

# Down With Slavishness; Strictly Observe Proletarian Revolutionary Discipline

by LIN CHIEH

## I

**R**EVOLUTION, struggle, and criticism — this is the essence of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tse-tung's thought. In the revolutionary cause of the proletariat, every revolutionary must have a militant, revolutionary style and an indomitable, fearless spirit. Slavishness, however, urges people to bow in submission to the lords of the exploiting classes and meekly accept adversity; it allows only absolute obedience and tolerates no questioning whatsoever.

In order to push his counter-revolutionary revisionist political line, the top Party person in authority taking the capitalist road introduced slavishness, which is thoroughly reactionary, into the Party in a vain attempt to liquidate the revolutionary spirit of Party members and turn them into docile tools of his opposition to the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. In that big poisonous weed of a book on "self-cultivation" of Communists, and in his other statements, he gave slavishness the force of law, and exalted it as a precept for Communists in their "cultivation of Party spirit." He said:

"We stand for absolute subordination organizationally." "Any subordination with conditions attached is incorrect." "It is incorrect . . . to take as the condition for subordination . . . that superiors or the majority must first be correct in principle and politically."

"You must obey even if the great majority and superiors or the Central Committee are actually wrong"; "the principle of democratic centralism stipulates that whatever is endorsed or decided upon by the great majority, the superiors or the Central Committee must be obeyed, even though it may be wrong."

This is slavishness, pure and simple!

Chairman Mao long ago made a penetrating criticism and repudiation of slavishness. Shortly after the publication of the book on "self-cultivation," Chairman Mao stated in his brilliant work *Rectify the Party's Style of Work*: "Communists must always go into the whys and wherefores of anything, use their own heads and carefully think over whether or not it corresponds to reality and is really well founded; on no account

should they follow blindly and encourage slavishness." During the great proletarian cultural revolution, when the top Party person in authority taking the capitalist road brought out the bourgeois reactionary line, suppressing the masses cruelly and demanding absolute subordination from the proletarian revolutionaries to his counter-revolutionary revisionist leadership, Chairman Mao countered it point-blank by stating: "All erroneous leadership that endangers the revolution should not be accepted unconditionally but should be resisted resolutely."

Marxism-Leninism has always held that political correctness and correctness in principle are the prerequisite for organizational subordination. The proletariat's organizational line must be subordinated to its political line.

When Chairman Mao talked of observing the organizational principle of democratic centralism, he pointed out first of all that the Party leadership "must give a correct line of guidance."

Lenin formulated the problem in precisely the same manner. How is the iron discipline of the proletariat maintained? Lenin answered: first, "by the class consciousness of the proletarian vanguard and by its devotion to the revolution"; second, "by its closest contact . . . primarily with the proletariat, but also with the non-proletarian masses of working people"; third, "by the correctness of the political leadership exercised by this vanguard . . . provided the broad masses have seen, from their own experience, that they are correct."<sup>1</sup>

The supreme principle for Communists is revolution. Should any Party leader betray the revolutionary principle of the proletariat, we must rebel against him and never "subordinate absolutely and unconditionally." Sacrificing the Party's political principle while engaging in extravagant talk about organizational discipline means betrayal.

The top Party person in authority taking the capitalist road claimed to be the "leader" of the Party. Should anyone fail to "subordinate absolutely and unconditionally" to him, he would produce the slaveowner's law and fire such charges as "disregarding organization and discipline," "disrupting democratic centralism," "resisting the will of the majority," "opposing the Party" and so on and so forth.

"Disrupting democratic centralism?" Ours is centralism based on extensive democracy. There can be no correct centralization without democracy. Centralization means the concentration of correct opinions. Only on this basis can there be unified thinking and action. Erroneous centralization runs counter to democratic centralism. Opposition to erroneous centralization absolutely does not mean opposition to democratic centralism. On the contrary, it upholds democratic centralism.

"The opinion of the great majority must be obeyed even though truth is in the hands of the minority?" Absolutely not. It is out-and-out opportunism to give up truth, to sell out principle and surrender to an incorrect "majority."

