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far  
east

Reporter

THE MASS LINE  
IN THE  
CHINESE REVOLUTION

Dr. Boon-Ngee Cham



Workers—Peasants—Soldiers

## THE MASS LINE IN THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

By Dr. Boon-Ngee Cham

### FAR EAST REPORTER INTRODUCTION

Dr. Cham makes a needed contribution to American understanding of the People's Republic of China. It is not enough to know that China's agriculture has succeeded in feeding 800 million, that China has developed its oil production, not enough to learn about the spread of hospitals, clinics, barefoot doctors, nurseries, schools and universities and how China treats its national minorities, its senior citizens and its law-breakers. These aspects of People's China are undeniably significant in themselves and in what they may "say" to Americans trying to improve their own society.

But one misses the essence of People's China if one ignores the ideological basis of China's goals and achievements, and the process by which this ideology is carried out by the masses.

Dr. Cham's analysis illuminates the "mass line" and its role as a fundamental underpinning of the contemporary Chinese revolution. Equally significant, the mass line provides a basic contrast between bourgeois politics—essentially premised on deception (small portions of which are periodically disclosed in such scandals as Watergate) and on the passivity of the masses—and working class politics, premised on the wisdom and heroic actions of the masses.

For the "other America"—yearning to breathe free, to realize the promises of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness (the America for which Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Theodore Dreiser, Jack London, Upton Sinclair and others spoke)—the mass line is both a beacon and a guide, and is as relevant to the destiny of the United States as it is to that of the People's Republic of China.

In its applicability to the specific conditions of each country, the mass line demonstrates its universality, transcending national boundaries and expressing, in scientific terms, aspects of political experience that are truly international in nature.

(CONTINUED ON INSIDE BACK COVER)

THE MASS LINE  
IN THE  
CHINESE REVOLUTION

中国革命里的  
群众路线  
詹文义

## THE MASS LINE IN THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

Dr. Boon-Ngee Cham

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## The Mass Line in the Chinese Revolution

B. N. Cham

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"It is striking," one writer noted recently, "that so many American intellectuals and professionals can come increasingly to admire China's achievements...yet willfully ignore the Chinese explanation of what made all this possible: the success of the revolution."<sup>1</sup> Although there are exceptions, and these exceptions have been increasing in recent years, most conventional analyses of the Chinese revolution have been dominated by the tendency to treat "the Chinese explanation" with cynicism, suspicion and disbelief or to ignore or distort it completely. This orientation is even more evident in studies dealing with the role of the Chinese masses in the revolution. In these studies, "almost without exception, the masses have been treated...as pawns being manipulated by elites — competing elites during the civil war periods and Communist elites during the post-1949 period."<sup>2</sup> Their central premise is that "power considerations alone control the calculus of revolutionary leadership" whose ability to mobilize the masses "rests primarily on their manipulative qualities including a large component of terror, and on the ruthless application of Leninist organizational skills."<sup>3</sup> Thus when Han Suyin pointed out the dialectical link between Mao Tsetung's leadership and the Chinese people in which Mao "has embodied the aspirations, needs, and desires of his nation and of his people; their will to revolt, to end exploitation, misery, injustice; to free themselves and become masters of their own destiny,"<sup>4</sup> her approach was described as "fully in accord with traditional historiography of China"<sup>5</sup> and "more apt to appeal to the feelings than to convince."<sup>6</sup> However, "from the viewpoint of Chinese Communists," Roy Hofheinz, Jr. writes, "there is a sense of coherence, of collective mission, of the historical unity of struggle which we ignore at our peril: they might well be right."<sup>7</sup>

In the West, "as soon as capitalism became fully established, and the bourgeois social and economic order firmly entrenched, this order was 'consciously or unconsciously' accepted as history's 'terminal station,' and the discussion of social and economic change all but ceased."<sup>8</sup> It is thus not surprising to find that just like many of the modernization theorists who devote almost all their energy to abstract theorizing about development and modernization from purely Western and capitalist perspectives while being completely indifferent to the plight of the third world peoples and their objective demands for basic change, many of the so-called China experts examine Chinese politics and economy by applying the same theoretical framework and concepts that have been designed and used by bourgeois scholars to judge the operation of bourgeois politics and economy, while at the same time they dismiss as pure ideological rationalization or

propaganda what the Chinese have said of their own revolutionary transformation and the significant role of the Chinese masses in this struggle. The mass line as a pattern of thought and conduct in China, for example, has been seen as nothing more than "an organizational technique that enabled the Chinese Communists to gain the support of the masses without at the same time giving very much in exchange."<sup>9</sup> This approach amounts to "whipping the facts into line" and "altering the world to suit the theories,"<sup>10</sup> thus creating an intellectual tradition that blocks the way to a genuine understanding of the nature and essence of the Chinese revolution.

Fortunately, owing to the efforts of a concerned minority whose ranks have been growing since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (and especially after the ping-pong diplomacy of the early 1970's) and include both academic and non-academic scholars,<sup>11</sup> the dominant analyses of the Chinese revolution have now been fundamentally challenged. Central to this growing minority opinion is the view that the victory of the New Democratic Revolution and its subsequent achievements in the Chinese socialist construction have been due not to "happenstance and Communist opportunism" or coercive manipulation of the unwilling masses, but to the fact that the vanguards in the Chinese revolution have in the long years of their revolutionary practice developed a world outlook, an ideological commitment and concern, and a set of thought patterns, working styles and institutions conducive to their revolutionary success. These encourage and enable the leadership to constantly learn from the masses the concrete problems facing them and to gain their support by truly helping them to understand and resolve these problems.<sup>12</sup> In other words, this growing dissenting literature signifies an initial grasp of the important role of the mass line in shaping the course of the Chinese revolution.

## THE ORIGINS OF THE MASS LINE

The mass line (qunzhong luxian)\* is a central concept in revolutionary dialectics. It "permeates virtually every aspect of party, theory and practice" in China.<sup>13</sup> The mass line concept embodies a proletarian world outlook that is committed to serving the real needs and interests of the oppressed masses. To be able to serve the masses, one must not only know the objective world but must also be able to apply this knowledge to change the world. To accomplish this task of knowing and changing the world requires the constant practice of the mass line, because it is through it that theory and practice, knowing and doing, learning and teaching, the general and the particular, the abstract and the concrete, and the subjective and the objective can be brought into proper correspondence and linked in a unity. The mass line also prescribes a way of formulating and implementing policies and of conducting political and economic struggles, as well as a style of work and leadership, that facilitate and ensure the continuous integration of the general with the

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\*The Chinese characters for the romanized Chinese phrases are listed in the appendix.

particular and of the leadership with the masses. In sum, it is, in the Chinese way of life, the only correct method of recognizing and resolving contradictions existing between the two components of each of the above-mentioned contradictions.

One of the more important works on the practice of the mass line in China is Mark Selden's *Yenan Way*,<sup>14</sup> which provides a detailed description of the immediate reasons behind the formulation of the mass line and how it was actually practiced during the Yanan period. In Selden's view, it is primarily the devoted commitment of the Communist Party of China (CPC) to the goals of social revolution in China and to serve the basic needs of the peasant masses as expressed in the Yanan Way that won it the voluntary and enthusiastic support of the majority of the people in areas under its control.<sup>15</sup> While Selden's work is rich in information about the practical side of the mass line, he does not, however, advance his perceptual understanding of the mass line to a theoretical grasp of the ideology and world outlook behind the mass line. "Mao Tse-tung, not to mention Marx and Lenin, does not receive his due" in Selden's account.<sup>16</sup> The same failure can also be found in other studies of the mass line practice. While Selden maintains that the mass line had its origin during the Yanan period as a response to wartime necessities, other studies argue further that it was little more than a "mass image technique" or a high quality bait that the CPC could use to fish in the sea of the masses in a situation of power "vacuum."<sup>17</sup> The point is, however, that the mass line is neither a "Yenan legacy" nor a "mass image technique," but a world outlook and a style of work, study and leadership inherent and implicit in the principles of dialectical and historical materialism. The mass line is characteristic of the thought and behavioral pattern of the proletarian class which, if firmly grasped by leaders and masses alike, will become a mighty material force to transform the world. It is the very source of what the Chinese now call "the socialist new things" (*shehuizhuyi di xinshen shiwu*) which have emerged and been further developing in socialist China.<sup>18</sup>

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE MASS LINE BY THE CPC

During the Yanan period the Chinese Communist Party's understanding of the mass line advanced from a prior level of revolutionary practice to a comprehensive grasp of the essence of the mass line.

What is perceived cannot at once be comprehended and only what is comprehended can be more deeply perceived. Perception only solves the problem of phenomena; theory alone can solve the problems of essence.<sup>19</sup>

The Marxist theory of revolution was created when proletarian struggle had attained the level "of conscious and organized economic and political struggle."<sup>20</sup> Similarly, the mass line as a link between the universal viewpoint and methods of Marxism-Leninism and the concrete particularities of China came to be comprehended by the CPC leadership when the revolutionary development in China had entered the Yanan stage of large-scale, organized and conscious military, political and economic struggles.

It is true that Mao's early writings abound with the mass line idea. In fact, as John G. Gurley points out, the sequence actually followed by the CPC in conducting revolutionary struggles in the rural areas before the 1949 victory was first outlined by Mao in his 1927 Hunan report.<sup>21</sup> But it is also true that in his later writings on military affairs, on practice and on contradiction he began to "comprehend" and grasp the essence of a "national form" of Marxism-Leninism. This conceptual leap led to the formulation of the theory of the New Democratic Revolution in 1940. Later, the cheng-feng campaign in 1942-1944 crystallized the mass line idea implicit both in the principles of dialectical and historical materialism and in China's protracted revolutionary practice.<sup>22</sup> Of course, this does not mean that the mass line was not practiced by the CPC before the Yenan period. It only means that it was during and after the cheng-feng campaign that the CPC began to practice the mass line in a conscious and organized manner. Moreover, it should also be stressed again that the Yenan Way did not drop from the skies. Nor was it purely a product of "the Japanese offensive and the intensified Kuomintang blockade," although they might have accelerated the process of its conceptualization. The concrete form and content of the mass line emerged in the long revolutionary struggle undertaken by Mao Tsetung and his comrades since the 1920's against the enemies of the revolution and the dogmatists and empiricists within the CPC, and in the creative application of Marxism-Leninism to this struggle.

