

Refute the "Combine Two into One" Theory Over the
Contradiction Between Redness and Proficiency

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In the polemics between "divide one into two" and "combine two into one," Comrade Yao Po-mao has set forth the following views, citing the contradiction between redness and proficiency as an instance: (1) Contradictions may be divided into two categories: "contradictions with identity as their principal feature" and "contradictions with struggle as their principal feature." The contradiction between redness and proficiency belongs to the "contradictions with identity as their principal feature." (2) Redness and proficiency "partially exclude each other." "It cannot be said that the opposite of redness is proficiency and vice versa." "Redness and proficiency are completely united." (3) It is not necessary to resolve the contradiction between redness and proficiency by conducting a tit-for-tat struggle; i.e., by overcoming one aspect with the other; it should be resolved by "combining two into one." From this he draws the conclusion that both those who advocate "dividing one into two" and those who advocate "combining two into one" are "guilty of taking the part as the whole." (See "Comment on the Discussion of 'Divide One into Two' and 'Combine Two into One,'" - Jen-min Jih-pao of July 19, 1964)

The above views held by Comrade Yao Po-mao are wrong. Below we shall analyze his wrong views, taking as an instance the contradiction between redness and proficiency that exists in training politically red and professionally proficient personnel in the institutes of higher learning.

1. How redness and proficiency constitute a contradiction

In our opinion, the relationship between redness and proficiency is one between politics and profession, and between politics and technique; the two are a unity of opposites. The relationship between politics and profession exists in all societies and among all classes. In the capitalist society, the bourgeoisie demands unity of bourgeois politics and profession. In the socialist society, the proletariat demands unity of proletarian politics and profession, i.e., unity of redness and proficiency. Redness means the political orientation of the proletariat; it is the commander, soul, base and motive power of profession. Proficiency means the technique, instrument and method of carrying out assignments; it is at the service of politics. A politically red man is one who takes the stand of the proletariat, has the communist outlook on the world, and serves the workers, peasants and socialism with all his heart. A professionally proficient man is one who masters specialized skills and modern scientific and cultural knowledge. Redness and proficiency are united and promote each other. By placing proficiency under its command, redness can promote proficiency; by serving redness, proficiency can facilitate realization of the political tasks. That redness and proficiency are united and promote each other is recognized by Comrade Yao Po-mao. But the point is that we cannot confine our view to the unity of redness and proficiency without losing sight of their mutual antagonism, exclusion and struggle. Concerning the antagonism between redness and proficiency, Comrade Yao Po-mao tells us nothing concrete except to say that "redness does not amount to proficiency and cannot replace proficiency, nor does proficiency amount to redness and replace redness."

What are the manifestations of mutual antagonism, exclusion and struggle of redness and proficiency?

One of the manifestations of contradiction between redness and proficiency is that in the present-day society redness and proficiency are still not developed in an even manner and are still separated in varying degrees -- some are politically red but not professionally proficient, while some are professionally proficient but not politically red. For instance, some people have a fine professional ability but not a high political awareness; their political level is not compatible with their professional level; the fact that they are politically not red restricts display of their professional ability, prevents them from making a success of their work and even causes them to do things unfavorable to the people. On the other hand, some people have a high degree of political awareness but poor professional ability; their professional level is not compatible with their political level; the fact that professionally they are not proficient prevents them from fulfilling their political tasks and making a success of their work. In philosophical terms, this incompatibility and separation are called mutual antagonism, exclusion and struggle of opposites. Being professionally proficient but not politically red or being politically red but not professionally proficient is a state of separation of redness and proficiency, a state brought about by an intensification of contradiction between redness and proficiency.