Chairman Mao teaches us: **"The supreme test of the words and deeds of a Communist is whether they conform with the highest interests and enjoy the support of the overwhelming majority of the people."** We must never discard this supreme test in order to obey a "majority." The "majority" which goes against the highest interests of the broadest sections of the masses is in fact a minority, a handful.

Chairman Mao says: **"Throughout history, new and correct things have often failed at the outset to win recognition from the majority of people and have had to develop by twists and turns in struggle."** When truth is with the minority, the minority should uphold it, fear no attack and unswervingly struggle for it. Our great leader Chairman Mao is a brilliant example. When he was attacked by the opportunists Chen Tu-hsiu, Li Li-san, Wang Ming and others by using the so-called majority, Chairman Mao constantly upheld the truth, persisted in a principled stand and waged uncompromising struggles against them. It was the same with Lenin. Stalin said: **"Lenin never became a captive of the majority, especially when that majority had no basis of principle. There have been times in the history of our Party when the opinion of the majority or the momentary interests of the Party conflicted with the fundamental interests of the proletariat. On such occasions Lenin would never hesitate and resolutely took his stand in support of principle as against the majority of the Party. Moreover, he did not fear on such occasions literally to stand alone against all, considering — as he would often say — that 'a policy based on principle is the only correct policy.'"**<sup>2</sup>

"Anti-Party?" For the great, glorious and correct Chinese Communist Party headed by the great leader Chairman Mao, we cherish boundless love. As for treacherous "leaders" who have betrayed the fundamental interests of the proletarian revolution, we must rebel against them and overthrow them. This is done precisely to safeguard the Party. It is those who usurped Party leadership who are one hundred per cent anti-Party elements.

In his immortal work *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Lenin called on the German workers **"to throw off the Scheidemanns and the Kautskys, to push aside such 'leaders,' to free themselves from their stultifying and debasing propaganda, to rise in revolt in spite of them, without them, and march over their heads towards revolution!"**<sup>3</sup> How well has Lenin put it! Proletarians of the whole world, rise up and resolutely throw off the Scheidemanns and Kautskys of today and kick aside all opportunist "leaders" of the "Khrushchov type!"

## 2

Our great leader Chairman Mao issued the great call in 1958 to break down fetishes and superstition, emancipate the mind and eliminate slavishness. The top Party person in authority taking the capitalist road openly opposed Chairman Mao and propagated the reactionary theory of a "docile tool," demanding that Communists act as "docile tools" like slaves. This is slave-owner mentality pure and simple!

Slavishness is not the ideology of the slave class but the reactionary ideology used by the exploiting classes to deceive and make fools of the exploited classes. "Docility" is definitely not inherent in the slave class. Where there is exploitation and oppression, there is resistance and struggle.

Lenin said: **"The slave who is aware of his slavish condition and fights it is a revolutionary. The slave who is not aware of his slavish condition and vegetates in silent, unenlightened, and wordless slavery, is just a slave. The slave who drools when smugly describing the delights of slavish existence and who goes into ecstasies over his good and kind master is a grovelling boor."**<sup>4</sup>

Proletarian revolutionaries always warmly praise the soaring revolutionary spirit of the exploited classes and encourage them to rise and fight. But the exploiting classes, for their own purposes, always impose "docility" on the exploited classes and praise it as their "virtue." The fact that the top Party person in authority taking the capitalist road has spared no efforts to propagate slavishness shows that he has completely taken the reactionary stand of the exploiting classes.

In order to peddle slavishness, the top Party person in authority taking the capitalist road even went so far as to distort at will the glorious history of our Party and viciously attack our great leader Chairman Mao. In December 1957 when he received the delegate of a certain Party, he said: "Even at the time of Chen Tu-hsiu's erroneous line, our Party was unified under Chen Tu-hsiu's line, and later unified under the 'Left' line. . . . Our Party has always kept its unity without a split and maintained Party discipline . . . that is to say, the Party always maintained unification regardless whether the Party's line was right or wrong."

This is an absolute lie!

