

PHILOSOPHYRefuting Comrade Yang Hsien-chen's Fallacious Argument
against Revolutionary Activity

by

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For many years Comrade Yang Hsien-chen has regarded himself as an "authority on Marxian philosophy." And as an "authority in philosophical circles" he is "famous" for his exposition on the theory of knowledge.

Yet all those who have attended his lectures know the way he dwells on the theory of knowledge. He confines himself to the theory that being is primary. Thinking is secondary and a reflection of being. He says nothing as to how to apply dialectics to the theory of knowledge and to incorporate practice into the theory of reflection. He dwells on the "correspondence," "adaptability" and "identity" between subjectivity and objectivity without explaining the repetitional process in which knowledge develops. He says something about the leap from matter to spirit and nothing about the leap from spirit to matter; he even represents the leap from spirit to matter as a Machian [Ernst Mach, Austrian philosopher and physicist] "complex of ideas" and "complex of sensations." He explains that one's consciousness can reflect the objective being but avoids explaining that one's consciousness may in turn transform the objective being.

In this way, he substitutes a theory of passive, mechanical and intuitive reflection for the theory of active, revolutionary reflection. Thus he throws away the revolutionary essence of the Marxian theory of knowledge.

In applying his theory of passive reflection to actual life and using it to interpret social phenomena, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen introduces out-and-out metaphysics and subjective idealism. In his lectures on "Introductory Remarks on Philosophy" to the 1959 class of the Higher Party School in November 1961, he talked about a great number of things such as "subjectivity must correspond to objectivity," "subjectivity must adapt itself to the objective being," "our subjective world can only be a reflection of the objective world," and "whether our thought and method are correct will depend on whether they can adapt themselves to objective things." In his long lectures of 90 thousand words, not a word was said about the role of man's conscious activity or about the role played by man in transforming the objective world.

Further, under the pretence of "summing up the historical experience and educating cadres," he wantonly attacked the general line--building socialism with more, faster, better and more economical results by exerting utmost efforts and aiming high--as a "theory that the will is everything." He decried the big leap forward as "using the strength of will to create the world."

Some comrades have subjected this negative material, which is the worst of its kind, to analytical criticism from the angle of the theory of knowledge. In this article we will pass some analytical criticism on the fallacious argument given by Comrade Yang Hsien-chen in denying the revolutionary conscious activity.

I

Comrade Yang Hsien-chen denies man's conscious activity, first of all its great function as a revolutionary ideal. He decries the communist style--thinking, talking and acting with courage and daring--as one of "thinking foolishly, talking wildly and acting recklessly" and as one of "making history at will." He derides the broad masses of people for their ideal of changing the "poor and blank" features and building ours into a powerful socialist country as soon as possible--comparing it

to an attempt to "clasp Mt. T'ai under the arm and stepping over the Northern Sea-- an impossibility." He seizes upon and makes much ado about Fuerbach's words: "Man's ideal is one of corresponding with nature." In his opinion, our ideal can only correspond to the poor and blank "nature" of our country. This obviously means that people must give up their revolutionary ideal and forever keep China in a poor and backward position and as a slave to "nature."

Revolutionary ideals are a powerful spiritual strength acquired by people after they have actively and correctly known the objective world in the long course of social practice. Applied to social practice, revolutionary ideals and will can become a huge material force for actively transforming society and the world. This is a manifestation of conscious activity displayed by people in the most conscious and revolutionary ways and to the highest degree.

Everybody knows that conscious activity is a characteristic common to mankind. But only the conscious activity that is armed with Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Mao Tse-tung and marked by a great ideal and a strong will is called the revolutionary activity of the proletariat. By fully displaying this revolutionary activity we can do earth-shaking work not done by our forefathers.

Why do our people led by the Party and Comrade Mao Tse-tung have a revolutionary strength which can overpower mountains and rivers? One of the important reasons is that people have the great ideal of communism and the target of struggle to realize this highest ideal at each historical stage. Inspired by the great ideals of revolution, our people waged a heroic struggle, won complete victory in the democratic revolution and important victories in the socialist revolution and achieved great successes in socialist construction. Such is the great material strength engendered by revolutionary ideals.

Revolutionary ideals are the direction of progress and the fountain of strength. When an ideal is translated into reality through the people's hard struggle, the reality becomes a new driving force that moves one's ideal to a remoter state. Inspired by the new ideal a still better reality will appear through the practice and struggle of millions.

