

TEXT 13

HISTORY DEVELOPS IN SPIRALS

Hung Yu

The People's Republic of China has triumphantly travelled a militant path for 25 years.

Under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line over the past quarter of a century, our Party, by uniting the people of all nationalities in our country and overcoming all sorts of difficulties, has beaten back repeated attacks by class enemies at home and abroad and won great victories in socialist revolution and socialist construction. In particular, our Party has in the past 25 years undergone four major struggles between the two lines in which the anti-Party conspiracies of Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih, Peng Teh-huai, Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao, chieftains of the opportunist lines, were exposed and smashed, thereby ensuring our country to march forward along the road of socialism. The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in the last eight years further testifies to the correctness of Chairman Mao's thesis and policies on continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat; it has further heightened our understanding of the laws governing class struggle in the period of socialist revolution. Practice in our socialist revolution and socialist construction has over and over again testified to this truth: Revolution invariably advances along a zigzag path by incessantly surmounting all kinds of obstacles and obstructions. New things are bound to replace the old and revolutionary forces are bound to prevail over reactionary forces. This is an objective law independent of man's will.

Unity of Opposites—Progressiveness And Tortuousness

In his work *Karl Marx*, Lenin made a vivid and scientific generalization on the law of the development of things, describing it as **“a development, so to speak, that proceeds in spirals, not in a straight line.”** In many of his important works, Chairman Mao has incisively expounded and elaborated this brilliant thought of Lenin's. Chairman Mao has pointed out: **“Events have their twists and turns and do not follow a straight line.”** (*On Protracted War.*) Dwelling on the law of development of class struggle, he has said: **“Make trouble, fail, make**

Peking Review #43, October 25, 1974. (Slightly abridged translation of an article in *Hongqi [Red Flag]* #10, 1974.)

trouble again, fail again . . . till their doom; that is the logic of the imperialists and all reactionaries the world over in dealing with the people's cause, and they will never go against this logic. This is a Marxist law." "Fight, fail, fight again, fail again, fight again . . . till their victory; that is the logic of the people, and they too will never go against this logic. This is another Marxist law." (*Cast Away Illusions, Prepare for Struggle.*) This teaching of Chairman Mao's points out the two diametrically different outcomes for the imperialists and reactionaries on the one hand and the revolutionary people on the other hand; he also points out that a tortuous course of development is inevitable in the struggle between the revolutionary forces and counter-revolutionary forces. The disruption and failure of the counter-revolutionaries and the failure and success of the revolutionary people are two aspects which are interlinked and can transform themselves into each other. The alternate appearance of these two aspects in the course of revolutionary struggle is a concrete manifestation of the law of spiral development.

Why do things develop in spirals? It is because in each thing there is the contradiction between its new and its old aspects and the two aspects of the contradiction are united and at the same time opposed to each other, thereby pushing the development of things. The course of development of things from a low to a high stage is one in which the new things develop through continuously defeating the old. To conquer the old and replace it, a new thing is bound to meet with strong resistance from the old; only by repeated and fierce struggles can the new thing grow in strength and rise to predominance, and only thus can the old thing be weakened and forced to perish gradually. Therefore, in spite of the fact that the general direction of the development of things is a forward movement from a low to a high stage, it cannot advance in a straight line. The inevitable phenomenon in the actual process of development is that there are twists and turns of varying degrees at one time or another. Chairman Mao has said: "**Like every other activity in the world, revolution always follows a tortuous road and never a straight one.**" (*On Tactics Against Japanese Imperialism.*) This is because there is a process of development for the revolutionary forces to grow and for the counter-revolutionary forces to perish, and it is not possible for the former to completely defeat and annihilate the latter overnight. This is also because the cognition of objective laws, the leap from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom, requires a process of accumulating experience—from without experience to having experience, from less experienced to more experienced. Only by repeated comparisons between positive and negative experiences can one achieve a correct understanding of the law of the development of revolution

and consciously apply this law to accomplish the revolutionary tasks.