The great Chinese Communist Party is a most militant and revolutionary proletarian political Party. Both in the period when the Party was controlled by the Right opportunist Chen Tu-hsiu and in the period when it was controlled by the "Left" opportunists Li Li-san and Wang Ming, Chairman Mao persisted in waging struggles and resolutely resisted their opportunist lines. Our Party has grown and become stronger in the course of the struggle between the revolutionary line represented by Chairman Mao and the "Left" and Right opportunist lines.

If the revisionist line assumes the dominant position in a Party, the proletarian revolutionaries should rise up resolutely in rebellion, they should overthrow the revisionist rule or build a new, Marxist-Leninist Party and absolutely should not unite under revisionist leadership.

In order to advocate reactionary slavishness, the top Party person in authority taking the capitalist road came out openly to smear the great Lenin. He said that before the October Revolution Lenin "did not make a break with the Second International organizationally."

This is a gross lie!

Did not Lenin make an open break with the opportunism of the Second International organizationally at the "Meeting of the Zimmerwald Left" held in 1915? Without this break with the opportunism of the Second International, the great victory of the October Socialist Revolution could not have been achieved at all.

### 3

The top Party person in authority taking the capitalist road regards the "organizational discipline" of the bourgeoisie as sacred, while flagrantly violating the revolutionary discipline of the proletariat. He demands that all Party members "unconditionally and absolutely obey" his erroneous leadership which brings harm to the revolution. Yet with regard to the wise leadership of our great leader Chairman Mao and the correct decisions of the Party's Central Committee headed by Chairman Mao, he feigns compliance while acting in opposition and refusing to implement them.

Soon after the outbreak of the War of Resistance Against Japan, our great leader Chairman Mao put forward the principle of "**independence and initiative within the united front**" to oppose class capitulationism. This great strategic idea of Chairman Mao was adopted at the meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Party held in Lochuan, Shensi Province, in August 1937.

But what was the real attitude of the top Party person in authority taking the capitalist road towards this great directive of Chairman Mao and the decision of the Party's Central Committee? On February 5, 1938,

he clamoured for class capitulationism, saying that guerrilla warfare in all areas "in strategy must carry out the unified strategic aim of the Central Military Committee [the 'central' that he mentions here refers to the central authorities of the Kuomintang]. And in policy it must implement the unified anti-Japanese policy of the Central Government." He also said that all the anti-Japanese armed forces in north China "must be unified, as far as possible, under the direct command of the local, north China, and central supreme military commands." On July 10 of the same year, he wrote to Peng Chen, the ringleader of the counter-revolutionary revisionist clique of the old Peking Municipal Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. In the letter, he not only did not express any disagreement with the capitulationist fallacy of "everything through the united front" and "everything must be submitted to the united front" which Peng Chen advocated at the Party Congress of the Shansi-Chahar-Hopei Border Area, but he instructed Peng Chen to cater to the needs of the big warlord Yen Hsi-shan and to sing the same tune as Yen Hsi-shan.

Our great leader Chairman Mao published his works of genius *On Coalition Government* and *The Situation and Our Policy After the Victory in the War of Resistance Against Japan* before and after the victory of the war. Chairman Mao pointed out clearly that the policy of Chiang Kai-shek, the political representative of the big landlords and big bourgeoisie, was to fight civil war. He said that, with regard to the Kuomintang reactionaries, our policy was to give them "**tit for tat and to fight for every inch of land!**" Chairman Mao warned the whole Party and the whole army: "**If there is any opportunism during this period, it will lie in failing to struggle hard and in making a voluntary gift to Chiang Kai-shek of the fruits which should go to the people.**"

The top Party person in authority taking the capitalist road heard these words of Chairman Mao and raised his hand in approval when Chairman Mao's political report *On Coalition Government* was adopted at the Seventh Party Congress. Yet, on August 28, 1945, he instructed the *Jiefang Ribao* to publish an editorial to spread illusions about peace, saying that "everyone, provided he is not a maniac, not an idiot, no matter what class or nationality he belongs to, will certainly ask for peace in the present situation."