#### THE MASS LINE AND THE PROLETARIAN WORLD OUTLOOK

As an expression of the proletarian world outlook, the mass line is derived from the materialist concept of historical and social development. According to this concept, "it is man's social being that determines his thinking. Once the correct ideas characteristic of the advanced class are grasped by the masses, these ideas turn into a material force which changes society and changes the world."<sup>23</sup> The important fact here is that social being is created by the three fundamental activities of the laboring masses: production, class struggle, and scientific experiment. These activities produce the raw material for the formation of ideas. Since the laboring masses are constantly engaged in these three kinds of social practice, they are also in constant contact with and closest to the true source of knowledge. They therefore have the richest practical experience in social, political and economic life.

In class society, the role of the laboring masses as the true makers of history and the creators of material and spiritual civilization is totally denied by the ruling class. Instead, the ruling class claims credit for these creations and uses them as a weapon against the fundamental interests of their true creators. The mass line world outlook reverses this relationship and seeks to restore to the laboring masses their rightful position in history. It recognizes that "all social change is the outcome of revolutionary struggles by the masses" because they stand "for the development of social productive forces," while "the reactionary classes...want to preserve the old relations of production."

All advanced thinking and theories are the epitome of these struggles and mirror the revolutionary will of the masses; all science and technology are a crystallization of the practical experience of the masses; all progressive culture and art stem from the life of the people which is full of struggle. Without the masses' struggle for production, a society cannot possibly exist, still less can history develop. In class society, without the class struggle of the masses, the development of history is also out of the question.<sup>24</sup>

When the consciousness of the laboring masses is raised to the level of that of a revolutionary class, it becomes "the greatest productive power."<sup>25</sup> Hence, in the mass line world outlook, not only "the wealth of society is created by the workers, peasants and working intellectuals"<sup>26</sup> and "the people, and the people alone, are the motive force in the making of world history,"<sup>27</sup> but also "the masses have boundless creative power"<sup>28</sup> and they "are the real heroes" while the leaders themselves "are often childish and ignorant."<sup>29</sup>

On the eve of the proclamation of the People's Republic, Mao said: "Of all things in the world, people are the most precious. Under the leadership of the Communist Party, so long as there are people, every kind of miracle can be performed."<sup>30</sup> To achieve this, however, the people need the kind of leadership, advanced consciousness and organization that will create the material and spiritual condition for releasing the boundless creative power of the masses. The role of the leaders is significant because they may hasten or slow down the making of history by the masses. Nevertheless, they can only affect the tempo but not change the direction of historical progress. Heroes are born of revolutionary struggles, and can play their roles only when they are with the masses.<sup>31</sup>

Thus "heroes in various periods are those who come to the fore to answer the needs of the struggles of the masses;...every time history presents a new task of struggle, heroes who lead the masses in it are bound to emerge."<sup>32</sup>

#### NATIONAL VARIATIONS IN APPLYING THE MASS LINE

The mass line idea is also implicit in the law of the unity of opposites, or the theory of contradiction. Although contradiction is universal and absolute because it is "present in the process of development of all things and permeates every process from beginning to end," "the contradiction in each form of motion of matter has its particularity."<sup>33</sup> As Mao puts it, "It is precisely in the particularity of contradiction that the universality of contradiction resides."<sup>34</sup> It is the particularity of contradiction that gives birth to a great variety of different forms of matter and being. Each of these forms is regulated and influenced by a set of contradictions peculiar to the stage of its development. Thus "contradiction and struggle are universal and absolute, but the methods of resolving contradictions, that is, the forms of struggle, differ according to the differences in the nature of the contradictions."<sup>35</sup> On this basis, Mao argued in 1936 that although the civil war experience in the Soviet Union should be regarded as a guide for all Communist Parties in the world,

this does not mean that we should apply it mechanically to our own conditions. In many of its aspects China's revolutionary war has characteristics distinguishing it from the civil war in the Soviet Union. Of course it is wrong to take no account of these characteristics or deny their existence.<sup>36</sup>

If the Soviet experience were to be copied and applied to China "without allowing any change," Mao warned, "we shall...be 'cutting the feet to fit the shoes' and be defeated."<sup>37</sup>

Similarly, in applying Marxism to China, Chinese Communists must fully and properly integrate the universal truth of Marxism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution, or in other words, the universal truth of Marxism must be combined with specific national characteristics and acquire a definite national form if it is to be useful, and in no circumstances can it be applied subjectively as a mere formula. Marxists who make a fetish of formulas are simply playing the fool with Marxism and the Chinese revolution.<sup>38</sup>

Hence, "the crux is to bring the subjective and the objective into proper correspondence with each other."<sup>39</sup> Policies, or forms of struggle, if they are to be effective, must be brought into proper correspondence with the particular realities of the situation to which they are applied.

How does the mass line concept fit into this world outlook? "There are two methods," Mao wrote in 1943, "which we Communists must employ in whatever work we do. One is to combine the general with the particular; the other is to combine the leadership with the masses."<sup>40</sup> How does a Communist combine the general with the particular and the leadership with the masses? It is precisely here that the mass line plays its significant and indispensable role. It is the link or bridge between the two elements of each pair of the two contradictions — the general and the particular, and the leadership and the masses. It can play this role because it embodies the "dialectical world outlook" which "teaches us primarily how to observe and analyse the movement of opposites in different things and, on the basis of such analysis, to indicate the methods for resolving contradictions."<sup>41</sup> Thus, "our attitude towards every person and every matter should be one of analysis and study" based on the mass line world outlook.<sup>42</sup>

#### MASS LINE: INTEGRATION OF THE GENERAL WITH THE PARTICULAR

It is true that dialectical materialists state that man's social being determines his thinking, but "'social being' changes from place to place and, especially, from city to countryside. Since...social being reflects variety and uniqueness, so does the thinking of one who is part of it."<sup>43</sup> Consequently, if one encounters a concrete situation, one should make every effort to understand it not only in terms of its universal character but also in terms of its particular features. Speaking of Chinese teachers taking part in social practice, Donald J. Munro writes:

For the teacher qua teacher, the realm of social practice is coextensive with the so-called "concrete" (particular)

characteristics of any given geographical area and its unique social features. The Maoist insistence on describing the social environment in terms of diversity as well as pan-class features is operative at this point. ... A teacher who involves himself in the life of a given area sufficiently to know its features is engaging in social practice. His own thoughts are thereby remoulded. In brief, he no longer thinks of children in general; he thinks of children with specific cognitive localized vocabulary problems and knowledge needs, and particular attitudinal problems. His teaching approach is varied accordingly. The end result usually is spoken of as the resolution of a contradiction between desire to teach and those factors previously impeding success.<sup>44</sup>

The teacher in question is thus following the mass line approach whereby he brings about a proper correspondence between the general and the particular, the abstract and the concrete, and the subjective and the objective.

Fundamental to the idea of integrating the general with the particular are the principles of *yindi zhiyi* (adaptation to each locality, i.e., the best for and out of each locality) and *yinshi zhiyi* (adaptation to different times or stages of the development of a thing). These principles demand that ideas, policies, forms of struggle, theories or methodologies be adjusted not only to the particular conditions of the locality, group or any object to which they are to be applied (for example, foreign techniques to Chinese conditions, the urban approach to rural conditions, and the Tachai experience to other communes) but also to the different stages of the development of these conditions (for example, land reform during the period of the New Democratic Revolution and collectivization during the period of socialist construction). Through these principles, the principal contradiction and its principal aspect manifested in the particularities of a concrete situation or locality at a particular stage of its development can be correctly perceived, recognized and acted upon. The mass line is, therefore, the integrator of the general and the particular, as well as the correct method of recognizing and resolving contradictions among the people. In the Chinese view, "revolution means solving contradictions."<sup>45</sup>

The mass line is also the integrator of the leadership and the masses. This is implicit not only in the idea that the masses, not the heroes, are the true makers of history, but also in the view that "the emancipation of the workers must be the act of the workers themselves."<sup>46</sup> Proletarian leaders, before they become vanguards of the working class and other laboring masses, are the product and offspring of the spiritual and material being created by the masses, and thus they are a part of them and their permanent pupils. As such, they are objectively united with the masses and are duty-bound to work consciously to integrate themselves with the masses and to bring into play to the greatest extent possible the role of the latter as the makers of history. To judge whether a person is a revolutionary, Mao stated, the "only valid" criterion is "whether or not he is willing to integrate himself with the broad masses of workers and peasants and does so in practice."<sup>47</sup> Since

the advanced ideas and theories of the proletarian leaders are a reflection of the demand of the masses, they can be transformed into a material force to make history only when they are grasped and practiced by the masses in a conscious way. In other words, if he acts alone in attempting to accomplish any task without the enthusiastic participation of the masses, a leader is just like a fish out of water, however advanced his ideas may be. Therefore, proletarian leaders must rely upon the masses in all their undertakings, and their point of departure is not what they have to gain for themselves in their activities but "to serve the people wholeheartedly and never for a moment divorce (themselves) from the masses, to proceed in all cases from the interests of the people and not from the interests of individuals or groups."<sup>48</sup> In Mao's view, Communists are "like seeds and the people are like the soil. Wherever we go, we must unite with the people, take root and blossom among them."<sup>49</sup>

## THE MASSES MAKE THEIR OWN REVOLUTION

Letting the masses make their own revolution is another essential element of the mass line. In other words, every cause, be it revolution or construction, should be seen as the people's own and must be accomplished by the people themselves. Revolution should start and be carried out among the people from below and it should not be one-sidedly imposed and dictated "from the top."

In his directive of October 1, 1943, Mao stated:

As rent reduction is a mass struggle by the peasants, Party directives and government decrees should guide and help it instead of trying to bestow favors on the masses. To bestow rent reduction as a favor instead of arousing the masses to achieve it by their own action is wrong, and the results will not be solid.<sup>50</sup>

Earlier in 1927 Mao spoke of the same idea when he turned to the question of sweeping away peasants' superstitions and religious idols:

It is the peasants who made the idols, and when the time comes they will cast the idols aside with their own hands; there is no need for anyone else to do it for them prematurely. The Communist Party's propaganda policy in such matters should be "Draw the bow without shooting, just indicate the motions." It is for the peasants themselves to cast aside the idols, pull down the temples to the martyred virgins and the arches to the chaste and faithful widows; it is wrong for anybody to do it for them.<sup>51</sup>

On August 8, 1966, the decision of the Central Committee of the CPC concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution declared:

In the great proletarian cultural revolution, the only method is for the masses to liberate themselves, and any method of doing things on their behalf must not be used. Trust the masses, rely on them and respect their initiative. Cast out fear. Don't be afraid of disorder. ... Let the

masses educate themselves in this great revolutionary movement and learn to distinguish between right and wrong and between correct and incorrect ways of doing things.<sup>52</sup>

At the heart of these statements is the belief that only in the actual act of taking part in revolutionary struggle can the people truly transform themselves and their society. "We have always maintained," Mao declared, "that the revolution must rely on the masses of the people, on everyone taking a hand, and have opposed relying merely on a few persons issuing orders."<sup>53</sup>

## INTEGRATION OF MASSES AND LEADERS

Proletarian leaders are the founders of revolutionary ideas which reflect the objective demands of the masses, the disseminators of these ideas among the masses, and the organizers of their revolutionary struggles. These tasks can be accomplished only if and when the leaders are completely integrated with the masses in their social practice.

