

LITERATURE, ART REVOLUTION MUST CONTINUE

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[Text of PEOPLE'S DAILY 4 March article by Chu Lan: "Persist in the Revolution in Literature and Art, Repulse the Right Deviationist Wind to Reverse Previous Verdicts"--originally published in RED FLAG No 3]

[Text] Last summer and fall, when the right deviationist wind to reverse previous verdicts was widely reported in education, science and technology, literature and art were also not tranquil. Rumors were everywhere and filthy waves turbulent. Its offensive spearhead was unrestrainedly and recklessly aimed at Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line and at our great leader himself.

People cannot but ask: From where did this sinister wind in literature and art blow? It is now quite clear that the source of the wind is that unrepentant capitalist roader within the party. This also shows that the struggle in literature and art is not an isolated and incidental phenomenon. It has a profound political background and is an important aspect of the life-and-death struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The proletariat must repulse the bourgeoisie wherever it launches its offensive. Now is the time for the literary and art front to repulse the right deviationist wind to reverse previous verdicts.

At the 10th plenum of the 8th National CCP Congress in 1962, Chairman Mao pointed out: "To overthrow a political power, it is always necessary first of all to create public opinion, to work in the ideological sphere. This is true for the revolutionary class as well as for the counterrevolutionary class." Millions upon millions of people participated in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution which was started precisely in the culture and education fields. The capitalist roaders within the party who represent the interests of the landlord and capitalist classes always regard revolutions in education, literature and art as eyesores and are only too happy to eliminate them. Their revengeful counterattack also began in these areas.

The right deviationist wind to reverse previous verdicts in literature and art has notable characteristics: concentrating their attacks on the model revolutionary theatrical works in a vain attempt to breach them--thus negating the proletarian revolution in literature and art represented by the model revolutionary theatrical works--reversing previous verdicts on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, allowing the sinister revisionist line in literature and art to make a comeback in order to replace the correct leadership exercised by Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in literature and art since the Cultural Revolution, and attaining the vicious goal of restoring capitalism from the literary and art stage to the political stage.

It has been 10 years since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution began. In literature and art, this decade is one of "past scenes are transformed." It is one of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie turned into the dictatorship of the proletariat. The major hallmark of the tremendous changes effected by the revolution in literature and art is the successive emergence of a large number of model revolutionary theatrical works. Whether to affirm or deny the model revolutionary theatrical works has always been the point of contention between the two classes and lines on the literary and art front. The splendid victories of the proletariat will inevitably be the fiascos of the bourgeoisie. The orientation and road taken by and the profound impact of the model revolutionary theatrical works, plus their force as models, have made the bourgeoisie hateful and fearful.

Therefore, the bourgeoisie has always concocted various absurd arguments to slander them. The unrepentant capitalist readers within the party have peddled the fallacy of the so-called "do not let model theatrical works blossom as the only flower" and have blown from dark corners the cold wind that the model theatrical works stunt the development of literature and art. Whether the model revolutionary theatrical works are "blossoming as the only flower" or promoting socialist literature and art blossoming like a hundred flowers, whether they have stunted or promoted the development of creativity in literature and art--this is a cardinal question of right and wrong which must be discussed.

Since the beginning of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, under the impact of revolutionary theatrical works, progress has been seen in all aspects of theatrical works, literature, film-making, music, dance, song-composing, art and photography. This is particularly true in recent years. Tremendous progress has been made both quantitatively and qualitatively. In the past 2 years alone, over 190 performances of theatrical works, music, dances, songs, puppet shows and shadow shows were given during the national literary and art festivals in Peking. Even the creation of story films--admittedly a relatively weak link--has made headway in recent years. Many films with fine ideological themes have been professionally produced. Without the impact of revolutionary theatrical works, it is doubtful that "Spring Seedlings," "Break Up," "The Second Spring," "The Shining Red Star," "Green Pine Ridge," "The Unforgettable Battle" and other such excellent story films could have been produced. Also, a great number of science and education films which reflect the Chinese working class industry, wisdom and spirit of self-reliance have appeared. They have forcefully rebuffed the slavish comprador philosophy.

By seriously learning from the experience of revolutionary theatrical works, vast numbers of literary and art workers have created a great many new works. Themes of revolutionary theatrical works have been used by local theatrical works and dramas and have served as an impetus for progress. In recent years, mass literary and art creations have also shown vigor and prosperity unparalleled in history. In short, many facts show that the revolution in literature and art has brought prosperity to socialist literature and art and promoted diversity of art forms and style. A prosperous scene of "a hundred flowers luxuriantly blooming" has prevailed.

