groups conducted in several provinces and cities (including the Guangzhou area) as well as from relevant university journal articles. It is provided to comrades simply to allow them to further discuss and study the question of the inner-party bourgeoisie.

—Editor

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These sections compose the fifth of a five part collection of material for presentation on the subject “How to Understand the Bourgeoisie is Right Inside the Party.” Compiled at the third discussion forum in Beijing. This forum was held from April 6-15, 1976. The material was edited by the Beijing Municipality Party Committee’s Propaganda Group before April 20, 1976, and it was then published by the Beijing People’s Press (Ed. of translation).

Table of Contents

1. Chairman Mao’s scientific thesis on the bourgeoisie in the Communist Party is a significant development of Marxism Leninism [*So far this is the only section that has been translated*]
2. On how to understand the problem of the bourgeoisie being right inside the Communist Party
3. On the question of changes in class relations during the socialist period
4. On the root causes of the emergence of the bourgeoisie within the party
5. On the characteristics of the bourgeoisie within the party and the contradictory nature of the relationship between the bourgeoisie within the party and the proletariat
6. On the question of recognizing and struggling against the bourgeoisie within the party

Section 1 of 6: Chairman Mao’s scientific thesis on the bourgeoisie in the Communist Party is a significant development of Marxism Leninism.

This subject is elaborated on by several articles and discussion materials according to the following three aspects:

(1) (Chairman Mao) was this first throughout the historical development of Marxism Leninism to put forward the scientific thesis that the bourgeoisie is right inside the Communist Party. He pointed out where the main sources of danger for capitalist restoration reside during the historical period of socialism.

In capitalist society, through infiltration, corruption and bribery by the bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie’s ranks are found within the workers’ movement and within the Communist Party. However, the bourgeoisie’s core, its primary force, and its primary ranks are found outside the workers’ movement and outside the Communist Party. At this time [before the establishment of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat—Ed. of translation], the bourgeois headquarters was a bourgeois state machine controlled and manip-

ulated by a small group of the big bourgeoisie. When analyzing the relationship between right opportunist factions and the bourgeoisie, the authors of the classics of Marxism-Leninism always pointed out their common class essence while also heavily emphasizing the dependence and subordination of these factions within the working class movement and within the Communist Party to the bourgeoisie in society. Marx and Engels said opportunists are vassals, tails, and children of the non-monopoly bourgeoisie. Lenin said that revisionists are tools, lackeys, and agents of the monopoly bourgeoisie. In capitalist society, if the proletariat is to defeat the bourgeoisie, it must first destroy the bourgeois headquarters, immediately smash the bourgeois state machine and replace the bourgeois dictatorship with the dictatorship of the proletariat.

After the proletariat seized power, the new transformation in class relations produced class struggle with new characteristics. The bourgeoisie's attempts at early armed restoration were defeated. The socialist transformation of the system of ownership achieved a basic victory, and the bourgeoisie was repeatedly routed in its attacks on the political and ideological fronts. The class was isolated and disgraced. Under these circumstances, the opportunist faction within the party played an increasingly important role in the attempt at restoration of the entire bourgeois class. After the October Revolution, in the midst of the struggle against the Trotsky and Bukharin anti-Party cliques, Lenin was keenly aware of this new tendency of class struggle.

Chairman Mao led the great struggle of our people against modern revisionism and in carrying out socialist revolution and socialist construction. While doing so, he summed up the historical lessons provided by the restoration of capitalism within the Soviet Union and of the line struggles that followed our country's liberation. According to the new change in class relationships he continuously theoretically summarized the laws of the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and profoundly revealed the bourgeoisie's new trends. Chairman Mao raised the issue of opposing the capitalist roaders who are in power in the party before the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

In the early days of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Chairman Mao also pointed out that there existed a bourgeois headquarters within the party, and issued a great call to bombard the headquarters. In his recent im-

portant instructions, Chairman Mao said: "You are making the socialist revolution, and yet don't know where the bourgeoisie is. It is right in the Communist Party—those in power taking the capitalist road. The capitalist roaders are still on the capitalist road." The capitalist roaders in the party who are in power, the bourgeois headquarters within the party, and the bourgeoisie are right in the Communist Party—these are all new scientific concepts and new scientific theses in Marxist-Leninist theory. These scientific theses further reveal the objective laws of class struggle during the historical stage of socialism. They point out where the main sources of danger for capitalist restoration reside during the historical period of socialism. This is a great advance in the development of Marxism.

(2) The emergence and existence of the bourgeoisie inside the party during the socialist period has been revealed, as well the class's existing economic foundation and political and ideological roots. This is the first time in the historical development of Marxism that this has happened. It is a new development in Marxist theory on the bourgeoisie's emergence and conditions of existence.

