

Giovanni Scuderi

Mao: a great leader of the international proletariat and of oppressed nations and peoples

Published: First present 22nd June 1993. This essay was presented to the International Seminar on Mao's Thought that took place in Gelsenkirchen (Germany) on the 6th and 7th November 1993 to celebrate the centenary of Mao's birthday.

Transcription, Editing and Markup: Paul Saba

Copyright: This work is in the Public Domain under the [Creative Commons Common Deed](#). You can freely copy, distribute and display this work; as well as make derivative and commercial works. Please credit the Encyclopedia of Anti-Revisionism On-Line as your source, include the url to this work, and note any of the transcribers, editors & proofreaders above.

The internationalist proletarian initiative on the part of the Center for Social Studies, directed by comrade Jose Maria Sison, is very important, providing a platform for representatives of Parties, Organizations and Marxist-Leninist Groups from different countries, on the occasion of the centenary of Mao Zedong's birth. It is a useful and militant way of paying our collective respects to a great leader of the revolution, and at the same time of reflecting on how his universal teachings may be applied to the realities of the respective countries.

The exchange of opinions is a Marxist-Leninist approach; it is not simply a question of intellectual or structural information, but of learning from one another, checking the validity of one's own opinions, and correcting them if they turn out to be wrong.

If - seventeen years after his death - we have been invited to talk about Mao, this is an obvious sign that his thought and work are still worthy of the utmost

consideration on the part of all those in the world who work tirelessly for the triumph of the Socialist cause.

We must, however, be clear about the general valuation which is to be attributed to the thought and work of Mao. It is this fundamental question which determines the nature and the line of the Proletarian Party, as well as the success or otherwise of its political activity.

In fact, if one does not have a correct, materialistic view of the thought and work of Mao it is easy to fall into right or "left-wing" revisionism, with consequent serious damage to the proletariat of one's own country and of others'.

For us Italian Marxist-Leninists Mao is a great leader of the international proletariat and of oppressed nations and peoples.

1) Mao's Thought represents the development of Marxism-Leninism

Mao's Thought has enriched and developed Marxism-Leninism in the theoretical, philosophical, economic, political and military fields, giving the right replies to the crucial problems of the contemporary class struggle. It is valid and currently relevant, not only in Third-World countries, but also in capitalist and imperialist ones.

More specifically, Mao's Thought is essential and irreplaceable for the Socialist Revolution and the construction of socialism. Given the theory of the continuation of the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat - and with the practical experience of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution - Mao's Thought in these fields provides the working class with original and fundamental instruments with which to defend and build Socialism in the face of attempts by revisionists and counter-revolutionaries to restore capitalism.

Mao's Thought is not an eclectic composite of the ideas of several people, but the fruit of personal elaboration by Mao himself, made on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and the experience of the Chinese and world revolutions. It was formed in the melting-pot of the Great Chinese Revolution, but this historical fact in no sense limits its universal validity, but rather gives it the anointing touch of truth and justice. Nothing in fact can be considered valid and effective if it is not proved so by reality, by social practice. Besides, does not the authority of Lenin's Thought derive from the very victory of the Great October Revolution?

Naturally, within Mao's Thought we have to distinguish between that part which is closely linked to the specific situation of China, and that which is of a universal character - at the level of principle, method, analysis, general and directional information. It is from this second part that we must extract the essence, the spirit and the revolutionary kernel, so that we may apply them dialectically and correctly to our own national reality.

In conversation with representatives of various Latin American Communist Parties who were visiting China on the 25th September 1956, the chief author of the Chinese revolution himself underlined that " the experience of the Chinese revolution - creating support bases in the countryside, surrounding the cities to

moving in from the countryside to conquer finally the city itself - is probably inapplicable in many of your countries, but it may serve as point of reference. I take the liberty of exhorting all present to be aware of transplanting the Chinese experience mechanically. Any foreign experience can serve only as a point of reference and must not be taken as dogma. It is absolutely essential to integrate the two factors: the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism and the specific situation of your own country."

It is not easy to apply Marxism-Leninism-Mao's Thought correctly to one's own country . Yet this is the fundamental pre-requisite for the fulfillment of our revolutionary duties in the spheres of organization, politics, trades unions and the armed struggle.

Mao took the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin well to heart and - through an extraordinary, long and complex revolutionary experience which is without historical precedent - reached the level of his teachers with great naturalness and without ambition. He thus brought about a great development in Marxism-Leninism, bringing it to answer fully to the needs of the contemporary revolutionary struggle. So much so that today there can be no authentic Marxism-Leninism which does not include the Thought of Mao, and which does not maintain that this thought constitutes a progression and a development of the revolutionary theory of the proletariat.

The hyphen which we put between Marxism-Leninism and Mao's Thought is the expression - at once political and graphical - of the continuity and development which exists between Marxism-Leninism and the Mao's Thought.

Marxism-Leninism and Mao's Thought are not two distinct and separate things but rather two components which form a single dialectic unit. It would be just as mistaken to separate Mao's Thought from Marxism-Leninism in order to consider it in isolation as a specific revolutionary experience to be kept in mind at will - as it would be to restrict Marxism-Leninism to simply the thought of Marx and Lenin. This would, on the one hand, deprive us of the most recent and authoritative interpretation of Marxism-Leninism given to us by Mao, and on the other would allow Marxism-Leninism to gradually wither and die. In fact without Mao's Thought, the Marxism-Leninism would no longer be relevant to the present situation; it would be unable to respond fully to new revolutionary requirements. It would be lacking specifically on questions which concern the construction of Socialism and of the Party, Socialist economy, dialectic and historical materialism, analysis of the current international situation, strategy and tactics of the struggle against imperialism and colonialism, and of the struggle against modern revisionism and neo-revisionism.

Generally speaking all revisionist and neo-revisionist groups have a common interest in drawing a veil over Mao's Thought; they fully realize that if it should penetrate to the masses on a large scale Marxism-Leninism would inevitably re-emerge with all its light and persuasive power. All their false theories would then lose their gloss and show for what they effectively are - ideological and political mystifications, conjured up with the sole purpose of preventing the working class

from fighting capitalism and gaining political power.

To consider Mao's Thought as a constituent of - and inseparable from- Marxism-Leninism, as well as a development of it, is therefore a question of fundamental importance. Upon it depend the success of the worldwide proletarian revolution, the triumph of Marxism over revisionism, the correct constitution of Marxist-Leninist Parties and the unity and co-operation between such Parties. In the light of experience we can certainly say that it is extremely difficult for those who do not make such a choice to hold out for long against revisionism, and soon or later not to fall victim to reaction.

Naturally, Mao's Thought is not the last word in Marxism, for this is continually developed by the struggle itself and unceasingly enriched by the contribution of the various authentic Marxist-Leninist Parties. At some point in history as we get closer to the Communist era, it is probable that the most advanced and emancipated people of that epoch will give birth to another great leader of the proletariat, who will advance Marxism still further. But, until the revolutionary theory of the proletariat arrives at a new, more advanced and superior synthesis, Mao's Thought will continue to represent the high spot of Marxism-Leninism. We are still in the era of imperialism and of the proletarian revolution, and as long as this era lasts Marxism-Leninism-Mao's Thought will continue to be relevant and valid everywhere.

2) Mao's contribution to the proletarian concept of the world

Mao made an historical contribution both to the process of the ideological emancipation of the proletariat which was begun by Marx and Engels and continued by Lenin and Stalin, and to the struggle against the bourgeois concept of the world at a philosophic, theoretical and cultural level. He is the greatest proletarian revolutionary theorist of our times.

Thanks to his extraordinary and incalculable contribution, the proletarian concept of the world has become clearer and more easily accessible to the masses; it has undergone a significant development as a result of the new experiences of the Chinese and international proletariat - with specific references to the struggle against modern revisionism- and has been enriched by new concepts and notions which will allow it to successfully confront the great class struggles of the twenty-first century.

The first great, self-evident and undeniable merit of Mao at an international level is that of having re-launched the proletarian concept of the world which had been dimmed and progressively twisted and denied by modern revisionists.

Mao inherited, defended and developed the proletarian concept of the world as regards philosophy (specifically, the theory of knowledge and dialectic and the contradictions within nature and within society), ideology, culture, literature, art, education, morals, customs and habits. In so doing he penetrated new areas, visited for the first time by Marxism-Leninism.

In the present circumstances it would be impossible to explain everything which

Mao elaborated and discovered. We can only list his philosophic works, and illustrate a few points of Mao's concept of the world.