Spiral development only approximates a series of circles, but each cycle is not a simple repetition of the previous one and does not return to where it started. As Chairman Mao has summed up: **“With each cycle the content of practice and knowledge rises to a higher level.”** (*On Practice.*) Superficially, reversals and zigzags look like going out of the right path, but actually every time a reversal or a twist and turn is overcome, it is invariably accompanied by a victory and progress, thereby pushing the thing to a new stage. Compared with the old stage, every new one is brought to a comparatively higher plane and by no means returns to the original place. The unity of opposites—the progressiveness and tortuousness of development of things—makes up the complicated spiral movement. The viewpoint that things develop in a straight line negates the tortuous nature of the development of things, and the viewpoint that things move in a circle negates the progressive nature of the development of things; both negate the dialectical unity of the progressive and tortuous nature, and will inevitably lead to the metaphysical quagmire.

The history of development of human society over the past several thousand years is a history of spiral development full of twists and turns. Revolutions in the past, be it the replacement of the slave system by the feudal system, or the replacement of the feudal system by the capitalist system, involved dozens or hundreds of years of repeated and tortuous struggles centring around progress and retrogression, restoration and counter-restoration. Since the replacement of one system of exploitation by another system of exploitation involved such a process of development, the socialist revolution in which socialism triumphs over capitalism and which makes final elimination of the system of exploitation and classes its goal, will by no means be smooth sailing. The struggles involved will be more tortuous and protracted than those of any previous revolution and tremendous efforts have to be exerted. Chairman Mao has taught us: **“New things always have to experience difficulties and setbacks as they grow. It is sheer fantasy to imagine that the cause of socialism is all plain sailing and easy success, without difficulties and setbacks or the exertion of tremendous efforts.”** (*On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People.*) Chairman Mao said this in 1957. Practice in the past 17 years has greatly heightened our understanding of this viewpoint. After the seizure of political power by the proletariat, the overthrown reactionary classes refuse to take their defeat lying down. They are bound to come out to engage in sabotage and disruption to get back their lost “paradise” and look for agents in the ranks of the Communist Party as their political representatives for staging a come-back. In addition, the socialist revolution in the realm of

the superstructure will be more arduous than before owing to the thousands of years of influence of the exploiting classes' traditional ideas. It will take a considerably long period of time to decide the question of which will win out, the proletariat or the bourgeoisie, in the political and ideological spheres. Class struggle and the two-line struggle at home always coordinate with the class struggle abroad. The domestic class enemies are bound to work hand in glove with the imperialists and social-imperialists and make trouble whenever they have the opportunity to do so. Therefore, after the seizure of political power, the proletariat faces the heavy task of strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat, consolidating the worker-peasant alliance, uniting the people of various nationalities, and persisting in continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Much work remains to be done. The proletariat must sum up the positive and negative experiences in the protracted and repeated struggles and continue to deepen its understanding of the law of socialist revolution and socialist construction. Only in this way can it overcome hardships and obstructions on the path of advance, defeat the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes and realize communism.

Zigzag Course of Development in China's Socialist Cause

Our socialist cause in the past 25 years has developed along a zigzag course in the struggle between the two classes, the two roads and the two lines. Speaking at the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in 1949, Chairman Mao clearly pointed to the principal contradictions at home and internationally in the period of socialist revolution and foresaw the protracted and complex nature of the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. He thus set forth a correct line and laid down the basic steps and various principles and policies for the transition from the new-democratic revolution to the socialist revolution.

In the years immediately after the birth of New China, the Party led the people of the whole country in rehabilitating the national economy and carrying out the *san fan* and *wu fan* movements (the movement against the three evils—corruption, waste and bureaucracy—and the movement against the five evils—bribery of government workers, tax evasion, theft of state property, cheating on government contracts, and stealing economic information for private speculation). It put forward the general line for socialist industrialization and socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts and capitalist industry and commerce, and got the First Five-Year Plan (1953-57) for socialist construction go-

ing. The vigorous development of socialist revolution and construction filled the people throughout the country with joy and elation, but at the same time it evoked bitter hatred and fear on the part of the class enemies at home and abroad.

Bourgeois careerists Kao Kang and Jao Shu-shih who had wormed their way into the Party ganged up in an anti-Party alliance and wildly carried out conspiratorial activities, vainly trying to split our Party, usurp the supreme power in the Party and the state and obstruct the advance of socialism. Chairman Mao led the whole Party to expose and shatter in good time the Kao-Jao anti-Party alliance and rallied all Party members and the people of the whole country to bring about an upsurge in socialist transformation of the ownership of the means of production.