In the socialist society, this contradiction between redness and proficiency is brought about mainly by the class system and is a manifestation of the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The socialist society has come out from the old society. In the old society, the exploiting class monopolized science and culture, most of those trained were intellectuals of the exploiting class, and the broad masses of working people were deprived of the right to master science and culture. What is left over by the old society is this extreme separation of redness and proficiency. After liberation, things have radically changed with science and culture placed in the hands of the working people, with new intellectuals politically red and professionally proficient growing up in large numbers, with many intellectuals from the old society having gone through ideological remolding, and with the separation of redness and proficiency being overcome step by step. However, because of the fact that the exploiting

class still has great force and influence in the scientific and cultural fields, bourgeois intellectuals are still found and differences still exist between manual labor and mental labor, and between workers and peasants; the separation of redness and proficiency left over by the old society is still not completely done away with and there is a likelihood that new separation of redness and proficiency will take place. For example, some of the young people who have grown up after liberation and are of good family origin have a high degree of awareness but lack scientific and cultural knowledge. On the other hand, some people who have been deeply influenced by the exploiting class in the society and their families and whose level of awareness is low, possess more knowledge of science and culture. This brings about a contradiction between redness and proficiency in real life.

The contradiction between redness and proficiency also finds its striking expression in the fact that those imbued with bourgeois ideas take their profession as a means to personal fame and gain, use profession to exclude politics and proficiency to exclude redness, and advocate proficiency to the neglect of redness. For instance, during the 1957 rectification campaign, bourgeois rightists in the institutes of higher learning considered themselves to be the professional "authority," demanded "professorial management of schools," raised an outcry that "one outside the trade cannot lead one inside the trade," and opposed Party leadership over schools. This was how the bourgeoisie used profession as the means for opposing political leadership and Party leadership, and developed a contradiction between the enemy and ourselves. Further, among some people is found the bourgeois idea of letting profession serve personal fame and gain. They think that profession may be independent of politics, and hope to be "pure scientists." In the belief that "profession is everything," they bargain with the Party, relying on their profession for "strength." On the excuse that their time is constant and their energy is limited, they exaggerate the contradiction between redness and proficiency in time, and hold that it is impossible for one to be both politically red and professionally proficient. Dominated by this individualist outlook on life, they suggest "proficiency first and redness second," "more proficiency and less redness" and "substitution of proficiency for redness." In a word, they want proficiency and no redness, using proficiency to exclude redness, and oppose placing proficiency under the command of redness. Meanwhile, that they are politically not red restricts their professional proficiency. This road traversed by bourgeois intellectuals who are professionally proficient but politically not red is fundamentally opposed to the road traversed by the proletarian intellectuals who are both politically red and professionally proficient. Therefore, this struggle between redness and proficiency waged by bourgeois-minded people who use profession to exclude politics and proficiency to exclude redness is manifested, in real life, as a struggle between political leadership over profession and "profession decides everything," and a struggle between the red and proficient road, and the proficient but not red road.

The contradiction between redness and proficiency also finds its expression in two different criteria for evaluating what is proficiency. The proficiency the proletariat demands is such that one is capable of solving both theoretical and practical problems, is able to use both his brains and his hands, and is capable of both literary and military deeds. This proficiency is proficiency directed by the proletarian view of the world and proficiency combined with redness which is at the service of proletarian politics. On the other hand, the criterion with which the bourgeoisie measures proficiency is the books read and the theoretical knowledge acquired, irrespective of whether practical problems of socialist revolution and socialist construction can be solved or not. This proficiency is proficiency directed by the bourgeois idealist view of the world and is divorced from redness. This proficiency cannot possibly render a good service to the proletarian politics and many even exclude the purpose of serving proletarian politics. This is also one of the manifestations of contradiction between redness and proficiency in real life.

