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For the Beijing Commune For the Political Revolution in China

- Works -

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There are objective economic causes to the Beijing Commune and there are subjective origins. Of the objective origins the Chinese speaker has already given most of what is necessary. In order to save time I will not go into the analysis of all the contradictions of the subsequent stages of the economic reforms, its initial successes, and its later failures.

Today the situation as it is felt by the mass of Chinese people is a bad situation, as the Chinese comrade explained, it is a situation of inflation, stagnating and receding standard of living, huge unemployment, huge imbalances, and especially corruption and bureaucratic material privileges, which are in the eyes of the broad masses of the Chinese people a tremendous scandal. Inequality in the Soviet Union is graphically expressed by the fact that in a luxury restaurant the price of one meal equals the monthly wage of a worker. In China the price of one meal equals the annual wage of a worker. Imagine what ordinary people think about such a situation.

From the subjective point of view, the eruption of the student movement, which triggered a big mass upheaval of workers of the metropolitan area of Beijing, which we call I think correctly the Beijing Commune, has historical roots. It is the third stage of a democratic movement launched by the Chinese students and intellectuals as the historical heirs of the initial democratic movement of 1919, the beginning of the second Chinese revolution.

The first stage of that movement came in 1978-79 with the famous Democracy Wall in Beijing, where the students and intellectuals expressed their democratic demands. It is very little known that that democratic movement produced an analysis of the need for political revolution of the highest theoretical standard, written by a comrade called Chen Erjin in 1979 and entitled, "On the Proletarian Democratic Revolution." It has been published by Verso Press in Britain. It is a remarkable work. I do not agree with all the vocabulary but essentially it is a chart of the political antibureaucratic revolution, demanding, as we do, to institutionalize people's power, that is to say, workers' councils, popular councils, a multiparty system, and full enjoyment of all democratic rights : the right to strike, the right to assembly, the right to organize, the right to demonstrate, a free press-requests which are the key demands, which the students also took up during the Beijing Commune.

The second stage of this movement came in December '86 to January '87, in the period following the dismissal of the party leader Hu Yaobang, whose funeral triggered the present student uprising. Then we come to the third stage, which started with the funeral of Hu Yaobang.

Each time students, teachers, and intellectuals were in the forefront of the movement. But we have to understand that their objective function was to articulate and detonate mass movements of a much broader scope. Already, before the student movement erupted, we had workers' strikes, peasants' strikes, local uprisings in different parts of the country which, however, as a result of their disparity and fragmentation, could not express in a concentrated way political demands. Here is where the students and intellectuals came in. They were obviously capable of doing just that.

If we look at the demands of the students and the demands of the workers, we will find an amazing parallel. The seven key demands of the students as they were published by the students' organizational committee of Beijing University, on April 21, start with an inner-party quarrel : reevaluate the action of Hu Yaobang and approve his point of view, that which is called the reform wing of the Communist Party of China, standing for internal party democracy and more democracy in the country. Second, punish those who have started to attack the students and the masses,

that is, oppose repression. Third, publish a law on the press authorizing free publication of journals, guaranteeing the freedom of the press. Fourth, force the leaders of the state to give an accounting to the country on the state of their income, their fortune and that of their families, that is to say, denounce corruption and private wealth accumulation by the bureaucracy. Fifth, ask that the leaders of the state publicly admit the errors of then- educational policy and increase the credits to education and the salaries of the teachers. You must know that the teachers in China, not to speak of students living on scholarships, are amongst the lowest paid people of that country. There is a systematic underinvestment in education, which is a real scandal from the point of view of the objective needs of development and modernization in an underdeveloped country like China. Sixth, reevaluate the campaign against « bourgeois liberalization » with total rehabilitation for those who have suffered unwarranted injustice. The last point is to ask that the press report objectively about the problems and the reality of the democratic and patriotic student movement.

If we look at the seven demands there is not the slightest attack against socialism in them, there is not the slightest call or appeal for capitalism. These were demands for the democratization of a bureaucratized workers' state.

