

Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions

Part 5: Culture and the Superstructure

Introduction

In 1967, at the height of the mass upsurge of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in China, the following statement by Mao Tsetung was put forward as one of the decisive guiding lines for this unprecedented struggle: "The proletariat must exercise all-around dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in the realm of the superstructure, including the various spheres of culture." (Peking Review, No. 39, September 26, 1969, p. 9.) Here Mao was not only stressing the great importance of the superstructure in general, but of culture in particular. And he was emphasizing not only the need for the proletariat to exercise dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in general but specifically to sweep the bourgeoisie off the cultural stage and defeat its attempts to dominate this sphere, which plays such a major role in the ideological field, in shaping public opinion and influencing the economic base, the fundamental structure of society.

From the very beginning, during the new-democratic as well as the socialist stages of the revolution in China, Mao attached great importance to the role of culture and he continued to develop and deepen a revolutionary line to guide the struggle in this sphere. Indeed the further development of Marxist theory on and a basic line for culture constitutes yet another of Mao Tsetung's immortal contributions. Specifically, Mao gave great emphasis to the area of literature and art, to their role in the overall class struggle. And, under the guidance of his line, the Chinese people made a qualitative leap in this critical area, beyond anything previously achieved by mankind, including in the socialist countries.

This article, the fifth in a series on Mao Tsetung's immortal contributions (for the first four articles, see Revolution April-May, June, July and August 1978) will focus on this question of culture and specifically on Mao's leadership in developing a revolutionary literature and art serving the struggle of the proletariat to achieve its historic mission of communism.

Of course, in this area as in others, in making his great and immortal contributions, Mao was standing on the shoulders of the great Marxists who preceded him, and especially of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. It is thus correct to place Mao's contributions against the background of the development of the Marxist theory of art previous to him.

Marx and Engels

The starting point for Marxism is that man's conscious activities, of which literature and art are a part, do not stand by themselves or on their own, and of course do not create reality, but rather, as Marx put it in a famous sentence: "It is not the consciousness of men that determines their being, but on the contrary it is their social being that determines their consciousness." (Preface and Introduction to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Peking, Foreign Languages Press, 1976, p. 3.)

In other words, the starting point is the material world and the economic activity of people. Material conditions determine the activities, development and products of the human mind, and not the other way around. And as Marx explained further in this same "Preface":

In the social production of their existence, men enter into definite, necessary relations, which are independent of their will, namely, relations of production corresponding to a determinate stage of development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which there arises a legal and political superstructure and to which there correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life-process in general. (*Ibid.*)

In other words, society arises out of the basic need of people to eat, to be clothed, have shelter and so on, and in order to carry this out people have to come together in some particular form so that they can collectively transform nature, to make the various things they need to live. Thus the nature of society is rooted in the material requirements that people have. But society and nature are in a constant process of change—and not a cyclical change, coming out the same way it began, but a process of spiral-like change progressing from the lower to the higher level and marked by leaps.

Thus today we have things undreamed of even 100 years ago, let alone a million years ago or more when the earliest forms of human life were forming the most primitive kind of society. This is one of the basic indications of how society is not only rooted in the



Mao making a speech in the liberated area, around the time of his Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art.

organized struggle of people coming together to battle and transform nature, but is developing from a lower to a higher level. And besides this, Marx's great discovery ("the guiding principle of my studies," as he referred to it) was that this development of human society is ultimately determined by the development of the basic forces which human beings have developed in their interaction with nature to produce what they need and want—in other words by the *productive forces* of society. This includes the tools and instruments which people develop, and it also includes, most importantly, the people themselves, with all their skills and abilities, who actually do the producing.

In order to use these productive forces, people have to enter into certain relations with regard to the overall process of production in society. And the nature of these relations will differ and change in accordance with the development of the productive forces of mankind. Thus these relations were termed by Marx the *relations of production* of a society.

As Marx goes on to say in the quotation above, these production relations constitute the economic structure of society. They are also often called the *economic base*. And this base is the "real foundation," as Marx says, of the whole legal, political, ideological and cultural *superstructure* of society. The political institutions, legal structures, habits, customs, artistic conventions, philosophies, ways of thinking and looking at the world of a given society and epoch all belong to the superstructure. This is true of the philosophy, culture, etc., representing the oppressed class(es) as well as that of the dominant class. But, of course, as Marx and Engels stressed, "The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of the ruling class." (*Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Peking, FLP, 1970, p. 55.) In short, in order to establish its domination in the spheres of ideology, culture, etc., a particular class must first seize political power, establish itself as the dominant class in this most decisive part of the superstructure.

But, again, not just any kind of political power and ruling ideology can be established in any given historical conditions. These things, belonging to the superstructure, will be ultimately determined by the nature of the economic base, which in turn will, in the final analysis, be determined by the level of development of the productive forces.

In other words, as Marx summed it up in a letter early in his development as a Marxist:

Assume a particular level of development of men's productive forces and you will get a particular form of commerce and consumption. Assume particular stages of development in production, commerce and consumption and you will have a corresponding social system, a corresponding organization of the family, of social estates or of classes, in a word, a corresponding

civil society. Assume such a civil society and you will get a political system appropriate to it, a system which is only the official expression of civil society. (Letter to P.V. Annenkov, December 28, 1846, Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1975, p. 30.)

And, as Marxism also teaches us, assume a certain social system, civil society, political system, etc., and you will get a certain sort of ideology and intellectual life, including a certain sort of culture, with literature and art a very important part of this. The intellectual life includes, as noted earlier, the ideas representing the oppressed as well as the ruling class—to cite one outstanding example, Marxism itself is a product of *capitalist* society. But, as also emphasized just above, only when an oppressed class rises to the position of the ruling class—only when it overthrows the existing political power and establishes its own state power—can its ideas become the dominant ones in society.

This method of studying and understanding society and history, whose basic principles Marx first laid out, is known as *historical materialism*. Engels summed it up as

... that view of the course of history which seeks the ultimate cause and the great moving power of all important historic events in the economic development of society, in the changes in the modes of production and exchange, in the consequent division of society into distinct classes, and in the struggles of these classes against one another. (Introduction to the English edition of *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Peking, FLP, 1975, pp. 23-4.)

This view and method of historical materialism is the basic framework for the correct understanding of the meaning and role of literature and art. Literature and art and culture generally are part of the superstructure. But it should be recalled and re-emphasized that the relationship between the base and superstructure is not rigid, static or one-way. While Marxism is materialist, it is also dialectical. The superstructure is not a passive effect of the base, but there is a constant interaction between them. Engels forcefully spoke to this point in combatting mechanical, as opposed to dialectical, materialism:

According to the materialist conception of history, the *ultimately* determining factor in history is the production and reproduction of real life. Neither Marx nor I have ever asserted more than this. Hence if somebody twists this into saying that the economic factor is the *only* determining one, he transforms that proposition into a meaningless, abstract, absurd phrase. The economic situation is the basis, but the various elements of the superstructure—political forms of the class struggle and its results, such as constitutions established by the victorious class after a successful battle, etc., juridical forms, and especially the reflections of all these real struggles in the brains of the participants, political, legal, philosophical theories, religious views and their further development into systems of dogmas—also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles and in many cases determine their *form* in particular. There is an interaction of all these elements in which, amid all the endless host of accidents (that is, of things and events whose inner interconnection is so remote or so impossible of proof that we can regard it as non-existent and neglect it), the economic movement is finally bound to assert itself. (Letter to J. Bloch, September 21, 1890, *Selected Correspondence*, pp. 394-5.)

And although the base is overall principal and is the determining thing, it is also true, as Mao points out, that:

When the superstructure (politics, culture, etc.) obstructs the development of the economic base, political and cultural changes become principal and decisive. ("On Contradiction," *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 336.)

In other words, the relationship between base and superstructure must be seen dialectically, not mechanically or metaphysically. This is a point which Mao gave great emphasis to, and further developed, specifically in relation to socialist society. It assumes great significance in looking at Mao's contribution to the theory and basic line for revolutionary culture.

Returning to the founders of scientific socialism, it is important here to note that Marx applied the stand, viewpoint and method of historical and dialectical materialism chiefly to the political economy of capitalism and secondarily to analyzing the class struggle in the political sphere as it was developing, especially in Europe, when he was alive. After his early collaborative efforts with Engels (in *The Holy Family* and

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The German Ideology) Marx did not go on and develop any systematic and all-around theory on the ideological (including cultural) aspects of the class struggle in general, nor of literature and art in particular.

Engels, on the other hand, did devote some systematic work to such forms—notably in parts of *Anti-Dühring* and in his *Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*, as well as in some other scattered essays (the Introduction to the English edition of *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* being a good example). But at the same time, Engels, too, did not devote any systematic attention to art. The most that we have from both Marx and Engels on this topic are more or less off-hand comments about past or then-present writers and works.

However, there is the following brief but profound aside by Marx in one of his works:

The social revolution of the nineteenth century [Marx means the proletarian revolution] cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future... Earlier revolutions required recollections of past world history in order to drug themselves concerning their own content. In order to arrive at its own content, the revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury their dead. (*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, New York, International Publishers, 1963, p. 18.)

This statement, with its emphasis on the great difference between the proletarian socialist revolution and all past revolutions and the way in which this carries over into the area of proletarian art and culture is a theme which is prominent in Mao's contributions to this topic, and one which will be returned to below.

Lenin

Lenin also cannot be said to have developed a complete and all-around theory of art and culture. But Lenin was, of course, intimately involved with a successful proletarian revolution and therefore with the setting up of a socialist society. And Lenin did lay out certain basic principles which played a key part in laying the groundwork for the development of a revolutionary literature and art serving the struggle of the proletariat.

What Lenin particularly stressed in this regard was the necessity for proletarian culture to be closely integrated with the overall revolutionary movement of the proletariat. In the upsurge of the 1905 revolution in Russia, for instance, Lenin spoke of the need for the development of "party literature," and asked:

What is this principle of party literature? It is not simply that, for the socialist proletariat, literature cannot be a means of enriching individuals or groups; it cannot, in fact, be an individual undertaking, independent of the common cause of the proletariat. Down with non-partisan writers! Down with literary supermen! Literature must become part of the common cause of the proletariat, a cog and a screw of one single great Social-Democratic [communist] mechanism set in motion by the entire politically-conscious vanguard of the entire working class. Literature must become a component of organized, planned and integrated Social-Democratic Party work. ("Party Organisation and Party Literature," *Collected Works*, Vol. 10, p. 45.)