If revolutionary ideals are lost, people will certainly lose their bearings and their driving force for revolution on their forward road. If so, it will be out of the question to display any revolutionary conscious activity and build a socialist powerful country.

As a matter of fact, judging by his consistent thought, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen is not one who does not want ideals. It's just that what he wants are capitalist ideals, not socialist and communist ideals. In endlessly asking people to cast away so-called "illusions" and adapt themselves to "nature," he actually asks people to cast away ideals and come to terms with the present.

Revolutionary ideals are anything but a "castle in the air." They are a lighthouse illuminating in all directions. They rest on the strongest base that has stood the tests of numerous winds and waves.

Comrade Yang Hsien-chen deliberately views ideals and illusions in the same light in order to create confusion. His intentions are pernicious.

The distinction between an ideal and an illusion lies in whether it corresponds to the law of social development. Realization of socialism and communism is the inevitable tendency in the development of human society and is a mission with which history endows the proletariat at a specific stage in the development of the human society. The proletariat merely consciously takes as its objective the demand objectively presented by social history. Therefore, revolutionary ideals are identical to the law of objectivity.

Socialist ideals have been and are being translated into a living reality in our country. With a view to realizing the great ideals of socialism and communism, the broad masses of our people fully displayed their revolutionary activity according to the law of objectivity, scientifically manifested their revolutionary style-- thinking, talking and acting with courage and daring--waged arduous struggle and achieved brilliant results in socialist construction. It is a glorious, great history made by our people by dint of hard effort. It is anything but "making history at will" and "thinking foolishly, talking wildly and acting recklessly" as slanderously described by Comrade Yang Hsien-chen.

In fact, Comrade Yang has for many years longed for the capitalist road and attempted to turn back the wheel of history. Indeed, what he stands for are "impractical illusion," out-and-out subjective idealism and a theory that will is everything.

II.

On the pretext of "respecting truth and proceeding from reality," Comrade Yang Hsien-chen in his lectures on "Introductory Remarks on Philosophy" opposes a display of man's conscious activity. He interprets "respecting truth and proceeding from reality" to mean that "subjectivity" must "adapt itself to the objective being." He maintains that you must adapt yourself to objectivity as it is--that if one's subjectivity has adapted itself to objectivity, it would mean that one has "respected truth and proceeded from reality." This is a gross distortion of "respecting truth and proceeding from reality."

Dialectical materialism and historical materialism tell us that, generally speaking, animals are directed by nature and urged on by their instincts. Animals can only passively adapt themselves to their environment while man can consciously and deliberately transform the objective environment. That is one of the important conditions for making man what he is. The lower this condition, the more will man become a lower-class man. The higher this condition, the more will man become a higher-class man. If problems based on reality are understood in this light, then what people are required to do is not only to recognize the objective being but, more important still, to transform the objective being from this starting-point. Proceeding from reality is precisely aimed at changing the state of the objective reality, not at keeping the objective reality intact, maintaining the status quo and "resting on objective reality."

Comrade Yang Hsien-chen misrepresents "respecting truth and proceeding from reality" merely as an act to adapt oneself to the objective being of nature and society. He regards one's activity as an "act to cope with one's environment." Thus he lowers man to the level of the animals in general. This "theory of adapting subjectivity to objectivity" denies the role of man's conscious activity. It is the out-and-out philosophy of passive survival.

If this philosophy is applied to the world revolution, one will only come to this conclusion: The outrage of U.S. imperialism objectively exists--the people of the world can only go with the adverse tide, adapt themselves to this objective being and may not fight. The peoples of South Vietnam, Laos and the Congo (Leopoldville) adopt very improper measures for themselves, respect no truth and ignore reality when they conduct a determined struggle against the United States--the most powerful imperialism in the world.

If one takes this attitude toward the revolutionary struggle, one will certainly come to the same absurd and dangerous conclusion when he deals with other things. This logic is completely identical to Yang Hsien-chen's "combine two into one" view of reconciling contradiction and opposing struggle. This is an attempt to form a theoretical basis for Chia Kwei's thought, the coward's view and crawler's idea. It is a logic that repudiates and opposes revolution.

What do we mean by proceeding from reality? On this question we and Comrade Yang Hsien-chen take entirely contrary views. By proceeding from reality is meant that in doing any work we must understand the actual state of affairs, find the internal connections of things, fully display our revolutionary conscious activity according to the law for development of things and the subjective and objective possibilities, and achieve success.

The "proceeding from reality" we have in mind is anything but a passive reaction, passive adaptation or automatic development; it is based on the conviction that people retain complete initiative in the face of objective things and can positively and successfully change the objective world.

