

TEXT 21

SOCIALIST BIG FAIR IS GOOD

—An investigation of transformation in rural trade fair in Haerht'ao commune, Changwu county, Liaoning Province

Last year, just when the arch unrepentant capitalist-roader within the Party Teng Hsiao-p'ing was vigorously whipping up the Right-deviation wind to reverse verdicts, the Party committee of the Haerht'ao commune, Changwu county, Liaoning Province, through taking class struggle as the key link, adhering to the Party's basic line and closely relying upon the poor and lower-middle peasants, transformed the old rural trade fair and created a new type of fair—the socialist big fair. This gave an effective boost to the movement to learn from Tachai in agriculture. The socialist position in the countryside was thus further consolidated.

Contradictions Calling for An Urgent Solution

Haerht'ao commune is situated near the border between Liaoning and Kirin provinces. It has poor soil and an arid climate. In the past, grain output was very low. In the winter of 1974, spurred by the movement to criticize Lin Piao and Confucius, this commune whipped up a new upsurge in "learning from Tachai in agriculture." The broad masses of cadres and people broke the habit of "allowing land to lie fallow in winter" and energetically participated in farmland capital construction. However, after a period of time, attendance gradually diminished. When the Spring Festival drew near, there were still fewer people at work on farmland capital construction. Where did the people go? After an investigation, the commune Party committee discovered that the force of old habit had attracted the people to the trade fair.

Trade fairs in Haerht'ao had a history of many years. On the 5th, 10th, 15th, 20th, 25th and 30th days of the month, people from the neighboring areas and even from as far as several tens of *li* away converged at the trade fair, numbering from 4,000 or 5,000 at the most to 2,000 or 3,000 at the least. A few profiteers made use of the fair to corner the market, play tricks and carry out capitalist activities. Such a fair held a great attraction for some rich peasants who had not rid themselves of their private-ownership mentality. Under the influence of this

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kind of fair, the collective economy of this commune was weakened, the movement to learn from Tachai failed to get off the ground and agricultural production long remained in a backward stage.

The Party committee of Haerht'ao commune investigated the conditions of the rural fair and made clear the relations between the two-road struggle and trade fair in the countryside. It felt that if such a fair was not subjected to restrictions and transformation, capitalism would make a breach through this fair and run wild and more and more people would deviate from the socialist orbit. How should the rural trade fair be transformed? There were two ways: One was to follow the previous practice of closing it down by way of an administrative order or to exercise general control over it. As a result, it could neither be closed nor controlled properly. Another way was to establish the "socialist big fair" in light of the situation where a small number of private plots and family side occupations were still retained at the present in the countryside. Efforts should be made to take class struggle as the key link, deepen education in the Party's basic line, arouse the masses to sell to the state the agricultural produce and by-products instead of bringing them to the trade fair. At the same time, the supply and sales departments should be organized to break with the usual practice and expand their scopes of buying and selling and the exchange of commodities should be actively organized among the masses, so as to occupy the rural commercial position in a planned manner. The commune Party committee made a study of the matter and decided to adopt the latter measure to transform the existing trade fair.

Fair of a New Type Appears

In the process of establishing the socialist big fair, Haerht'ao Commune first organized the cadres and the masses to vigorously run political night schools, to learn the fundamental experience of Tachai and to unfold penetrating criticism against capitalist tendencies existing in rural trade fair. Meanwhile, conscientious ideological education was conducted to further raise the socialist consciousness of the masses. After spending a period of time on study, criticism and ideological education, many commune members on their own initiative offered to sell to the state private agricultural produce and by-products intended for the fair, so as to support socialist construction. The commune Party committee decided to take advantage of this favorable situation to organize a socialist big fair.

On the 1975 New Year's day, this fair of a new type made its debut in Haerht'ao Commune. That day, the masses of commune members of various brigades led by the cadres carried on their shoulders their own

agricultural produce and by-products and, beating gongs and drums, and holding red banners, came from all directions and converged on the streets of Haerht'ao to take part in the socialist big fair. They sold to the supply and marketing cooperative their surplus agricultural produce and by-products. Then they headed for the stalls of the supply and marketing cooperative to buy various kinds of farm implements and other daily necessities they needed. The brisk trade in the fair presented a delightful bustling scene. The previous bourgeois practice, of shouting prices and driving bargains was swept away at one stroke.