In capitalist society, the economic foundation for the bourgeoisie is the capitalist possession of the means of production. After the proletariat seizes power and basically completes the socialist transformation of the system of ownership, does the bourgeoisie still exist? Marx, Engels and Lenin have clearly pointed out that the existence of bourgeois right is a condition for the existence of class differences. As long as bourgeois right exists, there will be classes and class struggle. At the same time, the brilliant idea was also put forward that bourgeois right serves as the soil and condition for the emergence of a new bourgeoisie. Under new historical conditions, Chairman Mao defended and developed these brilliant thoughts. Chairman Mao said: "With the socialist revolution they themselves [i.e. the capitalist roaders—Ed. of translation] come under fire. At the time of the co-operative transformation of agriculture there were people in the Party opposed, and when it came to criticizing bourgeois right, they were resentful." Here Chairman Mao's instruction profoundly clarifies the relationship between the bourgeoisie and bourgeois right. It explains the economic interests and political outlook of the inner-party bourgeoisie.

An unavoidable inequality exists between the living standards of high party officials on the one hand and the workers and poor and lower-middle peasants on the other. If they do not have a communist worldview, such high officials will degenerate into the bourgeoisie within the party; regard the victory of the revolution as an opportunity for themselves to profit; regard bourgeois right as their just dessert; do everything possible to protect the interests of high officials; oppose the continuing revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat; or oppose restrictions on, or even strive to expand, bourgeois right. Clearly, the existence of bourgeois right provides an important economic basis for the formation of the bourgeoisie in the Party.

Chairman Mao also teaches us that due to the existence of bourgeois right, what we are now building is a bourgeois state without capitalists not so different from the old society [It should be remembered that socialism is the transitional stage between capitalism and communism, and therefore elements of capitalism still exist in socialist society—Ed. of Translation]. Therefore, if people like Lin Biao come to power, it will be quite easy for them to rig up the capitalist system. This thus fundamentally answers the important question of why capitalism cannot peacefully grow into socialism, but socialism may peacefully evolve into capitalism.¹

Analyzing the origin of the bourgeoisie in the Party, Chairman Mao for the first time in the history of Marxism-Leninism pointed out the problem of the development of the bourgeois democrats into capitalist roaders.

On the bourgeois democrats, Marx, Engels and Lenin have pointed out for a long time, “These gentlemen ... are chock-full of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideas.” and “within a workers’ party they are an adulterating element” (Circular Letter from Karl Marx and Frederick Engels,

September 17-18, 1879).

Lenin said:

In the course of the bourgeois-democratic revolution a number of elements joined our Party, attracted not by its purely proletarian programme, but chiefly by its gallant and energetic fight for democracy; these elements adopted the revolutionary-democratic slogans of the proletarian party, but without connecting them with the entire struggle of the socialist proletariat as a whole.

(Lenin’s complete works vol. 15, p. 444.)

When such elements thought to foist their “theories”, their world outlook, i.e., their short-sighted views, on the workers’ party, a split with them became inevitable.

(Lenin’s complete works vol. 16, p. 60)

Under new historical conditions, Chairman Mao has elaborated on these brilliant ideas. He points out that after the proletariat gained political power, the proletarian party became the ruling party. At this stage if there are those in the bourgeois democratic camp who persist in maintaining a bourgeois worldview with their thoughts remaining in the stage of democratic revolution, they will transform from fellow travelers of the democratic revolution into the opposition of the socialist revolution. They will do this in order to protect the interests of high officials and oppose the socialist revolution. They will degenerate, turning into the target of the revolution and becoming capitalist roaders. This brilliant thought of Chairman Mao’s constitutes a great development of Marxism-Leninism. It has great practical significance and far-reaching historical significance.

1 Ed. of translation’s note: It is helpful to consult the explanation of this idea in the editor’s note contained in the pamphlet Marx, Engels, and Lenin on the Dictatorship of the Proletariat (<http://bannedthought.net/MLM-Theory/State-DoP/Marx-Engels-Lenin-OnTheDictatorshipOfTheProletariat-1975-sm.pdf>), published by the Peking Foreign Language Press in 1975: “Chairman Mao said: Why did Lenin speak of exercising dictatorship over the bourgeoisie? It is essential to get this question clear. Lack of clarity on the question will lead to revisionism. This should be made known to the whole nation. Speaking of the socialist system, Chairman Mao said: In a word, China is a socialist country. Before liberation she was much the same as a capitalist country. Even now she practices an eight-grade wage system, distribution according to work and exchange through money, and in all this differs very little from the old society. What is different is that the system of ownership has been changed. Chairman Mao pointed out: Our country at present practices 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 [Lin Biao] come to power, it will be quite easy for them to rig up the capitalist system. That is why we should do more reading of Marxist-Leninist works. Chairman Mao also pointed out: Lenin said that ‘small production engenders capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale.’ They are also engendered among a part of the working class and of the Party membership. Both within the ranks of the proletariat and among the personnel of state and other organs there are people who take to the bourgeois style of life.”

