

Two Line Struggle Travel Notes

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Two line struggle. We heard about it everywhere during a recent tour which took us 1,200 miles south of our home in Peking. In Loyang, which had a university with 30,000 students 2,000 years ago and where to-day one can study stone-age tools and 75 h.p. tractors. In Chengchow, which before Liberation was beset by four calamities: floods, droughts, locusts and warlords, whose troops in 1923 shot down strikers who advanced to the points of their bayonets. In Wuhan, where Mao Tsetung in 1926-27 headed the Central Peasant Movement Institute, whose students suppressed a counter-revolutionary uprising as part of their field-work. In Kweilin, where cormorants dive from commune fishing boats into the Li River, which meanders between limestone crags rising up from the plain like pine-cones on a card table. Even there we learnt about two-line struggle.

A Peasant Who Went Astray

A member of a commune near Kweilin, before the Cultural Revolution, scamped work for the collective, saved up and bought a cart and went around with his wife and children picking up haulage jobs. But living on the road with his family was expensive, and instead of getting rich he fell into debt. Besides, the

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family was cut off from the collective life of the commune; the parents took no part in the political movements to study Communist Party policy and learnt nothing of the current education in birth control and the free facilities provided for it. So the number of children increased from three to six. (There is a humorous jingle about family planning, these days: 'One's not too few. You're alright with two. Three just won't do.') The children had no schooling and none of the family could avail themselves of the co-operative medicare recently set up in the communes. The commune brigade Party secretary grew concerned about them. So did the head of the brigade Women's Association. They tracked the family down and, in their own words, 'did painstaking ideological work with them,' convinced them that the capitalist road of Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao was a dead-end and persuaded them to come home and work in and for the collective. They did. Result: their debt is paid off, they have 300 *yuan* in the bank and have adopted family planning.

The tale of the carter on the capitalist road was not strictly an example of two-line struggle; it was a 'struggle between the two roads', the road to capitalism and the road to socialism. Two line struggle is 'a reflection of class struggle inside the Communist Party'—especially within its leadership. There have been ten such struggles since the CCP was founded in

1921, the ninth being between the line of Mao Tsetung and that of Liu Shao-chi, the tenth between that of Mao and that of Lin Piao. In both cases Mao's line was always accepted by the great majority of the Party leadership, of the rank-and-file membership and of the Chinese people.

Two Lines in Power Plant

But somewhere on our trek south we were taken to see a reservoir-cum-power plant. Its story presented a clear-cut case of two line struggle. We from the West had thought of it first and foremost as a power-plant. This turned out to be wrong. Mao Tsetung says, 'Agriculture is the base of the economy and industry the key lever' . . . 'Industry must serve agriculture.' It was Liu Shao-chi who maintained 'first mechanisation, then co-operatives', which meant postponing if not preventing collectivisation. This was a two line struggle at the top level of Party leadership, in which Mao's line prevailed and had its effect all over China.

So the reservoir was primarily for irrigation. Electric power was a by-product. The dam, 200 feet high and 750 feet long, was built by men and women carrying baskets of earth on shoulder-poles. The reservoir has a capacity of 517 million cubic metres and irrigates land in 17 communes in two counties and in the suburbs of a near-by city—40,000 hectares in all. Eighty per cent of this area was previously subject to drought. Yet in 1972, when for two months there was not a drop of rain, one commune work team of 19 families, because of the irrigation, still managed to produce 95 metric tons of grain. Without the reservoir they would have had to seek relief from the People's Government; before Liberation they would have starved. As it was, they had a sizable surplus to sell to the State.

The power plant was started in 1966 and began to generate power in 1969, the water which flowed to the fields turn-

ing the turbines. More irrigation, more electricity—unless, in exceptional cases, there is a surplus of water or an emergency need by industry. The dam was built in 1958, the year of the Great Leap Forward; the power plant during the Cultural Revolution. It was not only some Western wiseacres who predicted that these two movements would wreck China's economy. Liu Shao-chi and his followers opposed the Great Leap and during the hard years of 1959-61—when Khrushchov suddenly withdrew all Soviet experts from China, tore up hundreds of contracts for massive construction projects, stopped sending spare parts for machinery already sold to China, etc.—Liu advocated capitulation to Khrushchov's pressure and dependence on foreign aid. Liu's line would have turned China into a Soviet satellite and ultimately have led to the restoration of capitalism. Mao's line was self-reliance and to go all out in building socialism.

