

Document

Struggle between Two Lines

“RED FLAG” Article on Criticism of Confucius

We are reproducing here an article from the journal “Red Flag” (Organ of CPC) by Chin Chihpai on the historical experience of the Chinese Communist Party’s struggle against opportunist lines in connection with the criticism of Confucius, basing on some of Chairman Mao’s related works.
- Editor

Confucius typified the ideology of the decadent slaveowning class, the first reactionary class overthrown in China’s history. His ideas, which stood for retrogression and restoration, served the political needs of all dying and degenerating reactionary classes. The ringleaders of past opportunist lines in our Party, including Liu-Shao-chi and Lin Piao, used the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius as an ideological weapon to oppose Marxism-Leninism and Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line. As early as the 1919 May 4 movement, Chairman Mao sharply criticised the Confucian shop in his revolutionary struggles against imperialism and feudalism. From that time on, for half a century, Chairman Mao has always linked his fight against opportunist lines in the Party with repeated criticism of Confucius and those who revere Confucius. Such criticism has become part of the criticism of erroneous lines. A serious study of Chairman Mao’s works and statements criticizing Confucius is of great significance in understanding and deepening the present movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius.

Period of New Democratic Revolution

The struggle between Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line and Chen Tu-hsiu’s right opportunist line during the first revolutionary civil war period (1925-1927) was the first serious struggle in our Party between the two lines. Although Chen-Tu-hsiu for a time took a radical bourgeois democratic stand and shouted the revolutionary slogan “down with the Confucian shop”, he completely rejected this slogan and went seeking the aid of the dead souls of the Confucian shop when he adopted right opportunism. The worker-peasant revolutionary movement was surging throughout the country at that time, especially the peasant movement which rose like a mighty storm, like a hurricane, a very swift and violent force. At that point so crucial to the progress of the revolution, Chen Tu-hsiu brazenly used the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius to oppose the revolution and Chairman Mao’s proletarian revolutionary line, clamouring that “we must keep to an eclectic middle of the road line for a considerable period of time”. This was a right opportunist line advocating “all alliance and no struggle”, which meant offering leadership of the revolution to the Kuomintang reactionaries and defending the dictatorship of the landlord and capitalist classes. In chorus with the counter-revolutionary clamours of the landlords and capitalists, Chen Tu-hsiu attacked the peasant movement as “being too left” and “going too far” and vilified it as “terrible” so as to put down this sweeping, vigorous movement. The reactionary class nature of Chen Tu-hsiu’s line had to be exposed fully, and the counter-revolutionary doctrines of Confucius and Mencius which it used to deceive and intimidate the people had to be criticized in order to carry the revolution forward.

“Report on an investigation of the peasant movement in Hunan”, which Chairman Mao wrote in March 1927, was a battle cry for criticism of Chen Tu-hsiu and the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. It exposed and criticised: Chen Tu-hsiu’s right-opportunism, sharply denounced the counter-revolutionary slander of the peasant movement as “going too far” penetratingly expounded the revolutionary dialectics that “proper limits have to be exceeded in order to right a wrong”, and sharply criticized the doctrine of the mean. Chen Tu-hsiu and company used the doctrine of the mean, which protected the interests of the reactionary declining classes, to vilify the peasant movement for “going too far” and forbid the peasants from smashing the old man-killing order of the feudal landlord class. In sharp opposition, Chairman Mao pointed out that “a revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous.” “A rural revolution is a revolution by which the peasantry overthrows the power of the

feudal landlord class. Without using the greatest force, the peasants cannot possibly overthrow the deep rooted authority of the landlords which has lasted for thousands of years.” Therefore, “proper limits have to be exceeded in order to right a wrong, or else the wrong cannot be righted”. These brilliant concepts of Chairman Mao’s have become sharp weapons that always encourage revolutionary people to dare to struggle and dare to win.