The philosophical works of Mao published to date are: *On Practice* (July 1937); *On Contradiction* (August 1937); *On the right solution to the contradictions within the people* (27th February 1957); *Where the right ideas come from* (May 1963).

Written during the period of the first revolutionary civil war, the first two works contest the dogmatism and empiricism then existing in the Chinese Communist Party. The other two, written during the period of socialist construction in China, counter the right-wing revisionism which gained ground in the Party under the stimulus of Liu Shaoqui and Deng Xiaoping.

Other essential texts regarding the proletarian concept of the world are to be found in the following works: *On the new democracy* (January 1940); *Let us revise our studies* (May 1941); *Speeches made at the Yen-an conference on the literature and art* (May 1942); *Speech at the national Chinese Communist Party Conference on Propaganda* (12th March 1957).

The "most widely-read writings", from the period of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, are also important: *In Memory of Norman Bethune* (21st December 1949); *At the Peoples Service* (8th September 1944); *How Yu Kung moved the mountains* (11th June 1945) - in which the ideals of the Marxist-Leninist and the new socialist personality are defined.

Taking the above mentioned works as a whole, they will be found to contain a synthesis and clarification of all the major discoveries about dialectical and historical materialism made by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, further enriched by Mao's original contributions.

To give an example of the power of Mao's Thought on dialectic and contradictions, we quote an extract from "On contradiction": "The law of contradictions which is inherent in things- that is the law of the unity of opposites- is the fundamental law of nature and of society, and therefore also of thought. It is in opposition to the metaphysical concept of the world. Its discovery constitutes a great revolution in the stay of human consciousness.

Dialectic materialism holds that contradiction exists in all those processes which take place within objective things and subjective thought, penetrating such processes from the beginning to the end; it is this which gives to contradiction its universal and absolute character. Each contradiction and each aspect of the same, has its own particular characteristics; it is these which give to contradictions their specific and relative character. Inherent in opposites in certain conditions is the equality which makes possible their co-existence in a single entity, and besides their transformation into respective opposites; it is this too which gives the contradiction its specific and relative character. But the struggle of opposites is unceasing - it is as much present during the co-existence of opposites as it is during their reciprocal transformation (a moment in which the struggle is particularly in evidence); it is this too which gives contradiction its universal and absolute character. When we study the specific and relative character of contradiction we must bear in mind the difference between primary and secondary contradiction,

between the primary and secondary aspects of the contradiction and the struggle of opposites, we must bear in mind the differences between the various kinds of struggle, otherwise mistakes are inevitable."

In comparison with earlier leaders of the international proletariat, Mao had a new mission: that of bearing the Socialist Revolution into the superstructure and into the depths of human existence.

Invented, promoted and organized by Mao himself, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, was the instrument which was to allow him to transform the superstructure - bringing it into line with a socialist basis - and to revolutionize the mind and conscience of the masses and of the new generations, thereby rooting out bourgeois and revisionist ideologies.

Mao emphasizes that "The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is a great revolution which moves man at the deepest level of consciousness tending to resolve the problem of his concept of the world."(1) Here we were clearly dealing with a happening unprecedented in history, the validity of which remains intact as a fount of inspiration and instruction for all those who struggle on behalf of Socialism and for a new world. And this remains true in spite of the fact that the experience was violently interrupted by the restoration of capitalism in China. Mao's original theories - on class, class contradictions and class struggle in socialist society - will eternally remain his greatest and most precious contribution to dialectic and historical materialism. The theory of the two types of contradiction discovered by Mao within socialist society- the contradictions within the people (which are to be resolved by dialectic, reasoning and conviction) and the antagonistic contradictions between the enemy and ourselves (which are to be resolved by force and revolution) - remains the pole-star of the builders of socialist society.

It is a guide too for those who, like us, find themselves in the phase of the struggle for Socialism, and who face the same problem - albeit in a different form - of the resolution two types of contradiction. In fact, while we must convince the left-wing masses through dialectic, argument, facts, example and action that the road of revisionist and neo-revisionist parties does not lead to socialism, we must not be distracted from opposing the capitalist system, in order to break down and destroy it.

On the basis of historical experience, Mao underlines that "In a class-divided society, revolutions and revolutionary wars are inevitable, for without them it is impossible to make a leap in the development of society, it is impossible to overthrow the dominant reactionary classes and allow the people to gain power. The Communists must denounce the lying propaganda of the reactionaries, who assert, for example, that the social revolution is neither necessary nor feasible. The Communists must cling tightly to the Marxist-Leninist theory of social revolution to help the people to understand that the social revolution is not only absolutely necessary but also entirely feasible."(2)

Mao exerted himself so that on every theme and question the terms of the contradictions and different outlooks of the proletariat with respect to those of the

bourgeoisie should be clear, and that the class struggle should not waver. In this way he effected a great clarification and ideological re-ordering in the spirit of the delegates of the Foundation Congress of the Communist League (June 1847)- in effect the first International Marxist Organization, which adopted the historical watchword "Unit+, peoples of all nations" replacing the precedent, idealistic "Let all men be brothers".

On human nature Mao commented: "Does a human nature exist? Certainly it does, but only a concrete human nature not an abstract human nature. In a class-divided society there exists only a human nature characterized by class and not a human nature beyond class."(3)

The unity of human genus, of the species, exists therefore only on paper, or rather in idealistic dreams; in reality, as we can all see for ourselves, humanity is deeply split and divided. We have to then start from there, from this reality generated by the division of society into classes, if we truly wish to attain human unity and universal fraternity.

3) The slanders of the revisionists cannot cancel out Mao's Thought and work

Mao's theoretical and political elaborations - together with his practical action - constitute in themselves the most fitting response to, and the most telling denial of, the thesis of the "Peking midget" Deng Xiaoping, according to whom Marxism-Leninism cannot furnish solutions to all the new problems so that the need for "new principles" and "new conclusions" arises.

He even had the courage to denounce from the lectern as "erroneous", "adventurist" and "extremist" Mao's most significant actions during the period of socialist construction in China. With a pile of waste paper pompously entitled "Resolution on Questions about the History of our Party after the foundation of the People's Republic", Deng Xiaoping and his gang believed they could negate Mao's Thought and work from the summer of 1955 to 9th September 1976. In effect they wanted to cancel out agricultural cooperation, the transformation of craftsmanship and individual business, the Great Leap Forward, the People's Communes, the general lines of socialist construction in China, the struggle against the revisionist cliques of Peng De Huai, Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping and finally the struggle against international revisionism headed first by Khrushchev and later by Brezhnev.

The main target of this illegal, arbitrary, unilateral, anti- Marxist and anti-Socialist "Resolution" was of course none other than the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution itself. Its principles, elaborated by Mao himself, were actually defined as "inconsistent both with Marxism-Leninism and with the Chinese reality". It's always the same; when the Communists seriously begin to tread on the toes of the bourgeoisie. Then the cries of the servants reach to high heaven in an attempt to protect their masters.

To cover up his own past guilt, current intrigues and suspect objectives, the arch-revisionist Deng proclaimed that Mao had committed "grave errors" during the last

years of his life. But in effect the errors he mentions represent on the contrary Mao's great theoretical, political and historical achievements. Not that we want to suggest that the founder of the New China never made a mistake, because when he did he was always ready to criticize and correct himself - not in the sense of abandoning the path to Socialism, but rather of correcting its course in order to advance more confidently.

To err is human. Even Marx made some mistakes; for example at the beginning he did not believe in the Paris Commune although later he extolled and supported it. On the basis of this experience he theorized on the necessity of the proletarian dictatorship, of revolutionary mass violence and of the Communist Party. Lenin too made mistakes; for example after the February Revolution of 1917 he thought that the proletariat could gain power by peaceful means but it did not take him long to realize his mistake and to launch and guide personally the Socialist Revolution. The leaders of the international proletariat therefore have never had any difficulty in recognizing and correcting their own mistakes, and when they were not able to do it their successors have taken care to put things right. As far as Mao is concerned - in the present state of our knowledge - it seems that there is nothing in his thought or work that needs to be rectified. Nevertheless, should there be something to revise it will not fall to the renegades to do it, but to the collective judgment of authentic Marxist-Leninist Parties.

