

Uniting with Workers and Peasants Is the Basic  
Way for Theoretical Workers to Become  
Red and Expert

- appreciations from a study of Speech at the CCP National  
Conference on Propaganda Work -

by

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(Hsin Chien-she [New Construction], No. 1, January 20, 1965)

During the period of democratic revolution, Chairman Mao constantly taught intellectuals to unite with the worker-peasant masses, pointing out that unless they do so, they would accomplish nothing. Many revolutionary intellectuals followed this direction, plunged themselves into the mass movements conducted with fanfare, and made valuable contributions toward the revolutionary cause.

In Speech at the CCP National Conference on Propaganda Work, which was made public last year, Chairman Mao, in tune with the new situation arising from the penetrative socialist revolution, discoursed very profoundly and incisively on the question of the need for intellectuals to unite with the worker-peasant masses and the ways in which they should do so. He said: "Since they are to serve the workers and peasants, the intellectuals must first of all know them and become familiar with their livelihood, work, and thought." He called on the intellectuals to "go into the midst of the masses, go to the factories, go to the rural areas," and "form a close ties with the workers and peasants by availing themselves of all possible opportunities."\*

These instructions by Chairman Mao have pointed out the basic direction in which the broad masses of the intellectuals and philosophy and social science workers may attain both redness and expertness.

At present, a socialist education movement is being unfolded in the cities and rural areas of our country. It is an extremely extensive and deep revolutionary movement of great significance, and is the best school for reforming and training intellectuals.

If philosophy and social science workers seriously enforce Chairman Mao's instructions, grasp the opportunity, and enthusiastically plunge themselves into the revolutionary movement to share breath and fate with the workers and peasants and struggle, live and labor together with them, they will then be able not only to contribute their strength toward the struggle, but also to do something of significance to their own thought remolding, raising their work proficiency and improving their research work.

I

The Party requires intellectuals to be "both red and expert." Redness refers to politics. It means that intellectuals must listen to the words of the Party and Chairman Mao, assume a revolutionary character, and assume a laboring character. They are required to study Marxism and the thought of Mao Tse-tung properly, go into the midst of workers, peasants and servicemen over a long period, and take part in class struggle, production struggle, and scientific experiment. They are required to serve wholeheartedly the political ends of the proletariat and the work of socialist construction, to be able to stand firm in the struggle against imperialism, the struggle against modern revisionism, and the domestic struggle between the two roads [socialism and capitalism], and to enforce the Party's directives and policies firmly in work.

\* All unattributed quotations in this article are from Speech at the CCP National Conference on Propaganda Work, People's Publishing House, 1964.

Expertness refers to professional work. It means that intellectuals must study science and techniques properly, master the knowledge and theories connected with their professional work, master the skills of serving the people, and make more and better contributions toward the work of socialist revolution and socialist construction.

One who is expert but not red will go astray, embark on the wrong path, and fall into the quagmire of the bourgeoisie or revisionism. One who is red but not expert lacks professional knowledge and technical skills and will not be able to serve socialism well. In the relationship between redness and expertness, the former is the soul and the commander-in-chief. Expertness which is preceded by redness and which serves the proletariat and socialism is what we want. At the same time, redness may advance expertness. Those who have a high sense of responsibility toward the revolution are certain to study hard, study their professional work actively, and exert effort to become expert.

Redness cannot be attained easily. To attain it, one must step up ideological remolding, boost proletarian thought while demolishing bourgeois thought, and strive for a radical change in one's world outlook. Since the liberation, many intellectuals have been working hard to remold their thinking. Owing to education by the Party and training in a succession of practical struggles, they have made tremendous progress. But they must correctly estimate their own progress.

Discussing the conditions of intellectuals in 1957, Chairman Mao said: "During the past few years, they received some education in Marxism, and some of them studied very hard and have made great progress. As for the majority, however, they are still way behind insofar as complete substituting the proletarian world outlook by the bourgeois world outlook is concerned." Such an appraisal made by Chairman Mao several years ago is still applicable today to the intellectuals, including the ranks of philosophy and social science workers.