The bourgeoisie, however, did not take its defeat lying down. Taking advantage of the rectification campaign in 1957, it unleashed another furious attack on the Party. This fully showed that, with the socialist revolution on the economic front alone, the socialist system under the dictatorship of the proletariat still was not secure and it was imperative to carry out a thoroughgoing socialist revolution on the political and ideological fronts. Under the guidance of Chairman Mao's thesis on continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the nation started a vigorous struggle to beat back the bourgeois Rightists and once again repulsed the bourgeoisie's large-scale frenzied attacks, thereby giving great impetus to the rapid development of socialist revolution and construction.

Having summed up the experiences, both positive and negative, of socialist construction at home and abroad, Chairman Mao put forward the general line of **"going all out, aiming high and achieving greater, faster, better and more economical results in building socialism."** Hence the excellent situation marked by the big leap forward in the national economy and the establishment of the people's communes in 1958. But the struggle in the political and ideological spheres remained very intense. At the Lushan Meeting in 1959, the Peng Teh-huai anti-Party clique took the field, frantically attacking the general line, the big leap forward and the people's commune in a futile effort to split our Party and check the onrushing torrent of socialism. Chairman Mao led the whole Party in meeting the onslaught head-on and crushing the Peng Teh-huai Right opportunist clique whose plots fell through.

With the daily deepening of the socialist revolution, the Liu Shao-chi renegade clique ran wild in carrying out counter-revolutionary activities. During the period when China had temporary economic difficulties due to three successive years of natural disasters and sabotage by the Soviet revisionist renegade clique, Liu Shao-chi and his followers openly trumpeted and pushed the revisionist line of *san zi yi bao* (the

extension of plots for private use, the extension of free markets, the increase of small enterprises with sole responsibility for their own profits or losses, and the fixing of output quotas based on the individual households) and of *san he yi shao* (the liquidation of struggle against the imperialists, reactionaries and modern revisionists, and the reduction of assistance and support to the revolutionary struggles of the people of various countries). They spared no effort in their criminal activities to restore capitalism in the political, ideological as well as economic spheres.

At the Tenth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of our Party in September 1962, Chairman Mao summed up the historical experience of the dictatorship of the proletariat at home and abroad, advanced in a more comprehensive way the Party's basic line for the entire historical period of socialism and issued the great call: "**Never forget classes and class struggle.**" Immediately afterwards, Chairman Mao initiated the socialist education movement on a nationwide scale, criticized Liu Shao-chi's reactionary bourgeois line which was "Left" in form but Right in essence, set in motion the revolution in Peking opera and other cultural and art fields and launched the criticism of *Hai Jui Dismissed from Office* (a bad opera designed to reverse the verdict passed on the Right opportunists), thus ushering in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.

The reversals and zigzags of the struggles in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution were even more soul-stirring. Under the leadership of Chairman Mao, the entire Party and the people of the whole country, having broken through all kinds of obstacles and gone through arduous struggles, finally smashed the bourgeois headquarters with Liu Shao-chi as its ringleader. But the struggle did not end there.

The bourgeois careerist and conspirator Lin Piao, who "lodged for a time" in the Party, jumped out to continue Liu Shao-chi's counter-revolutionary activities. He negated the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, attacked the socialist new things and plotted to launch a counter-revolutionary armed coup d'état, subvert the dictatorship of the proletariat and restore capitalism, all in a vain effort to turn socialist New China back into the semi-feudal and semi-colonial China of old. With deep insight, Chairman Mao saw through all this and led the whole Party in exposing in good time the Lin Piao anti-Party clique and smashing its counter-revolutionary machinations to restore capitalism by following Confucius' precept of "restraining oneself and returning to the rites."

The purpose of the current deepening movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius is precisely to thoroughly repudiate the Lin Piao anti-Party clique and its revisionist line, criticize the doctrines of Confucius

and Mencius—the ideology of the reactionary decadent classes promoted by Lin Piao, consolidate and develop the tremendous achievements of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and further strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat. Historical experience has proved that each and every victory in the socialist cause has been won through repeated struggles. The socialist revolution in the days ahead will, as in the past, move forward along a spiral course in class struggle and the struggle between the two lines.

