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Mao Tse-tung

**BEAT BACK THE ATTACKS
OF THE BOURGEOIS RIGHTISTS**

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BEAT BACK THE ATTACKS OF THE BOURGEOIS RIGHTISTS

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In March I spoke here to a number of Party cadres. A hundred days have passed since then. During these hundred days a great change in the situation has occurred. We have fought a battle with the bourgeois Rightists, and the political consciousness of the people has risen, and indeed to a considerable degree. We expected this at the time. For instance, I said here that when people started criticizing, or in other words, when the fire started burning, wouldn't that cause pain? We must toughen our scalps and bear it, I added. This part of the body is called the head, and the skin on it is called the scalp. Toughening one's scalp and bearing it means, when you criticize me, I toughen my scalp and listen for a while. Afterwards, I'll analyse what you say and make a reply, accepting what is right and rebutting what is wrong.

We must believe that in China, as everywhere else in the world, the majority of the people are good. By the majority, we mean not 51 per cent but over 90 per cent. Of the 600 million people in our country, the worker and peasant masses are our mainstay. In the Communist Party, the Youth League and the democratic parties and among the students and intellectuals, the majority are invariably good people. They are kind-hearted and honest, they are not crafty and don't have ulterior motives. This should be acknowledged. It has been borne out in every political movement. Take the students in the present movement. There are more than seven thousand students at Peking University, but the Rightists account for only 1, 2 or 3 per cent. What does this 1, 2 or 3 per cent really mean? It means that the backbone die-hard elements who kick up a rumpus from time to time never exceed fifty persons or so, or less than 1 per cent. The remaining 1 or 2 per cent form their clique.

* Speech at a conference of cadres in Shanghai.

It's not easy to set a fire going and draw it upon oneself. Now I hear that some comrades in this city rather regret that the fire was not fierce enough. I think the fire in Shanghai was about right, almost but not quite strong enough to be satisfying. Wouldn't you have let the fire rage if you had foreseen its miraculous effect? Let poisonous weeds sprout and ghosts and monsters appear. Why be afraid of them? I said in March you shouldn't be afraid. However, some comrades in our Party have been afraid that chaos would spread across the land. I say that, staunch and devoted to the Party and the country as

these comrades are, they don't see the over-all situation, don't see that the vast majority of the people, that is, more than 90 per cent, are good. Don't be afraid of the masses, they are with us. They may rail at us but they will never strike us with their fists. The Rightists are only a handful, and at Peking University they make up only 1, 2 or 3 per cent, as I have just said. This applies to the students only. The case is different with the professors and associate professors, about 10 per cent of whom are Rightists. The Left also amounts to about 10 per cent. The two sides are matched in strength. The middle makes up approximately 80 per cent. So what is there to be afraid of? And yet some of our comrades are assailed by fears of one kind or another, afraid of houses collapsing and the sky falling. From time immemorial no one but "the man of Chi worried lest the sky fall", [1] meaning that only one man from Honan was afraid it might happen. Save for this man, no one else is known to have entertained the fear. As for houses, I am sure this one will not collapse, as it was built not long ago. How can it collapse so easily?

In short, more than 90 per cent of the people everywhere are our friends and comrades. Don't be afraid. Why be afraid of the masses? There's no reason to be. What sort of persons are leading figures? Group leaders, team leaders, Party branch secretaries, heads of schools and colleges and Party committee secretaries -- they are all leading figures, Comrade Ko Ching-shih counts among them and I too. At any rate all of us have some political capital, that is, we have performed some service for the people. Now the fire is set ablaze, and more than 90 per cent of the people hope that our comrades will be tempered in the fire. Every one of our comrades has his weaknesses. Who hasn't? "Men are not saints, how can they be free from faults?" One way or another, we say or do something wrong, for instance by being bureaucratic. These things are usually done unwittingly.

