

## **Building the movement among the workers of China**

Revolutionary Socialist Front of China

As we approach May Day, the day of international working class unity, we publish an article from the second volume of the journal of China's Revolutionary Socialist Front. It is important that workers in different countries take an interest in each other's approaches to developing the revolutionary mass movement of their own country, for only in this way can we truly implement the Marxist view that the workers have no country, that they are not divided by nationality or ethnicity, but are united as the class that will shape the future of humanity. We have added some footnotes for the information of readers outside China – eds.

### **Six aspects of the relationship that should be grasped by current Marxist-Leninist-Maoists participating in the workers' movement**

Adapted from the article on the Bolshevik website: (1)

Editor's note:

1. Illegality and legality, political struggle and economic struggle, are not metaphysical "sequences", but unified, concrete, relative and dialectical "primary and secondary relations".
2. The bourgeoisie cannot be defeated by expanding political influence, but Marxist-Leninists-Maoists should first organise themselves, grasp what needs to be done at the present stage, work in a practical manner and take root in the various stages of production.
3. Step by step, enter the network of acquaintances, the correct line needs grassroots cadres who are integrated into the masses to achieve it.

The three-year epidemic closure has had a significant impact on the lives of workers, who want a socio-economic recovery, a stable working environment and continued improvement in their livelihoods. The current objectives of the workers' movement revolve around economic interests and the urgent need for significant wage increases and improved welfare protection.

The ruling class continued to develop its monopoly capital and is intent upon stifling the resistance of the people. The bourgeoisie is always on guard against the resistance of the working class, and generally adopts methods of division, disintegration and suppression when the workers are relatively weak. But the real headache for the ruling class is the upcoming economic crisis. The estimated economic growth in 2022 is only about 3%, which is much lower than the target of 5.5% at the beginning of the year. The decline in the profit growth rate of industrial enterprises expanded again to 9.53%, and domestic business confidence has dropped to the lowest level since 2013. Therefore, there may be two obvious situations in 2023: first, the ruling class will once again implement expansionary fiscal policies to stimulate the economy; second, the number of workers will continue to decline, and the large-scale economic stimulus will exacerbate the phenomenon of labour shortages, to promote a new round of national labour movement.

After the 2018 Jasic Incident (2), there has been more emphasis on official control of the workers' movement, but in reality, grassroots officials simply cannot control the worker protests that are happening every day. As long as workers do not storm the streets and block traffic, the police generally do not care. Ordinary workers have accumulated some experience through their struggle, but this experience is mostly passed on by word of mouth and has not yet become a common tool for the majority of workers, especially young workers. In the face of the new upsurge in the

movement, there is an urgent need for Marxist-Leninist-Maoists to participate in the struggle, to take the initiative in developing mass organisations, to sum up the experience of the struggle, to systematically disseminate the lessons learned and to explore new and effective forms of struggle.

Of the six demands made by Honda workers in 2010, a substantial increase in wages and union restructuring were the two most central. At the moment, the core demands of the workers' struggle are still a substantial increase in wages and benefits and the restructuring of the union into a democratic union with workers' participation. To join the workers' movement, Marxist-Leninists-Maoists had to conceal their political orientation, avoid the adventurist tendencies of the Jasic movement, understand the life and psychology of the workers, translate the sufferings and demands of the masses into simple slogans, provide regular and widespread propaganda and encouragement, and formulate tactics and strategies in a targeted manner so that the workers would be united and active under these slogans.

**Marxist-Leninist-Maoists should grasp the following six relationships when entering the factory to integrate workers:**

### **I. Correct understanding of the relationship between open work and secret work**

Given the absolute dominance of the enemy and the special interest in the participation of university students in the workers' movement, Marxist-Leninist-Maoists should, on the basis of their investigations into the various mass organisations, make it clear that mass work should be carried out mainly through open organisations or open platforms and that intra-party work should be carried out in secret. Those who hold positions in mass organisations or participate in open platforms should make themselves known to the masses and under no circumstances should they reveal themselves as Marxist-Leninists-Maoists.