Overcome Metaphysical Viewpoint of Straight-Line Development of History

In order to observe and analyse the situation in the revolutionary struggle from the viewpoint that history develops in spirals, it is necessary to do away with the metaphysical viewpoint which holds that history develops in a straight line. Lenin pointed out: **“Human knowledge is not (or does not follow) a straight line, but a curve, which endlessly approximates a series of circles, a spiral.”** (*On the Question of Dialectics.*) In class struggle, looking at problems in a straight-line way means “all struggle and no alliance” or “all alliance and no struggle.” According to Chairman Mao’s directives and in the light of the historical experience of our Party, the Tenth Party Congress once again reminded us of the necessity to oppose and prevent these two kinds of one-sidedness. If one does not know that there are ups and downs, tension and relaxation in the course of struggle and that the process of alliance involves struggles against reactionary things, splittist tendencies and erroneous ideas, one does not understand the law of spiral development. Chairman Mao pointed out in the period of the War of Resistance Against Japan: **“Today our Anti-Japanese National United Front policy is neither all alliance and no struggle nor all struggle and no alliance, but combines alliance and struggle.”** (*On Policy.*) To lead any major class struggle and two-line struggle to victory, it is essential to have a good grip on this Marxist policy. The **“unity-criticism-unity”** formula conforms to the law of spiral development and is an important method for us to correctly resolve contradictions among the people. These contradictions and those between ourselves and the enemy are two different types of contradictions. The knowledge different persons among the people have is not always the same, but they can be united on the basis of Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought through criticism or struggle and through distinguishing right from wrong on matters of line. And only by achieving unity can the correct line be implemented and the erroneous line overcome. Denying the existence of contradictions among the people and stressing unity alone but negating

struggle will of course harm the revolutionary cause. Likewise, confusing the two different types of contradictions, stressing only struggle but negating unity, and not knowing the dialectical relationship between struggle and unity and the paramount importance of revolutionary unity will also harm the revolutionary cause. Both tendencies are manifestations of seeing problems in a straight-line way and run counter to the law of spiral development. These two tendencies have occurred in our Party's history and brought losses to the cause of the Party. So we must pay attention to them and always keep in mind the historical experience of one tendency covering the other.

During the War of Resistance Against Japan, Chairman Mao used day-to-day routine such as eating and sleeping as an example to give a profound illustration of what is meant by dialectics. To those who had mistaken ideas and failed to understand the dialectical relationship between fighting heroically and abandoning territory temporarily in order to wipe out the enemy troops, Chairman Mao said: **“To eat and then to empty your bowels—is this not to eat in vain? To sleep and then to get up—is this not to sleep in vain? Can questions be posed in such a way? I would suppose not.”** (*On Protracted War.*) To see things in a straight-line way is in fact a metaphysical way of thinking and is like “eating without emptying the bowels” and “sleeping without getting up.” Anyone using this way of thinking in observing things inevitably fails to see what is the essence and what is the appearance, which is the mainstream and which is the tributary, which is the part and which is the whole. This way of thinking leads to blind optimism and loss of vigilance when revolution develops successfully, and to indolence, helplessness, pessimism and despondency when revolution faces difficulty and twists and turns. Only by using the dialectical viewpoint of spiral development can one perceive the inevitable reversals and zigzags in the development of revolution, and only in this way can one perceive the inevitable victory of revolution even when it undergoes twists and turns, discern the orientation in the acute and complicated struggles, grasp the initiative in the struggle and guide it in the course of its development to seize victory.

The reversals and twists and turns in a revolutionary struggle have a dual character. While bringing transitory difficulties to revolution, they at the same time pave the way for still greater successes for the revolutionary cause. The revolutionary people invariably have to be educated and tempered by both positive and negative examples. It is the reversals and twists and turns in struggle that educate and temper us by negative example; after correctly summing up the experience and drawing lessons from it, we create the conditions for winning still greater victories in the revolutionary cause. The failure of the First Revolutionary

Civil War in 1927 was a profound lesson to the Chinese people, enabling them to understand the extremely great importance for the proletariat to take the leadership into its own hands and grasp the Marxist truth that **“political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.”** Guided by Chairman Mao’s proletarian revolutionary line, our Party mastered the three principal magic weapons (the united front, armed struggle and Party building) for the Chinese revolution, found the correct road for encircling the cities from the rural areas and the final capture of the cities and pushed the Chinese revolution to a new stage in its development. These historical experiences are an invaluable wealth for the revolutionary people. Chairman Mao often tells the Party cadres to bear in mind the experience and lessons of the many successes and failures in our Party’s history; in so doing he is teaching us to learn to analyse and correctly handle the reversals and twists and turns on the road of the revolution from a materialist dialectical point of view and to understand that such twists and turns are inevitable in the development of history. When we have studied how the reactionary classes in the past brought about a restoration and how tortuous the struggle was in consolidating the new social system, we can understand better the importance of consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat and preventing the restoration of capitalism today.