At this fair, the spare-time cultural and art propaganda teams of the commune and various brigades also presented various cultural and art programs, and made propaganda of new men, new deeds and new practices. The masses could participate in the fair and, at the same time, receive socialist education.

At such a fair, there were also various support-agricultural activities organized by factories in the city. What people witnessed here was the vivid scene worker-peasant alliance and exchange between town and country. What they heard were the principles of socialist revolution and the advanced deeds in learning from Tachai, grasping revolution and promoting production. They said elatedly, "The more we attend the socialist big fair the greater the hatred we develop toward capitalism and the closer our hearts draw toward socialism. The socialist big fair is just fine."

Such a fair is a socialist new thing emerging in the struggle between the two roads, and its appearance holds down the capitalist influence. With the support of the broad masses of poor and lower-middle peasants, this kind of socialist big fair is run better and better. Now, apart from the periodical comprehensive big fairs, big fairs for the exchange of one chosen kind of commodities are run in light of agricultural seasons and the people's needs. Such exchange fairs are supplements to the comprehensive big fair. At specified time and locality and within certain limits, they strictly stick to pre-arranged prices. With regard to agricultural produce and by-products, such as piglets, ducklings, chickens, seedlings, etc., which they find it inconvenient to handle for the present, the supply and marketing cooperative organize exchange among the individuals and between one collective and another so as to meet each other's needs. Thus, 128 kinds of agricultural produce and by-products under the nine categories of commodities including pigs and fowl, fabricated straw goods, firewood, weeds, etc., which were freely traded in the past are put on the socialist orbit. The predominance of socialism is established in the position of the rural trade fair. Apart from the buying and selling of ordinary agricultural produce and by-products, the commune also take advantage of the big fair to organ-

ize various brigades to sell to the state grain, pigs and other products under the unified purchase and sales program and under the planned purchase scheme. Actually, this kind of socialist big fair has become the main form of economic exchange activity in the countryside.

Another Leap Forward in Understanding

Not long after the socialist big fair was established, Chairman Mao's important instruction on the question of theory was published.

“Our country at present practices a commodity system, and the wage system is unequal too, there being the eight-grade wage system, etc. These can only be restricted under the dictatorship of the proletariat.” “Lenin said, ‘Small production engenders capitalism and the bourgeoisie continuously, daily, hourly, spontaneously, and on a mass scale.’ ” The cadres and the masses of Haerht’ao Commune studied these teachings of Chairman Mao’s, applied the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat in summing up and analyzing the practice of running the socialist big fair, and saw the direction of advance more clearly. They realized that: To run well the socialist big fair is not only a measure to hit at capitalist activities but also a practical step to educate the peasants, transform small production and restrict bourgeois rights. In the period of socialism, there inevitably exist bourgeois rights such as the trade fair, the exchange of commodities, private plots, family side occupations, distribution according to work, etc. Their existence is allowed by the Party’s policy. But they should not be given oxygen and blood and be allowed to grow unrestrictedly. Instead they should be gradually restricted under the dictatorship of the proletariat. Running the socialist big fair provides fresh experience for blocking the channel which leads small production to capitalism, effectively restricting bourgeois rights in the sphere of exchange of commodities in the countryside and gradually removing the soil and conditions engendering capitalism.

On the basis of heightened awareness, the Party committee of Haerht’ao Commune has at all times taken guiding the masses to the socialist road as an important task in the process of running the socialist big fair. Through continuously instilling socialist ideas into the peasants, it has enabled them to consciously break with the concept of private ownership and with established traditions. In this commune, the political night schools of various brigades constantly launched such activities as “line education,” “discussing everything,” etc. Before a big fair was held, they organized the masses to study the Party’s basic line and the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat. At times, they also invited the old poor peasants to recount histories of their families,

villages and cooperatives, so as to impart education by making comparison between the new and the old societies and between the conditions before and after the great cultural revolution. Through these activities, they praised Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, criticized the revisionist line and brought political and ideological work to every house and every heart, so as to continuously strengthen the people's consciousness in following the socialist road. Thus, a still broader ideological foundation was provided for the socialist big fair.

Leaders Stand in the Van of the Movement

"The root lies in the line and leadership is the key." This equally applies to the struggle of operating a socialist big fair.

