

# Grasp the Principal Contradiction, Hold To the General Orientation of Struggle

— Study the May 16, 1966 Circular of the Central Committee  
Of the Chinese Communist Party

by "HONGQI" COMMENTATOR

**D**URING the great proletarian cultural revolution, we must grasp the principal contradiction. Only by doing this can we hold firm to the general orientation of the struggle.

What is the principal contradiction in the great proletarian cultural revolution? A clear-cut answer is provided by the great historic document of the May 16, 1966 Circular of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.

This great historic document, drawn up under the personal guidance of Chairman Mao, directs the spearhead of struggle against none other than "those Party people in authority taking the capitalist road who support the bourgeois scholar-tyrants, and those bourgeois representatives who have sneaked into the Party and protect the bourgeois scholar-tyrants." Chairman Mao points out in this document: "Those representatives of the bourgeoisie who have sneaked into the Party, the

government, the army and various cultural circles are a bunch of counter-revolutionary revisionists. Once conditions are ripe, they will seize political power and turn the dictatorship of the proletariat into a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie." We must thoroughly criticize and repudiate these counter-revolutionary revisionists, clear them out and seize from them the power of leadership which they have usurped. "Our struggle against them, too, can be nothing but a life-and-death struggle."

This means that the principal contradiction we must resolve in the great proletarian cultural revolution is the contradiction between the proletariat and the handful of Party people in authority taking the capitalist road. This contradiction is an antagonistic one, a contradiction between the enemy and ourselves. The general orientation of the struggle in this great proletarian cultural revolution is precisely the resolving of this principal contradiction by directing the spearhead of the struggle against the handful of Party people in authority taking the capitalist road.

The contradiction between the proletariat and the handful of Party people in authority taking the capitalist road is a concentrated manifestation of the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in China and of the struggle between the socialist road and the capitalist road. This is the most outstanding characteristic of the class struggle under the conditions of the dictatorship of the proletariat, particularly after the socialist transformation of the ownership of the means of production is in the main completed. This is an objective law.

The handful of Party people in authority taking the capitalist road represent the interests of the bourgeoisie and reflect its demands in a concentrated way. They wave "red flags" to oppose the red flag. They appear as "Party and government leaders," but speak and act on behalf of the bourgeoisie. They use the power of the Party and the state they have usurped to carry out the policies of the bourgeoisie and try by every means to turn the dictatorship of the proletariat into a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. In short, the representatives of the bourgeoisie who have sneaked into the Party have secretly set up a bourgeois command headed by the Khrushchov of China inside the apparatus of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Therefore, we must concentrate our forces to knock out this bourgeois command and thoroughly criticize and repudiate its counter-revolutionary revisionist wares and completely discredit them. Only by so doing can we eliminate this most serious hidden danger, consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and ensure that our country does not change its colour.

Chairman Mao pointed out long ago that the contradictions between the two classes (the proletariat and

the bourgeoisie) and the two roads (the socialist road and the capitalist road) find concentrated expression in the contradiction between the proletariat and the handful of Party people in authority taking the capitalist road.

In 1957, in his brilliant work *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People*, Chairman Mao pointed out that **revisionism was even more dangerous than dogmatism**. As regards the domestic scene, the revisionism referred to is mainly the agents of the bourgeoisie within the Party.

Chairman Mao pointed out in May 1963 that **in the ranks of our cadres, a number of people failed even to differentiate between the enemy and ourselves but collaborated with the enemy and were corrupted, divided and demoralized by him, and the enemy was pulling our cadres to his side or sneaking into our ranks**. Chairman Mao added that if things were to continue like this, **"it would not take long, perhaps only several years or a decade, or several decades at most, before a counter-revolutionary restoration on a national scale inevitably occurred, the Marxist-Leninist party would undoubtedly become a revisionist party or a fascist party, and the whole of China would change its colour."** It is those elements within the Party pulled out by the bourgeoisie and those elements of the bourgeoisie who sneaked in who are referred to with emphasis as being the most dangerous.

In July 1964 when Chairman Mao spoke of the question of successors to the proletarian revolutionary cause, he put forward **the question of preventing "the emergence of Khrushchov's revisionism in China."** And he said that the first requirement for worthy successors to the revolutionary cause of the proletariat was that **"they must be genuine Marxist-Leninists and not revisionists like Khrushchov wearing the cloak of Marxism-Leninism."**

In January 1965 Chairman Mao pointed out in "Some Current Problems Raised in the Socialist Education Movement in the Rural Areas"\* that **"the main target of the present movement is those within the Party who are in authority and are taking the capitalist road."**

In the past few years, Chairman Mao has pointed out on many occasions: **Be on guard against the emergence of revisionism, especially against the emergence of revisionism in the Central Committee of our Party.**

After several years of preparation, Chairman Mao personally initiated the great proletarian cultural rev-

\*Summary minutes of discussion at the National Working Conference called by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, known as the 23-article document.—Tr.

olution and is leading it himself. The main aim of this great revolution is precisely to overthrow the handful of Party people in authority taking the capitalist road, especially the handful of top Party persons in authority taking the capitalist road. This means grasping the principal contradiction after analyzing all the intertwining contradictions in China at the present stage.

In studying the Circular in the light of the new situation in the present struggle and the practice of the revolution over the past year, the basic requirement is to take hold of the principal contradiction and keep to the orientation of the struggle firmly and unswervingly. We must not divert our sight to all sorts of secondary contradictions, and thus shift the general orientation of the struggle.

