

TEXT 20

FIGHTING WITH THE PEN AND STEEL ROD

Workers in our plant often have said: "We should shoulder the dual responsibility of using both the pen and the steel rod in battle." That is to say, we should carry out revolutionary mass criticism with the pen and produce more and better steel with the rod.

Through mass criticism, the Marxist-Leninist theoretical level of our plant's workers and cadres has been steadily raised, their ability in distinguishing Marxism from revisionism has been increased and their enthusiasm for building socialism has soared to greater heights. The battle with the steel rod also has scored successes. With no increase in major buildings, equipment and staff, annual steel output in our plant is now double that of 1965, the year prior to the start of the Great Cultural Revolution. Varieties and specifications of rolled steel have risen to 11,800 as against 1,800 in the same period.

Spurred on by the movement to study the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat this year, our plant has made further progress. Compared with the corresponding period last year, output of steel, rolled steel and new products from January to July increased 8.83, 6.4 and 30 per cent respectively.

Facts are eloquent proof of the correctness of Chairman Mao's principle of "**grasping revolution, promoting production.**"

Revolution Means Liberating Productive Forces

Marxism holds that revolution means liberating the productive forces and promoting their development. The Chinese people have in the last 26 years turned the poor and backward old China into a socialist country with the beginnings of prosperity by relying on their own efforts. Take iron and steel production for instance. Our plant's annual output has outstripped the highest yearly mark for the whole of old China; Shanghai's daily output now is far more than the annual output in all of old Shanghai. How could the productive forces have expanded so swiftly? The answer is the Chinese people have, under the guidance of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, carried out a thoroughgoing democratic revolution, overthrown the rule of imperialism, feudalism and

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bureaucrat-capitalism, and since then carried on the ever-deepening socialist revolution.

Our plant was born in a revolutionary high tide. In 1956, China had in the main completed the socialist transformation with respect to ownership of the means of production in individual agriculture, individual handicrafts and privately owned industry and commerce. The following year saw the defeat of the attack by the anti-Party, anti-socialist bourgeois Rightists on the political and ideological front. These revolutionary successes heralded the big leap forward in socialist construction beginning from 1958. At that time, builders flocked to the site where our plant was to go up and, working with enormous enthusiasm on this tract of desolate land, erected the first group of workshops and put them into operation in just three months. Annual steel output in the three years 1958-60 rose from tens of thousands to several hundred thousand tons.

However, we were not sailing a smooth sea. China's national economy went through a temporary difficult period as a result of sabotage by the Soviet revisionist renegade clique and natural calamities for three successive years. Taking advantage of this, Liu Shao-chi and his gang spared no effort to restore capitalism and strangle socialism. They opposed workers studying Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought, babbling that we couldn't understand it. While ordering the "dismounting" of many new factories, they did their utmost to peddle the Soviet revisionist line in running enterprises, such as putting profits in command, material incentives, the system of one-man leadership and letting specialists rule the factories. These evil trends also showed up in our plant. Some workshops put out the fire in the furnaces, workers' enthusiasm was throttled and output dropped by a big margin in the early 60s.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has smashed the two bourgeois headquarters of Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao. Revolution has liberated the productive forces, and our plant's production has gone ahead at an unprecedented speed. Both successes and setbacks have enabled us to see clearly that **"without a correct political approach to the matter the given class will be unable to stay on top, and, consequently, will be incapable of solving its production problem either."** (Lenin: *Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Current Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin.*)

Consciousness Turns to Matter

A continuation of the Great Cultural Revolution, the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius also had played the role of further

liberating the productive forces. The movement is a political and ideological struggle in the superstructure by which Marxism triumphs over revisionism and the proletariat over the bourgeoisie.

