

UNITY - CRITICISM - UNITY
(21 June 1967)

In an epochmaking, brilliant article "On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People," Chairman Mao taught us: to solve contradictions among the people, it is necessary to measure "unity-criticism-unity, in detail, namely, starting from the desire for unity to solve contradictions through criticism or struggle, and thus achieve a new unity of a new base."...

At present, there are still people who do not understand the importance of criticism and self-criticism. They do not understand that unity-criticism-unity has been the method always taught by Chairman Mao and the only correct measure to solve contradictions among the people. They do not understand that there is no other way besides this.

Some comrades think that they are perfect. Whenever there is a shortcoming or mistake, they do not conduct a conscientious practice of self-criticism, nor do they tolerate others' criticism. It is dangerous for them to "give orders" which are metaphysical in nature and incompatible with Marxism-Leninism and the theory of understanding Mao Tse-tung's thought....

Those comrades in authority should, in particular, bring about democratic practices, inspire and listen to criticism, and withstand criticism. They should take the initiative to conduct self-criticism of their own mistakes. In case they are in a passive position, they must every more conscientiously listen to the criticism of others and remain calm in order to make a sincere self-examination. Chairman Mao has taught us: "The sky will not fall and you yourself will not fall, if you let people talk. Suppose you do not let people talk. There might be one day when you fall." This is an indestructible truth.

There are still some comrades who often shift from one extreme to another. When criticism has not yet been launched against their own comrades in regard to the questions among the people, they seem to see no shortcomings or mistakes at all; but once criticism is launched, or when they hear of some "tips," they consider that other people must be "very guilty" and must be "overthrown." Our comrades are not enemies. If they commit mistakes in work, they can make correction. Why should we not let others correct mistakes? Why should we not let others make revolution?...

To deal with the comrades who committed mistakes, the party's policies are: "Take warning from the past in order to be more careful in the future," "Watch and help," and "Unity-criticism-unity."

Chairman Mao has said that to develop criticism, "the essential thing is to start with a desire for unity. Without this subjective desire for unity once the struggle starts it is liable to get out of hand. Wouldn't this then be the same as 'ruthless struggle and merciless blows'? Would there be any party unity left to speak of?" Chairman Mao said: "In dealing with comrades who committed mistakes, whether one should adopt an attitude of hostility or an attitude of assistance is a criterion for determining whether one has a good or bad intention." If one tries to finish all comrades who committed mistakes among the people with a single blow, one just blurs the demarcation line between the contradictions among the people and those between the enemies and ourselves, and actually denies the formula of "Unity-criticism-unity." This action is metaphysical, and runs counter to Marxism-Leninism and to the theory of knowledge of Mao Tse-tung's thought.

It should be pointed out that if one fails to correctly use the weapon of criticism to help those who commit mistakes, one often fails to develop self-criticism. The great proletarian cultural revolution is a great revolution touching the souls of the people. Without "correct, undistorted, serious criticism and self-criticism," it is impossible to touch the souls of the people.

In the course of the great proletarian cultural revolution, and among the masses and the revolutionary students and teachers, it is an essential to correctly and effectively handle the contradictions among the people according to the formula of "unity-criticism-unity" and to carry out and improve work by making full use of the weapon of criticism and self-criticism.

Only by so doing will we be able to unite all the people that can be united, concentrate our efforts to fiercely attack the handful of top party persons in authority taking the capitalist road, and raise our struggle to a still higher level.