To originate ideas and formulate tasks (which require the practice of the mass line on the part of the leaders) is not enough; these ideas and tasks must be truly grasped by the masses and become a part of their consciousness before they can be transformed into an effective force to change society and man. To achieve this also requires the practice of the mass line and the total involvement and participation of the masses and leaders alike in all forms of political and economic struggles. The masses should not only be educated to know their revolutionary tasks; but they should also be shown why these tasks should be done and exactly how to achieve them.<sup>54</sup> "Even great storms are not to be feared. It is amid great storms that human society progresses."<sup>55</sup> "Plants raised in hot-houses are unlikely to be sturdy."<sup>56</sup> Thus only in this endless process of revolutionary learning and teaching and in the actual act of revolutionary struggle to change reality can leaders and masses truly grasp their revolutionary tasks, be completely integrated with one another, and the creative power of the masses be fully emancipated and released, thereby creating a fish-water relationship between them in which the leaders can swim freely in the sea of the masses. Of course, throughout this whole process, proletarian politics (i.e., the Marxist-Leninist viewpoint and methods and class struggle) must be in command; otherwise the mass line would amount to little more than what is commonly known as mass spontaneity or bourgeois populism. On the one hand, revolutionary tasks should be organized according to "the actual needs of the masses rather than what they fancy they need." On the other, these tasks should be carried out according to "the wishes of the masses, who must make up their minds instead of our making up their minds for them."<sup>57</sup>

## CREATIVE POWER OF THE PEOPLE RELEASED BY THE MASS LINE

Class struggle continues in the period of socialism, and strengthening the leading role of the working class is essential to resolving class contradictions in the P.R.C., to consolidating socialism, and to developing the productive

forces at a maximal rate.<sup>58</sup> Among the various components of the productive forces, the most important is human labor. This is even more so in a country where the level of industrial and technological development is very backward. Human labor as the most important component of the social productive forces, however, does not have an independent existence, because it exists only in man's physical being. Consequently, its concretization as an actual productive force is regulated and influenced by man's subjective consciousness, which is a reflection of his social being. In capitalist society, labor power becomes a commodity which is bought and sold in the market. During his working hours, a worker becomes a cog in the machine and loses control over the use of his own labor power. As a result, he is alienated from his productive activity and becomes frustrated, hoping that his working hours will pass quickly so that he can return home and be "free." Under capitalist relations of production, there is no way in which the creative power of the masses can be fully released for social production. In socialist China, owing to the revolutionary transformation of the economic base and the relations of production, although the masses still have to work, they no longer sell their labor power as a commodity. During their working hours, they not only work but also participate in the management of their productive activity, in planning and designing their products and improving their tools and skills, and in organizing political, cultural, educational and recreational activities in their production units. Since productive activity is a part of the community life and they are not alienated from it, they are able to maintain a high level of interest and enthusiasm in their work, bringing into play, to the greatest extent possible, their labor power. The important question here, however, is that the reflection of the new socialist economic base and relations of production in man's consciousness is not completely an automatic process. It is through the mass line method and style of leadership and organization that the new social being can truly penetrate and take hold in the consciousness of the masses. It is through the mass line that the contradictions facing the proletarian class can be properly resolved and a unity achieved between the objective and the subjective aspects of human labor. Thereby the "boundless creative power" of the masses can be fully released to perform "every kind of miracle."

#### THE MASS LINE METHOD AND STYLE OF LEADERSHIP AND WORK

It was mentioned earlier that the mass line also prescribes a way of formulating and implementing policies and a style of leadership and work. Since both follow logically from the mass line world outlook, they will be discussed only briefly here.

Basically, the mass line as the correct way of formulating and implementing policies in China is expressed in the phrase "from the masses, to the masses" (chong qunzhong zhong lai, dao qunzhong zhong qu). This phrase has a number of meanings. First, it is a learning process which requires a leader to maintain constant contact with, or be a part of, the social practice of the masses and always be concerned with their well-being and real needs. It is from this continuous contact and concern that one can form correct

ideas and conceive correct tasks about the objective world.

If you want to know a certain thing or a certain class of things directly, you must personally participate in the practical struggle to change reality, to change that thing or class of things, for only thus can you come into contact with them as phenomena. . . . This is the path to knowledge which every man actually travels.<sup>59</sup>

Thus, a leader, like everyone else, must constantly struggle against the tendency of three separations (san t'oli) from reality (class struggle), from the masses, and from productive labor, a tendency which was characteristic of the style of leadership of the traditional scholar-officials<sup>60</sup> and bourgeois politicians.

Second, "from the masses, to the masses" requires that before a policy or a form of struggle is formulated, a leader should gather ideas from the masses and their practical experience. Since the ideas of the masses are bound to be scattered and unsystematic, the task of the leader is to concentrate them into systematic ideas. The next task of the leader is to return these systematic ideas

to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action. Then once again concentrate ideas from the masses so that the ideas are persevered in and carried through. And so on, over and over again in an endless spiral, with the ideas becoming more correct, more vital and richer each time.<sup>61</sup>

It can be seen that the mass line method of formulating and implementing policies constitutes a part of the general process of revolutionary learning and teaching on the part of the leadership and the masses. In order to teach the masses, a leader should first learn from the masses and, based on this learning, provide correct guidance to mass action while allowing the masses to perform the action themselves. It is in this endless process of "from the masses, to the masses" that mass consciousness and mass ideas can be transformed into revolutionary consciousness and revolutionary ideas.

The endless process of learning, concentration, teaching, and then learning and so on is of utmost importance on the part of the leadership, especially

because people engaged in changing reality are usually subject to numerous limitations; they are limited not only by existing scientific and technological conditions but also by the development of the objective process itself and the degree to which this process has become manifest. . . . In such a situation, ideas, theories, plans or programs are usually altered partially and sometimes even wholly, because of the discovery of unforeseen circumstances in the course of practice.<sup>62</sup>

In other words, since social being is the source of true knowledge and social being is in a state of constant development and change, "there is no one



set of economic or social policies that can be considered technically superior or optimal at all times."<sup>63</sup>

As far as social movements are concerned, true revolutionary leaders must not only be good at correcting their ideas, theories, plans or programs when errors are discovered as the revolutionary process has already progressed and changed from one stage of development to another; they must also be good at making themselves and all their fellow-revolutionaries progress and advance in their subjective knowledge along with it — that is to say, they must ensure that the proposed new revolutionary tasks and new working programs correspond to new changes in the situation. In a revolutionary period, the situation changes very rapidly; if the knowledge of revolutionaries does not change rapidly in accordance with the changed situation, they will be unable to lead the revolution to victory.<sup>64</sup>

Such a mass line approach to making and implementing decisions imparts to the Chinese leadership a dynamism which promotes revolutionary activism and a deep ideological commitment to the well-being of the masses, as well as an ability to adapt programs and policies to changing times and to the changing stages of the Chinese revolution.

#### DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

The mass line as the correct style of leadership and work manifests itself in a number of ways. Basic to this style is the principle of democratic centralism. Seen from the mass line perspective, democracy is a process through which learning and teaching take place, and centralism is a process through which concentration of ideas and correct political line and guidance are provided. The various elements of the mass line style of leadership serve to maintain a proper balance between these two distinct processes.

Mao wrote in 1957:

Within the ranks of the people, democracy is correlative with centralism and freedom with discipline. They are the two opposites of a single entity, contradictory as well as united, and we should not one-sidedly emphasize one to the denial of the other. Within the ranks of the people, we cannot do without freedom, nor can we do without centralism. This unity of democracy and centralism, of freedom and discipline, constitutes our democratic centralism. Under this system, the people enjoy extensive democracy and freedom, but at the same time they have to keep within the bounds of socialist discipline.<sup>65</sup>

Democracy is needed because "however active the leading group may be, its activity will amount to fruitless effort by a handful of people unless combined with the activity of the masses."<sup>66</sup> Without democracy it is impossible to practice correct centralism. On the other hand, centralism is also essential because "if the masses alone are active without a strong leading group to

organize their activity properly, such activity cannot be sustained for long, or carried forward in the right direction, or raised to a high level."<sup>67</sup> Without centralism it is impossible to practice democracy. Since both democracy and centralism are indispensable, the main problem is to achieve a proper unity between them.

Democratic centralism can be widely and effectively practiced in mass organizations only when its efficacy is demonstrated in revolutionary struggle and the masses understand that it is the best means of mobilizing their forces and is of utmost help in their struggle.<sup>68</sup>

#### AVOID COMMANDISM AND ADVENTURISM

In Chinese politics, the correct way to achieve a unity between democracy and centralism and between freedom and discipline lies in practicing the mass line method and style of leadership. On the one hand, a leader is required to emphasize the importance of voluntary action by the masses. On the other, he is called upon to observe the principle of constantly leading the masses forward in their revolutionary struggle. In some situations, the leaders may see an objective need for change and yet the masses are not yet conscious of the need or not determined to make the change. At this stage, the tasks of the leaders should be concerned primarily with teaching the masses through persuasion and mobilization. "They should not make the change until, through their work, most of the masses have become conscious of the need and are willing and determined to carry it out." If the leaders do otherwise, Mao warned, "we shall isolate ourselves from the masses. Unless they are conscious and willing, any kind of work that requires their participation will turn out to be a mere formality and will fail."<sup>69</sup>

A leader who insists on bringing about a change without taking into account the level of political consciousness of the masses is committing a form of commandism. Commandism occurs when the action of the leaders oversteps the level of political consciousness of the masses and violates the principle of voluntary mass action. It "reflects the disease of impetuosity" and assumes that everything the leaders themselves understand is also understood by the masses. To overcome this mistake requires the leaders to emphasize their tasks of learning from the masses because "whether the masses understand (a task) and are ready to take action can be discovered only by going into their midst and making investigations. If we do so, we can avoid commandism."<sup>70</sup>