What makes Chinese men and women carry tons of earth on their shoulders to build dams? What makes China tick? The bait of high pay and lush living? That was Liu's theory: 'Material incentives.' Mao Tsetung's line has always been 'faith in the masses', coupled with ideological education to help them slough off the selfishness bred by centuries of struggle for existence under small-scale individual production and feudalism and capitalism.

At the Loyang Tractor Works—perhaps the biggest in China—we were told: between 1960 and 1962 the Works management, under the influence of Liu's line of material incentives, would bargain with the workers: 'Get this job done by such and such a time and we'll give you a bonus of 30 *yuan*.' And the workers would reply: 'Make it 50 and it's a deal.' Liu's line was wooing the workers 'away from socialism onto the capitalist road.' But it was not doing much to turn out more tractors. Until the Cultural Revolution the highest output was 8,000, though

the plant was designed to produce 15,000. By 1972 output had been raised to 20,000 a year. This was done not by money bonuses but by the ideological education of the Cultural Revolution, which stepped up the workers' enthusiasm for socialism.

It was the same at Wuhan Steel Works. Under Liu's line it took 12-15 days to do a certain job. When the management switched from material incentives to 'rousing the workers' political consciousness', the time was cut to 3 days. Before the Cultural Revolution they offered a bonus of 4 *yuan* a ton for iron salvaged from the slag of one furnace. Result: 50 tons of iron saved each month. In the course of the Cultural Revolution the workers turned down the bonus and salvaged 150 tons a month. What roused their enthusiasm? Studying the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Mao Tsetung! That played a key role. But theory must be combined with practice. Reversing the trend started by Liu Shao-chi and continued by Lin Piao of building a top-heavy bureaucratic structure; getting chair-polishers back to the work bench, put new heart into the workers. There was a return to the spirit of '58, the year of the Great Leap Forward.

Ups and Downs

It was the same in the communes when, as a result of the Cultural Revolution, the leaders spent less time at meetings or merely inspecting the fields and got themselves covered in sweat, mud and muck working in the fields.

In a commune brigade near Kweilin we got the following figures for the average output of vegetables: Before Liberation (1949), the figure was around 37.5 tons per hectare. Between 1949 and 1952, when land reform was completed (i.e. a small-holders set-up replaced landlordism), the figure rose to over 45 tons per hectare. It continued to rise, though with ups and downs, during

the ensuing co-operative movement. In 1958, with the founding of the communes and the Great Leap Forward, it went up to 82.5 tons per hectare. Then, during the hard years of 1959-61, Liu Shao-chi, advocating capitulation to Khrushchov's pressure, called for a retreat from collective towards individual production. This trend was embodied in Liu's policy (pithily summed up in four Chinese syllables) of: extension of private plots and free markets, promotion of small private enterprises responsible for their own profit and loss, and the fixing of output quotas by the household instead of the collective (e.g. the work team). In short, back onto the road leading to capitalism. Under Liu's line output fell, at its lowest to the pre-Liberation figure of 37.5 tons per hectare. The Socialist Education Movement, proposed by Mao Tsetung to counteract this capitalist trend, brought output up to 60 tons per hectare in 1964-65. The Cultural Revolution has boosted it to an average of 101.3 tons per hectare. These figures are a record of 'the struggle between two roads and two lines' which goes on all over China.

