SURVEY OF CHINA MAINLAND PRESS

March 4, 1965 No. 3409

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RECTIFICATION

A Brief Discussion on the Three "Cardinal Principles" of Comrade Yang Hsien-chen's Philosophy

by

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(Peking Kuang-ming Jih-pao Feb. 6, 1965)

The polemics started by Comrade Yang Hsien-chen (杨献珍) about "dividing one into two" and "combining two into one" have been going on for a good many months. Extensive attention has been aroused. In terms of the extent and the heat of argument the post-liberation period knows no equal. The significance is great and the influence, farreaching. The outcome is now quite clear: the preposterous theory of "combining two into one" has been severely criticized and the number of people believing in it is on the wane.

However, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen has been teaching philosophy at the Higher Party School of the CCP Central Committee for more than ten years. He thinks highly of himself. Moreover, a small group of followers regularly give him moral support. He enjoys a wide reputation and is regarded more or less as an "authority" on philosophy. Under his spell, some people worship him blindly. Therefore, we should thoroughly expose and criticize his ideas and let the public know what kind of an "authority" he is. What sort of thing is his philosophy after all? Who are the people it serves?

The number of articles Comrade Yang Hsien-chen has openly published is not large. His philosophical ideas have principally been expressed in his lecture notes. I have seen only part, and not all, of these notes and am in no position to make overall comments on his philosophical ideas. However, his notes are more or less the same in content. So, even on the basis of some of them, it is not difficult to see the fundamental substance of his philosophical ideas. Now, I wish to talk in a generalized way about the sort of thing his philosophy really is. If there are inaccuracies in my comments, I hope the public will point them out and criticize and correct them.

What Kind of Philosophical "Authority"?

What kind of "authority" on philosophy is Comrade Yang Hsien-chen?

True, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen has been teaching philosophy for more than ten years. And he regularly goes to various places to give lectures and make reports. But, what has he been talking about in all his lectures? To quote his own words: always "those few points"; always "the same old thing." He has written nothing of merit on philosophy. Nor has he ever correctly expounded the philosophy of Marxism-Leninism. And he has never used the stand, viewpoints and methods of Marxist-Leninist philosophy to explain the practical problems of history and revolution scientifically and theoretically. Most of the lecture manuscripts and reports he has written are conglomerations of various substances, full of lengthy quotations and plausible examples. On surface they appear to be rich in content with "a wide range of supporting references" from Chinese and foreign, ancient and modern sources. In reality, however, they are exceedingly poor and only skin-deep.

Comrade Yang Hsien-chen seems to pay much attention to the system of philosophy. He emphasizes that philosophy should be studied systematically. For instance, in his lecture entitled, "Why Should Marxist-Leninist Philosophy Be studied?," he said in March, 1959: "At present, there are two methods to study philosophy. One is the method for workers and peasants, i.e., to talk about the things seen on the spot and discuss the problems encountered at the moment. (This is a distortion of the method by which the masses should study philosophy.) The other method to study it in a relatively systematic way, beginning with the most fundamental problems of philosophy." But, what is the system of Comrade Yang's philosophy? What assistance can it give to those who study philosophy systematically?

This much can be said: his lecture notes on philosophy are too confusing to have any value; they are simply "pots of hodgepodge" or, in other words, "heaps of rubbish." They include Feuerbach's metaphysical materialism, Deborin's theory of conciliation in contradiction, Bukharin's "theory of balance," Laotzu's doctrine that "when existence and non-existence are combined, it is called the origin," Fang I-chih's (方以智) theory of "combining two into one" and so on. They are odds and ends mixed together. There is neither a complete system nor any strict principle of logic. Wrong things are neither analyzed nor criticized. Moreover, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen even goes so far as to adopt the bourgeois attitude of pragmatism and various exceedingly foul tactics to dump his "illicit goods" in an attempt to attain an object which he cannot make public. Therefore, his philosophy can only bring harm to other people and create ideological confusion. Basically it can give no assistance.

For example, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen's book entitled, "What Is Materialism?", may be considered by comparison to be a collection of "systematically complete" lecture notes. But, in this book of some 200 pages, the author has neither systematically proved the principles of materialism nor scientifically generalized the development of materialism. Moreover, he has given publicity to numerous absurdities (e.g., the negation of the identity of thinking and being). In particular, the great advance Comrade Mao Tse-tung has made on dialectical materialism has been left outside his field of vision. In regard to the confusion in the logic of his thinking, to the large accumulation of quotations and to the wholesale plagiarism of material, the book is really boring. Although the author says that his book was written to assist the student to study classical works, in fact it was done to be used as a philosophy textbook for the Higher Party School of the Central Committee. Let us ask: What assistance can such a book give to the cadre in studying philosophy systematically?