More impressive, more significant, are the central demands of the Beijing Independent Workers Association, the first independent trade union created by the Beijing workers, which was published on May 21, a month after the students started their struggle, and you see immediately the way in which there was a real capacity to help articulate the workers through the initiative of the students.

First, the workers ask that their organization must be totally independent and must be set up as the result of a democratic process in which workers take part of their own free will. It must not be under the control of any other organization. And it must have equal status with other mass organizations. Secondly, the basic aim of this organization must be to put forward the views of the greatest number of workers on political and economic questions and never be a simple welfare organization, as is the case with the present state unions. Thirdly, this organization must have a monitoring role over the Communist Party in firms and businesses that are the property of the whole people, that are under collective ownership. This organization must have the right to use all appropriate and legal means to monitor the legal representatives and to insure that the workers are really the masters of the firms. You cannot be clearer in the expression of a revolutionary socialist purpose, which has absolutely nothing to do with the restoration of capitalism.

They did not ask that the firms be sold to capitalist owners. No, they said that the workers must be the real masters of the collective factories. This is clearly a revolutionary socialist demand. It gives you clearly the content of this Beijing Commune as it developed.

There is a lot of evidence that after the initial stage of the student general strike in Beijing, and the extension of the student strikes to some of the key provincial university cities, there was a massive influx of working people into the Beijing mass movement. At the height of the movement, immediately before and immediately after the proclamation of martial law, that is to say from May 17 to May 22, there were between one and two million people that came to the streets of Beijing and to Tiananmen Square. In Beijing you have at the maximum a few hundred thousand students. If you have two million people in the streets, obviously the great majority of these people are not students. They are workers and ordinary people of the metropolitan area.

There are detailed reports made by foreign liberal journalists from the British, the German, the Italian, and the French press, some of them social democrats and people more to the left who give many details. The big steel plant of Beijing was completely on strike. The postal workers were completely on strike. The bus drivers completely on strike. I can give you a long list. It is not necessary to go into details. A huge working class solidarity developed with the student movement.

One can discuss the motivation of the workers. Probably this is what most experienced socialists would think, workers did not only take part in support of the student demands, although they were in total solidarity with them ;

they also came out for their own demands. That is absolutely legitimate, it does not in any way reduce the worker-student unity of action, which developed in the streets of Beijing and which developed around Tiananmen Square in these crucial days.

Comrades who were on the spot give detailed descriptions of what happened in that huge city (the Beijing metropolitan area is one of the greatest urban areas in the world) immediately after the proclamation of martial law.

When the threat of military repression of the people assembled on Tiananmen Square became visible, there occurred a degree of self-organization of the masses of Beijing as we have rarely seen in history. You have to go to the highest points of past communes, the Paris Commune, the Petrograd Commune of 1917-1919, the Barcelona Commune of 1936, the Budapest Commune of 1956, to see something similar. Practically in every neighborhood an organization was set up in order to be able to immediately mobilize hundreds of thousands of people to block the army, to block the tanks, to agitate the soldiers. This happened day after day, mobilizing a large part of the population of this metropolitan area. If you take the whole metropolitan area there are many more than ten million inhabitants, including also peasants of the suburbs and the fields around Beijing. So, you have there an extremely developed revolutionary mass movement of peasants, workers, students, intellectuals, writers, state functionaries, who not only solidarized with the students but expressed their own demands, which all run in the direction of a political, antibureaucratic revolution.

This opinion, that we were at the beginning of such a revolution, was not something that was peculiar to revolutionary Marxists, as we are. It was shared by most of the observers who were on the spot. I have a whole series of quotes available, from newspapers and weekly papers like *The Guardian*, *The Independent* in Britain, like *Die Zeit*, *Der Spiegel* in Germany, and many other papers in France and in Italy, that said in as many words including headlines : this is the beginning of a revolution. I am not talking about the whole period, from April to June, but of the high points. One can discuss if it lasted 20,30,40 days, but this was obvious to all honest observers, everybody who looked at these events objectively without being prejudiced and ideologically motivated to deny reality.