It is necessary to "set a fire going" at regular intervals. How often? Once a year or once every three years, which do you prefer? I think we

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should do it at least twice in the space of each five-year plan, in the same way as the intercalary month in a lunar leap year turns up once in three years and twice in five. The Monkey Sun Wu-kung becomes much stronger after being tempered in the Eight-Diagram Magic Crucible of the God of Supreme Power. Isn't Sun Wu-kung a character of tremendous magical power? Even Sun, who is called "The Great Saint on a Par with the Emperor of Heaven", needs tempering in the Eight-Diagram Crucible. Don't we talk about tempering? Tempering means forging and refining. Forging is shaping by hammering and refining is smelting iron in a blast furnace or making steel in an open-hearth furnace. After steel is made, it needs forging, which nowadays is done with a pneumatic hammer. That hammering is terrific! We human beings need tempering too. Some comrades, when asked about being tempered, would appear very much in favour, saying, "Oh yes, I have shortcomings. I'm eager to get some tempering." Everybody says he wants it. To talk about it is very easy, but when it comes to the real thing, when it means being "forged" with a pneumatic hammer, he backs away, scared stiff. We have been in the midst of tempering. For a time there was gloom above and darkness below, with the rays of the sun and the moon completely shut out. Two winds were then blowing, one from the overwhelming majority, the good people, who put up big-character posters saying that the Communist Party had shortcomings and should overcome them, the other from a handful of Rightists who attacked us. These two offensives went for the same target. The offensive by the majority was justified and correct. It was a kind of tempering for us. The offensive by the Rightists was also a kind of tempering

for us. For real tempering this time we have to thank the Rightists. They have given a most instructive lesson to our Party, to the masses, the working class) peasants, students and democratic parties. There are Rightists in every city and they want to topple us. We are now closing in on them.

Ours is a people's revolution, a revolution by 600 million people under the leadership of the proletariat; it is the people's cause. The democratic revolution was the people's cause, the socialist revolution is the people's cause and so is socialist construction. Then, are the socialist revolution and socialist construction good or not? Have there been achievements? Which is primary, achievements or mistakes? The Rightists negate the achievements in the people's cause. This is the first point. Second, which is the direction to take? One way leads to socialism and the other to capitalism. The Rightists want us to turn

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round and take the capitalist road. Third, who is to lead in building socialism? The proletariat or the bourgeoisie? The Communist Party or those bourgeois Rightists? The Rightists say they don't want leadership by the Communist Party. I think this has been a great debate with the focus on these three questions. It is good to have a debate. In the past, there wasn't any debate on these questions.

There were prolonged debates in the course of the democratic revolution. In the last years of the Ching Dynasty up to the Revolution of 1911, in the fight against Yuan Shih-kai, in the Northern Expedition and the War of Resistance Against Japan -- in each of these periods there were debates. To resist or not to resist Japan? One school preached the theory that weapons decide everything. China, they said, was short of arms and so could not resist Japan. Another school said that need not cause fear, for after all people were primary, and though inferior in arms we could still put up a fight. The War of Liberation that followed was preceded by debates. The Chungking negotiations, the old Political Consultative Conference held in Chungking and the Nanking negotiations were all debates. Chiang Kai-shek turned a deaf ear to our opinions and to those of the people, what he wanted was war. The outcome of the war was that he was beaten. So there were debates, a long period of mental preparation, in the course of the democratic revolution.

The socialist revolution came swiftly. In a matter of six or seven years the socialist transformation of capitalist ownership and of individual ownership by small producers has by and large been completed. But the transformation of man still has a long way to go, though some progress has been made. Socialist transformation is a twofold task, one is to transform the system and the other to transform man. The system embraces not only ownership, it also includes the superstructure, primarily the state apparatus and ideology. For instance, the press comes within the scope of ideology. Some people say that the press has no class nature and is not an instrument of class struggle. They are mistaken. Until at least the extinction of imperialism the press and everything else in the realm of ideology will reflect class relations. School education, literature and art all fall within the scope of ideology, belong to the superstructure and have a class nature. As for the natural sciences, there are two aspects. The natural sciences as such have no class nature, but the question of who studies and makes use of them does. In the universities, the departments of Chinese for one and the departments of history for another are most seriously