In this article Chairman Mao cited fourteen great achievements of the peasant movement in refuting the slanders against it by the reactionaries and opportunists, and warmly praised the poor peasants as “vanguards of the revolution” and described the peasant movement as “fine”. Many of the fourteen great achievements countered the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. Powerful proof of this is that the peasants tossed aside the Confucian-Mencian concepts of the “three cardinal guides and five constant virtues”, overthrowing the political power of the landlords, the clan authority of the ancestral temples and clan elders, the religious authority of the town and village gods, and the masculine authority of husbands. “These four authorities - political, clan, religious and masculine - are the embodiment of the whole feudal-patriarchal system and ideology, and are the four thick ropes binding the Chinese people, particularly the peasants”. Here, Chairman Mao very clearly made the point that the struggle against Confucius was an important part of the revolutionary struggle. Subsequent struggles in China’s revolution proved to the hilt that every move forward by the revolution and by the people demanded struggle against the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and other ideology of the reactionary, moribund classes. The use of Marxism-Leninism to criticize the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius has been a militant and protracted task on the political and ideological front in the Chinese revolution.

After Chen Tu-hsiu’s right capitulationist line was rectified, three “left” opportunist lines appeared in our Party and that of Wang Ming dominated for the longest time and most damaged the Party. Like Chen Tu-hsiu, the “left” opportunists were all worshippers of Confucius. They enshrined the idealism and metaphysics of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and kowtowed to. Then they opposed integrating the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the practice of the Chinese revolution, and vilified and opposed Marxism-Leninism by spreading mystical notions of “prophecy” such as disciples of Confucius and Mencius advocated. Their various lines of “all struggle and no alliance” were based on subjective idealism.

In order to eliminate these opportunist lines ideologically, Chairman Mao wrote “Oppose Book Worship”, “On practice”, “On contradiction” and other brilliant works, in which he summed up the historical experience of the struggles against “left” and right opportunist lines, and criticized the idealist and metaphysical doctrines of Confucius and Mencius which they advocated, thereby inheriting, defending and developing Marxist dialectical and historical materialism.

Chairman Mao points out in “Oppose Book Worship”. “When we say Marxism is correct, it is certainly not because Marx was a ‘Prophet’ but because his theory has been proved correct in our practice and in our struggle. We need Marxism in our struggle. In our acceptance of his theory no such formalistic or mystical notion as that of ‘prophecy’ ever enters our minds”. Confucius proclaimed himself ‘the prophet’. And his worshippers down through the ages praised Confucius and his like as ‘Prophet’s. Their purpose was to use a priori idealism to oppose the revolutionary practice of the masses and oppose progressive ideas that accorded with social development. Chairman Mao sharply criticized the thoroughly erroneous idealist viewpoint of the “left” opportunists who regarded Marxism as ‘prophecy’, and he pointed out that revolutionary theory comes from revolutionary practice and must be tested by it, that the mystical notion of ‘prophecy’ is utterly incompatible with Marxism. The subtitle of “On practice” is ‘on the relation between knowledge and practice, between knowing and doing’. This shows clearly that the spearhead of criticism is directed at the a priori idealist notion held by Wang Ming and Confucius, a notion that is contemptuous of practice and regards man’s knowledge and ability as innate. In a profound explanation of the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge, as embodied in the formula “practice - theory-practice”, Chairman Mao states explicitly: “Our conclusion is the concrete, historical unity of the subjective and the objective, of theory and practice, of knowing and doing, and we are opposed to all erroneous ideologies, whether ‘left’ or right, which depart from concrete history”.