On March 1, 1946, he made another report on problems concerning the current situation in which he asserted that "the instigators of civil war and the advocates for war have met with failure. The main form of the struggle of the Chinese revolution has become peaceful and parliamentary." In this report he advocated the so-called "six beliefs": "The belief that the civil war will come to an end," "the belief that the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek will not fight us," "the belief that the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek will carry out democratic reform," the belief that the Kuomintang and Chiang Kai-shek "will be able to carry out democratic

national construction together with us," "the belief that China will move to the new stage of peace and democracy," and the belief in the "statement of Truman," the chieftain of U.S. imperialism. On the basis of this, he also put forward the so-called "three exchanges": Hand over our army and "unify it under the Ministry of National Defence" in "exchange for democracy in the whole country;" hand over our Party power in "exchange for the legal status of our Party;" and hand over the fruits of victory won by the great Chinese people by their courageous struggle and sacrifices and bloodshed in exchange for "official positions, posts in the Central Government" for some persons and for "the 200,000-dollar U.S. loan."

This is out-and-out betrayal on a big scale!

What he said, had also been said on many occasions by U.S. imperialism and Chiang Kai-shek. U.S. imperialism had told us: "You should listen to Hurley and send a few men to be officials in the Kuomintang government." Chiang Kai-shek had stated that the Communist Party would have to turn over its army before it could acquire legal status. Chairman Mao seriously refuted these "nice words." Chairman Mao said: "It is no easy job to be an official bound hand and foot; we won't do it," "without a people's army the people have nothing" and "the arms of the people, every gun and every bullet, must all be kept, must not be handed over."

It is very clear that the "party spirit" spoken of by the top Party person in authority taking the capitalist road was the party spirit of the Kuomintang, the party spirit of the U.S. Democratic Party; the discipline he obeyed absolutely was what U.S. imperialism and Chiang Kai-shek called "military orders and administrative decrees."

He has a clear-cut stand: Being servile towards Harry Truman and Chiang Kai-shek, worthy of "a docile tool" full of slavish obedience; but showing the perverse arrogance of an overlord towards our great leader Chairman Mao and the revolutionary masses. This is the class essence of slavishness he advocated.

#### 4

Different classes have different types of organizational discipline. A person can obey only the organizational discipline of his own class. The proposition of obeying all organizational discipline unconditionally or opposing all organizational discipline is extremely false and deceptive.

Chairman Mao has instructed us: "**Unified discipline is a necessary condition for the victory of the revolution.**" Sharp class struggle enables the proletariat to understand that only with strict organizational discipline is it possible to form a resolute and powerful contingent which will advance in step and which has a unified will. Only with strict organizational discipline is it possible to ensure the carrying out of the political line, to concentrate the force of the proletariat on a

common target of attack and to defeat a mighty enemy. When we oppose slavishness, we do not oppose at all subordination to Party organizational discipline. On the contrary, our intention is to strengthen the revolutionary organizational discipline of the proletariat.

We must firmly carry out and act completely in accordance with the organizational discipline of the Chinese Communist Party headed by the great leader Chairman Mao and his close comrade-in-arms Comrade Lin Piao and the wise instructions of the great leader Chairman Mao. Chairman Mao is the greatest Marxist-Leninist of our era. Every sentence uttered by Chairman Mao is truth. Mao Tse-tung's thought is universal truth tested in revolutionary practice and is living Marxism-Leninism at its highest in the present era. Therefore we must act according to Chairman Mao's instructions whether or not we have already fully grasped its significance. We must establish the absolute authority of Mao Tse-tung's thought. This is the fundamental interests of the proletariat and our supreme discipline.

A proletarian party must have its own true outstanding leader and it is necessary to establish his absolute revolutionary authority throughout the party. Without this condition the party's discipline cannot become an iron discipline and there will be no guarantee for the victory of the party's cause. Lenin said: Without "**influential party leaders,**" "**the dictatorship of the proletariat, and its 'unity of will,' remain a phrase.**"<sup>5</sup> It is most fortunate for the Chinese people and for the revolutionary people all over the world that the Chinese Communist Party has such a great teacher, great leader, great supreme commander and great helmsman as Chairman Mao.