Chairman Mao long ago pointed out: **“While we recognize that in the general development of history the material determines the mental and social being determines social consciousness, we also—and indeed must—recognize the reaction of mental on material things, of social consciousness on social being and of the superstructure on the economic base. This does not go against materialism; on the contrary, it avoids mechanical materialism and firmly upholds dialectical materialism.”** (*On Contradiction.*)

From our own experience we can see well-defined examples of how production stagnated because the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, remnants of the ideology of the exploiting classes, had shackled people’s minds. Once this garbage has been swept away and replaced by the new ideology of the proletariat, production will forge ahead. But it must be realized that such rubbish cannot be cleared out all at once. After one corner has been cleaned, it can be found in another corner. After one form of expression has been criticized, it will appear in another form. Thus only repeated cleaning over a long period of time will yield the desired result. The movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius is another such clean-up.

To put proletarian politics in command or “to put profits in command” and go in for “material incentives” has always been a focus of the two-line struggle in running an enterprise. The struggle has a bearing not only on whether production can be done well but, of more fundamental importance, on whether a socialist enterprise will degenerate into a capitalist firm or not. Through study we have come to understand that the “new economic system” by means of which the Soviet revisionists have restored the capitalist economic base has “the principle of profits” and “material incentives” at its core.

The Soviet revisionist “new economic system” actually is nothing new. The exploiting classes have always held that “each for himself” is the “eternal human nature.” Confucius said that “the inferior man thinks in terms of gain.” Lin Piao and his gang also said that “self-aggrandizement and avarice are objective laws.” Those whose minds are poisoned by such thinking do not understand that proletarian politics should be in command of economic work. Instead of relying on the workers’ political enthusiasm for building socialism and on the proletariat’s high sense of responsibility of fulfilling its historical mission, they are bent on promoting production by means of “material incentives” or other similar “incentives.”

We criticized “putting bonuses in command” in the initial stage of

the Great Cultural Revolution. Later, though it was out of the commendable desire to increase production, cadres in a workshop thought of another way to "boost" output by "beating drums and gongs." Thus, if a team fulfilled a high quota, it could proclaim its "achievements" with drums and gongs. Doing this to celebrate successes in socialist construction is permissible, and, indeed, customary. However, if it is treated as a means of self-glorification, then a team will be led astray to the bourgeois road of chasing after fame and gain. Facts proved that this method did not promote production but enhanced the "departmentalism" of the various teams and groups. Criticisms from the workers helped the cadres correct their errors and give prominence to political and ideological work in real earnest. They organized workers to study revolutionary theory and criticize revisionism and the bourgeoisie. They took part in manual labour like ordinary workers, made investigations at the furnaces, listened to workers' opinions, visited workers' families. . . . As a result, the workshop's production went up by big margins. The plant's Party committee led all the workers and cadres in analysing and discussing this typical example which was a profound education for everyone.

The movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius forcefully pounded away at the decadent idea that "those who work with their minds govern, those who work with their hands are governed." Cadres in our plant have since been more conscious in working together with the workers and listening to their criticisms. And, as masters of the country, the workers have become more active in supervising the work in the plant so that it will proceed along Chairman Mao's revolutionary line.

A Big-Character Poster. Some workers during the movement suggested that small quantities of leftover molten steel in the furnaces be cast into small ingots to increase production, something that had been neglected previously. Underestimating the workers' enthusiasm for socialism, a cadre in charge decided that this was good, but "extra pay" should be given since the workers would be doing "extra work." When comrades in the workshop's theoretical group learnt this, they immediately put up a big-character poster in front of the mess hall. The poster sharply pointed out that the idea of giving "extra pay" was simply a refurbishment of the Confucian thinking that "the inferior man thinks in terms of gain" and a retrogression to the revisionist principle of "putting bonuses in command" which had been criticized. The title of this poster "There's No Future in Going Backwards!" was an eye-catcher.

The poster won the extensive support of the workers and educated the cadre concerned. Together, they worked out appropriate technical measures to utilize the leftover steel. Output went up without any

“material incentives.”