The same theme was emphasized by Lenin after the establishment of the Soviet Republic, when (in 1920) he drafted a resolution on proletarian culture, the first article of which read:

All educational work in the Soviet Republic of workers and peasants, in the field of political education in general and in the field of art in particular, should be imbued with the spirit of the class struggle being waged by the proletariat for the successful achievement of the aims of its dictatorship, i.e., the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, the abolition of classes, and the elimination of all forms of exploitation of man by man. ("On Proletarian Culture," *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 316.)

There were, of course, then as now, those who were outraged by and attacked such statements as being incompatible with the "individuality" and "freedom" which is supposed to be necessary for artistic creation. Lenin characterized such a view as bourgeois individualism, and pointed out that such talk about absolute freedom from the mouths of artists in bourgeois society was sheer hypocrisy or self-delusion. He explained:

There can be no real and effective "freedom" in a society based on the power of money, in a society in which the masses of working people live in poverty and the handful of rich live like parasites. Are you free in relation to your bourgeois publisher, Mr. Writer, in relation to your bourgeois public, which demands that you provide it with pornography in novels and paintings, and prostitution as a "supplement" to "sacred" scenic art? This absolute freedom is a bourgeois or an anarchist phrase (since, as a world outlook, anarchism is bourgeois philosophy turned inside out). One cannot live in society and be free from society. The freedom of the bourgeois writer, artist or actor is simply masked (or hypocritically masked) dependence on the money-bag, on corruption, on prostitution. ("Party Organisation and Party Literature," *op. cit.*, p. 48.)

In a class society, it is impossible for literature and art to rise above classes, impossible for them not to both express some class viewpoint and serve the in-

terests of some class. On the other hand, Lenin pointed out, these classes are not on a par with each other, and the aim of communists is

... to contrast this hypocritically free literature, which is in reality linked to the bourgeoisie, with a really free one that will be openly linked to the proletariat.

It will be a free literature, because the idea of socialism and sympathy with the working people, and not greed or careerism, will bring ever new forces to its ranks. It will be a free literature, because it will serve, not some satiated heroine, not the bored "upper ten thousand" suffering from fatty degeneration, but the millions and tens of millions of working people—the flower of the country, its strength and its future. (*Ibid.*, pp. 48-9.)

Stalin

Stalin was the continuator of Lenin's work in leading the Soviet proletariat in the building of socialism and protecting it against external and internal enemies. He also upheld and applied many of Lenin's developments of Marxism, including in the theory of art and literature.

It was under Stalin's leadership that the Soviet Party developed the concept of *socialist realism*, a concept which expresses the viewpoint of the proletariat in literature and art, and which laid an important part of the foundation for Mao's contributions in this area.

In 1932, by a decision of Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, an organizing committee for the first National Congress of Soviet Writers was set up, which first formulated the concept of socialist realism. It was defined in the charter of the Association of Soviet Writers: "Socialist realism, which is the fundamental method of Soviet literature and letters, requires the artist to present reality in its revolutionary course of development, in a true and historically concrete manner."

Note that this definition stresses truth and historical concreteness, and links this with "present[ing] reality in its revolutionary course of development" as the main aspect. In other words, proletarian art is partisan, is part of the revolutionary struggle of the working class, and is also truthful. In fact, as gone into in more depth later in dealing specifically with Mao's contributions, such literature and art is truthful precisely because it reflects and serves the outlook and interests of the working class. It is truthful because it brings out the real underlying course of development of history and society, which is revolutionary.

As the name "socialist realism" implies, there have been other forms of realism in art—notably bourgeois realism. This had a progressive role to play at one time, just as did the bourgeoisie itself, when it was still a rising class. But, of course, even at that time its disclosure of reality was hemmed in by the same limitations as is the world-view of the capitalists. The most it could ever disclose is a world of self-seeking individuals, which is by no means the whole nor even the greater part nor certainly the essence of reality. And, as the bourgeoisie has become a totally reactionary class, its "realism" has turned into its opposite, into an attempt to portray men in the most sordid, animalistic and cynical manner, or into pure fantasy and escapism.

At the same time that socialist realism was brought forward as the guiding policy of literary and artistic work in the Soviet Union, it was also emphasized that this was not inconsistent with romanticism, but that it was of a new type—*revolutionary romanticism*—since to portray reality in its revolutionary course of development is inevitably to portray the tremendous heroism of the people and the vastest horizons of human progress.

While the emergence of this concept and ideal of socialist realism (including revolutionary romanticism as an aspect of it) was a real advance for the development of proletarian art, there were also certain defects in Stalin's viewpoint in this area. One of these is his idea that the chief thing in socialist construction was to

raise the cultural standards of the masses of Soviet workers and peasants—and, moreover, to view this "raising of standards" in purely *technical* and *quantitative* terms. (See Stalin's handling of this subject in his reports to the 16th, 17th and 18th Party Congresses, *Works*, Vol. 12, pp. 307-8, and *Problems of Leninism*, Peking, FLP, 1976, pp. 725-7 and 908-11.) (This question is specifically dealt with by Mao, in his treatment of the contradiction between popularization and raising standards, and his decisive and important contributions on this topic will be focused on shortly.)

Another and related error of Stalin's in this area is spoken to in the summary of a forum on work in literature and the arts which was convened in Shanghai in early 1966 by Mao's wife Chiang Ching, to formulate a policy for upholding and more thoroughly applying Mao's line in the arts:

Stalin was a great Marxist-Leninist. His criticism of the modernist literature and art of the bourgeoisie was very sharp. But he uncritically took over what are known as the classics of Russia and Europe and the consequences were bad. The classical literature and art of China and of Europe (including Russia) and even American films have exercised a considerable influence on our literary and art circles, and some people have regarded them as holy writ and accepted them in their entirety. We should draw a lesson from Stalin's experience. Old and foreign works should be studied too, and refusal to study them would be wrong; but we must study them critically, making the past serve the present and foreign works serve China. (*Summary of the Forum on the Work on Literature and Art in the Armed Forces with which Comrade Lin Piao Entrusted Comrade Chiang Ching*, Peking, FLP, 1968, p. 14. It should be pointed out that, despite Lin Piao's pretensions, the guiding line here is that of Mao Tsetung, who personally went over the text of this summary several times, strengthening it and preparing for publication the text from which the above quote is taken.)

Mao On the Importance of the Superstructure

Mao Tsetung made decisive advances in the development of Marxist-Leninist theory in the sphere of literature and art and culture generally. This is closely connected with the overall advance he led in making in the correct understanding of the role of the superstructure, particularly under socialism.

This advance was associated, in turn, with a summation of the theory and practice of Marxist-Leninists, and specifically of certain errors of Stalin, in this area. Thus Mao, for instance, begins his late 1950s "Critique of Stalin's *Economic Problems of Socialism in the USSR*" with the statement, "Stalin's book from first to last says nothing about the superstructure. It is not concerned with people; it considers things, not people." (*A Critique of Soviet Economics*, three articles by Mao Tsetung, Monthly Review Press, 1977, p. 135.)

As pointed out in a previous article in this series (on Mao's contributions to political economy, etc., *Revolution*, July 1978, Sec. 2, p. 2), this work of Stalin's, written in the last few years of his life, did contain some valuable insights into and analysis of important aspects of the advance from socialism to communism, the final goal of proletarian revolution. But, as is pointed out there, Stalin tended to treat these problems "... from the standpoint of developing production and raising the material and technical level of the masses and not very much from the standpoint of politics and ideology." (*Revolution, ibid.*)

Many of Mao's greatest contributions, of course, centered precisely in developing the understanding of the nature of socialist society and in his consequent emphasis on the need to continue the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, even after the socialist transformation of ownership had in the main been completed. This was closely linked with Mao's further development of Marxist theory concerning the interaction of the base and superstructure, especially under socialism.



Communists have always emphasized the need for art to serve the revolution, and thus the need to portray proletarian heroes. Here, in a scene from the revolutionary Peking Opera, *On the Docks*, two veteran working class fighters talk with a young docker who does not like loading work.

Mao showed the decisive importance of continuously revolutionizing the superstructure as well as the economic base. He not only upheld the dialectical understanding of the relationship between the base and superstructure—which indicates that overall the base is principal and decisive, but that at certain times the superstructure becomes principal and decisive in determining the nature and development of the economic base. He further summed up and taught that under socialism the role of the superstructure assumes even greater importance and the struggle in the superstructure becomes even more acute and complex. Even while the proletariat holds political power overall in society, the bourgeoisie may actually control certain parts of the superstructure (just as it may control certain units and departments of the economy). Ideology in particular, Mao warned, will be an arena of long and tortuous struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. As early as 1957, as a crucial part of the revolutionary line he developed in opposition to the revisionists, who preached that "the class struggle is dying out," Mao emphatically stated:

In the ideological field, the question of who will win out, the proletariat or the bourgeoisie, has not yet been really settled. We still have to wage a protracted struggle against bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology. ("Speech at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference on Propaganda Work," *SW*, Vol. 5, p. 434.)

And culture, of course, including art and literature, falls squarely within the ideological field.

As noted, the nature of the relationship between the base and superstructure is a contradiction in which the base is the overall principal aspect, but in which the superstructure may become, at a particular time, the principal aspect. But, in addition, the superstructure plays the *initiating* role in transforming the base. It is for both these reasons that the superstructure is of crucial importance in any revolution.

But, as also noted, all this applies with even greater force to the *proletarian* revolution and socialist society. For this revolution, unlike any previous revolution in human history, does not aim at bringing a new class of exploiters to power. Rather the goal of the working class is to do away with all exploitation and oppression. Its goal is the abolition of all classes—that is, communism. Thus socialism, in which classes still exist and in which the working class rules society, is *not* the final goal of proletarian revolution, but is a transition stage to that goal.

Because of this transitional nature of socialism, it must be constantly moving forward toward communism. If it does not, then it will inevitably move backward—to capitalism. This can happen because under socialism a *new bourgeoisie* is inevitably generated, and has its core within the communist party itself, especially revisionists in top party leadership, who can seize power from the proletariat and restore capitalism. This is what has happened in the Soviet Union and, following Mao's death, a revisionist coup was carried off in China and the process of capitalist restoration is now being carried out in that country too.

