

**SEXISM, POLITICS  
AND REVOLUTION  
IN MAO'S CHINA**

By Raya Dunayevskaya



- Chiang Ch'ing, Hua Kuo-feng  
in Post-Mao China
- Alienation and Revolution:  
A Hong-Kong Interview  
with a Chinese Refugee

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Cover Ting Ling, one of the most outstanding women writers and Communist activists in China, was purged in 1957 because of her criticism of the Chinese Communist Party's treatment of women, and has been a "non-person" ever since.

Chinese character is symbol for woman.

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## Chiang Ch'ing, Hua Kuo-feng in post-Mao China

The present villification of Chiang Ch'ing as the leader of "the gang of four"—which pictures the alleged radicals as the worst of "capitalist roaders," who had brought China to the verge of catastrophe until saved by Hua Kuo-feng—tells a great deal more about the contradictions tearing at post-Mao China than the victors in this power struggle intended to disclose. Ironically, into this game of power politics in China comes a small-time "Western" entry — Roxane Witke's biography, *Comrade Chiang Ch'ing*,<sup>\*</sup> which the author prefers to call "a history of the revolution largely from Comrade Chiang Ch'ing's point of view." Because this simplistic work is further befogged by a bourgeois concept of feminism as against the genuine revolutionary feminist viewpoint and actual struggle of a Ting Ling, it becomes necessary to disentangle the three to get at the root of what characterizes, not just post-Mao China but Mao's China itself.

The first of the four tasks the new Communist Party Chairman, Hua Kuo-feng, set for China for 1977 was "to deepen the great mass movement to expose and criticize 'the gang of four.' This is the central task." (1) In its prefatory note to the speech, *Peking Review* stressed that "1977 will be a year in which we shall smash 'the gang of four' completely."

### SMASH, SMASH, SMASH

It is not that Hua's speech to that point needed any further emphasis, as he devoted no less than eight of

<sup>\*</sup>*Comrade Chiang Ch'ing* by Roxane Witke, Boston, Little, Brown and Co., \$15. Pagination below is to this volume.

(1) *Peking Review*, January 1, 1977. It is also reproduced in *China Quarterly*, March, 1977. Evidently this conference on "Learning from Tachai in Agriculture" was followed by another "Learning from Taching in Industry", and there Hua projected no less than "10 more oilfields to be built." *Manchester Guardian*, 5/22/77. "Brave New Targets of Hua" by John Gittings.

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the 14-page speech at the Second National Conference on "Learning from Tachai on Agriculture" to that one point. Furthermore, point two, "to strengthen Party building," likewise turned out to be a vilification of the four former leaders—Wang Hung-wen, Yao Wen-yuan, Chang Chun-chiao, and Chiang Ch'ing who is alleged to have been the ringleader who had taken advantage of being Mao's wife to mislead 800 million Chinese. So, these many years.

Here is how he wound up the whole of the speech and thus the two remaining tasks — "to learn from Tachai" to strive "to push the national economy forward," and finally "to study conscientiously and well the works by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, and Chairman Mao's works": "Immediately after smashing the 'gang of four', the Central Committee adopted a decision on the publication of the Selected Works of Mao." Hua then singled out from the new Volume V — actually writings from 1949 to 1957 — "Chairman Mao's brilliant work, 'On the Ten Major Relationships (2)' which is 'to guide all' in the fight against Russian revisionism and 'the smashing of the gang of four.'"

The way Hua edited that volume, especially that "brilliant" article, is a tale unto itself, to which we will return later to see if there is any connection whatever between Chiang Ch'ing and this article which supposedly will aid us in "smashing the gang of four." Here, instead, it is necessary to start "at the beginning" — 1962 — the year that Chiang Ch'ing singled out as so crucial that she very nearly dated the "Cultural Revolution" at that time, adding only as an afterthought, that, "of course, the real" beginning was the summer of 1966, since that is when "the masses" began the Cultural Revolution.

Now, what was so crucial about 1962? I don't mean its significance insofar as the annals of Chinese Communist history, which record 1962 as the Socialist Education Campaign. I mean its significance for Chiang

(2) *China Quarterly*, March, 1977, carries both *On the Ten Major Relationships*, as edited by Hua and thus now the official version of the Mao Tse-tung speech of April 25, 1956, and a comparison of it and other versions by Stuart R. Schram.

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who felt very much discriminated against and underestimated in her own right rather than just the wife of Mao.