Commandism is also a manifestation of adventurism which occurs when the leaders try to go on the offensive while "the masses are not yet awakened." "If we insisted on leading the masses to do anything against their will, we would certainly fail."<sup>71</sup>

#### AVOID RIGHT OPPORTUNISM AND TAILISM

The opposite of adventurism is right opportunism, which is also a wrong style of leadership. This takes place if the leaders "did not advance when

the masses demand advance."<sup>72</sup> In this case, the leaders are behind the mass movement and are pulling it backward. Right opportunism also involves tailism, another incorrect style of work. Tailism is committed when leaders fall below the level of political consciousness of the masses and violate the principle of leading the masses forward. It "reflects the disease of dilatoriness" and assumes that the masses have no understanding of what the leaders themselves do not understand. But this is not always true; "it often happens that the masses outstrip us and are eager to advance a step when our comrades are still tailing behind certain backward elements," reflecting "the view of these backward elements" and mistaking "them for those of the broad masses."<sup>73</sup>

In Mao's view, true proletarian leaders must firmly grasp the mass line style of work and leadership and always be on guard against commandism, adventurism, right opportunism, and tailism. "Right deviations must be combated where the masses have not yet been aroused in earnest and the struggle has not yet unfolded, and 'Left' deviations must be guarded against where the masses have been aroused in earnest and the struggle has already unfolded." In military affairs, "Left" deviations must be combated "in times of victory" and Right opportunism must be guarded against "in times of defeat or when we are unable to win many battles."<sup>74</sup> This dialectical view of the mass line constitutes the underlying attitude of Mao Tsetung and his comrades toward the launching of the Great Leap Forward and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and their aftermaths.<sup>75</sup>

#### AVOID BUREAUCRATISM AND SECTARIANISM

Bureaucratism and sectarianism are another two wrong styles of work which go directly against the mass line. Bureaucratism is a tendency among cadres and administrators who lack a sense of responsibility to the people and to the party, who fail to conduct investigations and learn from the masses about their administrative problems, who become corrupt and degenerate and lord it over the people, or who conduct their work in a perfunctory spirit. Both bureaucratism and commandism are a manifestation of dogmatism and subjectivism, of carrying out party or governmental work merely by issuing orders or merely by making use of the administrative apparatus, the rule books, and party and state authority without taking the trouble to mobilize, organize, educate and patiently explain to the masses why and how they should voluntarily conform to the correct policies and tasks of the party and government. This style of work displays an aloofness and a lack of concern toward the fundamental interests of the broad masses. This deviation from the mass line is both a product and a cause of the three separations (*san t'oli*) and, in Mao's view, constitutes one of the "more important" sources of "disturbances" in socialist China, although it can be classified as a contradiction among the people which, if properly handled, can be resolved by the democratic method of "unity, criticism, unity." In other words, "in order to root out the causes of disturbances in our country, we must stamp out bureaucracy, greatly improve ideological and political education, and deal with all contradictions properly."<sup>76</sup>

Sectarianism is "an expression of subjectivism in organizational relations" manifested in both internal and external party relations.<sup>77</sup> In its internal relations, it tends to take the form of protecting and favoring small groups and individual undertakings while neglecting or ignoring the interests of the whole. In its external manifestation, sectarianism means isolation from and exclusiveness toward people outside the party, adopting a closed-door attitude and displaying no respect for the opinions of outsiders and non-party elements. All these tendencies violate the mass line which insists on not only "uniting the comrades throughout the Party" but also "uniting the people throughout the country" to complete the tasks of the Chinese revolution.<sup>78</sup> Proletarian leaders, Mao argued, "must never separate themselves from the majority of the people or neglect them by leading only a few progressive contingents in an isolated and rash advance, but must take care to forge close links between the progressive elements and the broad masses."<sup>79</sup> They

must listen attentively to the views of people outside the Party and let them have their say. If what they say is right, we ought to welcome it, and we should learn from their strong points; if it is wrong, we should let them finish what they are saying and then patiently explain things to them.<sup>80</sup>

Mao's statement that "our attitude towards ourselves should be 'to be insatiable in learning' and towards others 'to be tireless in teaching' is, therefore, central to the concept of the mass line."<sup>81</sup>

#### THE TASK OF REVOLUTIONARY LEADERS

Leaders or heroes of the proletariat and the revolutionary masses are the founders and disseminators of revolutionary ideas and the organizers of mass revolutionary struggles. These tasks of the leaders involve an endless process of learning and teaching. Mao declared in 1941:

We should place before the whole Party the task of making a systematic and thorough study of the situation around us (on the basis of the theory and method of Marxism-Leninism). . . . We should get our comrades to understand that the twofold basic task of the leading bodies of the Communist Party is to know conditions and to master policy; the former means knowing the world and the latter changing the world. We should get our comrades to understand that without investigation there is no right to speak.<sup>82</sup>

"Advanced ideas and theories are a reflection of the demand of the masses for revolution and an epitome of their experience in struggle; they will become a material force advancing history only when they are grasped by the masses."<sup>83</sup> Thus proletarian leaders, in representing the fundamental interests of the proletariat and of other working people, must constantly and consistently maintain the closest ties with the broad masses and their social practice (which is the only source of true knowledge) and must penetratingly sum up the experience of the masses in their practical activities. In other words, "Be a pupil before you become a teacher."<sup>84</sup> In this way, leaders can formu-

late correct ideas and recognize and grasp the particularities of the contradictions manifested in each concrete situation and locality.

To perform the task of changing the world, leaders must mobilize the masses to grasp correct and advanced ideas. In doing so, leaders must be with and among the masses, "arouse their enthusiasm and initiative, be concerned with their well-being, work earnestly and sincerely in their interests and solve all their problems of production and everyday life." If leaders do all these, Mao concluded in 1934, "the masses will surely support us and regard the revolution as their most glorious banner, as their very life."<sup>85</sup> According to the mass line world outlook, therefore, proletarian leaders must not only maintain constant ties with the masses, learn from them, sum up their practical experience, and act in accord with their fundamental interests; but they also must "be good at translating the Party's policy (i.e., theory and ideas) into action of the masses...be good at getting not only the leading cadres but also the broad masses to understand and master every movement and every struggle" they launch.<sup>86</sup>

#### STANDARDS OF LEADERSHIP

The mass line method and style of leadership and work are thus completely opposed to adventurism, opportunism, commandism, tailism, bureaucratism, and sectarianism. Apart from being required to be an integral part of the reality, the masses and productive labor, leaders are also called upon to behave and live according to the mass line style of work. They "should be modest and prudent, guard against arrogance and rashness, and serve the Chinese people heart and soul."<sup>87</sup> They should "preserve the style of plain living and hard struggle."<sup>88</sup> "Every Communist engaged in government work," Mao wrote in 1938,

should set an example of absolute integrity, of freedom from favoritism in making appointments and of hard work for little remuneration. Every Communist working among the masses should be their friend and not a boss over them, an indefatigable teacher and not a bureaucratic politician. At no time and in no circumstances should a Communist place his personal interests first; he should subordinate them to the interests of the nation and of the masses. Hence, selfishness, slacking, corruption, seeking the limelight, and so on, are most contemptible, while selflessness, working with all one's energy, whole-hearted devotion to public duty, and quiet hard work will command respect. Communists should work in harmony with all progressives outside the Party and endeavor to unite the entire people to do away with whatever is undesirable. ... As for people who are politically backward, Communists should not slight or despise them, but should befriend them, unite with them, convince them and encourage them to go forward. The attitude of Communists towards any person who has made mistakes in his work should be one of persuasion in order to help him change and start afresh and not one of exclusion, unless he is incorrigible.<sup>89</sup>

It is thus clear that the mass line provides the democratic base on which centralism is built. Freedom with leadership, and democracy under centralized guidance, create a political situation in China in which there are both centralism and democracy, discipline and freedom, and unified will and individual activism.

#### OVERCOMING DEVIATIONS FROM THE MASS LINE

In the history of the Chinese Communist movement, many tensions and political struggles arose largely because some leaders or groups of leaders were not able to live up to the mass line requirements. Deviations from the mass line were manifested in what Mao Tsetung called the "evils" of dogmatism, empiricism, commandism, tailism, sectarianism, bureaucracy, and an arrogant attitude. Whenever these evils emerged, Mao said in summing up his "twenty-four years of experience" in 1945, "the wrong tasks, policy and style of work" which "invariably disagree with the demands of the masses" also emerged. As a result, "they alienate us from the masses." Thus they "are definitely harmful and intolerable, and...anyone suffering from these maladies must overcome them."<sup>90</sup>

In Mao's view, the evils arising from deviations from the mass line can be overcome only through further development of the mass line contradictions or "ideological education on the mass line."<sup>91</sup> Hence the rectification campaign in the 1940's, the *san fan* (three anti) and *wu fan* (five anti) movements, the Hundred-Flower and Hundred-School campaigns, the Great Leap Forward and the Commune movement in the 1950's, the Socialist Education Campaign and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in the 1960's, and the campaigns against Confucius and Lin Piao, against bourgeois right and against the Right Deviationist wing to reverse correct verdicts in the 1970's have all been launched with the main aim of combating deviations from the mass line. Similarly, decentralization and despecialization in industry, the policies of walking on two legs and of eliminating the three great differences (between manual and mental labor, between city and countryside, between industry and agriculture), community control and participation in the communes, production units and schools, the May 7th cadre schools, the *xiafang* (downward transfer) system or the *shangshan xiexiang* (up to the mountains, down to the villages) movement, the open-door rectification and criticism-struggle-transformation practices, and the emphasis placed upon man being the decisive factor, politics being in command,<sup>92</sup> *yindi zhiyi, quanli xiafang* (downward transfer of authority or initiative), and *zhili genshen* (self-reliance) — all represent concrete efforts undertaken to institute the mass line world outlook and practice as a way of life and to ensure that "the good society, which implied prior industrialization," can be achieved "without in the process subverting the end by the very nature of the means."<sup>93</sup> In military affairs and in the fields of culture, art, literature and sport, the mass line is the guiding principle of thought and conduct. As opposed to the bourgeois view that "education is life and school is society," the mass line education in China upholds the principle that "life is education and society is a school."<sup>94</sup> In foreign affairs, the mass line is expressed primarily in the

view that "revolutionary movements can be neither exported nor imported"<sup>95</sup> and in the Chinese insistence upon the indispensability of self-reliance in the third-world peoples' revolutionary struggles.