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affected by idealism. So are the people who work on newspapers. Let no one suppose that idealism abounds only in the field of the social sciences, there is also a good deal in the field of the natural sciences. Many people who work in the natural sciences are idealists in their world outlook. When you ask them what water is composed of, they are materialists and say it is composed of two elements, which conforms with reality. When it comes to the transformation of society, they are idealists. While we say the Communist Party should be further strengthened through rectification, some of them say it should be wiped out. This is what the present movement has revealed.

When the Rightists were on the offensive, our policy was to listen and keep quiet. For several weeks we toughened our scalps, cocked our ears to listen and kept mum. Moreover, we didn't inform the Youth League and Party rank and file, nor did we inform the Party branch secretaries and Party branch committees, we just allowed a free-for-all fight where everybody was on his own. Some enemies had sneaked into the Party committees and general Party branches in the universities; for instance, they were on the Tsinghua University Party Committee. When there was a meeting, they would inform the enemy of what was going on. Such persons were dubbed "insurgents". Hadn't there been insurgent generals? Now there were "insurgent scholars". This pleased both the enemy and us. The enemy was very much pleased to see the "insurrection" of Communist Party members and the imminent "collapse" of the Communist Party. How many Party members have collapsed this time? I'm not clear about Shanghai. In Peking probably 5 per cent of the Party membership in the universities have collapsed, and the percentage is higher among the League members, perhaps 10 per cent or more. In my view, their collapse is exactly as it should be. In short, whether it was 10, 20, 30 or 40 per cent, I'm very happy that they have collapsed. Their minds are stuffed with bourgeois ideas and idealism and they have wormed their way into the Communist Party or the Youth League, they are nominally for communism, but are actually anti-Communists or waverers. So we were also pleased to see their "insurrection". When did we ever do such a thorough job of purifying the ranks of the Party and Youth League? These people scampered away of their own accord without our having to clear them out. But now the situation has changed and the tables have been turned. The "insurrection" stopped when we started closing in on the Rightists and when many who were not Rightists themselves but had connections with them came forward to

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expose them. The Rightists are having a very hard time and some of them have rebelled. I spoke here in March. How things have changed in a hundred days!

The current struggle against the Rightists is essentially a political one. Class struggle takes various forms. This time it is chiefly a political, not a military or an economic, struggle. Is it partly an ideological struggle? Yes, it is, but in my view the struggle is mainly political. Ideological struggle will come chiefly in the next stage and should be like a gentle breeze and a mild rain. Rectification in the Communist Party and the Youth League is an ideological struggle. We must raise our level and really learn some Marxism. We must truly help each other. As for shortcomings, are we totally free from subjectivism or bureaucracy? We must really think hard, take notes and keep at it for a few months to raise our understanding of Marxism and our political and ideological level.

The counter-attack on the Rightists may take a few more weeks, a month or so. However, it would be impossible if the press kept on publishing the Rightists' views as it is now doing and continued for

the rest of the year, next year and the year after. There are just so many Rightists, the press has carried just about enough of their views, and there isn't much more to print. From now on, we shall print a little more in some form or other but none when there is nothing worth printing. In my view July is still a month for intensive counter-attack on the Rightists. The Rightists like a strong gale and a torrential downpour most and a gentle breeze and a mild rain least. We advocate a gentle breeze and a mild rain, don't we? But they say, "What? A gentle breeze and a mild rain? If it keeps drizzling for days on end, the rice seedlings will rot and there will be a famine. It's better to have a strong gale and a torrential downpour." Haven't you got someone here in Shanghai who wrote an article "A Crow Caws 'at High Noon' "? That "crow" is the man who proposed having a strong gale and a torrential downpour. They also say, "You Communists are downright unfair. When you fixed us in the past, you preferred a strong gale and a torrential downpour, and now when your turn comes, you want a gentle breeze and a mild rain." The fact is that we always called for a gentle breeze and a mild rain in our previous inner-Party directives concerning ideological remoulding, including the criticism of Hu Shih and Liang Shu-ming. Everything in the world develops in twists and turns. For instance, when you walk, you never walk in a straight line. Have you ever been to Mogan Mountain?