#### CHIANG CH'ING AND THE TALE SHE TOLD

It is true that when she begins her story—"Let me dissect myself before you"—Chiang starts with her childhood and details all her suffering. The "true story" is also that she was a revolutionary long before she came to Yen-an, and married Mao. And once she became the dominant force in the arts during the Cultural Revolution, she wreaked vengeance on those Communist leaders who hadn't given her her due in the 1930s.

But what predominated all her actions and ambitions was to be a leader in Mao's eyes, and in 1962, for the very first time, Mao permitted her to draft a policy statement on the arts known as May 16th Circular (p. 204). This, then, becomes the year her self-development reaches the high point from which what Mao was later to call her "wild ambitions" took off. So much so that, much as she knows and believes Russia is the enemy, the Sino-Soviet conflict which predominated those very years—1960-1964—plays a subordinate part to her never-ending preparations for what would, four years later, become her zenith: "The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution."

Unfortunately, that is true not only for Chiang but for her professor-biographer who had five years to research something she certainly knew before she ever started, and yet we get not one whiff of the serious theoretical debates of the Sino-Soviet conflict when Mao first began to challenge Russia, not just for Sinification of Marxism, but for world leadership. Yet it is this, this precisely, which preceded the Cultural Revolution, was its leitmotif, and without which it is impossible to understand the changing global relations that, at one and the same time, made it possible for Chiang to exercise influence as Mao's health was failing, and, while he was still alive, led to the beginning of the end of Chiang's reign.

#### MALE CHAUVINISM

Instead, we get a sort of Chinese version of Roxane Witke on male chauvinism. Male chauvinism surely is

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rife in China and Chiang suffered from it at various times, even as all suffered from Chiang's philistinism. Shouldn't the author have been more perceptive as to the reasons why Chiang herself did not attribute what she considered her overly-long march to power to male chauvinism? What point was there in interpreting Chiang's competitiveness with Mao as "teaching the Chairman not only to love her as a woman, but also to respect her as a political figure not to be monopolized by any one man" (p. 449)? And what, exactly, does the phrase, "not to be monopolized by any one man" mean at a time when the author does make clear that the measure Chiang thought she was creating was nothing short of "eventually changing the nation's life"?

A more objective and sharper picture of some of Chiang's history emerges from two photographs (among the series following p. 220) than from the lengthy, distorted story of a distorted life. Both are from the decisive years of the War of Liberation, 1947-1949, after Chiang Kai-shek bombed Yenan to smithereens, and Mao began the final march to power. One shows Chiang as a young soldier following Mao in that march. (She was also a "political instructor" to the People's Liberation Army.) The other is a picture of Chiang as clearly more than secretary to Mao, although Mao himself was later to denigrate the role of secretary.<sup>(3)</sup> It was a most productive period in Mao's life as he both fought and theorized on a guerrilla war and the perspective he saw for the new society he meant to build and called "New Democracy."

When one considers that it was after those two decisive years, followed also by what is called "incognito" work in land reform and marriage reform, that, as her health failed completely and she was shuttled between hospitals in Peking and Moscow, she was

(3) The Wan-sui documents report a speech by Mao in March, 1964, which says: "On the Current Situation and Our Tasks was spoken by me in 1947. Some one transcribed it and it was revised by me. At that time I had contracted a disease whereby I could not write . . . But if you never take the initiative and rely on a secretary, it is just like having a secretary assume your responsibility for leadership work." (Miscellany of Mao Tse-tung Thought, II, p. 338). This is the speech Chiang was so proud of taking down "word for word."

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stripped in 1951 of all her posts, one must conclude that there is a greater tale against Mao as male chauvinist than ever there was against Chou Yang in the 1930s upon whom Chiang wreaked her vengeance.