The counter-revolution by a new bourgeoisie begins in the superstructure—here the superstructure plays the initiating as well as the decisive role. And, in preparing the conditions for such a coup, these new capitalist leeches will pay great attention to struggle in the ideological realm, including literature and art. As Mao sharply pointed out in 1962:

Writing novels is popular these days, isn't it? The use of novels for anti-Party activity is a great invention. Anyone wanting to overthrow a political regime must create public opinion and do some preparatory ideological work. This applies to counter-revolutionary as well as to revolutionary classes. (*Chairman Mao Talks to the People*, edited by Stuart Schram, N.Y., Pantheon, 1974, p. 195.)

To the degree that the bourgeoisie—in particular top party persons taking the capitalist road—is not fought in this arena, it will gain in strength, and will be in that much better a position to seize political power. Thus the great importance under socialism of class struggle in the superstructure and of Mao's statement, quoted at the start of this article, that "The proletariat must exercise all-around dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in the realm of the superstructure, including the various spheres of culture."

Mao's Line on Literature and Art

In this connection, the quotation earlier from Marx (from the *Eighteenth Brumaire*) is worth recalling. There Marx was emphasizing how past revolutions could borrow their poetry from the past—could cloak themselves in the past precisely in order to hide from themselves the full meaning of their own revolutionary nature. This is because they all represented the seizure of power by a new exploiting class. Although they were, in their period of rise, instruments of progress for mankind, previous classes, even while carrying out a revolution and rising to power, *could not* really be fully aware of this progressive and revolutionary role they were playing—because to be fully aware of it would have also been to see their own historically transitory nature, their own eventual doom and extinction.

The proletariat, on the contrary, *must* be aware and conscious of just what it is doing and of the fact that its own rule is, from an historical standpoint, only transitory. In fact, the proletariat is the first and only



Crucial to the Chinese revolution in all its stages has been the revolutionary mobilization of China's vast peasantry under the leadership of the proletariat, and this holds true in the sphere of art and culture as well. This peasant painting from Huhshien County in Shensi Province entitled, "Condemning Confucius at His Temple Gate," is a good illustration of how art can be a weapon in the fight against the ruling-class ideologies.

class in history which aims for the eventual elimination of its state power and all the conditions, material and ideological, that make that rule necessary. And indeed, if this is lost sight of, its rule will be overthrown and capitalism restored. That is why the proletarian revolution cannot draw its poetry, its culture generally, from the past—but must constantly strive, in full consciousness of what it is doing and of its great historic mission, to create something different than mankind has ever known.

Although Mao's main contribution in this area was in connection with the development of proletarian culture and its use in consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat and carrying forward the revolution under this dictatorship, he laid out the basic orientation for this even before nationwide political power had been established and the socialist stage of the revolution had been entered. He was able to do this, in part, because (as seen in previous articles in this series) the Chinese revolution developed in such a way that it did not consist of the overthrow of the power of the old regime all at once or in a relatively short time, but through a protracted armed struggle. Actually, this consisted of a whole series of different wars through which, in the course of more than 20 years, the new base areas liberated from the rule of the reactionaries were built up and then finally an all-out assault was launched to liberate the whole country. During this long process—itsself marked by various sub-stages—new relations of production and a new superstructure were built up in the liberated areas to serve the developing struggle of the masses. Although the economic, social and political relations were not yet socialist in character—and this was reflected in the realm of ideology and culture—nevertheless, there were aspects of the socialist future, including the leading role of the proletariat and its ideology, which Mao consistently fought for against bourgeois (and feudal) elements, inside as well as outside the Chinese Communist Party.

Yenan Forum on Literature and Art

It was on this basis that Mao developed the fundamental orientation for literature and art. This was concentrated in a series of talks that Mao gave at the month-long forum at Yenan in 1942 on literature and art. (Yenan was the place where the revolutionary government of the base areas and the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party were centered.)

Two years earlier Mao had written his basic work "On New Democracy," in which he not only summed up the basic strategy for the Chinese revolution in that stage—the new-democratic revolution—but gave particular emphasis to the fact that, as he said, "For many years we Communists have struggled for a cultural revolution as well as for a political and economic revolution," and that the new China which was being brought into being through revolution "...will have not only a new politics and a new economy but a new culture." (*SW*, Vol. 2, p. 340.) In this essay he outlined the general characteristics of this new culture, and emphasized that

Revolutionary culture is a powerful revolutionary weapon for the broad masses of the people. It prepares the ground ideologically before the revolution comes and is an important, indeed essential, fighting front in the general revolutionary front during the revolution. (*Ibid.*, p. 382.)

In general, "On New Democracy" lays the groundwork for Mao's *Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art*, in which he goes into the specific characteristics which art must have in order to serve as a revolutionary weapon.

First, Mao spoke to the question of class stand.

As has been pointed out, all literature and art have to be guided and objectively will be guided, by the worldview and stand of some class in society, whether the person producing it is conscious of it or not. And Mao pointed out that, in this era, in order for culture to play a progressive and revolutionary role it had to serve the proletariat, because in this stage in human history only the working class is a revolutionary class in a thoroughgoing way and only the working class can lead the masses of people in thoroughly transforming society. And Mao insisted on this, even though the stage of the revolution then was democratic and not yet socialist. Only with the leadership of the working class in all spheres, including culture, could it be a *new-democratic* revolution, capable of thoroughly defeating imperialism and domestic reaction tied in with it and advancing to the socialist future.

Closely related to this, Mao also sharply posed the question of *for whom*. For whom, he asks the cultural workers at Yenan, are you producing your works? The basic question here is: should they be for the elite, should they be for the supposedly "superior people," or should they be for the masses of people? And Mao answered that they must be produced for the masses of people, which in China included not only the working class but also hundreds of millions of peasants, as well as the soldiers (particularly of the revolutionary army). Art must be produced for the masses of toiling and oppressed people, Mao made clear. It must be embraced by the masses and taken up as a weapon in their struggle.

In order to fulfill this, Mao insisted, the cultural workers, people producing literature and art, had to go out among the masses, integrate themselves with them, take part in labor together with them, and help them to wage the struggle against the class enemy. He stressed that "Our writers and artists have their literary and artistic work to do, but their primary task is to understand people and know them well." (*SW*, Vol. 3, p. 72.) Note that he says that this is not just an important task, but the *primary* task of revolutionary writers and artists.

What is decisive here, Mao said, is the question of intellectuals integrating themselves with the masses, transforming their world outlook and firmly taking up the revolutionary stand, outlook and method of the proletariat and Marxism. It is in this connection that Mao describes, in a famous passage, how his own feelings towards the masses changed as he became a revolutionary. As a result of bourgeois (even feudal) education, Mao says, he

...acquired the ways of a student; I then used to feel it undignified to do even a little manual labor, such as carrying my own luggage in the presence of my fellow students, who were incapable of carrying anything, either on their shoulders or in their hands. At that time I felt that intellectuals were the only clean people in the world, while in comparison workers and peasants were dirty. (*Ibid.*, p. 73.)

Mao goes on to recount how his feelings changed:

But after I became a revolutionary and lived with workers and peasants and with soldiers of the revolutionary army, I gradually came to know them well, and they gradually came to know me well too. It was then, and only then, that I fundamentally changed the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois feelings implanted in me in the bourgeois schools. I came to feel that compared with the workers and peasants the unremoulded intellectuals were not clean and that, in the last analysis, the workers and peasants were the cleanest people—and, even though their hands were soiled and their feet smeared with cow-dung, they were really cleaner than the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois in-

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lectuals. That is what is meant by a change in feelings, a change from one class to another. (*Ibid.*)

Revolutionary cultural workers, Mao insisted, had to get to know the people—what their feelings were about things, how they saw the world, how they were actually carrying forward the struggle. They had to learn the lively language of the people, had to learn and develop further the cultural works, the song, music, dance, etc., that was produced by the people themselves, especially the more they developed their struggle. Unless this was done, literature and art was bound to be rejected by the masses of people—because it was bound to be alien to them, in form as well as in content.

As the outstanding model Mao pointed to Lu Hsun, a revolutionary writer during the new-democratic revolution who took up the communist outlook and stood firmly with the masses of people, using his pen as a mighty weapon in their revolutionary struggle, until his death in 1936. Lu Hsun was, Mao acclaimed, "the greatest and most courageous standard-bearer" of the new, revolutionary cultural force that had emerged in China, in the wake of the May 4th, 1919, anti-imperialist upsurge in China and the spread of Marxism-Leninism to that country and the formation in 1921 of the Chinese Communist Party. (See "On New Democracy," *SW*, Vol. 2, pp. 371-3.) In particular, after the Japanese invasion of China, when the task of waging a war of resistance against Japan came to the forefront, Lu Hsun forcefully championed the line of a "literature of the masses for the national revolutionary war," in opposition to the right-wing line of a "literature of national defense," which had currency among influential left-wing literary circles and even within the Chinese Communist Party and which represented a line of capitulation and subordination to Chiang Kai-shek. This was a key struggle in the area of literature and art and was closely linked to and played an important role in the overall class struggle within the camp of opposition to Japan and within the revolutionary movement.

In this and other ways, Lu Hsun stood as a titan in China's revolutionary cultural army. "All communists," Mao said, "all revolutionaries, all revolutionary literary and art workers should learn from the example of Lu Hsun and be 'oxen' for the proletariat and the masses, bending their backs to the task until their dying day." (*SW*, Vol. 3, p. 96.)

Mao also took up the question, whom should art extol and whom should it expose and criticize? His answer was precise and to the point:

All the dark forces harming the masses of the people must be exposed and all the revolutionary struggles of the masses of the people must be extolled; this is the fundamental task of revolutionary writers and artists. (*Ibid.*, p. 91.)

Note the emphasis here. This is the *fundamental task* of revolutionary cultural workers. (This does not contradict what Mao had earlier said, that the primary task of revolutionary writers and artists is to understand the people and know them well, for there he was talking about what is overall primary, whereas here it is in terms of their fundamental task in actually creating cultural works—in other words he is speaking here to the fundamental task of culture, literature and art in particular.)

