

The Reactionary Nature of the Theory of "Combining
Two into One" As Seen from Class Struggle in the
Countryside

by

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A major polemic on dividing one into two and "combining two into one" has recently unfolded itself in the newspapers. This polemic was stirred up by Comrade Yang Hsien-chen. He put forward the theory of "combining two into one" vis-a-vis revolutionary dialectics of dividing one into two. Consequently, the criticism of Comrade Yang Hsien-chen's theory of "combining two into one" is a grave class struggle in the ideological domain. We cadres handling rural work should be mindful of this polemic and be educated by it.

Comrade Yang Hsien-chen has seriously distorted the law of the unity of opposites. He says: "The unity of opposites means only to say that contradictory aspects are inseparably linked together." He also says: "Dialectics is a theory that studies how opposites can be identified. That is what we call seeking identity and preserving the difference, or finding out the character common to both aspects." If this philosophical viewpoint of Comrade Yang Hsien-chen is used to deal with class relations in the countryside, it would inevitably lead to the reconciliation of class contradictions and the liquidation of the revolutionary struggle.

Before liberation, peasants and landlords were doubtlessly "two aspects of a contradiction." If this is seen according to Comrade Yang Hsien-chen's theory of "combining two into one," then there would be "a common demand" between the two, and the two could forever be "inseparably linked together" without waging a life-and-death struggle. However, the actual situation is completely different. There is fundamentally no common demand between the landlords and the peasants. At that time, the "demand" of the landlords was to step up the exploitation of the peasants and to consolidate their rule over the latter, so that they might perpetuate their oppression. The demand of the peasants was to free themselves from the rule and oppression of the landlord classes, and from the cruel exploitation of the landlords so that they might be liberated politically and economically. It can be seen that the demands of the two opposing classes run counter to each other, and there is nothing in "common" in their fundamental interests.

Then is it true that between the peasants and the landlords, there is only "inseparable connection" but no struggle or transformation? This is not true. It is quite true that there is a "connection" between landlord and peasant, but in the old society this was a kind of "connection" between the oppressor and the oppressed, between the exploiter and the exploited. In essence, the landlord owned the land, and the peasant could not but toil on the land of the landlord, pay rent, and support the landlord with blood and sweat. This kind of "connection" was not "inseparable," but was bound to transform itself and to break up after repeated struggles. When the cruel oppression and exploitation by the landlord class was beyond toleration, the peasants were bound to rise and wage a life-and-death struggle. This struggle ended in the victory of the peasants, the overthrow of the rule of the landlord class and the confiscation of the landlords' land the original "connection" was thus "severed."

Under the correct leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese peasants have, along with the revolutionary people of the whole country, overthrown the "three great mountains" towering above them, carried out the agrarian reform, won emancipation in the political and economic fields, and become members of the ruling class, while

the landlords have changed from the ruling class to the ruled class. Is this not the best proof of "the separation" of the original connection between the landlords and the peasants? How can it be said that the connection of the two profiles of the contradiction is inseparable? If the two are really "inseparable," does it not then mean that the landlords are forever landlords riding over the peasants, forever living on exploitation, and forever domineering? And does it not also mean that the tenants and hired farmhands are forever tenants and hired farmhands working for the landlords like beasts of burden and forever denied emancipation? Consequently the philosophical thought which preaches only the inseparability of the two aspects of a contradiction, but does not talk about the struggle between the two aspects and their transformation into each other under given conditions is in actuality the thing needed by the landlord class, but not the thing needed by the oppressed and exploited peasants.

Let us ignore the past and talk about the present. Following the universal establishment of communes in the countryside, is the relationship between the landlord elements and the peasants characterized by "combining two into one" today? This is not the case. After the agrarian reform, the landlord elements, having really no more land to rent, were no longer able to live on exploitation and the blood and sweat of the peasants. They had to work in order to live. It is easy for some people to be misled by this phenomenon. They erroneously think that the landlords and the peasants have become one and the same thing. They are indistinguishable from each other; there is no need to draw a line of distinction between them since both have to work for a living. As a matter of fact, when seen superficially, some landlords are really like the peasants, but they are still dreaming of restoration. What they dream of is fundamentally not socialism but the restoration of their feudal rule so that they may ride over the peasants again to exert their dominating role. Numerous facts exposed in the class struggle in the countryside have shown that right now the contradiction between the peasants and the vestiges of the feudal forces is extremely acute and beyond reconciliation.

