

## **A Wonderful Old Article from *Peking Review*: On attitudes that revolutionaries should have toward *themselves*!**

[This is a short letter I sent to friends on June 23, 2009. –S.H.]

Hi everybody,

As many of you know, I have been gradually posting a large number of articles from old issues of *Peking Review*, especially from the Cultural Revolution years. Some of these articles are now mostly of historical interest, but many of them still have a great deal of contemporary relevance.

I have just posted one of the very best articles I have come across so far, “Maxims for Revolutionaries—The ‘Three Constantly Read Articles’”, at: <http://www.massline.org/PekingReview/PR1967/PR1967-02d.htm> The “three constantly read articles” are Mao’s essays “Serve the People”, “In Memory of Norman Bethune” and “The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains”. These are all very fine essays which all revolutionaries should be quite familiar with, and should re-read from time to time. (However, I disagree that they should be “constantly read”; if we do that we won’t have time to read anything else!)

But in addition to urging the serious study of those three essays, this short article has its own independent value. It powerfully brings out some of the important attitudes that we revolutionaries should have *TOWARD OURSELVES!* It says for example:

“How should a cadre look at himself? He should look at himself from the ‘one divides into two’ point of view. He may have his strong points, but he is sure to have shortcomings. He must not think he is always right. He must understand that remoulding one’s world outlook is not something that can be completed once and for all. As long as classes and class struggle exist in society, the struggle of the two world outlooks will go on in people’s minds.... Anyone who thinks he has no contradictions in his mind and needs no remoulding is harboring a metaphysical viewpoint that is extremely harmful.”

And:

“Whatever his position, however long his experience in the revolution, or his age, every one of our cadres must see himself both as a motive force in the revolution and, at the same time, as a target of the revolution, and therefore must consciously wage revolution against himself.”

There is more good stuff like that in this article. The conception of revolution as a struggle between those with a fully worked out and completely correct line against all those who oppose them is misleading at best. The true nature of revolution is, as Marx saw in his “Theses of Feuerbach” (1845), a process of continuous revolutionizing practice, not only for the masses, but also for those who seek to lead the masses.

Scott