Many people in the Chinese Communist Party strenuously objected to and opposed Mao's line on this question. For a number this was part and parcel of opposing his line on culture as a whole and, in fact, his revolutionary line overall. They said that revolutionary artists should be "objective"—by which they meant even-handed. We shouldn't always praise the workers, the peasants and the revolutionary struggle, they insisted; we should also point out the bad parts, the shortcomings. And if the capitalists do something good we should give them credit for it; likewise if the workers do something bad we should point that out, too.

Despite the claims that such a stand is "objective," in fact it is not. Making proletarian revolution must be a very conscious struggle, and it means a complete exposure and rejection of all the traditional ideas, of all the forces of habit, of all the usual, accepted, natural ways of doing things. And to be "even-handed" in this situation means objectively to serve the capitalist class, which has the force of habit and the force of tradition on its side.

This question, and struggle around it, came up many times during the course of the Chinese revolution, not only during its new-democratic stage but even more fiercely in the socialist stage. For instance, Tao Chu, a revisionist who was a prominent figure in the Chinese Communist Party's propaganda work at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, claimed, among many other things, that Party writers should point out the shortcomings of the People's Communes which had been created through a mass upsurge in the countryside and represented a further advance of socialism there. Here, like other revisionists, Tao Chu was directly going against Mao's basic line, including the basic orientation he had set for culture. And here, too, we can see again the tremendous role of culture in creating public opinion for one class or another and upholding one system or another.

In response to this, Yao Wen-yuan, a revolutionary who came to prominence during the Cultural Revolution and who was one of the Four who heroically fought to defend Mao's line after his death, retorted: "There is a song called *The People's Communes Are*

Fine. Is it necessary to modify this title with another sentence 'the people's communes have shortcomings'?" (*Comments on Tao Chu's Two Books*, Peking, FLP, 1968, p. 27.)

The point is not that revolutionary writers should tell lies and be one-sided. Exactly the opposite. As Yao explains:

We should distinguish between the main current and the minor currents of life. Only when we focus on the main current can we give a typical presentation of the essence of social advance. Minor currents merely offer a contrast to the main current and can be used as a means to present the essence, forming a subordinate aspect of the whole, and partial and temporary twists in the course of advance, never to be regarded as the main content of life. (*Ibid.*, p. 26.)

Of course everything has both its good and its bad aspect. But which aspect is principal? What is new and vigorous as opposed to decadent and declining? And what is the revolutionary artist's overall purpose? Already in 1942 in his talks at the Yen-an Forum, Mao had set forth the basic approach to this question. Yes, he said, "The people, too, have their shortcomings." (*SW*, Vol. 3, p. 71.) Yes, the outlook of the exploiting classes has influence. And it is an important task of revolutionary culture to educate the people and help them cast off these burdens. But it must be done on the basis of uniting with them and fully supporting their struggle; it must be done in such a way as to actually help them throw off these shackles, and not so as to attack them or draw no distinction between the people (who are influenced to a certain degree by the ideology and culture of the enemy) on the one hand and the enemy, its system, its exploitation and its decadent ideology and culture on the other.

Popularization and Raising Standards

Given, then, that revolutionary art should serve the masses in their struggle, the question that arises is, how to do this? And here a critical question that Mao addressed in his Yen-an Forum talks was the contradiction between *raising standards* and *popularization*. This was an area in which Mao made important new contributions.

Some people were saying that, while spreading art and culture among the masses was important, the most important things was to raise the standards of revolutionary art—in other words that it was too primitive, dull, stereotyped, etc. But Mao clearly and sharply opposed this view. Popularization, he said, the spreading of art and culture generally among the broad masses, as a key part of the overall fierce revolutionary struggle then raging, was the principal aspect.

But much more crucial was what Mao said about the inter-relation between these two aspects, and the relationship of the whole problem to the task of the cultural workers in integrating with and learning from the masses:

We must popularize only what is needed and can be readily accepted by the workers, peasants and soldiers themselves. Consequently, prior to the task of educating the workers, peasants and soldiers, there is the task of learning from them. This is even more true of raising standards. There must be a basis from which to raise. Take a bucket of water, for instance; where is it to be raised if not from the ground? From mid-air? From what basis, then, are literature and art to be raised? From the basis of the feudal classes? From the basis of the bourgeoisie? From the basis of the petty-bourgeois intellectuals? No, not from any of these; only from the basis of the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers. Nor does this mean raising the workers, peasants and soldiers to the "heights" of the feudal classes, the bourgeoisie or the petty-bourgeois intellectuals; it means raising the level of literature and art in the direction in which the workers, peasants and soldiers are themselves advancing, in the direction in which the proletariat is advancing. Here again the task of learning from the workers, peasants and soldiers comes in. Only by starting from the workers, peasants and soldiers can we have a correct understanding of popularization and of the raising of standards and find the proper relationship between the two. (*SW*, Vol. 3, pp. 80-81.)

In other words, revolutionary art and culture must build on what the masses have already created—their own lively ways of speech and expression, for instance, and the songs, the dances, the music, the folk tales which have come from the people. This is the starting point. And what is the direction? It is the direction in which the masses of people in struggle are already advancing, the direction which they are historically taking and must take—the direction of socialism and communism.

Radical Rupture in the Sphere of Culture

Why does Mao say that raising standards specifically does *not* mean raising the masses to the so-called "heights" of the feudal and bourgeois classes and the petty-bourgeois intellectuals? What does he mean here and what is the importance of this?

This was in direct opposition to the line that the task in cultural work was to "elevate" the masses to where they could properly "appreciate" the classical works of the "men of genius" of past eras. This, along with the position that the present era and the socialist system should produce a "galaxy" of new "men of genius," is exactly the line of the revisionists—in the Soviet Union, and in China itself, including those revisionists who today rule China—who have consistently



"Grasping the Main Task. Shipbuilders Criticize Lin Piaolin in Shanghai, a bastion of working class struggle during the Cultural Revolution. Wang Hung-wen, Chairman of the Shanghai Municipal People's Commune, heroically fought to uphold Mao's line after his death.

attacked Mao's line not only on culture in general but specifically over this point of what "raising standards" means.

Here what is fundamentally involved is whether or not proletarian culture, including literature and art, represents and must represent something qualitatively different from—and advanced beyond—all previous culture. Mao emphatically said yes; the revisionists all, in one way or another, essentially say no. What Mao was basing himself on and applying was the understanding put forward by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*: the communist revolution must be the most radical rupture not only with all traditional property relations but with all traditional ideas as well.

This certainly applies to the sphere of culture. It is not possible to carry out the socialist revolution and the transition to communism without creating a whole new culture, including literature and art, which, for the first time in history, puts forward the outlook and promotes the interests of the proletariat in overthrowing everything reactionary and revolutionizing all of society. This cannot be done by supposedly raising "classical" works of art "above class," and treating them as the pinnacle of achievement which the "ignorant rabble" of the masses must be "elevated" to worship. Nor can it be done by creating supposed



and Confucius." This painting was created by workers of the Cultural Revolution (as well as before), and a young Chun-chiao, Chiang Ching and Yao Wen-yuan, who

proletarian works of art by utilizing the methods of the exploiting classes and their intellectuals: reliance on a few "great men" divorced from the masses and their revolutionary struggles. Instead it must be done by relying on, learning from and unleashing and developing the creativity and the creations of the masses themselves, under the guidance of Marxism.

Does this mean, was it Mao's position, that all art and culture of previous epochs should be indiscriminately negated and simply cast aside as useless or harmful? Certainly not. Historical materialism must be applied to assess the role of such works. Those which played a progressive role in previous epochs should be upheld in that context, while, however, never failing to point out their class bias and limitations. And on this basis, such works can be used as part of educating the masses in historical materialism, so long as this is done from that standpoint and linked to systematic analysis of such works with the science of Marxism. Further, certain artistic devices can be adopted from works which represent the outlook and interests of previous, exploiting classes and systems, but these generally will have to be adapted as well to conform to the revolutionary character of proletarian art—since form interpenetrates with content.

Mao spoke to this in his talks at the Yanan Forum:

We should take over the rich legacy and the good traditions in literature and art that have been handed down from past ages in China and foreign countries, but the aim must still be to serve the masses of the people. Nor do we refuse to utilize the literary and artistic forms of the past, but in our hands these old forms, remoulded and infused with new content, also become something revolutionary in the service of the people. (*Ibid.*, p. 76.)

This was summarized in the following slogans, which, under Mao's leadership, were applied to culture as well as other fields: "Make the past serve the present and foreign things serve China" and "Weed through the old to bring forth the new."

As part of this basic line, it must be grasped that even works which were progressive in their time—in previous historical epochs—do not play a progressive role in this epoch precisely if they are presented uncritically and put forth as classless "classics" or even staged without systematic Marxist criticism and education of the masses as to their class content as well as their historical role. Here again it must be stressed that the force of habit and tradition weighs heavily in favor of the exploiting classes and against the proletariat. All these works of art of previous epochs, representing the stand and interests of exploiting classes, will, spontaneously, influence the masses in a direction opposed to the proletarian world view and their own revolutionary interests and, in such conditions, will therefore play a reactionary role. Again, only if the use of such works is combined with systematic education as to not only their historical role but also their class content and world view, and only if the latter are thoroughly criticized while the former is explained in light of historical materialism, can they play any kind of positive role in regard to the proletarian revolution.

And, beyond that, none of these works, however great they may have been in their own era, can in any way compare to the revolutionary cultural creations achieved in this era under the leadership of the revolutionary proletariat and its ideology. Measured against such proletarian works of art, all previous works pale in comparison. Regardless of their artistic devices, they can never portray the power and grandeur of the self-emancipating struggle of the masses of people under the leadership of the most revolutionary class in history. Only culture guided by the outlook and serving the interests of this class, the proletariat, can scale such heights.

It is on this point in particular that Mao's contribution in the sphere of culture is centered, representing a further advance beyond the previous theory and practice of Marxism and the proletariat in this sphere. And it was exactly under the leadership of Mao's revolutionary line that the Chinese people created works of art representing the highest pinnacle achieved by mankind yet in culture.

Art as a Concentration of the Revolutionary Struggle

Again, it should be stressed that Mao developed this line and made these contributions precisely through keeping uppermost the aspect of class stand in art and culture. This is what Mao stressed again and again, as when he said in his Yanan Talks:

In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines. There is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes or art that is detached from or independent of politics. (*Ibid.*, p. 86.)

