

What Does a Socialist Factory Produce? Workers in the Chinese Cultural Revolution

Andrea Piazzaroli Longobardi

In the last twenty years, scholars have introduced new theoretical perspectives to the study of the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) based on previously unexamined sources, and in particular taking into consideration grassroots records of contemporary debates. This article discusses a set of documents comprising both central and marginal publications from the Cultural Revolution, with the aim of highlighting the role of workers in shaping policies and theoretical debates in that period.¹ My main argument is that the participation of workers in both political debates and practical experiments, especially after January 1967, constituted a moment of intense political creativity, not only because the CCP needed to solve organizational conflicts resulting from workers' nationwide mobilization, but also because workers actually provided essential contributions to theoretical debates and proposed radical changes to the organization of production, which in turn uncovered important contradictions in their socialist society. By examining specific examples of workers' intellectual production during the Cultural Revolution, my goal is to show how workers' participation in the study of theory, far from being an idle exercise in propaganda, was rather an experiment that allowed them to produce significant political insights into the lingering contradictions of socialist society.

From the beginning of the Cultural Revolution (hereafter CR), workers' participation in political mobilizations was discussed at every level of society, from the production unit to the Central Committee (CC). According to orthodox Marxist-Leninist ideology, proletarians are the central figures both in the revolution and in the socialist state. In a “new stage of socialist construction”—as the CR was called—how could they be left out?² However, nobody knew how actually to engage workers in this national campaign without damaging planned production, and this is why, at least in the first six months of the CR, a seemingly endless stream of documents was exchanged between local and central levels of the CCP, proposing different policies for how workers could (or how they should not) take part in public debates, demonstrations, and political study.³

From mid-1967, CCP leaders began to view the engagement of workers as a way out of Red Guard student factionalism. In fact, the so-called Worker Propaganda Teams (工宣队) were a crucial element in suppressing factionalism in schools, universities, and production units (RUSSO, 2005; PERRY, 1993).⁴ After the disbanding of the Red Guards in July 1968, the Central Committee focused its efforts on promoting other political experiments, principally organized within production units or resulting from partnerships created between professors, workers, and students. This is the case at the Workers' University (工人大学), a local initiative that received close attention from CC

members and was broadcast to and reproduced in many places in China. The Workers' University and other similar study groups were responsible for providing literacy programs and political studies in factories and other work units, and they maintained a persistent editorial effort, publishing countless collections of articles authored by workers themselves. These texts show that workers actively produced social and political-economic analyses that brought to light important theoretical questions concerning the definition of socialism and its organization.

A Turning Point within the Cultural Revolution: The Rise of Workers as Political Actors

We left the plane and there were many groups to welcome us, mostly workers and cadres. Then the Red Guards arrived. When we started walking, workers and cadres did not move, but the Red Guards, not caring that there were thousands of people, started to crowd us, and surrounded us so that the guests could not move. After a few minutes, I could see that the cadres and workers had not moved, neither had the work teams. Afternoon came and the students had not left, they ate at the airport and then cleaned everything up. It was nine in the evening and students were still there. Schools should be better organized... From this perspective, if the workers take the lead, they can influence the students. Students are the vanguard of the revolution, they started it, but if they do not ally with the workers, it won't do. (ZHOU, 1967a.)

In describing and analyzing this scene at the Shanghai airport on June 28, 1967, Zhou Enlai (1898–1976) alludes to an important topic of debate in 1967–68. Observing the different attitudes of workers, cadres, and students in organizing a reception in the airport, Zhou referred to the importance of transferring the political leadership of the CR from students to workers and of creating strategies to bring these groups together.

The CR had started as a broad mobilization of Red Guards—what Mao once called “the Red Guard broom” (MAO, 1967a). These first mobilizations resulted in the dismissal of some national and local leaders, disseminated popular texts, and initiated collective debates. The Red Guard groups were a main force in the early CR because of their sheer numbers, their lack of any “regard for rules” (MAO, 1967a), and their virulent opposition to any policy that tried to suppress or control their own self-organization. In 1966, “pressure was being exerted on the

students, the Red Guards had just been born, and the struggle was in its initial stage” (MAO, 1967b); by the second quarter of 1967, however, “the situation had changed greatly; the working class had risen to its feet” (MAO, 1967a). The directive to “carry out cultural struggle but not armed struggle” (要搞文斗不要搞武斗) was frequently broadcast by the CCP and intensely debated in meetings in schools, universities, and production units. Yet not all Red Guard groups respected this directive. Factionalism had spread throughout the country and there were debates at every level of society about how to deal with violent social conflicts.

Meanwhile, the “big critique” (大批判) campaign, launched alongside the CR as a response to Mao’s call to “care about the problems of the state,”⁵ was being waged using the Four Big Weapons (四大武器, the Big Voice, Big Liberation, Big Debate and, of course, the Big-Character Poster)⁶ as methods of political mobilization. These were extolled as the “weapons” (or methods) appropriate for cultural struggle (文斗), as opposed to armed struggle (武斗). Big Critique and the Four Big Weapons were considered ways to actualize propositions articulated in Mao’s article “On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People” (1957), which sought to describe how to deal with political contradictions within a socialist society. Mao had argued that non-antagonistic contradictions, for instance contradictions between right and wrong, were radically different from antagonistic ones, such as the contradiction between the revolution and its mortal enemies, and therefore required different methods to resolve them.

Actually, the issue of the permanence of contradictions and class struggle in socialist society was fiercely disputed because, if that premise was accepted, it entailed that even though capitalists had been defeated and property had been collectivized, exploitation and oppression continued to exist. In such a scenario, the question of how structures of oppression and class struggle manifested themselves in a socialist society remained an open one, since Marxist-Leninist studies had not satisfactorily addressed the problem of what happens after the success of a revolution. The characterization of the nature of class struggle under socialism, then, oscillated between various positions from 1957 to at least 1976. Some called for a war of “proletarians” against “capitalists,” that is, war between individuals. Others suggested instead that class struggle under socialism was confined mainly to the political and cultural spheres, for example in the unequal distribution of power to manage labor. In this case, class struggle under socialism was understood as a non-antagonistic contradiction, so that its resolution required the methods of cultural struggle.

Yet, as long as factionalism prevailed, popular mobilization remained trapped within the confines of the bureaucracy. Factional struggles for power principally concerned

the dismissal of certain local and central party-state functionaries. In virtually every production unit two factions were fighting over the dismissal of a certain group of leaders, which was supported

by one faction against the opposition of another—and vice versa. Antagonistic alliances were formed, not to claim an independent capacity of political judgment, but primarily to become the steel “nucleus” ... of a regenerated party-state ... and eventually leading to the annihilation of the other faction. (RUSSO, 1998: 194.)