So much for the manifestations of mutual antagonism, exclusion and struggle of redness and proficiency. Comrade Yao Po-mao also recognizes redness and proficiency as two aspects of a contradiction but he holds that redness and proficiency "only partially exclude each other," are not opposed to each other, and are "completely united." In fact, every contradiction has two aspects which exclude each other and struggle against each other, that is, two aspects which are opposed to each other. Chairman Mao said: "To be 'opposed to each other' means the mutual exclusion or struggle of the two contradictory aspects." (1) There is no such thing here as a distinction between what is called partial exclusion and what is called whole exclusion. The instances of contradiction between redness and proficiency as analyzed above will clarify the following: Redness and proficiency are incompatible with each other and are separated from each other -- does not this mean mutual exclusion of opposites? Bourgeois-minded people use profession to exclude politics and proficiency to exclude redness, insist on proficiency instead of redness, advocate "profession decides everything," and oppose placing profession under the command of politics and becoming both red and proficient -- does not this mean mutual exclusion of opposites? The proficiency directed by the bourgeois idealist view of the world cannot conform with the demand of proletarian politics and even excludes it -- does not this mean mutual exclusion of opposites? How can this be called "partial exclusion" and "complete unity"? Comrade Yao Po-mao's view is untenable. He himself says: "One may not become a nominal statesman who is politically red but professionally not proficient, still less of course may one become one who is professionally proficient but politically not red and who is unable to serve the people with all his heart and who even does things jeopardizing the interests of the people." Here Comrade Yao Po-mao has clearly seen the intensification of struggle between redness and proficiency. But as he departs from classes and class struggle that objectively exist and as he abstractedly explores the relationship between redness and proficiency, he loses sight of the contradiction between redness and proficiency and arrives at the wrong conclusion that redness and proficiency "partially exclude each other" and are "completely united," thus disregarding the elementary knowledge of materialistic dialectics

Concerning the relations in which politics is opposed to and united with professions -- i.e., with technique, economics, military affairs, and art -- Chairman Mao has made many brilliant and concrete analyses which we should learn in earnest. For instance, analyzing the relations in which politics is opposed to and united with art, Chairman Mao said in his "Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Art and Literature," "What we demand is unity of politics and art, of content and form, and of the revolutionary political content and the highest possible degree of perfection in artistic form." (2) But is there a contradiction between politics and art? There is. "Some things which are basically reactionary from the political point of view may yet be artistically good. But the more artistic such a work may be, the greater harm will it do to the people, and the more reason for us to reject it. The contradiction between reactionary political content and artistic form is a common characteristic of the art and literature of all exploiting classes in their decline." (3) On the other hand, "works of art, however politically progressive, are powerless if they lack artistic quality." (4) It is a contradiction between revolutionary political content and a lack of perfect form of art. That is why Chairman Mao called for "a struggle on two fronts over the question of literature and art" to oppose both "the works with wrong political approaches and the tendency towards so-called 'poster and slogan style' which is correct only in political approach but lacks artistic power." (5) This is intended to resolve the contradiction between politics and art and achieve unity of politics and art.

2. How to resolve the contradiction between redness and proficiency and achieve both redness and proficiency.

Comrade Yao Po-mao takes the view that since the contradiction between redness and proficiency is "a contradiction with identity as its principal feature," to resolve it, "it is not necessary for the two contradictory aspects to conduct a tit-for-tat and life-and-death struggle against each other" and that the result of struggle of opposites is not overcoming of one aspect by the other but "should be combination, unity, connection and 'uniting into one' of the two aspects." Is that really the case? In our opinion, whether it is necessary to "conduct a life-and-death struggle" to resolve the contradiction is a question of the form of struggle between opposites. Chairman Mao said: "Contradiction and struggle are universal and absolute but the method of resolving the contradiction, i.e., the form of struggle, varies with contradictions

