

Study Materialist Dialectics and Be a Vanguard Fighter in Consciously Making Revolution

by Wang Shu-chen

Woman worker of the Tientsin No. 4 Cotton Mill

In this article, Comrade Wang Shu-chen has used her experience and historical materialism to explain two points.

The first is that the working class is unable to develop advanced thinking spontaneously. This is a Marxist viewpoint. Lenin pointed out long ago that Marxism was the scientific theory summarized from revolutionary practice and was not developed by the working class spontaneously. The workers, peasants and other working people have simple proletarian feelings, and in practice they may have some materialist and dialectical ideas of a naive character, but all this is a far cry from the mastery of the scientific theory of dialectical and historical materialism. Hence the urgent need to conscientiously study Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought.

The second point is: One may not study philosophy but that does not mean he has no philosophy. Philosophy deals with class stand, viewpoint and method. It permeates all things. Whether one is aware of it or not, one's thinking and action invariably reflect a certain class stand, viewpoint and method; it is either a proletarian stand or a bourgeois stand, either a materialist or an idealist viewpoint, either a dialectical or a metaphysical method. Therefore, whether one knows and studies philosophy or not, whatever he says or does is, in fact, inseparably linked with philosophy and governed by a certain philosophy, and he is consciously or unconsciously applying philosophy all the time. Having understood this truth, one will be able to consciously study Chairman Mao's philosophical works, carry out the struggle between the two world outlooks and learn to grasp the Marxist stand, viewpoints and methods. — Ed.

Advanced Ideas Are Not Innate

IF we want to be proletarian vanguards, the most important thing is to arm ourselves with Mao Tsetung Thought, Chairman Mao's dialectical materialism and historical materialism, and consciously remould our world outlook. Some comrades say: "The working class is the most advanced class. What could be wrong with our world outlook?" I examined this remark in the light of Chairman Mao's materialist dialectical concept that "one divides into two," and found that it was wrong. Advanced thinking does not

arise spontaneously from the working class. A member of the working class may not necessarily represent the whole working class. Whether a person can represent the working class or not depends, I think, first and foremost on his ideology, that is to say, we should see whether he makes conscious efforts to study and apply Mao Tsetung Thought in a living way and uses it to guide all his actions. This is decisive and fundamental. Class origin is of course important, but not decisive. The decisive factor is whether he has the revolutionary ideology of the proletariat.

In reviewing the changes in my thinking since liberation, I deeply realize that it is Mao Tsetung Thought, Chairman Mao's materialist dialectics, that shows me the direction of advance and gives me courage, wisdom and strength.

Like my class sisters, I felt when Tientsin was liberated in 1949 that the contrast between the new and old society was like that between heaven and hell and we rejoiced from the bottom of our hearts. But how had such tremendous changes come about? What were the aims of the Chinese Communist Party? Was it the capitalists who kept the workers alive or vice versa? Why were we workers impoverished in the old society? And why were the landlords and capitalists rich? I could not make head or tail of these political accounts. It was through study after liberation that I came to know Chairman Mao's great theory on classes and class struggle and understand many questions that had previously puzzled me. This was the first great emancipation of my mind, the first great leap in my thinking.

The second great emancipation of my mind was in 1958 when Chairman Mao called for emancipating the mind, doing away with all fetishes and superstitions, and daring to think and act. We workers mounted the stage of proletarian philosophy and studied and applied Chairman Mao's works *On Practice* and *On Contradiction*. The great truth that knowledge originates in practice gave us immense courage. At that time, we spinners wanted to speed up the spindles to produce more yarn. But some people said: "Foreign technical data stipulate that the spindles must not revolve more than 200 times a minute, otherwise the machine will break down." To this we replied: "Let's try and see." We succeeded in finally breaking away from this convention which had held sway for scores of years.

This was another leap in our thinking. It was an event of extraordinary significance which deeply impressed us.

The third great emancipation of my mind was during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution. Should the revolution be continued under the dictatorship of the proletariat? Who are the targets of the revolution? How should the revolution be made? Can the political power be consolidated or will its colour change? These are basic questions which we can never clearly understand without the guidance of Chairman Mao's great theory and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution initiated and led by Chairman Mao himself.