We can ask ourselves a question : Why was that powerful commune defeated by the military intervention ? There are two main reasons for this : first the uneven development of the workers' and the students' movement ; and secondly, the uneven development between town and countryside in China.

There was a large workers' solidarity movement, but there was no workers' total general strike. If there had been a workers' total general strike, the crushing of the Beijing Commune would have been, if not impossible, at least not possible in one night. The Budapest precedent of November 1956 confirms this. There was still a gap between the general student movement and the partial workers' movement, which involved several millions of people probably on the national scale, but not enough to make an instantaneous repression impossible.

Secondly, the uneven development between town and countryside. Some of you know the history of the Russian Revolution and the writings of comrade Trotsky on the subject. I will remind you of the explanation Trotsky gave for the defeat of the revolution of 1905 : the revolution was defeated by the peasant soldiers. We notice likewise a significant part of the army, the army stationed around Beijing, the army stationed around Shanghai, those who were the most closely linked to the working class, were not ready to crush the uprising of the students and the workers hi Beijing. Deng had to take a plane to go to look around China to find some division which would be ready to undertake the crackdown. He could find one. The general level of decomposition in the army was still not the one you had in the Russian Revolution of 1917. China is a subcontinent with a tremendous unevenness of development both between town and countryside and between different provinces. So they could still find some instrument for repression.

There might be a third reason for the defeat of the commune, but I do not want to go into that question. The degree of organization of the student movement was very high. It was sufficient for the upsurge of the movement, but it was not

sufficient for a confrontation with a counterrevolutionary armed force. The students by their whole preparation, their whole ideology, were not prepared for it. They were discussing, in the last final days, the merits and demerits of withdrawing. They were not sure enough, not capable enough, of confronting the military.

It must be said, in passing, that the cynicism of the Deng counterrevolutionary faction was beyond belief. When they tried to trick the students into retreat by maneuvers, by political means, that was the first form of their intervention. They made statements which were blatant lies. The marshal, who is president of the republic, said "and it was printed in the official daily of the Communist Party of China : "« If one student is killed, we will pay the price for it for a thousand years. » It was the same person who, two weeks later, coolly lets the army kill several thousands of students ! The day he made that statement, he knew exactly that he was preparing that repression.

Deng accuses the students of having been conscious or unconscious tools of the CIA and American imperialism. But during the whole period of the Beijing uprising, including of course the period of repression, the Deng government had not stopped for a single day its collaboration with the CIA. You have hi China, for several years, a listening post that tries to listen to signals from the Soviet Union, commonly administered by the Chinese secret police and by the CIA. This had not stopped for one moment when these assassins accused the students of being tools of the CIA.

What general conclusions can we draw from this grandiose and tragic historical event which unfolded in the months of April, May, and June ? The first lesson we have to draw is that the thesis of the liberal intelligentsia in both Eastern and Western Europe, that economic liberalization leads to or is even a precondition for political democratization, has been utterly contradicted by historical evidence. There is no identity or logical link between perestroika and glasnost, to put it in Russian terms. On the contrary, economic liberalization increases social tensions. Under conditions of increased social tensions, inequality, and differentiation, political democracy becomes a luxury which the largest part of the bureaucracy will try to severely restrict or do away with. The opposite is also true. Precisely for the same reason, workers, students, intellectuals, all have an interest in supporting and extending every step in the direction of more democratic institutions. It is not by accident that the students on Tianan-men Square came out with the slogan, "« Long Live Glasnost. » For them it meant more democracy, more possibility of self-expression, of self-organization, more elimination of censorship and all institutions of that same land.

