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COMMUNIST THEORY

Why Does Comrade Yang Hsien-chen Oppose Having Theory  
Serve Politics?

by

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"Theoretical study cannot serve politics" - this is one of Comrade Yang Hsien-chen's absurd views. This view is extremely ludicrous in theory, very harmful in practice, and utterly reactionary politically. This is because it basically distorts the true relationship between theory and politics and is a deliberate muddying of the water, so that theory may be prevented from serving proletarian politics but that his "theory" may serve the bourgeoisie.

What is a theory? "Marxism-Leninism is a theory created by Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin on the basis of reality; it is a general conclusion drawn from the realities of history and of revolution." (Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. III, p. 816) This theory "is no dogma but a guide to action." (Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. III, p. 822)

What is politics? Politics is a concentrated expression of economy and also class relations and class struggle. Proletarian politics means revolution; it unites the people to seize political power and, having done so, continues to unite them in carrying out socialist transformation and socialist construction with the ultimate object of abolishing classes and building communism.

What is the relationship between theory and politics? This relationship is that theory must serve class struggle, that is, politics. "The principal service done by Marx and Engels," says Lenin, "is their identification of socialism with the workers' movement. The revolutionary theory which they founded explains the necessity of this union and points out that the task of socialists is to organize the class struggle of the proletariat." (Collected Works of Lenin, Vol. IV, p. 225) Hence, one must "never forget political struggle even for one minute." (Collected Works of Lenin, Vol. XXIV, p. 361)

But, completely ignoring the above-mentioned Marxist-Leninist principles, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen talks volubly about his absurd view that "theory cannot serve politics."

Let us examine what this absurd view means.

1. He says that theoretical study cannot serve contemporary politics, believing that the slogan - "Fight while you study, and study while you fight" - is wrong, and that to learn what you are doing now is in a certain sense pragmatism.

2. He says that the Higher Party School should serve as a rear area on the theoretical front, that we must not make it a regular practice to have theory serve politics, and that the study of theory also involves the question of serving theoretical research itself.

3. He believes that no rectification campaign should be permitted in the Party school.

Can such an absurd view stand on its feet?

If the slogan - "Fight while you study, and study while you fight" - is wrong, should we have the slogan - "Don't fight while you study, and you can't study while you fight"? Look at all the works written by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Comrade Mao Tse-tung, which one of them was not written in the midst of combat? These great revolutionary mentors never studied theory in isolation from struggle; but, on the basis of the urgent needs of revolutionary struggle, they wrote one great theoretical work after another. And it is exactly because these immortal classic works were born amid struggle, were written for the sake of struggle, and were closely related to actual struggle that they reflected actual struggle most profoundly and in turn played a great, guiding role in it.

To link theoretical studies closely with the current actual struggle is also a means of overcoming dogmatism and preventing the study of Marxism-Leninism statically and in isolation. So that theoretical studies may not be divorced from central work, both cadres and students of the Party School, particularly those comrades who are exclusively engaged in theoretical work, must regularly and systematically participate in central work and must constantly study the various important resolutions and documents of the Party Central Committee, which serve as the most powerful weapon with which to apply Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Mao Tse-tung in analyzing the current situation and unraveling current contradictions and problems. Through serious study of these resolutions and documents it will be possible to learn to apply the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism in correctly analyzing and dealing with the major problems concerning revolution and socialist construction at home and abroad, and in correctly implementing the Party's policies and establishing a fine Marxist-Leninist style of work which integrates theory with reality. This is entirely necessary and is compatible with the spirit of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's exhortation that "comrades of our Party school should not regard Marxist theory as a rigid dogma. They must master it and apply it, the purpose of its mastery being its application." (Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. III, p. 817) It may be asked that if theoretical studies at the Higher Party School are divorced from the Party's central work and from the current resolutions and documents of the Party Central Committee, would this not cause theoretical studies to be divorced from Party leadership as well?