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There are eighteen hairpin bends on the way up. Society invariably moves forward in a spiral. Now the fight to ferret out the Rightists must go on without any let-up, and we must keep up the strong gale and torrential downpour. Just because they started it all, it may look as if we are trying to get even with them. It is only now that the Rightists realize how good a gentle breeze and a mild rain is. At the sight of a reed they try to cling to it, because they are sinking fast, like a drowning man in the Whangpoo River clutching at a straw. I suppose that "crow" must now be pining for a gentle breeze and a mild rain. But now it is stormy weather. After July, there will be a gentle breeze and a mild rain in August, for there won't be much left to ferret out.

The Rightists are very good teachers by negative example. China has always had teachers by both positive and negative example. People need to be educated by negative as well as positive example. Japanese imperialism was our first top-flight teacher by negative example. Previously there were the Ching government, Yuan Shih-kai and the Northern warlords, and then there was Chiang Kai-shek. They were all fine teachers by negative example. Without them the Chinese people could never have learned their lessons. The Communist Party served as the teacher by positive example, but this alone would not have been enough. This holds good to this day. There are people who refused to listen to many of the things we said. Who are they? Many of the middle elements, and particularly the Rightists. The former took us half seriously and half sceptically. The Rightists wouldn't listen to us at all. We told them our views on quite a number of issues but they turned a deaf ear and took a different course. For instance, we advocated "unity -- criticism -- unity", but they wouldn't listen. We said that achievements were primary in the elimination of counter-revolutionaries, but they denied it. We said there must be democratic centralism and people's democratic dictatorship under the leadership of the proletariat, but they denied it. We said we must unite with the socialist countries and the peace-loving people throughout the world, but they denied that too. In short, we told them all this before, but they wouldn't listen. There was another point which they particularly wouldn't listen to, namely, that poisonous weeds must be uprooted. Let ghosts and monsters come out and make an exhibition of themselves, and afterwards the people will say these ghosts and monsters are no good and must be eliminated. Let poisonous weeds sprout, then uproot them and plough them under for manure. Didn't

we say all this before? Of course we did. All the same, poisonous weeds keep sprouting. Year in year out, the peasants tell the weeds they are going to dig them up several times a year, but the weeds simply won't listen and keep growing. Even though digging will go on for ten thousand years, weeds will keep growing. They will grow even a hundred million years from now. When I talked about weeding, the Rightists were not afraid because I was only talking and weeding had not actually started. What is more, the Rightists considered that they were not poisonous weeds but fragrant flowers and that we were poisonous weeds and we, not they, should be uprooted. It just didn't occur to them that it was precisely they who should be uprooted.

A debate on the three questions referred to earlier is now in progress. The socialist revolution came so swiftly that the Party's general line for the transition period has not been fully debated either inside the Party or in society at large. This may be likened to a cow eating grass. It gulps the grass down, stores it in its stomach, then regurgitates it and slowly chews the cud. We have been making socialist revolution in the system, firstly in the ownership of the means of production and secondly in the superstructure, in the political system and the sphere of ideology, but there has never been a full debate on the question. And now we are unfolding the debate through the newspapers, forums, mass rallies and big-character posters.