Again, it was not a bourgeois feminist but a great revolutionary writer and feminist—Ting Ling—who dared challenge Mao directly both in Yenan and in the 1950s, and who summed up the fate of those leaders' wives in a single phrase, "Noras who came home." (4)

#### BACK TO CHIANG

Chiang Ch'ing rode the crest of the so-called Cultural Revolution, as autocrat over the arts, directly into the very core of Party-Army-State power—membership into the Politburo. By the time of Lin Piao's downfall and Mao's complete reversal of Sino-American relations when he rolled out the red carpet for Nixon in 1972, Chiang took advantage of the presence in China of the host of U.S. journalists, scholars, and what not, to seek out one Sinologist, Roxane Witke. Professor Witke had been commissioned to report on "Chinese female masses", and Chiang asked her to record her solo flight to the echelons of power. The fact that Ms. Witke held that Chiang had "inspired" (5) the "Cultural Revo-

(4) Ibsen's *Doll's House* enjoyed popularity in Japan, and the heroine Nora who slammed the door on housewifery was used by Ting Ling in her piece on International Women's Day, "Thoughts on March Eighth", where she saw wives of leaders as cruelly taken advantage of as they became "Noras who return home." The best pamphlet on Ting Ling, *Purged Feminist* was issued in Japan (Femintern Press, Box 5426, Tokyo). When American feminists who themselves suffer from Maoism issue anything by her, as one feminist journal published in Chicago (*Signs*, Autumn 1976 issue) did, the "explanatory" note is disgusting as they try to conclude that, though right, Ting Ling was nevertheless evidently wrong, or untimely, or whatever.

(5) For a more comprehensive view of the "Cultural Revolution" see both the chapter on Mao Tse-tung Thought in *Philosophy and Revolution*, and my essay, "Post-Mao China: What Now?" in *New Essays*. For a view of China's foreign policy, some ten chapters devoted to that are well worth reading in *The Chinese Party in Power, 1949-1976* by Jacques Guillermaz.

lution," held leadership in her own right in a "very patriarchal society", surely did earn Chiang a sympathetic ear.

Unfortunately, the wheels of bourgeois research and publishing grind very slowly. By the time—five years!—the "weeklong interview" was expanded to a 350-page book on what Professor Witke fancies is "a history of the revolution, largely from Comrade Chiang Ch'ing's point of view" (p. 14), Chiang Ch'ing had been arrested, vilified as a "traitor", not to mention a "maggot". When the "Cultural Revolution" first unfolded in mid-1966 and catapulted Chiang front center stage, she seemed to have no historic past. Whether it was to right the record, or to invent an unwarranted high niche in Chinese history, the truth is that the height of power was, indeed, the beginning of the end for Chiang.

The first flurry of mild anti-Chiang posters appeared in 1973-74, when Mao was still alive and when rumors first surfaced about the biography she was recording via a bourgeois writer. Whether or not Mao inspired those first attacks, Hua now claims that Mao saw through her "wild ambitions" and warned her against her "faction of four" in 1974.

A new period had begun at the 10th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, when the undercurrent of revolt in the military following the downfall of Lin Biao compelled the rehabilitation of many of the former Communist Party leaders who had been removed from their posts during the Cultural Revolution. Where Mao did it reluctantly, Chou hailed it as a sort of "savior" for the development of the national economy. Indeed, he raised Mao's main "enemy", Teng Hsiao-ping, to Deputy Prime Minister. Mao could not have been all that hostile to Chiang in 1973-74. And 1975 proved it.

What was at stake was something greater than Chiang. It was a possible global realignment. First, Mao absented himself from the Fourth National People's Congress, which drew up a whole new Constitution as well as both a Five and a Twenty Year Plan for the development of the national economy. Mao did not attend that Congress. Instead, he was meeting with every reactionary world leader, from Franz Joseph Strauss of West Germany to the disgraced ex-President Nixon,

not to mention taking any side, any side whatever, including apartheid South Africa's role in Angola, so long as Russia was recognized as "Enemy No. 1".

The year 1975 had revealed great unrest in China. There were many strikes and bank robberies. At the same time Russia was winning victories in Africa, especially in Angola, but also in Europe. China felt "surrounded." The climax came in the first spontaneous, genuine mass demonstration at the grave of Chou En-lai in April 1976. Instead of facing the reality that it was a spontaneous outburst against the regime — the ruling "radicals" controlling the mass media—Mao Tse-tung moved, this time with the great aid of Chiang, to remove Teng. Hua was to replace him. That was Mao's last hurrah. It was not exactly an anointment of Hua as Chairman, but that top cop knew how to take the "interim" position, and so organize the Party bureaucrats, the military and state bureaucracy behind him, as to need no more than a month after Mao's death to displace in toto all those who had control of mass media and may have opted for total power.