(3) Chairman Mao's wise assertion that the bourgeoisie is right inside the Party is a major development of the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

At the same time as the economic basis for their existence remains unchanged, the forms of the non-monopoly, monopoly, and socialist period inner-party bourgeoisie are in fact constantly changing. Although the class opposition between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat has not changed, the specific form of this opposition is constantly changing. Opportunists and revisionists take advantage of these non-intrinsic changes to engage in political opportunism. They constantly concoct falsehoods claiming that the bourgeoisie is disappearing on its own, or that it has already been eliminated. They thus endeavor to prevent the proletariat and the laboring people from seeing clearly where the bourgeoisie is, and provide cover for the bourgeoisie in its attacks on the proletariat.

In the course of leading the struggle of the proletariat and the laboring people against the bourgeoisie, the guides of the proletarian revolution constantly smash all kinds of strange theories put forward by opportunists and revisionists that provide cover for the bourgeoisie. They constantly resolve questions on how to identify the bourgeoisie, and where to find the bourgeoisie. They do so in every important historical stage, according to new changes in class relations, and according to the new characteristics of the class struggle. They formulate a theory, line and strategy for the proletariat's victory over the bourgeoisie.

The epoch contributions of Marx and Engels primarily reside in the following. They used the world outlook of dialectical materialism to study the capitalist mode of production. They created the theory of surplus value, revealing the secrets of capitalist exploitation. They exposed the non-monopoly bourgeoisie within the third estate and within the palace's so-called "kingdom of human nature." They organized and led the struggle of the proletariat against the bourgeoisie, putting forth the conclusion that class struggle will inevitably lead to the dictatorship of the proletariat. They pointed out that the elimination of classes is a path through which history must travel.

Lenin's achievements mainly lie in the following. He analyzed the basic characteristics of imperialism, pointing out that imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism, that state monopolies are nothing but collective capitalism, and that the monopoly bourgeoisie oppresses and exploits the proletariat and the working people more insanely and

cruelly than the non-monopoly bourgeoisie. He exposed the monopoly bourgeoisie within the so-called "community of nations," and "community of nationalities." He pointed out the unprecedented sharpening of the three major contradictions inherent under imperialism, [the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie; the contradiction between the oppressed nations and imperialism; and the contradictions among imperialist countries—Ed. of translation] and concluded that imperialism constitutes the eve of the socialist revolution, and that the socialist revolution may first achieve victory in one or several countries. He transformed the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat into a question of direct practice. He obtained the great victory of the October Revolution, and ushered in a new era of the dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie. He also demonstrated that the dictatorship of the proletariat is not the end of the class struggle but the continuation of the class struggle in a new form. He pointed out the necessity of guarding against the danger of capitalist restoration. Lenin advanced Marxism to a new stage under the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution.

The great leader Chairman Mao defended and developed Marxism-Leninism in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution.

Chairman Mao's wise assertion that the bourgeoisie is right inside the Communist Party has contributed extremely important new material to the theoretical treasure house of Marxism-Leninism, providing communist fighters with a very sharp new weapon. It further revealed the secret of revisionism within the Soviet Union, letting people all over the world more clearly see the likes of Khrushchev and Brezhnev hidden within the "Party of the whole people," "State of the whole people," or the "jeweled palace in fairy mountain" [this is a Chinese analogy for a non-existent fantasy or wonder—Ed. of Translation]. They turned out to be the bourgeoisie in the Bolshevik Party in the past, and now are the bureaucratic monopoly bourgeoisie of social imperialism. Chairman Mao's assertion ripped off the guise of Marxism-Leninism worn by Liu Shaoqi, Lin Biao and the unrepentant capitalist Deng Xiaoping. It tore away their masks of being "old party members," "old cadres," and "revolutionary veterans." In place it showed their true colors—that of the inner-party bourgeoisie. The assertion guides us in more deeply understanding the party's basic line, and in more thoroughly grasping that the main contradiction through-

out the whole historical stage of socialism is the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the main danger is revisionism, the target of the revolution is the bourgeoisie, and the great truth that the focal point is the capitalist roaders in the Party who are in power.

The theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat established by Marx and Engels is the essence of Marxism, and summarizes their entire revolutionary doctrine. Lenin's brilliant thesis on the possibility of socialist revolution achieving victory first in one or several countries, and Chairman Mao's brilliant thesis that the bourgeoisie is right within the Communist Party successively developed the great theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat and made indelible contributions towards mankind's cause of eliminating class on earth. They are of great significance, and have a far-reaching influence.