Another example was the “system of deducting from the production quota.” A rule in one of the workshops stipulated that if the necessary preparations were not made to facilitate the work of the next shift, then part of the output of the preceding shift would be deducted and added to that of the next shift. Such “material punishment” increased the contradictions among teams. The workers criticized and abolished this rule during the movement. In its stead the communist style of “offering others what is convenient while tackling the difficulties oneself” was vigorously advocated. The result was closer unity and higher output.

Numerous facts have proved that selfless communist spirit can be fostered only when the influence of bourgeois ideology has been criticized. For instance, a rolling-mill heater in workshop No. 12 once had a hitch. The usual way was to overhaul it after it had cooled for 72 hours. The workers said: “Time means steel and the state needs steel.” Only eight hours later the workers and cadres, wearing protective clothing, went into the centre of the heater to overhaul it. Examples like this showing the difficulty-defying spirit of the workers without any thought of getting rewards are too numerous to cite. Shanghai workers often have said: “Lin Piao wanted to restore capitalism. We must go all-out to build socialism.” Can this kind of spirit be “incited” by “material incentives”? The bourgeois and revisionist Shylocks naturally can never understand this mentality of the proletariat.

The manifestations of “putting profits in command” were also criticized during the movement. How to prevent the practice of thinking in terms of profits is important in business transactions between factories. Under unified state planning, our plant has dealings with some 10,000 factories and our products are sent to all parts of the country. When orders come from other factories, so long as the products are badly needed in socialist construction, we will fulfil them regardless of profits or difficulties involved. We will do our best to satisfy the demands, be they steel ingots weighing many tons or capillaries used in precision medical instruments. If a new equipment is needed to manufacture the products, we make it by our own efforts. If the order is a new product we never made before, we learn to produce it in the course of work. By doing so, the state first of all benefits, and it also spurs us on to increase the varieties and specifications of our products and raise our technical level. We do not chase after profits. Does this mean we will lose? Of course not. Because of our efforts in increasing production and practising economy, annual profits turned over to the state by our plant in the last few years amounted to half its fixed assets. Contrary to the case in capitalist society, such profits do not go to a few people, but are used by the state for construction which benefits the

people of the whole country.

A New Technique. The movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius opened fierce fire on the decadent idea that "the highest are the wise and the lowest are the stupid." Thus cadres acquired a firmer faith in the workers' collective strength and wisdom and we workers showed greater daring to blaze new trails. The upshot: more and better technical innovations.

The story of "cutting the tiger's tail" has spread in our plant. Molten steel first has to be poured into the ladle and then into the mould to be cast into ingots. In the past, a hand-operated rod was used by workers standing close at hand to function as the ladle's locking stopper. The rod had to be replaced once it was used. This held back production. Several technical innovations ensued and a hydraulic pump was introduced to control the ladle's slide valve. This raised efficiency a great deal. But the splashes of molten steel sometimes caused the pump's wire to snap. Workers called this wire the "tiger's tail," meaning it could not easily be removed and replaced with something else. Some workers suggested making another innovation to solve the problem. Others had apprehensions. "Don't pull the tiger's tail," they cautioned lest normal production might be affected if it was not handled properly.

The movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius strengthened our determination and confidence. Confucius and Lin Piao preached that "some are born with knowledge," but we deem that "real knowledge comes from practice." A "three-in-one" group was formed with veteran workers as the backbone and with the participation of leading cadres and technicians to tackle the problem. After overcoming numerous difficulties, they finally succeeded in getting rid of the "tiger's tail."

This example is only one of many showing that mass technical innovations have played a big part in raising output, improving quality, reducing labour intensity and guaranteeing safety in production. In New China, of course, automation will not lead to sacking of workers and unemployment, which is often the case in capitalist countries.

Since the workers' collective strength and wisdom have been given fuller play, the spirit of self-reliance has soared higher. While criticizing Lin Piao's plot to turn China into a Soviet colony, workers in the No. 2 central testing room strengthened their determination to build up the country independently and self-reliantly. Reviewing the designs of two projects, they said: "We will not import any piece of equipment if a domestic one can be used; we will not ask for anything our plant can make." During the movement, the No. 13 workshop began mass-producing cold-rolled high-speed steel strip, which we had to import in quantities previously.