His preemptive coup succeeded so well that there is no doubt whatever that, whether or not Mao meant to cut Chiang's "wild ambitions" as far back as 1974, Hua surely had it all planned long before Mao died. Why then is he still so preoccupied, in 1977, to totally smash "the gang of four"? Well, it isn't the "four". It is the Chinese masses who are asked to produce more and ever more as China rushes to "overtake" the U.S. by the end of the century. It is Hua's "interpretation" of Mao's "Ten Great Relationships."

#### **HUA EDITS MAO AND DISCIPLINES WORKERS**

Editing may not have as sinister a connotation as DeMaoisation, but then DeStalinisation likewise did not mean any genuine uprooting of Stalinism, that is to say, state-capitalism, just some of its "excesses." The same is true in post-Mao China as the wheels are rolled back to the mid-1950s before the Great Leap Forward, when Stalin's mistakes were judged to be only "30 percent" while his achievements were rated as "70 percent." While the doors to any Sino-Soviet entente are definitely kept closed, and the doors to the "West" kept open,

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what predominates over all foreign affairs is what happens at home—building up the economy, especially industrialization, especially militarization in modern weaponry, and above all, getting the workers to produce more, with, perhaps, a little incentive in differential in wages added (6).

With this in mind, Vol. V of Mao's Selected Works has been published and everywhere the study goes forward of Mao's text, "On Ten Great Relationships" as edited by Hua. Thus, where Mao spoke abstractly of "mistakes of some socialist countries," Hua leaves no doubt that China has "done better than the Soviet Union and a number of the East European countries." Thus, of the ten dichotomies—between industry and agriculture; between economics and defense; between central and local authorities; between Revolution and counter-revolution, etc.—there is no doubt that what has replaced all is that economics is in command. Moreover, "politics in command" is spelled out as the Party, the Party, the Party, so much so that even when regions seem to have more room for decision-making than Center, the telling clause reads: "all on the premise that the unified leadership of the Center is to be strengthened." What that "unified" leadership is establishing, in striking over and over again at a dead horse—or four of them—is discipline for workers, demands for ever greater productivity, no absenteeism and greater "responsibility."

It all spells out state-capitalism entrenched and looking for a global role. It isn't that Chiang Ch'ing had fundamentally any different perspective, but she surely had greater belief in "superstructure." It is this fetish that sealed her fate.

The military-industrial-political complex had no difficulty whatever in getting the "mass media" to toe its line once it won total state power. It promptly branded her a "maggot."

One famous Sinologist, Simon Leys, attributes part of the emptiness of Comrade Chiang Ch'ing to the author's being "somewhat blinded by her feminist

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(6) See "A Great Leap Backward" by Fox Butterfield, N.Y.T. magazine, 6/19/77.

bias." (7) In truth, however, it isn't Ms. Witke's "feminist bias"; it is her petty-bourgeois kitsch that kept her from penetrating what was actually happening among the masses, women included. Thus, as part of her 1972 assignment, she interviewed women other than Chiang Ch'ing, but, again, it was the pseudo-leaders, rather than the masses, as was the case with her report, "Wu Kuei-hsien: Labour Heroine to Vice-Premier." (8) Here she becomes so great an apologist for Mao's China that she designates the case of that Chinese Stakhanovite thusly: "In today's China she represents women in total control."

And how did that display itself? Well, she quotes Wu Kuei-hsien as saying that she prefers to remain with her First National Textile Mill of Hsienyang rather than go to the center of power because of the work she puts in. Thus, "I have one child born last year. That kept me away from work only one month; I did not need the usual 50-day leave." (9) As for her self-development intellectually, we get it straight from Professor Witke that Wu was grappling "in plain language with the contradiction between thought and action, idea and practice . . ." and therefore she wanted to work out "her dialectical examples from cotton spinning and weaving . . ."

That, dear reader, is not the product either of Ms. Witke's "feminist bias," or Chiang Ch'ing's "wild ambitions." Rather, it is the product most directly of Mao's retrogressionism which, sans its poetry, is now practiced in full by Hua Kuo-feng in post-Mao China.

(7) See "China's Fallen Empress" by Simon Leys in *New Republic*, 6-25-77.

(8) *China Quarterly*, 12-75, "Report from China," pp. 730-740.

(9) As against Ms. Witke's apologia, see my Hong Kong interview with Jade (printed in *News & Letters*, June-July, 1968), and Jade's report of the achievements and retrogressions since the Chinese Revolution (included in *Notes on Women's Liberation*, available from *News & Letters* for \$1).