Twists and Turns Cannot Halt the Advance of Revolution

The reversals and twists and turns on the road of revolution are only whirlpools, big and small, in the long river of history and are of little significance. As far as the entire course of history is concerned, advance and ascendancy make up the mainstream and essence of things, while twists and turns and retrogression are only branches and transient phenomena. The proletariat is bound to defeat the bourgeoisie; socialism is bound to triumph over capitalism; Marxism is bound to prevail over revisionism—this is the established general trend of the development of history. Chairman Mao has pointed out: **“The world is progressing, the future is bright and no one can change this general trend of history.”** (*On the Chungking Negotiations.*) Any reversals or twists and turns, even retrogression and the repeating of history for a while, can only affect the tempo of historical development, but can neither halt the advance of history nor change the direction of its development. Both in the past and in modern times, there have been countless reversals and twists and turns in the development of history. From Confucius (551-476 B.C.) to Yuan Shih-kai (1859-1916) and Chiang Kai-shek, and from Chen Tu-hsiu to Wang Ming, Liu Shao-chi

and Lin Piao, all were reactionaries swimming against the tide of history. None of them succeeded in turning back the clock of history. Instead, every one of them lifted a rock only to drop it on his own feet and ended up in self-destruction.

We firmly believe that no reversals or twists and turns of any kind can obstruct the cause of revolution from advancing; this belief is based on the historical-materialist viewpoint that **“the people, and the people alone, are the motive force in the making of world history.”** At all times the people are the masters of history and the people always want to make revolution. Led by Chairman Mao, the broad masses are firm in taking the road of socialism. The working class, the poor and lower-middle peasants, the commanders and fighters of the Chinese People’s Liberation Army, the revolutionary cadres and revolutionary intellectuals all have profound proletarian sentiments for the Party and Chairman Mao and have enormous enthusiasm for the socialist cause. As long as we have firm faith in the masses and rely on them, we can overcome any reversals or twists and turns and surmount any kind of difficulty. Both at home and abroad, class enemies all try to subvert our dictatorship of the proletariat and change our socialist system by taking advantage of the reversals or twists and turns that appear in the advance of our revolutionary cause, but all to no avail. This is because our revolutionary cause stands for the fundamental interests of the people and has won the approval and support of the masses.

“The correctness or incorrectness of the ideological and political line decides everything.” We also firmly believe that no reversals or twists and turns of any kind can impede the advance of the revolutionary cause because our revolution is carried out under the guidance of the correct Marxist-Leninist line. Chairman Mao’s proletarian revolutionary line is the product of the integration of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution; it is the fundamental guarantee for winning victory in the revolution. It is entirely due to Chairman Mao’s proletarian revolutionary line that we defeated imperialism and the Kuomintang reactionaries with Chiang Kai-shek as their ringleader, that we got hold of arms and seized political power and won great victories in socialist revolution and construction. When an erroneous line dominated, there were reversals and twists and turns in our struggles, causing serious damage to the revolutionary cause and even leading the revolution to failure; but when the correct line dominates, the reversals or twists and turns that appear in the course of our struggle are only partial and temporary and are not difficult to eliminate. Therefore, under the guidance of the correct line, achievements are always primary and the situation is always excellent. Having undergone tests in prolonged struggles, our Party, state organs

and the People's Liberation Army can withstand any storms. After eight years of tempering in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the dictatorship of the proletariat in our country is consolidated as never before. As long as we strengthen revolutionary unity, unswervingly carry out Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line, correctly distinguish and handle the two different types of contradictions, we will make the excellent revolutionary situation still more excellent.

“While the prospects are bright, the road has twists and turns.” This is a scientific conclusion drawn from the summing up of countless historical experiences, and it has been verified in practice.