

## [On Inner-Party Struggle]

Mao Zedong

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*The main topic of the draft is why wrong views exist in the party and how to treat party members who make mistakes. It illustrates Mao's thinking on some aspects of dialectical materialism and his application of dialectics to inner-party conflicts.*

*This draft was written on the last day of the Central Committee conference at Lushan, which had been the scene of intense debate over the course of the Great Leap Forward. Minister of Defense Peng Dehuai had attacked the Great Leap, not only for its economic failures, but also as an attempt to established forms of communal organization that allegedly did not correspond to the development of China's forces of production. After his confrontation with Mao at Lushan, Peng lost his role in the party leadership, although technically he remained a member of the Party's Central Committee. The source for this translation is Mao Zedong's Manuscripts Since the Founding of the State [建国以来毛泽东文稿], Beijing, 1990, volume 8, p. 451-455. The first paragraph is omitted.*

A struggle emerged at Lushan, a class struggle. In the past 10 years of the course of socialist revolution, the capitalist class and the proletariat have continued the life-and-death struggle of these two big antagonistic classes. It appears that in China, inside our party, it is still possible for this is kind of struggle to continue. We will still need to fight for two more decades, possibly half a century. In short, the whole capitalist class must be destroyed for the struggle to stop. Struggle has ended in past societies and also arose in new societies. In accordance with materialist dialectics, there is always contradiction and struggle, otherwise the world would not become fully developed. Capitalist politicians say that the communist party's philosophy is simply a philosophy of struggle. This is a little inaccurate on one point: the form of struggle depends on the era, and is a little bit different in different eras.

About the present, I say that society's economy has changed, but the

reactionary thinking corresponding to the remnants of past ages—namely the thinking of the capitalists and the upper strata of the petty bourgeoisie—occupies a big part of people's brains and will not change in a short time. Change takes time, and moreover, it requires a long time. This is society's mounting class struggle. Inner party struggle reflected heightened class struggle in society. This is hardly surprising. Not having this kind of struggle is inconceivable. In the past this principle has not been explained fully, and it is not obvious to many comrades. When an issue arises, for example, the Gao-Rao matter in 1953,<sup>1</sup> and now the issue of Peng,

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<sup>1</sup> In 1953 Gao Gang and Rao Shushi were accused of a conspiracy to divide the party and seize control of the party and the government. In March 1954, the Communist Party of China National Delegate Assembly adopted a resolution expelling them from the party.

Huang, Zhang, and Zhou,<sup>2</sup> many people are amazed.

This kind of wonder is understandable, since social contradictions are hidden until they become apparent. People's understanding of class struggle in the socialist period should be able to deepen step by step, by means of their own experience and practice. In particular, there are some kinds inner-party struggle, for example, the Gao-Rao and Peng-Huang affairs, which have a complex and convoluted character.

Yesterday someone was still a meritorious person, but today he becomes the chief culprit. "How do you figure out whether or not a mistake has been made?" People are not aware of their path of historical change, and they don't know the complex and tortuous history of their path. Isn't this quite natural? Comrades should be led correctly, step-by-step, and the complex and convoluted character of this kind of case should be clearly explained to them.

Furthermore, over-simplified methods cannot be used to handle this kind of incident, and it cannot be handled as a contradiction between ourselves and the enemy, but it must be treated as a contradiction among the people. We must adopt the policies of "unity-criticism-unity," "punishment first and caution afterwards, cure the sickness to save the patient," "criticize rigorously but treat leniently," and "look after and help." Not only should they be allowed remain in the party, but they should also remain members of provin-

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<sup>2</sup> Peng Dehuai, Huang Kecheng, Zhang Wentian, Zhou Xiaozhou. In August 1959 Central Committee meeting at Lushan they were designated the so-called "Peng Dehuai, Huang Kecheng, Zhang Wentian, Zhou Xiaozhou anti-party group."

cial party committees and of the Central Committee, and individual comrades should remain in the Central Committee Political Bureau. Is there a danger in this policy? There can be, but so long as we adopt the correct policy, it is possible to avoid danger.

There are only two possibilities about their mistakes: that they will mend their ways and that they will not. Full conditions exist for mending ways. First, they have two aspects. One aspect is revolutionary and the other aspect is reactionary. Up to now, there is a distinction among those who supported the traitors Chen Duxiu, Luo Zhanglong, Zhang Guozhou, and Gao Gang. One is a contradiction among the people, and one is a contradiction between ourselves and the enemy.

Contradictions among the people can change into contradictions between ourselves and the enemy if both sides adopt improper words on approach and policy. It is possible for these contradictions not to change into contradictions between ourselves and the enemy, but they can be regarded as contradictions among the people from beginning to end. These can be given a thorough resolution, if we can handle this kind of contradiction promptly and use words of resolution.

The following conditions are important. The whole people's supervision of the party. The political level of the vast majority of the central and local cadres is high, and compared to the period of the 1953, has greatly improved, understanding things better. Isn't the successful struggle preceding the Lushan conference evidence of this?

Furthermore, our approach and policy for treating them, the Marxist approach and policy, must suit the circumstances, but we already had such an approach and policy. It is not only pos-

sible for change to arise, it *exists*. If nothing goes on to make a disturbance then we are courting destruction. If a few members are added to the ranks of Chen Duxiu, Luo Zhanglong, Zhang Guozhou, and Gao Gang, what loss is that to our great party and our great people?

We are convinced that all errors of mistaken comrades, except for an extremely small number people besides Chen, Luo, Zhang, and Gao, can always change under certain conditions, which accumulate with each passing day. We must have firm confidence that these exceptions are few. Our party's 38-year

history has provided full evidence this, as is known by everyone. In order to help comrades who make mistakes, we are still going to treat them as comrades, treat them equally as brothers, give enthusiastic help, provide them time in order to correct mistakes and continue to be engaged in the outlet of revolutionary work.

They must continue to have some leeway. They must have warmth, they must have springtime--they cannot always remain in winter of life. I think these comrades are all extremely important.