

Speech At The Hangchow Conference

Excerpt, May 1963

[SOURCE: *Long Live Mao Tse-tung Thought*, a Red Guard Publication.]

(2) The problem of understanding

After the Tenth Plenum¹, [they] ran to 11 provinces, and only Zu Hou and Yan Chuan talked fluently and unceasingly about socialist education while the others did not speak. After the February meeting the situation again changed. For five months Henan had not grasped class struggle, but after the February meeting it grasped it very well. There was a change, but it was not an all-encompassing one. There were some regional committee secretaries who after the February meeting did not understand thoroughly, and only after going down to conduct on the spot experiments did they understand thoroughly.

I looked at Hunan's second material. Only now do I understand a little, and that is that there is a two-road struggle between planning and production management.

I have asked a good many people where thought comes from. All were unable to respond. It is a common phenomenon of life that the material changes the mental and the mental changes the material. Illiterate peasants even understand this point. For example, you ask a peasant if he knows that Zhang San is a landlord who oppresses us. Once you have the concept of "Zhang San" and "landlord," one can reason out a landlord is a person who oppresses people. The peasants' understanding is derived from life, and an illiterate can also understand philosophy. Genghis Khan was an illiterate.

A single word may rejuvenate a country, a single word may bring disaster to country. This is the mental changing the material. Marx is one word which says there must be proletarian revolution and proletarian dictatorship; isn't this a case of a single word rejuvenating? Khrushchev is also one word, one which does not want class struggle and does not want revolution. Isn't this a case of a single word bringing disaster?

Philosophy must be discussed in the course of practical work, it must be discussed at meetings. You must tell your comrade by your side that philosophy is not at all difficult. Military studies are also not difficult. Among the marshals and generals of our people's Liberation Army only a few like Lin Biao and Liu Bocheng arose from military academies.² Turning the pages of a book on military studies and reading the history of European wars are not relevant to the Chinese situation. It wasn't the Whampoa Academy "foreigners" who defeated the "locals," but rather the "locals" who defeated the "foreigners." Comrade Lin Biao was enrolled at the Whampoa Academy for half a year. . . when he was sent out to command a company he was basically unable to fight. He had to listen to his squad leaders and fight according to how they said to fight. Military affairs are learned from practice. Therefore we must not look at Marxism as something so mysterious, nor must we regard philosophy as so mysterious. I looked at a portion of Xue Feng's diary and this person understood little philosophy.

If university students study for five years, can they learn philosophy well? I don't believe it. A good many philosophers did not study in universities. Of China's philosophers, including Wang Choung, Fan Zhen, Fu Xuan, Liu Zong Yuan, Wang Chuan Shan, Li Zhi, Dai Dong Yuan, and Wei Yuan, none were specialists in philosophy. Hegel also was not a specialist in philosophy and his learning was very profound. Kant was an astronomer, and his theory of heavenly bodies is still valuable today. Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin also were not specialists in philosophy.

Philosophy comes out of the mountains and valleys. A report as good as Ling Ling's did not emerge in Xiang Tan nor did it emerge in

¹ The tenth plenum of the CC of the CPC was held during June 1962 in Beijing.

² The academy referred to here is the Whampoa [Huángpǔ] Military Academy. It was located at Whampoa near Canton and was established by Dr. Sun Yat-sen [Sūn Yixiān] in 1924 after the reorganization of the Guomindang with the help of the Chinese Communist Party and the Soviet Union.

Chang De, it emerged in Ling Ling. Philosophy is only able to emerge amidst adversity and struggle. Philosophy arises from an adverse situation. Is philosophy able to arise from a propitious situation? Huang Gai Xiong of the Three Kingdoms was a man of Ling Ling, Cheng Yi and Cheng Hao's teacher Zhou Lianxi, a great legalists of the Song Dynasty and of the same school as Jiu Xi, were also men of Ling Ling — from Dao Xian of the Ling Ling special district Zhang Zai was from age 30 to age 40 in Ling Ling. At that time it was named Yong Zhou. His article on landscapes and his article on debates with Han Yu were written there.

Therefore we must smash superstition. However, we must pay attention so that we don't act as we did during the past few years, smashing even that which shouldn't be smashed.

A thing has both an appearance and an essence; we must penetrate the superficial to see the essence. The superficial and the essence are the unity of opposites. The essence cannot be seen so we must generate the superficial and grasp the essence. For example, if cadres do not participate in labor this will certainly give rise to revisionism. To cite another example, when we ordinarily walk along the road we do not see the ants and when we take great strides we see even less. We must squat down, and only then can we see many things. Otherwise it is not only the fresh sprouting things which we cannot see, it is also the majority of ordinary, existing things which we don't see. For example, class struggle and cadres not participating in labor exist in large quantities, but there are people who nonetheless cannot see this. We must employ the scientific method and advance investigation and study. Some people subjectively and boldly hypothesize, subjectively and cautiously seek evidence. In Hopeh various regional party committees went down to investigate and study; only the Bao Ding area party committee was scientific; the others were all subjective. At first the Bao Ding area party committee did not go down to handle the four clean-ups; it went down to handle distribution. The masses did not agree and raised the handling of the four clean-ups. When the Bao Ding area party committee heard the opinion of the masses, it changed its plan and handled the four clean-ups. This then is genuine investigation and study.

In discussing philosophy we shouldn't exceed one hour. Finish discussing it within one-

half hour, if we discuss more we become muddled.

At the Moscow Conference I discussed philosophy and the Moscow Declaration³ incorporated it but within the country no one discussed it.

³ A reference to the meeting of Representatives of the Communist and Workers Parties of the Socialist Countries held in Moscow, November 14-16, 1957. See Mao's speech "A Dialectical Approach To Inner-Party Unity"