The development of socialist revolution and socialist construction requires that intellectuals break thoroughly with the bourgeois world outlook and with all old thoughts, old traditions, and old habits. Chairman Mao said: "To overthrow the old social system and institute the new social system--the socialist system--is a great struggle, a great change in social systems and in the mutual relationship among men."

No change in the past can be compared with this change. At present, this great change is entering a stage of further deepening. Under such a situation of a major social change, stepping up thought remolding and striving for a radical change in the world outlook cannot but be an urgent matter before the intellectuals. Even those who have taken the proletarian stand more firmly and who have definitely established the Marxist world outlook must continuously reform themselves before they can be suited to the needs of the development of the objective situation.

There are two basic ways in which intellectuals can remold their thought and change their world outlook. One is to study Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Mao Tse-tung seriously, study them flexibly and apply them flexibly, combine study with application, and equip their heads with the thought of Mao Tse-tung. The other is to plunge themselves actively into the revolutionary movements of class struggle, production struggle, and scientific experiment, unite with the masses of the workers and peasants over a long period, mix as one with them in thought and sentiment, and assume a revolutionary character and a laboring character.

Generally speaking, because of the needs of their work, philosophy and social science workers are comparatively well read in Marxist-Leninist writings. They must of course continue to step up their studies and, above all, energetically step up their study of the works of Mao Tse-tung. But what is even more important for them is to implement seriously the directive of combining theory with practice, combine study with application, and apply the theories they have studied to solving problems, the remolding of thought, and the improvement of work. They cannot succeed in doing this and cannot do it well if they merely sit at their desks and devour books without digestion.

Those who "do not hear anything outside the window but keep their minds merely on reading theoretical books," are separated from practical struggle and far away from the masses of the workers and peasants. They lack revolutionary fervor and their thought is poor and empty. They cannot possibly study revolutionary theories flexibly and apply them flexibly, or deeply appreciate the spirit of Marxist-Leninist theories, or advance the revolutionization of their thought. They go from book to book, and from concept to concept. Their mouths are full of Marxist-Leninist terms, but the old thoughts and old ideas in their heads have remained intact.

Marxism-Leninism is the revolutionary, militant science of the proletariat. Those who do not take part in the practice of revolution and do not unite closely with the revolutionary masses, cannot really master Marxism-Leninism. Chairman Mao has put it well:

"If intellectuals unite with the masses of the workers and peasants and make friends with them, they can then turn the Marxism they have learned from books into a personal possession. To study Marxism, one must not only learn it from books. In order really to master it, the main thing is to learn it through class struggle, work practice, and approaching the masses of the workers and peasants."

If one only reads and does not take part in the practice of revolution or approach the workers and peasants, he will not only be unable to master Marxism-Leninism. But he will be in danger of becoming more confused or even of going astray and embarking on the wrong path. Chairman Mao told us:

"The method of bookism in studying social science is similarly the most dangerous, and may even lead to the counter-revolutionary path. In China, have many Communist Party members engaged in research on social science, who lived exclusively on books, not become counter-revolutionary in one group after another? This is obvious evidence."

"Many people who have read Marxist 'books' have become renegades of the revolution, while illiterate workers can often master Marxism very successfully. Marxist 'books' have to be studied indeed, but the study must be combined with the actual conditions of our country. We need books, but we must correct bookism, which is separated from the actualities." (Oppose Bookism, People's Publishing House, 1964 ed., p. 4)

Among the new and old revisionists in the international Communist movement, and among renegades, rightists, and revisionists in the process of our country's revolution, many were well read in Marxist writings. But all the same they became anti-Marxist, counter-revolutionaries. Among those who publicize such bourgeois and revisionist viewpoints as "uniting two into one," "the philosophy of survival," "humanism," "the spirit of the times which is a confluence of all classes," and "writing about people in the middle,"--and who have now been exposed and criticized in our country's cultural revolution--some have read many classical writings and have long worn the cloaks of Marxist-Leninist "authorities" and "experts."

These people studied Marxism-Leninism not for the sake of the revolution. Thus, they simply could not master Marxism-Leninism. They continued to uphold the bourgeois conception of the world, take the bourgeois stand, love what the revolutionary masses hate, and hate what the revolutionary masses love. In their reports and articles, they quoted many Marxist terms. But they did so only in order that they might mutilate and oppose Marxism-Leninism under the camouflage of a "revolutionary" cloak.