What is surprising and exasperating is that in recent years his lectures and reports, under the cloak of Marxism-Leninism, have served him as various devices to distort and revise at will Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Mao Tse-tung. Through these lectures and reports he launched vigorous attacks against the Party's principles, lines and policies. The language he used was full of nonsense, sarcasm and insult. Sometimes it reached the stage of "Grandma Wang cursing from one end of the street to another" where he had no scruples about his choice of words!

I think it is fitting here to apply the formulas of "yes--no" and "no--yes" to which Comrade Yang Hsien-chen has often referred. As a whole, his philosophy is unusually poor, confused and absurd. Inside, it is "full of filthy air." There is no integral system to speak of. From the standpoint of the substance of his thinking, a conspicuous thread runs through his thinking. But this thread is not red but white or, perhaps, black. This means precisely that it is a thread which, from beginning to end, opposes Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Mao Tse-tung! It opposes the Party and socialism! That is to say, his system of thinking is thoroughly bourgeois and revisionistic!

Distorted Materialism

Comrade Yang Hsien-chen describes himself as playing the following role: "We sell singing. When people say we can sing, then, we must sing. We have no choice." (From a rapid transcript of his lecture delivered to Class 59, Central Committee's Higher Party School, in November, 1961) Good! Let us see what merchandise he has been selling and what tunes he has been humming in his awesome philosophy classes.

In his report entitled, "Why Should Marxist-Leninist Philosophy Be Studied?," Comrade Yang Hsien-chen said: "When studying philosophy, should we grasp a cardinal principle? For instance, when studying materialism, we should grasp the most fundamental problem of philosophy, viz., the problem of the relationship between thinking and being. When studying dialectics, we should grasp the core of dialectics, viz., the unity of opposites and the struggle between them..... When studying historical materialism, we should grasp the role of the masses of people in history." Therefore, to know his philosophical merchandise in a generalized way, it is best for us to grasp his three "cardinal principles" as a basic clue for our comments.

Materialism is what he has talked about most. It seems to be his "pet" subject. Now, let us see first of all how he has been lecturing on materialism.

As everybody knows, the relationship between thinking and being is the fundamental problem of all philosophies. According to materialism, being is a primary quality and thinking a secondary quality. Being is the source of thinking and thinking, the reflection of being. The view of idealism on this problem is just the opposite.

It is beyond doubt that in the study of the philosophy of materialism, it is highly necessary first of all to understand this problem and to affirm that being is a primary quality and thinking a secondary quality. Speaking of the present, any person with a little common sense of philosophy will understand this problem with comparative ease. However, when lecturing on materialism to whatever audience during the past many years, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen has always grasped this very point, saying repeatedly: "Being is a primary quality and thinking a secondary quality. Thinking is the reflection of being." Day in and day out, he continues to talk about this same old thing. Actually he has made no strict distinction between mechanical materialism and dialectical materialism. He has not extricated himself from the noose of mechanical materialism.

In Engels' book, "Feuerbach and the End of German Classical Philosophy," it is pointed out that there are two aspects to the problem of the relationship between thinking and being. Apart from the aspect of what constitutes a primary quality and what a secondary quality, there is another aspect, i.e., whether or not it is possible for us to understand the realistic world through our thinking. In philosophical parlance, this is called the problem of the identity of thinking and being. These two aspects are closely related. A confirmed materialist is definitely not one who recognizes one aspect and not the other. But on the latter aspect of this problem, i.e., on the identity of thinking and being, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen has done his utmost to distort and attack Engels' principle.

Between 1959 and 1962 the philosophical circles in China initiated polemics on the problem of the identity of thinking and being. In those years, the controversy also originated from Comrade Yang Hsien-chen. His fundamental viewpoint on whether or not recognition should be given to the identity of thinking and being is that this identity is "a thesis of idealism" and whoever affirms the identity of thinking and being is an idealist. However, according to the dialectical law of the unity of opposites, all contradictions have the character of identity and, since thinking and being are a pair of opposites, they naturally have the character of identity. Inasmuch as Comrade Yang Hsien-chen negates the identity of thinking and being, it implies that he refutes the universality of the law of unity of opposites in the belief that this universal law is inapplicable to the contradiction between thinking and being. If this is not so, then, it must imply that he regards thinking and being as two mutually unrelated, isolated things, refuses to accept them as a pair of opposites and refutes the idea that thinking is the reflection of being. In this way, he negates the reaction of thinking on being as well as the existence of identity between the two. Is this not a kind of metaphysical viewpoint?