In the early period of the Great Cultural Revolution, I had a poor understanding of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat. At that time some people criticized me for not following Chairman Mao closely. I argued with them: "I suffered from the time when I was a child. Chairman Mao saved my family. I've been a worker for more than 20 years, how could you say I am not following Chairman Mao closely?" It seemed I was in the right and nobody could refute me. But when I think over it now, I doubt whether I was right. Can I say that I always follow Chairman Mao closely just because I suffered and because I am a worker?

I started working when I was only nine years old and in the old society I suffered all kinds of oppression and exploitation by the bureaucrat-capitalists and the bourgeoisie. Then came liberation. I have profound proletarian feelings for the Party and Chairman Mao, but this does not mean that I have armed myself with Mao Tsetung Thought. I remember that before liberation I worked for the capitalists and every time a capitalist or an overseer beat or cursed me I always thought: "Why is one person different from another? Why aren't people equal? Why do some people have to go hungry, endure beating and humiliations and lead a life worse than that of beasts of burden? And why do some live in great comfort and lord it over others?" At that time, how could I answer these questions? I remember my mother used to say to me: "Child! It's all because of fate that you were born into a poor family!" Some workers said: "It's just bad luck that we have such a bloody overseer!" Though couched in different terms, both remarks were influenced by the reactionary philosophy of fatalism. They did not get at the essence, which is class oppression and class exploitation. The reactionary ruling classes in the old society used fatalism to benumb the working people, hoping thereby to enslave their minds and turn them into permanent slaves.

How can we understand that the working people are the motive force in the making of history and how can we be conscious of the great position of the working class in history if we haven't studied Chairman Mao's revolutionary theories since liberation? From practice I understand that we cannot accomplish

anything by subjective wish alone. Veteran workers who suffered much in the old society all wish to do more work for the Party and for socialism. But why don't facts sometimes correspond with their wishes? The answer is that they cannot distinguish what is proletarian from what is bourgeois, socialism from capitalism, and Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tsetung Thought from revisionism. Only when we master Mao Tsetung Thought can we make a clear distinction and overcome bourgeois ideas, capitalism and revisionism.

Chairman Mao has taught us: **"True, the productive forces, practice and the economic base generally play the principal and decisive role; whoever denies this is not a materialist. But it must also be admitted that in certain conditions, such aspects as the relations of production, theory and the superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role."** We must firmly bear in mind this great teaching of Chairman Mao and take a correct attitude towards ourselves. Whoever does not attach importance to class origin is not a materialist. But if one pays attention only to class origin and ignores advanced ideology, particularly ignoring the tremendous role of Mao Tsetung Thought in promoting the people's initiative, he will fall into the mire of metaphysics. Only by consciously arming our minds with Mao Tsetung Thought can we continue the revolution and make constant progress and bring into full play the initiative of revolutionaries in correctly knowing and changing the world.

Study Materialist Dialectics Hard and Break With Idealism and Metaphysics

In consciously remoulding one's world outlook, one must study Chairman Mao's philosophical works hard, break with idealism and metaphysics and grasp materialist dialectics. The renegade Yang Hsien-chen advocated "combining two into one." I hadn't heard anything about this at that time, but through participation in the criticism of Yang Hsien-chen, I found that I also had the remnant pernicious influence of this fallacy in my head. For instance, in the early period of the Great Cultural Revolution I was unable to see that contradictions and struggles existed within the Party; my consciousness of the struggle between the two lines was low. Wasn't this because of the pernicious influence of "combining two into one"? This was a big lesson to me. I thought about this for a long time and came to understand this truth: One may not study philosophy, but that doesn't mean he has no philosophy. The question is what kind of philosophy it is. If it isn't proletarian philosophy, it must be bourgeois philosophy.

In production, we often come up against two opposing views. Take the recent increase in the speed of the spindles for example. Most of the workers were for increasing the speed, maintaining that things are always developing and never remain at the same level. But a few others held that the speed could not be increased further. This is a manifestation of the clash between two kinds of philosophy, that is, the clash be-

tween the idea that things develop and the idea of stagnation, the clash between materialist dialectics and metaphysics.