## ALIENATION AND REVOLUTION

### A Hong Kong Interview

"There is no word in the Chinese language that is the exact equivalent for the word, alienation. The ideograms spell out: separation and distance." The young refugee from mainland China hesitated as she searched for words to describe what was happening there, and why she had fled to Hong Kong.

Let's call this refugee Jade, and let me admit at once that, in a few instances, Jade is a composite of several people I interviewed. This method of reporting the discussion with refugees serves as protection for them. Moreover, many of the stories do fit one into another since they are typical of those who, though they are now refugees, had not streamed out of China when the Communists first came to power.

#### WENT BACK TO CHINA

On the contrary, in the early 1950's they went back to what they considered to be their homeland: "We wanted to do something for our country. We wanted to live as free men and women. No one who has to live all his life in a colony can feel free. Even when he has the proper credentials to stay in Europe, or in the United States, he remains, always an outsider, a 'foreign student.'"

"As a Chinese," continued Jade, "I couldn't stand living in this colony where citizenship was denied me."

"Pe'u (Peking University) was my dream. We all felt ourselves the children of the May 4 (1919) Movement. Its new name was communism, but I do not think that most of us were communists. Humanist tendencies are very strong among the Chinese. I think the intellectuals went with Mao against the nationalists because of his democratic ideas; we all thought of communism as the truest democracy. In any case, I disliked, intensely, the merchant class. Almost everyone in Hong Kong sells something; and I certainly didn't want to be any sort of tradesman."

Jade's enthusiasm for the Maoist regime had not begun to wane until mid-1958. I asked her what impact the Hungarian Revolution had made on China. She replied: "I don't think the Hungarian Revolution was in the consciousness of the masses. There were dissatisfactions with conditions in China. Many, especially the older ones—at least at first it was the older ones—felt that after seven years of strict military rule it was time to relax the control. I had also heard that in Yu-men there was a strike of some oil workers. I had heard it from Lin Hsi-ling, the most famous student critic at Peking University. She was all the rage among us during the 'let one hundred flowers bloom, let one hundred schools of thought contend' debates in the spring of 1957. She was a very powerful orator and kept us spellbound for three and even four hours at a time. She could speak for that long a stretch of time. We would laugh when she derided the superior air of Communist Party members and the system of ranks in the Party."

"It was she who told us that a book critical of the Stalin era had been published, but it was sold only to cadres above the 11th rank. It's true she also mentioned the Hungarian Revolution, but if I remember right, this came only after the Party began accusing its critics of wanting 'to imitate Hungary.' But Lin Hsi-ling

herself had drawn a distinction between the Russian Communist Party, which put down the Hungarian Revolt, and the Chinese Communist Party, which initiated the hundred flowers discussion. As I remember it, what she complained of mostly was that the 'contending and blooming' was confined to the upper strata, insisting that only when the masses are free to air their views can the problems that beset us be solved. But all this was said in order to assure our road to genuine socialism.

"Insofar as I was concerned I still thought that was exactly where we were going. Nor did I think it wrong to make some university lecturers clean spittoons. To me it was a sign of breaking down mandarin society that had always plagued Chinese civilization. Thus I participated actively in the anti-Rightist campaign in mid-1957—I was then in Shanghai. In 1958, when the Great Leap Forward was launched, I volunteered for work on one of the big dams. It was only there that my disillusion began."

#### "ALL LABOR WAS FORCED LABOR"

She stopped talking and seemed suddenly to be far, far away. I looked at this intense young woman who was less than five feet tall, and weighed about 85 pounds. I asked her how could she do the arduous and menial work of building a dam. She replied, "It isn't the menial work that upset me. It was the utter human waste, the bureaucratism, the inefficiency. We were transported by truck, and when we reached the place, we found that nothing was ready for us. Neither a place to live nor even the tools with which to work. It was the most primitive labor imaginable, as if we were to build the whole dam by hand. We lacked even such simple devices as a block and tackle to lift heavy rocks. These had to be pushed into place by sheer brute force.

"Also, although work didn't start until ten in the morning, we had to get up as early as five o'clock because we had no less than 20 miles to walk daily from where we slept to where we worked. All we had when we stopped for lunch was some bread. We did eat better when we finished work at sundown, but we had to reassemble for meetings. We didn't know which was the hardest to bear—the labor, the food or the meetings. We had to describe what we did that day, and we had to speak about our attitude to what we did.