A second lesson we have to draw is to denounce the hypocrisy of the imperialist ideological and political onslaught following the Chinese events. They make a lot of noise in favor of democracy and against repression. But simultaneously there is the preparation of continuous economic and financial collaboration. Profits count more for these gentlemen than lofty ideas. The Chinese market is a huge market. They are not going to forgo that market because thousands of students and workers have been killed. We have also to ask them, including some of our social democratic friends : you protest the massacre in Tiananmen Square. But what about the massacre in Caracas ? Venezuela is a very small country. Caracas has 10 percent of the inhabitants of Beijing. When the people of Caracas rose against price increases and misery, the army under a social democratic president of the republic shot into workers' homes and killed one thousand people. That is proportionally much, much more than the people who have been killed in Beijing. You have not heard any great public scandal about the massacre in Caracas or of even greater massacres which have happened in El Salvador and Guatemala. So these gentlemen should be considered hypocrites when they shed crocodile tears about the massacre hi Beijing. We should not give them one ounce of political or moral credit. They do not merit it.

This leads me also to a political conclusion. We should not call upon bourgeois governments to apply economic sanctions against China. First, because it is not our task to ask anything in that field from bourgeois governments. Secondly, because it could be very profoundly counterproductive. It would help Deng get a new legitimacy.

The Chinese people have been treated as a semicolonial people for a long historical period. They have been humiliated, oppressed, overexploited by imperialist governments. To create a situation in which Deng could present himself now as a Chinese patriot, defending China against economic sanctions from the West, would help him obtain a new legitimacy.

We should direct our requests not to the Western governments, but to the international labor movement, to the trade unions, to the communist parties, to the social democratic parties, to the scientific organizations. We should ask them to stop collaborating with the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party as long as a certain number of demands are not fulfilled. We should demand, for example, that an international jury composed of representatives of the labor movement reexamine every single trial that has been conducted against the Chinese students' and workers' leaders. We should request that scientists and activists not go to any conference with any Chinese delegation as long as they are not allowed to send a delegation to the Chinese jails to see how the political prisoners are treated there, if they have been beaten, if they have been tortured. That type of pressure exercised on the Soviet authorities, in the years before and after Gorbachev, has had results, has had effects. We should not consider that it is impossible with the strength of the international labor movement and the scientific organizations to get such results also today.

The third lesson we have to draw is that the international bourgeoisie and social democracy can indeed make gains from Deng's blows against the Chinese people. They translate the insupportable pictures of the tanks crushing the bones of young workers, of students, even of children in Tiananmen Square into the formula : « Look at the ugly picture of communism. » "This is the end of communism."

Of course, for us it is obvious that these Stalinist crimes have nothing to do with communism. But our voice is still very weak against the concentrated power of the bourgeois-controlled mass media and their reformist echoes. So, the immediate consequence of the crushing of the Beijing Commune is a big blow against the left, against the labor movement, against socialism and communism everywhere in the world. One of the leading ideologues of the Soviet Communist Party told me, and I think he is right, that Deng Xiaoping in one hour has destroyed five years of efforts to give communism again a human face before international public opinion.

That is true. We all suffer from that. We will continue to suffer from it for a certain time. But this is not the total balance sheet of the effects of the Beijing Commune, of its rise and of its temporary defeat, on the international class struggle scene. It is only part of it.

The fourth lesson of the Beijing events tells us that there is another part of that balance sheet, which is in favor of socialism, in favor of revolution, and which will continue to operate in that sense in the coming months and years.

Before television brought to the homes of hundreds of millions of people throughout the world the pictures of the army crushing the Beijing Commune, it had already brought to the same homes the pictures of the commune itself. The participants in the Beijing Commune were the first ones in the history of revolution to enjoy the privilege of having all their actions instantaneously seen and assimilated by hundreds of millions of people throughout the world. We have to try to retain and reproduce these pictures on videotapes and play them over and over and over again. We have to try and write them down in pamphlets and books, lest they be forgotten. They tell a wonderful story. They reveal a heartening truth.