Chairman Mao in “On contradiction” directly criticizes Wang Ming’s metaphysics, and exposes the reactionary nature of the metaphysical concept “heaven changeth not, likewise the Tao changeth not”

advocated by Tung Chung-shu, chieftain of the worshippers of Confucius of the western Han dynasty (206 B.C.-24 A.D). This reactionary philosophy attempted to prove that the social system of oppression and exploitation dates from hoary antiquity and would remain for ever unchanged. Aimed at countering social change and people's revolution, this type of metaphysical notion served the decadent feudal ruling classes for a long time. The opportunists picked up this worn-out ideological weapon of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius because they intended to maintain the Kuomintang's reactionary rule, sabotage the people's revolution and block historical advance.

During the war of resistance against Japan, Wang Ming jumped from the ultra-left to the extreme right advocating "everything through the united front" and "everything must be submitted to the united front" In essence, Wang Ming returned to Chen Tu-hsiu's right opportunist line of "all alliance and no struggle" and handed leadership of the anti-Japanese war over to the Kuomintang. In advocating this erroneous line, Wang Ming fell back on the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. He claimed that antagonistic classes, parties and armies should "hold each other in esteem", "respect and love each other" and "show courtesy and deference to each other" under the banner of "benevolence and love". In fact, he was calling on the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people to cast themselves at the feet of Chiang Kai-shek, giving him a free hand to suck the life-blood of the people and sell out China by surrendering. Wang Ming's right opportunist line did serious damage to the interests of the Communist Party and people of China. Chairman Mao wrote "On New Democracy", "The Orientation of the Youth movement", "Introducing the Communist", "Oppose stereotyped Party Writing" and "Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art" to sum up the experience of the struggles between the two lines from the time of the May 4 movement and pointed out that opposition to stereotype party writing was a continuation of opposition to the old sort of stereotype writing. Chairman Mao personally led the Yen-an movement to rectify the style of work, thus further correcting Wang Ming's line ideologically and politically and criticizing the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius.

The sinister line runs through the world outlook of all reactionary exploiting classes and opportunists is the theory of "human nature" of the exploiting classes. These people always use this kind of hypocrisy to deceive the people, blur the differences between classes, benumb revolutionary will and sabotage revolutionary struggles. Wang Ming was such a person. He tried to cover up the essence of his capitulationist line with the banner of "benevolence and love". In "Talks at the Yen-an forum on literature and art", Chairman Mao makes the profound point: "As for the so-called love of humanity, there has been no such all-inclusive love since humanity was divided into classes. All the ruling classes of the past were fond of advocating it, and so were many so-called sages and wise men, but nobody has ever really practiced it, because it is impossible in class society." The main representative of the "sages and wise men" whom Chairman Mao is criticizing in this work is Confucius who chanted "the benevolent man loves others". This is a powerful exposure of the ideological essence of Wang Ming's capitulationist line and a sharp criticism of the reactionary and hypocritical features of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius.

Exposing the class nature of the worship of Confucius by the reactionaries at home and abroad and the ringleaders of opportunist lines, Chairman Mao makes the point in his work "On New Democracy": "China also has a semi-feudal culture which reflects her semi-feudal politics and economy, and whose exponents include all those who advocate the worship of Confucius, the study of the Confucian canon, the old ethical code and the old ideas in opposition to the new culture and new ideas. Imperialist culture and semi-feudal culture are devoted brothers and have formed a reactionary cultural alliance against China's new culture. This kind of reactionary culture serves the imperialists and the feudal class and must be swept away."

Imperialism and the feudal landlord class, which colluded politically for their common, reactionary goal of exploiting and oppressing the Chinese people, inevitably formed a reactionary alliance in the field of culture. The doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, as the restorationist and retrogressive ideology of the declining slave-owner class, have always in Chinese history attracted reactionary and decadent class forces. After the imperialists invaded China, these doctrines served the imperialist forces of aggression and were a spiritual bulwark against the people and the revolution. The traitors in modern and contemporary Chinese history, ranging from Tseng Kuo-fan and Li Hung-chang to Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Ching-wei, without exception, played the dual tactics of lauding Confucius and spreading his canons as well as worshipping everything foreign and betraying the nation. Similarly, the ringleaders of the opportunist lines,

as agents of the landlord and capitalist classes within the Party, without exception lauded Confucius and worshipped everything foreign. Some of them became enemy collaborators and traitors.