different in character." (6) A life-and-death struggle is a form of struggle of antagonistic contradictions; the opposite is a form of struggle of non-antagonistic contradictions. It has nothing to do with the question whether the contradiction involved is "one with identity as its principal feature" or "one with struggle as its principal feature." This is the first point. The second point is that we consider it very important to combine redness and proficiency and our aim of resolving the contradiction between redness and proficiency is to achieve both redness and proficiency and to combine redness and proficiency. But like all other contradictions the contradiction between redness and proficiency must be resolved through a tit-for-tat struggle of the two aspects of contradiction, by overcoming one aspect with the other, and not by way of "uniting two into one." As mentioned above, the contradiction between redness and proficiency during the socialist period is mainly a manifestation of the class contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Therefore, to resolve the contradiction between redness and proficiency, we must conduct a class struggle to "promote the proletarian and destroy the bourgeois," use the proletarian thought to overcome the bourgeois thought, use redness to set proficiency in motion, and combine redness and proficiency. After liberation, we have conducted tit-for-tat and repeated struggles against the bourgeoisie in order to place professions under the proletarian command, train red and proficient personnel and overcome separation of redness and proficiency. For example, we have gradually transformed science and culture according to the socialist principle and used the cultural superiority of the proletariat to overcome the force of the exploiting class in the scientific and cultural fields. In educational undertakings, we have carried out the educational policy of the Party, developed the work-study and farming-study system of education, used the educational system of the proletariat to overcome the educational system of the bourgeoisie and taken steps to eliminate the differences between manual labor and mental labor, between workers and peasants and between town and country. All this has given a strong impetus to the growth of the red and proficient forces. Further, among the intellectuals we have consistently persisted in the ideological struggle to "promote the proletarian and destroy the bourgeois" and opposed the road traversed by bourgeois intellectuals who are professionally proficient but politically not red. Meanwhile, we have taken care to overcome the tendency toward 'redness but no proficiency,' that was once manifested by some people. In this way, many people have gained a clear understanding about the direction of redness and proficiency, and gradually embarked upon the red and proficient road. Further, in the professional field we also conducted a struggle between the proletarian outlook on the world and the bourgeois outlook on the world, helped the intellectuals to study Marxist philosophy and Chairman Mao's works, to use the proletarian outlook on the world to direct their professional practice and to overcome the influence of the bourgeois idealist view of the world, and used the policy of integrating theory with practice to overcome the tendency of separating theory from practice, thereby enabling them to achieve redness and proficiency in a better way. Is it not clear that resolving the contradiction between redness and proficiency and achieving both redness and proficiency is a struggle to "promote the proletarian and destroy the bourgeoisie" and to overcome one aspect of contradiction by the other?

Probably Comrade Yao Po-mao will say that the contradiction we have in mind is one between 'redness and proficiency' and 'proficiency but no redness,' or 'redness but no proficiency' and one between 'redness' and 'no redness' and that this is "beside the point." As mentioned above, the socialist society objectively demands both redness and proficiency and a combination of redness and proficiency but separation of redness and proficiency is brought about mainly by the class system. This being so, the contradiction between redness and proficiency must be resolved by overcoming the separation of redness and proficiency and by combining redness and proficiency, that is, by overcoming 'proficiency but no redness' or 'redness but no proficiency' with 'both redness and proficiency.' How can the resolution of the contradiction between redness and proficiency and the resolution of the contradiction between 'both redness and proficiency' and 'proficiency but no redness' or 'redness but no proficiency' be regarded as two entirely different things? Comrade Yao Po-mao cuts apart the contradiction between redness and proficiency and the contradiction between 'redness' and 'no redness.' In the contradiction between redness and proficiency, redness is the

principal aspect of the contradiction and is the commander and soul of proficiency; when the contradiction between redness and proficiency is developed and intensified, there will be only proficiency and no redness. Therefore, this contradiction between redness and proficiency cannot be resolved without involving the question of redness; a struggle to "promote the proletariat and destroy the bourgeoisie" must be conducted before both redness and proficiency can be achieved. Conversely, if the struggle to "promote the proletariat and destroy the bourgeois" is given up, and if the contradiction between 'redness' and 'no redness' is not resolved, then the political bearings will be lost, proficiency will not be able to serve proletarian politics, and professional development will be considerably restricted, in which case it will be impossible to achieve both redness and proficiency. This may be clearly seen from some students who have graduated from the institutes of higher learning. There are students who persist in ideological remolding. After graduation, they take up work posts. As they are able to serve the people with all their hearts, go into the thick of production practice and form one with workers and peasants, their proficiency can be brought into full play and they are able to achieve high success in their work and to grow up soon politically and professionally. On the other hand, there are some students who studied hard in school but who slackened ideological remolding and received serious effects from bourgeois thought; after graduation, they do not rest content with their work and they separate themselves from production practice and from the worker and peasant masses; because of this, their proficiency cannot be brought into full play and they are unable to achieve both redness and proficiency. Is it not very clear that to resolve the contradiction between redness and proficiency and to achieve redness and proficiency is closely bound up with resolving the contradiction between 'redness' and 'no redness'? Comrade Yao Po-mao talks about the contradiction between redness and proficiency apart from the concrete problems in real life, and says that the contradiction between redness and proficiency should be resolved by "combining two into one." This is really a case of "talking beside the point."