"Although I had volunteered for the job, I now began to feel as if all our labor was forced labor. I kept my tongue, but you couldn't always keep quiet since, if you kept silent, your team leader would see you afterwards and ask what was the matter. I began to feel like I was nothing more than an ant, and that not only because of the unthinking mass labor, but because you so often said, yes, when you meant, no, that you lost all confidence in yourself. Everyday it got harder to think any thoughts of your own. There was many a day when I wanted to bury myself in that dam.

"Finally, my health began to break down. I got what they call a nervous stomach. It got so that I couldn't eat the food at all. After a few months I couldn't bear it any longer and asked to be returned to Peking. Surprisingly, my team leader agreed to that on the condition I wouldn't immediately return to the university and that I shouldn't reveal that I quit. She said I really needed some rest before returning to school.

"For the first time since I had been so actively engaged in the anti-Rightist campaign I began to realize what they—I had

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now began to put a distance between myself and the regime—feared most was the reaction of the youth. Of all the surprises during the hundred flowers campaign what must have shocked them most was the attitude of the youth, for the very generation that was a product of the new People's Republic had become its severest critics.

"In my opinion," Jade concluded, stressing the word, my, as if the counterposition of an individual's view to that of the state and the Party was the highest possible daring, "in my opinion," she repeated, "the designations of the Right and Left were used only afterwards. At the beginning of the hundred flowers debates it was so obvious that the most brilliant students, those who had been the most dedicated Communists and who had been the most prized by the regime, and who themselves kept stressing that they were Communists and wanted no return to the old, had nevertheless become the most severe critics. As I told you, I volunteered for the building of the dam and I truly thought that it was a way not only of building up my country, but of 'working' mental and manual work. But now every one of my bones ached, and my brain, too, was tired, tired, tired."

#### STUDIED "MAO'S THOUGHT," BUT NOT MARXISM

Jade stopped talking. I felt that the telling of the story of the dam was an actual reliving of that shattering experience, and I didn't wish to break the silence. After a few moments she resumed talking, this time about how she used the period of rest to begin studying Marxism. Paradoxical as it may sound, it seems that Marxism was not taught to one and all; it was reserved for "the cadre"—the Communist Party and Communist youth members: "Well, you know, not everybody did consider himself a Communist. Actually only a very small percentage of the Chinese people are Communist Party members. We all, of course, had to know the latest pronouncements of the Communist Party and be acquainted with 'Mao's Thought' on current subjects, but as for serious study of Marxism, that's a different matter.

"I was peeved. I had not been taught Marxism in Hong Kong or in the United States, and I was determined to study it by myself now. Business men, for example, could attend the Democratic People's After Hours Political Education School, and in four months come out as experts in Marxism, but it was not easy for me to get into a class that studied the original works of Marx.

"I found out what the ten basic books were, and I asked for these from the library: four volumes of Mao's Selected Works; two pamphlets by Lenin—Imperialism, and State and Revolution; two books by Stalin—Foundations of Leninism and History of the Communist Party of the USSR; and two volumes of the Selected Works by Marx and Engels. There are not many Chinese translations available of the original works of Marx. It is, however, possible to buy some books in the bookstores on the famous Wang Fu Ching Avenue in Peking if you can read a foreign language, and if you have the money. It is fun to go into those bookstores.

"I was told I should concentrate on Mao's Thought; that theoretically, the two most important essays are On Practice, and On Contradiction, as well as one of the latest, On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People. These, plus Stalin's The History of the Communist Party of the USSR, were the sum total of what constituted to them 'Marxism-Leninism.' The trouble was, the more I read, the more I began to doubt some of Mao's statements, because my own experience which kept intruding into

my study didn't jibe either with his practice or theory. But I didn't dare to say so out loud, not even to myself.

#### SINO-SOVIET CONFLICT ERUPTS

"I had first heard about disagreements late in 1956, when Pan Tzue-nien, an editor of Hsinhwa (the official news agency), listed ten points on which Soviet Russia disagreed with the People's Republic. He had begun reeling them off as the Great Leap Forward, the Three Red Banners, the 'non-dialectical' approach to technicians who, the Russians said, should be judged not on how 'Red' they are, but how expert they are, and so forth and so on.