For many intellectuals, especially philosophy and social science workers, it is not difficult to learn classical writings by heart or to discourse on theories and principles. What is difficult is the real radical change of their world outlook. This problem cannot be solved until they have undergone a prolonged trial in actual struggle and subjected themselves for a long time to the influence of the thought and sentiment of the masses of the workers and peasants.

Marxist epistemology tells us that knowledge comes from practice, and correct knowledge is usually not complete until after it repeatedly undergoes the process from practice to cognition and from cognition to practice. For this reason, revolutionary thought and sentiment, and the revolutionary world outlook cannot be really established except in the process of repeated study and repeated application of revolutionary theories, in continuous revolutionary practice, and in prolonged unity with the masses of the workers and peasants.

The change in one's world outlook is a radical one. But it is concrete instead of abstract. It should assert itself in class sentiment, in ideological style, and in practical action. It should assert itself in the establishment of such basic viewpoints as those of the Marxist class, labor, masses and dialectical materialism. Before intellectuals have taken part in the revolutionary struggles of the masses and mixed as one with the masses, their class stand is usually shaky, their class viewpoint blurred, and they look down upon the workers and the peasants. They despise labor, are separated from reality, and are subjective and one-sided. Such a state of affairs will change only after they have taken part in actual struggles, united with the masses of the workers and peasants for a long time, and made up their minds to reform themselves.

The broad masses of the workers and poor peasants and lower-middle peasants oppose the exploitation system most thoroughly, and follow the socialist and Communist road most resolutely. Their stand is firm, and they distinguish clearly between what they should love and what they should hate. They are hardworking and courageous. They utterly detest gains for which one does not have to work, and detest those who love ease and hate work. They are public-spirited and selfless. They love the collective, respect facts, and are practical. On the one side, they fight on the frontline of production struggle and form the mainstay for socialist construction. On the other, they fight on the frontline of class struggle and form the mainstay for socialist revolution.

If philosophy and social science workers march to the frontline to unite with the masses of the workers and peasants, carry out the revolutionary movements of class struggle, production struggle, and scientific experiment together with them, and learn from them humbly, they will be able gradually to rid themselves of the filthy things of bourgeois intellectuals. They will be able to change from one class to another in thought and sentiment, in stand, and in viewpoint.

Recently, in all parts of the country, a great number of philosophy and social science workers have gone to factories or rural areas to take part in the socialist education movement. Though they have not done so for long, they have tasted different degrees of the sweetness of taking part in actual struggles and approaching the masses of the workers and peasants.

Some of them say: "Six months in the countryside are more profitable than 10 years of book reading."

Some say: "After we have approached the workers and peasants, a colossal image of the masses of the workers and peasants has gradually appeared in our minds."

Some say: "After we have come to the rural areas to live, struggle, and labor together with the poor peasants and lower-middle peasants, we have gradually developed feelings for them, and we are now in such a mood that we love what the workers and peasants love and feel, concerned where they feel concerned."

Many comrades have realized that "uniting with the masses of the workers and peasants is indeed the avenue to revolutionization for intellectuals." This is a bumper harvest and a rapid step forward. Going on like this for a long time, intellectuals will be able to complete the change in their world outlook and become thorough revolutionaries of the proletariat.

In short, in order to become red and revolutionized, one cannot but take part in practical struggle and unite with the masses of the workers and peasants. At the same time, it is only through deep practice and through close touch with the masses of the workers and peasants, that one can test whether one has become red and revolutionized. Whether you are really red or not does not depend on how many books you have read or what things you say. It depends on what you actually do. Chairman Mao said:

"The final distinction between a revolutionary, a non-revolutionary, and a counter-revolutionary intellectuals lies in whether he wants to unite, and actually unites, with the masses of the workers and peasants."

"If one wants to unite, and actually unites, with the workers and peasants, one is a revolutionary; otherwise, one is a non-revolutionary or even a counter-revolutionary." (Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. 2, pp. 546 & 554)

All those who want to become proletarian intellectuals and Marxist-Leninist theoretical warriors, must never forget these important instructions by Chairman Mao.