Marxist philosophy emphasizes the dependence of knowledge on practice. It is pointed out that knowledge is acquired from social practice. The foundation of theory is practice. In the course of practice there comes theory which, in turn, serves practice. At the same time, practice is the standard by which theory is examined. Comrade Mao Tse-tung has said: "The standpoint of practice is the primary and basic standpoint in the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge." (On Practice) In the course of social practice, man's transformation of the objective world does not passively or intuitively reflect the external world. Instead, on the basis of practice, it continuously enriches the knowledge of perception and exercises abstract thinking to reflect the regularity of the external world. This is the subjective conscious activity which characterizes man.

All idealists and old-line materialists did not understand the role of practice in the theory of knowledge. Nor did they understand the active role of man in transforming the objective world and the subjective world through practice. It was Marxist philosophy which correctly solved this problem for the first time. Since Comrade Yang Hsien-chen negates the identity of thinking and being, it shows that he understands neither the role of practice in knowledge nor the dialectical relationship between knowledge and practice. Hence his negation of the revolutionary, active theory of reflection of Marxism-Leninism.

On the problem of the dialectical relationships between thinking and being and between knowledge and practice, Marx said: "Philosophers have only been explaining the world in different forms, but the problem lies in transforming it." (Theses on Feuerbach) Lenin said: "Man's consciousness not only reflects the objective world but creates it as well." (Philosophical Notebooks) In On Practice, Comrade Mao Tse-tung developed this principle further and put forward the formula of "practice--knowledge--more practice--more knowledge," stressing the developmental cycle of practice and knowledge. In particular, in his article, "Where Do Man's Correct Ideas Come from?," Comrade Mao Tse-tung put forward in a much clearer way the formula of "converting matter into spirit and spirit into matter." In an unusually vivid and concise manner, he generalized and proved the dialectical relationship between thinking and being. This has now become a truth well known to all. Since Comrade Yang Hsien-chen negates the identity of thinking and being, it only goes to show that he does not know how to apply dialectics to the theory of knowledge and that he negates the possibility of the "intra-conversion between spirit and matter," especially negating man's great role of subjective conscious activity. Is this not perfectly clear?

Comrade Mao Tse-tung has emphatically pointed out: "Before reaching the stage of completeness, correct knowledge often has to undergo many repeated changes from matter to spirit and from spirit to matter and many processes from practice to knowledge and from knowledge to practice." ("Where Do Man's Correct Ideas Come from?") This is Comrade Mao's great development of the Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge.

According to dialectical materialism, to expose the contradictions in objective things requires a process. Likewise, man has to go through a process to know objective things. In particular, the wish to understand certain complex problems correctly cannot be fulfilled in one process. The fulfillment requires many repetitions from practice to knowledge and from knowledge to practice. It is a frequent occurrence for thinking to lag behind reality. In the process of knowledge the commission of one-sided mistakes is often unavoidable. But the metaphysical materialist is unable to apply dialectics to the theory of knowledge. He does not understand the tortuous and complex character of knowledge or the dialectical relationship between practice and knowledge. He thinks that the reflection of thinking on being is negative and passive and can be completed at one stroke. He believes that the process of knowledge does not include contradictions. This is a demarcation line separating the theory of reflection of dialectical materialism and the theory of reflection of metaphysical materialism.

Comrade Yang Hsien-chen precisely treats the process of knowledge from the metaphysical standpoint in the belief that it does not need many repeated processes of practice for subjective things to reflect objective things. He also believes that the acquisition of correct knowledge is completed at one stroke and that--so long as the world outlook is correct--it is likely that subjective things will conform entirely with objective things at one stroke. Of course, this is a big mistake.

Comrade Yang Hsien-chen has repeatedly emphasized this viewpoint: mistakes in practical work are all due to non-conformity between subjective things and objective things. This non-conformity always has its origin in the idealistic world outlook.

According to this erroneous viewpoint of his, any person making a mistake, whatever it may be, is always concerned with the problem of world outlook and is not a materialist.

But hardly does he realize that, while some serious mistakes of principle are traceable to the world outlook, there are also mistakes which are caused by other factors, such as those caused by the restrictions imposed by objective and historical conditions, by unilateral methods of thinking, by lack of subjective experience, and so on.

These mistakes cannot all be attributed to the problem of world outlook (although they are definitely related to it). Nor can it be said in a sweeping manner that those making the mistakes are all idealists.

In opposing the principle of identity between thinking and being, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen has a practical object to serve. In the past few years, our people, guided by the Party's three red banners, have developed their revolutionary subjective conscious activity to a high degree. As a consequence, great results have been achieved in socialist revolution and socialist construction.

But, on the basis of certain gossip and rumors fabricated by people with ulterior motives, in the absence of investigation, study and concrete analysis, and even according to subjective conjecture, Comrade Yang has trumpeted shameless, slanderous attacks against the Party's three red banners and against our practical work in various fields. He has declared that the big leap forward was "a big development of idealism," that the formation of people's communes "lacked sufficient theoretical preparations" and that the identity of thinking and being was a theoretical foundation to make mistakes in practical work....