For example, natural calamities of varying degrees will occur every year in our country which is vast in area and where the climate is complicated. This is inevitable at the present moment. In agricultural production, people have long established the view that "human effort can conquer nature" and have resolutely fought natural calamities. That is, everything is done to prevent natural calamities before they break out; after the outbreak of natural calamities which are beyond human control, full reliance is placed on the strength of the masses, man's conscious activity is fully displayed and all means and ways are exhausted to reduce the effect of natural calamities to a minimum. Such is our Marxists' view of respecting truth and is the true "proceeding from reality."

If we "respect truth and proceed from reality" according to the "theory of adapting subjectivity to objective being," inevitably we will take no preventive measures before the outbreak of natural calamities--for there is no such objective being as natural calamities! After the outbreak of natural calamities, we will inevitably let people "adapt" themselves to this fait accompli, allow the natural calamities to play havoc, sit and watch the fields crack and the crops wither, or allow the fruits of labor to be ravaged and let nature determine our destiny.

Thus the "respecting truth and proceeding from reality" which Yang Hsien-chen has in mind is a theory of passive reflection.

If we really respect truth, proceed from reality and correctly resolve the contradiction between the subjective and objective in revolution and construction, we must oppose both subjectivism--which substitutes the subjective view for objective conditions--and the theory of passive reflection--"adapting subjectivity to objective being." We must recognize objective reality without becoming a slave to it. We must try to be master of objective reality and display our conscious activity within the limits of objective possibilities. Such is what we dialectical materialists and revolutionaries correctly understand to be "respecting truth and proceeding from reality" as advocated by the theory of active reflection.

III.

To deny the great role of conscious activity, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen seizes upon the word "conditions" and states a great number of things about them. He speaks nonsense [when he says] our big leap forward "departs from conditions, casts away the law of objectivity and onesidedly relies on conscious activity." This pretentious respect for "conditions" is nothing but a trick and a deliberate attempt to set respect for conditions against a display of man's conscious activity. And in talking about conditions Comrade Yang Hsien-chen lays stress on the objective conditions and excludes subjective conditions; he stresses external conditions to the neglect of internal ones; stresses those which are a priori, without recognizing the fact that people may change and create conditions.

In his view, people are powerless against conditions. This is nothing but an attempt to prevent people from transforming the objective world in revolutionary ways.

We have always held that the objective world may be changed and that definite conditions must be fulfilled if it is to be changed. All things depend upon the time, locality and conditions. All things which contradict and struggle against each other are transformed under given conditions: this is a fundamental viewpoint of dialectical materialism.

Hence we attach great importance to conditions in our practice of revolution and construction, holding that the "theory of ignoring conditions" is wrong. Nevertheless, our theory of conditions is fundamentally opposed to Comrade Yang Hsien-chen's "theory of conditions."

First, how are we to view objective and subjective conditions? We say, objective conditions are material conditions which are independent of one's will, subjective conditions are conditions that depend on man.

Take planting of crops for example. Climate, soil, irrigation facilities and fertilizers, etc., are objective conditions. Production plans, management, technology, man's efforts and awareness, etc., are subjective conditions. The action of subjective conditions depends on objective conditions; yet subjective conditions may react upon objective ones and change them.

The correct handling of the relationship between objective and subjective conditions should consist in giving full play to the role of subjective conditions and using it to control objective conditions. Comrade Mao Tse-tung said aptly: "People who direct a war cannot strive for victories beyond the limit allowed by objective conditions, but within that limit they can and must strive for victories through their conscious activity. The stage of action for these directors of war must be built upon objective conditions. Given this stage as the basis, they can direct the performance of many dramas, full of sound and color, of power and grandeur." ("On the Protracted War")

What then is Comrade Yang Hsien-chen's view? He says in his "Introductory Remarks on Philosophy:"

"What is plan? Plan should be a reflection of the external world and the objective being... A production plan should be a reflection of the capacity of equipment. Your plan must be such as to suit the capacity of equipment." It is evident that here he recognizes only the role of equipment capacity, gives no recognition to the role of subjective conditions and completely ignores man's awareness, efforts, measures, methods etc.--that is, the role of man's conscious activity.