Chairman Mao has taught us: **"Throughout the history of human knowledge, there have been two conceptions concerning the law of development of the universe, the metaphysical conception and the dialectical conception, which form two opposing world outlooks."** Here Chairman Mao says **"there have been,"** meaning that this is a universal law. Reviewing my experience in studying Chairman Mao's brilliant philosophical thinking over the past decade and more in the light of this teaching, I deeply realize that there has been a struggle in my mind between the two world outlooks. Generally speaking, when I do things correctly, I have acted in accordance with materialist dialectics, and whenever I do things the wrong way, it is because of the idealism and metaphysics in my mind. This is an objective fact, independent of man's will. Only by acknowledging this reality and more consciously using Chairman Mao's materialist dialectics to overcome the idealism and metaphysics in our minds can we constantly make progress in revolutionizing our thinking and remoulding our world outlook.

With High Aims, Persevere in Destroying Self-Interest and Fostering Devotion to Public Interest

During the convocation of the Ninth Party Congress, Chairman Mao issued the great call **"Fear neither hardship nor death."** Like the "three constantly read articles" written by Chairman Mao, this great call points out the direction for us to remould our world outlook. I always say to myself: To continue the revolution, defeat imperialism, revisionism and the reactionaries of various countries, and to realize communism without the exploitation of man by man throughout the world, we must have a generation of people who **"fear neither hardship nor death."**

Chairman Mao has taught us: **"If any Communist or Communist sympathizer talks about socialism and communism but . . . is reluctant to shed his blood or give his life for it, then wittingly or unwittingly, such a person is betraying socialism and communism to a greater or lesser extent and is certainly not a politically conscious and staunch fighter for communism."** The proletariat has the unprecedentedly arduous and great historic tasks of completely overthrowing the bourgeoisie and all other exploiting classes, defeating imperialism, revisionism and the reactionaries of various countries, and realizing communism throughout the world. Those whom we are determined to defeat are a pack of wolves armed to the teeth, war maniacs brandishing atomic bombs. We must have proletarian vanguard fighters who **"fear neither hardship nor death"** to deal with such enemies. Armed with Mao Tsetung Thought, we can become such vanguards! And we can do a good job at our posts while bearing the high aims of the Chinese revolution and the world revolution in mind.

Whenever I meet difficulties, I always overcome them by "recalling the past" and "looking to the future." "Recalling the past" means recalling past sufferings. We must never forget our bitter suffering in the old society when we had to put up with all sorts of humiliations in order to make a living. Working together with our class brothers for the cause of the Party today, we can overcome all difficulties. "Looking to the future" means asking myself: "If the enemy should impose a war on us, will you take up the knapsack and plunge into battle without hesitation? Will you be able to persevere in battle without food for days on end?" By "recalling the past" and "looking to the future," which has proved very fruitful, my courage increases, my fatigue vanishes and all difficulties confronting me are nothing to be afraid of.

To temper oneself into a staunch proletarian vanguard fighter with the spirit of serving the people "wholly" and "entirely" and the heroism of vanquishing all enemies, one must work at it bit by bit at his present post. When our mill started a vigorous movement to increase production and practise economy last July, the workers displayed great enthusiasm. I was on the night shift at the time, but I still had to take part in some meetings and attend to other activities during the day. So I was very busy.

There was a struggle in my mind: Must I go to work at night after busying myself all day? It seemed to me quite all right not to go. If I should go, the only thing was that I would feel too tired. Concerned about my health, some comrades said to me: "Why bother about working at night when you've busied yourself all day long? There'll be plenty of work for us. You'd better look after your health." What should I do? I said to myself: "If I don't do physical labour for one day, then it will be two days, three days . . . and soon I'll lapse into this bad habit. In the long run, I will become divorced from the masses and eventually be corrupted by revisionism."

So I made up my mind to temper myself. I persisted in working on the night shift. Sometimes my head swam and I felt like collapsing. But gritting my teeth and reciting to myself **"Be resolute, fear no sacrifice and surmount every difficulty to win victory,"** I felt better and continued working. In this way, I persisted in working on the night shift. I was extremely happy when I found that devotion to the public interest had got the better of self-interest in my mind.

Much remains for me to do in remoulding my world outlook. I am determined to make greater efforts to study and apply Mao Tsetung Thought in a living way. I must see to it that, in the struggle in my mind, devotion to public interest will always triumph over self-interest, that materialism will triumph over idealism and dialectics over metaphysics. I will persist in continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat and strive to be a Communist who has truly joined the Party ideologically and an advanced element of the proletariat in the true sense of the term.