This reflects the increasing depoliticization of the Red Guard movement, which ended up being almost completely consumed by factional struggles. In 1967 and 1968, then, the Cultural Revolution Small Group (CRSG) and other members of the Central Committee (CC) were trying to define a new political direction for the Cultural Revolution, one that would necessarily engage workers.

The experience of workers in Shanghai was decisive. As many CC members noted in 1967, the mobilization of Shanghai workers managed to minimize factionalism and actually led to the development of important political experiments and detailed critiques of national regulations regarding industry and management. This was made possible through collaboration between workers’ representatives, cadres, professors, and students aligned with the CR campaign. That is why from 1967 Mao Zedong, Zhang Chunqiao, and Zhou Enlai all singled out Shanghai as a place where the CR had produced good results.

In a meeting with the leadership of the Shanghai Workers General Headquarters⁷ on November 22, 1967, Zhou Enlai advised that “When struggling we cannot always fight, it is also necessary to unite a little... Through studying and debating, it will surely be possible to criticize old things, and then new things are certainly going to emerge” (ZHOU, 1967b).

“Criticize old things, and then new things are certainly going to emerge” was substantially different from the motto common at the beginning of the CR, “Destroy the old world, build a new world” (打破旧世界, 创立新世界). The call to “destroy” had been the inspiration for many concrete actions—such as destroying temples, books, schools, and personal objects—and the attributes “old” and “new” were frequently identified with objects, places, books, or even individuals. In Zhou’s formulation, however, the focus was moved to the field of discourse, as “to criticize” was an element of the so-called cultural struggle. Here, the “destructive” or “negative character” of the revolutionary process (BADIOU, 2008; BENJAMIN, 2001) was relocated to the cultural sphere—in Marxist terms, the superstructure. It came to include changes in relations of production, labor management, and national education, at both a theoretical and a practical level.

An Empirical Standpoint for Theoretical Debates: Examples of Workers’ Analysis of National Political Economy

Workers in the Shanghai Machine Tools Factory (hereafter, SMTF) were often identified in national media as examples of the political vanguard in the Cultural Revolution. Articles written by these workers or describing their political experiences were distributed as examples of how to engage in “language

struggle” or “cultural struggle.” For instance, on July 30, 1967, one SMTF group published the article “In What Direction Does Putting Profits in Command Take an Enterprise?” (利润挂帅把企业引向何方?) in the local newspaper *General Assembly Special Issue* (大会专刊), in which they analyzed some of the industrial policies implemented after the Great Leap Forward (GLF) and their impact on labor relations in the factory. The article declared that the implementation in 1961 of what they called “the policy of profits in command” had disrupted collaboration between public enterprises or, in their words, the “Big Cooperation” (大协作):

Big Cooperation means “less quantity, more variety” to supply the sister factories of the country that need machines and replacement items. This kind of production used to occupy 15% of our production capacity. ... But in 1961, the “Chinese Khrushchev Liu Shaoqi and his running dogs” proclaimed the mistaken slogan “profit should be the cow’s nose” [take the lead] ... and, basing their arguments on the Seventy Articles for Industry, the new capitalist leadership used the excuse that we should be “specialists” and greatly disrupted the Big Cooperation between factories. They indiscriminately raised the prices of machines and supplies ... so that profits would be raised by two times or more. No wonder sister factories referred to these products as “tiger meat.” Some needed to buy only one piece, but they were forced to take a whole pack. Some came to buy only one screw for a few yuan, and we had to sell them a whole pack of parts for a hundred-forty yuan, which compelled many sister factories to overstock. ... Partnerships that did not generate much profit were discontinued. ... One example was when Chengdu Cutting Tools Factory bought a camshaft from us, then it lost one of its parts and they needed us to produce a replacement. But the capitalists in command in the factory thought it was not our responsibility, and that it would not give us any profit, so we should not produce it. Thus, they caused the sister factory to stop production with that machine for more than three years, which had a major influence in production. (Revolutionary Association of the SMTF, 1967)⁸

This article refers to the enforcement of profit-oriented competition, defined in the Seventy Articles for Industry as “socialist labor competition” (CCPCC, 1961) and applied to both intra- and inter-enterprise management dynamics from 1961. It raised the question of competition in a socialist society—a topic of debate since at least since 1917, when Lenin wrote the article “How to Organize Competition?” in which he differentiated between capitalist and socialist competition. Socialist competition, in Ruda and Hamza’s summation, “should not be subjugated to a given norm, otherwise competition would not be competition and one would witness its formal re-capitalization (it must be practical but not economic competition).” This means that socialist competition could only be organized “from

among workers and peasants,” who would act as the “practical organizers of this competition” (RUDA and HAMZA, 2017). Profit-oriented competition, on the other hand, would break the “collaboration” between comrades and factories, ultimately ratifying the mandate of capital, personified by the management team.

Indeed, the “Draft Outline Regulations on State-run Industrial Enterprise Management” (1961), also known as the “Seventy Articles for Industry,” outlined “profit regulations” (利润规定) that meant that all units were required “to follow the principle of equivalent value in exchange in their economic co-operation” and that “items transferred from enterprises to communes or from communes to enterprises should all be accounted for, returned, or compensated for” (CCPCC in HOWE and WALKER, 1989: 108).

The arrangement of enterprise leadership was also a target of criticism. “What concerned workers was not only who had authority in the workplace, but also how this authority was exercised” (SHEEHAN, 1998: 123). In 1967, an article signed by the “Shanghai Machine Tools Factory” and titled “After All, What Is the Use?” criticized the Seventy Articles for reestablishing one-man management and the responsibility system, under the aegis of “specialization in command”:

Chen Pixian and Cao Diqu, at the time “high level Party cadres,” not only intruded in the fields of culture, art, and education, but also messed with enterprise administration. About ten years ago, people in the leadership of the Shanghai Party Committee disseminated the misguided policy that “a high level intellectual like a party cadre has ten times more use than a worker.” Then, they took a few followers of “technical authority,” capitalist intellectuals, and feudalists, and admitted them to the Party branch. One classic example of this situation was the man appointed to be our project director, Li Gentong (李良同). Let’s see, after all, what his use was. Before liberation, Li Gentong was a rich landowner and a local administrator for the Nationalist Party. After liberation, he got involved in a workers’ group. In 1959, his past was not clearly investigated and his documents were hidden. ... Soon after joining the Party, Li received many bureaucratic titles: he was appointed project director of our factory, a representative of our country’s “specialists,” and so on. This multiplied his power by ten and dragged him to the sky, placing all proletarian power in his hands. As soon as he had power, he opposed and meddled with the popular press and the propagandizing of Mao Zedong Thought. He wrote an article declaring that Chairman Mao’s directives are not related to planning and management in enterprises. (Representatives of the SMTF Revolutionary Association, 1967)