"However, the real shockers did not occur until 1960—and those we heard first, not officially, but through the grape-vine—and those concerned an exchange of gunfire between Chinese and Russian border guards, and the departure of the Russian technicians with their blueprints. All work had to stop. The campaign then began full force against the Russians. We had no specific love for them; there had actually been very little contact between Russians and Chinese, but the regime itself had always played up the Russians as the greatest friends we had, and Stalin's History of the CP had been studied as much as any work by Mao. And now all we heard about them was that they were 'revisionists.' Somehow, instead of hatred against the Russians, a feeling of utter isolation descended upon all of us.

"Then something else took place that set me thinking. African students began coming to our university. We were very interested in them, their countries, their revolutions, but we were not permitted to fraternize with them. They were ghettoized both as to living quarters and any socializing. Meanwhile, living conditions in China had become so difficult that we wanted to ask these new arrivals for things we were short of, like soap. And we were stopped from doing that. So once again, we felt very frustrated. I felt more strongly than ever that things were reeling backwards. At the same time my health hadn't improved much; it seems I was now stuck with a bleeding ulcer. I wanted to flee. I began to plan my escape. It took me two years to achieve it, and yet . . . . ."

Jade stopped and looked at the mountain at the top of which one could see the radar of mainland China. She resumed talking as if she was talking only to herself: "And yet, I wasn't back in Hong Kong very long—I only came last year, you know—when I began to feel all the old alienations that drove me from this island to the mainland. I'm referring not only to the British colonial administration, but the so-called independent British scholars—and they are not as poor a breed as the Americans who seem to have so exhausted themselves in learning the Chinese language that they do not bother to learn anything about the Chinese people.

"It's funny, their attitude to their 'specialty, China,' seems to be like that to a skill, like oil drilling. People exist for them as so many millions—a figure, a figure they wish they could cut, that's all. They don't exist as people with feelings, thoughts, aspirations. Not a single one of them is a Marxist, for example. OK, I can understand that. What I cannot understand is their cynicism. It seems to be one big joke for them, but Marxism isn't one big joke to the Chinese people. No wonder Mao feels so sure that no outsiders will ever get to first base in China, much less win the leadership over the Chinese."

#### MAOISM IS RETROGRESSIONISM, NOT REVOLUTIONARY

Heretofore I had intervened only in order to ask questions.

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but I felt it necessary at this point to make my own position clear. I told her that what she knew about me was that I was an American, what she didn't know was that I was a Marxist-Humanist. And as a Marxist-Humanist I wish to state most categorically that Mao was no sort of Marxist. Quite the contrary. Were it not for the fact that he had state power over a vast land of 700 million human beings, no one would pay any attention to his sophomoric essays—On Practice, On Contradiction—much less consider them original contributions to the Marxism of our age. As for How to Handle Contradictions Among the People, that is not only a revision of Marxism, it is the pronouncement of an exploitative tyrant who is so drunk with power that he thinks that the objective contradictions of capitalist production can be abolished by fiat. Mao decrees so, and so it is.

The shocker, to me, I concluded, was not the power conflict between those two state-capitalist societies, Russia and China, that euphemistically call themselves Communist. The shocker was ingrained in Mao's contention that "for decades" — and "even a century" — the class struggle would continue "in all socialist countries . . . as an objective law independent of man's will." Far from being a new theory of revolution, that is the most sinister of all theories of retrogression.

At this Jade fairly jumped out of her seat, exclaiming: "Retrogression, that's it. That really is it. Mao is a retrogressionist! That's the word that escaped me when I said everything seemed to be reeling backwards. That word never came into my consciousness because I was afraid to face its consequences, though I had felt for some time that Mao was the real revisionist. Retrogression, that really sums up 'Mao's Thought.'" Jade took my book out of my hands and began glancing at the chapter, "The Challenge of Mao Tse-tung," saying "I must translate this and get it into the mainland." She kept stressing, over and over again, that Mao was the retrogressionist, not the Chinese masses: "Marx's Humanism will raise their spirits once more, and then history can move forward. The youth stands ready to make a new revolution."

No wonder, I thought to myself as the interview drew to a close, that some Chinese refugees consider the American scholar no more than a new form of the CIA. It is, after all, impossible to bridge the gulf between a "ired exponent of "the end of ideology" age and the energetic revolutionary who had suffered through more than a decade of "Mao's Thought" and hard labor and still dreams of new revolutions. No doubt Jade exaggerated the proximity between philosophy and revolution. But the Maos fear their youth, and not those who bemoan their fate at the hands of "the gods that failed." For the dreams and energies of youth are the stuff revolutions are made of, totalitarianisms undermined, Maos overthrown.