In the period of the war of liberation, China was confronted with a decisive battle between two futures and destinies. The Kuomintang reactionaries and their hack writers once again unfurled the sinister Confucian ensign in an effort to maintain their bloody rule. The renegade, hidden traitor and scab Liu Shao-chi became their agent in our Party. Liu Shao-chi had long been a fanatic worshipper of Confucius. As early as 1925, he was arrested by the reactionaries and turned traitor. Upon release from enemy prison, he brought home a volume of “the four books”, a present given by a reactionary warlord, and sneaked back into the revolutionary ranks. He first put out in 1939 his sinister book on “Self-cultivation” which lauded the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. In the period of the liberation war, he dished up the reactionary programme of a “new stage of peace and democracy” to oppose the People’s Liberation War, and followed this up by preaching that “it is necessary to show forbearance like Confucius” in an attempt to prevent our Party from leading the people in winning nation-wide victory. Whether to carry the revolution through to the end or abandon it halfway was a cardinal issue concerning China’s future and destiny.

Chairman Mao wrote the article “Carry the revolution through to the end” severely criticizing the so-called forbearance of Confucius and Mencius. He made the penetrating point : “the Chinese people will never take pity on snake-like scoundrels, and they honestly believe that no one is their true friend who guilefully says that pity should be shown these scoundrels and says that anything else would be out of keeping with China’s traditions, fall short of greatness, etc.,” “If the revolution is to be carried through to the end, we must use the revolutionary method to wipe out all the forces of reaction resolutely, thoroughly, wholly and completely.” Under the guidance of Chairman Mao’s revolutionary line, the Chinese people swept aside all obstacles with a mighty force. The hour had come for the downfall of the Chiang family dynasty and the birth of a new China of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

At this key juncture of the revolution, the reactionary forces not reconciled to defeat, continued their desperate struggle. They came out with what Confucius and Mencius called “benevolence, righteousness and morality” in viciously attacking the revolutionary political power as “not benevolent”. Chairman Mao wrote “On the People’s Democratic Dictatorship” and other articles to give incisive criticism of the preachings of Confucius and Mencius on “rule by benevolence”, and sharply, refuted the attacks mounted by the reactionaries and Liu Shao-chi and company on the dictatorship of the proletariat. Giving tit for tat. Chairman Mao wrote “you are not benevolent exclamation’ quite so. We definitely do not apply a policy of benevolence to the reactionary classes”. The state apparatus has always been an instrument of violence for class oppression; it is never “benevolent”. Supra-classes “rule by benevolence” simply does not exist. There is only dictatorship by which one class oppresses another. “All the experience the Chinese people have accumulated through several decades teaches us to enforce the People’s Democratic Dictatorship”. If the revolutionary people do not master this method of ruling over the Counter-revolutionary classes, they will not be able to maintain their state power, domestic and foreign reaction will overthrow that power and restore its own rule over China, and disaster will befall the revolutionary people”. Chairman Mao profoundly expounded the essence of the Marxist theory of the state, and formulated the great programme for the establishment and consolidation of the dictatorship of the proletariat in China. The criticism of the “rule by benevolence” is at the same time a declaration of the bankruptcy of the plots of the domestic and foreign reactionaries and the opportunists within the Party to obstruct the advance of the Chinese revolution by using the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius.