Chen Pixian (1916–1995) had been party secretary in Shanghai from 1952 to 1967 while Cao Diqu (1909–1976) had been Shanghai’s vice-mayor from 1955 to 1965 and mayor from 1965 to 1967; both were dismissed in January 1967 and were targets of criticism for the Red Guards and mobilized workers. Centralization of planning and of production management were among the rectification policies introduced after the Great Leap Forward. Although these measures required the technical specialization of management personnel, party representatives continued to have important roles in the administration of each production unit or industrial sector (CCPCC in HOWE and WALKER, 1989: 102). This is why, at the beginning of the CR, local party members were strategic targets of criticism, since they actually had significant power over labor management and the organization of production.

This kind of critique was an attempt to disentangle the discourse of official propaganda and actual political-economic practices. Sarcasm and the twisting of stock phrases was a way to highlight contradictions in official discourse and to single out problematic policies. In this case, the aversion to “bureaucratic titles” and to the “technical authority” exercised by “specialists” was a way of showing that during the conservative backlash after the Great Leap Forward, the power to administer production and labor had shifted from the hands of workers to the hands of bureaucrats.

The article also argued that, in order to establish one-man authority over production processes, the manager had started from the ideological sphere, declaring that Chairman Mao’s directives had nothing to do with day-to-day production and economics. Indeed, there had been previous attempts to disassociate technical issues and economics from politics, for instance in a directive issued by the Central Committee in 1961, which stated that people should not “treat different opinions on technology as if they are ideological problems or, even more important, as political problems” (CCPCC in HOWE and WALKER, 1989: 111–112). This declaration evoked a crucial debate at the time: the decisive role of the superstructure in socialism and the connected issue of the relation between politics and the economy. To declare that “Mao’s directives are not related to planning and managing enterprises” would be a way to oppose “politics in command,” that is, a way to claim that there is a split between politics and the economy, and therefore that the economy could not be led by politics.

The article written by the SMTF Revolutionary Association continued by arguing that putting “economics in command” would actually have the effect of damaging production and wasting resources:

[Li Gentong] then positioned himself as the leader of the party group, claimed to be an “authority,” and started to decide everything by himself. He even went to Beijing to decide many problems of our factory on his own, making long distance calls to impart his instructions. At the end of 1962, this counter-revolutionary and revisionist was called to Beijing to take part in a conference on the

application of the Seventy Articles and to draft the “Working Regulations of the Deputy Factory Manager and Chief Engineer” for the Ministry. This draft was not subjected to any debate in the Party Committee and was immediately applied in the factory. He put two-thirds of the factory under his personal control. In 1964, he wanted to reinforce quantity and abruptly decided to send 400 tons of casting material, which was worth more than 100 thousand yuan, to the furnaces. This caused our factory to continually fail to meet production goals for seven months and greatly wasted national resources and damaged production planning. ... This is the use of this kind of fellow in the end: to follow the counterrevolutionary and revisionist line of Liu Shaoqi, Deng Xiaoping, Chen Pixian, and Cao Diqu. To wave the red flag to oppose the red flag, and to drag a socialist industrial enterprise along the capitalist path. (Representatives of the SMTF Revolutionary Association, 1967)

Articles such as these were taken as evidence that studying and criticizing particular cases could provide an alternative to the already saturated campaigns of “power seizure” promoted in the first months of the CR. As Zhang Chunqiao said in a speech in 1967: “What have they seized? They seized a few rooms ... and took the press into their hands. ... I am not sure what it means to seize power if they speak and nobody listens” (ZHANG, w/d: 210-211). Simply occupying certain bureaucratic positions would not guarantee that the socialist economy would actually develop towards communism, because practical questions remained unanswered. After the transformation of private property into collective or publicly owned property, there was no detailed map of which path to follow in order for the state to “wither away,” as Lenin had suggested.

As Yao Wenyuan stated in October 1967, “we must first look at empirical conditions and needs, and only then look at the needs of the state” (CCPCC, 1967). This expression refers to the activities of workers in studying and collectively debating the conditions of work, economics, and politics at both national and local levels.

Questioning the Vanguard of the Revolution

By October 1967, Revolutionary Committees had been established in 97% of the estimated 8,000 factories in Shanghai. According to Xu Jingxian—then one of the secretaries of the Shanghai Revolutionary Committee—only sixty factories remained without the “big alliance,” that is, without a “three-in-one” Revolutionary Committee (CCPCC, 1967). Harsh criticisms were raised against the newly established committees, including that the rehabilitated cadres who took part in them were setting up obstacles to the active participation of worker and student representatives. As Yao Wenyuan reported in October 1967, “the main complaint from the workers is that after the new cadres take hold of power, they seldom join in with the masses” (YAO, 1967).

Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and members of the CRSG pointed out on several occasions that factionalism was threatening to overwhelm workers’ mobilizations, and that studying and criticizing empirical situations and carrying out local experiments could be ways to overcome this problem.⁹ The saturation of the campaigns to “seize power” led the CRSG and other CC members increasingly to promote the critique of the “ideology of the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes and to transform education, literature, art, and all other parts of the superstructure not in correspondence with the socialist economic base” (CCPCC, 1966a). Indeed, the focus of the CR had shifted from attacks against individuals to attacks against class representation within the superstructure and the political-economic system itself. As Kang Sheng put it in December 1966, “I am afraid we have some factories that are, like Lenin said, capitalist factories without capitalists” (CCPCC, 1966b). By 1968, the definitions of “political line” and “line struggle” were changing in official declarations. As the focus shifted to the cultural sphere, it became clearer that contradictions between “vested interest groups”—to use Mao’s expression—would continue to exist in the superstructure. The purpose of struggle should not be to overthrow a particular individual or group, but rather to distinguish “right from wrong,” the “two lines.”