The big-character poster is a fine thing and I think it will be handed down to future generations. The *Confucian Analects*, the *Five Classics*, the *Thirteen Classics* and the *Twenty-four Dynastic Histories* have all been handed down to us. Won't the big-character poster be handed down to posterity? I think it will. Will it be used in the future when rectification is unfolded, in factories for instance? I think it is a good idea to use it, the more the better. Like language, it has no class nature. Our vernacular has no class nature. We all speak in the vernacular and so does Chiang Kai-shek. We no longer speak literary Chinese exemplified by sayings like -- "Great pleasure is derived from learning and constantly reviewing what has been learned" and "Welcoming friends from afar gives one great delight". The vernacular is used by the proletariat and also by the bourgeoisie. The big-character poster can be used by the bourgeoisie as well as by the proletariat. We believe that the majority of the people are on the side of the proletariat. Therefore, the big-character poster as an instrument favours the proletariat, not the bourgeoisie. For a period of time, about two or three weeks, things seemed to go in favour of the bourgeoisie,

with gloom above and darkness below and the rays of the sun and the moon completely shut out. When we said we must toughen our scalps and bear it, we meant losing sleep and appetite for those two or three weeks. Didn't you say you wanted tempering? To lose sleep and appetite for a few weeks is a kind of tempering, and this doesn't mean being shoved into a blast furnace to be smelted.

Many middle elements have vacillated, and this is a good thing too. They will draw lessons from their vacillation. It is the hallmark of the middle elements, otherwise would they be known as such? The proletariat is at one end and the bourgeoisie at the other, with large numbers of middle elements in between, a case of both ends being small and the middle being large. But in the final analysis the middle elements are good people, an ally of the proletariat. The bourgeoisie too wanted to win them over as an ally, and at one time they looked like it. For these middle elements also criticized us, but

their criticisms were well-intentioned. When the Rightists saw them criticizing us, they came out and made trouble. In Shanghai, you had Rightists like Wang Tsao-shih, Lu Yi, Chen Jen-ping and Peng Wen-ying and also Wu Yin making trouble. Once the Rightists went at it, the middle elements got confused. The Rightists' progenitors are Chang Po-chun, Lo Lung-chi and Chang Nai-chi, and Peking is the Rightists' place of origin. The greater the chaos in Peking, the better, and the more profound it is, the better. This has been borne out by our experience.

Just now I talked about the big-character poster. It is a question of method, a question of what method to use in fighting. The big-character poster is one of the weapons used in fighting, like small arms such as the rifle, the pistol and the machine-gun. As for planes and field guns, perhaps they are *Wen Hui Pao*, the *Kuangming Daily* and some other newspapers. For a time the Party papers also carried the Rightists' views. We issued an order to the effect that all Rightists' views must be published verbatim. Through the use of this and other methods, we helped the broad masses to get educated by both positive and negative examples. The staff on the *Kuangming Daily* and *Wen Hui Pao*, for instance, have received a profound education this time. Hitherto they were unable to tell the difference between a proletarian and a bourgeois newspaper, between a socialist and a capitalist one. For some time the Rightists in charge ran these two newspapers as bourgeois newspapers. These Rightists hated the proletariat and socialism. They guided the universities not towards the proletariat but towards the bourgeoisie.

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Is remoulding necessary for the bourgeoisie and the intellectuals from the old society? They are mortally afraid of remoulding, saying that it gives rise to a particular complex called the "inferiority complex", and the more the remoulding one undergoes, the stronger this complex. This view is wrong. The correct view is that the more the remoulding, the greater one's self-respect. If anything, the result should be a sense of self-respect since one has awakened to the need for remoulding. These people with their high level of "class consciousness" think they need no remoulding themselves, on the contrary they want to remould the proletariat. They seek to transform the world in the image of the bourgeoisie whereas the proletariat seeks to transform the world in its own image. I dare say the majority, that is, over 90 per cent of these people, will eventually bring themselves around to accepting remoulding after some hesitation, reconsideration, reluctance and vacillation. The more the remoulding one undergoes, the more one feels the need for it. Even the Communist Party is undergoing remoulding. Rectification means remoulding and it will continue into the future. Do you think there will be no more rectifications after this one? Will bureaucracy vanish after the present rectification? After only two or three years, some people will forget all about it and then bureaucracy will return. That's how people are, they have a short memory. Hence the need for rectification from time to time. Since the Communist Party itself is in need of rectification, can it be that the bourgeoisie and the intellectuals from the old society need no rectification? No remoulding? Certainly, they need rectification and remoulding, only more so.

