

POWER TO EXERCISE LEADERSHIP OVER NEWSPAPERS
MUST BE SEIZED

[Following is a translation of an article by the "Spark and Prairie Fire" Revolutionary Rebel Headquarters of Wen-hui Pao in the Chinese-language periodical, Hung-ch'i (Red Flag), Peiping, No 3, 3 February 1967, pages 49-53.]

Early in the morning on 4 January 1967, the Shanghai People's Broadcasting Station announced the heart-stirring news that the "Spark and Prairie Fire" Revolutionary Rebel Headquarters of Wen-hui Pao had taken over Wen-hui Pao and given the paper a new lease of life.

Beginning on that day, the Wen-hui Pao formally announced its clean break with the bourgeois reactionary line of the former CCP Shanghai Municipal Committee by standing completely and wholly on the side of Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line and entirely inclining toward the side of the revolutionary rebels. This was a tremendous victory for the militant unity of the revolutionary workers of Wen-hui Pao. In one word, it was a great victory for the thought of Mao Tse-tung. We raised our arms and shouted: Long live and long, long life for Chairman Mao, the reddest sun in our hearts!

A look in the retrospect over the rugged road of revolutionary rebellion which we have gone through is of some significance.

Prior to 1957, Wen-hui Pao was in the hands of big rightist Hsu Chu-ch'eng and provided the right-wingers a position for launching rabid attack against the Party and socialism. Later, however, it was under the control of a tiny handful of counterrevolutionary revisionists. When the class struggle was extremely acute in 1961 and 1962, the paper was swarmed with poisonous weeds, monsters and demons, and it actually had become a tool for shaping public opinion for capitalist restoration.

Over the period of more than ten years in the past, the revolutionary left, under the personal leadership of Chairman Mao, had launched a number of struggles against Wen-hui Pao. In 1957, Chairman Mao wrote the article "The Bourgeois Orientation of Wen-hui Pao Should Be Criticized," and this illustrious article became the program document of the anti-rightist struggle. In November 1965, under the leadership of Chairman Mao, Wen-hui Pao published Comrade Yao Wen-yuan's "On the New Historical Play Hai Jui Relieved of His Office," thus unveiling the overture to the great proletarian cultural revolution that caught the eyes of the world.

After 1 June 1966, however, Wen-hui Pao once again fell into the hands of a tiny handful of counterrevolutionary revisionists within the CCP Shanghai Municipal Committee, and became their tool for pushing the bourgeois reactionary line, and countering and resisting the proletarian revolutionary line.

Facts show that once a newspaper is divorced from the thought of Mao Tse-tung, it will become the weapon of the class enemy for attacking the Party and the people.

The Revolutionary Road Is Full of Twists and Turns

Our most respected and beloved great leader Chairman Mao said: "It is up to us to organize the people. As for the reactionaries in China, it is up to us to organize the people to overthrow them. Everything reactionary is the same; if you don't hit it, it won't fall. This is also like sweeping the floor; as a rule, where the broom does not reach, the dust will not vanish of itself."

According to Chairman Mao's teaching, we five young persons of the Wen-hui Pao formed the "Spark" Fighting Detachment during the last ten days of October last year to make preparations for exposing the crimes of a handful of power holders taking the capitalist road within the Shanghai Municipal Committee. Before making such exposure, we took revolutionary action against a person who was guilty of serious anti-Party crimes in the newspaper office by seizing his notebook recording the crimes committed by certain responsible members of the Municipal Committee against the thought of Mao Tse-tung. Meanwhile, we carried out exchange of revolutionary experience within the newspaper office, and stated our viewpoint. Many comrades gave us all-out support and stated that they would take prompt action to write wall posters to expose the problems of the Municipal Committee.

However, a tiny handful of lords in the newspaper office were scared to death by Chairman Mao's call for writing revolutionary wall posters. They suggested that "circulars should be written to expose the Municipal Committee" in the attempt to strangulate the revolutionary wall posters. Under the pretext that "state secrets must be safeguarded,"

they tried to cow us into handing over the notebook. We saw through their plot and sternly refused to meet this demand.

We cut our way through various barriers of resistance, and put up wall posters to expose a tiny handful of counterrevolutionary revisionists within the Municipal Committee and successively convened oath-taking rallies to fire violently at the bourgeois reactionary line. We enlarged the revolutionary ranks in struggle and set up the "Spark and Prairie Fire" Revolutionary Rebel Headquarters.

These revolutionary actions of ours were promptly and ruthlessly suppressed by the lords within the Municipal Committee and the newspaper office. Since many persons who were formerly regarded as the revolutionary left and activists had now rebelled, they made an about turn and branded us as "double-dealers," "dangerous elements," and "personalities flaunting a 'red banner' to oppose the red banner," and the few leaders of the revolutionary rebels as "counterrevolutionaries." They also laid down rules which forbade the exchange of revolutionary experience within journalistic circles in the municipality, the journalistic circles to hold rallies in criticism of the bourgeois reactionary line of the Shanghai Municipal Committee, the sticking of wall posters in streets, and the publication of handbills. By forbidding this and that, they meant to forbid revolution and rebellion.

