

EXTENSIVE DEMOCRACY

Peiping, Kuang-ming Jih-pao, 20 January 1967

[An article by the Hurricane Combat Group, Full text of
Institute of Philosophy of the Thought of Mao Tse-tung.]

The great proletarian cultural revolution is a movement of extensive democracy with Mao Tse-tung's thought in command. In this campaign, the broad revolutionary masses employ forms of extensive democracy such as free airing of views, posters in big characters, big debate and extensive exchange of revolutionary experience to expose those persons in power within the party who follow the capitalist road, unmask all monsters and demons and uncover the bourgeois reactionary line, hitting at them until they are all struck down!

This form of extensive democracy provides the masses with the best means for educating themselves, using it to unify their thinking and understanding, heightening their consciousness and mastering Mao Tse-tung's thought. The exercise of extensive democracy of the proletariat is an important guarantee for combating and preventing revisionism and stopping the dictatorship of the proletariat from turning into bourgeois dictatorship. That is why the kind of extensive democracy we put into practice is the extensive democracy under proletarian dictatorship, a truly higher stage of proletarian democracy which has never occurred in the history of mankind and a new development of Chairman Mao's mass line in the socialist revolution. Only a great Marxist-Leninist as Chairman Mao dares to launch such extensive democracy.

Historical experience of proletarian dictatorship tells us that if the system of proletarian democracy is not fully put into practice, it will be impossible to effect a truly proletarian system of centralism. Therefore, the fundamental object of introducing extensive democracy is to consolidate proletarian dictatorship and the socialist system, in this way preventing our country from going revisionist.

Comrade Lin Piao has said: "Without carrying out such a thorough-going great proletarian cultural revolution and without practicing such extensive democracy, the dictatorship of the proletariat will be weakened and will degenerate, while capitalism will try in every possible way to stage a comeback and the exploiting classes will once again lord it over the people."

Since proletarian dictatorship safeguards extensive democracy, without the dictatorship of the proletariat there will not be any extensive democracy for the masses of people. It is precisely because our proletarian dictatorship is consolidated, it is possible to put extensive democracy into practice.

However, those people in power who are bent on the capitalist road and a small handful of persons who obstinately cling to the bourgeois reactionary line try to distort the extensive democracy of the proletariat by substituting the extensive democracy of the proletariat into democracy for the bourgeoisie. They do so with the object of opposing proletarian dictatorship and restoring capitalism. Under the guise of cherishing "democracy" and waving the big banner of "democracy," these people use what they call "extensive democracy" as a cover for publishing open letters, putting up posters in big characters and bombarding the proletarian command posts. With these things in mind, they fabricate reactionary fallacies to obstruct the masses from criticizing and refuting them.

For instance, they say: "I am of the masses. If I am criticized and refuted, the spearhead of attack is directed against the masses." This is indeed a gross crime. The masses are divided into classes -- this being the basic viewpoint of Marxism-Leninism and the thought of Mao Tse-tung. Our line embraces the proletarian revolutionary line represented by Chairman Mao. We firmly trust the masses and rely on them, always directing the spearhead of attack against those persons in power within the party who are taking the capitalist road. Only those who uphold the bourgeois reactionary line direct the spearhead of attack against the masses, not those persons in power within the party who follow the capitalist road. As regards those of the "masses" who carry signboards and obstinately adhere to the bourgeois reactionary line and bombard the proletarian command post -- they are not of the "masses" at all. They are merely enemies of the masses, a small handful of active counterrevolutionary elements struggling against the masses. We want precisely to direct the spearhead of attack against these persons, striking them down and trampling them under foot until they will never rise again. If this is not done, our proletarian dictatorship can never be consolidated. Without solid proletarian dictatorship, it is impossible to have the extensive democracy of the proletariat.

These people say, for another instance: "You people comprise a 'one-voice hall.'" In a class society, democracy and freedom for the ruling classes means that those who are governed by them will have no democracy and freedom at all. Since our country is a socialist state upholding the dictatorship of the proletariat, we have to promote proletarian and eradicate bourgeois ideology and vigorously propagate the thought of Mao Tse-tung. Under no circumstances should bourgeois and reactionary ideas be permitted to spread unchecked.