Here you had day after day hundreds of thousands and later more than a million people assembled, supported by the great majority of the inhabitants of the Beijing metropolitan area. These people were bound together not by selfishness, but by altruism and sympathy ; not by the pursuit of material rewards, but by collective solidarity ; not by competition, but by cooperation. They did not need any Jesus to drive the merchants out of the temple. The merchants themselves brought in food, drink, medicine, blankets, books, paper for printing the news, typewriters, mimeographs, free of charge from all over the metropolis. And thanks to these common goals you have had that unbelievable spectacle in the terrible world in which we are living. This million assembled without a single murder, without a single act of violence, without a single rape, without a single case of drug addiction, day after day after day.

This picture hammers home that elementary truth which all the skeptics and all the renegades and all the opponents have to face. This was the rise of a new socialist man and woman, embodying a new civilization superior to the civilization of capitalism based on selfishness, shallow values, striving towards self-destruction. Gentlemen on

the other side of the barricades : here you see these new socialist men and women coming alive ; they were one million. Here is the real picture of socialism, not that of the gulag or of the corrupt bureaucrat. You could not eliminate it from the television screens. People all over the world spontaneously sympathized and solidarized with it. You won't erase it from people's memory. As time goes on and as the Chinese people will do away with their oppressors and the Beijing Commune will rise again triumphantly, this image will stay and outlast any image of repression by the murderers.

This is not just an unfounded dream, a Utopia. This is the way in which history in the long run is restoring truth and justice. It is already unfolding on that course in the Soviet Union where all of Stalin's crimes are today being revealed and condemned. All his victims are being rehabilitated. The names of our dearest comrades of the Left Opposition and of their great spokesman Leon Trotsky did not remain buried under the permafrost of the tundras as their murderers expected. They are alive again, as is alive the voice of our dear and great Rosa Luxemburg, of our dear and great Ernesto Che Guevara, and of all the murdered martyrs of the international labor movement.

Two weeks ago 250,000 people assembled in the streets of Budapest to give a solemn funeral to the communist prime minister of the Hungarian revolution of 1956, comrade Imre Nagy. We had to wait 50 years until the Soviet people imposed the juridical rehabilitation of the victims of the Moscow trials. We had to wait 30 years until the Hungarian people imposed the rehabilitation of comrade Imre Nagy and all the martyrs of the Hungarian revolution of 1956. We won't have to wait 10 years until the Chinese people will impose the rehabilitation of the martyrs of Tiananmen Square. There will be a solemn meeting on Tiananmen Square in front of a million people. Every one of these martyrs will come alive again.

What has happened in the USSR, what is happening in Hungary, is a great vindication, a great historical victory for our movement. For a long time we were nearly alone in denouncing the Moscow trials, solidarizing with the Hungarian revolution. Now millions of people take up these causes and lead them to final success.

Two other historical victories following closely upon that initial one should be noted. We are just witnessing a revival of proletarian internationalism. It is still modest and limited but nonetheless significant. As I said before, we were practically alone in condemning the crushing of the Hungarian revolution of 1956. We were likewise isolated in struggling against, not only condemning, the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. Today, powerful forces of the international labor and revolutionary movement condemn and fight against the crushing of the Beijing Commune as we do. The Brazilian Workers Party does so. The Sandinista comrades do so. The left wing of the Labor Party of Britain does so. We have had solidarity demonstrations with the Chinese students in several Eastern European cities, in Budapest, in Warsaw, in Wroclaw, in Ljubljana, in Prague, and elsewhere. It warms our hearts to know that one of the largest demonstrations anywhere in the world in solidarity with the Chinese students took place in Moscow. We have to salute the political courage of comrade Boris Yeltsin, who publicly broke the discipline of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on that issue, and the line of the Congress of People's Deputies of the Soviet Union of which he is a member, extending support to the students and condemning their murderers.

In the Soviet Union the struggle for proletarian internationalism is an uphill struggle. The overwhelming majority of the Soviet people mistakenly identify the costly and reactionary bureaucratic adventures, like the invasion of Hungary, the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the invasion of Afghanistan, with proletarian internationalism. But now growing political awareness makes them ready to rediscover the simple truth which is at the basis of working class internationalism : an injury to one anywhere in the world is an injury to all.