All this is in tune with the views of Khrushchev. It has not the slightest trace of a scientific attitude. Under the guise of "respecting materialism" and opposing the "identity of thinking and being," he employs to the full the viewpoints and methods of idealism to attack the thought of Mao Tse-tung and socialism. Is that not perfectly clear also?

Distorted Dialectics

Formerly Comrade Yang Hsien-chen confined his talks to materialism. He did not, or seldom did, talk about dialectics. At that time, we thought this might have

been due to the division of teaching work. But since materialism and dialectics are closely related, to talk about materialism without touching upon dialectics would distort materialism.

In recent years, he has actually started to talk about dialectics. For instance, under the title of "Respect for Materialism; Respect for Dialectics," he has given a number of reports and lectures on dialectics at great length. Superficially he seems to have made progress. But, on closer investigation, the real substance of his talks will come up to the surface. It shows that he does not understand dialectics. Moreover, he has distorted it in a hundred and one ways. He has actually substituted bourgeois metaphysics for Marxist-Leninist dialectics.

How does Comrade Yang Hsien-chen talk about dialectics?

As every one knows, the unity of opposites is the basic law of dialectics. It is the essence and kernel of dialectics.

It is this kernel of dialectics that Comrade Yang has grasped to distort, revise and negate the revolutionary spirit of dialectics. In reality, this is a "tactic to puncture the heart" of Marxist-Leninist philosophy.

In On Contradiction, Comrade Mao Tse-tung points out that when studying the law of the unity of opposites we cannot but touch upon a great variety of philosophical problems. The problems are: the two world outlooks; the universality of contradiction; the particularity of contradiction; the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction; the identity and struggle of the aspects of a contradiction; and the role of antagonism in contradiction. "If we can become clear on all these problems, we shall arrive at a fundamental understanding of materialist dialectics." (On Contradiction)

However, when lecturing on the law of the unity of opposites, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen does not mention these important problems. He talks only about the unity, about the link. He says: What is called "the unity of opposites merely means that the two aspects of a contradiction are inseparably linked." He adds: What is called "dialectics is a study of the way in which the opposite aspects may become identical (united). It seeks to find common ground and let differences remain."

Let us see whether this has anything in common with the contents of On Contradiction. Comrade Mao Tse-tung says:

"This dialectical world outlook teaches us primarily how to observe and analyze the movement of opposites in different things and, on the basis of such analysis, to indicate the methods for resolving contradictions." (On Contradiction)

But, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen says:

"To study dialectics is to acquire the ability to link two opposite thoughts together." He does not talk about how to analyse the contradictions in things or about methods for resolving contradictions. Can we see whether this has anything in common with what Comrade Mao Tse-tung mentions as the object of studying dialectics?

As is well known, Comrade Mao Tse-tung is a superb expert in dialectics. This red thread of revolutionary dialectics runs through all his writings. Particularly in his philosophical works of On Practice and On Contradiction, he has creatively developed Marxist-Leninist dialectics. Therefore, to study assiduously his thought on revolutionary dialectics is of inestimable significance to the study of theory and to the study of the Party's policies and guidance for revolutionary practice.

In this regard, Comrade Ch'en Po-ta (陈伯达), in an article entitled, "Comrade Mao Tse-tung on Revolutionary Dialectics," written as early as 1952, profoundly proved how in On Contradiction, Comrade Mao Tse-tung developed Marxist

dialectics and how he flexibly applied dialectics to the solution of various complex problems of the revolution in China. In his works published after the liberation, such as, "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the People" and "Where Do Man's Correct Ideas Come From?," he further expounded and proved the problems of contradiction, class and class struggle in socialist society as well as the Marxist theory of knowledge. In this way, he contributed a good many new things to Marxist-Leninist philosophy.

However, when teaching dialectics, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen, as a teacher of philosophy at the Central Committee's Higher Party School, practically takes no interest in Comrade Mao Tse-tung's thinking on revolutionary dialectics. He ignores the development that Comrade Mao Tse-tung has creatively made on dialectics.

Why is this so? More shocking still, he has also put forward the reactionary philosophical theme of "combining two into one" in open opposition to Comrade Mao Tse-tung's great philosophical thought.

A typical example is the polemic about "combining two into one" and "dividing one into two." As is well known, in order to be in keeping with the class struggle at home and abroad, our Party has intensified propaganda in newspapers and periodicals on the materialistic dialectics of "dividing one into two."

In the view of our Party, "dividing one into two" is applicable to all things in the world. It is a universal law of nature, of society and of thinking.