Period of Socialist Revolution

With the founding of the People’s Republic, of China our country entered the period of socialist revolution and the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie became the principal one at time. There were repeated and vigorous struggles by Chairman Mao’s proletarian revolutionary line against the revisionist lines of Liu Shao-chi and Lin piao and others. The focus was on whether to take the socialist road or the capitalist road that is, on whether to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and propel the revolution forward or restore capitalism and turn history backward. The essence of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius was restoration and retrogression and under the conditions of socialism, the opportunist class struggle-jan-feb-2017-doc-struggle-twolines

ringleaders are without exception wadded to these doctrines so as to restore capitalism, and the specter of the reactionary doctrines of Confucius and Mencius in turn took possession of the counter-revolutionary revisionists. Hence, the struggles between the two classes and the two lines in this period are closely connected with the struggle between opposing and worshipping Confucius.

A faithful lackey of the landlord and capitalist classes, Liu Shao-chi had at an early date begun his activities against socialist revolution in new China. By blatantly preaching “exploitation has its merits” and clamouring for “consolidating the new democratic order” and “ensuring the protection of private property”, he wanted in fact to give up socialism for capitalism. In conformity with this reactionary political line, Liu Shao-chi and his agents in art and literature brought out the reactionary film “the life of Wu sun” which encouraged the worship of Confucius and opposed the people’s revolution. Wu Hsun, who is eulogized in the film, was a diehard defender of feudalism and an utterly despicable worshipper of Confucius. In lauding Wu Hsun, Liu Shao-chi and company were praising Confucius and preaching the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. Chairman Mao personally led the criticism of “the life of Wu Hsun” as a struggle in ideological and political line and penetratingly exposed the ugly features of Liu Shao-chi and other worshippers of Confucius. Chairman Mao pointed out: “In the view of many writers, history has developed not by the replacement of the old by the new, but by the exertion of every effort to preserve the old from extinction, not by class struggle to overthrow the reactionary feudal rulers who had to be overthrown, but by the negation of the class struggle of the oppressed and their submission to these rulers, in the manner of Wu Hsun.” Chairman Mao’s statement dealt a mortal blow to the revisionists and all worshippers of Confucius, and hit hard at the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius.

A high tide of socialist transformation in China began in the second half of 1955. Several hundred million peasants joyously took the broad road of co-operation. Liu Shao-chi and company came out again with the threadbare doctrine of the mean to slander the co-operative movement as “too fast” and “too sweeping”, and slashed back the co-operatives right and left. Chairman Mao at once published “On the Question of Agricultural Co-operation” and other articles, and edited the book “The Socialist Upsurge in China’s Countryside” to counter-attack their disruptive activities.

In an introductory note to one article in the book, Chairman Mao criticized Liu Shao-chi for having gone on a pilgrimage to Chufu to worship Confucius and restore the ancients. Chairman Mao noted: “a socialist co-operative has been started by the people living in the birth place of Confucius. The people there remained impoverished for two thousand years or more, but their economic and cultural life began to change in three years of co-operation. This demonstrates that our socialism today is without precedent. Socialism is infinitely superior to the Confucian ‘classics’. To those who are interested in visiting the temple of Confucius and the groves there, my advice is that they might do well to take a look at this co-operative on their way.” This profound class analysis makes the clear point that the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius are worthless to the working people and that only socialism can save China and benefit the people. Under the leadership of the party, the Chinese people achieved socialist transformation of the ownership of the means of production in a fairly short time.

Under the guidance of the Party’s general line of “going all out, aiming high and achieving greater, faster, better and more economical results in building socialism” the Chinese people showed daring in thinking, dared to speak out and act and launched the great leap forward in 1958. When the Chinese people made their first tractor by relying on their own resources, Chairman Mao warm-heartedly wrote the inscription: “the lowly are most intelligent; the elite are most ignorant.” This scientific thesis criticized the reactionary view of history which the disciples of Confucius and Mencius had insisted upon for 2,000 years, namely, “the highest are the wise and the lowest are the stupid,” and greatly inspired the several hundred million revolutionary people throughout the country.