### **2. Correct understanding of the relationship between official organizations and "own" organizations**

According to the information provided by "Gaining Authority" (3) and the history of the CCP's work in the White Areas, Communist Party members can establish mass organizations that are closely related to themselves in various factories, mines, and workshops, in which the masses provide cover for Party members and through which they can develop their membership and layers of cadres. The aim of our mass work is also to build up many "own" organisations in which we can develop people successfully. In the early stages of work, however, it is often the case that there are only a few comrades in a particular factory and there are no favourable conditions for "own" organisations. But in the early stage of work, generally only a few comrades may enter a certain factory, and there is no such favourable condition as "own" organization. At this time, we should actively use official trade unions or other officially approved existing mass organizations to break in, openly use the organization and propaganda channels of existing mass organizations to widely publicize labour laws and labour contract laws, and tell workers which rights they should fight for; you should take the opportunity to meet with workers at dinners, cultural and sports events and private friendships, and avoid the factory management to talk about the struggle among the workers and spread the experience of the struggle. By changing the nature of the official trade unions and existing associations, or by tapping into them and pulling workers out of the woodwork to form new organisations, you can eventually build up your own organisation.

### **III. A correct understanding of the relationship between socialism and economic struggle**

The current demands of the new workers are for long-term stability in the cities and do not directly translate into a tendency to fight for socialism. When we look back at the October Revolution, the demands of the Russian people were for an end to the civil war, an eight-hour working day and the nationalisation of land, and these demands were not directly socialist. But both the Communist Party of Russia and the Communist Party of China succeeded in taking advantage of the situation to channel the pressing demands of the people into a socialist revolution. In fact, the socialist revolutions in history did not wait for the majority of the people to have socialist consciousness before promoting them. The majority of the people had socialist consciousness after the establishment of the socialist system. We need to recognise that under capitalist conditions, especially monopoly capitalism, class contradictions are as sharp as ever and that the officialdom is fundamentally unable to meet the demands of the working class. We should constantly unite the masses on issues of immediate interest and in the process educate them as to why the bureaucrats and the police treat us so badly; why we seem to have made some gains after one struggle, but after one inflation or rent increase by the landlords, the gains of the struggle are wiped out; why only fundamental system changes and only the working class being the masters of the country can fundamentally reverse our status; why socialism failed in the past, and why we will surely win in the future.

#### **IV. Correct understanding of the relationship between victory in struggle and mass organisation**

Do not apply struggle slogans mechanically. The slogans, demands and forms of struggle that can mobilise the masses should be based on the specific circumstances of the time and the level of awareness of the masses, and the masses should be widely involved and taken to a higher stage of struggle in the light of changing conditions in the course of the struggle. It has already been suggested that the demands of the workers' struggle in the new period will focus on substantial wage increases and the restructuring of trade unions, but this does not mean that such a struggle should be immediately proposed under all conditions. For example, at the beginning of the Jasic Movement, the establishment of a trade union was also proposed, and even the local District Federation of Trade Unions approved it. In the long run, this slogan was correct, but it had not yet become a slogan understood by most workers. There were more than 1,000 workers in the Jasic factory. Of these workers, only 89 people supported the establishment of the association and signed. In fact, the organisers of the Jasic movement were too ambitious in their demands (they made a direct demand for the establishment of a union, when in fact they should have mentioned the economic goals to unite the masses), and rushed to make a big news story without forming a solid organisation. This slogan was inappropriate at the time of the Jasic movement, because most workers hadn't caught up and didn't understand why we had to put the establishment of trade unions in the first place. After the Jasic incident, the relevant official departments were extremely sensitive to the workers' demands for union building. If the Marxist-Leninist-Maoists had just entered the factory and were yet to gain a firm foothold, it would be impractical to raise the slogan of reorganizing or establishing a trade union immediately, and they would be easily suppressed. We should not mechanically recite generic slogans or propose goals and means of struggle that the masses do not yet understand, forcing them to accept the struggle, which often makes it impossible to mobilise the masses or to unite them for long afterwards, resulting in a situation where the masses do not accept the continued leadership of the Marxist-Leninist-Maoists and the struggle ultimately fails.