As we know, both industrial and agricultural production plans should be worked out by synthesizing the objective and subjective conditions and taking full account of the possibilities of the objective reality and man's conscious activity. The capacity of equipment is of great importance to fulfillment of production plans. To produce a definite quantity of steel, we must have corresponding steel-refining equipment and quantities of raw materials and fuels. Without these objective conditions, it is impossible to put the role of subjective conditions into play and make steel. But possessing definite objective conditions does not amount to production of steel. Without the role of subjective conditions and apart from man's conscious activity, equipment can only be a useless thing no matter how good it is. Therefore, objective conditions can play their part only through subjective conditions.

Further, it should be realized that in many cases subjective conditions are often even more important than objective conditions. The equipment of some "lane factories" in Shanghai is poor but they often turn out high-quality, precision and important products of the first grade. The production level of some of our factories and enterprises is often far above their originally designed capacity. The reason is that instead of being restricted and handicapped by objective conditions they continue to improve the objective conditions by exerting revolutionary effort and manifesting a creative spirit.

Comrade Yang Hsien-chen magnifies the limitation of objective conditions and narrows down and denies the role of subjective conditions. His negative viewpoint is quite harmful in practice. We must resolutely oppose it.

Second, we maintain that in examining objective conditions we must distinguish internal from external conditions. External conditions are secondary factors. Internal conditions are main and decisive factors.

Our Party's policy of construction based on self-reliance is drawn up according to the principle of dialectical materialism and historical materialism. Self-reliance is the foothold of revolution and construction. Self-reliance supplemented with external aid is applicable to any work under any circumstances. This is because, generally speaking, full display of the role of internal conditions is always basic and our own efforts must be relied upon for both revolution and construction. External aid can only play a helping role and is a condition that plays its part temporarily.

Meanwhile, no matter how good external conditions are, nothing can be done if the role of internal conditions is not brought into full play. The achievements in our socialist construction--particularly the basic self-sufficiency achieved in petroleum and the explosion of the first atomic bomb--are eloquent proof that they are results of carrying out the policy of self-reliance, fully summoning the enthusiasm and creativeness of workers, technical personnel and scientists and exerting the efforts of our people to achieve prosperity.

Since he denies the role of man's conscious activity, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen will certainly obliterate the role of internal conditions and deny the necessity for self-reliance. If we act according to this view, then we can only rely on others, shall never have atomic bombs and shall never be able to build an independent and integral system of modern national economy. This is obviously a philosophy of willing slaves.

Third, we take the view that all things contain both favorable and unfavorable conditions. These conditions are interconnected and are transformed into their opposites. In our work we must fully utilize the favorable conditions and facilitate the development of revolution and construction. Meanwhile, we must strive to change the unfavorable conditions and promote their transformation into favorable ones.

Yet Comrade Yang Hsien-chen sees only the unfavorable conditions. He loses sight of the favorable ones in examining things.

In his "Introductory Remarks on Philosophy," in a pessimistic tone he dwells on the construction undertaken on a "poor and blank" base. In his eyes, this "poor and blank" feature is a condition extremely unfavorable for our construction and is the greatest difficulty. This metaphysical view is diametrically opposed to the Marxian view.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung said in his "Introducing A Cooperative":

"These appear to be bad things but actually are good. When one is poor, one will think of change, action and revolution. On a plain paper the newest and most beautiful words can be written and the newest and most beautiful pictures can be drawn."

Here Comrade Mao Tse-tung teaches us that we must evaluate unfavorable conditions from the dialectical viewpoint. This is of great significance.

Correctly know and evaluate unfavorable conditions, despise them strategically, take account of them tactically, take effective measures to surmount unfavorable conditions, and change unfavorable conditions into favorable ones and bad things into good things. In this way we shall be able to surmount numerous difficulties and win constant victories in revolution and construction.

Fourth, in examining favorable conditions and unfavorable conditions we must develop and supplement the original conditions and create new ones.

Comrade Yang Hsien-chen says: "It is 'leftist' deviation to act before you acquire the necessary conditions." Here Comrade Yang Hsien-chen makes the objective conditions fixed and absolute. It is wrong in the extreme to think that conditions cannot be changed, developed and created. We would ask: Are we to lie down and do nothing because the necessary conditions are not fulfilled?

Many facts indicate that not all the conditions necessary for certain tasks are ready-made and perfect in our actual work. Along with raising their ability to know and transform the world in their practice, people may develop and supplement the original conditions and create new conditions in addition to restricting the objective ones and transforming them in a direction favorable for us. Instances like this are too numerous to mention.