3. The unity of redness and proficiency is relative and their struggle is absolute

Chairman Mao said: "The unity of opposites is conditional, temporary and transitional and, consequently, is relative while the struggle of opposites is absolute." (7) This fundamental principle underlying dialectics is applicable to the contradiction between redness and proficiency. We maintain that if correct political bearings are maintained and profession and technique are studied earnestly, basic unity of redness and proficiency can be achieved. But this unity is conditional, temporary; when conditions have changed, unity will become disunity and a new unity has to be achieved through struggle. For instance, in the case of many of our veteran cadres who had long been tested in revolutionary wars, redness and proficiency were basically united. After the victory of revolution, as Chairman Mao said, "Serious tasks of economic construction confront us. Some of the things familiar to us will soon be set aside while things unfamiliar to us are being forced on us." (8) At the start, these comrades who were transferred to posts of economic construction which were unfamiliar to them were not versed in their professions, and the unity of redness and proficiency was changed into a disunity. They were required to study their trades in a revolutionary spirit and to achieve unity of redness and proficiency under new conditions. Further, when our country entered from the period of democratic revolution into the period of socialist revolution and when the socialist revolution was being deepened, people's past political training and experience were inadequate to meet the current situations and the unity of redness and proficiency was turned into a disunity, making it necessary for people to study anew Marxism-Leninism and Chairman Mao's works, throw themselves into the socialist revolution and struggle and achieve new unity of redness and proficiency. Dwelling on the contradiction between social production and social needs in the national economy, Chairman Mao said: "By balance we mean a temporary, relative unity of opposites. By the end of each year, such a balance, taken as a whole, is upset by the struggle of opposites, the unity achieved undergoes a change, balance becomes imbalance, unity becomes disunity, and once again it is necessary to work out a balance and unity for the next year." "Contradictions arise continually and are continually resolved -- this is the dialectical law of the development of things." (9) In our opinion, this is also the case with the movement of contradiction between redness and

proficiency. With the three great revolutionary movements of class struggle, production struggle and scientific experiment constantly developed, with new demands constantly presented, with one's ideological struggle developed and with the work points changed, contradictions will continue to arise between redness and proficiency and unity is constantly turned into disunity, making it necessary to achieve a new unity through struggle. This is even the case with those who follow the red and proficient road. The unity of redness and proficiency cannot be achieved once and for all. Even when redness is well combined with proficiency, it is only a basic unity of opposites, and struggle still exists in unity. In real life, when we say that a certain comrade has achieved both redness and proficiency and combined redness and proficiency, we mean it in the relative sense. There is always an imbalance between redness and proficiency. Nobody can possibly achieve an absolute redness and an absolute proficiency and "completely unite" redness and proficiency without any contradiction.

In short, the unity of redness and proficiency is conditional, temporary and relative while the struggle of redness and proficiency is absolute. For this reason, we must handle the contradiction between redness and proficiency in a revolutionary way and overcome the idea that unity of redness and proficiency in a revolutionary way and overcome the idea that unity of redness and proficiency can be achieved once and for all. Comrade Yao Po-mao says nothing about this but raises the question of whether identity or struggle of opposites is the "principal feature" of contradiction. And he maintains that the contradiction between redness and proficiency is "one with identity as its principal feature," that "redness and proficiency are completely united" and that it is not necessary to resolve the contradiction between redness and proficiency by conducting a tit-for-tat struggle and by overcoming one aspect of the contradiction with the other. Actually, he regards the unity of redness and proficiency as something absolute and denies the struggle of redness and proficiency so as to define a category of so-called "contradictions with identity as their principal feature" and leave a ground for the "combine two into one" theory.