The Party committee of Haerht'ao Commune held that in order to make the masses grasp the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat and consciously restrict bourgeois rights and follow the socialist road, the Party committee of the commune should first take the lead in breaking with established traditions and waging a resolute struggle against capitalism. Secretary Nashun (a Mongolian) of the commune Party committee is an old comrade. After receiving education in the great cultural revolution, he looked upon the operation of the socialist big fair as a struggle to continue the revolution. He led the way in recalling the painful lessons he learned by carrying out the revisionist line before the great cultural revolution. He took the initiative to criticize the bourgeois influence in himself and took the lead in restricting bourgeois rights. His act of persisting in continuing the revolution inspired the ideological revolutionization of the leading bodies at the commune and brigade levels. Young cadre Shih Ya-wen, vice chairman of the revolutionary committee of the commune took the initiative to persuade his mother to be the first in selling to the state at the quoted price the tobacco crop from her private plot, thus playing a forward role among the masses. The ideological revolutionization of the leading body also set the pace for the ideological revolutionization of the broad masses of cadres and Party members. In the whole commune, there appeared a revolutionary scene of vigorously criticizing revisionism and capitalism and vigorously building socialism.

Turn the Supply and Marketing Cooperative Into a Tool of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat

In the past, under the influence of the revisionist line, Haerht'ao supply and marketing cooperative did not put proletarian politics in command but only concerned itself with talking about buying and selling

behind the counter and cared nothing about class struggle beyond the counter. In the course of purchasing agricultural produce and by-products, it practiced many restrictive rules. It refused to handle one thing and purchase another, and so it could not meet the needs of the socialist countryside. When it started to run the big fair, the commune Party committee took the correct orientation of the operational line of the supply and marketing cooperative as an important task. It pointed out that the rural commercial departments should persist in putting politics in command, serve the broad masses of poor and lower-middle peasants, become a special army in hitting at capitalism, use socialism to occupy the commercial position in the countryside and set [themselves] as a tool of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Under the leadership of the commune Party committee, the working personnel of this supply and marketing cooperatives conscientiously studied the theory of the dictatorship of the proletariat and resolutely carried out Chairman Mao's revolutionary line. Their idea of doing business went through a tremendous change. They energetically widened the scope of business and regarded the handling of one more kind of product as the occupation of one more position and the removal of one more plot of soil engendering capitalism. In the past year and more, the commodities handled by this supply and marketing cooperative rose to over 350 varieties. The agricultural produce and by-products purchased were 41 items more than those handled before the socialist big fair. Meanwhile, additional points were set up in the commercial network. This gave the masses every facility and production every support. In addition, they also supplied small earth stoves. This gave the commune members every convenience in retrieving the old and utilizing waste materials. Small carts were sent to the countryside to bring goods to the doorsteps, while purchases were made in the brigade. Various sales departments also offered additional services such as cloth cutting, book lending, free glass-cutting, etc. Thus, even on the days when the fair was not held, the masses could also keep in touch with the state-run commercial network. This left no room for capitalism.

After the establishment of the socialist big fair, in order to insure the steady supply of commodities on the market, Haerht'ao commune took market demands into consideration while arranging production in accordance with the guideline of "developing the economy and insuring supplies." While seeing to it that no adverse effect was produced on food crops and not a cut was made in the planted acreages planned by the state plan, when implementing the state cultivation plans, the various production teams, made unified arrangements for certain economic crops needed by the market and gradually substituted the products under the collective economy for those formerly obtained from the

commune members' private plots. Meanwhile, the production teams not only continuously encouraged individual commune members to raise pigs, but also made energetic efforts to develop collective pig-breeding and collective side-occupations and to combine development of diversified economy with the organization of sources of market supplies. Thus not only in the area of commodity circulation but also in the link of commodity production, the initiative was seized in fighting against capitalist influence, and the steady supply of commodities on the market was effectively guaranteed. This was hailed by the broad masses.

A New Situation Appears in Learning from Tachai

The appearance of the socialist big fair is a profound socialist revolution. This revolution has not only transformed the features of rural commerce of Haerht'ao but also educated and transformed people and brought about profound changes in the people's spiritual outlook. In the past, in certain brigades of this commune, class struggle was acute and complicated and capitalism ran wild. Socialist activism of the masses was repressed. After the socialist big fair was established, this situation changed very rapidly. The proper trend of socialism prevailed over the evil trend of capitalism. Revolutionary practice of "glorifying socialism and looking upon capitalism as a shame" took shape. A new situation appeared in the vigorous development of the movement to learn from Tachai in agriculture. Gratifying results were achieved in changing men, changing soil and changing output.