Aren't the democratic parties in the midst of a rectification movement? All society should go through a process of rectification. What's bad about that? The rectification will deal not with trivialities but with important issues, with the question of political line. At present the democratic parties are putting the stress of rectification on the question of line and on repudiating the counter-revolutionary line pursued by the bourgeois Rightists. I think they have been correct. In its own

rectification the Communist Party is now stressing not the question of line but the style of work. For the democratic parties, however, style of work is secondary and the main stress should be on what line they follow. Should they follow the counter-revolutionary line of Chang Po-chun, Lo Lung-chi, Chang Nai-chi, Chen Jen-ping, Peng Wen-ying, Lu Yi and Sun Ta-yu, or should they follow another line? First and foremost, they must get a clear idea about this and about

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the three questions I am raising here: Are the achievements of the socialist revolution and socialist construction, the work accomplished by several hundred million people, good or not? Which road should we follow, the socialist road or the capitalist road? Which party should assume leadership in building socialism, the Chang-Lo alliance or the Communist Party? Let there be a great debate to thrash out the question of line.

There is also the question of line within the Communist Party. As far as those "insurgents", the Rightists in the Communist Party and the Youth League, are concerned, it is indeed a question of line. At present dogmatism is not the question, for it has not evolved into a line. In the history of our Party dogmatism did become a question of line on several occasions, because it developed into a system, policy and programme. Present-day dogmatism has not developed to this extent, but it does have a certain rigidity which is now being somewhat softened by hammering and forging. Aren't those in leading positions in departments and organizations, universities and factories "coming down the stairs"?[2] They are discarding the Kuomintang style of work and their uppity airs and no longer act like bureaucrats. Bureaucracy has greatly diminished now that directors of co-operatives work with the peasants in the fields and factory directors and Party committee secretaries join the workers on the shop floor. This kind of rectification will still be necessary in future. We should put up big-character posters, hold forums and deal separately with what should be set right and what should be criticized. There is another point. We should raise our level and learn some Marxism.

I believe most of our people are fine people and the Chinese nation is a fine nation. Ours is a nation which is very sensible, warm-hearted, intelligent and courageous. I hope a situation will be created in which we have both unity of will and liveliness, that is, both centralism and democracy, both discipline and freedom. There should be two aspects; not just one, not just discipline alone nor just centralism alone. That would muzzle people and prevent them from speaking up and criticizing what is in fact wrong. We should encourage people to speak out and there should be a lively atmosphere. Whoever criticizes us in good faith is not blameworthy. However sharp his criticism or severe his censure, he is not to be blamed or punished or given tight shoes to wear. Tight shoes are very uncomfortable. Now to whom should we give the tight shoes? The Rightists. The Rightists must be made to wear them.

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We should not be afraid of the masses but should be with them. Some comrades fear the masses just as they fear water. Do you swim? I encourage swimming everywhere I go. Water is a good thing. If you put in an hour every day to learn swimming and keep it up, taking a dip today and another tomorrow, I bet you will learn how in a hundred days. First, you mustn't get a coach, second, you mustn't use a rubber tyre, as you won't learn if you use one. "But I fear for my life, I can't swim yet!" Well, you can first start in shallow water. Suppose you are to learn swimming in a hundred days, you