In May 1968, Mao Zedong wrote in an editorial in *People’s Daily* that “Outside a party, there are other parties. Within a party, there are factions. It has always been like this” (党外有党, 党内有派。历来如此) (MAO, 1968a: 317). Outside of the party, that is, there are real political struggles and debates, and within the party there is factionalism. We may infer that when Mao says, “it has always been like this,” he means that in every bureaucratized governing institution there is a power struggle, and that politics—in the sense of creative popular mobilization—is found mainly outside the formal institutions of government. With this, Mao articulated a fierce critique of the orthodox socialist conception of the party-state as a representative of the people—that is, an organization that would “act on behalf of” the people in developing and implementing plans for the transition to communism. The socialist state, according to Mao, should be in charge of formally allowing people (the grassroots, the real vanguard of the revolution) to participate politically on their own behalf. If politics was actually to be found outside of the party and, conversely, if inside the Party one would only find “factionalism,” then the apparatus of government could not claim the role of political vanguard for itself, since the actual creation of the new could only come from popular initiative. This follows Alessandro Russo’s argument:

First, a basic distinction should be stressed between the intermittent nature of politics—... which exists only in singular intellectually inventive sequences—and the structural invariance of the state, despite the incessant historical mutations of its particular forms. ... The hypothesis is that the concrete form of the State in a given moment is the hollow imprint of the last great political sequence, or that it is shaped by a reactive de-politicization. (RUSSO, 2006: 674.)

Politics, according to this hypothesis, means political inventiveness or, in other words, the actual participation of people in inventing possible egalitarian political mechanisms and organizations. This is why Mao, especially after the January Storm (1967) and the crisis of the “power seizure” campaigns, frequently stressed the need to study political economic theory and to “debate empirical conditions and needs.” It was only by “creating the new” that the dictatorship of the proletariat could be understood and actualized. “The whole set of ‘new-born things’ was considered by Maoists as a series of experiments embodying the search for the true political content of otherwise empty concepts” (RUSSO, 2012: 16). Wang Hui also notes that there was a great effort during the CR to emphasize political events and inventions outside the party, and that this was fostered through the dissemination of study groups in every production unit and the implementation of policies aimed at smashing “the absolute authority of the Party and the State, in order to further the goal of progress toward genuine popular sovereignty” (WANG, 2006: 35).

In 1968 and 1969, many worker organizations were created and named according to their political objectives, like the Workers’ Theory Groups (工人理论队) and the Workers’ Universities. Their aim was to change who was in charge of administering labor processes, work relations, education, and training. From that point on, their task was to replace the local leadership, considering, as Mao had claimed, that “the people who are in charge [of factories, rural communes, and schools] have not changed. This is the social foundation for revisionism to prevail in China” (MAO, 1968b).

In a speech at the Ninth Party Congress in 1969, Mao noted in particular that leadership within production units was still following “the same kind of path as Liu Shaoqi’s,” that is, “using material incentives, putting profits in command, not mobilizing proletarian politics, and giving bonuses and awards.” He repeatedly called on members of the Central Committee to pay close attention to local mobilizations.

I hope that when you have opportunities in the future you will go down to have a look again, and to study the problems existing in various factories. It seems to me that the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution must be carried further. Our foundation is not solid and stable. ... In quite a large majority of the factories, the leadership is not controlled by true Marxists, or by the masses of the workers. (MAO, 1969.)

Mao and his supporters considered actual control of labor processes within production units by rank-and-file workers to be the kernel of the transition to communism. Without this the capitalist system of production could still prevail within socialism, leading to revisionism and the failure of the revolution. “Bourgeois right” (or “capitalist legal power”) was the name Mao gave to the capitalist structures still lingering inside socialism—for example, the division of labor, material incentives, and remuneration according to production output.¹⁰

Are There Workers in a Classless Society?

Initiatives such as theory study groups, technical courses, and literacy classes in production units had been promoted since 1957. The Sino-Soviet split and the Great Leap Forward further stressed the social and economic importance of workers studying and achieving relative technical autonomy and even active political participation in their units and local administration. However, during the CR, workers gained prominence in the political field and many official declarations stated that workers were the only group capable of assuring the path of socialist transition.

After the Red Guard organizations were disbanded in July 1968, the CRSG and Mao himself paid particular attention to workers' autonomous mobilizations and the experiments they had promoted, such as the Workers' Universities, making some of their reports widely available and promoting the national distribution of literacy manuals. This resulted in a process of "intellectualization" for many workers engaged in local politics. However, the political experiments carried out by these workers also involved proposals for radical changes to the administrative structure of production units and labor processes. Inside a factory or a commune, the study of theory was never separated from labor practices or politics. This created certain difficulties, since the study of theory often developed into practical political experiments and changes in the organization of labor.

As a result, workers in the same unit often disagreed on many issues. Some criticized the theory study groups because of their focus on politics—they argued that the focus should instead be on technology and production. Many criticized the Workers' Universities because they existed inside the factories, with experienced workers serving as professors and, especially, because the worker-students usually returned to the production line after graduating. This was a particularly tricky issue, because workers who graduated from a Workers' University did not receive any immediate material compensation; they were asked to sacrifice themselves for an unpredictable future, for a society without classes, that is, communism.

"This new type of graduate is new in what sense, exactly?"¹¹ "Some people ask, what 'position' will I occupy [after I graduate]?" (当一个什么“员”)¹² The answers to these rather practical questions about the role of graduates of Workers' Universities were mostly idealistic in nature: "I believe it is about not forgetting that I am a worker. ... Every day, after class, I go back to the factory floor and work with all my comrades. ... When there is a problem, we solve it together" (*Advance through the 7.21 Path*, 1975: 33). The goal of studying in these universities was framed in personal and political terms: to become a person who is actively involved in production, political experiments, and intellectual debates, and who is capable of teaching in a university. Even when a graduate agreed to return to the production line, sometimes they did not "fit back into" the unit. Sources provide examples of workers who tried for years to participate in projecting machines and managing production and only accomplished that goal after they seized the

opportunity by solving a particular management or technical problem.

Six years after the formation of the first Workers' Universities and well after the graduation of their first two classes, only a minority of workers had deeply studied both politics and technology. For the most part, the control of production units remained in the hands of specialists and engineers who had graduated from the regular pre-CR colleges. This is why Wang Hongwen wrote a report in *People's Daily* in January 1974 which argued that

Specialists managing factories, bureaucracy, unilaterality, oppression, the blind worship of foreign things—none of this was eliminated. How do workers become the masters of the factory? By opposing the revisionist line. We are in this decade of iron and steel and some enterprises are formally in our hands, but actually in the hands of capitalists; some are even formally in the hands of capitalists... How can we place power in the hands of the proletariat? ... The Cultural Revolution has already lasted seven, eight years—we must learn how to solve these problems. (WANG, 1974)

When the CCPC shifted the focus of the CR to the "Revolution in Education" campaigns, workers were called to exercise leadership in *everything*, in all spheres of society, but especially in propaganda and education. This meant that their role as "workers" was about to be merged with that of "intellectuals." Thus, the category of "working class" began to be defined not merely by its engagement in material production, but also by its political performance in society. Even if a person worked on a production line and participating in political mobilizations, they could still be questioned about their class or their political role in society.