Education in Wuhan

We met it in the field of education in Wuhan. There we visited the building which had housed the Central Peasant Movement Institute in 1926-7. This was not the first time Mao Tsetung had headed a school. In his youth he had studied at Changsha Normal School and on graduating with honours was prevailed upon to head the primary school attached to it. In 1925, too, he had headed a Peasant Movement Institute in Kwangchow. So the educational principles he has advocated up to and during the Cultural Revolution are based on personal practice as well as on Marxist theory. Indeed, one of his primary educational principles has always been the combination of theory and practice. He applied it in Wuhan in 1926-7, for there he both taught peasant students

and wrote his 'Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan.' This work, written in March, 1927, was based on a just completed 32-day tour of the province as a 'Special Revolutionary Envoy' and was no mere academic exercise. It played a key part in overthrowing the opportunist leader of the CCP, Chen Tu-hsiu. Chen was terrified of the revolutionary peasant upsurge, which he described as 'terrible.' Mao, in his 'Report' quipped, 'it's not terrible, it's terrific.'

Under Mao's leadership combination of theory and practice ran through the whole of the Wuhan Peasant Movement Institute's curriculum. Courses included not only general education and Marxism-Leninism, but military science; the armoury was as important as the library. When a landlord organisation staged a counter-revolutionary uprising near Wuhan, the students put down their books, picked up their guns and went with the revolutionary troops to suppress it.

Mao then as now advocated running schools with the doors opening both inwards and outwards. Not only did the students go out to take part in revolutionary struggle, but working people entered freely, as both students and teachers. Workers living in the neighbourhood, after coming off shift, flocked to Mao's lectures and also to tell the peasant students about their own conditions and struggles.

The regular students, who came from 17 Chinese provinces, sat no formal entrance exam. They were recommended by local revolutionary organisations and entered the Institute on the understanding that they would go back where they came from as 'special revolutionary envoys' to help guide local peasant organisations along revolutionary lines.

For over 20 years these educational principles were developed and applied in the Liberated Areas, and Mao called for the continuation of them after the Communists entered the cities and set up the People's Republic in 1949. Liu Shao-chi

immediately launched a counter-attack. In the name of 'raising academic standards', he demanded 'regularisation of schools' and 'overcoming guerilla work-style.' The old-style intellectuals, long entrenched in the cities, found Liu's line to their liking. Following Liu's lead they nibbled away at Mao's principles of making education 'serve proletarian politics', 'combining education with productive labour' and maintaining the Yen-an tradition of plain living. The nibblers naturally enough endorsed Liu's line of leaving education to the experts—i.e. themselves—rather than putting it into the hands of uncouth workers and peasants.

In the mid-fifties Liu's line gained support and even inspiration from the Soviet experts. These, in the main, worked conscientiously and systematically, but they had not sloughed off all the academic influence of Czarist days (which Lenin had trounced), were unfamiliar with Chinese conditions and needs, and advised the use of teaching methods and material which could not realise Mao's aim of turning out 'socialist-minded, educated working people.' They were better suited to the cultivation of an intellectual élite. A see-saw struggle between Mao's line and Liu's went on for over ten years. In 1958 the spirit of the Great Leap Forward spilled over into education and Mao's line prevailed for a time. But with Liu's willing capitulation to Khrushchov's pressure, from 1959-62, it suffered a setback. From 1963-65 the Socialist Education Movement pushed it forward again, but not to a decisive extent. So despite the great advances made in the 17 years since Liberation, the Cultural Revolution launched in 1966 was, in Mao's words, 'most timely and necessary.'

Wuhan University Today

Now, visiting Wuhan University, we found progress being made in the struggle to implement Mao Tsetung's educational principles. Mao had actually visited the