To correct the real errors of the great Marxist leaders is not in the interests of the revisionists; their aim - as in the case of Deng - is to upset the proletarian revolutionary line, to destroy the revolutionary theory of the proletariat, to clear the way for capitalism, man's exploitation of man and hegemonism. Besides, how can one give the slightest credit to Deng - whom Mao depicted thus with these master brush-strokes? "He is a man who does not understand class struggle, who has never spoken of this principal axis. He has remained with the 'black and white cat' concept, without worrying about whether we are dealing with imperialism or Marxism". "He knows nothing about Marxism-Leninism; he represents the bourgeoisie. He swore against his will 'not to retry just verdict': we cannot give him credit".(4)

Whatever the "Peking midget" may say, Mao was lucid and coherent - as regards Marxism-Leninism and as regards his own thought- up to the day of his death. His far-sightedness, which was proverbial, was not a divine gift but derived from his profound knowledge and mastery of dialectic and reality. He had worked out who Deng was a long time ago, and he was equally convinced that a single Cultural Revolution would not be enough to root out in China capitalism and shake out the representatives of the bourgeoisie who were nesting in the highest branches of the Party and of the State.

In a famous letter of the 6th June 1966 Mao wrote: "There are more than a hundred Communist Parties in the world, and the majority of them no longer believe in Marxism-Leninism; they have taken Marx and Lenin to pieces: what is to prevent this happening to us too?". And that, unfortunately, is what happened shortly after Mao's death, brought about by the betrayal of the modern revisionists. The gang-

leader of the Chinese bourgeoisie, Deng Xiaoping took Mao's thought and work to pieces, restoring China to capitalism, and transforming the glorious Communist Party into a revisionist, anti-Communist and Fascist party. So, is it all over? No, we don't believe so. Neither in China nor in the world. The revolution cannot be stopped; it may mark time and suffer setbacks, but no-one can suppress it definitively.

The revisionists may slander and disown the great leaders of the proletariat, but they will never succeed in negating their thought and works. As long as there exists in the world a single exploited or oppressed individual, their thought will burn bright, lighting the path towards liberty, social justice, emancipation and peace. At the same time, the direct heirs of the great leaders of the proletariat - the authentic Marxist-Leninist Parties and Organizations of the world - have the duty of protecting the thought and works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao, and of defending them as they would their own lives against the direct and indirect attacks of the revisionists and neo-revisionists.

The struggle for an open defense of Mao's thought and work is fundamental for these reasons: to rid the Marxist-Leninist Parties of capitulationists, revisionists and hardened and incorrigible neo-revisionists. To make a clear distinction between the fields of Marxist-Leninists and those of revisionists and neo-revisionists, however well-disguised. Finally, to create, as soon as times and conditions permit, the Marxist-Leninist International, on the basis of Marxism-Leninism-Mao's Thought, of proletarian internationalism and of the consequent struggle against imperialism, colonialism, racism and apartheid.

Whatever country it operates in, and whatever the internal and international circumstances may be, no authentic Marxist-Leninist Force can ignore or undervalue the struggle against revisionism and neo-revisionism. Because, as is shown in practice, if we do not combat these dangerous bourgeois elements which have infiltrated the ranks of the proletariat and of the Marxist-Leninists, then it will not be possible to succeed in the class struggle and the revolution, to defend the dictatorship of the proletariat, and to absolve our own duties towards the proletarian internationalism.

4) Mao - standard-bearer of the struggle against modern revisionism

As in the past, only by defending and taking their direction from the thought of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, the Communists were able to discover, oppose and liquidate the various opportunist cliques of right and "left" which sought - with so many sophisms and pseudo-revolutionary theorizations - to disorientate and divide the proletarian Parties and socialist countries and make them surrender to imperialism. So today only through a profound knowledge of Mao's Thought too and by placing it also in the lead in every field, can the Marxists-Leninists gain a deep, complete and scientific knowledge of modern revisionism at both the theoretic and political level. Only in this way will they know how to fight it and block its path within the Party and among the masses, so that it cannot set their

spirits to sleep or corrupt their consciences, and so that the revolution can freely take up its course again.

Mao's brilliant theoretic and political elaboration of modern revisionism, reached its peak in the stupendous strategical and tactical masterpiece of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. This was an inspired solution to the fundamental historical problem of the continuation of the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. This elaboration constitutes the general balance of experience acquired to date by Marxist-Leninists worldwide on the struggle against the old-school revisionists, and well as being a new and invaluable enrichment of the common treasure of Marxism-Leninism as regards the capital question of the struggle against modern revisionism, an inexhaustible fount of teachings of a universal nature, and a powerful guide to action.

Without Mao's great contribution to the struggle against modern revisionism - inside and outside China, within the Chinese Communist Party and within the then International Communist Movement - without his organic refutation of the anti-Marxist theses of the khrushchevian revisionists on fundamental questions about the nature of imperialism, the proletarian revolution, the character of the Communist Party and the dictatorship of the proletariat, without all this the international working class would still be fumbling in dark. In showing, both in theory and in practice, how to oppose and defeat modern revisionists, Mao has objectively become the standard-bearer of Marxism-Leninism and the leader of the international proletariat. His invincible thought has become the irreplaceable instrument for nailing the revisionists down to their treachery and for annihilating all the obstacles they place in the path of the revolution.

Lenin rose up resolutely in defence of Marxism, denouncing the old-school revisionists Bernstein and Kautsky - who had capitulated before imperialism and sold out the interests of the proletariat to the class enemy - thus realigning the international proletariat on the right Communist attitudes, and taking the revolution a great leap forward. In the same way in defence of Marxism-Leninism, Mao courageously faced up to the modern revisionists. Headed by the renegade Khrushchev, they exerted themselves frantically to distort Marxism-Leninism, to disunite the then socialist camp and to slow down the progress of the revolution. He gained important victories in this epic struggle, inspiring the birth of new Marxist-Leninist Parties and imparting new and vigorous growth to the revolution. The international situation today is radically different from that which Mao left. Then, in September 1976, one could note with supreme pleasure that the main tendency in the world was towards revolution. It was clear that Mao's Thought and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution exercised a powerful influence on the international proletariat and on oppressed nations and peoples, in spite of the fact that the USSR had handed down the socialist flag 20 years earlier, and that the revisionists hindered the revolution everywhere.

At present the revolutionary flames are few and the scene seems to be dominated by capitalism, imperialism and neo-colonialism. This is all the fault of the revisionist cliques of various countries who, at first, hid behind Marxism-

Leninism, sabotaging the revolution and passing off reformism, parliamentarism and pacifism as "creative" Marxism-Leninism and who later passed bag and baggage over into the bourgeois and capitalist camp, going so far as to restore capitalism where they had the power and dissolving the historical Communist Parties.

As long as Mao was alive and the masses wanted the revolution, these disguised revisionists did all they could to appear true communists, and reacted savagely towards the Marxist-Leninists who unmasked them. The militants of the PMLI know something about this, having been victims of aggressive acts in the factories, in the schools and in the demonstrations in Sixty-eight and during the Seventies. Today these renegades and traitors of the Socialist cause compete to show that they were never classical communists; at worst they declare themselves "Democratic Communists" or "Neo-communists", and in any case very different from Lenin, Stalin and Mao.

Mao realized immediately who the modern revisionists were and immediately sent out strong warning signals, denouncing their bourgeois and counter-revolutionary nature. In March 1957, scarcely thirteen months after they had usurped power in Ussr, he defined them thus: "Revisionism is to deny the fundamental principles of Marxism, to deny its universal truths. Revisionism is a bourgeois concept. The revisionists cancel out the differences between capitalism and socialism, between the bourgeois dictatorship and the dictatorship of the proletariat. What they really desire is the capitalist rather than the socialist line. In present conditions revisionism is much more dangerous than dogmatism. We have now an important work on the ideological front: to refine the criticism of revisionism."(5)

The fact, however, remains that we cannot understand the present situation without taking into account the nature of modern revisionism, and the role which it has played in the destruction of Socialist States and historical Communist Parties.

The origin of this historically unprecedented counter-revolutionary betrayal is to be found in the 20th PCUS Congress. We have to start from there in order to reconstruct the history of the last 37 years, to establish who was right and who was wrong, who was really on the side of socialism and who was only paying it lip-service. We have to go back to throw light on the counter-revolutionary and anti-Communist role of the revisionist cliques of various countries who went along with Khrushchev's line and so-called de-Stalinization. Finally, we have to look back to take serious critical account of ourselves and of our past and present militancy with reference to the national and international struggle between Marxist-Leninists and revisionists. Only thus can we be sure of not making mistakes at ideological, political and organization levels, and of clearly distinguishing our positions from those of the revisionists - those who continue to disguise themselves as Communists, those who have recycled themselves as socialists and finally those who present themselves as "neo-communists" and "refounders of communism". These last mentioned are none other than neo-revisionists - a new form of revisionism dreamed up by political swindlers to harness the revolutionary proletariat to the shackles of capitalism and imperialism.

