

SELECTED ESSAYS
ON THE STUDY
OF PHILOSOPHY BY
WORKERS, PEASANTS
AND SOLDIERS



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Selected Essays on the Study of Philosophy by Workers, Peasants and Soldiers

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of Philosophy by Workers,
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Quotation from Chairman Mao Tsetung

Liberate philosophy from the confines of the philosophers' lecture rooms and textbooks, and turn it into a sharp weapon in the hands of the masses.

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Marxist philosophy holds that the most important problem does not lie in understanding the laws of the objective world and thus being able to explain it, but in applying the knowledge of these laws actively to change the world.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Our great leader Chairman Mao points out: **"Liberate philosophy from the confines of the philosophers' lecture rooms and textbooks, and turn it into a sharp weapon in the hands of the masses."** Under the impact of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, this great call is changing into revolutionary reality.

The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution has settled accounts with the renegade, hidden traitor and scab Liu Shao-chi for his criminal attempt to kill the study of philosophy by workers, peasants and soldiers. The revolution has ended the long-term monopoly of philosophic study by a handful of bourgeois intellectuals and opened a broad prospect for the worker, peasant and soldier masses' living study and application of Chairman Mao's philosophic thinking. Now, the broad masses of workers, peasants and soldiers fighting at the forefront of the three great revolutionary movements — class struggle, struggle for production and scientific experiment — are eagerly studying and applying Chairman Mao's philosophic thinking in a living way to solve practical problems in the current revolutionary struggle. They closely integrate their study with practice, studying and applying repeatedly. The more they study, the deeper their understanding and the better their application. Materialist dialectics has become a sharp

weapon in their hands. They use this weapon to criticize the bourgeoisie, revisionism and all kinds of metaphysical ideas which obstruct revolution and progress, use it to analyse and resolve contradictions in the three great revolutionary movements, to educate themselves, unite with comrades and strike at the enemy. All this has given vigorous impulse to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, stimulated the development of production, science and technology and the transformation of people's world outlook.

The broad masses of workers, peasants and soldiers have written many excellent essays telling how they study and apply Chairman Mao's philosophic thinking in their revolutionary struggle. The nine selected here are only a small part. They are factual and reason things out, are pungent in style and set forth a clear-cut point of view. Vividly reflecting the rich gains of China's workers, peasants and soldiers from living study and application of Chairman Mao's philosophic thinking, they are eloquent proof that workers, peasants and soldiers should and can master philosophy, and thus declare total bankruptcy for the fallacy that "philosophy is mysterious".

For the workers, peasants and soldiers to occupy the positions in philosophy, to study and apply philosophy, is necessary to the revolution, to the struggle. This is a great event on China's political and ideological front, an event of far-reaching significance in consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, preventing capitalist restoration and speeding socialist construction. A new upsurge in the mass movement for the

living study and application of Chairman Mao's brilliant philosophic thinking is now emerging. We will continue to see that once materialist dialectics becomes a weapon in the hands of the working class and other revolutionary masses, it turns into a mighty material force uninterruptedly propelling forward the vigorous development of China's socialist revolution and socialist construction.

STUDY CHAIRMAN MAO'S PHILOSOPHIC THINKING WELL, CONSCIOUSLY REMOULD WORLD OUTLOOK

by Li Chang-mao

a worker of the Tientsin Second Woollen Mill

In making revolution we the working class must study philosophy. The philosophic thinking of our great leader Chairman Mao is a sharp weapon for us in waging revolutionary struggle. Chairman Mao Tsetung pointed out in 1957: **"We want gradually to disseminate dialectics, and to ask everyone gradually to learn the use of the scientific dialectical method."** Inspired by this great call of Chairman Mao, about a dozen of us old workers organized a philosophy study group in 1958.

During the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution I joined the workers' Mao Tsetung Thought propaganda teams. I'd like to tell something of the experience I gained in studying Chairman Mao's philosophic thinking to consciously remould my world outlook.

Work May Change But Not Ideological Remoulding

As a worker at the mill I often studied Chairman Mao's works together with my fellow workers and

exchanged views with them. I paid close attention to remoulding my ideology.

In the latter half of 1968, responding to Chairman Mao's great call **"The working class must exercise leadership in everything"**, our workers' Mao Tsetung Thought propaganda teams entered schools and colleges in force. I considered this a glorious task Chairman Mao had given us and we must do it well. At first we dealt with every matter ourselves whether important or trifling, and we had our hands full. However, there was little progress in our work, and the school hadn't changed much after a period of time. Also I found the work taxed my health, which wasn't very good, and I began to think about "self". It seemed to me the work was too hard and after so much effort for quite a long time I had achieved hardly any result worth mentioning. I thought of returning to my old job at the mill where I wouldn't have to do so much thinking. Why not let someone else take my place, "work in turns"? With these problems in mind, I studied Chairman Mao's great teaching: **"Our country has 700 million people, and the working class is the leading class. It is essential to bring into full play the leading role of the working class in the great cultural revolution and in all fields of work. On its part, the working class should always raise its political consciousness in the course of struggle."** Chairman Mao's brilliant teaching wisely points out for us the dialectical relationship between changing the objective world and at the same time changing one's subjective world. As Vice-Chairman Lin Piao instructs us: "We must regard ourselves as an integral part of the revolutionary force and at the same time constantly regard ourselves as a target of the revolution." I realized the reason

why so many problems arose in my work and thinking was that I was taking a one-sided view of Chairman Mao's great call, **"The working class must exercise leadership in everything"**. I thought that now my work had changed and I had come just to exercise leadership in every matter. I thus failed to handle well the relationship between the motive force and the target of the revolution. I became lax in remoulding my thinking and regarded myself only as a motive force but not a target of the revolution. That was why, when confronted with difficulties, I had thought for a time of going back to the mill and letting someone else take my place on the team.