university in 1958. At that time he found that, under the impetus of the Great Leap, the students were demanding that the university should be changed into a 'half-work, half-study' school. Mao encouraged them and said they should set up small factories in their spacious grounds. But during the hard years of 1959-61, under Liu's influence, the factories were scrapped. Since the Cultural Revolution they have been started again. New students are being recruited from among workers, peasants and soldiers. As with the Central Peasant Movement Institute led by Mao in 1927, there is no academically exacting entrance examination for Wuhan University these days: merely modest requirements in Chinese and general knowledge. On the political and ideological side the demand is decidedly higher. The applicant must have had a good record during at least two years of work on a farm, in a factory or in the People's Liberation Army. Then he must be recommended by his mates ('the masses') and approved by the local leadership before being considered by the university. This is the procedure all over China. It cannot be said to be working perfectly yet, for China has a centuries-long tradition of personal pull. But 'getting in by the back door', as it is called, is fast being done away with. This is part of the struggle against the élitism of Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao. Wuhan University has hook-ups with factories and communes in the locality, and especially with the docks, so that the students and those teachers who are young and fit enough can do their annual stint of manual work. They also cultivate the land on their own campus.

Besides this, the students play their part in running or supervising the university, according to the CCP's policy that workers, peasants and soldiers should 'go to school, take part in running the school and reform the school according to the Thought of Mao Tsetung.' The university is administered by its Revolutionary

committee, an elected body of 30, led by the university Communist Party branch but including non-Party members. It includes Wuhan industrial workers (who are members of the propaganda team working at the university) as well as teachers, university clerical staff and manual workers, a representative of the housewives or staff families. Last but not least it includes three students. Each department or faculty has its own Revolutionary Committee, similarly constituted and including students. Activities of the Student Union (which lapsed during the Cultural Revolution but have since been resumed) include student-teacher meetings every two or three weeks, at which students and teachers speak their minds about each other's teaching and studying. Criticisms and suggestions are also put to the university leadership. Since 1970, seven 'Great Debates' have been conducted at which the entire university population—not only students and teachers, but also cooks, drivers, office workers, housewives—are all entitled to take part. Debate topics have included: length of the university course; how to compile teaching material suited to the needs of the incoming worker-peasant-soldier students; teaching methods; proportions of time to be spent on class-work and homework, on professional studies, politics and manual work, etc.

All this accords with Mao Tsetung's line in education. He has always preached 'faith in the masses'—and practised it. His launching of the Cultural Revolution—the most colossal mass movement in history—is evidence for it.

Liu, too, to give the devil his due, also practised what he preached. He not only put his faith in experts, Chinese and foreign; he held it was the highest duty of the rank-and-file Communist Party member to 'be a docile tool.' And when, at the start of the Cultural Revolution, the students rose in answer to Mao Tsetung's call to 'overthrow power-holders in the Party who are going along the road to

capitalism', Liu sent work teams to suppress them with a reign of terror. Lin Piao was a double-dealer: 'Always with the red book in his hand and long live on his lips', as Chou En-lai has described him, pretending to support the Cultural Revolution but secretly egging-on the ultra-Left to acts which would have discredited it at home as well as abroad and would ultimately have wrecked it. It was Lin who took the lead in lavishing all those 'greats' and 'greatests' on Chairman Mao, who himself adhorred them. Lin praised Mao to the skies, so as first to win the name of his most devoted follower and then to take his place. But when his 'adulation' was exposed as ambition, he realised that though he had managed to get himself proclaimed successor, in fact he would never succeed—by legitimate means. Then he resorted to coups d'etat and ultimately at attempted assassination. What could be further from faith in the masses, relying on them, learning from them, which is the source of Mao's greatness?

So despite these personal contrasts, the struggle between the lines of Liu and Lin on the one hand and that of Mao Tsetung on the other, was not a personal one. Liu and Lin were representatives of a class whose philosophy is individualism, the capitalist class. Mao is the representative of the mass of the people, of collectivism, of socialism. While Liu Shao-chi relied on 'experts', Lin went further and established a cult of 'geniuses'—big ones at the very top, lesser ones a little lower down. (His own son, Lin Li-kuo, was to have been the greatest genius of all time.) The struggle, first against Liu, then against Lin, was thus a struggle between two political lines, a struggle over what road to take, the one to socialism or the one to capitalism. This struggle is not yet over. Mao says it will last throughout the whole historical era of socialism, the transitional period between capitalism and communism, and that this may last another five to ten generations. But he has boundless confidence that socialism will prevail, based on his boundless confidence in the common people.