paddle in the shallow water for thirty days and then you get the hang of it. Once you know how, it makes no difference whether you go swimming in the Yangtse River or in the Pacific Ocean, it is just water, the same thing. Some argue that you can't drown in a swimming-pool, because somebody will come to your rescue if you sink; but swimming in the Yangtse is terrifying, the current is so swift, won't you be lost for good once you go under? This is an argument some use to scare people. I say that's the way amateurs talk. None of our top-notch swimmers, none of our coaches and experts at the swimming-pools dared to go swimming in the Yangtse at first, but they do now. Don't people swim in your Whangpoo River here nowadays? The Whangpoo and the Yangtse are admission-free swimming-pools. Metaphorically speaking, the people are like water and the leaders at various levels are like swimmers who must stay in the water and swim with the current, not against it. Don't rail at the masses! In no circumstances must you do so. You mustn't rail at the worker, peasant and student masses and the majority of the members of the democratic parties and of the intellectuals. You mustn't set yourselves up against the masses, on the contrary you must always be with them. The masses may make mistakes. When they do, patiently reason things out with them, and if they refuse to listen, then wait for another chance to talk to them. But don't alienate yourselves from them, just as in swimming you don't leave the water. When Liu Pei got Chukeh Liang to help him, he said he felt "just like a fish in water". This is all true. Their fish-water relationship is not only described in fiction but recorded in history. The masses are Chukeh Liangs, the leaders are Liu Peis. One leads, the other is led.

All wisdom comes from the masses. I have always said that it is intellectuals who are most ignorant. This is the heart of the matter. Over-weening intellectuals stick up their tails which are longer than that of the Monkey Sun Wu-kung. Sun Wu-kung can make seventy-two meta-

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morphoses, and on one occasion he changes his tail into a flagstaff -- that long. It's just terrific when the intellectuals stick up their tails. "If I'm not Number One Under Heaven, then I'm at least Number Two." "Who do the workers and peasants think they are? They're just blockheads! They can barely read and write." But the over-all situation is determined not by the intellectuals but ultimately by the working people, by their most advanced section, the proletariat.

Which leads which -- the proletariat the bourgeoisie, or vice ver sa? The proletariat the intellectuals, or vice versa? The intellectuals must transform themselves into proletarian intellectuals. There is no other way out for them. "With the skin gone, to what can the hair attach itself?"^[3] In the past the "hair", meaning the intellectuals, attached itself to five "skins", that is, depended on them for a living. Imperialist ownership was the first skin, feudal ownership the second and bureaucrat-capitalist ownership the third. Wasn't the purpose of the democratic revolution to topple the three big mountains of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism? National capitalist ownership was the fourth skin, and the fifth was ownership by small producers, that is, individual ownership by the peasants and handicraftsmen. In the past the intellectuals attached themselves either to the first three skins or to the latter two and depended on them for a living. Do these five skins still exist? "The skins are gone." Imperialism is gone and its property has been taken over. Feudal ownership was liquidated and the land restored to the peasants, and now there is agricultural co-operation. Bureaucrat-capitalist enterprises were nationalized. National capitalist industry and commerce have been transformed into joint state-private enterprises and have by and large become socialist enterprises, though not entirely. Individual ownership by the peasants and handicraftsmen has been changed into collective

ownership, even though the latter is not yet consolidated and will take a few years to consolidate itself. These five skins are no more, but they have a lingering effect on the "hair", on the capitalists and the intellectuals. These people can't get these skins out of their systems, and even dwell on them in their dreams. Those who came over from the old society, the old orbits, are nostalgic for their old habits and ways of life. Therefore the transformation of man will take a much longer time.

At present what kind of skin do intellectuals attach themselves to? To the skin of public ownership, to the proletariat. Who provides them with a living? The workers and peasants. Intellectuals are teachers

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employed by the working class and the labouring people to teach their children. If they go against the wishes of their masters and insist on teaching their own set of subjects, teaching stereotyped writing, Confucian classics or capitalist rubbish, and turn out a number of counter-revolutionaries, the working class will not tolerate it and will sack them and not renew their contract for the coming year.