Let us ask advocates of the right deviationist wind to reverse previous verdicts this question: "What facts do you have when you attack revolutionary theatrical works as being a 'blooming of one flower alone' which has obstructed the developments of literature and art. Though your eyes are wide open, you are blind to concrete facts. You have stubbornly clung to your prejudices and condemned revolutionary theatrical works. Isn't this tyranny?"

Revolutionary model theatrical works are valuable art works embodying revolutionary political themes in a relatively perfect and comprehensive form. They have won the hearty praise of the workers, peasants and soldiers who have thronged to revolutionary theatrical shows and learned to sing revolutionary theatrical songs. Revolutionary theatrical works have become household words and gained great popularity among the people. Yet that unrepentant capitalist reader within the party has never attended even one revolutionary theatrical show and has even slanderously remarked: "It is hard to sell tickets for revolutionary theatrical shows these days." If this is not purely groundless slander, what is? Before the Cultural Revolution began, when old theatrical works monopolized the stage, few people went to see them. The size of the audience was at times even smaller than the number of performers on stage. Yet unrepentant capitalist readers within the party were never heard to say anything like "tickets were hard to sell."

But in regard to that feudalistic, bourgeois and revisionist stuff which flooded literature and art in the past, he never pointed out that they represented the "blooming of one kind of flower only" which belongs to the landlord and bourgeois classes. On the contrary, he enthusiastically promoted them and never stopped showering praise upon them. Today, when proletarian revolutionary literature and art have occupied the stage he has arrogantly condemned them. When comparing these facts, it is very clear what he loves and what he hates, what class he represents and for which class he speaks.

Is it true that revolutionary theatrical works do not obstruct the development of other forms of literature and art? Not necessarily. No doubt revolutionary model theatrical works promote and encourage the development of socialist literature and art, but they decidedly seek to restrict and prevent the development of feudalistic, bourgeois and reactionary literature and art. This is most gratifying for the proletariat and revolutionaries. There is no construction without destruction, no flowing without damming and no motion without rest. Without destroying feudalistic, bourgeois and revisionist reactionary literature and art, proletarian revolutionary literature and art cannot be established.

Revolutionary model theatrical works are red plum flowers which herald the coming of spring. They have ushered in socialist literature and art which has "filled the garden with the brightness of spring" and promises a brilliant future. It has always been a firm class policy of the proletariat to cherish the bright flower of socialist literature and art and eliminate the poisonous weed of feudalistic, bourgeois and revisionist literature and art.

The unrepentant capitalist roaders' slander of "allowing only one kind of flower to bloom" is in fact intended to chop down the red plum tree revolutionary model theatrical works--which herald the coming of spring--eliminate "a hundred flowers luxuriantly blooming" on the socialist literature and art front, and allow poisonous weeds of feudalistic, bourgeois and revisionist literary and art works to once again dominate the stage. "There is absolutely no such thing as love or hatred without reason or cause." Why do unrepentant capitalist roaders intensely hate revolutionary theatrical works? One major reason is because revolutionary model theatrical works have portrayed images of proletarian heroes. Chairman Mao has taught us in his talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art that literature and art must serve the workers, peasants and soldiers, and portray new people and new things.

The minutes of the PLA literary and art work discussion meeting held 10 years ago with Chairman Mao's warm concern clearly show that it is necessary to strive to create heroic images of workers, peasants and soldiers. This is a fundamental task of socialist literature and Art and fully reflects the orientation of literature and art as one serving the workers, peasants and soldiers. To fulfill this fundamental task, revolutionary theatrical works cherished by the proletariat have wholeheartedly striven to create a great number of shining images of proletarian heroes. They have driven emperors, kings, generals, ministers, scholars, beauties, demons and devils from the literary and art stage and performed lasting meritorious deeds in the history of revolutionary literature and art.

It is precisely because of the above fact that the fundamental task of socialist literature and art has been attacked by the bourgeoisie. They have always complained about revolutionary model theatrical works, saying that these works lack the scientific approach and leave a lot to be desired. They have eagerly longed for the day when the proletariat will abandon this fundamental task.

Because worker-peasant-soldier heroes have occupied the literature and art stage, which has made him feel uneasy, that unrepentant capitalist reader has never watched a revolutionary model theatrical show. Revolutionary theatrical works would remind him of those demons and devils which have been driven off the stage and make him even sadder.

In 1964, he was invited to watch "Raid on the White Tiger Regiment" performed specially for him. But he refused to watch it even though the actors and actresses were already in their costumes. He insisted on watching the old play "The Sisters Change Their Marriage" by (Lu Yu). Ten years have elapsed. He not only still refuses to watch the model revolutionary theatrical works but also dislikes the fine works created after learning from the experience of the model revolutionary theatrical works. He watched the film "Spring Sprout" but left halfway through in displeasure, criticizing it as ultraleftist. As for those works with a view opposite to that of the model revolutionary theatrical works or those distorting the image of workers, peasants and soldiers, he loves them immediately and personally sponsors and supports their production. In short, what the proletariat supports, he opposes; what the proletariat opposes, he advocates. He insists upon antagonizing the proletariat and the fundamental task of socialist literature and art set forth in the summary [The summary of the forum on literature and art work in the armed forces with which Comrade Lin Piao entrusted "Comrade Chiang Ching Ching"].