China’s rapid advances in socialist revolution and construction struck fear and hatred in the hearts of the bourgeoisie and its agents in the Party – Liu Shao-chi, Lin Piao, Peng Teh-huai and their like. At the eighth plenary session of the eighth central committee of the Party in 1959, Peng Teh-huai came out and viciously attacked: the Party’s general line, opposed the great leap forward and the people’s commune as well as the revolutionary mass movement. His aim was to usurp Party leadership, seize power and subvert the dictatorship of the proletariat. Chairman Mao led the whole Party in smashing Peng Teh-huai’s right opportunist line in good time and, in the course of the struggle, exposed Peng Teh-huai’s reactionary world class struggle-jan-feb-2017-doc-struggle-twolines

out look to its very root. Peng Teh-huai had never been a Marxist. In the war of resistance against Japanese aggression, he preached “liberty, equality, fraternity” and the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius such as “do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you” Chairman Mao pinpointed these as anti-Marxist bourgeois views intended to hoodwink the people. Preaching “do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you” before the victory of the revolution was to practice class conciliation and oppose the overthrow of the enemy by war and political means. It meant to liquidate the revolution. Preaching “do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you” after the victory of the revolution meant to make bitter complaints on behalf of the overthrown landlords, rich peasants, counter revolutionaries, bad elements and rightists, liquidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and restore capitalism. Herein was the essence of Peng Teh-huai’s right opportunism. Chairman Mao’s criticism of this reactionary view is very important to us in upholding the Marxist theory of classes and class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat. As long as classes and class struggle still exist, it can only be “do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you” and firmly grasp the dictatorship of the proletariat, resolutely attack the enemy and protect the interests of the proletariat and the people.

After Peng Teh-huai’s right opportunist line was smashed, Liu Shao-chi joined in the anti-China, anti-Communist and counter-revolutionary trend created by imperialists, revisionists and reactionaries abroad, and stirred up an evil storm for counter-revolutionary restoration. He had his sinister book on “self-cultivation” issued for the third time in 1962. Imbued with the poison of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, the book made no reference whatever to the dictatorship of the proletariat and the struggle between bourgeois restoration and proletarian counter-restoration. It advertised “self-cultivation” behind closed doors, isolated from the three great revolutionary movements of class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment, and called on communists to learn from Confucius and Mencius such doctrines as “loyalty and forbearance” “return good for evil” “make concessions to achieve one’s purpose” and “swallow humiliation and bear a heavy load.” Furthermore, Liu Shao-chi supported the holding of a meeting to eulogize Confucius. What he wanted was to achieve “peaceful evolution” through the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, push his counter-revolutionary revisionist line, subvert the dictatorship of the proletariat and restore capitalism. Countering the restorationist conspiracy of Liu Shao-chi and company, Chairman Mao at the tenth plenary session of the Party’s eighth central committee issued the great call “never forget classes and class struggle” and set forth more comprehensively the Party’s basic line for the whole historical period of socialism. In 1963, Chairman Mao wrote his well-known treatise “Where Do Correct Ideas come from?”. It criticized the idealist theory of knowledge based on the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius which Liu Shao-chi peddled, and repudiated his preaching of “self-cultivation” directed against the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution initiated and led by Chairman Mao is an overall settling of accounts with Liu Shao-chi’s counter-revolutionary revisionist line as well as a profound movement to criticize Confucius. In the programmatic document of the great proletarian cultural revolution -the circular of the central committee of the Chinese Communist Party (May 16, 1966) – Chairman Mao wrote a paragraph to refute the absurdity preached by Liu Shao-chi and company that “everyone is equal before the truth” and criticize the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius on the so-called relationship of “benevolence, righteousness and morality”. Chairman Mao pointed out very clearly: “Those representatives of the bourgeoisie who have sneaked into the party, the government, the army and various spheres of culture are a bunch of counter-revolutionary revisionists” : “they are faithful lackeys of the bourgeoisie and imperialists, they cling to the bourgeois ideology of oppression and exploitation of the proletariat and to the capitalist system, and they oppose Marxist-Leninist ideology and the socialist system. They are a bunch of counter revolutionaries opposing the Communist Party and the people. Their struggle against us is one of life and death, and there is no question of equality. Therefore, our struggle against them, too, can be nothing but a life-and-death struggle, and our relationship with them can in no way be one of equality. On the contrary, it is a relationship in which one class oppresses another, that is, the dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie. There can be no other type of relationship, such as a so-called, relationship of equality or of peaceful coexistence between exploiting and exploited classes, or of kindness or magnanimity.” This indicated the correct orientation for this great revolution, i.e., the criticism of revisionism, of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and of the ideology of all reactionary, moribund classes. It expounded the nature of this great