According to this revolutionary dialectics of "dividing one into two," it is recognized that the contradictions and struggles among things are absolute, perpetual and unconditional and that the unity of opposites is relative, conditional and transitory. In the unity of opposites is contained the struggle between contradictions; the struggle between contradictions is inherent in the unity of opposites. It is also recognized that, through internal struggle and under given conditions, things will transform themselves into one another, undergo qualitative changes and wage revolutions.

The dialectics of "dividing one into two" is our methodology as well as our proletarian world outlook. Only by using this methodology and this world outlook to observe the world and pursue our work can we correctly bring contradictions to light, analyze them, find methods for resolving them and accelerate their transformation so as to realize the object of transforming the world.

But Comrade Yang Hsien-chen has put forward the theme of "combining two into one" in opposition to "dividing one into two." He has said: "Combining two into one is applicable to anything"; "'the combination of existence and non-existence is called the origin' is precisely 'the unity of opposites'"; the study of dialectics is none other than 'to find common ground and preserve differences' and 'to search for common points'"; and so on.

That is to say, he has only emphasized the unity of opposites together with their link and inseparability. He has very seldom talked about contradictions in things. Basically he has not mentioned the severability of that link. He has negated the transformation of the struggle between opposites under given conditions. Thus, the unity has become absolute and unconditional.

In order to prove his theory of "combining two into one," Comrade Yang Hsien-chen always tries his best to avoid problems of class contradiction and class struggle. Citing such examples as the combination of redness with expertness, the combination of labor with leisure, the combination of industry with agriculture and the combination of quality with quantity, he talks a lot about problems of "combination" as if these "combinations" did not contain any contradiction or struggle.

In fact, contradiction and struggle are present inside everything and any "combination" is a process of the unity of, and the struggle between, opposites.

It is this unity and this struggle that set things in motion and cause them to change.

The concrete conditions of contradiction and struggle are different simply because the nature of things is different. Only by bringing contradictions to light can we, through the struggle between opposites, overcome contradictions and effect a "combination" between the two aspects of a contradiction.

Dialectical "combination" is to show the repetitive, uninterrupted movement of "dividing one into two." It is absolutely unlike Yang Hsien-chen's eclectic or composite "combination of two into one." His theory of "combining two into one" is a theory of conciliation in contradiction. Basically it is dialectics distorted, revised and bereft of the revolutionary soul of Marxism-Leninism.

It is quite clear that the polemics about "dividing one into two" and "combining two into one" do not constitute any knotty problem of phraseology. Rather, they concern a point-by-point clash between two world outlooks and two methodologies.

If class society is observed according to the world outlook and methodology of "dividing one into two" in the belief that class struggle is the motive power for social development, it means that in socialist society it is necessary to carry class struggle through to the end.

On the other hand, if the observation is based on the world outlook and methodology of "combining two into one," it will inevitably lead to the dissemination of the class conciliation theory, to the obliteration of class struggle and to the restoration of capitalism in socialist society. Is this not perfectly clear?

When lecturing on dialectics, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen talks a good deal about linking (linking that is detached from contradiction and struggle). Nevertheless, when studying problems, he forgets all about linking and about dialectics. He does not observe and analyze the contradictions in things from the dialectical standpoint. Nor does he grasp the overall situation in his search for methods to resolve contradictions.

Rather, he approaches problems from the metaphysical standpoint--in a superficial, one-sided and isolated manner. He sees trees but not the forest. He grasps one facet of a problem and neglects the others.

For example, when he went down to the countryside, his special purpose was to collect certain examples of shortcomings and mistakes in our practical work. On the basis of gossip and rumor, he adopted the method of "assaulting one single point, magnifying it as much as possible and leaving out the rest" in attacking the Party's three red banners furiously and condemning mass movements indiscriminately.

He fails to see the great results we have achieved in socialist revolution and socialist construction during the past several years. He fails to see the main current and the essence of the mass movements. He fails to see the favorable aspects of the situation and the bright future. As a consequence, he has committed the error of rightist opportunism. That is to say, by substituting metaphysics for dialectics in the study of problems, he is definitely unable to know the original faces of objective things. He is bound to fall into subjective idealism. Is that not perfectly clear?

Distorted Historical Materialism

Marxist-Leninist philosophy is a united, integral whole "cast from a single sheet of steel plate." Materialism, dialectics and historical materialism are organically linked to one another. They cannot be separated. Historical materialism owes its origin to the use of the principles of dialectical materialism

to sum up the history and experience of mankind. It is the universal law of human history and social life. Since Comrade Yang Hsien-chen has distorted materialism and dialectics, it goes without saying that he is in no position to lecture correctly on historical materialism, much less to use its principles correctly in the analysis of human history and social life.

Although Yang Hsien-chen talks little about historical materialism, still he stresses the need "to study it by grasping the role of the masses in history" and regards this problem as the "cardinal principle" of historical materialism. This implies that he is theoretically mistaken and harbors an ulterior motive.