As I said here a hundred days ago, the intellectuals from the old society are now without a base, they have lost their former social and economic base, that is, the five skins, and they have no alternative but to attach themselves to a new one. Some intellectuals are now unsettled. Suspended as they are in mid-air, they have nothing to hang on to above and no solid ground to rest their feet on below. I say, these people may be called "gentlemen in mid-air". Flying in mid-air, they want to go back but are unable to because they find their old home, those skins, gone. Though now homeless, they are still unwilling to attach themselves to the proletariat. If they are to do so, they must make a study of proletarian ideas, have some feeling for the proletariat and make friends with workers and peasants. But no, they won't. They still hanker after what they know is gone. What we are doing now is persuading them to wake up. After this great debate, I think they will wake up somehow or other.

Those intellectuals who take a middle position should awaken and not be too cocky, because what they know is limited. I say these people are intellectuals and at the same time not intellectuals, maybe semi-intellectuals is a more appropriate term. For they have just so much knowledge, and on matters of principle they cannot open their mouths without making mistakes. Now let us leave aside the Rightist intellectuals, for they are reactionaries. The trouble with intellectuals who take a middle position is that they waver, do not have a clear orientation and sometimes even lose their bearings. If you have such great learning, how come you make mistakes? If you are so marvellous and cocksure of yourselves, how come you waver? A tuft of grass atop the wall sways right and left in the wind. It all goes to show that you don't know much. In this connection, it is the workers and the semi-proletarians among the peasants who know a lot. They can tell at a glance that Sun Ta-yu and his wares are nothing but fakes. You see who knows better? Undoubtedly it is those who can hardly read and write that know better. One must go to the proletariat when it comes to making the crucial decision concerning the over-all situation, the general direction. I'm the kind of person who consults the workers

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and peasants before I do anything significant or make decisions on major issues, talking over and discussing things with them and with the cadres close to them to see if my ideas are all right. This makes visits to various places necessary. Staying put in Peking could be fatal. It is a barren place

where you can't get any raw material. All the raw material comes from the workers and peasants and from the localities. The Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party can be likened to a processing factory, which uses raw material to turn out products. The finished products must be good, or otherwise mistakes are made. Knowledge comes from the masses. What does the correct handling of contradictions among the people mean? It means seeking truth from facts and following the mass line. In the final analysis, it is the mass line that counts. We mustn't alienate ourselves from the masses, our relationship with the masses is a fish-water relationship or swimmer-water relationship.

Do we need to finish off the Rightists with one blow? Giving them a couple of hard knocks is quite necessary. If we don't, they will play possum. Don't we need to mount attacks on these types and go after them? Yes, attacks are necessary. But the aim is to force them to reverse course. We should use every means in our offensive to isolate them completely, only then can we win over some, if not all. They are intellectuals and some are big intellectuals; once won over they can be useful. Win them over and let them do some work. Besides, they have done a great service to us this time as teachers who have educated the people by negative example. We are not going to dump them into the Whangpoo River but will still take the approach of curing the sickness to save the patient. Perhaps some are not willing to come over. If men like Sun Ta-yu are obstinate and refuse to make the change, so be it. We have a lot to do now. It is simply impossible to keep on hitting out at these types day in day out for the next fifty years! There are people who refuse to correct their mistakes, they can take them into their coffins when they go to see the King of Hell. They can say to him, "I'm a defender of the five skins. I'm a man of 'integrity'. The Communists and the masses grilled me but I did not submit and I have come through all right." But they should get this into their heads. Today there is a change of hands even in Hell, with Marx, Engels and Lenin ruling there. There are two Hells today, the rulers of the Hell of the capitalist world probably remain the same, while Marx, Engels and Lenin rule the Hell of the socialist world. As I see it, even a century hence the die-hard Rightists will get their punishment.

NOTES

[¹] *Lieh Tzu*, "Tien Jui". [p. 458]

[²] "Coming down the stairs" refers to the efforts of those leading cadres who had committed errors to make self-criticism in response to the criticisms of the masses and to win their understanding during the rectification movement. [p. 467]

[³] [p. 469]