## II

Uniting with the masses of the workers and peasants and actively taking part in revolutionary practice not only can advance the revolutionization of philosophy and social science workers, but also is the basic way in which they can increase their work proficiency and improve their research work.

Some say that taking part in social practice is attending to "redness" to the neglect of "expertness." Such a view is wrong. In the first place, philosophy and social science bear a strong class character and Party character. Unless they are red, it is practically impossible for Marxist workers of philosophy and social science to become expert, i.e., to realize the expertness required by the proletariat.

Secondly, expertness of philosophy and social science workers refers mainly to mastery of Marxist-Leninist theories and related specialized knowledge. Their most important task is to sum up and study experiences and problems in contemporary revolutionary struggles--especially experiences and problems in our country's socialist revolution and socialist construction. If they separate themselves from social practice or from the masses of the workers and peasants, they basically cannot achieve any of these purposes.

To master Marxist-Leninist theories and related specialized knowledge, while book reading is important, more so is participation in revolutionary practice and approaching the masses of the workers and peasants. Some people, who have read a fair number of books, consider themselves to be very learned and style themselves experts. They are rather blind and one-sided. Chairman Mao said:

"Before the knowledge which an intellectual has acquired from books has been combined with practice, his knowledge is incomplete or very incomplete. In order to come into possession of the experiences of people of the past, intellectuals depend mainly on book reading. So it is of course necessary to read books. But book reading alone cannot solve problems. They must study the current situation, study practical experiences and data, and make friends with the workers and the peasants."

"Many things cannot be learned from books alone. They must be learned from the producers, from the workers, and from the poor peasants and lower-middle peasants. In the school, they must be learned from students, from those whom one, himself, is educating."

It is quite clear that, unless one takes part in practice, one cannot very properly master book knowledge. Unless one takes part in revolutionary struggles, one cannot deeply appreciate the spirit of revolutionary theories. Besides, things in real life

are much richer and more vivid than things in books. Many problems cannot be learned from books. They must be learned from practice.

Many comrades have experienced the following case. When they first left their studies to take part in social practice, they often appeared childish and ridiculous, were at a loss to know what they should do, and were very much embarrassed. As they went deeper into the midst of reality, they increasingly realized the poverty of their practical knowledge and the need to unite with the masses of the workers and peasants. This provides a very good illustration.

The work of socialist revolution and socialist construction which the people of our country are now carrying out under the guidance of the three red banners is unprecedentedly great and magnificent. Chairman Mao said:

"We are now finding ourselves in an era of great social changes. The Chinese society has been in the midst of great changes for a very long time. The War of Resistance against Japan was a great change, and so was the period of the Liberation War. But, in character, the present changes are much more profound than those of the past."

Experiences and problems in socialist revolution and socialist construction constitute a vast realm for research. They constitute an extremely extensive "arena" for the philosophy and social science workers. For this reason, they must go all the deeper into the midst of practice and the midst of the masses of the workers and peasants to gain direct experiences.

The process of scientific research is no more than a process of "seeking truth from facts."

"'Facts' refer to all things which are objectively present. 'Truth' refers to the internal connection or the law of objective things. 'Seeking' means our research." (Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. 3, p. 801)

Only after understanding the "facts" and mastering abundant data can one carry out the creation of research, thus drawing the conclusion and seeking the "truth." In order to understand the "facts" and master the data, one must go into the midst of real life to take part in practice and conduct investigation and research. If one wants to study class struggle in the socialist society, one definitely cannot study it well unless one goes to the factories or the rural areas to take part in the practice of real-life class struggle, master conditions, and accumulate data. If one wants to study such problems in the people's communes as production, distribution, and the management of operations, one cannot obtain any result if one does not go deep into the communes to conduct investigation and research but sits in one's study and tries to "manufacture a cart behind closed doors" [meaning to try to figure out things in the absence of data - ed.] Chairman Mao said:

"If one wants to know a certain thing or certain things directly, one must personally take part in the actual struggles for changing reality and for changing that certain thing or those certain things before one can get into contact with the appearance of the thing or things, and one must also personally take part in the actual struggles for changing reality before one can expose the substance of the thing or things and thus understand them." (Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. 1, p. 276)

For this reason, it is necessary to take part in social practice for a long time and unite with the workers and peasants for a long time before the work of research on philosophy and social science can be established on a solid, firm foundation.