Of course, the role of the masses in history is a very important problem. One of the basic defects of history and sociological theory before the time of Marxism was to neglect the decisive role of the masses in history with the conclusion that history was created by heroes, great personages, emperors, kings, generals and prime ministers. Naturally, this is an extremely reactionary theory. According to Marxism-Leninism, the principal creators of history were the masses of people and not the so-called heroes, great personages, emperors, kings, generals and prime ministers. For this reason, it is necessary to give full attention to the role of the masses in history when lecturing on historical materialism.

However, the study of historical materialism is quite extensive in scope and deals with a wide range of objects. It includes the most fundamental processes and the most general laws on the historical development of human society as a whole. For instance, productive forces and productive relations, the economic base and the superstructure, and so on, fall within its purview. If only the problem of the role of the masses in history is tackled, we shall find it impossible either to generalize the fundamental principles of historical materialism or to grasp the objective laws governing the development of social history.

Marxism-Leninism holds that the masses of people are an historical category. During different historical periods of class society, this category included different classes, strata and social groups. If we lack the viewpoint of class struggle and treat the masses abstractly and generally without applying the method of class analysis, it will be impossible not only to understand the role of the masses correctly but also to know the distinction between the people and the enemy.

In class society, class struggle penetrates every sphere of social life. It is the motive power for historical development. Only by grasping it can we control the pulse of social movement and social life. Comrade Mao Tse-tung has said: "In the course of class struggle, some classes triumph and others are eliminated. Such is history; such is the history of civilization for thousands of years. To interpret history from this viewpoint is historical materialism. Standing in opposition to this viewpoint is historical idealism." (Cast Away Illusions, Prepare for Struggle) However, when lecturing on historical materialism and observing social life, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen has cast away this very important thing--class struggle.

When normally giving lectures on philosophy, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen makes every excuse to dodge the problem of class struggle. When there is no escape, then he quickly and casually mentions it in passing. He basically does not talk about how Marxism-Leninism has been developed by Comrade Mao Tse-tung's ideas of class, class contradiction and class struggle in socialist society. Why is this? The reason is now quite clear to us. It is because he advocates the "combining two into one" theory of conciliation in contradiction and the theory of class conciliation.

His special purpose is "to search for common points" and "to find common ground and preserve differences." He naturally takes no interest in class struggle. That is why he does his best to dodge the problem in an attempt to reconcile class struggle.

However, the existence of class struggle is an objective law that cannot be changed according to man's will. Whoever discards the viewpoint of class struggle is bound to commit a major mistake. This is particularly manifest in the person of Comrade Yang Hsien-chen.

For instance, in an article published in June, 1955, under the title of "The Problem of the Base and Superstructure of the Chinese People's Republic during the Transitional Period," he put forward his theory of "a comprehensive base." He stated that the economic base of our country during the transitional period was a comprehensive one (comprising the five economic components existing then) and emphasizing the need for "a balanced and interrelated development" among the various economic components. He also advocated that the socialist super-structure should serve this "comprehensive base" and pay equal attention to all the economic components.

Here, he ignored the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, i.e., the question of "who should defeat whom." He did not see the opposition and struggle between the socialist economy and the capitalist economy. He laid no stress on developing the socialist economy and wiping out the capitalist economy step by step. He did not emphasize that the socialist super-structure could only render service for its own base, for the consolidation and development of the socialist economy and for the elimination of the capitalist economy. In reality, he advocated the viewpoint of treading the capitalist road.

Judging from the foregoing example, what would be the result if, when studying the problem of social life, once we discarded the viewpoint of class struggle and the method of class analysis? In fact, as far as Comrade Yang Hsien-chen is concerned, this example is by no means an isolated one.

Let us cite another example. In an article published in the Hsin-hua Jih-pao (North China edition) in August, 1941, under the title, "More on the Problem of the Social Character of Anti-Japanese Bases Behind Enemy Lines," he had the temerity to say that the future of China's new democratic revolution "was precisely the road of capitalism" and that China's new democratic economy was a capitalist economy. He pictured the publicly-operated enterprises at the bases as "state monopolies of capitalism in embryo." He described the new democratic state power as being "suited to the development of the existing non-monopolistic capitalist economy and also to the exercise of this state power for the establishment of state monopolistic capitalism....." Please see how incomparably absurd his views were!

Moreover, these nonsensical views were made public after the publication of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's On New Democracy. He openly distorted and directly opposed the works of Comrade Mao Tse-tung! It is a matter of regret that Comrade Yang Hsien-chen has never examined or criticized this reactionary viewpoint of his.