4. Concluding remarks

It will be seen from the above analysis that the whole theoretical basis on which Comrade Yao Po-mao tries to justify the "combine two into one" theory by the contradiction between redness and proficiency is wrong. His view is one of denying contradiction, denying the absoluteness of struggle of opposites, and denying the viewpoint that all contradictions must be resolved through struggle and by overcoming one aspect of the contradiction with the other.

If the contradiction between redness and proficiency is observed and handled according to the "combine two into one" theory as advocated by Comrade Yao Po-mao, such an approach would: obliterate the struggle between redness and proficiency and its class content; forsake the struggle "to promote the proletariat and destroy the bourgeois;" reconcile the contradiction between 'both redness and proficiency' and 'redness but no proficiency' or 'proficiency but no redness,' and guide one to the road traversed by bourgeois intellectuals who are proficient but not red, or cause one to be red but not proficient. If a state gives up the socialist revolution in the scientific and cultural fields, does not develop the cultural superiority of the proletariat, and does not overcome the influence of the exploiting class in the scientific and cultural fields, then those who are trained are only bourgeois intellectuals who are professionally proficient but not politically red, and thereby a social base for revisionism is built. It is precisely because it is so important to handle the relationship between redness and proficiency, between politics and profession and between politics and technique that we must adhere to the "divide one into two" view and oppose the "combine two into one" view.

One of the important reasons for the wrong views held by Comrade Yao Po-mao is that his method of research is divorced from reality and that he dabbles in the method of abstract conception. Chairman Mao said: "The contradiction we have in mind is real, concrete contradiction, while the mutual transformation of contradictions is also real and concrete." (10) Yet Comrade Yao Po-mao isolates the contradiction between redness

and proficiency from the reality of social class struggle, abstracts redness and proficiency into two conceptions devoid of content, and then studies the contradiction between these two conceptions. He seems to think that redness means absolute redness and proficiency means absolute proficiency. In fact, there is no such thing as absolute redness nor absolute proficiency in real life. Because of this, he naturally loses sight of the struggle between redness and proficiency in real life, loses sight of the class content of the contradiction between redness and proficiency, and loses sight of the complicated circumstances in which one aspect overcomes the other through struggle. This method of research is one divorced from reality and dabbling in abstract conception. If such a method of research is used, the law of unity of opposites cannot be correctly applied in analyzing concrete contradictions and theoretically errors will be committed.

The present polemics between "divide one into two" and "combine two into one" is a struggle between the proletarian outlook on the world and the bourgeois outlook on the world. Comrade Yang Hsien-chne's theory of "combining two into one" is opposed to materialistic dialectics and Chairman Mao's philosophical thinking. In these polemics, Comrade Yao Po-mao in a seemingly balanced and fair manner tries to bring together, through his concocted classification of contradictions, two fundamentally opposed outlooks on the world, i.e., "divide one into two" and "combine two into one." Outwardly he seems to make an all-round observation of problems but actually he applies eclectic tactics in negating "divide one into two," denying that the law of unity of opposites is a universal law of the objective things and defending Comrade Yang Hsien-chen's "combine two into one" theory. We must resolutely oppose Comrade Yang Hsien-chen's "combine two into one" theory as well as various views defending it, and safeguard revolutionary materialistic dialectics.

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1. "On Contradiction," Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. I, 1952 edition, p. 321
2. "Talks at Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art," Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. III, 1953 edition, p. 871
3. ditto
4. ditto
5. ditto
6. "On Contradiction," Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. I, 1952 edition, p. 323
7. "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," Selected Reading of Mao Tse-tung's Works Book A, p. 454
8. "On People's Democratic Dictatorship," Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung 1960 edition, Vol. IV, p. 1485
9. "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," Selected Reading of Mao Tse-tung's Works Book A, p. 458
10. "On Contradiction," Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. I, 1952 edition, p. 319.

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