#### **V. Correctly handle the relationship between Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and different factions**

In mass work, you will inevitably encounter various groups with different political orientations, such as reformists, opportunists, and fellow villagers' associations, and you cannot instinctively reject

these groups. If it is within the core group, these tendencies must be fought resolutely to maintain internal purity. But in mass work, you should accept cooperation with different factions, and don't let these factions recognize your political orientation and organization. We must be good at uniting these factions in mass struggles, expose factions that do not even support legal struggles in front of the masses, unite factions that support struggles into alliance organizations, and even join these organizations. These organisations always have some aims that are used to confuse the workers, so it is important to expand these aims (for example, the slogan of the Hong Gang before the founding of the state was "all brothers are one family", and Party members entered the Anyuan Hong Gang to reinforce the slogan that "all workers are one family") (4), educate those who can fight for them, and dig into them. They should educate those who can be fought for, and dig into them to educate and convert those who sincerely serve the workers into their own people. At the same time, the wrongdoings of some factions should be firmly criticised and resisted. For example, during workers' strikes, the liberals will ask the workers to shout the slogan "Down with Xi xx" (5). At the beginning of the movement, we must resolutely resist such slogans. Such slogans will politicize the workers' actions to fight for economic interests, and they will be oppressed by the ruling class. The consequences of these wrong slogans and behaviours should be explained to the masses, and the masses should be required to act in unison and strengthen their organization.

#### **VI. The right relationship between losing struggles and educating the masses**

We need to make moderate demands for struggle to ensure that most struggles are won and that small victories are turned into big ones. However, because of the existence of reactionary rule, some struggles may still fail because of enemy repression, and at such times there is bound to be pessimism and disappointment, and some workers may feel that such struggles are meaningless. At this time, Marxist-Leninists-Maoists must be the mainstay of the struggle, correctly summing up the lessons learnt and patiently and carefully working with the backbone and activists. We should enlighten the workers, explain to them how the situation is developing and how the balance of forces is changing, how we should continue to build up our strength and expand our organisation, and explain objectively the reasons for our defeat in comparison with the victorious workers' movement. We must not become pessimistic and disappointed just because the masses cannot accept our ideas for the time being and accept their wrong conclusions as the tail of the masses. Defeat did not necessarily break up the masses, but if education was timely, it sometimes helped workers to realise the reactionary face of the ruling class and to become more united. For example, after the defeat of the second armed uprising of the Shanghai workers (6), the feudal warlord Li Baozhang's Daggers arbitrarily raided and killed workers, plunging Shanghai into a state of terror. However, after education, the millions of people in Shanghai had withstood the severe test and the workers' enthusiasm for struggle, which had risen as a result of the General League strike, had not fallen, and the mass organisations were still relatively solid. In response to the failure of the previous two uprisings, Zhou Enlai paid special attention to the preparations before the uprising, learning in detail about the strength of the workers' pickets in each district and studying the strongholds and distribution of the enemy's military and police forces. (7)

It is not enough for Marxist-Leninists-Maoists to have a spirit of sacrifice and loyalty to the communist cause, but also to have a correct line and strategy. Guided by a correct line, Marxist-Leninists-Maoists organise the vanguard of the masses, learn the methods and experience of the struggle from the masses and are determined to follow the path of integration with the masses, and they will certainly be able to win. History is made by the little people, Stalin said: "It is surprising that ordinary people sometimes come closer to the truth than some high authorities." In a situation of overwhelming bourgeois dominance, it is only by learning from the masses, by coming from the

masses and going to the masses, that one can exercise correct leadership and propose the correct objectives, tasks and solutions to the actual situation. One must not put oneself on a natural revolutionary moral high ground by directing oneself in the imagination of books and films and dramas, for this would easily lead to the same extreme "left" mistakes of the Jasic movement.