Does Comrade Yang Hsien-chen, in smearing the correct academic style propounded by Comrade Mao Tse-tung as "pragmatism," not openly and audaciously stand up against the Party, the Party Central Committee, and Chairman Mao? Anyone with a little common sense knows that "pragmatism" is the world outlook of the modern reactionary bourgeoisie, that it regards everything useful as a truth, and that it is as incompatible with dialectical materialism - the theoretical foundation of Marxism - as water is with fire. Obviously, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen has his own political axe to grind. He wants to separate theory from the central work of the Party and turn it into hollow dogma, so that he may use it to serve his reactionary politics. Even a casual examination

of the personal history of Comrade Yang Hsien-chen would show that he is no "superman" who is not concerned with politics, but that he does pay very close attention to taking advantage of every key political moment to attack the Party. What he thinks is useful - be it true or false - he makes use of and draws a preposterous conclusion which is entirely inconsistent with reality, in order to oppose truth. It is crystal clear that it is Comrade Yang Hsien-chen, and no one else, who is a true pragmatist.

If we say that "having theory serve politics must not be regarded as a regular practice of theoretical work" and that "the study of theory also involves the question of serving theoretical research itself," can it be that the regular practice of theoretical research is to stay out of political struggle and to do theoretical research for its own sake? But let us compare this with Comrade Mao Tse-tung's instruction! In the article "Reform Our Study," Comrade Mao Tse-tung says: "As to education for cadres on the job and cadres' training schools, we should make it a central task to study the practical problems of the Chinese revolution under the guidance of the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism. We should do away with the method of studying Marxism-Leninism statically and in isolation." (Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung, Vol. III, p. 803) While Comrade Mao Tse-tung says that the study of the practical problems of the Chinese revolution should be made a central task, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen says that having theory serve politics must not be regarded as a regular practice. Comrade Mao Tse-tung says that the method of studying Marxism-Leninism statically and in isolation must be done away with, yet Comrade Yang Hsien-chen contends that the study of theory also involves the question of serving theoretical research itself. Are they not exactly antithetical to each other?

A rectification campaign is a general Marxist education movement when the whole Party, through criticism and self-criticism, studies Marxism and adjusts its style of thinking and style of work. As practice shows, this is a practical and effective method of study, a method that applies equally to the Party school. If we say that no rectification campaign should be permitted in the Party school, does it mean that the report "Adjust the Party's Style of Work" which Comrade Mao Tse-tung made at the Central Party School in Yen-an on February 1, 1942, was also wrong? The rectification campaign carried out at that time was an ideological revolution of the Party, a great campaign of historical significance for rectifying the ideas of cadres and Party members and changing their style of work. As experience proves, theoretical studies must be linked with rectification drives. Self-education along Marxist-Leninist lines through adjustment of the style of thinking of the students is an important method for persevering in the principle of combining theory with practice. For this reason, in the course of study, we must set aside a period of time for carrying out a rectification campaign. Only in this way shall we be able to link our cognition of the world and the transformation of it; and only in this way can we link the transformation of the objective world with that of the subjective world.

In addition to openly opposing the rectification campaign on many occasions, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen, in order to deceive the Party and the masses, has from time to time talked with affected seriousness about rectification campaigns. But he does not genuinely propagandize the rectification campaigns of the Party. Instead, in the name of rectification campaigns, he slanders the Party Central Committee and Comrade Mao Tse-tung, tries to sell his anti-Marxist viewpoint, and carries out sectarian activities. It can thus be seen that he is well adept at opposing correct ideas and attacking the right style of work through the camouflage of rectification campaigns.

In short, in opposing theory's serving politics, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen opposes its serving proletarian politics. Instead he wants to use "theory" to serve bourgeois politics. In order to uphold firmly the union of theory with reality and the adoption of an educational policy guided by the thought of Mao Tse-tung, it is necessary to remove, with resolution and thoroughness, all the harmful influences spread by Comrade Yang Hsien-chen.