With the deepening of the struggle-criticism-transformation movement in the superstructure, our team was busier, and my blood pressure rose again. I was getting old, I thought, and my health was poor—I would be eligible for retirement after a few more years of work at the mill. Just then a study class was organized by the district revolutionary committee to study the documents of the Chinese Communist Party's Ninth National Congress. With my own problems in mind I made a serious study of Chairman Mao's great theory of continuing the revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat and of the heroic spirit of fearing neither hardship nor death displayed by our People's Liberation Army men at Chen-pao Island. The more I studied the more I realized that ideas of "sitting back" and of "retiring and going home" were not right, and I tossed about for several nights unable to sleep. I recalled the suffering of the first half of my life, how I had been treated like a draught animal in the old society. It was Chairman Mao who had delivered me from the depths of misery. Now Chairman

Mao had issued a great call to us the working class to occupy the superstructure permanently. Why hadn't I put my whole heart into answering Chairman Mao's call? My conduct was unworthy of the trust placed in us by our great leader Chairman Mao; I was failing to live up to Chairman Mao's expectations of the working class. Fearing fatigue and tension was selfishness. Traces of the evil influence of the renegade, hidden traitor and scab Liu Shao-chi's "philosophy of survival" were still in my mind. I now felt that the idea of "packing up and leaving" was not only wrong, but that it was even very dangerous politically. Arriving at this conclusion, I took Chairman Mao's instruction "**Fight self, criticize revisionism**" as my guide and severely criticized my personal considerations at the study class and at the district meeting of the workers' Mao Tsetung Thought propaganda teams.

Through study I realized further that the motive force of the revolution and target of the revolution constitute a contradiction, are the two aspects which are in opposition and yet identical; that in given conditions these two aspects change into each other. Therefore, "In making revolution we must also revolutionize ourselves. Without revolutionizing ourselves, we cannot succeed in making this revolution." Without consciously fighting self and criticizing revisionism, without regarding ourselves as a target of the revolution, we could not accomplish the great historic task Chairman Mao had given us to occupy and transform the superstructure. Failure to revolutionize ourselves could affect Chairman Mao's great strategic plan; the motive force of revolution could change into an obstacle in the way of revolution. I realized that if we are to be a powerful motive force of the

revolution we must consciously regard ourselves as a target of the revolution. Only when we correctly regard ourselves as a target of the revolution can we become its powerful motive force. My work has changed from that of a worker in a mill to that of a leader in a school, but I can never stop remoulding my ideology. Only thus can I go on making revolution under the dictatorship of the proletariat, always making revolution, and be a staunch proletarian revolutionary fighter.

Circumstances Change But the Style of Keeping Close to the Masses Must Not

I was at a mill working with other workers before I came to the district office of the workers' propaganda teams. Here I was assigned, together with other team members, to lead the teachers and students in carrying out the tasks of struggle-criticism-transformation in the schools. The situation had changed. There was an enormous amount of work to be done. From my first day in the office I was swamped with work and failed to grasp what was important. Over-anxious for quick success I sometimes was busy all day, asking the workers' propaganda teams at the basic level for information, telephoning the leading comrades of the teams to report and discuss their work with me, taking up one matter one minute and another the next, getting very little solid result. With this problem in mind I studied Chairman Mao's teaching: **"Direct reliance on the revolutionary masses is a basic principle of the Communist Party."** It brought home to me that the reason for my inability to do well after joining the workers' propaganda teams was

that I stayed in the office too much and went among the masses too little; this was different from when I was in the mill. I realized that my style of close consultation with the masses must not change though my work situation might. I must make a more conscious effort and take greater initiative in keeping close to and relying on the broad revolutionary masses, which means understanding and arousing them, arming them with Mao Tsetung Thought, and fostering deep proletarian feeling with them in the heat of the three great revolutionary movements of class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment. Only by so doing can we truly rely on the masses in making revolution. Once, as I was about to telephone a cadre of a unit to come to my office to report, I thought of Chairman Mao's teaching. I put the receiver down and went to the unit by bicycle, looked up the comrade and discussed the work with him. Another time, answering the call of the district revolutionary committee to go to the grassroots units and work at a selected spot, I went to a school to grasp typical examples, sum up experience and find out their laws, so as to advance the work of every unit of the district. Consequently I not only unearthed many problems but, by working together with the masses, I found solutions to them. I was convinced that only by going among the masses can we discover problems, understand and correctly analyse them, and avoid blindly drawing simple conclusions which are either absolutely affirmative or absolutely negative.

Chairman Mao teaches us: **"We Communists seek not official posts, but revolution. Everyone of us must be a thoroughgoing revolutionary in spirit and we must never for a moment divorce ourselves from the masses."**