The radicalism of the first two years of CR had no place in the post-1969 context. In all spheres, the CCP was facing unprecedented crises, in the face of which it was not enough simply to propose further "political experimentation," since the international situation required military readiness and, internally, the political situation required a decisive shift from "destruction" to "construction." The Campaign for Party Reconstruction, launched at the Ninth Party Congress, officially sanctioned the beginning of the "transform" stage—the last stage in the three-part "struggle-criticize-transform" (斗批改) process.

Ongoing debates focused on initiatives that had been started between 1966 and 1968. For example, one question concerned how to combine labor and study in production units. At the SMTF in 1970, three workers sent a request to the Shanghai Revolutionary Committee asking for its support in setting limits to and rules for study activities in the unit. They reported that since the "sent-down youth" (or "educated youth," who were mainly former student Red Guards) had joined the factory, workers had been pressured into participating in all-night study sessions several times a week. The three workers who signed

the petition asked the SRC to officially limit the amount of time that could be devoted to study, so as to guarantee time for work and family, and some leisure time (SMTF, 1970).

As we can see, this new-born thing, the Workers' University, entailed a series of practical and theoretical questions. To deal with this situation, many meetings and experiments had to be carried out in order to figure out a methodology and a structure adapted to the universities' economic and political aims. Zheng Shiyi, for example, at that same meeting with members of the Politburo and the SRC in June 1970, brought up a question that would be a central topic of debate for at least the next six years: the concept of social class and its political implications within socialism:

As soon as we started studying, workers said: "We came to seize the right to speak [or "the power of language/culture" 夺文权], and to occupy the vacuum in science." ... But when they entered [the classes], they neglected to change their own ideas about themselves. They assumed that if they are already from the working class, if one comes from proletarian origins and has practical experience, then they are "naturally red" and do not have to transform their own thinking.¹³

Later in the same meeting, the SMTF technical worker Wang Shaoting referred to the problem of the "theory of the naturally red" (自红论): some workers had argued they did not need to take politics classes because they were workers and, therefore, simply by performing their main role in society—that is, by engaging in material production—they were already acting as the vanguard of the revolution.

According to a Marxist-Leninist definition, class is defined by the political-economic conditions that determine a group's level of autonomy and power within society. A social class is defined by the ownership and control of the means of production by a given social group. This determines, among other things, the amount of power a group has over another group, for example by determining the conditions of labor for others. As such, class relations necessarily imply some level of oppression and exploitation (CHIBBER, 2008: 355), embodied in the existence of a section of society that occupies a position that guarantees particular advantages, concentrating political or social resources in their hands. When Marx analyzed the capitalist system, he identified the social force that capitalists possessed: they had control of a concentrated quantity of means of production and purchased the labor power of others who did not own any means of production beyond their own physical capacity.

But then, what about a socialist society? Once a society had abolished private property and therefore no longer had capitalists, who then would be responsible for managing the means of production in order to generate value and to produce goods that would be distributed throughout the country? The figure of the capitalist would then be replaced by the state, which would represent the proletariat and administer the means of production and the distribution of its output on its behalf.

Nonetheless, according to the "revolutionary line" in China, even under socialism relations of production were still permeated by power struggles, and class relations persisted even after the legal foundations of private property had been abolished. At the beginning of the CR, "class" was still defined as "groups of individuals" from a certain "class origin" or background. However, the concept of "line" politicized the category of class because it stated that a class could only be identified in terms of political actions (and not simply by one's family background).

The emergence of the concept of "political line" made the identification of one's class much more complicated. It required rich documentation and a long process of collective analysis. For instance, a person could be identified as being in favor of the revolutionary line, yet acting wrongfully through ignorance, because they were unaware of "the difference between capitalist and socialist policies." Class became something that was formed over time, because it came to be defined principally by one's capacity to understand and follow a political line. The idea of a "political line in ideology" (思想政治路线) or "political path in ideology" (思想政治道路) conferred greater importance to the ideas a person espoused or according to which that person undertook their activities. This established a counterweight to the concept of class as defined by different relationships to the means of production.

After the January Revolution in Shanghai (1967), workers' struggles to participate actively in social and economic matters signaled a rupture of the "formula of the 'classical' socialist doctrine ... summarized as the conceptual chain 'worker-class-factory-party-state'" (RUSSO, 2012: 9), because the representative role of the party was deliberately disrupted in order to allow workers to represent themselves, even if within a limited space, through political self-organization.

Fighting for Having Politics in Command

Therefore, based on Chairman Mao's teachings, we understand that a socialist enterprise cannot only produce commodities, but also cadres, talents. Capitalism also has industrial enterprises, as well as revisionism. The main difference between our enterprises and capitalist enterprises is that, in their industries, workers are politically oppressed slaves. They treat workers as if they were cattle. But in our factories, workers are the masters of the country, so they not only can grasp revolution and promote production, but they can also train cadres and transform the factory into a fundamental unit of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus, our factory engages not only in production, but also in education (ZHANG Meihua 1974).

In December 1974, Mao Zedong wrote a brief text that was later published as a call for the whole country to study the theoretical fundamentals of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It was initially a request to the group of writers collaborating with Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenjuan.