This is the essence, and the heart, of Mao's whole basic orientation. Because art is always tied to a definite class, it is also inseparable from politics, from the class struggle.

Now by this, of course, Mao didn't mean that art and culture are the same as politics *per se*, or identical with class struggle in any other form, and that there's no role for art and culture in and of itself. Quite the opposite. Mao stressed that there is in fact the contradiction between political content and artistic form, and that to really be art, a cultural work must of course be good in technique, must have proper and appropriate form, and must express its content in this way. He specifically criticized the existence in the Communist Party and among revolutionaries of that time of what he called the "poster and slogan style" of art. For art, in order to fulfill its function as art and play a revolutionary role, must be good artistically. It must perform the function that the masses seek and desire out of art, or else it will not be able to play a revolutionary role.

But what is it, then, that people seek from art? Why is it that although art arises out of life itself, people are not just satisfied with life, but demand art as well? Mao's answer is that, although on the one hand "works of literature and art, as ideological forms, are products of the reflection in the human brain of the life of a given society," on the other hand,

... life as reflected in works of literature and art can and ought to be on a higher plane, more intense, more concentrated, more typical, nearer the ideal, and therefore more universal than actual everyday life. (*Ibid.*, pp. 81, 82.)

This is what it means to be art. A work of art must be more intense and concentrated than life itself; it cannot passively reflect life; a play, novel, song, etc. cannot just reflect the minute-by-minute life of someone—there would be no point to it. Art must concen-

trate and intensify life, must raise it to a higher plane.

But all concentrations of life are not the same and do not serve the same interests. This raises the question of truth and reality. Bourgeois writers and critics (or at least those who still make a pretense of realism) say: "Well, revolutionary art may be more idealistic, but our art is more truthful to reality." However, in fact the exact opposite is the case. All art expresses some aspect of reality, just because it is a social product. But bourgeois art can only portray, at most, the surface of things, whereas revolutionary proletarian art can show the underlying essence, the actual truth. Bourgeois art can only concentrate what is dying; today proletarian art alone can reveal what is new and arising.

As indicated earlier there is no incompatibility between the fact that revolutionary art is partisan and that it depicts reality, nor between the fact that it is a weapon in the struggle of the masses and that it is truthful. For, as Mao says in another famous work,

Marxists hold that man's social practice alone is the criterion of the truth of his knowledge of the external world. . . If you want knowledge, you must take part in the practice of changing reality. ("On Practice," *Selected Works*, Vol. 1, pp. 296, 300.)

The fact that a work of art is created as part of revolutionary practice, and is used to help change reality, does not mean that it doesn't reflect truth—for in fact truth can only be reflected through the process of changing reality, and the deeper and more essential truths about history, society and human beings can only be arrived at through the process of changing reality in a revolutionary way.

What, then, does revolutionary art do? Mao sums it up succinctly: "Revolutionary literature and art should create a variety of characters out of real life and help the masses to propel history forward." (*SW*, Vol. 3, p. 82.)

Struggle on the Cultural Front in the People's Republic

Mao's line, the proletarian line, on art, literature and culture generally did not win out in the Chinese Communist Party and the revolutionary movement without struggle. It had to be constantly and fiercely fought for throughout the course of the Chinese revolution. This held true in 1942 and still more so as the Chinese revolution advanced, as it swept away the old exploiting classes and entered the socialist stage with the founding of the People's Republic in 1949. And, further, while the talks at the Yanan Forum had set the basic orientation, further development of this line was needed as the struggle advanced from its first stage, that of the new-democratic revolution, to the stage of the socialist revolution. Thus Mao's line had to be both upheld and deepened through applying it to new conditions, as the Chinese revolution developed.

For instance, in 1951 Mao wrote an editorial (or part of an editorial) for the *People's Daily* calling for criticism of the film *The Life of Wu Hsun*, which was promoted at that time. This reactionary film openly praised this man who, as Mao says, "... living as he did towards the end of the Ching Dynasty in an era of great struggle by the Chinese people against foreign aggressors and domestic reactionary feudal rulers [Wu lived from 1838-96], did not lift a finger against the feudal economic base or its superstructure..." (*Selected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 57.) That such a film not only appeared at that time but received lavish praise, including from prominent Party members, indicated that the class struggle was indeed very acute and that bourgeois forces were launching sharp attacks, using culture as an important vehicle for this.

Or again there was, in 1954, Mao's "Letter Concerning the Study of *The Dream of the Red Chamber*," which was a letter to the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Party, and which concerned criticisms by two young people of the novel *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, and of the assessment of it by a bourgeois intellectual, Yu Ping-po. Mao comments on how these criticisms, which seem to have been in the main correct, were suppressed rather than welcomed by the literary authorities. (*SW*, Vol. 5, pp. 150-51.)

This incident revealed the underlying class struggle which continued very sharply and how it manifested itself in the field of culture. And indeed this episode proved to be merely a prelude to a very wide-ranging struggle indeed—the Hu Feng affair.

Hu Feng was a Party member and an intellectual figure. Despite his Party membership he had never actually become a Marxist-Leninist, and in fact espoused bourgeois individualism for writers and artists, and opposed putting politics in command of art. In the mid-50s he began organizing dissident groups, particularly in the universities.

In late 1954 the artists and writers federations in China began to repudiate the errors of the literary authorities around the criticism of Yu's assessment of *The Dream of the Red Chamber*. Seeing his chance, Hu Feng began criticizing the Communist Party for "authoritarianism" in art. After a struggle, he made a hypocritical self-criticism in January 1955, but in actuality went back to organizing his clique of reactionary dissidents with even greater frenzy. When this came to light, Mao organized a campaign, not only against Hu Feng, but to root out hidden counter-revolutionaries generally. As part of this, the book *Material on the Counter-Revolutionary Hu Feng Clique*

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que was published, which Mao edited and to which he contributed a preface as well as editorial notes. (See *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 176-182.)

In his "Preface," Mao goes into the question of why this material is being published and what the importance of the struggle against Hu Feng consists in:

The masses of the people are very much in need of this material. How do counter-revolutionaries employ their double-dealing tactics? How do they succeed in deceiving us by their false appearances, while furtively doing the things we least expect? All this is a blank to thousands upon thousands of well-intentioned people. On this account, many counter-revolutionaries have wormed their way into our ranks. . . . [S]uccess in spotting and clearing out bad elements depends on a combination of correct guidance from the leading organs with a high degree of political consciousness on the part of the masses, but in this regard our work in the past was not without shortcomings. (SW, Vol. 5, pp.177-78.)

In short, as Mao summed up, "we attach importance to the Hu Feng case because we want to use it to educate the masses of the people. . . ." (*Ibid.*, p.178.)

This case thus brings out at least two important points. First, it shows the close inter-relation of questions and struggles in the realm of literature and art, and the class struggle in society in general. And second, Mao's summation and action in this case illustrate how the struggles in this realm can serve as crucial training grounds for the masses in waging the class struggle, particularly under the new conditions of socialism.

In the next several years the class struggle further intensified in China at the same time as events were unfolding internationally, which reacted in a major way on the struggle in China. In the Soviet Union, the revisionists seized power. And in a number of other Eastern European countries, there were serious counter-revolutionary disturbances which drew in significant sections of the masses, playing upon discontent over bureaucratic tendencies and other defects in the government and its relations with the people. Emboldened by this, the Rightists in China, with unremolded bourgeois intellectuals playing an influential part, launched an attack in the Chinese Communist Party and the socialist state, also stirring up disturbances. It was in this context, in early 1957, that the policy of "letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend" was put forward.

"Hundred Flowers"

This was advanced as the long-term policy "for promoting progress in the arts and sciences and a flourishing socialist culture in our land," as Mao explained (SW, Vol. 5, p. 408). In this Mao and the Chinese Communist Party were following a similar line to that argued for by Stalin when he noted that "It is generally recognized that no science can develop and flourish without a battle of opinions, without freedom of criticism." (*Marxism and Linguistics*, N.Y., International Publishers, 1951, p. 29.) Or, as Mao put it, extending this assessment beyond science to art as well:

We think that it is harmful to the growth of art and science if administrative measures are used to impose one particular style of art or school of thought and to ban another. Questions of right and wrong in the arts and sciences should be settled through free discussion in artistic and scientific circles and through practical work in these fields. ("On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," SW, Vol. 5, p. 408.)

Note that this is a *struggle* between forms of art and schools in science. And Mao emphasized shortly after the above quote that this is part of the overall class struggle in socialist society:

Class struggle is by no means over. The class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the class struggle between the various political forces, and the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the ideological field will be protracted and tortuous and at times even very sharp. The proletariat seeks to transform the world according to its own world outlook, and so does the bourgeoisie. In this respect, the question of which will win out, socialism or capitalism, is not really settled yet. . . . It will take a fairly long period of time to decide the issue in the ideological struggle between socialism and capitalism in our country. (*Ibid.*, p. 409)

So this policy was a way of waging the class struggle. Of course, as Mao also mentioned, these two slogans in and of themselves do not have a class character—that is, they can be made use of, of course in opposite ways—by opposing classes. The proletariat will have its own criteria for judging the things that sprout up—for distinguishing, as Mao puts it, fragrant flowers from poisonous weeds. Mao mentions several of these criteria, the most important of which being that they be beneficial to the socialist transformation of society and that they help to strengthen the leading role of the Communist Party.

In other words, not every idea or art work that pops its head up under this policy will be a blossoming flower. Some will be noxious weeds, and they should be rooted out. But the fact that some weeds sprout under this policy does not mean that it is bad one. On the contrary. For, first, such weeding will have to be done in any case: "Weeds will grow even ten thousand years from now, and so we must be prepared to wage struggles for that long." ("Talks at a Conference of Secretaries of Provincial, Municipal and Autonomous Region Party Committees," SW, Vol. 5, p. 359.) In

other words, there will be bad and harmful ideas under socialism for a long time (and even under communism). The proletariat must be prepared to wage resolute and constant struggle against them.

But besides this, the policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend will often be useful in getting these ideas out in the open so they can be combatted and uprooted. And in fact this was what happened in 1957. The bourgeois Rightists in China indeed seized the opportunity given them by this policy and launched a big offensive. The proletariat and its Party then took *this* opportunity to repulse the offensive and smash this bourgeois headquarters.