Chairman Mao teaches us: **"In studying any complex process in which there are two or more contradictions, we must devote every effort to finding its principal contradiction. Once this principal contradiction is grasped, all problems can be readily solved. This is the method Marx taught us in his study of capitalist society. Likewise Lenin and Stalin taught us this method when they studied imperialism and the general crisis of capitalism and when they studied the Soviet economy. There are thousands of scholars and men of action who do not understand it, and the result is that, lost in a fog, they are unable to get to the heart of a problem and naturally cannot find a way to resolve its contradictions."** In the great proletarian cultural revolution, when class relations are undergoing radical change, it is all the more imperative to pay attention at all times to grasping the principal contradiction.

Only by taking hold of the principal contradiction, can we expand and strengthen the ranks of the Left, unite with the masses of people and cadres, form revolutionary great alliances and isolate to the maximum the handful of Party people in authority taking the capitalist road. We must concentrate all our forces on resolving this principal contradiction, thoroughly criticize and repudiate, politically, ideologically and theoretically, the handful of top Party persons in authority taking the capitalist road and eliminate the pernicious influence they have spread on all fronts.

Contradictions also exist among different mass organizations of the Left. These are contradictions between right and wrong within the forces of the Left. In some cases, on a given question one side is right and the other side wrong. In other cases, on a given question one side has more errors than the other side. In still other cases one side is right on one question and wrong on another, while it is just the opposite with the other side. In all the above cases, there are differences in principle. However, these contradictions between them are secondary and they have the same general orientation since the Party people in authority taking the capitalist road are their common opponents. Once they clearly discern their chief enemy and take hold of the principal contradiction, the mass organiza-

tions of the Left will be able to handle and resolve the contradictions between them correctly and in dealing with each other will refrain from using the methods for handling contradictions between the enemy and ourselves. Differences between mass organizations of the Left should be resolved by the method of criticism and self-criticism. Controversies between the two sides can be settled by consultation. On secondary issues which cannot be solved for the time being, both sides should seek common ground while reserving their differences and join in fighting the enemy. This cannot be called lack of principle, nor blurring the line between right and wrong, or eclecticism or conciliation, but is a correct practice aimed at forging the revolutionary great alliance and a manifestation of the principled attitude of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tse-tung's thought. On the contrary, if organizations of the Left hold fast to the controversial points, regard minor issues as more important than anything else and zestfully engage in internal feuds, thereby relaxing the struggle against those Party people in authority taking the capitalist road, this is precisely a lack of principle, a noxious manifestation of the small group mentality, the mountain-stronghold mentality and anarchism.

The relations between mass organizations of the Left and those of the masses who, due to lack of a correct understanding, joined conservative organizations, represent contradictions among the people, not contradictions between ourselves and the enemy. As long as we grasp the principal contradiction and recognize who our chief enemy is, we will understand that the misled masses in the conservative organizations are also victims of the bourgeois reactionary line. They are our class brothers. We should patiently teach them to break with the villains who have been controlling them from behind the scenes and return to the side of Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line. In order to isolate to the maximum and deal mortal blows to the handful of Party people in authority taking the capitalist road, we must take pains to do political and ideological work to help those who do not have a correct understanding. On this question, **we should always bear in mind Chairman Mao's teachings on placing trust in the masses. We should carry out his instructions that the proletariat must emancipate not only itself but all mankind; that without emancipating the whole of mankind the proletariat cannot finally emancipate itself.** The mistake committed by those of the masses who have been deceived into joining conservative organizations is a matter of understanding. We should help them to emancipate their minds and get rid of their mental burdens. We should deal with them by persuasion only, not by coercion, insults or attacks in reprisal. We should welcome them if they withdraw from the conservative organizations and join the revolutionary organizations. We should not discriminate against them but treat them correctly in accordance with the principle that "early or late, all who make revolution merit equal treatment." If they want to keep their original organization but rise in revolt collectively, change their political orientation,

turn about and direct their struggle against the handful of Party people in authority taking the capitalist road, we should also welcome them and not discriminate against them. This is not Right opportunism, nor capitulationism, but the correct principle of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tse-tung's thought. It will benefit the proletariat, the proletarian revolutionary line represented by Chairman Mao and the successful accomplishment of the great historic task of the great proletarian cultural revolution. Only by acting in this way can we unite with the overwhelming majority of the masses and make ourselves invincible. Any contrary attitude will serve the interests of the handful of Party people in authority taking the capitalist road.

On the other hand, the masses who have joined conservative organizations should be strict with themselves, recognize what the principal contradiction is, distinguish comrades from the enemy, take firm hold of the general orientation of the struggle and direct

their attack against the handful of Party people in authority taking the capitalist road. Since they have made mistakes, they should acknowledge and correct them. Once they have corrected them, all is well. They should not give themselves over to blind emotions or they will remain disorientated. They must heighten their vigilance and guard against being instigated by villains.

In studying the May 16, 1966 Circular of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, we should link our study with reality, take firm hold of the problems currently in people's minds and carry out a rectification campaign. We should recognize more clearly what the principal contradiction is, grasp the general orientation of the struggle better and, in particular, concentrate our forces on thoroughly criticizing and repudiating the handful of top Party persons in authority taking the capitalist road.

(*"Hongqi," No. 7, 1967.*)