

On Revolutionary Discipline and Revolutionary Authority of the Proletariat

“HONGQI” COMMENTATOR

THE fundamental task of the great proletarian cultural revolution is to mobilize hundreds of millions of people, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, to seize power from below from the handful of persons within the Party who are in authority and are taking the capitalist road. This is the general counter-offensive against the repeated ferocious attacks by the bourgeoisie during the past 17 years.

Class struggle exists in socialist society. The concentrated expression of this struggle is around the

question of political power, and around the question of the usurpation of political power by the bourgeoisie and its agents in the Party and the proletariat's seizing power from them.

After the proletariat seizes political power in the country as a whole, the reactionary bourgeoisie always seeks to find agents in the Party, by worming people into the Party and by buying over Party members. The handful of reactionary elements who wormed their way into the Party and were in authority carried out

"peaceful evolution" and the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in those places and departments in which they entrenched themselves. The proletariat must recapture all power they usurped; this is the only way to ensure that the dictatorship of the proletariat is consolidated and that our country will never change colour, and will always forge ahead triumphantly along the road of socialism and communism.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung, the greatest Marxist-Leninist in the present era, discovered the law of class struggle in socialist society. It is he who initiated and is leading the great proletarian cultural revolution and the struggle of the proletarian revolutionaries to form a great alliance and unite the broad masses of people to seize power from the handful of persons within the Party who are in authority and are taking the capitalist road; and it is he who has put forward the correct theory and a series of principles and policies. This represents a great development of Marxism-Leninism, and a great development of the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is of epoch-making, universal significance.

The handful of persons within the Party who are in authority and are taking the capitalist road are the most dangerous and the main enemy. An important weapon of these reactionary elements for preserving their reactionary rule is to illegally use the name of the Party and turn Party discipline into bourgeois discipline to repress the masses and oppose revolution. This counter-revolutionary discipline must be thoroughly smashed.

All revolutionary cadres must step forth, stand with the revolutionary masses and carry out resolute struggle against the handful of persons within the Party who are in authority and are taking the capitalist road, and ignore all their "discipline." They are no longer revolutionary superiors, on the contrary they are counter-revolutionary revisionists. During war, when a commander becomes a traitor and surrenders to the enemy, a revolutionary fighter should not obey his commands but instead should turn his gun on him. True during war, this should also be so in political struggle.

The proletarian revolutionary fighters must smash counter-revolutionary discipline and, at the same time, consciously observe proletarian revolutionary discipline.

Lenin pointed out that **rejection of proletarian revolutionary discipline "is tantamount to completely disarming the proletariat in the interests of the bourgeoisie."** **"It all adds up to that petty-bourgeois diffuseness and instability, that incapacity for sustained effort, unity and organised action, which, if encouraged, must inevitably destroy any proletarian revolutionary movement."**

Based on the principle of Leninism, Chairman Mao has always stressed revolutionary discipline. He has

pointed out many times that petty-bourgeois ultra-democracy and unrestrained liberalism which undermines discipline must be firmly opposed. Chairman Mao teaches:

". . . The danger of ultra-democracy lies in the fact that it damages or even completely wrecks the Party organization and weakens or even completely undermines the Party's fighting capacity, rendering the Party incapable of fulfilling its fighting tasks and thereby causing the defeat of the revolution."

"Education on discipline must be strengthened in the whole Party, because unified discipline is a necessary condition for the victory of the revolution."

Lenin's remarks in 1920 and Chairman Mao's remarks decades ago are all very important to proletarian revolutionaries and the revolutionary masses at this time when they are seizing power from the handful of persons within the Party who are in authority and are taking the capitalist road.

The movement for extensive proletarian democracy which has been vigorously carried out for more than the last six months has broken the counter-revolutionary discipline of the handful of persons in the Party who are in authority and taking the capitalist road. This is an extremely good thing. However, this absolutely does not mean that we want no discipline, or advocate ultra-democracy, anarchism, liberalism, departmentalism and "small group" mentality. Like fire and water, such things and the proletariat are incompatible. If we should fail to overcome them and strengthen proletarian revolutionary discipline, we would not be able to form the powerful proletarian revolutionary force, fight the enemy, correctly put Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line into effect and win victory in revolution.