Why did Lenin speak of a dictatorship over capitalists? It is necessary to write articles. Tell Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan to research this topic in Lenin’s works, then print it in big letters and send it to me. Tell people to read it first and then write articles. Zhang Chunqiao should write about it. If this question is not clear, then [China] will become revisionist. It is necessary to tell the whole country. ... Now we still carry out a system with eight levels of salary, distributing according to production, exchanging currency. This is not much different from the old society. All that has changed is the system of ownership. Our country still carries out a commodity system, and the salary system has no equality. ... Only under the dictatorship of the proletariat this can be limited. (MAO 1998(13): 413)

These comments were synthesized, excising the personal requests, discussed by the editorial boards of *Red Flag* and *People’s Daily*, and then publicized as a national call to study the dictatorship of the proletariat. Yao Wenyuan discussed Mao’s statement with the editorial board of *Red Flag* on February 5, 1975, clearly unsure of what “limiting” bourgeois right meant (which Mao referred to by its political-economic elements, such as currency circulation, distribution according to production, and so on). It is important to remember that by the end of 1974 Mao was quite elderly and probably suffering from Parkinson’s disease, which impaired his ability to talk and write—most of his comments and notes from then onward were transcribed and pieced together. At the meeting, Yao proposed some topics of research and suggested that the study of capitalist legal power—a debate that had been suspended in 1959 (YAO, 1975)—should be resumed. Mao’s statement, however, inaugurated a new approach to the study and critique of bourgeois right, centered on the idea that it could (and should) be “limited.” “The persistence of bourgeois rights, he said, could not be suppressed, but ‘could only be limited’ ‘under the dictatorship of the proletariat’” (RUSSO, 2012: 7).

That national call to study the dictatorship of the proletariat, which started with a question (“Why did Lenin speak of the dictatorship of the proletariat?”) and radically problematized the results of the revolutionary processes (“this [society] is not much different from the old society”), declared that the dictatorship of the proletariat was, in fact, an obscure topic, “as a necessary precondition so that it could ‘be clarified’” (RUSSO 2012: 7).

In the meeting with the editorial board of *Red Flag* on February 5, Yao Wenyuan highlighted that it would be important to study “the theory of capitalism without capitalists” in Lenin’s *State and Revolution* (YAO, 1975). According to Lenin, socialism could be defined as a society without capitalists, although capital and capital accumulation would still exist; value, however, would be put at the service of the people. However, Mao’s statements in late 1974 and early 1975 declared instead that capitalists were also still around, together with class struggle and the

exploitation of labor. These disruptive declarations provoked debates that shifted the focus from the distribution of goods and wealth (a common approach for socialist countries) to relations of production and the ideal of actually overcoming relations of exploitation.

To *limit* capitalist legal power, or bourgeois right, meant using elements of the superstructure to limit the inequality between classes. The elements of the superstructure—education, propaganda, administration, and the “four great weapons” (which were included in the national constitution in 1975)—were the “tools” with which to prevent bourgeois rights from becoming forces that would aggravate inequality. Moreover, in acting in the domain of the superstructure, workers were enjoined to construct political mechanisms that would promote social equality and, ultimately, suppress capitalist legal power.

In 1975, a series of texts debating practical aspects of the directive to “limit capitalist legal power” was published in four issues of the journal *Society and Critique*, written by a group which included workers, students, and professors. The texts were published in the form of an epistolary exchange among friends—characters representing different sectors of society who talked about how bourgeois rights manifested in their unit and how they could limit them. It started by introducing a peasant debating the motto “from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs”:

Xiao Gong,

It has already been ten days since we met in Shanghai in the Spring. I came back to the production team ... and joined the peasant comrades in an interesting and exciting debate and study of the dictatorship of the proletariat. ... Today at break time, as I was leaving the field where we raise the pigs, we were very casually talking about how to deal correctly with distribution according to production. One of the comrades asked: ‘To pay according to one’s work, isn’t this almost the same as in the old society? Why do we have to still use this principle?’ ... I heard the old peasant saying this and sincerely responded that in carrying out the principle of “to each one according to one’s work,” we must also bear in mind the principle “from each according to one’s ability.” We should not use material incentives. (*Study and Critique*, 1975(3): 33–34)

It is worth noting some details in the language used here. When this character says that they were discussing such a fundamental issue of political economy “very casually,” the writers are clearly indicating that these problems should be discussed on a daily basis by virtually anyone. They should not be topics restricted to academics or bureaucrats. The letter also explains that “to limit” the practice of remuneration according to production, it is necessary to act in the political and social spheres, by promoting the idea that “production output is a contribution to society.” Even though it was not yet possible to apply the

principle "to each according to their needs" entirely, it was nonetheless necessary to promote the principle "from each according to their abilities," pushing for the individual to exert themselves voluntarily in production. When production output surpassed the planned goal, the individual should not ask for material compensation.

The next letter in the same issue presents the case of a retired industrial worker, who, according to his young colleagues, "deserved" to be classified at the level two of the wage structure for his retirement. The retired man would not accept it, deciding to remain at the level six (four levels below, with a much lower salary), declaring that he had enough to live a comfortable life. The letter criticized the manner in which this hierarchy of levels ultimately implied that some types of work were worth more and some were worth less. Knowledge and specialization, according to the letter, should not define the level a worker occupies. "In socialism ... technical expertise cannot become a private property" (Idem: 36). That is, it should not necessarily result in a higher salary.

According to these texts, in the absence of private property, other elements—particularly in the superstructure—could act "as capital acts in capitalist society" (Idem: 36), engendering exploitation and inequality. Elements like bureaucratic power (in the case of cadres and managers) and knowledge (in the case of technicians, intellectuals, and specialists) could promote unequal relations that resulted in economic and political privileges or disadvantages. The instruments with which to "limit" or "constrain" this process were, on the one hand, following the May Seventh Directive and, on the other, consciousness of how inequality could still arise under socialism. That is why the grassroots would have a central role to play in the effort to limit bourgeois right, with the ultimate goal of steadying the direction in the transition towards communism by acting in the field of politics. Capitalist legal power was not described as simply particular economic practices, used only for their pragmatic effectiveness; it was also described in terms of political practices based on deeply rooted cultural values that could only be changed if a broad majority of people agreed to transform them.

In Shanghai, under the personal direction of Wang Hongwen and Zhang Chunqiao, workers' committees were formed to participate actively in the administration of industrial production units. Because a major critique levelled against workers' experiments was that they were limited to their own units and disregarded national planning, in 1975, some of these workers' committees began to study economic planning and enterprise management, in order to participate in the administration of inter-industry relations (*Study and Critique*, 1976(9): 14–16).

Workers who engaged in the study of theory frequently advocated that everyone in a production unit should participate in the study of politics. They declared, on the one hand, that workers were able to grasp theoretical debates and carry out philosophical analyses of empirical contexts and, on the other hand, that all workers must have real opportunities to participate and engage in such study campaigns, and that one of the material conditions for this to occur was the stability of labor contracts. If workers had stable contracts with a fixed salary, and extra

hours were not rewarded with material incentives, the argument went, they were more likely to participate in the political and study initiatives.