Some responsible members of the Municipal Committee also gave an interview for the first time to the young revolutionary rebels of our paper, and adopted the knavish tactics of deception, spreading rumors and disparaging the Cultural Revolution Group under the Central Committee to disintegrate the revolutionary rebels. In the newspaper office, they also repressed us with so-called Party "organization" and "discipline," babbled that "skepticism for the Municipal Committee means bombarding the proletarian command post," and forced us to hand over the notebook. They employed the means of secret agents by secretly listening to our telephone conversations and what we said in meetings, and sent men to shadow us. They also openly violated the orders of the Central Committee and the Military Commission, and hid black information for purging the revolutionary masses in the file room of the Shanghai People's Broadcasting Station.

This series of criminal activities of theirs for a time successfully pulled the wool over the eyes of some people, and the ranks of the revolutionary rebels comprising more than 90 persons in the newspaper office were divided. Many persons put up wall posters announcing their withdrawal from the "Spark and Prairie Fire" Revolutionary Rebel Headquarters.

This was really a grave test for the revolutionary rebels. Every time difficulty was encountered and every time they were encircled and attacked, the revolutionary rebels produced the red "Quotations from Chairman Mao." Chairman Mao's works injected unlimited strength into us.

At the most difficult moment, there were only eight persons left among us revolutionary rebels. In front of Chairman Mao's portrait, we solemnly made this oath: "Be resolute, fear no sacrifice, and surmount every difficulty to win victory."

No force can bend or break the revolutionary rebels armed with the thought of Mao Tse-tung. Counterrevolution is unable to break us, but we can break counterrevolution. This is the enormous power of the thought of Mao Tse-tung.

The Enormous Power of the Great Revolutionary Alliance

We knew that should we desire to win, it was not enough to rely merely on the revolutionary force of our own unit. The newspaper office was but a part of society and only through understanding the revolutionary situation of the whole municipality could we make a correct appraisal of the situation of our unit, formulate the correct strategy, and take correct action. On the other hand, the problems of the Municipal Committee were problems of the whole municipality, and it was not enough to rely merely on the revolutionary comrades of the Wen-hui Pao to expose them. Because of this, we exchange revolutionary ties with the various revolutionary rebel organizations of Shanghai, won their energetic support, and established a profound revolutionary friendship in the common battle. In the common battle based upon the great alliance of the revolutionary rebels, we gained a deeper understanding of the bourgeois reactionary line of the Municipal Committee, acquired a clearer knowledge of the general orientation of our struggle, and continuously put forward resounding and unambiguous militant slogans.

In the battle based upon the great alliance, although we revolutionary rebels formed the minority, yet we had no sense of isolation. We united the revolutionary workers of the newspaper to upset the old order of Wen-hui Pao. We posted militant programs, catchwords and slogans inside and outside the newspaper office, advocated exchange of revolutionary experience, held meetings to explain the situation at irregular intervals, and copied the important wall posters of the revolutionary rebels. In conjunction with the broad revolutionary rebels of the journalistic circles, we waged a face-to-face struggle with a tiny handful of power holders taking the capitalist road within the Party and an extremely small number of diehards who clung to the bourgeois reactionary line. We understood that this was really a people's "war." As Chairman Mao said, "the revolutionary war is a war of the masses; it can be waged only by mobilizing the masses and relying on them."

The Chieh-fang Jih-pao incident which shook the whole municipality on 29 November last year was best able to manifest the enormous power of the great alliance of the revolutionary rebels. The young Red Guard fighters, the Shanghai Workers Rebel General Headquarters and the comrades-in-arms of other rebel organizations joined forces, stood on

the side of the proletarian revolutionary line represented by Chairman Mao with a dauntless fighting spirit, and waged a fierce struggle for nine days and nights against the workers' red militia detachments and other conservative forces incited to action by the lords of the Municipal Committee.

The revolutionary rebels of our newspaper, together with the revolutionary rebels of the Chieh-fang Jih-pao, steadfastly stood on the side of the Red Guards and the workers' revolutionary rebels. The first evening they moved into the Chieh-fang Jih-pao, we beat gongs and drums to send wall posters in support of them, and fought shoulder to shoulder with them. Later, a ten thousand people's rally was held to expose and criticize the bourgeois reactionary line of the Municipal Committee, the Chieh-fang Jih-pao and the Wen-hui Pao. In the violent class melee, the ranks of the revolutionary rebels were enlarged. Our "Spark and Prairie Fire" also increased from eight to nineteen persons.

In the "Spark and Prairie Fire" Revolutionary Rebel Headquarters, eight workers belonged to the printery of this paper. When the revolutionary rebels were encircled and attacked, two young workers stood forth to denounce them for obstinately pushing the bourgeois reactionary line. Due to their clearcut class stand, many persons who had been deceived began to regain awareness. The revolutionary rebel workers were powerful propagandists and organizers among the working masses, and they became the mainstay of the newspaper office in the struggle to seize power.