That red political power in the past could exist in small areas, that the bases for resisting Japanese aggression could be consolidated and developed in the enemy's rear and that the Liberation War could be brought to a decisive victory, all this testifies to the importance of proletarian revolutionary discipline. This applies today, too. We can carry through the proletarian revolutionary line represented by Chairman Mao, forge a genuine great alliance of proletarian revolutionaries, organize a mighty, all-conquering proletarian revolutionary army and win victory in the struggle to seize power only when proletarian revolutionary discipline is strengthened.

Ultra-democracy, anarchism, liberalism, departmentalism and "small group" mentality are all destructive to proletarian revolutionary discipline. In the final analysis, they all stem from "self-interest" i.e., individualism. All revolutionary comrades and revolutionary mass organizations should firmly get rid of "self-interest" and foster devotion to the public interest;

firmly eliminate individualism and strive for the complete ascendancy of Mao Tse-tung's thought. This means that while we are transforming the objective world, we should also transform our subjective world. This demands that every revolutionary comrade conscientiously and creatively study and apply Chairman Mao's brilliant works *On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party*, *Combat Liberalism* and the "three constantly read articles" [*Serve the People*, *In Memory of Norman Bethune* and *The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains*] and link this up with examining his own ideas and actions. If we do not do this, but give mistaken ideas free rein, then we shall go to the opposite side and be used by the class enemy. Every revolutionary comrade and revolutionary mass organization must pay great attention to this point at this crucial moment in the struggle to seize power from the handful of persons in the Party who are in authority and taking the capitalist road.

Experience proves that in the course of the struggle to seize power, it is necessary for proletarian revolutionaries to establish, through the exchange of views and consultation, provisional organs of power consisting of leading members of revolutionary mass organizations, leading members of local People's Liberation Army units and revolutionary leading cadres of Party and government organizations. These organs of power must resolutely implement the proletarian revolutionary line of Chairman Mao Tse-tung. They must have authority.

There is no authority which is above class. We must thoroughly overthrow bourgeois authority and firmly establish proletarian authority. By no means do we oppose all authority.

Some persons oppose all authority. This is an expression of the inherent bad characteristics of the petty bourgeoisie, an expression of anarchism.

In his *On Authority*, Frederick Engels pointed out that combined action means organization and that it is impossible to have organization without authority. He thoroughly criticized the anti-authoritarians. Engels wrote:

"Have these gentlemen ever seen a revolution? A revolution is certainly the most authoritarian thing there is; it is the act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon — authoritarian means, if such there be at all; and if the victorious party does not want to have fought in vain, it must maintain this rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries. Would the Paris Commune have lasted a single day if it had not made use of this authority of the armed people against the bourgeois? Should we not, on the contrary, reproach it for not having used it freely enough?"

"Therefore, either one of two things: either the anti-authoritarians don't know what they are talking about, in which case they are creating nothing but confusion; or they do know, and in that case they are betraying the movement of the proletariat. In either case they serve the reaction."

Without authority there will be no organized revolutionary action, let alone victory in the revolution. This was true in the years of revolutionary war and is equally true today when, under the dictatorship of the proletariat, the proletarian revolutionaries are waging the struggle to seize power from the handful of persons in the Party who are in authority and taking the capitalist road.

Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tse-tung's thought, is the highest authority of the proletariat. The proletarian revolutionary line that Chairman Mao represents is the highest authority in the great proletarian cultural revolution. All provisional organs of power that carry out this correct line in directing the struggle to seize power should have authority and do have it as a matter of course. Proletarian revolutionaries should take it as their obligation to assume such authority. This is the authority of the proletariat.

The provisional organs of power that direct the struggle to seize power have the authority to exercise dictatorship over the class enemy. With regard to the handful of persons in the Party who are in authority and obstinately taking the capitalist road and with regard to the ghosts and monsters in society, we precisely want to deprive them of democratic rights; we cannot speak of any equality whatsoever between us and them.

The provisional organs of power that direct the struggle to seize power must exercise democratic centralism among the people, that is, centralism on the basis of democracy, and democracy under centralized guidance. In this great revolution, the most extensive democracy is being exercised and likewise, the highest degree of centralism should be enforced. All revolutionary comrades and all revolutionary organizations must consciously observe revolutionary discipline and act in accordance with the principle of democratic centralism, and must not do as they please.

We must bear in mind the lesson that the Paris Commune was too restrained in the use of its authority. The provisional organs of power and their responsible members who carry out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line in directing the struggle to seize power must display the courage and resourcefulness of proletarian revolutionaries, make full use of the revolutionary authority of the proletariat, lead the masses, and successfully accomplish the historic task of the struggle to seize power.

(*"Hongqi,"* No. 3, 1967.)