

# “Let Bourgeois Art Do Its Thing”

In line with their policy of doing all around self-exposure, the CPML recently let it all hang out in a letter, published with extra emphasis in the centerfold of the Oct. 9 issue of *the Call*, hailing the end of the so-called cultural tyranny in China in past years and the proliferation of bourgeois culture in China under the revisionists. “Freedom, that’s where it’s at,” squawks *The Call*’s art critic, “We don’t want anyone riding roughshod over us, so we shouldn’t blame the Chinese if they don’t either.” One would be tempted to think that this shameless petty-bourgeois viewpoint trumpeted in a so-called communist newspaper just uncontrollably slipped out if it wasn’t a well known fact that CPML is aiming at advanced world levels in upholding the counter-revolutionary garbage of their revisionist mentors in China.

“‘Freedom’ is a grand word, but under the banner of freedom for industry the most predatory wars were waged, under the banner of freedom of labour, the working people were robbed,” said Lenin in *What Is To Be Done?*, exposing exactly the same bourgeois view of “freedom of criticism” now openly put out by the CPML. And it is precisely under the banner of “freedom” that the revisionists in China have unleashed a torrent of bourgeois art and literature, as they hasten to forcibly bury the model works, like the *White Haired Girl*—works of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution which joyously and openly inspired the masses of people to exercise all-round dictatorship over the bourgeoisie in every sphere.

What the CPML applauds as “freedom of expression” is none other than the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the proletariat. Doe anyone seriously think that the masses of workers and peasants in China are clamouring to hear Beethoven? No, this wave of bourgeois art has been unleashed to please unreformed and disaffected petty-bourgeois intellectuals and bourgeois aspiring party bureaucrats—an important social base of the top revisionists. Does anyone seriously think that it is to *these* heights that the masses of workers in China should aspire? Obviously, the CPML does. But Mao Tsetung did not and struggled against this line from the time of the Yenan Forum right up to his last breath.

Thumbing through the pages of recent issues of *Chinese Literature* which *the Call* letter touts so highly, we find such brilliant examples of “exuberance, optimism and genuine



feeling” as the wood cut above, entitled *Youth*. This work, recently resurrected from 1961, might better have been called *Petty-Bourgeois Contemplation of a Modern Power Station at Midnight or Student Hypnotized by Electrical Tower Drops Pencil*. It is no wonder that Mao Tsetung said 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.”

Rave on, Ladies and Gentlemen of *the Call*. You are “free” to hail the great new awakening in art in China. You are “free” to admire the lofty works of Shakespeare, Ibsen and the revisionist trash which have usurped the stage from the model revolutionary works. You are “free” to praise the “progress” represented by the staging of such inspiring works as Hans Christian Andersen’s *Little Match Girl* by the Peking Dance School, or to tout the new slogan “Pay More For Well Dressed Hair” which has given quite a boost to China’s hairdressing trade or Pierre Cardin’s invitation to China to design new outfits for the new and old bourgeoisie. As Lenin said, you are free “to go yourselves wherever you will, even into the marsh. In fact we think the marsh is your proper place, and we are prepared to render *you* every assistance to get there.”

All of this reveals a growing thinness to the disguise which the ruling class is able to draw over its increasing attacks against the people. Carter and others attempt to wrap themselves in the cloak of “liberalism,” which has served the bourgeoisie so well in the past, but its more and more tattered and threadbare nature make this a harder and harder act to perform. More and more the bourgeoisie’s program is reduced to empty hand-waving—a “tax cut” which does not cut taxes (for the masses, at least), a “full employment” bill which will have no effect on employment (and is not meant to), an anti-inflation program which will have little or no effect on inflation, and an “equal rights amendment” which will do nothing toward achieving equality for women. Of course, even when the bourgeoisie does make real (not phony) concessions to the mass struggle, it is with the purpose of diverting and attacking the struggles of the masses. But what stands out about these recent measures is how all of them are either totally empty, or are straight-out attacks hiding behind only the scantiest of veils.

And why is the U.S. bourgeoisie no longer able to offer the sops it once could? Why is it forced to expose itself more openly? It is because of the major crisis of U.S. imperialism which this decade has seen, a crisis which has gone and will go through various phases and ups and downs, but which is the beginning of a new spiral downwards for U.S. imperialism—a downward spiral which, as summed up in our Party’s 1976 Central Committee Report, “. . . is the spiral that will lead to a major change in the relation of forces and will lead to the real prospect of proletarian revolution in this country as well as others.” (*Revolutionary Work in a Non-Revolutionary Situation* [RCP Publications], p. 5.) ■