#### DEVELOPING THE MASS LINE: A TORTUOUS ROAD

It should be emphasized that the various elements of the mass line should not be seen as a set of unchangeable rules subjectively stipulated and externally imposed upon the Chinese people by Mao Tsetung or the CPC. They are, in fact, a natural part of the proletarian ethics and morality that are implicit in the Marxist world outlook and take their concrete forms in China as products of the long revolutionary struggle to apply this world outlook to change Chinese society. As the process of revolution in China is still going on, the concept of the mass line continues to develop.

The reason why Marxism-Leninism has played such a great role in China since its introduction is that China's social conditions call for it, that it has been linked with the actual practice of the Chinese people's revolution and that the Chinese people have grasped it. Any ideology — even the very best, even Marxism-Leninism itself — is ineffective unless it is linked with the objective realities, meets objectively existing needs and has been grasped by the masses of the people. We are historical materialists, opposed to historical idealism.<sup>96</sup>

This paper has examined the mass line from the standpoint of the revolutionary theory and practice of the CPC. This does not mean that there is no gap between the ideal and reality in China. In fact, in any society, there is always a gap between the ideal and reality. At this stage of revolutionary development in China, the development of the mass line is undoubtedly conditioned by the fact that there is still class struggle and the role of a revolutionary vanguard is still crucial to the ultimate transformation of Chinese society from socialism to communism. What is significant is not whether there is a gap between mass line requirements and realities, but the fact that in Chinese politics the development of the mass line has consciously been advancing forward. In the course of this development, mass line patterns of thought and conduct have been created and consolidated to ensure that the revolutionary vanguard is not only a force for revolution but also a target of revolution open to self-criticism, criticism and transformation.

"Like every other activity in the world, revolution always follows a tortuous road and never a straight one."<sup>97</sup> Similarly, the development of the mass line in China also has had its ups and downs, its twists and turns, and its stage of relative rest and its stage of substantial change.

Marxism must still develop through struggle. Marxism can develop only through struggle, and not only is this true of the past and the present, it is necessarily true of the future as well. . . . Such struggles will never end. This is the law of development of truth and, naturally, of Marxism as well.<sup>98</sup>

The mass line develops through struggle. It is in the process of revolutionary struggle which the Chinese call "two steps forward, one step backward" that

Chinese leaders and masses can gradually come to a comprehensive grasp of the meaning and essence of the mass line as the crucial part of the proletarian superstructure and of the xinshen shiwu that have emerged, and are still emerging in China as a result of the revolutionary transformation of the economic base. It is precisely because there is always a gap (contradiction) between theory and reality that the process of revolution is a continuous one and that "Marxism... must develop along with the development of practice and cannot stand still."<sup>99</sup> Of course, Mao wrote in 1957,

even with the mass line mistakes may still occur in our work, but they will be fewer and easier to correct. The masses gain experience through struggle. From what is done correctly they learn how things should be done. From what is done wrong they learn useful lessons as to how mistakes should be avoided.<sup>100</sup>

In conclusion, the mass line is vital for the development of China's socialist economic base and of the new socialist human being arising from and interacting with this base. "One basic experience from our socialist construction over more than two decades," Chou En-lai stated in his report to the Tenth National Congress of the CPC in 1973, "is to rely on the masses. . . . we must persist in putting proletarian politics in command, vigorously launch mass movements and give full scope to the enthusiasm, wisdom and creativeness of the masses." He urged that all Chinese attach "importance to the class struggle in the superstructure, including all spheres of culture, (and) transform all parts of the superstructure which do not conform to the economic base."<sup>101</sup> As concretized in dang di santa zuofeng (the Party's three great work styles, namely, integrating theory with practice, maintaining close ties with the masses, practicing criticism and self-criticism),<sup>102</sup> mass participation in politics is now the central component of the Chinese way of life. The Chinese broad masses, tempered and trained by their own experience and with centralized guidance, are becoming masters of their own destiny.

## 1. Chinese characters for the romanized Chinese phrases:

yindi zhiyi

因地制宜

yinshi zhiyi

因时制宜

zhili genshen

自力更生

wu fan

五反

xiafang

下放

xinshen shiwu

新生事物

shehuizhuyi di xinshen shiwu

社会主义的新生事物

chong qunzhong zhong lai, dao qunzhong zhong qu

從群众中来, 到群众中去

dang di santa zuofeng

党的三大作风

quanli xiafang

权力下放

qunzhong luxian

群众路线

san fan

三反

san t'oli

三脱离

shangshan xiexiang

上山下乡

cheng-feng

整风

## 2. Footnotes

In the following footnotes, the Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung will be denoted by SW and the volume number. All four volumes were published by the Foreign Languages Press in Peking, volumes 1-3 in 1967, volume 4 in 1969. Similarly, Selected Readings from the Works of Mao Tse-tung (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1971) will be referred to as SR.

<sup>1</sup>Andrew L. March, "China: Image and Reality," Monthly Review, 27, 7 (December 1975), 41.

<sup>2</sup>Richard M. Pfeffer, "Serving the People and Continuing the Revolution," China Quarterly, 52 (October-December 1972), 621-622.

<sup>3</sup>Mark Selden, "People's War and the Transformation of Peasant Society: China and Vietnam," in Edward Friedman and Mark Selden (eds.), America's Asia: Dissenting Essays in Asian-American Relations (New York: Vintage Books, 1971), 358.

<sup>4</sup>Han Suyin, The Morning Deluge: Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Revolution 1893-1949 (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1972), 4.

<sup>5</sup>Jerome Ch'en's review of Han Suyin's The Morning Deluge in Pacific Affairs, 46, 2 (Summer 1973), 311.

<sup>6</sup>Jacques Guillermaz's review of Han Suyin's The Morning Deluge in China Quarterly, 55 (July-September 1973), 585.

<sup>7</sup>Roy Hofheinz, Jr., "The Ecology of Chinese Communist Success: Rural Influence Patterns, 1923-45" in A. Doak Barnett (ed.), Chinese Communist Politics in Action (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969), 5.

<sup>8</sup>Paul A. Baran, The Political Economy of Growth (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1957), 3.

<sup>9</sup>Pfeffer, op. cit., 623.

<sup>10</sup>Philip Corrigan, "China: Socialist Construction as Thought-Reform for Intellectuals," Journal of Contemporary Asia, 4, 3 (1974), 281. See also Tang Tsou, "Western Concepts and China's Historical Experience," World Politics, 22, 4 (July 1969), 655-691.

<sup>11</sup>These works include the contributions of Edgar Snow, Jack Belden and William Hinton and the valuable works produced by many other concerned Asian scholars and recent visitors to China. The fact that this minority is growing can be seen from the articles and reports in the Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, Journal of Contemporary Asia, Monthly Review, Modern China, New China, China Now, and the Hong Kong Chinese monthly The Seventies.

<sup>12</sup>Pfeffer, op. cit., 623.

<sup>13</sup>James R. Townsend, Political Participation in Communist China (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 72. Townsend's book is the only major work which focuses on mass participation in China produced by

bourgeois scholars, but like other conventional analyses, his study fails to understand the dialectical unity between centralism and democracy, discipline and freedom, centralization and decentralization, teaching and learning, and theory and practice in the Chinese process of mass participation. Although the mass line is the central concept in mass participation in China, Townsend devotes only a total of about ten pages in his book to the topic.

<sup>14</sup>Mark Selden, The Yen-an Way in Revolutionary China (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971). See also his "The Yen-an Legacy: The Mass Line" in A. Doak Barnett (ed.), op. cit., 99-151; and the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars, China: Inside the People's Republic (New York: Bantam Books, 1972), 35-70.

<sup>15</sup>Selden's findings pose a fundamental change to Chalmers A. Johnson's view that the CPC's success was due to its nationalist appeal to the peasants in the face of Japanese invasion. See Johnson's Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power: The Emergence of Revolutionary China 1937-1945 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1962). For other critiques of this book, see Elinor Lerner, "The Chinese Peasantry and Imperialism: A Critique of Chalmers Johnson's Peasant Nationalism and Communist Power," Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, 6, 2 (April-August 1974), 43-56; Donald Gillin, "Peasant Nationalism in the History of Chinese Communism," Journal of Asian Studies, 23, 2 (February 1964), 269-289; Lucien Bianco, Origins of the Chinese Revolution 1915-1949 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971), 140-166; Ralph Thaxton, "Some Critical Comments on Peasant Revolts and Revolutionary Politics in China," Journal of Asian Studies, 33, 2 (February 1974), 279-288; idem, When Peasants Took Power: A Theory of Peasant Revolution in China (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1975).

<sup>16</sup>Peter J. Seybolt's review of the Yen-an Way in China Quarterly, 51 (July-September 1972), 565.

<sup>17</sup>See Chalmers Johnson, "Chinese Communist Leadership and Mass Response: The Yen-an Period and the Socialist Education Campaign Period," in Ping-ti Ho and Tang Tsou (eds.), China in Crisis, Vol. 1, Book 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 397-437; John W. Lewis, Leadership in Communist China (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963); Arthur H. Steiner, "Current 'Mass-Line' Tactics in Communist China," American Political Science Review, 45, 2 (June 1951), 422-436; H. Pak, "Chinese Politics: The Nature of Its 'Mass Image' Technique," Asian Survey, 5, 4 (April 1965), 197-206; and Lowell Dittmer, "Mass Line and 'Mass Criticism' in China: An Analysis of the Fall of Liu Shao-ch'i," Asian Survey, 13, 8 (August 1973), 722-792. All these studies see the cheng-feng movement in 1942-1944 in which the mass line was formulated as a response to the urgent needs arising from the following circumstances: the demand for more well trained cadres due to wartime deaths, the expansion of guerrilla areas, and a sudden increase in party membership; the need for self-reliance to achieve self-sufficiency due to Japanese attack and Kuomintang Blockade; and the need of face-to-face contact between leaders and masses due to the backwardness of communications facilities in the Yen-an areas. Thus the mass line, in Selden's view, "was born of the crisis precipitated by the Japanese offensive and the intensified Kuomintang blockade" (The Yen-an Way, op. cit., 188). Another widely held view is that the mass line was devised by Mao Tsetung around the Yen-an period as a means of power struggle to get rid of his leftist opponents in the Party.

<sup>18</sup>For the concept of "the socialist new things", see Chih Meng, "Develop the Socialist New Things," Peking Review, 17, 51 (December 20, 1974), 9-11, 18.

<sup>19</sup>Mao Tsetung, "On Practice: On the Relation Between Knowledge and Practice, Between Knowing and Doing," SW, 1, 299.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 301.

