

Gale of Debate Blowing Through China

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Article I

PEKING—A full gale of debate is blowing through China, flattening what seemed to be the sturdiest plants and leaving unsuspected blossoms standing in their place.

Bureaucracy is under fire and bureaucrats are in retreat, together with people who consider dogma an alternative to argument, slogans an alternative to thinking, and issuing orders an alternative to solving problems.

This is the biggest mental shake-up I have seen, full of lessons for Socialists and others all over the world.

Most of the discussion centres on two speeches by Mao Tse-tung early this year, and the curious fact is that these have not yet been published.

This is not because they are in any way secret, but, I believe, because they contain theoretical propositions of the greatest importance and that Mao is still working to perfect them.

Anyway the speeches were made, as it were, "off the cuff" and not from prepared texts. They were made to the Supreme State Council and a special enlarged meeting called by the Communist Party, and in them Mao was "thinking aloud" about some of the major issues which face China in building Socialism.

Tape recordings of these speeches have been heard by millions of people here and have given impetus to the current discussions.

I have not heard these recordings, but have found it possible, by carefully examining the Press and in discussions with people who have heard them, to reach what I think is a fairly accurate estimation of what they contain.

The main issues involved, in which Mao is making a contribution to Communist theory of the greatest importance, are:

How to solve problems arising from differing interests and views among the Chinese people.

How to encourage the free development of arts and sciences under Socialism.

How to ensure the mutual super-

vision of the Communist Party and other parties by each other, and of both by the people.

How to overcome the tendency of the Communist Party—as the party in power—to become bureaucratic, divorced from the people and prone to act from broad principles rather than reality.

In approaching these questions, Mao has drawn the conclusion—of profound importance to Communist theory—that the 1949 revolution and the transformation of farming, handicrafts and capital in 1956, have brought to an end fundamental class struggles in China.

Although remnants of counter-revolutionary forces still exist, there is no longer any basic clash of interest among the mass of the people.

The shedding of the view—never subscribed to here—that the class struggle intensifies under Socialism, raises new questions.

The end of the basic clash of interests between the people and their enemies does not mean the end of conflicting views and interests among the people themselves. Where there is life there is conflict.

When the people have decisively defeated their enemies and this conflict disappears, the conflicts that come to the front are such as differences of opinion or interests between the people and their Government; different sections of the people; mental and manual workers; individual and collective needs; correct and incorrect policies, and questions in the realm of ideas.

Since the basic interests of all are identical—the building of Socialism and a better life for all—such conflicting issues have to be settled by democratic means. It is not only incorrect but impossible to solve them by using the method of power which it is correct to use against enemies.

For the people to dictate to themselves is an obvious absurdity.

If the attempt is made to solve such conflicts—which are not fundamental or antagonistic — by the methods suited to the class struggle, this will have the effect of

sharpening the conflict and making it antagonistic.

This question of how to solve the "contradictions in the ranks of the people" is now placed as the central theoretical question here. It is a complex question.

The Communist Party of China led the people to the conquest of power by armed struggle. It enjoys tremendous prestige, but this itself is a grave danger. A minority of Communist Party members have become conceited, seeking position and fame. "It is easy for our members to get begrimed with bureaucracy when the Party is in power," said Lu Ting-yi, one of the Party's leading theoreticians, recently.

Moreover, Chinese Communists, long accustomed to struggle and to the support of the people, can all too easily fall into the error of treating opposing minorities as "enemies" and of trying to solve developing problems by issuing

orders based on out-of-date experience and methods.

This is why, side by side with other democratic developments, a big movement is starting in the Communist Party to improve its style of work, get rid of bureaucracy and help members to understand how to solve problems democratically and realistically.

A leading Communist Party member told the foreign Press in Peking that the most dangerous fault for China was bureaucracy. Next was dogmatism (in the form of overstressing principles and ignoring the actual conditions); and thirdly, divorce from the real interests of the 600 million Chinese people.

This was why the Communist Party would concentrate on shedding bureaucracy, subjectivism and sectarianism.

Inside the Communist Party, as

outside, the stress is on democratic methods.

The starting point is unity and the desire for unity, and then to proceed by discussion and criticism—"gentle as a zephyr or a light shower"—to reach a higher degree of unity. Nobody unwilling to accept criticism should have it thrust on him.

What is perhaps most important for the future is the decision that all Communists, leaders and rank and file alike, must find out how to blend manual work with mental work.

Every tendency to look down on manual work in a society where equality is based on the ending of exploitation must be rooted out.

By bringing into existence a permanent system in which leaders go to work alongside workers and peasants for part of their time it is believed that problems will be discovered more quickly and solved more realistically.

The New AFL-CIO Ethics Code

Below we give in full the 12 "basic and elementary principles" set forth in the Code of Ethical Practices With Respect to Union Democratic Practices, approved by the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO which "should be guaranteed" by every affiliate. The 12 points, following a lengthy preamble, are:

1. Each member of a union should have the right to full and free participation in union self-government. This should include the right (a) to vote periodically for his local and national officers, either directly by referendum vote or through delegate bodies, (b) to honest elections, (c) to stand for and to hold office, subject only to fair qualifications uniformly imposed, (d) to voice his views as to the method in which the union's affairs should be conducted.

2. Each member of a union should have the right to fair treatment in the application of union rules and law. The general principle applicable to union disciplinary procedures is that such procedures should contain all the elements of

weaken the union as a collective bargaining agency, or to carry on slander and libel.

4. To safeguard the rights of the individual members and to safeguard its democratic character, the AFL-CIO and each affiliated national or international union should hold regular conventions at stated intervals, which should be not more than four years. The convention should be the supreme governing body of the union.

5. Officers of the AFL-CIO and of each affiliated national or international union should be elected, either by referendum vote or by the vote of delegate bodies. Whichever method is used, election should be free, fair and honest and adequate internal safeguards the achievement of that objective.

6. All general conventions of the AFL-CIO and of affiliated national or international unions should be open to the public, except for necessary executive sessions. Convention proceedings or an accurate summary thereof should be published and be available to the member-

should be democratic, conducted either by referendum or by vote of a delegate body which is itself elected by referendum or at union meetings.

10. The term of office of all union officials should be stated in the organization's constitution or by-laws and should be for a reasonable period, not to exceed four years.

11. To ensure democratic, responsible, and honest administration of its locals and other subordinate bodies, the AFL-CIO and affiliated national and international unions should have the power to institute disciplinary and corrective proceedings with respect to local unions and other subordinate bodies, including the power to establish trusteeships where necessary. Such powers should be exercised sparingly and only in accordance with the provisions of the union's constitution, and autonomy should be restored promptly upon correction of the abuses requiring trusteeship.

12. Where constitutional amend-