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revolution, namely, a great political revolution for consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat and preventing a capitalist restoration.

After smashing the bourgeois headquarters which had Liu Shao-chi as its ringleader, our Party followed up by smashing the bourgeois headquarters of which Lin Piao was the ringleader. Lin Piao was an out-and-out disciple of Confucius. He made a hodge-podge of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, which were meant to maintain and restore slavery, and revisionist absurdities to form the ideological basis for his counter-revolutionary revisionist line. He took over the Confucian programme to restore slavery of “restraining oneself and returning to the rites” as the most important of all things. To realize his dream of “returning to the rites”, namely, restoring capitalism and subverting the dictatorship of the proletariat, he rushed out a political programme that insisted on having a chairman of the state and a theoretical programme based on the idealist “theory of innate genius.” Seeing through the plot of Lin Piao and his cohorts to usurp power and restore capitalism, Chairman Mao gave instructions on several occasions on not having a Chairman of the state. Countering the anti - Party theoretical programme preached by Lin Piao and Chen Po-ta, Chairman Mao in particular criticized the “theory of innate genius” and made the penetrating point : on the questions of whether history is made by heroes or slaves, whether knowledge (talent also belongs to this category) is inborn or acquired, whether idealism or the materialist theory of reflection should be applied, we can take only the Marxist-Leninist stand and must not associate ourselves with Chen Po-ta’s rumours and sophistry. Chairman Mao’s penetrating criticism of a priori idealism unmasked the renegade and traitor Lin Piao, who proclaimed himself a “genius” “endowed by heaven”, “the noblest of men”, a “superman” and “heavenly horse”, as no more than a dolt acting against the trend of history.

On the one hand, Lin Piao invoked the dead soul of Confucius and praised the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius to the skies; on the other hand, he wildly slandered Chin Shin Huang (first emperor of the Chin dynasty, 221 B.C.-207 B.C.) as “cruel and tyrannical” and vilified the legalist school as the “school of punishment”. This was his way to oppose the dictatorship of the proletariat. Chairman Mao had earlier sharply criticized this reactionary view of Lin Piao’s. At the second meeting of the Party’s 8th national congress in 1958, when Lin Piao maliciously attacked Chin Shin Huang for “burning books and burying Confucian scholars alive”, Chairman Mao refuted him then and there. Chairman Mao fully approved Chin Shin Huang’s revolutionary action in resolutely suppressing reactionary Confucian scholars, expounded the progressive role of revolutionary violence and exposed the reactionary essence of Lin Piao’s attacks on Chin Shin Huang as attacks on revolutionary violence and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Important Historical Experience