With regard to a leading organization which carries out Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line, it is necessary to safeguard its prestige and to uphold its authority. Its correct directives and decisions should be obeyed consciously and carried out resolutely. It is permissible to raise different opinions, if any, but it is absolutely impermissible to treat proletarian revolutionary discipline with the attitude used in dealing with revisionist organization and discipline. The criterion for whether to obey a directive or decision by a leading organization must be whether it conforms with the revolutionary interests of the proletariat and with Mao Tse-tung's thought. This must not be determined by one's own preferences: Carrying it out when one likes it and refusing to carry it out when it does not suit one. Observance of revolutionary organizational discipline cannot be opposed and taken as slavishness. To oppose all leadership, all authority, all organization and all discipline is an anarchist trend of thought. This must be criticized and repudiated resolutely.

Slavishness cannot be opposed with anarchism. Slavishness and anarchism on the surface seem exact opposites. But in essence they are linked together. They are both ideologies of the exploiting classes, and are both metaphysical and idealist in their world out-

look. Slavishness upholds blind faith instead of truth; anarchism advocates the doubting of everything and overthrowing of everything, while worship of anarchism as an absolute also means the denial of truth and upholding of blind faith. We are opposed to both slavishness and anarchism; and still more are we opposed to substituting anarchism which overthrows all political power and opposes all organizational discipline for slavishness. We must never go from one extreme to the other.

Anarchism, which advocates the doubting, overthrowing and negating of everything, is a reactionary idea propagated by the handful of top Party persons in authority taking the capitalist road. When they were in power they preached slavishness and used obscurantism in order to maintain their counter-revolutionary revisionist dictatorship. However, when they lost their power, they came out with anarchism in order to create confusion and oppose the dictatorship of the proletariat. For the handful of top Party persons in authority taking the capitalist road, slavishness and anarchism are, in essence, the same; both are ideological weapons they use to oppose the dictatorship of the proletariat and to safeguard revisionist rule.

We must use Mao Tse-tung's thought as the weapon to criticize and repudiate slavishness and to oppose anarchism. We must take a sniff at everything, not accept or reject it blindly. We must act according to Chairman Mao's teachings: **"We should always use our brains and think everything over carefully," "get rid of the blindness which exists to a serious extent in our Party," and "to learn the method of analysis and to cultivate the habit of analysis."** Everything must be tested by revolutionary practice and examined with Mao Tse-tung's thought.

Conscious observance of revolutionary discipline is necessary for the revolution.

On the eve of nationwide victory in the Liberation War, Chairman Mao called this to the attention of the whole Party, the whole army and the people of the whole country: **"It is necessary resolutely to overcome certain manifestations of indiscipline or anarchy existing in many places. There are people who, without authorization, modify the policies and tactics adopted by the Central Committee or other higher Party committees and apply extremely harmful policies and tactics, which go against the united will and discipline but which they opinionatedly believe to be correct. There are also people who, on the pretext of pressure of work, adopt the wrong attitude of neither asking for instructions before an action is taken nor submitting a report afterwards and who regard the area they administer as an independent realm. All this is extremely harmful to the interests of the revolution. Party committees at every level must discuss this matter again and again and work earnestly to overcome such indiscipline and anarchy so that all the powers that can and must be centralized will be concentrated in the hands of the Central Committee and its agencies."** We must bear this teaching of Chairman Mao's firmly in mind and resolutely oppose anarchism and resolutely struggle against every action which goes against the unified will and discipline of the Party and which therefore is extremely harmful.

*(A slightly abridged translation of an article published in "Renmin Ribao" on June 16.)*

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1. V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1966, Vol. 31, pp. 24-25.

2. J.V. Stalin, *Works*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1953, Vol. 6, pp. 59-60.

3. V.I. Lenin, *op. cit.*, Vol. 28, p. 292.

4. *ibid.*, Vol. 13, p. 53.

5. *ibid.*, Vol. 32, p. 517.