Some of the Rightists complained that they had been tricked (a theme taken up by many bourgeois China scholars too). But Mao explained:

Some people say this was a covert scheme. We say it was an overt one. For we made it plain to the enemy beforehand: only when ghosts and monsters are allowed to come into the open can they be wiped out; only when poisonous weeds are allowed to sprout from the soil can they be uprooted. Don't the peasants weed several times a year? Besides, uprooted weeds can be used as manure. The class enemies will invariably seek opportunities to assert themselves. They will not resign themselves to losing state power and being expropriated. However much the Communist Party warns its enemies in advance and makes its basic strategy known to them, they will still launch attacks. Class struggle is an objective reality, independent of man's will. That is to say, class struggle is inevitable. It cannot be avoided even if people want to avoid it. The only thing to do is to make the best use of the situation and guide the struggle to victory. ("Wen Hui Pao's Bourgeois Orientation Should Be Criticized," SW, Vol. 5, p. 454.)

The bourgeoisie is going to exist under socialism and it is going to struggle and launch attacks on the proletariat. Sometimes the best tactic is for the proletariat to let them come out in the open, thus exposing themselves to the masses and arming the people with an understanding of what their real program is—restoration of the old order—so that the people can be mobilized to strike them down.

Battle in Cultural Field Intensifies

Despite this struggle and many others, the bourgeoisie was not, of course, by any means eradicated. Bourgeois forces continued to have vitality and strength, and in fact their strength was centered to a considerable degree in the areas of art and culture. The educational system was one of their strongholds, leading Mao to say later, in reviewing the course of the first year of the Cultural Revolution in 1967:

As I see it, the intellectuals, including young intellectuals still receiving education in school, still have a basically bourgeois world outlook, whether they are in the Party or outside it. This is because for seventeen years after the liberation the cultural and educational circles have been dominated by revisionism. As a result, bourgeois ideas are infused in the blood of the intellectuals. ("Talks by Chairman Mao with a Foreign [Albanian] Military Delegation," *People's China*, ed. David Milton, Nancy Milton, and Franz Schurman, Vintage Books, 1974, p. 263)

Here it is significant to note that this assessment by Mao of culture and education as dominated by revisionism for the 17 years after liberation until the start of the Cultural Revolution has all along been sharply attacked by the revisionists in China. Now, since seizing power, they have called this assessment the "two estimates" (on education and culture) and attributed them to the so-called "gang of four" as an indirect but blatant attack on Mao himself and his revolutionary line and as a crucial component part of their reversal of the Cultural Revolution and the Chinese revolution as a whole (there can be no politically aware person in

China who does not know that these "two estimates" were actually made by Mao himself).

Before the Cultural Revolution the revisionists were also strongly entrenched in the arts, where they pushed representatives of the old exploiting classes and new elites as models and promoted bourgeois and even feudal values, leading to Mao's famous admonition to the Ministry of Culture that "if it refuses to change, it should be renamed the Ministry of Emperors, Kings, Generals and Monsters, the Ministry of Talents and Beauties or the Ministry of Foreign Mummies."

Mao saw that public opinion (as well as conditions generally) was being prepared for a takeover by these revisionists, and he launched a counter-attack, concentrating at first particularly in the field of culture and especially art. Beginning in 1963 Mao's wife and close comrade, Chiang Ching, along with Chang Chun-chiao, another of Mao's close comrades and member of the so-called "gang of four," led in challenging the revisionists on just this turf. One important area of challenge was the traditional Chinese art form, Peking Opera, in which old feudal and semi-feudal works continued to be performed almost exclusively.

During that period Mao himself used the form of poetry to proclaim the inevitable triumph of revolution over reaction, in the face of a revisionist adverse current internationally, centered in the Soviet Union, and of stepped-up attacks from capitalist-roaders in China, in concert with this international trend of treachery and cowardly capitulation to imperialism. Mao ended a famous poem written in early 1963 with the following lines:

*The Four Seas are rising, clouds and waters raging,
The Five Continents are rocking, wind and thunder roaring.
Our force is irresistible,
Away with all pests!*
("Reply to Comrade Kuo Mo-jo," Mao Tsetung, *Poems*, Peking, FLP, 1976, p.47.)

Finally in 1965, after himself helping to prepare revolutionary public opinion, and aiming the first few blows in the crucial sphere of culture, Mao made a direct counter-attack politically. Interestingly and significantly, this also was connected with the field of culture.

The revisionists had written and staged a play which was set in the past, but which by analogy very directly attacked Mao Tsetung. The play was called *Hai Jui Dismissed from Office*, and ostensibly defended a man who had been dismissed in the feudal past, but by very clear analogy it was actually attacking Mao for knocking down the former Defense Minister, Peng Teh-huai, who had vigorously attacked China's Great Leap Forward in the late '50s. As Mao remarked in December 1965,

The heart of the matter in *Hai Jui Dismissed from Office* is the question of dismissal from office. The Emperor Chia Ching [of the Ming Dynasty, 1522-66] dismissed Hai Jui from office. In 1959 we dismissed Peng Teh-huai from office. And Peng Teh-huai is "Hai Jui" too.

So Mao suggested that criticism of this play should be organized. But this could not be done in Peking, so tightly were the revisionists, headed by Liu Shao-chi, Teng Hsiao-ping, Peng Chen (then Mayor of Peking) and others, in control there. It had to be done in Shanghai, where the revisionists also had the upper hand then, but not such tight control as in Peking. Yao Wen-yuan, in close consultation with Mao, wrote a blistering critique of the play ("On the New Historical Drama *Hai Jui Dismissed from Office*"), exposing its real social purpose and essence. This article, as Mao was later to say, was the signal for the beginning of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

The Cultural Revolution and the Revolutionizing of Culture

The Cultural Revolution will be discussed in detail



One of the things particularly stressed during the Cultural Revolution was making revolutionary art available to the broadest masses, particularly to those in remote areas. Here a cultural team performs a dance for Tibetan herdsmen. Besides performing, cultural workers would pitch in to help with physical work, and would also take the opportunity to learn from local folk arts, revolutionary experiences and amateur artists.

in the next article in this series. Here the aspect of art and culture is the center of attention. But of course this was a central aspect of this revolution—it was called the *Cultural Revolution* for good reason. As the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party said, in a decision said to have been personally drafted by Mao, and specifically in a paragraph which deserves to be quoted in full:

Although the bourgeoisie has been overthrown, it is still trying to use the old ideas, culture, customs and habits of the exploiting classes to corrupt the masses, capture their minds and endeavor to stage a comeback. The proletariat must do the exact opposite: it must meet head-on every challenge of the bourgeoisie in the ideological field and use the new ideas, culture, customs and habits of the proletariat to change the mental outlook of the whole of society. At present, our objective is to struggle against and overthrow those persons in authority who are taking the capitalist road, to criticize and repudiate the reactionary bourgeois academic "authorities" and the ideology of the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes and to transform education, literature and art and all other parts of the superstructure not in correspondence with the socialist economic base, so as to facilitate the consolidation and development of the socialist system. (Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, adopted August 8, 1966, Peking, FLP, 1966 p. 1)

Thus, while the Cultural Revolution was certainly not solely concerned with works of literature and art, nor even simply with culture generally, but ultimately (since it was a real revolution) had to center on the political question of who will hold power in society, still the field of culture generally and that of literature and art in particular was a very important arena in which this political question was fought out.

Therefore, the struggle in the field of art was very sharp. A good example is the case of *The White-Haired Girl*, a revolutionary drama created relatively early in the Chinese revolution which has gone through a number of transformations in the course of that revolution. This opera is based on a true story of an episode during the war of resistance against Japan, which was told of in folk-tales, which were in turn rewritten cooperatively by several writers in the Red Army and then rewritten again on the basis of the criticisms of peasants. During the last years of the war against Japan and during the civil war that followed, it was performed many, many times in the liberated areas. The form that it took then was as follows.

The heroine of the opera is the daughter of a peasant. She is seized by the landlord when her father is unable to pay his debts at New Year's, and is forced to become a maidservant in the landlord's house, beaten and tormented by the landlord's wife. Her father commits suicide. She is raped by the landlord. When she becomes pregnant and threatens to expose him, he plans to murder her. She flees to the wilds and gives birth to the baby, her hair turning white from her hardship and living conditions in a cave. She gets food from a village temple, where the peasants leave offerings, thinking she is a ghost or a goddess. When the Communist Party-led Eighth Route Army comes into the area, they hear of the apparition. Pursuing the "ghost" they find the white-haired girl and her baby. Learning how things are changing, she goes back with the army to her old village and denounces the landlord, who is beaten. The white-haired girl is reunited with another peasant who had been her boyfriend before, and the impression is that they can settle down and live happily now.

Beginning before, and in what constituted an important part of the preparation for the Cultural Revolution, and specifically under the leadership of Chiang Ching, many changes were made in this work. For, as was pointed out then, the opera in many ways reflected the new-democratic stage of the revolution when it was made. As the revolution moved forward into socialism, works of art had to reflect this progress. This work in particular had played a positive and important role in the revolutionary struggle in the new-democratic stage, but was far from fitted, in its old form, to the needs of the struggle in the socialist stage. In fact, if it were not transformed to keep pace with the advance of the revolution and the growing consciousness of the masses, it would turn into its opposite—it would become a vehicle for promoting ideas and sentiments in opposition to the continuation of socialist revolution and socialist construction. It is not for no reason, nor simply out of spite against Chiang Ching, that, since seizing power in October 1976, the revisionists in China have restored the old version of *The White-Haired Girl*, wiping out the revolutionary changes (summarized below) made in it under Chiang Ching's leadership.

One change initiated by Chiang Ching was that the father no longer committed suicide, but was killed while resisting the attack of the landlord's thugs. And likewise the heroine herself is no longer raped, but rather puts up continual resistance to the tyranny of the landlord and his wife, and finally has to flee because she's being more and more persecuted for resisting her oppression.