In many areas south of the Yangtze, for instance, planting double rice crops is an effective way to increase grain production. In the past, planting double rice crops was confined to Kwangtung and Fukien where climate conditions were favorable. After liberation, planting double rice crops was gradually expanded to areas north of these provinces. Planting double rice crops is now being spread to large areas around Shanghai. But the suburban areas of Shanghai encountered quite a few difficulties in introducing double rice crops.

To solve the problem arising from the fact that the frost-free period was not long enough and the temperature was low, Shanghai suburban areas selected early-ripening strains, bred rice seedlings under cover of plastic film, sowed and transplanted seedlings early and shortened the period of growth. In this way, they overcame some unfavorable conditions, developed and created new conditions for planting double rice crops and expanded the area under double rice crops.

This instance impressively shows how great the role of people's conscious activity is in transforming the objective world once they gain a penetrating knowledge of the objective things:

[We must] fully display the role of subjective conditions so as to control objective conditions; rely on internal conditions for utilizing external ones; apply favorable ones to overcome those which are unfavorable conditions; promote new conditions and develop original ones. We must in this way evaluate and correctly deal with the question of conditions and combine respect for conditions with a full display of revolutionary activity in the process of revolution and construction.

IV.

Another manifestation of Comrade Yang Hsien-chen's denial of man's conscious activity is that he recognizes being as primary, and thinking as secondary. But he does not recognize the reaction of thinking upon being.

In his "Introductory Remarks on Philosophy" he spares no effort to stress the need to work according to the philosophical principle that being is primary and thinking secondary, emphasizing that otherwise one will commit subjective idealist errors in his work. In his eyes, the question of primary quality in philosophy is a question of first-rate importance in actual work and the question of secondary quality in philosophy is a question of second-rate or third-rate importance in actual work. This is a sort of metaphysical view which is absurd and worn-out.

Dialectical materialism firmly recognizes that being is primary and thinking secondary; that being determines consciousness and subjectivity reflects objectivity. In the eyes of dialectical materialists, the question of primary and secondary quality is one of explaining this question: Which is primary, being or thinking, matter or spirit? This question--bearing on the big question whether it is materialism or idealism--is undoubtedly important.

Yet, to us, a thing of primary quality is not always of first-rate importance and a thing of secondary quality is not necessarily of second-rate importance. In some cases, the thing of primary quality is of second-rate or third-rate importance while the thing of secondary quality is of first-rate importance. When our thought still does not correspond to objective reality, to actively reflect upon the objective reality and acquire a correct thought is naturally a task of first-rate importance. But when we have acquired a correct thought through practice, then the thing of first-rate importance is to permeate the revolutionary action of transforming the world with the correct thought.

So far as we revolutionaries are concerned, the objective of knowing the world is precisely to transform the world. Therefore, to use the correct thought actively to transform the world is often a question of greater importance. Comrade Mao Tse-tung said:

"One's social being determines one's thought. And the correct thought representing the advanced class will become, once it is acquired by the masses, a material force for transforming society and the world." ("Where Do Man's Correct Ideas Come From?")

Are not the great achievements in our socialist revolution and socialist construction precisely due to the fact that the great masses of the people have acquired Marxism-Leninism, the thought of Mao Tse-tung and the Party lines and policies?

Comrade Yang Hsien-chen invariably emphasizes that one's social being determines one's thought--that is, being is primary and thinking secondary. He says nothing about the great role the correct thought of the advanced class can play, once it is acquired by the masses, in transforming society and the world. This can only lead to liquidation of the revolutionary struggle.

Proceeding from the absurd inference that the primary quality is of first-rate importance and the secondary quality of second-rate importance, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen views the relationship between man and things. He comes to the conclusion that things are of first-rate importance and thinking man of second-rate importance--that things should control man and not the other way round.

Here Comrade Yang Hsien-chen prostrates before matter and becomes a new fetishist. It is evident that he deliberately confuses the two problems--the relationship between thinking and being and the relationship between man and things--which are connected with, but distinct from, each other. On the basis of his fallacious reasoning that the primary quality is of first-rate importance and the secondary quality of second-rate importance, he regards things as being of first-rate importance and man as being of second-rate importance in the relationship between man and things. In this way he detracts from the role of man and opposes the display of man's conscious activity in revolution and construction.

It is common knowledge that the relationship between man and things is a unity of opposites at all times. Man directs things while things are certain conditions for man's activity. People cannot strive for success beyond the limit allowed by material conditions, but within the limit of material conditions man's conscious activity has a vast field of activity. Within this limit, politics, thought and revolutionary efforts, that is, man's conscious activity may change matter and technology. Therefore, the relationship between man and things is not one in which things control man but man controls things. It is not one in which things rule man but man rules things. Man is the decisive factor.