Some say: What I study are "ancient" things and "foreign" things, which have no connection with actual struggles. In fact, they are wrong. The history of civilization, be it ancient or modern foreign or Chinese, is no more than a history of class struggle. Marx said: "Dissection of the human body is the key to the dissection of the monkey." (Complete Works of Marx and Engels, Vol. 12, p. 756)

Mastering characteristics of class struggle in the socialist society is bound to be conducive to the understanding of the histories of class struggle of ancient times and of foreign countries, and to the solution of the problem of "modern application of ancient practices" in academic research.

Some say: I have never directly taken part in social practice but all the same I have written articles, and in fact many articles. Indeed, some comrades have written many articles while sitting in their rooms... And the articles are usually very long. But these articles usually did not proceed from the needs of revolutionary struggles, but were written on the basis of books. For this reason, the comrades concerned should not intoxicate themselves with the number or length of their articles but should ask themselves the following questions.

First, how is the quality of the articles? Are they original, and do they solve practical problems?

Secondly, what is the social effect of their articles? Do many people read them, and who? Whom do the articles benefit, and who welcome them?

If the comrades concerned do not consider these questions but are infatuated with uttering empty and tedious views and write articles just for the sake of writing, then they are not doing any good. Their empty and vague articles can be admired at most only by some "colleagues" in academic research, while the workers, peasants, and servicemen and the cadres in general do not understand them and do not want to read them. An acute question is thus posed. In whose direction should theoretical research face, and whom should it serve?

If those who want to be proletarian theoretical workers, do not let their research face in the direction of the masses of the workers and peasants, if the articles they write are not welcomed by them, then they have met the greatest failure and do not have grounds to claim themselves proletarian theoretical workers.

In order to write articles which are welcomed by the masses of the workers and peasants, one must go deep into the midst of reality to understand them and to become familiar with life. Whereas articles are to analyze the contradictions of matters, "Those who are not familiar with life and do not really understand the contradictions they discuss, will not be able to make any adequate analyses."

Recently, newspapers and magazines have carried some articles written by workers, peasants, or servicemen. They are very well written. Their authors have rich perceptual knowledge and practical experiences. On the basis of their serious study of Chairman Mao's works, they have applied the thought of Mao Tse-tung to the analysis and solution of problems encountered in actual struggles. Their articles have contents and viewpoints, are vivid and lively, and have a militant character and a strong scent of life.

They are quite worth learning by philosophy and social science workers. With their book knowledge and cultural level, if they go deep into the midst of reality and the midst of life, cultivate in themselves the sentiment of workers and peasants, and learn the language of the laboring people, philosophy and science workers are perfectly able to obtain some useful results from their research and to write some articles of good quality.

The key to the problem lies in the firm implementation of the principle of combining theory with practice. They must seriously study revolutionary theories on the one hand and, on the other, actively take part in social practice and unite closely with the masses of the workers and peasants. They must organically combine the two kinds of actions together. It is precisely by exerting effort in this manner that some of them have obtained abundant results.

Every comrade studying philosophy and social science, who wants to solve the problem of expertness very properly, must seriously appreciate and firmly bear in mind Chairman Mao's teachings on what theories are and what theorists are. Chairman Mao said:

"There is only one kind of true theory in the world, and it is the theory extracted from objective reality and proved by objective reality. No other thing deserves to be called a theory as we mean it."

He also said: "What kind of a man is the theorist we want? We want a theorist who can, on the basis of the Marxist-Leninist stand, viewpoint, and method, correctly interpret the actual problems arising from history and from revolution, and give scientific interpretation and theoretical explanation to China's economic, political, military, cultural, and other problems." (Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. 3, pp. 819 & 816)

For this reason, those who separate themselves from objective reality, are indifferent to the revolutionary movements of class struggle, production struggle, and scientific experiment carried out by the broad masses of the workers and peasants. They do not analyze, study, and solve problems posed by revolutionary practice through application of the Marxist-Leninist stand, viewpoint, and method. They cannot really do theoretical research work and cannot become Marxist-Leninist theorists in fact as well as in name.

### III

The road of uniting with the masses of the workers and peasants is a thoroughly revolutionary road. One must have a thoroughly revolutionary spirit before one can advance in big strides along it.