<sup>21</sup>John G. Gurley, "The Formation of Mao's Economic Strategy, 1927-1949," Monthly Review, 27, 3 (July-August 1975), 60.

<sup>22</sup>Almost every piece of Mao's writings is impregnated with the idea of the mass line. The theme running through all his works is his constant concern with the well-being of the oppressed masses, with learning from them, with making revolution among them and with the integration of theory with practice, as well as his absolute confidence in the creative power of the masses. Specific elaborations of the mass line, however, can be found in his writings written around the Yen-an period, particularly in the articles "Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership" (SW, 3, 117-122) and "Get Organized!" (SW, 3, 153-162).

<sup>23</sup>Mao Tsetung, "Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?", SR, 502.

<sup>24</sup>Tien Chih-sung, "The Masses Are the Makers of History," Peking Review, 15, 29 (July 21, 1972), 8. See also "People Are the Decisive Factor," Peking Review, 13, 26 (June 26, 1970), 25-27; Nan Yu, "Relying on the Masses to Consolidate Proletarian Dictatorship," Peking Review, 18, 30 (July 25, 1975), 5-7; and Li Cheng, "Theory of Productive Forces: Its Counter-Revolutionary Essence," Peking Review, 16, 48 (November 30, 1973), 11-15.

<sup>25</sup>In The Poverty of Philosophy, Karl Marx wrote: "The greatest productive power is the revolutionary class itself." As quoted in Tien Chih-sung, op. cit., 8.

<sup>26</sup>Mao Tsetung, "Introductory Note to 'The Party Secretary Takes the Lead and All the Party Members Help Run the Co-Operatives'", The Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside, Chinese ed., Vol. 1 (Peking: renmin chubanshe, 1955).

<sup>27</sup>Mao Tsetung, "On Coalition Government," SW, 3, 207.

<sup>28</sup>Mao Tsetung, "Introductory Note to 'Surplus Labor Has Found a Way out'", The Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside, Chinese ed., Vol. 2 (Peking: renmin chubanshe, 1955).

<sup>29</sup>Mao Tsetung, "Preface and Postscript to Rural Surveys," SW, 3, 12.

<sup>30</sup>"Bankruptcy of Idealist Conception of History," SW, 4, 454.

<sup>31</sup>Tien Chih-sung, op. cit., 9.

<sup>32</sup>Loc. cit..

- 33 Mao Tsetung, "On Contradiction," SW, 1, 319.
- 34 Ibid., 316.
- 35 Ibid., 344.
- 36 "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War," SW, 1, 194-195.
- 37 Ibid., 181.
- 38 Mao Tsetung, "On New Democracy," SW, 2, 380-381.
- 39 Mao, "Problems of Strategy ...," op. cit., 187.
- 40 "Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership," op. cit., 117.
- 41 Mao, "On Contradiction," op. cit., 315.
- 42 Mao Tsetung, "Methods of Work of Party Committees," SW, 4, 381.
- 43 Donald J. Munro, "The Malleability of Man in Chinese Marxism," China Quarterly, 48 (October-December 1971), 633.
- 44 Loc. cit..
- 45 Li Kuo-tsai, "Revolution Means Solving Contradictions," Peking Review, 14, 16 (April 16, 1971), 4-7.
- 46 See Charles Bettelheim, Cultural Revolution and Industrial Organization in China: Changes in Management and the Division of Labor (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1974), 72.
- 47 "The Orientation of the Youth Movement," SW, 2, 246.
- 48 Mao, "On Coalition Government," op. cit., 265.
- 49 "On the Chungking Negotiations," SW, 4, 58.
- 50 "Spread the Campaign to Reduce Rent, Increase Production and 'Support the Government and Cherish the People' in the Base Areas," SW, 3, 131.
- 51 "Report on An Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan," SW, 1, 46. He restated the same position in 1957: "We cannot abolish religion by administrative decree or force people not to believe in it. We cannot compel people to give up idealism, any more than we can force them to believe in Marxism." "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," SR, 438.
- 52 "Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Concerning the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" (adopted on August 8, 1966), Peking Review, 9, 33 (August 12, 1966), 7-8. This is another

thread of thought that runs through all Mao's writings - that is, it is through actual experience in struggle to change reality that man can truly transform himself. For example, writing about eliminating "localism" of the peasantry in "The Struggle in the Ching Kang Mountains" (SW, 1, 93), Mao wrote: "reasoning can at best produce only limited results, and it takes White oppression, which is by no means localized, to do much more. For instance, it is only when counter-revolutionary 'joint suppression' campaigns by the two provinces made the people share a common lot in struggle that their localism is gradually broken down. Localism is declining as a result of many such lessons."

- 53 "A Talk to the Editorial Staff of the Shansi-Suiyuan Daily," SW, 4, 241-242.
- 54 John G. Gurley, op. cit., 91-92.
- 55 Mao Tsetung, "Speech at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference on Propaganda Work," SR, 495.
- 56 Mao, "On the Correct Handling ...," op. cit., 465.
- 57 Mao Tsetung, "The United Front in Cultural Work," SW, 3, 187.
- 58 Gurley, op. cit., 108.
- 59 Mao, "On Practice ...," op. cit., 299-300.
- 60 In China's feudal past, some scholar-officials did indeed come from the ranks of the masses but as soon as they became scholars and officials, they alienated themselves from the masses. They became "superior men" or "men above men" who ruled the people from the above, divorcing themselves from reality, from the masses and from productive labor. They escaped their own class and did not lift it but being co-opted to the ruling class, became its oppressor.
- 61 Mao, "Some Questions ...," op. cit., 119.
- 62 Mao, "On Practice ...," op. cit., 306. The same learning process also takes place in military affairs. "The process of knowing a situation," Mao wrote, "goes on not only before the formulation of a military plan but also after. In carrying out the plan from the moment it is put into effect to the end of the operation, there is another process of knowing the situation, namely, the process of practice. In the course of this process, it is necessary to examine anew whether the plan worked out in the preceding process corresponds with reality. If it does not ..., or if it does not fully do so, then in the light of our new knowledge, it becomes necessary to form new judgments, make new decisions and change the original plan so as to meet the new situation. The plan is partially changed in almost every operation, and sometimes it is even changed completely. A rash man who does not understand the need for such alterations or is unwilling to make them, but who acts blindly, will inevitably run his head against a brick wall." "Problems of Strategy ...," op. cit., 188-189.
- 63 Gurley, op. cit., 101.

- 64 Mao, "On Practice ...," op. cit., 306.
- 65 Mao, "On the Correct Handling ...," op. cit., 438.
- 66 Mao, "Some Questions ...," op. cit., 118.
- 67 Loc. cit..
- 68 "The Struggle in the Ching Kang Mountains," op. cit., 91.
- 69 Mao, "The United Front ...," op. cit., 186.
- 70 Mao, "On Coalition Government," op. cit., 266.
- 71 Mao, "A Talk ...," op. cit., 243.
- 72 Loc. cit..
- 73 Mao, "On Coalition Government," op. cit., 266.
- 74 Mao Tsetung, "On Some Important Problems of the Party's Present Policy," SW, 4, 182.
- 75 This dialectical principle was illustrated by Chou En-lai in 1973 when he said: "It is imperative to note that one tendency covers another. The opposition to Chen Tu-hsiu's Right opportunism which advocated 'all alliance, no struggle' covered Wang Ming's 'Left' opportunism which advocated 'all struggle, no alliance'. The rectification of Wang Ming's 'Left' deviation covered Wang Ming's Right deviation. The struggle against Liu Shao-ch'i's revisionism covered Lin Piao's revisionism. There were many instances in the past where one tendency covered another and when a tide came, the majority went along with it, while only a few withstood it." "Report to the Tenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China," Peking Review, 16, 35-36 (September 7, 1973), 21. For an analysis of the various tendencies emerging in the midst of the cultural revolution, see William Hinton, Turning Point in China: An Essay on Cultural Revolution (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972), and idem, "Hundred Day War: The Cultural Revolution at Tsinghua University," Monthly Review, a special issue, 24, 3 (July-August 1972).
- 76 Mao, "On the Correct Handling ...," op. cit., 471, 470.
- 77 Mao Tsetung, "Rectify the Party's Style of Work," SW, 3, 49.
- 78 Ibid., 47-48.
- 79 Mao Tsetung, "The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War," SW, 2, 201.
- 80 Mao Tsetung, "Speech at the Assembly of Representatives of the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region," SW, 3, 33. In "The Tasks for 1945" (in Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung, Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1972, 162), Mao wrote: "anyone should be allowed to speak out, whoever he may be, so long as he is not a hostile element and does not make

malicious attacks, and it does not matter if he says something wrong. Leaders at all levels have the duty to listen to others. Two principles must be observed: (1) Say all you know and say it without reserve; (2) Don't blame the speaker but take his words as a warning."

- 81 "The Role ...," op. cit., 210.
- 82 Mao Tsetung, "Reform Our Study," SW, 3, 23.
- 83 Tien Chih-sung, op. cit., 9.
- 84 Mao Tsetung, "Methods of Work ...," op. cit., 378. Referring to his 1927 survey of the peasant movements in Hunan, in which he approached "cadres, the peasants, the hsiutsai, the jailer, the merchant and the revenue clerk," Mao wrote in 1941: these people "were all my esteemed teachers, and as their pupil I had to be respectful and diligent and comradely in my attitude; otherwise they would not have spoken or, if they spoke, would not have told all they knew." Mao admitted that these people "gave me a great deal of information I had never even heard of." "Preface and Postscript ...," op. cit., 12.
- 85 "Be Concerned with the Well-Being of the Masses, Pay Attention to Methods of Work," SW, 1, 149-150.
- 86 Mao Tsetung, "A Talk ...," op. cit., 242-243.
- 87 Mao Tsetung, "China's Two Possible Destinies," SW, 3, 203.
- 88 Mao Tsetung, "Report to the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China," SW, 4, 374.
- 89 Mao, "The Role ...," op. cit., 198.
- 90 "On Coalition Government," op. cit., 265.
- 91 Mao, "A Talk ...," op. cit., 242.
- 92 See Jack Gray, "Politics in Command: The Maoist Theory of Social Change and Economic Growth," Political Quarterly, 45, 1 (January-March 1974), 26-48. For an analysis of decentralization and despecialization in industry, see Steve Andors, "Robbes and Weber vs. Marx and Mao: The Political Economy of Decentralization in China," Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars, 6, 3 (September-October 1974), 19-34; John G. Gurley, "Capitalist and Maoist Economic Development," and Stephen Andors, "Revolution and Modernization: Man and Machine in Industrializing Societies, the Chinese Case," both in Edward Friedman and Mark Selden (eds.), op. cit., 324-356 and 393-444; and Charles Bettelheim, op. cit..
- 93 Pfeffer, op. cit., 626.
- 94 Jack Belden, China Shakes the World (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1970), 116. See also Peter Mauger et al., Education in China (London: Anglo-Chinese Educational Institute, 1974).