The system of "earn as much as one works" (多劳多得), then, stood in the way of the generalization of study campaigns and political mobilizations. According to the workers enrolled in the Workers' Universities, if workers devoted themselves to working as many hours as possible in order to receive a higher salary, they would not give up the possibility of temporary material gains to participate in campaigns of criticism and mobilization. This debate prompted a series of initiatives from 1971 to 1975 to stabilize labor contracts. The SMTF, for example, sent at least a hundred requests to the SRC asking that the contracts of workers within the unit, including an actor and four hairdressers, be stabilized. All of these requests were approved personally by Ma Tianshui and Chen Pixian.¹⁴

Workers emphasized that in order to limit capitalist legal power, and to prevent bourgeois elements from dragging socialist organizations "backwards" (towards capitalist restoration), it was necessary to reform state planning, to oppose material incentives, and to suppress the division between manual and intellectual workers, thus enabling the active participation of workers in management. This was an unprecedented critique in a socialist society. Marxist critiques of capitalism had been mainly focused on the sphere of distribution. Although the sphere of production had been extensively studied by Marx himself, it was not common in a socialist society to consider that the determinants of an economic system may be rooted there. Until the late 1960s, socialist theoreticians had systematically distinguished "class domination and private property as specific to capitalism, and industrial labor as independent of and nonspecific to capitalism" (POSTONE, 1978 (45: 4): 741) as two fundamentally different contexts. Value and social labor were seen as transhistorical categories, and what was conceived as the particular character of a socialist political economy was "the mode of its social distribution and administration" (POSTONE, 1993: 124). Moreover, the alienation of labor had been interpreted, in most socialist theories, as "the fact that people's objectifications are taken from them" (POSTONE, 1978 (45: 4): 750).

Notwithstanding this, workers in some theory study groups produced theoretical critiques that actually considered the sphere of production as determinant of the political-economic system. During the campaign to study the dictatorship of the proletariat, ruptures occurred in the interpretation of socialism as historical "progress" or as a "leap" beyond the capitalist mode of production. That is, some groups maintained that socialism was actually a period characterized by a continuing struggle between capitalism and communism, and further, one with an undecided outcome. The attempts to suppress the inequality between manual and intellectual labors eventually developed into a critique of the mode of production itself, and in particular, into a struggle against the objectivization of workers. That is why Workers' University programs insisted on keeping politics classes as the basis of their popular education experiment.

A socialist enterprise cannot only produce commodities, but also cadres, talents. Capitalism also has industrial enterprises, as well as revisionism. The main difference between our enterprises and capitalist enterprises is that, in their industries, workers are politically oppressed slaves. They treat workers as if they were cattle. (ZHANG Meihua, 1974)

In late 1974, workers engaged in the Workers' Universities made a number of declarations that showed that they had many doubts about how to develop their political experiments further. The ultimate goals were social equality and political sovereignty. However, their strength was rather weak relative to other forces at work in the political economy. The idea that politics formed the central axis of the Workers' University, and even of the organization of labor, was not easily understood.

Some people ask: To train workers, isn't it enough to send them to any national university? Or: Isn't it enough to train them in practical daily experience? Why do we need to build a university? We think there are still too few universities in this country, and that they are very disconnected from our needs. Besides, in Chairman Mao's directive about our factory, the first sentence is "We still need to make universities," so we did! Now, after six years of experience, we have reexamined this question, and we now understand it a little better. ... The factories that have the conditions to organize universities should do so. This way, not only do we solve the problem of the demand for more universities to train workers, but mainly we can break with the capitalist system of forming intellectuals. This means that the working class is taking its place in the educational sphere. ... Of course, the universities in factories are different from those that separate workers from production. Because of this, they still have many limitations. ... Many people say that there are already enough technicians. ... In fact, some graduate worker-students do not occupy technical positions ... But I think the main objective of the Workers' Universities is not just to form technicians, it is actually a long-term struggle, ... It is a matter of political line. (Wang Defa, 1974)

The Workers' Universities' program was not simply to train technicians and raise workers to the status of co-managers in each unit. The initiative aimed to allow virtually everyone, by raising their educational levels, to participate actively in both production and politics. In other words, to overcome the existence of the proletariat itself, as a section of society necessarily excluded from deliberative and policy processes.

This new kind of university student is new in what sense, exactly? ... They don't show any bookish airs [看不到大学生的架子]. ... After graduating, they become both manual and intellectual

laborers, a new, unified kind of worker. (Wu Xuzhou in *Advance through the 7.21 Path*, 1975: 19)

While theoretical studies moved on and the political-economic context increasingly restricted popular initiatives, remaining activists faced greater difficulties. In fact, especially after 1975, worker-students often declared that the Universities had long-term objectives and emphasized that these objectives were not limited to technical education but were actually collaborating in the process of transforming the entire system of social organization.

This is a long-term conflict. To support it, you must see the complex character of this struggle. ... We study technical knowledge, and we want all students to appropriate more and more technical knowledge, but "to put technical knowledge in the first place" is not correct. (Wang Defa in *Advance through the 7.21 Path*, 1975: 17)

The discourses that justified the Rectification Campaign in 1975 referred to the Cultural Revolution as a phase of political disturbances and chaos. In late 1975, Mao asked Deng to carry out a national study campaign to evaluate the CR itself.

About the Cultural Revolution, a general viewpoint: the basis is correct, but there have been failures. Now we have to examine the aspect of the failures. ... The Cultural Revolution committed two mistakes: 1. To oppose all; 2. Nationwide all-round civil war. In opposing all, some things were opposed correctly, like the Lin Biao Anti-Party clique. ... We had been over ten years without a war, and then we have an all-round civil war, it is gun for gun (抢了枪). ... To drive people to death, to hurt helpless individuals—this is not good. (MAO, 1998(13): 488)

Deng rejected the idea, saying that he was not the right person to lead this campaign because he not aware of events that had happened since 1967 (RUSSO, 2012:29). Mao had insisted on his invitation in October 1975, but Deng repeatedly refused to accept it.

Deng was unbending in declaring the theoretical debates and political experimentations that Mao was promoting in those months not only worthless but also dangerous sources of disorder. (RUSSO, 2012: 31)

"Deng repeated throughout the spring how important it was to tackle 'disorder', while never mentioning the true root of the problem" (Idem), which may be traced not only to the factional struggles that had occurred, but also to the campaigns to study and criticize elements of the socialist society. In fact, the terminology of "disorder," "mess," and "chaos" still dominates official CCP history discourses, referring to the series of mobilizations and theoretical studies that had undermined the representativeness of the party and its presumed vanguard role.