Comrade Yang Hsien-chen has put forward the proposition that the role of the masses in history should be a "cardinal principle" of historical materialism. When used theoretically, this is a deceptive method because Comrade Yang has more than once negated the strength of the people and opposed the study of philosophy by workers and peasants. It can thus be seen that he does not recognize the role of the masses in history. In reality, moreover, he harbors an ulterior motive.

In textbooks historical materialism is generally introduced under the theme of "the role of the masses and that of the individual in history." This theme refers, on the one hand, to the masses as creators of history and, on the other, to the role of the outstanding characters in history. What is more important, it propagates in an earnest and all-round manner the whole, intact theory of the interrelations among leaders, political parties, classes and the masses. According to Comrade Yang's proposition, however, the role of outstanding characters cannot be seen and the whole, intact theory about leaders, political parties, classes and the masses has been cut apart.

Approaching from the viewpoint that the mode of production is the foundation for the existence and development of human society, Marxism-Leninism holds that the history of social development consists, first of all, of the history of the development of production and the history of the producers of the material means of production, i.e., the laboring masses. On this basis, Marxism-Leninism affirms that the masses have played a decisive role in the development of social history. The masses are creators not only of material wealth but of spiritual wealth as well. Moreover, without the action of the masses there basically would have been no changes in history or success in social revolution.

However, on the premise of affirming that the masses are creators of history, Marxism-Leninism also recognizes the important role of outstanding characters in history. It points out, in particular, that proletarian leaders are able to grasp the law of social development and to stand together with the masses always. On no account should their role in history be neglected. In our country, for example, the ordinary people all know this truth: Leadership by the Chinese Communist Party headed by Comrade Mao Tse-tung is the guarantee for victory in revolution and construction in China!

As pointed out by Lenin, the masses are divided into classes which are usually led by political parties. As a rule, political parties are run by relatively stable groups of people who are most authoritative, influential and experienced and who have been elected to fulfill the most important duties and are called leaders. In his proposition, however, Comrade Yang Hsien-chen talks only about the role of the masses in history and not the role of political parties or that of leaders. And the masses he refers to are people in the abstract without being classified. Thus, he cannot really understand the role of the masses and has distorted the Marxist-Leninist theory concerning this problem.

It is no accident that Comrade Yang Hsien-chen has raised the problem in this manner. Under the modern revisionist slogan of the so-called "opposition to the cult of personality," there has been a wholesale refutation of Stalin. There has also been an open attack against Comrade Mao Tse-tung. Certain philosophers abroad have given Comrade Yang theoretical support, one-sidedly talking much about the role of the masses in history with little or no reference to the leading role of leaders and parties.

Under these conditions, Comrade Yang has also talked one-sidedly about the role of the masses, regarding it as the "cardinal principle" of historical materialism. He has refrained from talking about the role of leaders and parties and, moreover, has openly put forward the view of "opposing the cult of personality." If we link this with his hundred and one ways of deprecating and distorting the thought of Mao Tse-tung and with his [Comrade Yang's] malicious opposition to the Party's three red banners, is his intention not perfectly clear to us?

However, our Party has all along been upholding the Marxist-Leninist theory concerning the interrelations among leaders, political parties, classes and the masses. It has adhered tenaciously to the system of democratic centralism and collective leadership. We pay unusually keen attention to the role of the masses. At no time do we alienate the masses. But we resolutely oppose Comrade Yang Hsien-chen's belittling the role of leaders with an ulterior motive.

What People Does Philosophy Serve?

The very incomplete statements presented above, ranging from materialism, dialectics to historical materialism, all go to show that the whole series of Comrade Yang Hsien-chen's mistakes in his viewpoint have not been made in isolation, casually, blindly or on the spur of the moment. Rather, they have been made consistently, systematically consciously and in a planned manner. They are thoroughly against Marxism-Leninism and against the thought of Mao Tse-tung.

Some people say: "Have the words of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin not been quoted extensively in the lecture notes of Comrade Yang Hsien-chen? How can it be said that Comrade Yang is against Marxism-Leninism?" Other people say: "Has he not also lectured on the philosophical works of Comrade Mao Tse-tung? How can it be said that he is against the thought of Mao Tse-tung?"

True, he has quoted extensively the words of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin and has lectured on the works of Comrade Mao Tse-tung. But the problem lies not in whether he has quoted the classical works but in how he has quoted and lectured on them so that we may find out the substance of his thinking. It should be realized that in China today it is quite impossible for one to voice open opposition to Marxism-Leninism and to the thought of Mao Tse-tung. So, when hawking his merchandise, Comrade Yang has resorted to many vicious tactics.

Comrade Yang Hsien-chen regularly adopts dual-purpose tactics to distort and oppose Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Mao Tse-tung. At one time, he flies the flag of Marxism-Leninism; at another, he dons the cloak of disseminating the thought of Mao Tse-tung.