There is a fundamental difference between this new form of revisionism and its predecessor. Where the revisionists were in power, modern revisionism aspired to represent authentic Marxism-Leninism and true Socialism and, even in capitalist countries, claimed to be the true Communist party. Whereas, neo-revisionism completely disowns and counters the historical experience of the proletarian dictatorship; it places itself openly beyond and counter to Marxism-Leninism-Mao's Thought, and proposes to elaborate a new concept of "Communism" on the basis of parliamentarism, democracy, constitutional bourgeois legalism and non-violence.

Neo-revisionism - which has one of its most important centres in Italy represented by Armando Cossutta and Sergio Garavini's Communist Refoundation Party - operates international link-ups through old and new revisionist parties and through the so-called Trotskyist Fourth International. This situation opens, at national and international levels, a new phase of the struggle against revisionism : that against neo-revisionism.

If we do not begin from the 20th PCUS Congress, held in February 1956, it is absolutely impossible to understand subsequent events in the USSR and in East European socialist countries, starting with the counter-revolution in Hungary in October 1956, which had been preceded in 1953 by reactionary movements in Poland and East Germany. In fact, during those years, taking advantage of Stalin's death, world imperialism promoted anti-communist rebellions in many socialist countries, and the revisionists lent a hand.

With the courage and initiative typical of authentic revolutionary proletarian leaders, not afraid of risking either isolation or ostracism in defence of Marxism-Leninism, the proletariat, the revolution and Socialism, Mao immediately defamed the 20th PCUS Congress. He did not, however, sink his knife to the hilt because he hoped that the Soviet revisionists would repent and correct their errors.

In fact the Soviet Union could still be saved, the socialist camp - a billion strong - could be extended further, the historical Communist parties of the West, or the best part of them could be maintained on or brought back to the path of revolution.

Then, as Mao said, "The East wind prevails over the West wind". Almost half the world was socialist. The peoples of the Third World were clearly orientated towards Socialism. The proletariat of many capitalist countries - particularly in the West and in Italy - fought determinedly for Socialism. A few more circumstances in favor would have been enough to produce an entirely socialist world. But the revisionists of various countries, led by the Soviets, did not want this.

At the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in November 1956, Mao expressed himself thus: "I want to say something about the 20th Congress of the Soviet Union Communist Party. I believe that there are two swords: one is Lenin, the other is Stalin. Now the Russians have thrown away the Stalin sword. Gomulka and certain other Hungarians have picked it up to strike back at the Soviet Union, to fight so-called Stalinism. The Communist parties of various other European countries also criticize the Soviet Union. Their leader is Togliatti. Even imperialism has taken up this sword to throw itself into the attack, Dulles has taken

it up and used it for some manoeuvres. This sword has not been lent out, but rather flung away. We in China have not flung it away. In the first place we have defended Stalin, and in the second place we have criticized his mistakes, we have written the article 'On the Historical Experience of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat'. We have not done as certain others, who have discredited and destroyed Stalin, we have acted on the basis of the real situation.

Can one say that certain Soviet leaders have to, an extent, also thrown away the sword that is Lenin? I believe they have done so to a notable degree. Is the October Revolution still valid? Does it or does not constitute a model for all countries? In Khrushchev's report to the 20th Congress of the Soviet Union Communist Party he says that power can be achieved through parliamentary means, that is to say that other countries can do without following the example of the October Revolution. Once this breach has been opened, Leninism has effectively been cast away!" (6) This extraordinary extract contains all the historical, political and ideological elements necessary to understand that all the misadventures and disasters of the Soviet and international proletariat stem from the 20th Congress of the PCUS. The most important element which Mao brings to light is the fact that in 1956 the Soviet revisionists had already shattered the swords of Lenin and Stalin, that is the proletarian ideology, the most powerful weapon which the proletariat possesses for the conquest and maintenance of political power.

In practice, the khrushchevians in shattering the two red swords- disarmed the proletariat, gave free rein to bourgeois ideology and culture and began the task of restoring capitalism which was then continued by Brezhnev, Andropov and Cernenko and which has been completed by Gorbachev and Yeltsin.

Once the red swords had been shattered it was inevitable that the white swords should be taken up. From the time when Marx and Engels defined scientific socialism, history has only known the swords of the proletariat or the swords of the bourgeoisie.

And - it is as well to drive it home and be firmly convinced about it- the red swords of the proletariat are five in number and correspond to the names of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao. The shattering of whichever one means breaking the chain, satisfying the bourgeois and barricading forever the road to Socialism.

The destruction of the statues of Lenin and of other communist symbols in the Ussr is only a tangible fact; they had already been broken up by the 20th Congress.

We Italian Marxist-Leninists did not have to wait for Gorbachev to show his full hand before judging him. In that great document of the Central Committee of the PMLI dated 25th March 1990 and entitled "Let us fight the May battle under the banner of Socialism and the People's Committees", we had already taken stock of his inauspicious work in these terms: "The major responsibility for what has happened in the East rests on the shoulders of the neo-liberal Gorbachev, who has reduced the Party - and the State of Lenin and Stalin - down to its theoretical, political and organizational foundations. The notorious - 'perestroika' was not at all - as the consummate swindler Cossutta maintains - 'a second revolution' following that of 1917, or 'an innovation of Socialism; Socialism for the year 2000' (from the

Report to the Second General Assembly of Members of the Marxist Cultural Association, Milan 20.05.1989). With the 'perestroika' the new Tsar of the Kremlin has outdone Khrushchev in the restoration of capitalism in the Ussr, and in the work of corruption and revisionist incitement of the governors and Party leaders of already Socialist countries.

Without his example, and without the pressure he exerted on his foreign partners to imitate him, the East including the Ussr would not now find itself in the grip of capitalism and Western imperialism".

Therefore we should not talk about the collapse of Socialism and Communism, but rather about the historical failure of the revisionists, who have not even managed to retain power and have been obliged to hand it over to classical bourgeois sectors and other currents of the bourgeoisie.

5) The theory of the continuation of the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat

In the course of his life Mao accumulated many historical merits, the first of which is that of having led the Chinese people - a quarter of the human race - to free themselves from the chains of feudalism, imperialism and capitalism, through the armed Revolution of New Democracy and the Socialist Revolution.

During the period of the construction of Socialism in China, Mao's greatest merit was embodied in his elaboration of the theory of the continuation of the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. No-one before had imagined, thought or dared so much.

Through this great theory he has explained betimes what the principal contradiction of socialism is, how the restoration of capitalism can come about, and what must be done to prevent it and to safeguard and forward Socialism.

Lenin clearly stated that there is no Chinese wall between capitalism and Socialism, and that a restoration of capitalism is always possible. Stalin fought and overcame a whole series of traitors and bourgeois representatives such as Trotsky, Bucharin, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Rykov. But he erroneously believed that with their defeat, classes in the Ussr had disappeared. Just a year before his death, in his work "Economic Problems of Socialism in the Ussr" he indicated the existence of classes and class contradictions within Socialism.

Expertly mastering the dialectic materialism to which he made fundamental contributions, Mao analyses in depth the experience of the proletariat in power in the Ussr, in China and in other socialist countries. He identifies the principal contradiction of Socialism as that between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, indicating what are the methods and means of preventing the restoration of capitalism and of continuing the revolution.

Studying the historical experience of the proletariat from the Paris Commune onwards, Mao understood perfectly that the conquest of political power on the part of the proletariat is only the beginning and not the end of the Socialist Revolution. With great far-sightedness he warns the Party, the proletariat and the entire

Chinese people against stopping at the first stage of the revolution, urging them to follow it through to the end and to behave of allowing themselves to be corrupted by the bourgeoisie.