- 95 Mao statement on the dissolution of the Comintern on May 26, 1943. See Stuart R. Schram, The Political Thought of Mao Tse-tung (New York: Praeger, 1969), 421.
- 96 Mao, "Bankruptcy . . .," op. cit., 457.
- 97 Mao Tsetung, "On Tactics Against Japanese Imperialism," SW, 1, 165.
- 98 Mao, "On the Correct Handling . . .," op. cit., 464.
- 99 Mao Tsetung, "Speech at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference on Propaganda Work," op. cit., 496. In this 1957 speech, Mao continued: Marxism "would become lifeless if it remained stagnant and stereotyped. However, the basic principles of Marxism must never be violated, or otherwise mistakes will be made. It is dogmatism to approach Marxism from a metaphysical point of view and to regard it as something rigid. It is revisionism to negate the basic principles of Marxism and to negate its universal truth." Loc. cit..
- 100 Mao, "On the Correct Handling . . .," op. cit., 449.
- 101 Chou En-lai, "Report . . .," op. cit., 25, 24. For a very thoughtful discussion of the nature of the mutual relations in socialist production, see "shehuizhuyi shenchan zhong di fuxian guanxi - shang" (Mutual Relations in Socialist Production - Part I), Xuexi Yu Pipan (Studies and Criticisms), 6 (1975), 52-57; and "shehuizhuyi shenchan zhong di fuxian guanxi - xia" (Mutual Relations in Socialist Production - Part II), Xuexi Yu Pipan, 8 (1975), 62-71, 29.
- 102 A brief discussion of the three great work styles can be found in dang di juchu zhishi (Party's Basic Knowledge), (Shanghai: renmin chubanshe, 1974), 84-97.

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## CONCRETE EXAMPLES OF "MASS LINE" APPLICATION

Far East Reporter Selections  
From Peking Review

### THE MASS LINE MEANS: THE MARXIST-LENINIST VIEWPOINT AND METHODS MUST BE IN COMMAND

In 1973 the Hsipu Production Brigade in the Chienming People's Commune in Tsunhua County in Hopei Province organized a theoretical study group, made up mainly of cadres in the Party, the Communist Youth League and the militia. "We hope that through sustained efforts 'vast numbers of our cadres and the people will be able to arm themselves with the basic theories of Marxism.'" By December 1974 membership in the group had grown from a dozen or so to twenty-three; Wang Shun, the deputy secretary of the Party, is its leader. This is a theoretical contingent made up of poor and lower-middle peasants.

The first lesson in the study group was the Party's basic line in the historical period of socialism. As they studied, the members reviewed the history of class struggle and the struggle between the two lines in their brigade.

During the three years of temporary difficulties (1959-1961), former brigade leader Tu Kwei tried to share out the fruit trees of the collective to individual households and sell the collective fruit on the free market. Wang Kuo-fan — the leader of the agricultural producers' cooperative of 23 poor peasant families set up in 1953 when the peasants got land in the land reform — firmly opposed this and persisted in taking the socialist road. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1968) Tu Kwei tried to hood-wink some commune members into labeling Wang Kuo-fan as a capitalist roader. After careful investigation and study, it was proved that Tu Kwei had been corrupted by landlords for a long time before and had become the landlord class' agent in the Party. Through study everyone analyzed these social phenomena from a theoretical level and enhanced their understanding that the overthrown exploiting classes were not resigned to defeat but would always try to regain their lost paradise and find agents in the Party. Just as the Party's basic line has pointed out, there are still classes, class contradictions and class struggle throughout the historical period of socialism. In order not to lose one's bearing amid the sharp and complicated class struggle and the two-line struggle it is imperative to arm oneself with Marxism.

The members mainly study individually, but the class meets every five evenings for collective study. In the last year or so they have studied such Marxist-Leninist classical writings as The Manifesto of the Communist Party, The Civil War in France, and State and Revolution, as well as Chairman Mao's philosophical works and military writings.

Members of the theoretical study group act as tutors for the masses. Today

not only do the young and able-bodied brigade members spend an evening a week studying political theory, but all the women of the village, including some in their sixties and seventies, have been organized into 18 study groups. There has been a big change in their mental outlook as a result of study, and they now observe and analyze problems from the viewpoint of class struggle and the two-line struggle. They do a good job farming and grow more grain as their contribution to the Chinese revolution and the world revolution.

The village has a "Red Grannies" study group that frequently meets on warm brick-oven beds in winter and under shady trees in summer to study revolutionary theory and to learn to read. Seeing the other brigade members working so hard for the revolution and the collective, these elderly women were loath to live in idleness. In 1971 they began reclaiming a small piece of land from the river bank each year. They cultivated it and then handed it over to their production team the next year when they began reclaiming another piece of land. They said that this was doing their bit for socialist construction.

(From Peking Review, December 20, 1974)

#### THE MASS LINE MEANS: INTEGRATION OF MASSES AND LEADERS

Not long ago we visited Lankao County (one of China's more than 2200 counties) in the eastern part of Honan Province where we saw cadres paying attention to improving their relations with the peasants. In our socialist society, relations between leaders and masses are an important link in men's relations with one another.

Under the socialist system, cadres should be servants of the people. They are ordinary laborers and not overlords riding on the people's backs. Cadres should always guard against corrosion by bourgeois ideology; Lankao has a fine tradition in this respect.

Cadres at all levels in Lankao have now formed the habit of consciously taking part in manual labour. The county Party committee has set up a strict system, requiring cadres at the county level to do productive labour at least 100 days a year, cadres at commune level 200 days, and those at the brigade level 300 days. After a cadre has finished a day's work, it is jotted down in a small notebook by the production team, stating when he or she was there and what he or she did. These are published at regular intervals for all to check, compare and appraise.

Comrade Chiao Yu-lu, who was secretary of Lankao's Party committee in 1962, was praised as "a good student of Chairman Mao's and a fine example for county Party secretaries." When he first came to Lankao the county was hit by severe natural calamities. He led the masses in fighting the revisionist line and the once rampant capitalist tendency, and organized the peasants to struggle against the "Three Scourges"—water-logging, sandstorms and alkaline soil. Big success resulted.

Chiao was diligent in work. When heavy snows fell he visited the poor and lower-middle peasants whose living conditions were not so good, and attended

to their needs; and he went to the outlying districts to chart the "funnels" that wind-driven sand whistled through when sandstorms were at their peak, in order to study how to draw up a plan to hold down the shifting sand. When torrential rains poured down, he waded into rushing torrents to observe and determine the force and volume of the flow, so as to take appropriate measures to check them. Although he suffered from serious liver trouble, he worked from dawn till dusk until his untimely death in May 1964.

When we visited Lankao this year (1975) we saw that the young species of Paulownia that Chiao Yu-lu had planted had become trees and that the whole county was afforested under his influence. The once barren sandy land had become green tree belts. Wheat, cotton and rape seed cover the three old courses of the Yellow River on which nothing grew... Lankao has changed. Peasants miss Comrade Chiao, and cadres in the county follow the example set by him in serving the people.

Lankao's cadres pay attention to maintaining a style of hard work and plain living. Although production has been swiftly expanded and the people's living standards have improved steadily, the office of the County Party Committee is still in a modest house... First Secretary Chang Chin-li and another secretary set up their office in a small building erected before Liberation, whose walls were pock-marked with bullet holes left over from the war days. Though repairs were done on several occasions, the building was so dilapidated that it had to be pulled down and rebuilt. When Chang Chin-li heard that the County's financial bureau had allocated money for this, he did not agree and spent the money instead to build power stations in the rural areas. Chang and the other Party secretary found two other old rooms for their office. The County Party Committee provides cars for its leading members, but they choose to ride bicycles, like ordinary peasants do, when they go to the countryside unless there is something urgent. Why? Chang Chin-li was right in saying: "We cadres should set strict demands on ourselves and see to it that we share the good and the bad with the masses at all times. Wasting wealth created by the labouring people is criminal."

Lankao's cadres regard doing manual labour as a major measure of fundamental importance for combating and preventing revisionism, and for resisting corrosion by bourgeois ideology. They say being divorced from manual labor will surely lead to separation from the labouring people. Every one of them takes part in manual labour in a fixed production team.

Lankao's cadres listen to criticism and are ready to make self-criticism, not only making criticism among themselves and correcting mistakes as soon as discovered, but they also listen to the peasants' opinions through various channels including a special office set up by the county Party Committee for receiving visitors and for answering letters; also by cadres going to the countryside to gather opinions by holding forums of poor and lower-middle peasants at regular periods.

We heard a good deal about running the people's communes in a democratic way. Each of the nine production teams in the Laohanling Brigade of the Cheng-kuan Commune convenes monthly a democratic financial meeting at which the accountant reports to all members the team's income and

expenses for the month and the members discuss and approve them item by item.

A commune member once borrowed a sum from his team to buy expensive gifts for his would-be daughter-in-law. This was, of course, an old practice. When the accountant read out this item the gathering was astir immediately. Criticism from the young women was particularly severe; they pointed out that giving expensive presents to a would-be daughter-in-law was a backward custom and it showed that regarding matrimony as a money transaction has not been wiped out. The team authorities had not only failed to educate the members but had loaned the money; that meant the team had supported the mistaken idea. Both team leader and accountant agreed with the team members and made an on-the-spot self-criticism. The borrower of the money also came to understand through the discussion that his action stemmed from his outdated ideology. Such meetings are not limited to the financial side only. Members can air their views about the team's political life, production plan and management, as well as the work style of the cadres, thereby playing a supervisory role.

Workers, poor and lower-middle peasants and other labouring masses have the right to exercise revolutionary supervision over Party and State cadres at all levels. This concept has been strengthened since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. The new Constitution of the Communist Party of China adopted by the 10th Party Congress (1973) explicitly sets forth that the Party organizations and leaders at all levels must accept the supervision of the masses both inside and outside the Party and that "it is absolutely impermissible to suppress criticism and to retaliate."

(From Peking Review, October 3, 1975)

#### THE MASS LINE MEANS: THE MASSES HAVE BOUNDLESS CREATIVE POWER

The second year after the birth of the new China saw the beginning of a project for harnessing the Huai River. Following this, work has been done on the Yangtze, the Yellow River and many other rivers. Such large-scale water-conservancy projects involved broad areas and huge amounts of work. The mass line was carried out in North China's biggest water conservancy project: bringing the Haiho River under permanent control.