A New Record. The movement also dealt a heavy blow to conservative ideology. Chairman Mao has taught us: **“Man has constantly to sum up experience and go on discovering, inventing, creating and advancing. Ideas of stagnation, pessimism, inertia and complacency are all wrong.”** This is the proletarian method of thinking and is diametrically opposed to the Confucian preaching that “I pass on what is ancient and do not create anything new. I have firm confidence in and love the ancient things.”

The No. 5 blast cupola of the No. 4 workshop had produced 4,000 heats. According to the old practice, it should have been pulled down and rebuilt. Based on their rich experience, many workers said that it could still be used. However, a few people wanted to follow the beaten track, saying that this would be safer. A controversy ensued. Many pointed out: “Since we have criticized Lin Piao and Confucius for their attempts at restoration and retrogression, we should persist in making revolution and progress. The cupola is working properly, so why should we do things according to the old rules?” The workshop Party branch supported the workers’ initiative and organized them to work out necessary technical measures. Another 4,000 heats were produced to create a record in our plant for a blast cupola.

Many other examples pointed to the fact that with the change in people’s mental outlook, production went up. Those whose minds are shackled by the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius always look down upon new emerging forces. Before the Great Cultural Revolution, a young recruit usually spent his first three years in the shop sweeping the floor or looking after tools. Now many outstanding youngsters have been put in leading posts. In the movement, the older generation paid more attention to supporting and training the young workers while the latter have increased their own confidence and thus played a more dynamic role. Workers in the supply department, where quite a big proportion are females, work better after they criticized the widely circulated old book *Guide to Women’s Manners* which advocates that man is superior to woman. They also criticized a popular saying that “a man can be bolder, but a woman should always be timid.” Sweep away such rubbish, they said. Now more and more women comrades in our plant have stepped to the forefront of revolution and production in the spirit that “women build half the world.”

Chairman Mao has said: **“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.”** (*Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?*) Every criticism of the ideology of the exploiting classes makes the new ideology, new culture, new customs and new habits of the proletariat strike deeper root in people’s minds,

and this becomes a powerful material force. We therefore say: The victories in the battle with the pen bring with them big achievements in the battle with the steel rod.

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Like the rest of the country, our plant has achieved tremendous victories in the Great Cultural Revolution and the movement to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius. In this excellent situation, the Fourth National People's Congress was convened in Peking last January. The congress adopted a new Constitution and set forth the magnificent task of building China into a powerful socialist country before the end of the century.

It was at that crucial historical moment that Chairman Mao issued the important directive on studying the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Chairman Mao has said: **“Why did Lenin speak of exercising dictatorship over the bourgeoisie? It is essential to get this question clear. Lack of clarity on this question will lead to revisionism. This should be made known to the whole nation.”** Like a beacon, this directive illuminates our road of advance. At present, just as is the case in the whole country, an ever-deepening study movement is taking place in our plant. We are confident that mastering the Marxist theory on the dictatorship of the proletariat by the hundreds of millions of Chinese people is sure to guarantee that our country will march forward on the road charted by Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought. And this will ensure the eventual accomplishment of the task of the dictatorship of the proletariat set forth by Marx, that is, abolishing class distinctions generally, abolishing all relations of production on which class distinctions rest, abolishing all social relations that correspond to these relations of production, and revolutionizing all ideas that result from these social relations.

Marx and Engels issued the great call **“Working men of all countries, unite!”** more than a hundred years ago. We workers in the Shanghai No. 5 Steel Plant will unite with the people throughout the country and with all the oppressed people and nations in the world to fight for the complete elimination of the system of exploitation of man by man and for the realization of communism—the lofty ideal of mankind. **“Let each stand in his place. The internationale shall be the human race.”** (*The Internationale.*)