Whether we advocate heroic worker-peasant-soldier characters occupying the literary and art stage actually means whether we admit that the workers, peasants and soldiers are the masters of our country. By opposing literature and art eulogizing and depicting heroic worker-peasant-soldier characters, the capitalist readers within the party, on behalf of the bourgeoisie, have denied the political status of our country's workers, peasants and soldiers.

Another major reason why the bourgeoisie attacks the model revolutionary theatrical works is that the experience of creating model revolutionary theatrical works always emphasizes the reflection of class struggle. Of course, this also gets on their nerves. Marxism holds that class struggle is the direct motive force of historical development and a gigantic lever triggering social change. The revisionists are in great dread of this truth. The bourgeoisie wants to limit class struggle, twist and reduce its concept, and lessen its force. That unrepentant capitalist reader within the party peddles the revisionist program of "taking the three directives as the key link" in order to confuse the key link with everything else and replace it with everything else. His purpose is to deny that class struggle is the key link and to restore capitalism. His theoretical foundation is the "theory of the moribund class struggle."

The remnant pernicious influence of this reactionary fallacy has spread in all spheres. In literature and art, it is the negation of class struggle which universally exists in real life and opposition to literary and art works describing class struggle. Encouraged by the so-called "taking the three directives as the key link," some people rave that class struggle does not exist everywhere and that putting emphasis on writing about class struggle would mean absolutism. They peddle a large variety of strange and grotesque ideas. The common characteristic of these arguments is to aim the spearhead at the model revolutionary theatrical works which reflect class struggle in all historical revolutionary periods of our country and oppose the depicting of a proletarian heroic image in sharp class struggle. They even slander all the experience of creating the model revolutionary theatrical works as an inhibiting magic phrase straitjacketing a playwright's originality and as a cause of similarity between works.

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In literature and art circles today, the proletariat exercises dictatorship over the bourgeoisie, the brilliancy of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line on literature and art shines everywhere, and the stage of socialist literature and art is characterized by "orioles sing, swallows swirl." All this is rejected out of hand by the bourgeoisie. They are firm believers in "the present is not as good as the past."

In the eyes of the unrepentant capitalist readers within the party, there is nothing good about the new thing of revolution in literature and art. Furthermore, they clamor that the new leading groups and ranks of revolutionary literary and art workers tempered and matured in the Great Cultural Revolution will never do. In short, he [as heard] has made up his mind to make some readjustments. With this view in mind secret plans were made and kindled flames at the grassroot level. They vainly attempted to force old intellectuals in literary and art circles to attack the party's policy on literature and art and slander the excellent situation in that sphere. But when this attempt met resistance, they went so far as to assign others to be their ghostwriters.

Instigated by the so-called order of readjustment, an evil wind immediately appeared in society lauding the sinister revisionist line in literature and art of the 17 years, the old Ministry of Culture and the "four villains." Such nonsense as "it is necessary to reevaluate the literature and art of the 17 years" was blatantly asserted in an effort to illustrate the achievements of the old Ministry of Culture and the sinister revisionist line in literature and art, and to raise the banner to recall their spirit. All this directly negated Chairman Mao's numerous instructions on the questions of literature and art during the 17 years after China's liberation. In other words, the aim was to negate Chairman Mao's revolutionary line on literature and art and put literature and art circles once again under the domination of the "home-returning corps" of the landlord and capitalist classes.

In view of such a serious phenomenon as a capitalist restoration, can the proletariat, the vast numbers of revolutionary people and every revolutionary literary and art fighter allow this to happen? Naturally not. Under no circumstances should we lose the victorious achievements of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. We must fight to defend these achievements; this is our only answer.

The struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie has always been a tit-for-tat one. The more intensely the bourgeoisie antagonizes and attacks the proletarian revolution in literature and art represented by model revolutionary theatrical works, the greater the efforts we should make to cherish and safeguard them.

The current struggle against the right deviationist wind to reverse previous verdicts on all fronts is the continuation and deepening of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. It has a direct bearing on the future and destiny of the party and state. Under the leadership of the party Central Committee headed by Chairman Mao, we must thoroughly understand the essence and significance of the current struggle, scathingly criticize the revisionist program or "taking the three directives as the key link," deepen the revolutionary mass debate, and strive for still greater victories in the proletarian revolution in literature and art.