On the very eve of the triumphal entry into Peking he addressed the Party's Central Committee as follows: "Very soon we shall be victorious throughout the country. This victory will open a breach in the Eastern front of imperialism, and will have great international significance. It will not take a lot of time or great efforts to obtain this victory but it will take a long time and great efforts to consolidate it. The bourgeoisie has doubts about our capacity to build. The imperialists put their trust in the likelihood that sooner or later we will have to beg their charity in order to survive. Along with victory certain states of mind can develop within the Party: arrogance; pretensions to greatness; inertia and reluctance to make progress; the search for comfort and an aversion to continuing a hard life. On victory, the people will be grateful to us and the bourgeoisie will come forward to flatter us. It has been proved that the enemy cannot beat us with force of arms. Nevertheless the flattery of the bourgeoisie can conquer those among us who are not strong-willed. There can be Communists who, while not having been beaten by the armed enemy and having even gained the name of hero for standing up to these enemies, are still not capable of resisting the sugar-covered bullets; they are felled by these shots. We must prevent such a situation. The conquest of victory throughout the country is only the first step in a march of ten thousand `li'. Even though we can be proud of this step, it is relatively small; what will make us much prouder is still to come. In thirty or forty years the victory of the People's democratic revolution in China, seen in retrospect, will appear as the brief prologue to a long work. A work begins with a prologue, but the prologue is not the culmination of it. The Chinese revolution is a great revolution, but the road which we must follow after the revolution will be longer, the work greater and more arduous."(7)

Subsequently Mao was to take up these concepts again when faces with the first serious attacks of the Chinese revisionists, who placed under discussion the socialist way and the power of the proletariat within the Party and the State. It was not by chance that this coincided with the period of the 20th PCUS Congress. Mao affirms: "In our country, the bourgeois and petit-bourgeois ideology, the anti-Marxist ideology will persist for a long time. The socialist regime is already fundamentally installed in our country. In the field of the transformation of the rule of property of means of production, we have at best achieved a victory, but on the political and ideological front we have still not won completely. In the ideological camp it is not yet truly decided whether between the proletariat or the bourgeoisie will win."(8)

He then goes on to denounce those who oppose the Socialist Revolution, explaining his reasons by using the concept: "The Socialist Revolution is a new thing for all of us. In the past we have only had democratic revolution, which was a revolution of bourgeois character, which did not aim to destroy individual property nor that of national capitalism, but only that of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism. Many people therefore succeeded in passing the test.

Among them, some were not enthusiastic about a democratic revolution of a radical character and they passed the test with difficulty; others passed it because they were willing to exert themselves for a revolution of that kind. Now we have to pass the test of Socialism, and some are having difficulty doing it." (9)

At a certain point Mao clearly states that the opposition to the Socialist Revolution is also to be found within the Party itself: "After the democratic revolution, the workers, and the poor and less-poor peasants, wanted to continue the revolution. But certain members of the Party did not want to go further, some even moved a step backwards, placing themselves in opposition to the revolution. What is the reason for this? Having become great leaders they want to protect the interests of their rank." (10)

Finally, in August 1962, taking up again and synthesizing all he had already said about Socialism up to then - in particular in his great work "On the right solution to the contradictions within the people" - Mao established the fundamental socialist line with these precise words: "Socialist society embraces a very long historical period, in the course of which there still exist classes, class contradictions and class struggle, there still exists the struggle between the two roads, Socialism and capitalism, and there still exists the danger of a restoration of capitalism. We have to understand that this struggle will be long and complex, we must be vigilant and exert ourselves in the task of socialist education. We must understand, and restore correctly, the contradictions of class and the class struggle, distinguish clearly the contradictions between the enemy and ourselves and the contradictions within the people, and find right solutions for them. Otherwise a socialist country will become the opposite, it will change its nature and the restoration will take place. From now on we must talk about this problem every year, every month and every day, so as to have a clear understanding of it and to follow a Marxist-Leninist line." (11)

With this blow Mao demolished the bourgeois counter-revolutionary line of Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping's revisionist clique, which maintained that the principal contradiction in China was "the contradiction between the advanced socialist regime and withdrawn social productive forces", and not that between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. In other words it maintained that we should develop capitalism, urging the proletariat to dedicate itself to production and to abandon the revolution.

6) The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was the inevitable outcome of the theory of the continuation of the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Once the chief enemy had been identified, his plans discovered, once the dangers which we risked had been seen, and the necessity of a new input to the revolution and the construction of Socialism made clear, then it was essential to act immediately and on the basis of an adequate strategy and revolutionary tactic. And Mao did act, inventing in its entirety the Proletarian Cultural Revolution. A true

proletarian revolution directed against the bourgeoisie, with the special characteristic that it took place in a socialist country, an event without precedent in history. In fact up to then a new revolution to annihilate class enemies and safeguard and develop Socialism had never been thought necessary in any socialist country.

Mao explains that "The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is effectively a great political revolution which the proletariat leads in the conditions of Socialism against the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes, the continuation of the long struggle which sets in opposition the Chinese Communist Party - and the great people's revolutionary masses which it organizes - and the Guomindang, the continuation of the class-struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie."(12) In the past the Chinese Communist Party had been entrusted with the big front-line battles, such as that historical one in 1958 against Peng Dehuai for the Great Leap Forward and the People's Commons, but the class-struggle had never been brought to the level of Cultural Revolution.

In February 1967 Mao said: "In the past we conducted the struggle in the countryside, in the factories, in the field of culture, and we carried out the plans of socialist education. But all this could not solve the problem because we have not found the right form or method for mobilizing the great masses in an open and complete way, from low to high, to declare our more obscure side."

This form of mobilization of the masses on a large scale to defend and develop Socialism was later discovered by Mao himself in the Proletarian Cultural Revolution. This was an enormous contribution to the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism because it entrusts - not only to the Party or to the State - but to the great masses in first person the task of defending Socialism against the assaults of the dispossessed bourgeoisie and of the new bourgeoisie which Socialism throws up.

The Cultural Revolution gives free play to the revolutionary charge of the masses and to their enthusiasm for Socialism. Traitors and renegades are unmasked, denounced and discharged and the power which is lost is re-acquired through the mobilization of hundreds of millions, who can express themselves freely in the great public debates and in the dazebaos, the manifestos written large and by hand. The participation of millions of students in the Red Guards movement, with the aim of excluding the bourgeoisie from teaching and giving it instead a revolutionary proletarian character, is proverbial. Similarly renowned are the mass movements so that "agriculture might learn from Dazhai and industry from Daqing", two model experiences which had the aim of developing agriculture and industry along the economic lines laid down by Mao.

The masses, set in motion on a large scale under the direction of the proletariat and its Party, in the course of the struggle between the two lines, the two classes, and the two roads, live through new experiences and assume new organizational responsibilities through their own representatives in the Revolutionary Committees. These were new organs of government created in the course of the Cultural Revolution those members were elected using methods similar to those of

the Paris Commune.

We have said that the Cultural Revolution was directed against the bourgeoisie. But who exactly was this bourgeoisie, where was it to be found? Mao tells us: "The representatives of the bourgeoisie infiltrated into the Party, the government, the army, and various cultural sectors, form a mixture of counter-revolutionary revisionists. If the occasion were to present itself they would take power and transform the dictatorship of the proletariat into a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. We have discovered some of these individuals; others have not yet been ferreted out; yet others - for example individuals like Khrushchev- still enjoy our trust, are brought up to be our successors and are to be found at present in our midst". (13) This declaration cannot but strike us today in the light of subsequent events, in China and in other already socialist countries, but at the time it created considerable commotion. How was it possible that comrades - or more precisely Party leaders- who had overcome all the severe trials of the revolution - could be bourgeois, counter-revolutionaries? However, if we reflect a little we can see that only idealists could believe that within the Proletariat Party all was pure and immaculate, immune from bourgeois influence, from revisionism, individualism, arrivisme, bureaucratism and egoism.

The Cultural Revolution aimed to stamp out revisionism, to take up that sector of power usurped by the representatives of the bourgeoisie who had infiltrated the Party. It planned to consolidate and develop the economic basis, and exercise the total dictatorship of the proletariat in the superstructure, that is in politics, ideology, culture, teaching, art and State institutions.

The steel brush of the proletariat would have to reach into every corner to make a spin-cleaning of the old attitudes, concepts and measures of the bourgeoisie, and revolutionize everything on the basis of Marxism-Leninism-Mao's Thought.

The final objective was that of transforming the conscience of the masses in line with the proletarian concept of the world, and of forming and educating millions of successors to the cause of proletarian revolution. An enormous and complex task, but one which was absolutely necessary in order to be able to continue the revolution and advance towards Communism. An undertaking of historical size, already attempted by Lenin and Stalin, although not in these proportions or completeness of strategy. Had Mao not time to bring it to completion before he died, it would certainly have been impossible for the revisionists and the bourgeoisie to regain power, and to destroy what had already been constructed in a revolutionary sense within the economy, the State and society.

Mao has always considered the transformation of men as one of the two aspects of the socialist transformation, the other being the transformation of the system: the economic basis and superstructure. It is not casually that he explicitly asserts that "the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution is a great revolution which moves man at the deepest level of consciousness, tending to resolve the problem of his concept of world.(14)

Many practical steps are taken to this end, among them the participation of cadres and many young intellectuals in collective production. The study of historical and

dialectic materialism on the part of workers and peasants, among them the creation of groups of artists, poets and painters, the founding of "barefoot doctors" - that is groups of young doctors who go to work in the remote countryside; the formation of school offering half-time study and half-time work, the distribution at the mass level of the works of the five Leaders, the selection of the students among the workers and the peasants who have practical experience.