There was in our commune a landlord who ostensibly took part in labor. He was dressed no better than other people and assumed a pitiful look. But he was reactionary to the bone. In 1962, when newspapers reported the clamors of the Chiang Kai-shek gang for intrusion into the coastal area of the mainland, he felt so exalted that he openly chided Wang Mou-tse, leader of the production team, by saying: "Rascal, you better keep your head sober!" He also pressed Wang Mou-tse to settle a usurious loan which had been forfeited at the time of agrarian reform. If a radical struggle were not directed against him but, instead, "peaceful co-existence" with landlord elements were implemented according to the "theory" of "combining two into one", what would have been the situation? It would mean that the dictatorship of the proletariat would be abolished, that the landlord elements would be allowed to make trouble, and that the class enemy might overtly carry out counter-revolutionary activities. Could the people still rule in this way? Certainly not. Fortunately, the awakened peasant masses did not harbor any thought based upon "combining two into one." They saw clearly every movement of the class enemy, and opportunely exposed the conspiratorial activities of the landlord elements. At meetings of various sizes, a firm struggle was waged against this landlord. After the struggle, he was placed under stringent surveillance. He was permitted only to work honestly but was not allowed to talk and act recklessly. The rabid landlord elements were thus suppressed.

These facts tell us that the contradiction between the peasants and the landlords, be it in the past or the present, cannot be resolved by means of "combining two into one" or class reconciliation. It can only be resolved by means of dividing one into two and acute class struggle.

There is also no "combining two into one," but only dividing one into two -- not only between the peasants and the landlords, but also among the peasants. We know that all things are not free from contradiction like an iron plate, but are full of contradictions at all times and in all places. This is also the case among the peasants. To be sure, the contradictions among the peasants are fundamentally different in nature from the contradictions between the landlord class and the peasants.

The latter are contradictions between the enemy and ourselves and are contradictions among the people. Contradictions of different natures must of course be solved in different ways. But the adoption of different methods to solve contradictions does not mean abandonment of struggle.

Right now, the contradictions among the peasants find principal expression in the different attitudes adopted toward the socialist and capitalist roads. Among the peasants, the broad masses of the poor and lower-middle peasants firmly adhere to the collective economy and the socialist road. However, some peasants representing a section of the people among the well-off middle peasants often yearn for the small peasants economy, work zealously for personal enrichment, and are spontaneously inclined toward the capitalist road. If we accept the philosophical viewpoint of Comrade Yang Hsien-chen, it will do to "preserve" the "difference" among the peasants on the question of the two roads, and there is no need to unfold a struggle. But in this way, the foundation of unity in the common struggle for socialism among the peasants will face the danger of disintegration. How then can the collective economy of agriculture be consolidated and developed? We rural workers are deeply aware of this problem.

Let us discuss nothing else but the situation of our commune. There was in the Liangchuang Production Team, T'ao'dan Production Brigade, a well-off middle peasant who spent the greater part of last year in other places to carry out speculation and trading, and took no part in the collective work of the team. He was not contented with doing speculative business himself; - also he caused some cadres and commune members with a lower degree of consciousness to join his band wagon. Production in the team was thus seriously affected.

In dealing with this kind of undesirable act of following the capitalist road on the part of well-off middle peasants, how can we "combine two into one" with them? And how can we "preserve" such a "difference" between the two roads without waging a struggle? If "two are combined into one," and if the "difference" is allowed to be preserved without waging a struggle, this kind of contradiction will be deepened and enlarged among the peasants, thus shaking and even endangering the position of socialism in the countryside.

Realizing the seriousness of this tendency, the Party committee of the commune led the poor and lower-middle peasants in this team to criticize this well-off middle peasant. They disclosed a host of facts to show his having followed the capitalist road; they gave him education and assistance. He admitted his mistake and expressed his willingness to follow the socialist road. From then on, he honestly participated in labor once again. The cadres and commune members who had joined his band wagon also amended their ways, and production in the team returned to normal. It can be seen that even among the peasants, it is also not true that there is only "connection" and no struggle. The "difference" found among the peasants cannot be "preserved." It must be exposed before it can be properly solved by means of struggle.

It can be seen from the above that both between the enemy and ourselves and among the people, things are divided from one into two, and only the adopting of this or that kind of struggle can solve the contradiction. Comrade Yang Hsien-chen's attempt to use "combining two into one" to reconcile class contradictions and to eliminate class struggle will be of no avail. (Reproduced from Anhui Jih-pao, November 13, 1964.)