

China: ten years after Mao

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September 9 marks the 10th anniversary of the death of Mao Tse Tung, the leader of the Chinese Revolution and the chairman of the Chinese Communist Party. In the ten years after Mao's death, China has gone through such developments which have turned Mao and the line he represented into the past or, more precisely, into the history of China.

During these ten years not only has the enthusiasm of the "Cultural Revolution", as a "new flight into the Chinese Revolution", died down, but the period is now being recalled in terms of the "revolt of the youth", "the period of insanity, disorder and agitation".

Economically, in the present-day China, capitalism is unfolding itself all the more explicitly in its classical form, and private property is receiving new legal guarantees. The statesmen and economists criticize the limitations of planned production, and private initiatives receive encouragement and sanctification. The village Communes, i.e., the collective ownership and activity of those who worked the land, disintegrate and the land falls into the private ownership of the small landowners.

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The factories increasingly employ the traditional methods of bourgeois management in order to intensify exploitation and boost labour productivity. And in the scene of international relations, foreign investments receive great encouragement. The changes here, in particular, are such that the 1 000 million Chinese market is seen by certain experts of imperialist economy as one of the most effective factors and possibilities for overcoming the present world economic crisis.

In the political aspect, during this period the last democratic gains have been taken back. The political movements have given way to the reshuffling of statesmen. The wall posters have disappeared. The Chinese state now seems more powerful than ever and the official state institutions and organs exercise uncontested authority.

In its international political relations, China officially defends the most reactionary bourgeois and imperialist currents. The "Ping-pong Diplomacy" has, in its conclusion, developed into a reactionary foreign policy in all respects. Establishing active relations with the Islamic Republic and bringing itself into political harmony with it, helping its bankrupt economy and giving it military aid is just one example of this reactionary international policy. Perhaps a significant step towards transforming China's foreign policy image is the desire to end the uneasiness in the mutual relations with the Soviet Union which has been expressed recently. The period of "negative balance" in the East-West relations came to an end with the "Three Worlds" theory, and with the establishing of cordial relations with the Soviet Union the remainder of this theory itself is losing credit.

The developments, of which we have here mentioned only a part, have no doubt been accompanied by changes in the ideological super-structure of China. Ten years after Mao's death, although his mausoleum remains untouched in Peking's Peace Square, the criticism of his views, his line and policies, is a sign of the resoluteness of the Chinese statesmen in putting an end to the "Mao era" and of the beginning of a new era in the politico-economic life of China.

The closest allies of Mao who in the continuation of his views wanted to draw revolutionary conclusions, are still in gaol. Politically this should be taken as the all-time distancing of the present rulers of China from those views and conclusions. Teng Shio Ping, the first man in the present real echelon of state power in China, once showed such frankness in expressing this ideological transformation and this distancing from the past, that he said that Marxism was no longer of any use for China. Although Teng Shio Ping later retracted his statement, it is a fact that the theory of workers' revolution and workers' rule is not only of no use,



Mao proclaims the people's Republic of China, Peking, October 1, 1949.

from the viewpoint of the bourgeoisie and for the purpose of consolidating the bourgeois economic and political system, but is also a hindrance. The last ten-year efforts of the Chinese statesmen, too, have been directed to shedding these Marxist adornments and embellishments from an explicitly bourgeois ideology.

A brief review of the history of the social developments in China shows the necessity of the changes in the last decade.

The Chinese revolution of 1949 was a bourgeois-democratic revolution which on account of its anti-imperialist and anti-feudal character was to provide the necessary political and economic preconditions for the development of capitalism in China. Such a revolution, which from the viewpoint of the interests of the working class could only be seen as the realization of more favourable conditions for the socialist revolution of the working class, was conceived of by the peasants who were the motive force of this revolution, as an end to all hardships and miseries and the beginning of eternal happiness.

Just as the democratic republics resulting from the bourgeois revolutions of the eighteenth century were conceived of as the harbinger of the era of happiness for mankind, so the people's democratic republic arising from the Chinese democratic revolution was supposed to bring about popular rule, popular liberation and happiness for all. This unreal, idealized, picture of a bourgeois democratic republic in the 20th century was called New Democracy, and against a background of the historical defeat of all the clearly bourgeois ideologies, it was blended with the anti-imperialist, nationalist and bourgeois-democratic interpretations of Marxism. The "Mao Tse Tung Thought" and the theory of the Chinese democratic revolution constituted the theory of the idealization of people's democratic republic for all the social



classes and a beacon for the revolution of the revolting poor peasants.