The Haiho River and its tributaries form a big river system in North China, its basin occupying more than 70% of the area of Hopei Province, parts of Shantung, Shansi and Honan Provinces, and a section of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. The Haiho system is made up of five big rivers which take in more than 300 branches on the upper reaches. Converging near Tientsin, the five rivers flow into the 72-kilometre-long narrow Haiho River which empties into the Pohai Sea. The original water-discharging capacity at the estuary was only 1300 cubic metres per second, yet the volume of water from the tributaries on the upper reaches often increased to tens of thousands of cubic metres a second. Silt-laden water, from the upper reaches

in the mountains, flowing down to the lower reaches in a plain, choked up the river bed, raising the level and often causing floods. With rainfall usually concentrated in summer and autumn, the basin suffered from serious drought the rest of the year if there was no rain. In the coastal and low-lying areas, floodwaters from the upper reaches and rain water found no way out and accumulated in the fields. Gradually over a long period the soil became alkaline. Flood, water-logging, drought and alkaline were the four disasters of the Haiho River basin. On November 17, 1963, Chairman Mao issued a call: "The Haiho River must be brought under permanent control."

There are two different principles in building water conservancy works. One is to depend solely on state investments and allocation of equipment and material, a small number of specialists to design a few huge projects behind closed doors, and a professional construction contingent to do the work. The other is to mobilize millions of people, giving full play to the collective strength of the rural people's communes and the peasants' socialist enthusiasm, and to construct a great number of small or accessory works while big or medium-sized key projects are under way. This is a kind of "people's war."

A stupendous amount of work went into harnessing the Haiho. The main projects completed by 1973 include 4300 kilometres of flood-preventing dykes, the biggest, eight metres high and ten metres wide; and 34 trunk channels harnessed or nearly dug, totaling 3700 kilometres in length, the widest 3000 metres, 8 metres deep. Also completed were over 80 big and medium-sized reservoirs (a big one stores more than 100 million cubic metres of water; a medium-sized one stores between 10 and 100 million) and more than 60,000 culverts, sluice gates and bridges. In Hopei Province alone, 2500 million cubic metres of earth were dug up for waterways; if made into a dyke one metre high and one metre wide, it would go around the globe 61 times.

How was such an enormous amount of work accomplished? How were solutions found to the problems of manpower, money, equipment, material and technique?

We relied mainly on the peasant masses for manpower. ... They worked selflessly out of a strong desire to transform their native villages and to accelerate their motherland's socialist construction.

The state provided modern equipment including tractors, spike rollers, dredgers, derricks and trucks. Still, China is a developing country; we do not have enough machines, so a great part of the work was done with spades and rubber-tyred handcarts that the peasant workers brought with them. In addition, the peasants themselves made pulleys for moving carts up and down the slopes and used reed or mud moulds for concrete instead of wooden ones. Short of trucks, the peasants brought horse-carts from their communes or production brigades. The state allocated large amounts of rolled steel, cement, bricks, tile and timber for the Haiho Project.

Nevertheless, the peasants thought of ways to economize. They substituted willow branches and mats woven of sorghum stalks brought from their home villages for brick, tiles and timber to build simple movable houses for living quarters, spending only 10% of the money allocated by the state for housing. With a view to cutting down state expenditures, the peasants suggested that

the collective economy of the production brigades should be responsible for a big part of the expense — wouldn't they benefit from flood control? After all, the interests of the state, the commune and its members were the same.

People from other trades also gave active support. Road-builders rushed through paving the highways before the peasants came to the work-site. The post and telecommunications department was prompt in equipping the work-site with its service. Commercial establishments set up small retail shops; barbers, shoe-repairers and other service workers came. Pupils nearby were eager to do their bit. Children of a primary school presented a handcart they had bought with money from selling fodder collected in their spare time.

The labouring people have incalculable strength and the deepest wisdom. We relied on the masses to overcome technical difficulties in taming the river. . . . The Surveying and Designing Institute at the Headquarters for Harnessing the Haiho River in Hopei Province has only 200 engineers and technicians; they did their designing, outside their offices, with the masses. The first requirement for designing was a complete file of hydrological data from the past, but the Kuomintang reactionary rulers had left none. . . only general notations were found, such as "continuing rain during such and such a month in a certain year inundated the fields." The figures for the biggest flood-water flow per second in history was an important reference but there were no ready data available. The designing board went among the masses to investigate. An old peasant recalled: "A flood in 1939 swallowed up all the houses in the village and destroyed them; only the top structure of the gate of a landlord's house was above water." Another said: "Water came right up to the Buddha's feet in the temple north of the village." By following up these clues and by repeated checking on flood traces, they worked out the needed figures.

A new river 2500 metres wide and 140 kilometres long was to be dug to eliminate the threat of flood from the Tzuya River. Out of long years of experience, peasants at the site suggested: "Big floods don't necessarily come even once in eight or ten years. Why not dig a river that takes up less farm land?" Together with the designers they drew up another plan.

Often the textbooks offered only general principles for dealing with some of the many technical problems (that) cropped up in taming the river. Again and again, solutions suited to time and locality came from the practice of the masses. Other problems which found no mention at all in technical documents depended even more heavily on the peasants' collective wisdom for answers. These new experiences further enriched the theoretical knowledge in river harnessing.

It would have been impossible to complete such large-scale water-conservancy projects by relying only on state investments, a small number of specialists and technicians, and teams of professional construction workers without enlisting the strength and wisdom of the masses, following the mass line or launching mass campaigns.

(From Peking Review, September 27, 1974)

## THE MASS LINE MEANS: WORKERS TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN ESTABLISHING AND RUNNING THEIR LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS

The large number of schools established in the Chinese countryside after Liberation provide the poor and lower-middle peasants and their children with an opportunity to study. Our schools are designed to train workers with both socialist consciousness and culture.

Before the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution the schools basically followed a revisionist line, with education divorced from proletarian politics, from the worker and peasant masses, and from production. In order to effect a thorough change of the situation in which the bourgeois intellectuals controlled the schools, workers' Mao Tsetung Thought Propaganda Teams came to stay in the urban schools during the Great Cultural Revolution. At the same time, Chairman Mao pointed out: "In the countryside, schools and colleges should be managed by the poor and lower-middle peasants — the most reliable ally of the working class."

In 1968 the Hsipu Brigade set up an educational revolutionary committee with poor and lower-middle peasants as its main body; the committee has since formally taken part in the management of a nine-year school belonging to the brigade. The chairman of the committee is deputy secretary of the brigade Party branch, Wang Jung, and its permanent representative to the school is Wang Shen, an elderly poor peasant. The committee takes part in decisions on major issues in the school and sees to it that it keeps to the correct orientation. The school has to report to the committee on matters relating to enrollment, examinations and curriculum. . . . Wang Shen often goes to the school to listen to the teachers' lectures and when he finds something wrong he sets things right without delay. With the school managed by the poor and lower-middle peasants, the educational revolution has had gratifying results and education has advanced very rapidly. All children of the poor and lower-middle peasants are in school. The commune now has four middle schools with more than 900 students, and each brigade has a primary school with a combined enrollment of more than 2100. The quality of the teaching has also been enormously improved.

The cooperative medical services and "barefoot doctors" are new creations of the peasant masses who rely on the collective strength to fight diseases. Before Liu Shao-chi's pushing a revisionist line before the Cultural Revolution, health work served only a small number of urban people, and doctors and medicine were lacking in the rural areas. At that time there was only one clinic, staffed by three doctors, in the Chienming Commune of 14,000 people. Since the beginning of the Cultural Revolution Chairman Mao's principle, "In medical and health work, put stress on the rural areas," has been implemented. The ranks of rural barefoot doctors, who are not divorced from production, have rapidly expanded and the cooperative medical service has been established all over the countryside. The Hsipu Brigade began training its own barefoot doctors in 1968 and set up its cooperative medical station in 1970. Of the station's eight barefoot doctors, all but one are young people chosen from the production teams. These doctors have either

attended six-month medical training classes run by the county or have been given short-term training.

Every brigade member pays one yuan a year to the medical fund and the brigade pays one yuan annually for each member out of its public accumulation. Thus brigade members get medical treatment and medicine without extra charge.

The barefoot doctors know the health conditions of the village's more than 1100 people like they know the palms of their own hands and often visit the sick in their homes. Patients can send for a doctor in the night. These doctors adhere to the principle of "putting prevention first." They keep the wells clean; they keep the latrines in sanitary condition; they prepare preventative decoctions in advance and distribute them to the brigade members in seasons when infectious diseases may appear. Thanks to their efforts some common epidemic diseases frequently seen in the past have disappeared over the last few years. They and the masses collect medicinal herbs in the hills during their spare time and give them to the medical station. Twenty-three kinds of medicinal herbs are intercropped with wheat on a plot the brigade has allotted.

As a result of carrying out the correct line, medical and health work in the Chienming Commune has made rapid advance. The commune now has a hospital; all the brigades have instituted the cooperative medical service and there are more than seventy barefoot doctors.

The revolutionary teacher Lenin said: "The working class is not separated by a Chinese wall from the old bourgeois society. And when a revolution takes place, it does not happen as in the case of the death of an individual, when the deceased is simply removed. When the old society perishes, its corpse cannot be nailed up in a coffin and lowered into the grave. It disintegrates in our midst; the corpse rots and infects us." The landlords' land in China was confiscated and socialist transformation of capitalist enterprises carried out. But ideas of the landlord and capitalist classes will not automatically step down from the stage of history and the existence of exploiting-class ideology is incompatible with the socialist economic base. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out revolution in the political and ideological fields and continuously clear out the old ideology. Mao Tsetung pointed out: "Put destruction first, and in the process you have construction." The new ideas, new culture, new customs and new habits are being formed steadily in the countryside.

Led by the Party organizations, the poor and lower-middle peasants of the Chienming Commune and the Hsipu Brigade now occupy the rural ideological and cultural positions.

(From Peking Review, December 27, 1974)

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Cont'd. from Inside Front Cover

To make concrete the use the Chinese have made and are making of the mass line, selected writings from Chinese sources are appended to Dr. Cham's essay.

In addition to the extensive bibliography provided by his references, the reader will also find a useful list of supplementary source material compiled by Dr. Cham.\*

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\*Many of the works listed can be obtained from China Books & Periodicals in their San Francisco, Chicago and New York bookshops.

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