

From the Masses, to the Masses

COMRADE Mao Tse-tung has said: "In all the practical work of our Party, all correct leadership is necessarily 'from the masses, to the masses'." This also holds good for the work of the proletarian cultural revolution.

Wherever a unit has done its work well in the movement of the cultural revolution, that is because the leaders there, acting on the teachings of Comrade Mao Tse-tung, have marched in the van of the movement, boldly mobilized the masses, boldly encouraged them to put up big-character posters, air their opinions without reservation and hold great debates, and led them into the battle to sweep away all the monsters and demons.

Such good leaders have been able to serve first as the pupils of the masses before they serve as their teachers.

They have been able to listen, observe, and think a good deal and pay a good deal of attention to the views of the masses.

They have dared to "draw fire" on themselves by calling for exposure and criticism of their shortcomings and mistakes in their work.

They welcomed the big-character posters put up by the masses that expose and criticize them, and thus showed a fine communist style.

In this way, they have won the confidence of the masses, and, in their work, gained the initiative, the right to speak out and the right to lead; therefore they are able to guide the movement successfully.

But some other people occupying leading posts in their units have not been acting like this, but rather like the proverbial Lord Sheh who claimed to be fond of dragons but in fact was mortally afraid of them. They have talked about the mass line but they took fright as soon as the masses were really roused. They are afraid of this and that, fearing that they themselves will be caught by the revolutionary flames lit by the masses and that the masses will seize on their shortcomings and mistakes. In fact, as long as comrades who have committed ordinary mistakes dare to take their shortcomings and mistakes seriously, are sincere and earnest in their self-criticism, modestly accept the criticism of the masses, and show by deeds their determination and willingness to correct their mistakes;

the masses will understand and excuse them and will also welcome them doing so.

Then there are a handful of other people who have adopted the attitude of bureaucratic overlords towards the masses and placed themselves above the masses. They utterly refuse to listen to the opinions of the masses. When the masses put out a few big-character posters criticizing them, they could not bear it. They even sought various pretexts to suppress the mass movement and retaliate against the masses in revenge. Acting in this way, they cannot lead the cultural revolution and cannot muddle on like this. In consequence, the masses will discard them.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung has said: "Every one of our cadres, be his post high or low, is a servant of the people. Everything we do is in the service of the people."

It is absolutely impermissible for Communist Party members to take the attitude of bourgeois overlords towards the masses. The great proletarian cultural revolution is precisely a revolution against bourgeois overlords. If a Communist does not learn modestly from the masses but adopts the attitude of a bureaucrat towards them, in what sense is he a Communist? This is absolutely contrary to the Communist Party style of work, it is the Kuomintang style of work.

Back in Yen-an Comrade Mao Tse-tung said that it was necessary to distinguish between the Communist Party's style of work and that of the Kuomintang. Our Communist Party style is to have close links with the masses, learn from them and wholeheartedly serve the people, and, just as we wash our faces or sweep the floor every day, to undertake constant self-criticism of our own shortcomings and mistakes. The Kuomintang style is to divorce oneself from the masses, lord it over them and bully them.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung has said that Communist Party members absolutely cannot retain the Kuomintang style of work and preserve the dust of bureaucratism and warlordism.

The overwhelming majority of the Communist Party members are able to draw the distinction between the Communist Party style of work and the Kuomintang style of work. However, some are able to do so only at certain times and not at other times, or only on some questions and not on others. It is a most dangerous thing for a Communist Party member to be unable to see the line that divides the Communist Party style from that of the Kuomintang, for he will find himself standing on the wrong side of the line and in opposition to the revolutionary mass movement.

No revolutionary road is straight and smooth; it always has twists and turns and ups and downs. The great proletarian cultural revolution, such a great revolution that touches the people to their souls and such an extremely sharp, complex and deep-going class struggle, will inevitably have certain shortcomings and mistakes and certain twists in the course of this movement. The question is that we should spare no efforts to do a still better job in leading the movement, ensure the movement to develop in a still healthier way, and strive to have fewer mistakes and twists.

Can the movement be led in a better way? Certainly it can. This calls for the thorough implementation of the Party's mass line put forward by Comrade Mao Tse-tung and the persistent carrying out of the line of boldly mobilizing the masses.

The great proletarian cultural revolution is developing with such speed and force that many people find themselves insufficiently prepared ideologically. Every Communist Party member must be tested in this great revolution, in the flame of the mass struggles. They must prove by their actions that they are the faithful servants of the masses, and that they really take Comrade Mao Tse-tung's teachings as the supreme guide in all their actions.

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