Making revolution, to transform the world and ourselves, in short this the basic concept that Mao wanted the entire Chinese people to acquire.

Concerning the productive labour of cadres, for whom specific structures called "7th May schools" have been founded, Mao explains their importance as follows: "It is absolutely necessary to maintain the system of the cadres' participation in the collective production of labour. Our Party and our State cadres are simple workers and not gentlemen to be a burden on the shoulders of the people. Participating in the collective work of production, cadres maintain strong and constant relationships with the workers. This is a measure of importance in a socialist system because it helps to overcome bureaucracy and to prevent revisionism and dogmatism". (15)

Whereas for the re-education of young intellectuals Mao indicated the following approaches: "It is really necessary that young intellectuals should go into the country to be re-educated by the poor and lower middle-class peasants" (16)

The whole Party, the whole country, the entire people, all institutions must participate in this movement of transformation of the system and ourselves. It had also another concrete goal that is gradually to resolve the contradiction between industry and agriculture, town and countryside, intellectual work and manual work. Concerning this Mao gave a very important instruction in which he establishes "The People's Liberation Army must be a great school. In this school politics, military and cultural subjects should be studied; it must be also concerned with agricultural and subsidiary production and also run small and medium size factories to produce things that are necessary and which could be sold to the State for an equivalent value. This great school could also be involved in mass labour and participate in the socialist movement in the factories and countryside... The Army must also participate in the struggle of the Cultural Revolution to criticize the bourgeoisie. So at the same time the Army can devote itself to study, to agricultural and industrial work and mass work. Obviously these tasks must be coordinated in the most appropriate way....

The workers, who are mostly engaged in the industrial work, must at the same time study military subjects, politics and culture. They must be concerned with the socialist educational movement and criticize the bourgeoisies. When it is possible they must dedicate themselves to agricultural and subsidiary production as happens in the petrol field of Daqing.

The peasants of the Communes, who are mostly engaged in agricultural work (including silviculture, sheep-rearing, subsidiary activities, and fishculture) at the same time must study military subjects, politics and culture. When it is possible they must run small collective factories, and they must also criticize the

bourgeoisie.

This is also true for the students: who are principally dedicated to study, at the same time they must learn other things such as industrial and agricultural work and the study of military subjects. The duration of the studies must be reduced, because it is necessary to revolutionize the teaching system, the dominion of bourgeois intellectuals in our schools must have an end.

Also people who work in trade, services, body of the Party or the Government must behave in the same way when it is possible". (17)

Perhaps Mao's most important strategic measure, of which he was presumably confident - considering his privileged relationship with the young Red Guards - was the formation and education of millions of successors for the cause of Proletarian Revolution.

Concerning this argument he wrote a memorable piece which summarize the essence of the lesson about the capitalist restoration in the Ussr and about the class conflict which rages in China and in other socialist countries.

"To be sure that the Party and the country do not change colour - Mao stated - we must have not only the right line and politics, but also form and educate millions of successors to the cause of the Proletarian Revolution.

In the last analysis, forming the successors to the revolutionary cause of the proletariat means to decide whether or not there will be someone to carry on the cause of Marxist- Leninist Revolution begun by the old generation of Proletarian Revolutionaries; whether or not the leadership of our Party and our State will remain in the hands of Proletarian Revolutionaries; whether or not our descendants will continue to follow the right road signposted by Marxism-Leninism, or , in other words whether we will be able to prevent the rise of Khrushchev revisionism in China. In short, this is a kernel point of extreme importance, it is a matter of life or death for our Party and our Country. It is a fundamental matter for the Proletarian Revolutionary Cause of the next hundred, thousand or ten thousand years" (18)

Contrary to what has been sustained by trotskyists, "Ultra-left" and anarchists, as a result of their ancient aversion to the Marxist-Leninist Party and its leading role in revolution and Socialism, and of their opportunism as regards the petit-bourgeois revolutionaries, who are insensitive to proletarian discipline and democratic centralism, the Chinese Communist Party has had a central role in the Cultural Revolution.

It is enough to think that all decisions regarding the Cultural Revolution have been taken by the Political Office, the Central Committee, and the Congresses of the Party, starting with the two historical documents which trace the line of the Cultural Revolution, that is the Circular of May 16th 1966 and the Decision in 16 steps of August 8th of the same year drawn up under the personal direction of Mao and adopted by the Central Committee.

It is enough to think that in the great movements of the Red Guards and in all other mass movements the Party was present within an avant-garde role. It is enough to think that in all State institutions and in new revolutionary bodies, such as

Revolutionary Committees, the Party operated directly with a leading role which conformed to Mao's directives " Within the following seven sectors: industry, agriculture, trade, culture and education, army, government and the Party, it is the Party which must exercise its leadership on the others." (19)

This, aside from the fact that a part of the Party, especially the highest levels, had been attacked by Mao and the Cultural Revolution.

It was not a new event that the Party had been attacked by the class struggle. In fact up till Mao's death, the Chinese Communist Party experienced eleven important conflicts between the two lines, inevitable and necessary conflicts as mirror of the class struggle existing in society. Especially if we consider the dimensions of the Chinese Communist Party which, from some tens of members perhaps fifty at the act of foundation on the 1st July 1921, passed, before the Cultural Revolution, to 17 million members, of whom only 3 million 400 thousand had a membership card, before the foundation of the People's Republic of China proclaimed on 1st October 1949. Among them those who had entered the Party in the Twenties were no more than 700.

The last three struggles, those against the revisionist gangs of Liu and Deng, Lin Biao, Deng took place during the Cultural Revolution. Substantially, those gangs opposed the transformation of the Democratic Revolution in Socialist Revolution denied that in Socialism the principal contradiction is still that between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie and thought that the main task should be the development of production and not the fight against the bourgeoisie.

The struggle against the gang of Liu and Deng ended at the IX Party National Congress which took place from the 1st to 24th of April 1969. The struggle against the gang of Lin Biao ended at the X Congress which was held from the 24th to 28th of August 1973, while the struggle against the gang of Deng is still open because of Mao's unexpected death, who, nevertheless, at the meeting of the Party's Political Office held on April 1976 7th, had approved a resolution which ordered: "The destitution of Deng Xiaoping from all his functions within and without the Party; with the conservation of his role of member of the Party under observation".

In particular, Deng opposed Mao's directive which said: "The class struggle is the axis around which everything rotates."(20)

The Chinese proletariat has been the leading strength of the Cultural Revolution as well as in the Revolution for New Democracy. Although at that time it was constituted of four million workers, whereas in the sixties it was about 15 million in a boundless country with the great majority of its population peasants.

This a confirmation of the idea that it is not the number, but its economic collocation, its ideology and its class characteristics, which give the proletariat its hegemonist role in the Proletarian Revolution.

"Ours - Mao indicated - is a country with 700 million inhabitants, and the working class is the leading class. The leading function of the working class in the Great Cultural Proletarian Revolution and in all sectors of activity this has to be brought out. The working class, too must constantly elevate its political awareness during

the struggle." (21)

It has to be underlined how Mao links the leading role of the working class to the necessity of a transformation of itself during the struggle. In effect reality has demonstrated that the working class, in order to work out well its leading functions in economy, in the State, culture, in the Party should be able to cope, also on the ideologic side, with the foxy revisionists.

For these reasons Mao always exhorted the working class to study hard and deeply Marxism-Leninism to elevate its political awareness and improve its revolutionary culture. In his great work, already mentioned, he used even his personal experience to convince the working class to transform itself saying "In class struggle and in that against nature, the working class transforms the entire society and in the meantime it transforms itself. With work the working class has to go on learning, removing its faults progressively, the working class must progress incessantly. Let's take ourselves, here present, every year each of us has a certain growth, that means that every year people transform themselves. Once I had a lot of non-Marxist ideas, but only later on have I assimilated Marxism. I studied Marxism in books and I began to change my ideology, but the real transformation happened in particular during a prolonged class struggle. So I must go on studying in order to improve myself or otherwise I shall regress." (22)

Mao was sure that with a working class ideologically, culturally and politically well-educated no bourgeois fortress could stand up. Everything could be attacked and conquered by the working class, even the teaching. Consequently without taking care of the rage, shouts and scandal of Chinese and International bourgeoisie he pronounced the wonderful directive about the direction of schools and universities by the working class constituted by the following words: "In carrying out the Proletarian Revolution in teaching the working class has to lead it; the working masses must associate and realize in strict collaboration with the soldiers of the People's Liberation Army, the triple revolutionary union, grouping together also the active elements who, among students, teachers and workers of schools are ready to carry on to the end the Proletarian Revolution in teaching. The propaganda working groups must remain for a long time in the schools and participate in all the tasks of struggle - criticism - transformation. Moreover they must maintain their leading role for ever. In the countryside it is the task of ex-poor or medium-poor peasants, who are the strongest allies of the working class, to be concerned with schools." (23)

If the working class is the leading power of the Cultural Revolution, the young Red Guards, boys and girls together, are the pioneers and its most important attack force. The first cannonades, at mass level, are those from schools and universities. Encouraged by Mao's dazebao entitled: "Fire against the General Quarter" written on 5th of August 1966 in support of the dazebao written by 23 students and teachers, of both sexes, from Peking University, tens of millions of students fling themselves ardently into the Cultural Revolution.