But the historical reality was not so. The working class had not obtained any significant and decisive gain from this revolution. For the Chinese bourgeoisie the creation of an "independent", "blossoming" and "industrial" China meant none other than the extension and intensification of the exploitation of workers and the expropriation of the petty land-owners who had acquired land.

The development of capitalism in China after the 1949 Revolution was possible in two forms. First the free and classical development of capitalism, the market economy, anarchy of production - with all its accompanying social consequences and results, i.e., extensive poverty and destitution of masses of workers and toilers. Second, state-capitalism, that is, the pattern provided by Russia, and which entailed the creation of a large bureaucracy and the imposition of political repression, together with relative improvements in the material life of the poor. The first form would draw China towards union with and dependence on western imperialism. And the second called for unity and solidarity with the Russian state. After the Chinese Revolution, the Mao Tse Tung Thought, with its petty-bourgeois nationalism and democratism, represented a theoretical striving for creating an industrial and independent China, while holding aloof from both these alternatives and remaining independent of both the imperialist camps. Politically, Mao's view on the "correct solution of the contradictions inside the people's camp" represents an unsuccessful attempt to skip over the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In practical and economic terms China's great leap forward which was founded on building a peasant socialism, ended in defeat. China's break with Russia in the early 60s gave an impetus to the goal of creating an independent and blossoming China relying on the nationalism of the Chinese petty-bourgeoisie. But a 20-year effort to found a special economy distinct from both state-capitalism and classical private capitalism ended up in economic chaos, failure of the projected



New men to lead the enhanced capitalist development in China: Deng Xiaoping launches a rural 'modernization project'.

aims and the gradual defeat of the schemes. The Cultural Revolution, in the second half of the 60s, represented the last efforts of petty-bourgeois radicalism in the face of the defeat of this utopian ideal and its refusal to accept the inescapable results of capitalist development in China. But the proletarian solution to the economic contradictions and the social and political crisis of that period was not the Cultural Revolution but a socialist revolution whose first measure would be the seizure of political power by the proletariat. However, the workers' revolution did not take place, the "Cultural Revolution" suffered defeat, and in its place a theory corresponding to the requirements of the development of capitalism in China was advanced. The "Three Worlds Theory" was a reply to this necessity.

The domestic implication of this "theory", i.e., its application with regard to the internal affairs of China, was that "The white cat is not different from a black cat; a good cat is one which catches mice". This was bourgeois pragmatism expressed in the particular political language of China and represented a forsaking of every form of revolutionary commitment. At any rate, with the reliance of the Chinese bourgeoisie and state on the "Three Worlds Theory" and the greater homogeneity which the state achieved, the period of economic chaos, as well as the atmosphere which allowed the struggle from below - the mass struggles - the possibility of extensive and open expression, came to an end. The "Cultural Revolution" and the political ferment died down and the way to capitalistic development was opened with greater force.

This is the development of capitalism in China which has brought along its corresponding political and ideological changes; and with each step that it takes forward, it displays its character all the more overtly and explicitly.

In the course of such development and on the way to expand the interests of the Chinese bourgeoisie, Mao's thought which represented the attempt to avoid capitalistic development in its present form, was considered, from the viewpoint of the statesmen of the Chinese bourgeoisie, as an ideological problem and a politico-ideological barrier which would have to be cleared out of the way. In the period of accelerated capitalist development, and for such a purpose, other people and other ideas and views are needed. China's mature bourgeoisie now required a mature state, mature statesmen and a mature and homogeneous political Party. The events of the last decade after Mao's death clearly display this greater comprehensive maturity of the Chinese bourgeoisie.

The Chinese bourgeoisie's proclamation to world capital has been the intensification of the exploitation of the Chinese working class, the stepping-up of political repression, and the consolidation of state authority, along

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with wide-spread purges in the Party and state and the refining of the official state ideology of the remnants of petty-bourgeois democratism and revolutionism inherent in Mao's thought. This process began in Mao's life-time and has now reached maturity, ten years after Mao's death, with the open critique of his views and the rejection of the methods and traditions identified with his name.

The Chinese bourgeoisie will continue this process. And as can be seen from the enthusiasm and eagerness overtly shown by the international bourgeoisie, it too supports this process and has laid great hopes on the exploitation of hundreds of millions of Chinese workers. Ten years after Mao's death, the world working class has more than ever been freed from the petty-bourgeois ideals of popular governments, liberation of the whole people and an idealized bourgeois republic. In the follow-up to these developments the Chinese proletariat, too, has ahead of it reliance on class force, a resolute and unvacillating class struggle against the bourgeoisie and the setting-up of workers' state and proletarian socialism.