Now many people might say (as indeed they did in China) that such changes make the opera less realistic, that Chiang Ching and those who followed Mao were trying to make it seem that every peasant who had to give up his daughter to the landlord (and this was a very common occurrence in feudal and semi-feudal



Mao Tsetung always gave his fullest support to the "socialist new things" which arose in the field of art during the Cultural Revolution. Here Mao meets with the performers of the revolutionary Peking Opera, "Taking Tiger Mountain by Strategy" in 1967. This was one of the five model operas developed under the leadership of Chiang Ching.

China), and every peasant girl whom the landlord tried to rape (and this was also common) put up militant resistance, when this wasn't actually true. And of course it is a fact that not everyone in those circumstances put up this kind of resistance; there were some who were submissive and some who resisted in a whole range of other, less straightforward, ways than do the peasant father and his daughter in the changed *White-Haired Girl*. But there were also many who *did* resist militantly.

All these different ways of acting could be said to be typical, and portraying any one of them in the play could be a concentration of one or another aspect of life. But what was being created in China was *revolutionary art*, a revolutionary concentration of life, something in other words that will help the masses propel history forward and aid in the revolutionary transformation of society. And for this purpose what is most important to portray is the fierce resistance of the people to their oppression, and how they can break their chains.

Further, this does not mean falsifying things, contrary to the claims that such revolutionary art is "unrealistic." Of course, as was just said, both the peasant who commits suicide and the one who resists are real. But, actually, which one of these most truly presents the essence of what was happening among the peasantry during the Chinese revolution? Wasn't it much more of the essence of things, much more the tendency of where things were going, that the peasants were rising up like a mighty storm, smashing their oppressors and playing a vital part in transforming society? The whole Chinese revolution, like any revolution, seemed unreal, something that it was impossible to believe or accept, to those who looked at it through bourgeois eyes. And so the portrayal of the reality of heroic peasants was also bound to seem "unrealistic" to these same people.

Also, in line with this socialist orientation, the end of the drama was changed too. Instead of being beaten, the landlord is taken off-stage and executed. The reason is that in the opera the landlord essentially symbolizes the reactionary forces and his execution shows how the Chinese people were rising up and overthrowing these reactionaries by force of arms. (It was found that if he were to be killed onstage, this would create involuntary sympathy for him among the audience.)

Also, in the new version in the reunion of the white-haired girl with her boyfriend, the love theme is played down and made very secondary to the struggle of the peasants and the Chinese people as a whole. And instead of the two of them going off to live happily ever after, they both pledge themselves to join the revolutionary struggle and carry it forward. This, again, was necessary and correct not only in more accurately portraying the demands of the new-democratic revolution, which was as yet unfinished in the time which the end of the play portrays, but still more so in meeting the requirements of the socialist stage, where, as Mao had summed up, there was the need to continue the revolution and, in line with this, the need to depict in works of art the protected, ongoing and central role of the class struggle.

The White-Haired Girl was also made into a ballet during this period, one of the great works of art of mankind, in which Western forms of dancing and musical traditions were integrated with traditional Chinese forms and the effete and bourgeois types of gestures and positions which are almost synonymous with ballet in the West were transformed into militant and revolutionary gestures and positions.

These works of art like the changed *White-Haired Girl* were known as "model works," that is, pace-setters which the people all over China could use as models in their development of numerous and various artistic works. Further under the guidance of Mao's line and with the concrete leadership of Chiang Ching and others carrying out this line, not only were model works produced in other areas of literature and art (besides ballet and Peking Opera), such as symphonic music, but there was a tremendous proliferation of revolutionary works, especially creations of the masses themselves, in such fields as film, other forms of drama, short stories, poetry, paintings, music, dance, etc.

And besides this, in an unprecedented way, during this period of the Cultural Revolution tremendous advances were made in mobilizing the masses themselves to wage struggle in the cultural field and develop socialist culture. One of the problems in China is that it is still a backward and relatively undeveloped country. This is particularly true in the countryside, and one of the ramifications of this is that the system of transportation and communication is still relatively undeveloped especially in the rural areas. Under the leadership of revolutionaries like Mao and Chiang Ching and especially during the decade of the Cultural Revolution in its different stages and various forms—from 1966 to 1976—new ways were developed to get these new types of culture to the people—such as the development of small movie projectors which could be carried easily into the mountainous regions of the countryside or could be mounted on bicycles, so that films could be taken and shown even in remote and relatively inaccessible areas.

Also, different Peking Opera companies and other performing troupes would tour in the countryside, with bicycles and back-packs, performing in remote areas, helping local groups perform model works, and watching performances of local works in order to learn from them.

These were concrete ways in which the proletariat, its Party and cultural workers strove to break down the differences between city and country in the cultural field, thus helping to transform society under socialism in the direction of communism.

The Arena of Culture in Mao's Last Great Battle

But the Cultural Revolution was not all one straight line of progress, no more than anything is. It was a revolution, and of course it was fiercely resisted by counter-revolutionaries, headed by capitalist-roaders in the Party itself. There were many twists and turns, and different stages in which different tactics were required to deal with new conditions.

The final stage of the Cultural Revolution, the stage of Mao's last great battle, began with the defeat of the treachery of Lin Biao, who in the fall of 1971 died in an airplane crash, fleeing the country after having failed in an attempt to assassinate Mao and pull off a coup. But Lin had been identified in many ways with the Cultural Revolution, so his treachery gave an opening for many of those who had been knocked down during the Cultural Revolution and others who opposed it from the start or later came into opposition to it. Further, the Right was able to take advantage of the fact that during this stage China was entering into certain compromises, establishing diplomatic relations and making certain agreements with the U.S. and the West in order to keep the Soviet Union off balance, as it had become a direct and immediate threat to China.

Continued on next page

This last battle ended, after the death of Mao, with the counter-revolutionary coup in October 1976 which saw the arrest of Mao's closest comrades, the leaders of the forces of the Chinese proletariat who are now villified as the "gang of four." Revisionism triumphed, for the moment, in China.

In this last great battle, culture and art was once again a crucial field of struggle. The revisionists sought to reverse the gains that the proletariat had made on all fronts, including (and even especially) on this front.

In 1973 they brazenly staged an only thinly disguised remake of a drama which had championed Liu Shao-chi's line in opposition to Mao's before the Cultural Revolution. Around the same time, under the cover of the "opening to the West," and to serve their aims of capitulating to imperialism, they uncritically promoted and denied the class character and content of works of art from the Western imperialist countries, in particular "absolute music" (instrumental music with no descriptive title). Along with this they launched a fierce assault on the new, revolutionary works of literature and art brought forward through the Cultural Revolution, including a sharp attack on the model works and specifically on the revolutionization of Peking Opera.

They accused the revolutionaries of suppressing artistic creations and complained that there were not enough "flowers blooming"—attempting to infuse the policy of letting 100 flowers blossom with a bourgeois content and to pose it against Mao's line that "the proletariat must exercise all-around dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in the realm of the superstructure, including the various spheres of culture," which Mao put forward in dialectical unity with the "100 flowers" policy and which strengthened the proletarian basis of this policy. Along with all this, the revisionists struck out at the transformations in education and the fields of science and technology that had been brought about through the Cultural Revolution, whining that these new policies had made a "mess" of things and specifically that they prevented China from "catching up to and surpassing"—in reality they meant tailing after, aping and capitulating to—the "advanced" countries of the world—that is, the imperialists.

Mao and the revolutionary forces he guided, with the Four—Wang Hung-wen, Chang Chun-chiao, Chiang Ching and Yao Wen-yuan—as the active leading core, not only fought back vigorously against these specific attacks but launched a counter-offensive in the realm of the superstructure and the creation of public opinion. Shortly after the 10th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (in August 1973) they launched the movement to Criticize Lin Biao and Confucius, a campaign mainly educational in form but constituting an extremely important struggle in the realm of the superstructure. Through this campaign, using the method of historical analogy, and based on the application of and education of the masses in historical materialism, the revisionists' counter-

revolutionary line and policies and their preparations for a seizure of power, reversal of the revolution and capitulation to imperialism were exposed and mass criticism of them was mobilized.

Later, in the summer of 1975, as the overall class struggle was coming to a head, Mao used literature and art as a sharp weapon in this battle. In particular he focused attention on and called for revolutionary criticism of an historical novel, *Water Margin*, whose hero (Sung Chiang) was actually a traitor to the peasant rebels in whose ranks he had usurped leadership. Similar to those in present day China who joined the revolution in its democratic stage but were never thoroughgoing revolutionaries, never made a radical rupture with bourgeois ideology, Sung Chiang joined the peasant rebels only to fight corrupt officials and not the Emperor. In the end he took the offer of amnesty from the Emperor and enlisted in his service to fight the peasant rebels who continued the struggle and were determined to carry it through.

The criticism of this novel was, Mao stressed, no mere academic exercise or aesthetic pursuit; the merit of the novel, Mao said, was precisely that it would help the masses of people to recognize capitulationists, modern-day Sung Chiangs, who would betray the revolution at home and sell out to imperialism. The targets were those in authority, especially at the top ranks of the Party, who were pushing a revisionist line and taking the capitalist road—people like Teng Hsiao-ping, and behind them, Chou En-lai—veteran leaders who had failed to advance with the continuation of the revolution in the socialist stage and had turned from bourgeois-democrats (bourgeois-democratic revolutionaries) into capitalist-roaders, counter-revolutionaries.

As this last battle further boiled up and broke out into open, all-out struggle, the spheres of education and culture were extremely important battlefronts. Besides focusing attention on the battle in the educational field in late 1975-early 1976 and calling attention to the fact that this was a sharp reflection of the overall class struggle at that time, Mao led the revolutionary forces in the struggle in the cultural field, as another very important arena of the all-around showdown. And one of the main shots fired by Mao was not only about art but was in the form of art. Specifically, as he had done before, Mao used poetry as a salvo in the struggle—in particular two poems, which Mao had originally written in 1965, and which were reissued on New Year's Day in 1976. This was a message to the Chinese people that, just as in the period of 1965, there was a great danger of the revisionists taking over and restoring capitalism, and that just as at that time, so now there was need for a big struggle.