Daring to Blaze Trail and to Seize Power

In December last year, the tiny handful of power holders taking the capitalist road within the Municipal Committee -- who were attacked by the revolutionary rebels both from the interior and the exterior -- sensed that the continued publication of the Wen-hui Pao had become unfavorable to them, and they plotted to suspend its publication.

Prior to that we revolutionary comrades of the Wen-hui Pao had demanded the suspension of its publication. At that time, the tiny handful of power holders taking the capitalist road within the Municipal Committee rudely replied that the paper could not be suspended. Now, they suddenly wanted to suspend publication. What was the reason?

Chairman Mao taught us: "We should support whatever the enemy opposes and oppose whatever the enemy supports." According to Chairman Mao's teaching, we saw through their conspiracy in wanting to suspend publication, and we decided to vote against the suspension of the publication of Wen-hui Pao.

After their plot to suspend publication went bankrupt, they hatched another scheme. On the one hand they wrote to the CCP Central Committee, and wanted to use the method of merging Chieh-fang Jih-pao

and Wen-hui Pao to suspend the publication of Wen-hui Pao. On the other hand, in the name of "reinforcing" the leading force, they wanted to give leadership posts to the hard-core elements of the revolutionary rebels in the attempt to win us over and make us captives of the bourgeois reactionary line. We sternly refused to bite this treacherous bait.

We have long ago decided to seize power, to seize over the power to exercise leadership over the newspaper from the hands of those in authority and taking the capitalist road, and to put it firmly in the hands of the revolutionary rebels.

Beginning on 12 December, in conjunction with several fighting detachments, we held for the whole newspaper three oath-taking rallies for the overthrow of the bourgeois reactionary line to expose and criticize thoroughly and one by one the bad deeds performed by a few persons who obstinately clung to the bourgeois reactionary line. In these several rallies, many members of the masses who had been deceived angrily rose on their feet to accuse them of their crimes. We adopted the attitude of "making no discrimination between the early and late rebels" to welcome every genuine rebel, and we sincerely welcomed their return to the side of the proletarian revolutionary line. After 28 December of last year, the few persons who obstinately carried out the bourgeois reactionary line had been completely isolated among the masses, and the overwhelming majority of the masses were in support of the revolutionary rebels.

The situation for seizure of power was ripe. We made a strategic decision at midnight on 28 December 1966, and decided to take revolutionary action on 3 January 1967.

At first, we had some misgivings in regard to seizure of power.

First, we feared that after our takeover, we could not run with success the new-born Wen-hui Pao. Through repeated discussion, we found the way to run the newspaper from Chairman Mao's "A Talk to the Editorial Staff of the Shansi-Suiyuan Daily." The running of a newspaper must depend on everybody, on the masses of the people and on the whole Party. We felt that if "triple combination" -- combination of the newspaper leaders with the editorial staff, combination of the newspaper workers with the revolutionary rebels outside the newspaper, and combination of newspaper propaganda with realistic class struggle, struggle for production and scientific experiment -- was implemented, the new-born Wen-hui Pao could be made to acquire a clearcut stand, and would be sharp, pungent and full of life.

Second, we felt that no precedent had been set in seizure of power by newspapers in all places throughout the country, and that we would make mistakes in seizing power. We made an earnest study of Chairman Mao's writings and the revolutionary 16-point decision, and were firmly convinced that Chairman Mao was best able to support the

trail-blazing spirit of the revolutionary masses. Why couldn't we be the first in doing something which had never been done before in the country? Making revolution could not fear the dragon in the front and the tiger at the back. Guided by the thought of Mao Tse-tung, so long as the general orientation was correct, even though we might commit this or that kind of mistakes, it also would not be difficult to overcome them. Since we had made up our minds and had no fear for bloodshed or sacrifice, why should we be afraid of committing mistakes in concrete work?

There would naturally be risks in seizure of power. "Endless scenery lies in those hazardous peaks." A revolutionary should dare to take such risks under the guidance of Mao Tse-tung's thought. Fearing neither heaven nor hell, we young people dashed forward in this way, seized power in Wen-hui Pao, and won the warm support of more than 80 percent of the revolutionary workers of the whole newspaper and the all-out support of the revolutionary rebels of the whole municipality.

On 4 January, the new Wen-hui Pao, printed partially in red, was born!

*

Our most respected and beloved great leader Chairman Mao has made a very high appraisal of the new lease of life given to Wen-hui Pao and Chieh-fang Jih-pao. The Jen-min Jih-pao editor's note written according to Chairman Mao's instructions points out: This is a product of the victory of the proletarian revolutionary line over the bourgeois reactionary line. It is a great event in the history of development of the great proletarian cultural revolution in China. This great event will necessarily give an enormous impetus to the great proletarian cultural revolution movement in the whole of East China and in all provinces and municipalities throughout the country.

Chairman Mao's directive gives us revolutionary rebels great support and encouragement. With the invincible thought of Mao Tse-tung, and with the great alliance of the revolutionary rebels, we surely can consolidate the revolutionary leadership, and make a success of this new-born proletarian newspaper which holds high the great red banner of the thought of Mao Tse-tung.

CSO: 3530-D