The password that Mao sent to the Red Guards is "It is right to rebel against the reactionaries" and not only "it is right to rebel" as the trotskyists and anarchists of

Italy and other countries sustained. This password resounded in all the schools and universities of China which became powder-magazines. On the first of August 1966 Mao wrote to the Red Guards of the Secondary School annexed to the University of Qinghua in Peking "The Revolutionary actions of the Red Guards express the indignation and condemnation of the class of land owners, bourgeoisie, imperialists, revisionists and their lackeys who exploit and oppress workers, peasants, revolutionary intellectuals. They demonstrate that it is right to rebel against reactionaries. I express my warm support of them" (24)

On this basis the Red Guards rise up, united like a single man and attacking everywhere and everyone, inside and outside schools and universities, scholastic and university authorities and bourgeois representatives infiltrated within the Party. Six times, starting from the 18th August 1966 and the following months of the same year Mao, meet in Tian An Men Square 13 million Red Guards and other revolutionary masses.

The heroic gesture of the Red Guards became famous throughout the world, influencing and filling with enormous enthusiasm even the Italian students, who emulated their exploits in the Great Rebellion of Sixtyeight.

The People's Liberation Army, founded and educated by Mao as a force for combating but also a working, productive strength, integrated with the masses and at their service, had a very important role in the Cultural Revolution. It sustained the revolutionary masses and the socialist transformation of agriculture and industry actively, having also developed the transformation of itself, proletarianising itself. A proof of this could be the abolition of ranks, the assignation of the first place to proletarian revolutionary politics and the study of Marxism-Leninism-Mao's Thought.

Actually it can be said, in the light of facts, that through the Cultural Revolution, the construction of Socialism in China has had a new development. Nevertheless Mao was conscious of the fact that what was already done was not sufficient to prevent the restoration of capitalism.

From the beginning of the Great Cultural Revolution onwards Mao thought that it would have been necessary to make other revolutions within a short time, saying that "The current Great Cultural Revolution is only the first of this kind, it will be necessary to make others. In revolution it will be possible to know the winners only after a long historic period. If we do not behave in the right way, the restoration of capitalism could occur at any time. Members of the Party and entire people must not believe that everything will go well after one, two, three or four Great Cultural Revolutions. We must stay on our guard and not relax our vigilance" (25)

Coherent with this line, Mao in the last months of his life, spread important directives about the study of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin's teachings regarding the dictatorship of the proletariat, the consideration of the class struggle as an axis, the limitation of bourgeois rights, the consideration that revisionism is the principal enemy to fight and the reduction of the differences (between industry and agriculture, town and countryside, intellectual work and manual work). Seeing the

obstacles that Deng's clique opposed, he persuaded himself that it was necessary to mobilize again great masses in a new Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

Unfortunately he did not have enough time, and after his death, no more than two years later, the revisionists headed by Deng completely took power plunging glorious Socialist China into a dark fascist dictatorship.

Once again emerged the scientific truth of Mao's thesis, according to which "We have already had an important victory. Nevertheless the defeated class will continue struggling. These people still exist, and also this class. So we cannot call it a final victory. Not even in the next decades will we do so. We should not stop watching. Following Leninist thought the final victory not only requires the efforts of Proletariat and great masses of one's country, but depends also on the victory of the world Revolution and the abolition of man's exploitation of man throughout the world, so that all mankind will be emancipated. Consequently it is wrong to talk about the final victory of revolution in our country thoughtlessly, this is against Leninism and also does not correspond to reality." (26)

This does not mean that Socialism in one country cannot be reached, but only that the definitive victory of Socialism can be reached when the red flag waves on the whole planet.

With the fall of the great red bastion of China, after the Soviet one twenty years before, a phase of Proletariat dictatorship history comes to an end. Now we must open a new one based on the experience accumulated in the past.

We do not know how long a time will pass before that day, but certainly a new phase in history of the dictatorship of the proletariat will be opened. From the Commune of Paris to the Soviet October 46 years went by and other 32 years before the Chinese October. How many years have we to wait before the October of another country? In Italy we are making every effort to hasten it, the sooner the proletariat wakes up and take strength the sooner the red flag will wave in Italy.

7) Our trust in socialism remains intact and firm

The restoration of capitalism in countries which have been socialist, with all the events and upsets that this implies, does not change our mood about Socialism, our trust in it is untouched and firm.

On the basis of Mao's teachings about the theory on the continuation of revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat and on the Cultural Revolution, as on the basis of comparison of the USSR and China respectively after the deaths of Stalin and Mao, we know very well it was not Socialism that brought misery, hunger, unemployment, exploitation, oppression and social and State disintegration to those peoples, but the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie through the revisionists. Undoubtedly the fascist dictatorship of the revisionists in countries which had been socialist has brought inestimable damage to the image, prestige and honour of Socialism. Nevertheless gradually and through matured experience, the due comparisons and the study of history and the struggle between Marxism-Leninism-Mao's Thought and revisionism, peoples will become conscious of the substantial

difference between capitalism and Socialism and will place their trust in the latter again. We are deeply convinced that Socialism will be in fashion soon, very much in fashion.

In fact those who want the emancipation of the proletariat and the whole of mankind, the extinction of the State and Parties, people's self-government, the abolition of classes and class struggles, of any kind of war, right or wrong, revolutionary or counter-revolutionary, of any type of violence, the suppression of the exploitation of one man by another and capitalist private propriety, social justice, the complete and authentic parity between women and men, the welfare of workers, the abolition of underdevelopment and territorial disproportion, ecologic recovery, cannot but want the Socialism. That is, that social system which give the opportunity, through the dictatorship of the proletariat, to pass to Communism where finally, gradually with consecutive phases, all this can be realized.

Our models of Socialism are those built by Lenin, Stalin and Mao, although our idea of Socialism drawn in the Third National Congress of the PMLI held in December 1985 has a closer correspondence with the reality of our country, that is, not a mechanic copy of those.

It is sure that from those two great historical experiences we have gained the deep conviction that the point of all our attention in Socialism must be the uninterrupted revolution following Mao's theory, the complete involvement of the revolutionary masses in the construction of Socialism, the transformation of the world concept of the masses, the proletarianization of the Party.

In particular the masses under the leadership of the proletariat have to lead and control all sectors of the economy, of the State, politics and every other part of the super- structure. The leaders of the Party and the State must have a real proletarian ideology, in politics and social practice, living among the workers with the same salaries and the same accommodation.

Considering the destruction made by the revisionists in mass conscience and the ill-fated influence that the Ussr events have had, we are perfectly conscious that Socialism is not around the corner, nevertheless objectively it is always the historical goal of the proletariat. In Italy we have to overcome several historical hairpin bends before getting it.

The first of these is the realization by the proletariat that if they want to assume power there is no way except Socialism, that it cannot be reached peacefully through parliamentary approaches.

The Indonesian experience in 1965, that of Chile in 1973, and that of "Piano Solo" and "Gladio" in Italy have clearly shown that the extermination of Marxist-Leninists and revolutionaries is the remedy to hand for preventing them from assuming power by legal and parliamentarian methods.

The second historical hairpin bend, which proceed in parallel with the first, is the realization by advanced workers, intellectuals, revolutionary youth that only the PMLI has the firm intention of following to the end the road to way of the Socialist Revolution, and consequently it is the only party which deserves their support and militancy.

When the two historical hairpin bends have been overcome the way of the proletariat and the work of union of social and political components necessary to revolution should be easier and speedier.

All depends on the possibility that the voice of the PMLI be heard as soon as possible in every town, and even where there are pioneers ready to listen to it and willing to make sacrifices for the socialist cause.