Old poor peasant and Communist Party member Yang Fu-hsiang of Peiketasu production team of Fuyu Brigade in this commune was praised by the masses as a man who followed the socialist road without turning back and steeled his heart in building socialism. He resented the old fair long ago. Once the socialist big fair appeared, he energetically supported it. He considered that this measure could "get at the throat of capitalism." He said: The poor and lower-middle peasants should not always fix their eyes on their families, a Communist Party member should not occupy his mind with his own business and one who makes revolution must let socialism take roots deeply in his mind.

Once, when he went to another place to attend a meeting, some people of the production team carted over 700 mats to another place for sale at a high price. After he returned to the production team, a deputy leader of the production team boasted to him of his having earned an extra income of over 100 *yuan* for the production team. He also said, "The team has income and the commune members are satisfied. This pleases both sides." On hearing this, Yang Fu-hsiang knew that some-

thing was wrong. He immediately criticized this deputy leader, saying: Your yielding to capitalism is "the most displeasing thing." He added, "You are a leader. If you concern yourself only with making more money and think nothing of learning from Tachai and leading the masses in running the socialist big fair, there will be deviation in orientation and the line will be wrong." These words left this deputy leader speechless. He admitted his mistake. Meanwhile, he took the initiative to make a self-examination at a general meeting of commune members. This matter taught the commune members a vivid lesson on the line.

Sixty-eight-year-old Lin Ta-niang of Yaoao production team of Aohan brigade in this commune formerly "took up side-occupation for her own benefit and revelled in the small fair." After the socialist big fair was established, she raised her consciousness through study. She collected manure for the collective every day. With her thinking changed, her revolutionary spirit of utter devotion to socialism was praised by the commune members.

Old herdsman Chou Te-chin formerly tended cattle for the collective and, at the same time, gathered firewood for himself and for sale at the fair. Now he dropped the firewood basket and carried the manure basket on his back. As he tended cattle he gathered manure for the collective. More than ten herders of the whole brigade gathered over 200,000 catties of manure for the collective.

After the socialist big fair was established, the broad masses of cadres and commune members of Haerht'ao Commune took class struggle as the key link and persisted in vigorously criticizing capitalism and building socialism. After one year's hard effort, they brought rapid changes to the features of this backward commune marked by "the poor natural conditions of rolling mountains, poor soil, violent sandstorms and frequent attacks by drought in nine out of ten years." Last year, the whole commune built over 20,000 *mow* of terraced field, equivalent to ten times the acreage of terraced fields built in the preceding decade. Meanwhile, some irrigation projects were completed. This created conditions for promoting agricultural development. Last year, total grain output of the whole commune showed an increase of 47 percent compared with 1974. Per-unit output increased by 55 percent. The quantity of commodity grain sold to the state rose by 180 percent. The commune members said, "In the past decade, we have been learning from Tachai. This is the only year in which we made fast progress!"

The founding and development of the socialist big fair are fraught with the struggle between the two classes, the two roads and the two lines. Last year, when the arch unrepentant capitalist-roader within the Party Teng Hsiao-p'ing whipped up the Right-deviation wind to reverse verdicts, certain absurd arguments attacking the newborn things such

as the socialist big fair also appeared in society. The Party committee of Haerht'ao commune conscientiously studied Chairman Mao's directives, constantly made revolutionary mass criticism to give them tit-for-tat rebuttals, and took concrete action to hit back at the Right-deviation to reverse verdicts. At present, the Party committee of the commune is leading the broad masses in penetratingly criticizing the revisionist program of "taking the three directives as the key link" put forth by Teng Hsiao-p'ing and is determined to take class struggle as the key link, adhere to the Party's basic line, persist in running well the socialist big fair and give impetus to the further deepening of the movement to learn from Tachai.

The experience of Haert'ao commune in establishing the socialist big fair received the close attention and support of the CCP Committee of Liaoning Province. Last year, three provincial meetings were held here to popularize this experience, thus further developing the excellent situation in the countryside.