First, one must have the wish and the determination to reform one's stand and world outlook thoroughly. Those who seek to unite with the masses of the workers and peasants while carrying the bourgeois world outlook can never accomplish it. This is because the bourgeois world outlook and the proletarian one are antagonistic and irreconcilable; they do not speak the same language. Chairman Mao said:

"It is not an easy thing to make friends with workers and peasants. There are now some people who have gone to factories or rural areas. Some of them have obtained results, while others have not. A question of stand or attitude, which is also a question of world outlook, is involved here."

Bourgeois intellectuals, "if they do not discard their old things and replace them with a world outlook which is proletarian, will differ from the workers and peasants in viewpoint, in stand, and in sentiment. They will feel out of place everywhere in their midst. Nor will the latter confide their hearts' secrets to them."

For this reason, after going to the rural areas, intellectuals must raise their consciousness in thought remolding, fear no hardship or difficulty, live, labor, and struggle together with the workers and peasants, make up their minds drastically to train and reform themselves in revolutionary practice, and gradually assume a worker-peasant character, a laboring character, and a revolutionary character. If they exert effort in this way, they will be able to mix as one with the masses of the workers and peasants and will not feel "out of place." The more they mix as one with them and become intimate with them, the more can they learn from them their good qualities, thus speeding up the radical transformation of their own world outlook.

Secondly, one must discard the repugnant airs of intellectuals and learn humbly from the masses of the workers and peasants. After going to the factories or rural areas, philosophy and social science workers will find a great deal of work which they can perform. For instance, they can launch revolutionary movements together with the workers or the peasants, help them in learning revolutionary



theories, conduct propoganda among them on the directives and policies of the Party, impart cultural and scientific knowledge to them, etc. But the educator must be educated first. "Those who want to be good teachers must be good students first."

It is only by displaying the spirit of primary school pupils and sincerely and honestly learning the clear class stand of the workers and peasants--who distinguish clearly between what they should love and what they should hate--learning their good qualities such as public-spiritedness and selflessness and diligence and plain living, and their rich experiences concerning production struggle and class struggle. In this way they can make progress ideologically, theoretically, and in work proficiency.

It is not the attitude of proletarian intellectuals to look down upon the workers and peasants or to assume repugnant airs of self-importance in front of them. This is the attitude of bourgeois lords. Those who adopt such an attitude when they go to the factories or rural areas are bound to feel out of place everywhere in the midst of the workers and peasants and will not be able to learn anything.

Thirdly, one must persevere for a long time and unite with the masses of the workers and peasants for the rest of one's life. Marxist-Leninist theoretical workers must always serve the political ends of the proletariat and the work of socialist construction, and must always serve the revolutionary masses of the workers and peasants.

For this reason, they must take a long-range strategic view of the question--uniting with the workers and peasants. They must not stop halfway or regard uniting with the workers and peasants merely as an "interlude" in their theoretical research work. It is wrong to think or consider that it is sufficient, once and for all, to go to the factories or rural areas and stay there for several months or a year. Among the philosophy and social science workers, a habit of regularly taking part in social practice and regularly going deep into the midst of the workers and the peasants should be cultivated. They must always maintain close connections with the masses of the workers and peasants, continuously drawing force for progress and sources for research from them, erecting theoretical research work on the foundation of unity with them and with practice. They must carry out revolution all their lives, conduct theoretical research all their lives, and unite with the masses of the workers and peasant all their lives.

Concerning ways of uniting with the masses of the workers and peasants, they can be numerous and varied. At present, the most important way is to take part in the socialist education movement in town or countryside, to stand together with the workers and the poor peasants and lower-middle peasants, carry this revolutionary movement to the end together with them, and exert effort to train and reform themselves in this movement.

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Chairman Mao's Speech at the CCP National Conference on Propaganda Work, which elaborates on the question of reform of intellectuals, has pointed out the revolutionary road to growth for philosophy and social science workers. By advancing along this road and actively taking part in actual struggles and uniting firmly with the masses of the workers and peasants, they will be able to become fine warriors of the proletariat on the theoretical front who are both red and expert, and who will carry out revolution always and will never change their quality.

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