RED FLAG EXAMINES HISTORY OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

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[RED FLAG No 3 article by Chai Ching: "Study Some History of Chinese Philosophy"]

[Text] The struggle of the whole party and the people of the whole country to beat back the right deviationist wind to reverse correct verdicts is now developing in depth. In this intense struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, it will be very beneficial for us to seriously study some history of Chinese philosophy, combining this study with the study of the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. This will help increase our understanding of the nature, targets, tasks and prospects of the socialist revolution and thoroughly repudiate and discredit from its ideological source the revisionist line pushed by the unrepentant capitalist roaders within the party who stirred the right deviationist wind to reverse correct verdicts.

Philosophy is an instrument of class struggle. Since the beginning of class society, the history of philosophy has been a reflection of class struggle during various historical philosophical periods. Lenin pointed out: "We must not fail to see the struggle between parties and groups in philosophy. In the final analysis, this kind of struggle shows the tendencies and ideological systems of the antagonistic classes in today's society. The latest philosophy, like those of 2,000 years ago, has its party character too." A given political line always has a given philosophical concept as its theoretical basis. The fermentation, coming into being and development of a great political change are invariably accompanied by a great philosophic polemic.

The close connection of philosophic with political struggle is a characteristic we can clearly see by leafing through the history of Chinese philosophy. The great debate on the philosophic front more than 2,000 years ago during the spring and autumn and the warring states periods was not just a purely academic dispute but rather a profound manifestation of the fundamental antagonism between the political lines of the decadent slave-owning class and the rising landlord class. To defend the restorationist acts of the decadent slave-owning class, the Confucianist school, feverishly preached the idealist theory of the "will of heaven" and the apriorism that some people were "born with knowledge." It also preached the theory of the retrogression of history, that things were getting worse generation after generation. The Legalist school represented the interests of the rising landlord class. To find a basis for the changes its class was seeking, the Legalist school sharply criticized the reactionary Confucian philosophy and upheld materialism and the concept of history of progress and changes.

At that time, the Confucianist and Legalist schools competed with each other in writing books and propounding ideas, travelled among the states to study and preach, and carried on endless debates on philosophic questions. The most fundamental issue to be settled was the important question: In the final analysis which is right: restoration and retrogression or progress and change? This great philosophic debate carried on by the Legalist school against the Confucianist school directly served the political task of replacing the slave system with the feudal system. Chairman Mao has said: "As long as classes exist, there will be as many doctrines as there are classes, and even various groups in the same class may have their different doctrines."

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Before the middle of the Han Dynasty, the Confucian and Legalist philosophies were doctrines of different classes. From then on, in the long period of feudal society, they became the doctrines of different groups of the same class.

Similarly, the struggle between the two political lines of the reformers and the diehards within the landlord class was profoundly reflected in philosophy. The struggle between the (Ching Kung Tien Hsueh) school of thought and idealist neo-Confucianism in the northern Sung Dynasty dramatically proved this point. To push his progressive reform measures, reformer Wang An-shih put forward the theoretical program: "Natural changes need not be feared, ancestral ways need not be followed and other people's slanders need not be heeded." He stressed that "the way of heaven esteems changes" and courageously challenged the idealist Confucian theory of the "will of heaven" and the conception of history that called for restoration of ancient ways and retrogression.

The diehard Szu-Ma Kuang did his best to stress that "heaven changeth not, likewise the Tao changeth not" and repeatedly clamored that "the ancestral ways must not be changed." The spearhead of this reactionary philosophy to worship heaven and follow ancestral ways was directly pointed at Wang An-shih's reforms.

Cheng Hao and Cheng I, ideological representatives of the big landlord class headed by Szu-Ma Kuang, vigorously preached idealist neo-Confucianism and brayed that (?"things being the way they are today, it is necessary first to put things in good order,") to create public opinion for Szu-Ma Kuang to launch a vengeful counterattack.

As soon as he came to power, Szu-Ma Kuang used "putting things in good order" as the pretext and carried out unbridled restorationist and retrogressive activities. Giving top priority to restoring ancestral ways, he completely restored the old order of the rule of the big landlord class. In just about a year's time, the achievements of Wang An-shih's reform was destroyed. From then on, as the diehards of the big landlord class became even more reactionary, idealist neo-Confucianism dominated the ideological sphere with even greater arrogance.