In Italy the cause of Socialism has never had real pioneers. People like Andrea Costa, Camillo Prampolini, Turati, Treves, Leonida Bissolati, Antonio Labriola, Pietro Nenni and Sandro Pertini were not, nor were Amedeo Bordiga, Antonio Gramsci and Palmiro Togliatti and still less Ingrao and the leaders of the absurd, misleading and counter-revolutionary party of Communist Refoundation. The facts show that only those who hold firmly the red flag of the five Leaders of International Proletariat and of the PMLI can be considered pioneers of the cause of Socialism.

The struggle against presidentialism and neo-fascism makes most urgent this realization on the part of those who already believe in Socialism, and in the advanced elements of proletariat, masses and youth, a special hope which we place in our young people.

In fact if industries, schools, universities and demonstrations among the people do break out, it is unthinkable to stop the neo-fascists, presidentialists and P2 members who, with the connivance and the inertia of the coward PDS and PRC little by little made Italy wear the black shirt again. It is not difficult to foresee that without the hard class struggle soon the second republic will be totally realized. For some time in Italy we have been living in a typical P2, neo-fascist, presidentialist and mafia regime, without the masses being aware of it because apart from the PMLI nobody puts them on the alert and mobilize them.

At most, old and new revisionists and troskyists can admit that there are "authoritarian tendencies" but without doing anything concrete to denounce and struggle against them, on the contrary they favour them by not criticizing the capitalist system and participating actively in the institutional and electoral counter-reforms.

Little by little the whole democratic bourgeois State system has been changed in a fascist sense. Parliament has been totally deprived of power, powers have been concentrated in the Government, and the Presidency of the Republic; the State has been rendered fascist through the super prefects, super attorneys, high commissariats, and super police: the country has been militarized, especially the South, militarism, bellicism, nationalism and interventism have taken land, as is demonstrated by the participation of the Italian Army, earlier in the Persia Gulf and now in Somalia. The old electoral system has been suppressed and substituted with new fascist electoral rules, monarchy, Mussolini fascism, gladiators, coup d'état supporters and terrorism have been rehabilitated. Mafia and corruption rule in the government, in the State, in parliamentary parties and in the economic system, while in industries, schools and universities restoration and fascist discipline rule. We have changed from a bourgeois democratic regime to a neo-fascist regime,

which paradoxically has been propagandized as a "revolution". This has been realized on the basis of Gelli and P2 masonic loggia the so-called "plan of democratic rebirth".

The PMLI alone, isolated even by the parliamentary "left" boycotted by the mass-media - without fear of the reactions of P2 supporters, - and persecuted by the right of the police and the magistrature. From the II National Congress held on the 6th, 7th and 8th of November 1982 without going further back it denounced the notorious "plan" and its makers. Today we continue denouncing and fighting them tenaciously, and appealing to anti-fascists that they find the courage to come out in the open and help us. We do not want happen to them what happened to the liberals, socialists and would-be communists of the Twenties who underestimated Mussolini and fascism and opened the way for them.

We tirelessly ask anti-fascist and progressive people - including Catholics, Christians and people of any other religious belief - to break the umbilical cord with bourgeois democracy and capitalism and fight with us, not to go back to the first Republic - which is dead and buried or to re-create the Constitution of 1948 which is now reduced to a colander or a piece of rubber which everybody stretches as he wishes - but to go towards Socialism.

At this point defending the first Republic would be a retrograde battle, a misleading manoeuvre, a new notorious attempt to enslave proletariat and masses within capitalism and bourgeois democracy.

This kind of democracy - which constitutes an historical, political and practical progress with respect to feudal democracy - can no longer express anything progressive, and has moreover twice it led us to fascism, yesterday with the face of Mussolini, today with those of Bossi, Cossiga, Segni and other political cheats. This kind of democracy has nothing that can be called Universal, and those who have already known and experimented it such as the Italian proletariat and people, are conscious that it has a clear class mark and that it can be overcome only by Socialist Democracy, which means democracy for the people and dictatorship for the bourgeoisie.

Socialist Democracy is not the "extension" of bourgeois democracy but its overtaking, the upsetting of its sign and practice to give power to the proletariat and crush the resistance of the scattered bourgeoisie.

Bourgeois democracy is founded on private propriety, on the law of the strongest, on the freedom of the capitalists, on the oppression of the workers, on inconclusive and deceptive parliamentarism and on free mandate, individualism, egoism and on the motto "get rich". On the contrary the Socialist Democracy is founded on collective property, revolutionary altruism, the freedom of the workers, the oppression of the bourgeoisie, the self-government of the people and on direct democracy, on the spirit of serving the people, and has the goal of emancipating the proletariat and society as a whole.

Without the struggle for Socialism it will be impossible to get free in one blow from neo-fascism and the bourgeois democracy which constantly generate fascism, protect the capitalist economic system and keep the masses oppressed through

electoral, parliamentary, pacifist and constitutional illusions.

We are convinced that in Italy there is no democratic, progressive, anti-fascist, anti-capitalist and revolutionary future without starting the struggle for Socialism. We are ready and will continue working till the proletariat and the new generations rise up and under the great red flags of the PMLI begin to attack the sky. It does not matter how long we have to wait, but we are sure that sooner or later it will happen.

In any case we will continue with alacrity and with more enthusiasm than before, carrying out our revolutionary work repeating trustfully with Mao that " the socialist system in the end will substitute the capitalist system; it is an objective law, free from man's will. Although reactionary forces try to stop the wheel of history, sooner or later the revolution will break out and inevitably will win." (27) Eternal Glory to Mao, Great Leader of the International Proletariat and of Oppressed Nations and Peoples.

Long live the Proletarian Revolution and Socialism!

Long live the militant unity of authentic Marxist-Leninist Parties, Organizations and Groups!

Long live Proletarian Internationalism!

Firenze, 22nd June 1993

This essay was presented to the International Seminar on Mao's Thought that took place in Gelsenkirchen (Germany) on the 6th and 7th November 1993 to celebrate the centenary of Mao's birthday.

NOTES

- 1) Quoted in "Let us advance along the road opened by Socialist October Revolution" article by the editorial staffs of "The People's Journal", "The Red Flag" and "The Liberation Army Journal" of 6.11.67.
- 2) On Contradiction, August 1937.
- 3) Speeches at the Yen-an Conference about literature and art, May 23rd 1942.
- 4) Judgments expressed in 1975 and 1976.
- 5) Speech at the National Conference for Propaganda of the Chinese Communist Party, March 12nd, 1957.
- 6) Speech at the 2nd Plenary Session of the VIII Central Committee of Chinese Communist Party, November 15th 1956.
- 7) Report at 2nd Plenary Session of the VII Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, March 5th 1949.
- 8) Speech at the National Conference for Propaganda of the Chinese Communist Party, idem.
- 9) We must have a strong faith in mass majority. Speech at XIII Session of the

Supreme State Conference, October 13th 1957.

10) Quoted in "The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution will always shine in all its splendour", Article from "The People's Journal" May 16th, 1976.

11) Speech at Working Meeting of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party held in Beidaihe in August 1962 and at X Plenary Session of the VIII Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, September 1962.

12) Cited in "Hibiscus Country in the sparkling morning" article from "People's Journal" April 10th, 1968.

13) Circular of Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, May 16th, 1966.

14) Quoted in "Let us advance along the road opened by Socialist October Revolution", article by the editorial staffs of "The People's Journal", "The Red Flag" and "The Liberation Army Journal" of November 6th, 1967.

15) Quoted in "The False Communism of Khrushchev and the Historical Lessons it teaches to the World" July 14th, 1964.

16) Directive during The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

17) Quoted in "The whole country must become one great school of Mao Zedong's Thought", article of "The People's Journal", August 1st, 1966.

18) Quoted in "The False Communism of Khrushchev and the Historical Lessons it teaches to the World", idem.

19) Speech at a open Working Conference of The Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, January 30th, 1962.

20) Quoted in "Nothing in the world is impossible, if we are determined to climb to the top", article in "The People's Journal", January 1st, 1976.

21) Directive during The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

22) On the right solution to the contractions within the people, February 27th, 1957.

23) Directive during The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

24) Letter to The Red Guards, August 1st, 1966.

25) Quoted in "A Lighthouse for the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution", article from "The People's Journal", May 23rd, 1966.

26) Conversation of October 1968 quoted in IX National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, April 1st, 1969.

27) Speech at the Meeting of The Supreme Soviet of the Ussr for the celebration of the 40^o Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution, November 6th, 1957.