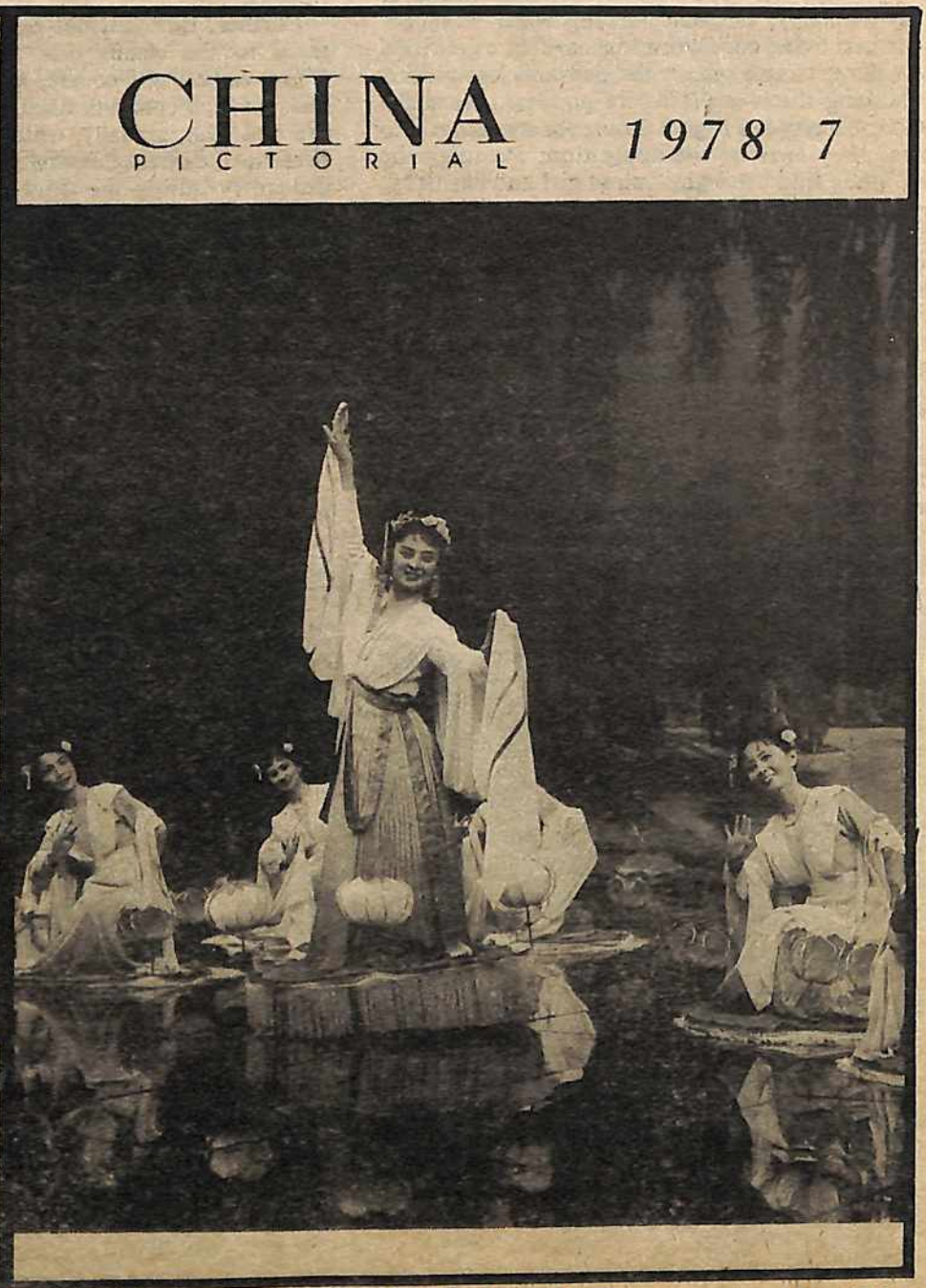
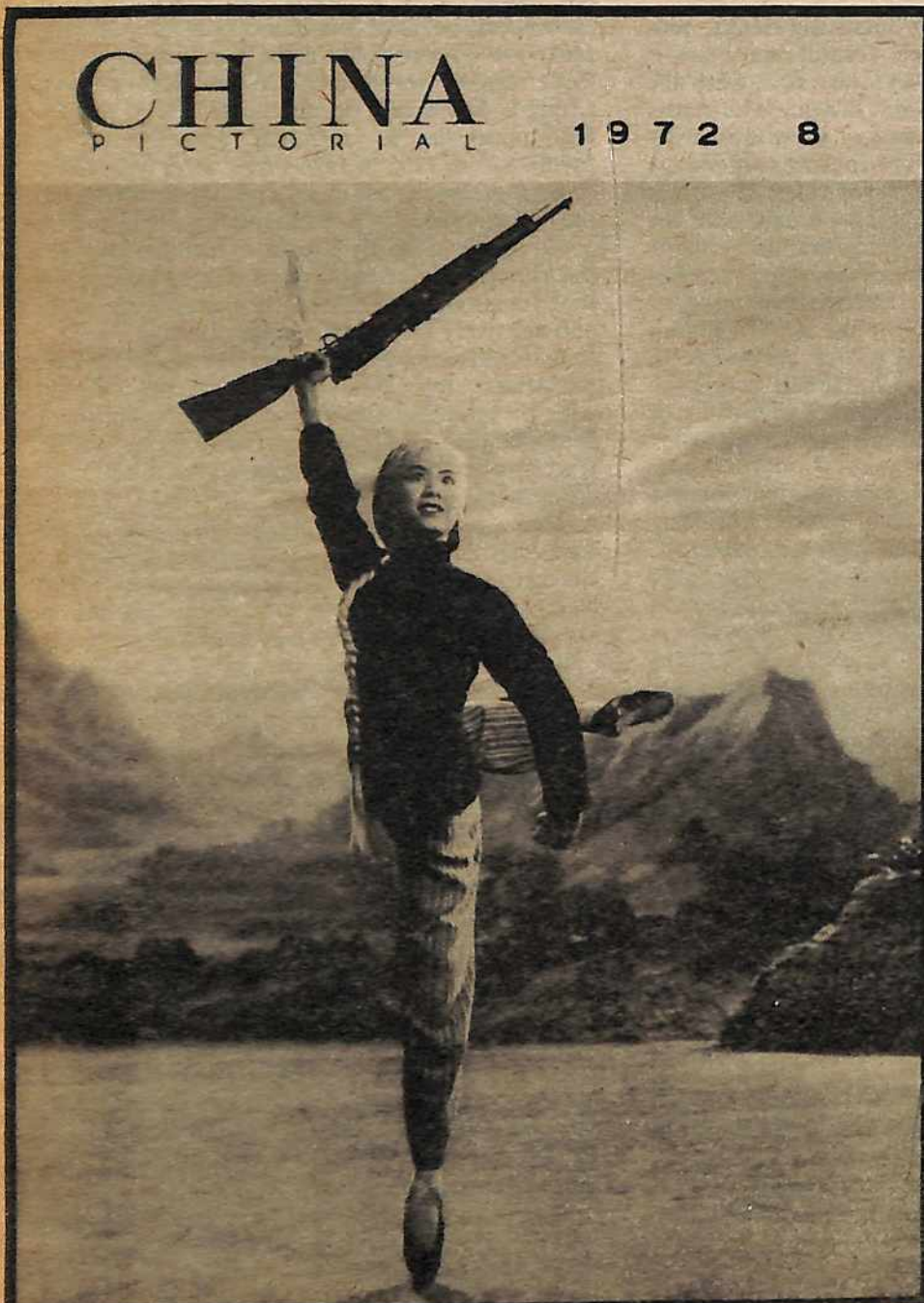
One poem "Chingkangshan Revisited" is full of revolutionary optimism, recalling the epoch-making victories of the Chinese revolution over the previous 38 years and pointing the way forward to the fierce struggles that will bring new victories in the future. Chingkangshan were the

mountains where the first base area for the revolutionary army had been established, starting the Chinese revolution on the road of armed struggle, in 1927.

The other poem, "Two Birds: A Dialogue" is a dialogue between a revolutionary and a revisionist, analogized as two birds, the legendary roc and the twittering, frightened sparrow who longs for potatoes and beef (Khrushchev's "goulash communism") and puts his faith in the "triple pact" (the sham nuclear test ban treaty concluded between the U.S., Britain and the USSR in 1963). The revisionist sparrow, like Khrushchev and his counterparts in China, thinks the revolutionary upsurge and turmoil in China and the world is "one hell of a mess." And the answer of the roc, the powerful bird representing revolution, is that the world is being turned upside down, is being transformed through these revolutionary struggles. These poems, along with the struggle on the cultural front generally, played an important part in this last great battle of Mao Tsetung, in arming the masses, including rank and file Party members and revolutionary cadres, to carry forward the revolutionary struggle right into the teeth of the revisionist hurricane being whipped up by the capitalist-roaders in authority.

The triumph of the revisionists in this last battle, their seizure of power, shows precisely the correctness of Mao's line that throughout socialism there are classes and class struggle and the danger of capitalist restoration (as well as attacks by imperialism and other foreign reactionaries) and that therefore it is necessary to continue the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. It shows specifically how correct Mao's line was on the role of the superstructure—not only that it assumes tremendous importance under socialism but that at times it plays the principal and decisive role. The revisionist coup, which constituted the qualitative change and the beginning of the actual process of reversing the revolution and restoring capitalism, obviously occurred exactly in the superstructure, and naturally could occur nowhere else.

Further, this last battle itself, like all previous struggles in socialist China—and in the earlier period of the Chinese revolution—illustrates the tremendous importance of not only the superstructure in general but of the field of culture and the struggle in that sphere in particular. It shows how correct and what an important contribution was represented by Mao's precise formulation that, upon seizing power, it is decisive that, "The proletariat must exercise all-around dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in the realm of the superstructure, including the various spheres of culture," and the policies and achievements that were developed under the guidance of Mao's revolutionary line on culture and the superstructure. And no revisionist coup and temporary reversal in China can in any way negate or detract from the tremendous and truly immortal contributions of Mao Tsetung, including in the vital area of literature and art and culture as a whole. ■



These two covers illustrate "better than a thousand words" the counter-revolution which has taken place in China since Mao's death, as manifested in the field of art. On the left is a picture from the ballet version of *The White-Haired Girl*, discussed in the text. On the right, a picture from the Lotus Dance, which today's revisionist rulers praise as being based on "traditional art." In this issue of *China Pictorial* they say that this and similar dances "... embody the wisdom and creativeness of our ancestors and reflect the characteristics and social customs of the Chinese nation. ..."!