A concrete study of such struggles between different schools of philosophy in Chinese history can help us understand that a struggle between political progress and political reaction is always related to a struggle between progressive and reactionary philosophy. Every major political change in history caused different reactions among people of different classes, strata or social (?groups). Moreover, as a reflection of this political change, a philosophical struggle lasts much longer than the political change itself. For instance, Wang An-shih's reform lasted only a few years, but the debate on this reform went on for several hundred years. From the Confucian school first came a book by Cheng Hao and Cheng I slandering remarks by Wang An-shih, and then there appeared a book by Chu Hsi entitled "Collection of Words and Deeds by Noted Ministers of the Three Dynasties," a collection of remarks by diehards and conservatives denouncing Wang An-shih's words. Later on there emerged numerous other books such as (Chien Wen Lu), (Chi Wen) and (Pi Lu) denouncing Wang An-Shih's reform, which had long before become history. Contrary to this, some progressive thinkers advocating changes all confirmed and praised Wang An-shih's reform.

In a life-and-death class struggle, the reactionary classes are inevitably overthrown and wiped out by the revolutionary classes, which is an objective law independent of man's will.

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However, the ideology of the reactionary classes will not immediately disappear. Although a reactionary trend of philosophical thought is thoroughly criticized by progressive, revolutionary thinkers at the time, it still can be rehashed and used by reactionary classes at a later date. As Lenin put it: "Physiologically, man naturally dies, but this is not the case with schools of thought and politics." As for the struggle between materialism and idealism and between dialectics and metaphysics, it will exist even after classes are abolished in communist society. The only difference is that this struggle will reflect social contradictions different from those in class society.

Tung Chung-shu's idealist, metaphysical and theological world outlook was a production of the change of the landlord class' historical position from progress to reaction. The metaphysical view "heaven changeth not, likewise the Tao changeth not" advocated by Tung Chung-shu did not disappear with his death, with criticism by Wang Chung or with the Yellow Turbans Uprising. In feudal society, which lasted for a long time, this view had almost become a philosophical motto of the reactionary ruling class. Chairman Mao has said: "In China there is a metaphysical idea that 'heaven changeth not, likewise the Tao changeth not' which had long been advocated by the decadent feudal ruling class." Chairman Mao has not only forcefully criticized Tung Chung-shu's reactionary world outlook but profoundly expounded a law that reactionary schools of philosophy in history are later resurrected in a new disguise through reactionary classes and that the reactionary classes invariably use such reactionary schools of philosophy as their ideological weapon to apologize for their perverted actions. Therefore, all progressive classes must criticize reactionary schools of philosophy in history and eliminate their influence in order to bring about revolutionary changes.

The struggle between those opposing Confucianism and those worshiping it, which has gone on for thousands of years in the history of Chinese philosophy, is a concentrated reflection of the life-and-death struggle between the reformist group and the decadent reactionary group within the revolutionary and landlord classes. The doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, which took shape in the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States period, is a system of ideology opposing revolution and progress and advocating restoration and retrogression. It reflects the ideological characteristics of the diehards within the reactionary classes. In the period before the Chin Dynasty, the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius directly served the declining slave-owning aristocracy in opposing the rising landlord class and in obstructing the substitution of the feudal system for the system of slavery. By the Western Han Dynasty, it had gradually evolved into the dominant ideology of declining Chinese feudal society, a semifeudal and semicolonial society.

Chairman Mao said: "All rulers at that time used the doctrine of Confucius to educate students, regarded Confucianism as a religious tract and forced people to believe in and observe it." At that time, Confucianism directly served imperialism because the comprador bourgeoisie it was feeding, from the very beginning, regarded the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius as tenets. Linking national betrayal with worshiping Confucius is an important characteristic of this class.

In the struggle against the feudal system, some representatives of the national bourgeoisie on several occasions fought against the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, but their struggle was not thorough enough. Later, they quickly changed from opposing to worshiping Confucius.