In their critiques of the policies of the Rectification Campaign, workers also interpreted the repetitive use of the word “disorder” as a way to disparage the mobilizations they were undertaking to build a new order at local and national levels. If politics was understood as political mobilization and inventiveness, it could not be determined as part of the agenda of the state; from the standpoint of a structure that aims to preserve itself (the state), conversely, what arrives to transform it is chaos, because of its destructive character. The Cultural Revolution was a period in which certain official policies allowed for the permanence of a power struggle that defied the state itself. As a result, it promoted the raising of questions that went beyond Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy, and that could only have been formulated through the participation of workers in politics.

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NOTES

¹ Several articles published in the last twenty or thirty years focus on analyzing the history of the concepts of “worker” and “proletarian,” and their political uses and meanings in different contexts. The concept of the proletariat has been discussed even among Marxist scholars, since Marx himself took different positions according to the distinction between productive and non-productive labor, which was itself not static in his work. (CAVALCANTE, 2009; FERGUSON, 2019) In this article, I use the term “worker” to translate the Chinese word “工人” (literally “a person who works,” but used in China at the time to define a factory or urban worker) and the term “proletarian” as

a translation of the Chinese term “无产” (literally, “without means of production”). It was precisely during the decade of the Cultural Revolution that global political and economic transformations were taking place that would result, not much later, in the radical problematization of these terms. Moreover, I believe the Cultural Revolution itself was a significant factor in this crisis. However, with regard to the aim of this article, we shall use both these terms to refer to people who “live entirely from the sale of [their] labor and [do] not draw profit from any kind of capital; whose weal and woe, whose life and death, whose sole existence depends on the demand for labor,” as Engels characterized the proletariat in *The Principles of Communism* (1847). This does not mean that I assume they formed a united and

acknowledged class, as we shall see. There were plenty of contradictions regarding its definition, characterization, and actions.

² This rather vague description of the Cultural Revolution is from the introduction to the "Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" of August 8, 1966, also known as "the 16 Articles." CCPCC, 1966a.

³ This topic is studied by Elizabeth Perry and Li Xun in *Proletarian Power: Shanghai in the Cultural Revolution* (1997) and by Jiang Hongsheng in his PhD dissertation, "The Paris Commune in Shanghai: The Masses, the State, and the Dynamics of the 'Continuous Revolution'" (Duke University, 2010).

⁴ These were groups of workers chosen from among activists to supervise and participate in party administration at local and regional levels. The national mobilization to organize these groups started in August 1968. For more details about this process, see PERRY 1997.

⁵ At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, during the first Red Guard gatherings at Tiananmen Square, Mao Zedong did not make speeches. The demonstrations aimed to recognize and promote self-organization and direct political participation. At one of these demonstrations, Mao asked the Red Guards to "care about the great matters of the state," which became a slogan often used by students and workers' organizations.

⁶ The "Four Big Weapons" (四大武器), or "Four Bigs" (四大), were first promoted and developed as methods of popular political activism in the Anti-Rightist Movement (1957–1959). During the Cultural Revolutions, they were largely broadcast by the Central Committee's Cultural Revolution Small Group and the Red Guards. In Chinese, the "Four Bigs" are "大鸣, 大放, 大辩论, 大字报," which I translate as "Big Voice, Big Liberation, Big Debate, and Big-Character Poster."

⁷ The Shanghai Workers General Headquarters (上海工人革命造反总司令部) had been established in November 1966 with approximately 1000 members. It was one of the first autonomous organizations of workers in the CR. It rapidly became the largest Red Guard organization in Shanghai, associating with other mobilized groups. In 1972, it changed its name to "Workers Representative Congress." There are at least three detailed descriptions of its history, in PERRY and LI, 1997; JIANG, 2010; and WU, 2014.

⁸ Many of the articles published in the name of workers were signed by study groups collectively. The number of articles written by individual workers, cadres or not, is also significant, but collective authorship of articles was common, especially in the beginning of the workers' mobilizations.

⁹ Some examples can be found in the following documents: YAO, Wenyuan, "Letter to Mao Zedong, 11 October 1967," in *Issues and Studies (Taipei)*, 7(1); Zhou Enlai, "Speech at the Meeting with the Standing Committee of the Shanghai WGH" (张春桥接见上海工总司常委时的讲话), November 22, 1967; "Memorandum of a Conversation between the Albanian Labor Party Delegation and the Chinese Communist Party Leadership," October 12, 1967, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Central State Archive, Tirana, AQPPSH-MPKK-V. 1967, L. 19, D. 20. Obtained by Ana Lalaj and translated by Enkel Daljani. <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/117694>.

¹⁰ I chose the term "capitalist legal power" in order to approximate its meaning in Chinese. Actually, the term 资产阶级法权 (composed of 资产阶级, "capitalist," and 法权, "legal right" or "legal power") refers to the concept "*das bürgerliche Recht*" in Marx's essay *Critique of the Gotha Program*, and normally translated into English as "bourgeois right." However, the English word "right" is not really equivalent to the wider meaning of "*recht*" in German. In Chinese the term chosen to translate this concept was 法权 *faquan*, which combines the ideograms 法, meaning "law," and 权, meaning "power" and also "right." A debate about the translation of this term was published in *People's Daily* on March 28, 1959: "关于资产阶级式的权利问题的讨论对于'资产阶级法权'一语译法的意见" ("Debating the Capitalist Right Model and the Right to Express 'Capitalist Power'—A Point of View"), written by the painter Zhang Zhongshi (1903–1987).

¹¹ Question by Wu Jizhou, a worker and cadre in the SMTF in 1975, in *Advance through the 7.21 Path* (1975): 19.

¹² Question by Chi Wenhan, a worker who graduated in the first group of the SMTF Workers' University, in *Advance through the 7.21 Path* (1975): 33.

¹³ Zheng Shiyi (graduate of Shanghai Qinghua University and a professor in a workers' university) in "Meeting on June 2, 1970 with Yao Wenyuan and Zhang Chunqiao in Shanghai about the Setting of Technical Schools within the Revolution in Education" (一九七〇年六月二日, 张春桥、姚文元同志在上海召开了理工科大学教育革命座谈会), in *Selected Works of Yao Wenyuan* (姚文元文集), chapter 54. Beijing: Utopia Editing Group, w/d.

¹⁴ Requests and SRC approvals in the documents B 173.4.624.11 and B 173-4-624-2, both 1972, available in the Shanghai Municipal Archive. Dozens of requests of this type are available for consultation in the SMA.