For example, when talking about the past in oblique reference to the present, he claims that the new development of Marxism-Leninism is "something already accomplished long ago." He quotes the words of Comrade Mao Tse-tung, but he does so by surreptitiously substituting a pole for a beam and grafting one plant with another in order to dump his "illicit goods." He keeps himself behind the scene and secretly instigates other people to write articles to start a battle of words against the thought of Mao Tse-tung. Sometimes he seizes an opportunity to come out in the open, holding sand in the mouth to spurt it at other people and cursing the ash while pointing at the mulberry. In this way, he mounts vicious and slanderous attacks against the Party's lines and policies.....

Some of these tactics of his have long been exposed and deservedly criticized; others will still play a bewildering role for a certain length of time to come and cannot be exposed propitiously at present. The "combining two into one" theory he has now put forward is a total summary and full revelation of his bourgeois thinking of many years. The current polemics have completely bared his real self.

Philosophy and social sciences are sciences with very strong class and Party characters. All philosophical ideas have their class roots and render specific services to politics. Then, what class does Comrade Yang Hsien-chen's philosophy serve. To be sure, it does not serve the proletariat. It serves the bourgeoisie and all reactionary forces.

For example, in the current situation where the class struggle is raging violently at home and abroad, he gives wide publicity to the theory of "combining two into one," to the theory of conciliation in contradiction and to the theory of class cooperation. He opposes the movement for socialist education and assists modern revisionism in a big way. Does he not serve the bourgeoisie and all reactionary forces at home and abroad?

As another example, in the controversy over the identity of thinking and being between 1956 and 1962, on the pretext of "respecting materialism" and opposing "identity of thinking and being" and on the basis of some one-sided material, he made a grand attack on the Party's three red banners and condemned the mass movements indiscriminately. Did he not on that occasion speak for the bourgeoisie at home and sing in chorus with the reactionary parties abroad against China?

As another example, at the end of 1952, the Party laid down a general line for the transition period, stipulating that the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts and capitalist industry and commerce should be carried out step by step throughout the country. It stipulated also that the state task of socialist industrialization should be fulfilled by stages. But Comrade Yang Hsien-chen put forward his theory of "a comprehensive base," calling for "a balanced and interrelated development" of various economic components and emphasizing that the socialist super-structure should "pay equal attention" to all the economic components. Did he not in this case represent the interests of the bourgeoisie and act in direct opposition to the Party and state task of socialist transformation?

It can thus be seen that Comrade Yang Hsien-chen's philosophical ideas are closely linked with his political viewpoints. His philosophical ideas serve as the theoretical foundation for his political viewpoints and, at the same time, as fighting weapons for his political activities!

It is quite clear that on the philosophical front our polemics with Comrade Yang Hsien-chen constitute a class struggle in the field of ideology. Comrade Mao Tse-tung has long pointed out that in socialist society the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is manifested in the economic, political and ideological fields. It will still be long and devious and at times become very acute. "The proletariat seeks to transform the world according to its own world outlook. So does the bourgeoisie." (On the Correct Handling of Contradictions among the people)

Comrade Yang is not a proletarian revolutionary but a bourgeois one. Although he has taken part in revolution for a long time and has done some work for the Party, yet he has never accepted remolding. He still adheres to the bourgeois world outlook and airs his bourgeois views with stubbornness. He wishes to use the bourgeois world outlook to transform the world and the Party as well as to melt down our proletarian ideas and corrupt our cadres and the masses. Of course, he cannot be allowed to do so.

We must wage a resolute struggle against him and must thoroughly criticize his bourgeois world outlook and bourgeois ideological system.

On the whole, the spearhead of Comrade Yang Hsien-chen's attack points mainly to the thought of Mao Tse-tung. This is the tap root of his mistakes. When criticizing him, we must hold high the great red banner of the thought of Mao Tse-tung, wage a sharp struggle against him and dig up his tap root.

As everybody knows, at the present time when imperialism is heading for collapse and socialism toward victory, the thought of Mao Tse-tung stands for application of the universal principles of Marxism-Leninism. It stands for the creative development of Marxism-Leninism in the course of the concrete practice in China's revolution, in the course of the collective struggles of the Party and the people and in the course of the struggle against the enemy at home and abroad and against modern revisionism.

His thought is the criterion for the people's revolution and socialist construction in China. It is a powerful ideological weapon to combat imperialism, modern revisionism and modern dogmatism. We must therefore regard his thought as the criterion for all our work. In waging class struggle in the ideological field, we must hold this powerful weapon firmly in our hands before the monsters and freaks of all varieties can be defeated and before our battle front can be expanded for the promotion of proletarian ideology and the eradication of bourgeois ideology.

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