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Both the landlord and bourgeois classes need a conservative and reactionary philosophy as their spiritual pillar when they gradually lose the revolutionary spirit they had during the period of their ascendence and become increasingly conservative and reactionary. Therefore, it was no accident that Confucius and his philosophy became popular among reactionary classes.

To push history forward, the advanced revolutionary classes and social strata have always launched one struggle after another against Confucianism. Legalists in the pre-Chin era, such as Shang Yang and Han Fei, denounced Confucianism represented by Confucius as a harmful insect. Later, reformists within the landlord class also endeavored to eliminate the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius as obstacles to their reform plans. All peasant uprisings in Chinese history have dealt Confucius and Confucianism a heavy blow. They are indeed shining achievements in struggle.

In view of the fact that all previous opportunist chieftains within our party were Confucianist worshipers, Chairman Mao in the course of leading the Chinese revolution has always linked criticism of the opportunist and revisionist line with that of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. He did so both in the new democratic revolution period and in the socialist revolution period. This has been one of our party's important historical experiences in the struggle between the two lines.

By conscientiously summing up and studying experience in the struggle between opposing and worshiping Confucius in the history of Chinese philosophy, we can see more clearly why the opportunist chieftains with the label of "Communist Party members" must worship Confucius, revere the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and observe idealism and mataphysics. This will encourage us to follow through the struggle to combat and criticize Confucianism.

The history of Chinese philosophy clearly indicates that the philosophy of all reactionary classes during their declining periods has always been characterized by eclecticism. Philosophers from Confucius at the end of the Spring and Autumn period to students of the (Hsin Meng) school in the middle of the Warring States period frantically trumpeted the doctrine of the mean and preached class conciliation. Because the slave-owning class they represented was declining at that time, they could not but seek help from the doctrine of the mean and used eclectic tactics to deceive people in an attempt to undermine the revolution of the newly emerging landlord class and the working people against the slave system.

Why did eclecticism have such close ties with the declining class? Lu Hsun put it clearly: "The time when they talked about the doctrine of the mean was the time when they badly needed it because they had already lost all their strength." This means that the declining class which had already lost its strength had to resort to eclecticism. The appearance of Lu's Almanac, which has been cited in the history of Chinese philosophy as a book which absorbs the ideas of the Confucian, Moist, Logician and Legalist schools, was a reactionary trend of thought which came out in the form of eclecticism. When Lu Pu-wei supervised the publication of this book at the end of the Warring States period, the rule of Confucian thought was precarious and so he could not but peddle the sinister Confucian stuff under the signboard of "miscellaneous school," using Confucian ideas as the mainstay of his book while at the same time also taking some Taoist and Moist philosophies. In fact, he used eclectic tactics to carry out the reactionary political program of "reviving states that had become extinct, restoring families whose line of succession had been broken, and calling to office those who had retired to obscurity."

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The book Huai Nan Tzu, which appeared in the middle of the Han Dynasty, also has this characteristic. Legalists in the early Han Dynasty followed the Legalist line under the cloak of the philosophies of Huang Ti and Laotzu who advocated quietness of mind and doing nothing. They paid attention to stability in order to consolidate the political power of the newly emerging landlord class. In the situation with the feudal centralized administrative power already consolidated, Liu An, an escapee from the rebellion of the seven states including Wu and Chu, employed men of letters to edit Huai Nan Tzu under his supervision. In the book, he took over the slogan of keeping the mind quiet and doing nothing put forward by the Legalist school, but used the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius to tamper with the Legalist line in order to serve the restoration and retrogression pushed by the remaining forces of the slave-owners.

The eclectic tactics used by the reactionary declining class to deceive people have also been inherited by the revisionists who betray the proletariat. Lenin clearly pointed out: "When one wants to turn Marxism into opportunism, the easiest way to deceive the masses is to disguise eclecticism as dialectics."

At present, the unrepentant capitalist roaders who stirred the right deviationist wind to reverse previous verdicts are precisely using the sophist tactic of eclecticism to peddle the theory of the moribund class struggle and the theory of productive forces, to oppose taking class struggle as the key link, and to tamper with the party's basic line. This reflects the reactionary, decadent and weak nature of the overthrown landlord and bourgeois classes.