It is not fortuitous that all the ringleaders of past opportunist lines in China revered Confucius and lauded the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius. These persons were representatives of the exploiting classes who had sneaked into the Communist Party. The decadent and moribund nature of exploiting classes leads to inevitable opposition to revolution and progress and advocacy of restoration and retrogression. Confucius was their venerable master who beat the drums for restoration and retrogression. The Confucian ideology, which was inherited and developed by reactionaries of subsequent generations, became a perfect guideline to defend reactionary rule. It suits the political needs of all decadent and moribund reactionaries. Therefore, it is naturally used by the ringleaders of opportunist lines in the Party as an ideological weapon to oppose the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Confucius had a reactionary political line for the restoration of the slave-owning system as well as a corresponding reactionary ideological line that is idealism and metaphysics. In order to justify the right of the reactionary slave-owning class to oppress and exploit the slaves and to defend the outrages of the decadent slave-owning aristocrats, Confucius spread the idealist view of a “mandate from heaven” and the priori concept that some are “born with knowledge”. Opportunist lines in the party “are all characterized by the breach between the subjective and the objective by the separation of knowledge from practice”. They all follow the reactionary ideological line of “from subjective to objective”, and one of the sources of this reactionary ideological line is the a priori idealism of Confucius.

Since the reactionary political line and ideological line of Confucius were advocated and enforced by all reactionary ruling classes, the reactionary ideological system of Confucius became the dominant ideology of declining feudal and semi-feudal, semi-colonial society in China. Chairman Mao says: “In class struggle-jan-feb-2017-doc-struggle-twolines

those days, the ruling classes indoctrinated students with Confucian teachings and compelled the people; to venerate all the trapping of Confucianism as religious dogma.” He goes on to point out that for the people of the whole country to be free from the shackles of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius would need “a very great effort – a huge job work on the road of revolutionary remoulding”. The struggles of the past decades prove the complete correctness of this thesis of Chairman Mao’s. The doctrines of Confucius and Mencius still influence various spheres of society. Therefore, those who carry out opportunist lines in China as a matter of course use the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and their traditional influence to paddle their wares. This is the historical reason why the ringleaders of all opportunist lines in China have venerated Confucius.

Pinpointing this specific feature of the opportunist lines within the Chinese Communist Party by tracing back their class and ideological roots, Chairman Mao always combines criticism of opportunist lines with criticism of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, and adheres to Marxism, to the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. This is an important historical experience of our Party in waging two-line struggles. During the period of the new democratic revolution, the fundamental task of the Communist Party and the revolutionary people of China was the seizure of state power. The ringleaders of opportunist lines preached the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius precisely to maintain the reactionary rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic-capitalism in China, therefore, the struggle between the two lines and the struggle between opposing and worshipping Confucius in that period centred mainly on the fundamental question of whether or not to make revolution and carry it through to the end, how to arrive at a correct understanding of the law of the new democratic revolution with the proletarian seizure of state power, the struggle between the two lines and the struggle between opposing and worshipping Confucius focused on the fundamental question of whether or not to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and continue the revolution under this dictatorship, and whether to take the socialist or the capitalist road. In the two-line struggles in various historical periods, through criticism of Confucius and by tracing the relation between the opportunist lines and the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius, Chairman Mao penetratingly exposed their common reactionary essence. With the socialist revolution going over deeper, the struggle to criticize revisionism and the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius is bound to reach in all fields and the various spheres of ideology and culture, and touch people’s world outlook. Criticism such as this will steadily eliminate the traditional influence of the doctrines of Confucius and Mencius and all other ideologies of declining reactionary classes. This is of great importance to opposing and preventing revisionism, consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat and preventing the restoration of capitalism.

The struggle to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, which is at present developing vigorously all over China, is a political and ideological struggle in the superstructure through which Marxism triumphs over revisionism and the proletariat over the bourgeoisie. In order to deepen the struggle and win new victories, we must conscientiously study the historical experience of Chairman Mao’s leading the entire Party in penetratingly criticizing Confucius in the various struggles between the two lines, study works by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin and Chairman Mao’s works, and study Chairman Mao’s instructions and the documents of the Party Central Committee on the criticism of Lin Piao and Confucius master our ideological weapon. We must, at the same time, apply the Marxist viewpoint in studying and summing up the history of the two-line struggle between the Confucian and legalist schools and the history of class struggle as a whole, and draw upon the historical experience of class struggle in promoting the growth of the struggle to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius in a deep-going, popular and sustained way.