The relationship between man and weapons is one of unity of contradiction. First, man relies on weapons and without weapons man cannot ultimately defeat his enemy; to play his role fully, man must depend on weapons. But weapons are made and used by man; man is living and weapons are dead; if man does not use weapons or does not use them well, even the best weapons cannot display its role.

Although long-distance weapons and nuclear weapons of modern times have great effects on the course of war and the change of tactics, they can by no means change the fundamental law for the outcome of war.

The ultimate outcome of war will in the final analysis depend on man and on man's courage, awareness and devotion. It will depend on one's ability to stand the hard test.

In the relationship between man and weapons, the leading position is occupied by man, not by weapons.

The thought that "man is the primary factor" is a Marxist-Leninist truth of universal significance and is applicable both to war and to all kinds of our work. While material conditions are an important factor determining whether or not our socialist revolution and socialist construction can achieve smooth development, the most important and active factor is man, the socialist awareness and revolutionary spirit of our people, and the socialist enthusiasm and creativeness of cadres and the masses.

As borne out by numerous facts, where importance is given to the role of man, the general line of the Party--building socialism with more, faster, better and more economical results by pressing ahead and aiming high--is adhered to and hard work is combined with that which is skilful, sky-rocketing efforts combined with the scientific spirit of respecting truth, and the greatest display of revolutionary activity combined with strict respect for the law of objectivity, there we can overcome various difficulties and achieve notable results in any work.

The Tach'ing spirit and Tachai spirit of which our people sing praise is fundamentally the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat and the spirit of "regarding man as the primary factor." Construction of the Tach'ing Oil-Fields began at the most difficult time, in a difficult locality and under poor material conditions. Hsiyang Brigade in Shansi battled against denuded mountains and flood for ten years, as a result of which a poverty-stricken mountain village has undergone fundamental changes.

Their examples bear out this truth: No matter how difficult objective conditions and how unfavorable natural conditions, people will certainly be able to change the earth and rivers and achieve great results in revolution and construction--provided they have an ambition to build socialism, manifest a high degree of revolutionary spirit, exert revolutionary efforts and endure hardship and toil.

Comrade Yang Hsien-chen not only regards all questions of primary quality as being of first-rate importance but also represents all defects and mistakes in actual work as questions of primary quality. He says: "Recognizing no objective being, overlooking objective being and respecting no materialism--such is the general root of errors in our actual work." This view is a gross distortion of the true state of actual work.

In fact, some of the defects and errors in actual work are unavoidable because one's knowledge of the objective things has to pass through twists and turns. This point has been made by many comrades in their articles, and we shall not dwell upon it here.

What should be added is that this and that defect and error in our actual work is, in many cases, due to our failure to bring the factor of man and man's conscious activity into full play. Why, for instance, do factories whose material conditions, such as their equipment, are the same turn out products different in quantity and quality? Why do several production teams which have more or less the same natural conditions and manpower and material resources show a great difference in output? In many cases, the cause should be found in the mental state.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung said: "Although superiority or inferiority in fighting strength is in itself an objective basis for the determination of initiative or passivity, yet it does not constitute actual initiative or passivity; a struggle and a contest of ability must be made before actual initiative or passivity can come into existence....."

"The inferior and passive side can wrestle the initiative and victory from the side possessing superiority and the initiative by securing the necessary conditions through active endeavor in accordance with actual circumstances." ("On the Protracted War")

As is the case with war, so is the case with construction. Many things which appear to be very difficult have been done and with good results, thanks to the revolutionary spirit and skyrocketing efforts displayed by people to overcome numerous difficulties. On the other hand, some things which can be done have not been done or not done well and have even become a failure simply because an inadequate endeavor was made. This state of affairs is often seen in actual life.

Comrade Yang Hsien-chen's denial of the factor of man and of the great role of revolutionary efforts is extremely harmful to the socialist revolution and socialist construction.

We must run counter to his road. We must hold higher the red banner of the thought of Mao Tse-tung and the three red banners of the general line, big leap forward and people's commune. On the basis of constantly knowing and mastering the law of objectivity, we must bring the revolutionary activity of the proletariat into full play, dare to fight and win, know how to sum up experiences, discover, invent and create things and make progress.

We must oppose the stand of marking time, the pessimistic stand and self-complacency and contribute everything to the building of ours into a powerful socialist country with modern agriculture, modern industry, modern defense and modern science and technology.