Studying some history of Chinese philosophy helps us to see through the eclectic tactics used by the opportunists and revisionists so that we can correctly wage a struggle against them. Because the history of philosophy and the history of class struggle it reflects indicate that no conciliation can be achieved in class struggle and political struggle, we must never talk about the doctrine of the mean with the unrepentant capitalist roaders who advocate eclecticism. Rather, we must draw a line of distinction with them on political and ideological problems.

Studying some history of Chinese philosophy is necessary in order to wage the struggle. Through the window of philosophical struggle, we can see the true nature of class struggle and understand the law of class struggle. In the socialist society we are now in, there are still classes, class contradictions and class struggle, and the majority of the people want to practice Marxism and take the socialist road. A few people, however, want to practice revisionism and take the capitalist road. There are two possibilities in today's society: advancing continuously along the socialist path pointed out by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought until we reach the destination of communism or restoring capitalism. The struggle between restoring capitalism and combating restoration has always been closely tied with the philosophical struggle between the two lines. Those theories we have had since the founding of our country, including the theory of a comprehensive economic foundation, the theory of not differentiating between thinking and being, the theory of combining two into one and the theory of genius were all designed to create a theoretical foundation for the revisionist line pushed by Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao.

Because all revisionist chieftains within the party were political swindlers and did not represent the truth, whenever they attacked the party, they always sought help from the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius.

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The capitalist roaders still on the capitalist road have once again followed Confucius in "restraining oneself and restoring the rites," played eclectic tricks and preached the program of "taking the three directives as the key link" in a vain attempt to change the party's basic line, vigorously launch vengeful attacks on the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution initiated and personally led by Chairman Mao and rabidly assail the dictatorship of the proletariat and the socialist system.

Many facts show that the unrepentant capitalist roaders within the party who stirred the right deviationist wind to reverse previous verdicts are faithful followers of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and completedly betray Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. Like all previous opportunist chieftains, they are characterized by setting subjectivity against objectivity and divorcing knowledge from practice.

In his brilliant philosophical work "On Practice," Chairman Mao profoundly points out the characteristic of the thinking of all diehards. "Their thinking is divorced from social practice, and they cannot march ahead to guide the chariot of society; they simply trail behind, grumbling that it goes toofast and trying to drag it back or turn it in the opposite direction." At present, aren't the unrepentant capitalist roaders who stirred the right deviationist wind to reverse previous verdicts such diehards? In order to push back the wheel of history, it is natural that they have to inherit Confucius' political and ideological line, practice idealism and metaphysics, practice the sophist theory of eclecticism and look for a theoretical foundation for restoration and retreggression from the library of philosophy books of the reactionary classes in history.

In order to ideologically criticize and discredit the right deviationist wind to reverse previous verdicts, we must study Marxist philosophy and some history of Chinese philosophy, strive to understand and master the laws governing political and ideological struggles and make the best of the situation so as to guide the struggle to victory.

ARTICLE SCORES CAPITALIST ROADER'S ECLECTICISM

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[Article by Hung Kuang-szu: "A Blueprint of Eclecticism--Criticizing 'Taking the Three Directives as the Key Link'"]

[Summary] The fallacy of "taking the three directives as the key link" pushed by that unrepentant capitalist roader within the party is a blueprint for preaching the theory of the moribund class struggle and the theory of productive forces, and an eclectic trick for tampering with the party's basic line, it is a reactionary program for implementing a revisionist line and stirring a right deviationist wind to reverse previous verdicts. "Chairman Mao's directives on studying theory and combating and preventing revisionism, stability and unity, and advancing the national economy are but a part of his series of important instructions. With ulterior motives, that person who stirred the right deviationist wind to reverse previous verdicts used the implementation of Chairman Mao's instructions as a pretext; selected these three from among the series of important instructions; put them together; and passed them off as the key link, alleging that these three directives are the general principle guiding our work in all fields." This is an old eclectic trick used by all revisionists. How have they played such an eclectic trick in using "taking the three directives as the key link" to negate taking class struggle as the key link and to practice revisionism?

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