

Large-Scale Mass Movement of Preventing Snail Fever in Southern China

THE revolutionary masses in those parts of southern China where snail fever (schistosomiasis) was once prevalent are waging a large-scale people's war to bid "farewell to the god of plague," in an effort to eradicate the disease in a comparatively short period of time. They are doing this in line with Chairman Mao's great strategic principle "Be prepared against war, be prepared against natural disasters, and do everything for the people" and his important directive that "snail fever must be wiped out."

Our great leader Chairman Mao has always been very concerned about the prevention and treatment of snail fever and has given a number of important instructions on it. Both his relevant instructions and two brilliant poems entitled *Farewell to the God of Plague* expressed his utmost concern for and encouragement to the people in the disease-affected areas and other parts of the country. The two poems were written on July 1, 1958, to eulogize the great mass movement of wiping out the disease after he had read a report on its elimination in Yukiang County, Kiangsi Province.

At the time of the great leap in industrial and agricultural production, hundreds of millions of army-men and civilians, high in spirits and firm in determination, unfolded an upsurge to bid "farewell to the god of plague" and won significant victories.

Thanks to the efforts of the poor and lower-middle peasants and revolutionary medical personnel over the years, more than three million people throughout the country have been cured of this disease and an area covering more than 3,000 million square metres has been freed of snails, the intermediate host of schistosomes. Snail fever has been eliminated in 38 counties including Yukiang and Tehhsing in Kiangsi, Hsienyu in Fukien, Tsengcheng in Kwangtung, Hsiangyang in Hupeh and Paoshan in the Shanghai municipality.

Under the guidance of Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line, the mass campaign to prevent, treat and wipe out snail fever has produced increasingly effective results since the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. In some parts of Kiangsi, Kiangsu, Kwang-

tung, Chekiang and Shanghai, more patients have been treated and more snails exterminated over larger areas in a single year's hard work than in several or a dozen or so previous years.

In many areas where snail fever has already been eliminated, the people still engage in repeated struggle to prevent its recurrence. Over the past 11 years, the revolutionary people in Yukiang County of Kiangsi Province, where snail fever was wiped out in 1958, have persistently taken measures to ensure permanent death to the "god of plague." Check-ups throughout the county at fixed intervals during the past years revealed no new case of infection nor the presence of snails.

Thanks to the wide-scope work over the years, areas once disease-ridden, where the miserable scene in which "Hundreds of villages choked with weeds, men wasted away; Thousands of homes decimated, phantoms sang with glee" was common before liberation, have undergone earth-shaking changes. Their populations are increasing. The physical strength of the people has improved. The revolutionary masses are all in high spirits. Revolution is forging ahead and production is thriving. Stretches of marshes, former breeding grounds for snails, are now tidy, cultivated land. The achievements in preventing and treating this disease are a great victory for Mao Tsetung Thought and for Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line!

As on other fronts, the work of preventing and treating snail fever has also witnessed a sharp class struggle between the two classes, the two roads and the two lines. The renegade, hidden traitor and scab Liu Shao-chi and his agents in this field had launched a ferocious attack on the work and carried out a variety of sabotaging activities. In open opposition to Chairman Mao's instructions, Liu Shao-chi and company slandered the mass movement of preventing and treating the disease as "wasting the people's energy and money" and spread the reactionary fallacy that "snail fever cannot be wiped out."

The revolutionary committees at all levels in the disease-ridden areas, in carrying out the work, firmly grasped the class struggle and the struggle between the

two lines as the key link and placed the living study and application of Mao Tsetung Thought above everything. Various types of Mao Tsetung Thought study classes were held to study Chairman Mao's important instructions on snail fever prevention and treatment, to relentlessly criticize the counter-revolutionary revisionist line pushed by the renegade Liu Shao-chi and his agents on this front and to denounce their towering crimes in sabotaging this work. While studying and propagating Chairman Mao's brilliant instructions, the revolutionary masses in many places carried out extensively the activities of "three reminds and three pour-outs": remind themselves of the history of class struggle, pour out grievances of class oppression and class exploitation; remind themselves of the history of the struggle between the two lines in the work of preventing and treating the disease, pour out grievances of oppression by Liu Shao-chi's counter-revolutionary revisionist line in medical and health work; remind themselves of the history of the rampancy of the disease, pour out the suffering caused them by the disease. Through mass study, propaganda and the above activities, Chairman Mao's revolutionary line and his brilliant thinking embodied in *Farewell to the God of Plague* have struck deep root in the minds of the people, enhancing markedly their consciousness of class struggle and the struggle between the two lines. As expressed by the poor and lower-middle peasants: "Liu Shao-chi and company were a gang of plague gods in politics who protected snail fever, the plague god in nature. To eliminate snail fever, it is imperative to raise high the great red banner of Mao Tsetung Thought and to criticize and discredit thoroughly the counter-revolutionary revisionist line pushed by Liu Shao-chi and his agents in this work. Revisionism must be rooted out and the disease eradicated."

Chairman Mao teaches: **"The revolutionary war is a war of the masses; it can be waged only by mobilizing the masses and relying on them."** In the work of preventing, treating and wiping out snail fever in the various localities, the masses were mobilized to engage in a deep-going, protracted people's war. The counter-revolutionary revisionist line of "giving first place to specialists and techniques" and the erroneous idea of relying solely on the specialized departments to do the work were criticized. The principle adhered to was combining modern and indigenous methods, with preference given to the latter, combining the activities of the masses with the work of the professional contingents, and combining prevention with treatment, with stress on prevention. By sticking to the road of "self-reliance" and "hard struggle" pointed out by Chairman Mao, many effective measures were devised

to prevent the disease and eliminate the snails, in the spirit of spending less money or none to do the work and of adapting to inadequate facilities and using local resources.

In the course of this mass movement, a contingent of part-time workers for snail fever prevention and treatment has come into being and is constantly growing. They are "barefoot doctors" and other health workers fighting against this disease. Not a few medical workers, graduates of old schools and colleges, have gone to the disease-ridden areas to be re-educated there by the poor and lower-middle peasants. They are beginning to foster the new idea of serving the poor and lower-middle peasants wholeheartedly and are contributing their share to the fight against the disease. Integrated with the mass movement, the full-time and part-time contingents have played a prominent role.

Recently, as an evidence of the deep concern of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party with Chairman Mao as the leader and Vice-Chairman Lin as the deputy leader, a conference was held in Shanghai on the work of preventing and treating snail fever in 11 provinces, one autonomous region and the Shanghai municipality, all located in southern China. Chang Chun-chiao, Member of the Political Bureau of the Party Central Committee, presided. Holding high the great red banner of Mao Tsetung Thought, the conference summed up the historical experience of the struggle between the two classes, the two roads and the two lines on snail fever prevention and treatment, undertook revolutionary mass criticism and worked out a programme for the elimination of the disease. In accordance with an instruction of the Party Central Committee, a leading group was re-established, under its leadership, to be in charge of snail fever prevention and treatment in the above-mentioned areas.

After the conference, revolutionary committees at all levels in the disease-ridden areas in southern China have raised the work of preventing and treating the disease to the level of the struggle between the two lines, preparedness against war, a matter of class viewpoint, mass viewpoint and the viewpoint of production. They have made further efforts to strengthen leadership over the work, mapped out plans to eradicate the disease, and greatly accelerated the people's war of bidding "farewell to the god of plague."

Under the leadership of the leading group and the revolutionary committees at all levels, a new upsurge in the mass movement to wipe out the disease in southern China is now in progress. It is integrated with large-scale water conservancy construction for the farmland and the preparatory work for spring farming.