If you apologize for anti-working class repression anywhere, or even keep silent about it, you will be much weakened in defending yourself against similar repression. This the vanguard of the Moscow working class begins to understand. In the crowd which assembled to solidarize with the Chinese students and which comrade Boris Yeltsin

addressed, there were banners saying "Yesterday Tbilisi, Today Beijing, Tomorrow Moscow ?" How right they were to raise the question in that precise form !

The second historical breakthrough which we are achieving concerns the reconquest of proletarian democracy combined with unity of action : the freedom to debate frankly but the readiness to struggle together for common goals against the common enemy. This traditional framework of labor democracy, which was a great source of self-confidence and strength during half a century, was first shattered by social democracy in 1914, before it was destroyed by Stalinism in the '30s. Now it is slowly being restored in the new labor movement arising in countries like Brazil, South Africa, South Korea, Mexico, the Soviet Union, several Eastern European countries, as well as some countries of Western Europe.

A few weeks ago I visited Hungary and gave a public lecture on the Fourth International in Budapest University. The conference was faithfully reported in the two daily papers of that country. I gave two radio interviews to the Hungarian radio on the same subject, "The Fourth International yesterday, today, and tomorrow." People did not agree with me, but there was not the slightest hesitation of objectively reporting what I was saying.

On July 8 in Paris, a big mass demonstration and mass festival for a just and legitimate cause took place. Twenty-five thousand people assembled in mass demonstration. Between 150,000 and 200,000 assembled in the evening festival. The objective was a struggle for the annulment of all third-world countries' debts, to which we added the additional demand of annulling the debts of all Eastern European countries. This demonstration was initiated by our comrades of the Revolutionary Communist League, the French section of the Fourth International. The main daily papers of France, in the first place *Le Monde* and *Liberation*, gave us all due credit for it. But it grew into a powerful united front action with more than sixty organizations joining together, with the Communist Youth and the Communist Party and significant parts of the Socialist Youth joining together with our comrades in the preparation and the organization of this demonstration.

Who could have imagined that these events were possible - I do not say five years ago, I say five months ago ? They show us how the world in which we live is starting to change. Behind that change is one decisive factor : big sections of the international working class which have been absent from the political scene for nearly half a century or more as an independent force are awakening and beginning to move. This is the case for Brazil. This is the case for the Soviet Union. This is the case for China. This is the case for South Africa. We have never lost for one minute our faith and our certainty that such an awakening is unavoidable. Sooner or later, other big sectors of the international working class which are still by and large politically inactive, in the first place the Japanese, the Indian, and the American working class, will follow on the road on which the Brazilian, the Soviet, and the Chinese workers have now started.

We do not know when it will be. It might take three years. It might take five years. It might take ten years or more. But it will come. The train of history, which Hitler, Stalin, and U.S. imperialism have caused to derail, is back on its rail again. Sooner or later it will reach the U.S. When it does, that will sound the death knell of capitalism everywhere in the world. These developments we patiently struggle for and prepare for from now on, and not only when they are around the corner.

Never before were there so many reasons to be confident in our class and in our organization, dear brothers and sisters. I call upon you, comrades, to build the party, to help us build the International, for without the International no problem of humankind can be cured. The future is ours. Because the future is with the international working class and its allies. The future is with the rule of the freely associated producers. The future is with a multiparty socialist democracy. The future is with a socialist world federation.

Glory to the Martyrs of Tiananmen Square !
Shame and Disgust for Their Vile Murderers !
Long Live the Political Revolution in China !
Long Live the Fourth International !

For the Beijing Commune For the Political Revolution in China

Long Live the Worldwide Struggle for Socialism !

Long Live World Revolution !

Venceremos ! We Shall Win !![didim escort](#), [marmaris escort](#), [didim escort bayan](#), [marmaris escort bayan](#), [didim escort bayanlar](#), [marmaris escort bayanlar](#)