You people say this is a "one-voice hall." Dear sirs, you are right in saying so, because ours is the "one-voice hall" of the proletariat. Since

the proletariat represents the interests of the broad masses of laboring people, the "one-voice hall" of the proletariat is an "airing-of-views hall" of the broad masses of working people. It is the consistent policy of our party and Chairman Mao that the masses of people shall have the right to enjoy ample freedom. This has been put into practice for a long time. The present great proletarian cultural revolution is all the more a movement of extensive democracy of the masses of people under the command of Mao Tse-tung's thought, the "hall where people air their views" with the thought of Mao Tse-tung in command, not the "one-voice hall." But in this "hall where people air their views" of the campaign of extensive democracy, none of the counter-revolutionary elements has ever been included.

Chairman Mao said long ago: "The democratic system is practiced among the people. The people are entitled to freedom of speech, assembly and the right to form societies. The right to vote is given only to the people, not to reactionaries. If these two aspects -- democracy among the people, but the exercise of dictatorship over reactionaries -- are combined we have people's democratic dictatorship."

Extensive democracy is democracy for the broad masses of people. Here, only revolutionary people are entitled to freedom of speech while dictatorship is imposed on counterrevolutionary elements. There is no such things as freedom of speech for counterrevolutionaries. Any attempt to use the odious and bankrupt bourgeois slogan of "liberty, equality and fraternity" to confuse real issues and deceive the masses cannot be anything but wishful thinking.

Chairman Mao says: "Freedom and democracy cannot exist in the abstract, they exist only in the concrete. In a society where there is class struggle, when the exploiting classes are free to exploit the working people, the working people will have no freedom from being exploited. Where there is democracy for the bourgeoisie, there can be no democracy for the proletariat and other working people."

With regard to counterrevolutionary elements, democracy should not be given them. On the contrary, they should be severely repressed. This is extensive democracy, the kind that expresses the will of the broad revolutionary masses and extensive democracy of the proletariat.

Thirdly, these people say: "You people don't treat others on an equal footing, favoring some but discriminating against others. These words are from the lips of those counterrevolutionary elements who harbor treacherous designs. They have no idea at all that this is the same odious stuff as the bourgeois slogan of "liberty, equality and fraternity." Can it be that we shall treat those active counterrevolutionary elements "on an equal footing?" Can we treat those persons in power who are bent on the capitalist road "on an equal footing?" Can we treat a small handful of persons who oppose the revolutionary line laid down by Chairman Mao and who carry out the bourgeois

reactionary line and bombard the proletarian command posts "on an equal footing?" No, this shall never be permitted.

In a class society, "to treat everyone on an equal footing" is basically a hoax. In the great cultural revolution, can people endorse both the bourgeois reactionary line and the proletarian revolutionary line? Can they support those who carry out both the bourgeois reactionary line and the proletarian revolutionary line? Of course, there are people who play dual tactics. But this is precisely an ugly expression of the bourgeois world outlook.

In all the above fallacies we have refuted attempt has been made to use the bourgeois slogan of "liberty, equality and fraternity" to replace the extensive democracy of the proletariat. These people [i.e., the authors of the fallacies] have the sinister intention of deceiving the masses, befoul the waters, blur the class demarcation line, and shift the target of struggle to something else. They want to abet the arrogance of the bourgeois Right and dampen the spirit of the proletarian Left, with a view to shielding the bourgeois Right, hitting at the proletarian Left and striking blows at the revolutionary masses. They do so with the object of promoting bourgeois liberalization, advancing revisionism, and swaying public opinion, in an attempt to upset the proletarian domain and turn it into a mess. Thus, when the moment is ripe, they will seize the political power of the proletariat and return to capitalism. For this reason, we must thoroughly criticize and refute these reactionary fallacies and eliminate their influence.