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(1) The Bolshevik web is a Chinese MLM website with an over 10 years' history. The comrades of the Revolutionary Socialist Front reprint some their articles.

(2) The Jasic Incident began on 27 July 2018 when a group of workers of Jasic Technology Co., Ltd., dissatisfied by low pay, poor working conditions, and long shifts sought to form a trade union. Jasic responded to the workers petition by firing the employees. This sparked weeks of protests by factory workers in Shenzhen, as well as student members of the Jasic Workers Solidarity Group and other sympathizers. Most of the latter were students who self-identified as Maoists. About 30 of the leaders of the workers were arrested on July 27. On 11 August, Shen Mengyu, a graduate student from Sun Yat-sen University, was bundled into a car by three unidentified men and made to "disappear". On the morning of 24 August 2018, police raided an apartment that served as a location for workers and students to organize, detaining about 50 people, who sang The International as they were arrested.

(3) "Gaining Authority" is the title of a book published by the Shanghai People's Publishing House in 2009. "Gaining Authority: Historical Experience and Enlightenment of the Mass Work of the Shanghai Underground Party" conducts a historical investigation of the work carried out by the Shanghai Underground Party in winning and organising the masses among the working class based on relatively reliable historical materials, and takes this as the starting point to reveal and summarise the basic model and main experience of the underground Party in uniting and winning over the masses before Liberation. The book presents a clear idea, and through a large number of case studies, it summarises the basic methods and main experiences of the Shanghai underground Party in carrying out the grassroots mass work with workers and obtaining authority in various historical periods. This is of great significance for comprehensively understanding the origin, development and evolution of the party's basic concepts, ideas and methods of mass work in Shanghai.

(4) The Qing Gang and the Hongmen were semi-secret counter-revolutionary organisations that served the Qing Dynasty, and when that was overthrown, the Guomindang under Jiang Jieshi (Chang Kaishek). When Mao Zedong went to Anyuan in 1922 to organise a strike, he and Li Lisan had to neutralise the influence of the Hong Gang which was running brothels, opium shops and gambling dens. Li Lisan met with the leader of the Hong Gang and won their sympathy and support for the strike

(5) Xi Jinping

(6) The First and Second Armed Uprisings against the warlords in Shanghai occurred under Wang Ming's and the Comintern's leaderships in 1926, and tried to promote cooperation between the left and right factions of the Guomindang, led by Wang Jingwei and Jiang Jieshi (Chang Kaishek) respectively. They were easily defeated. In early 1927, Zhou Enlai reassessed the objectives of the CCP and its tactical approach and successfully seized control of Shanghai (but not the International Settlements). The workers took control of the city, intending to welcome the troops of the GMD's National Revolutionary Army which instead turned on them and inflicted the Shanghai Massacre. Tens of thousands of workers were executed in the streets, and the extension of the massacre to other areas eventually saw the deaths of millions by the forces of counter-revolution.

(7) After the failure of the second armed uprising of Shanghai workers, the feudal warlord Li Baozhang's sword (or "dagger") team searched for and killed the workers, and the city of Shanghai fell into terror. The enthusiasm for struggle of millions of people in Shanghai because of the strike of the General League was facing a severe test. At a time when the workers' armed uprising was facing the danger of failing twice, Zhou Enlai, took on the heavy task of leading the third armed uprising of the Shanghai workers in order to achieve the goal of armed

establishment of the people's own government. In order to strengthen leadership over the Third Armed Uprising, on February 2, the joint meeting of the Central Committee and the Shanghai District Committee decided to organize a special committee composed of eight people, and set up a military committee and a propaganda committee under the special committee as the highest decision-making and command organs of the uprising. In view of the lessons learned from the failure of the first two uprisings, Zhou Enlai paid special attention to the preparations before the uprising. On the second day after his appointment as secretary of the Special Military Commission, Zhou Enlai attended the joint meeting of the secretaries of various departments of the Shanghai regional party committee and convened a meeting of military commissioners of various districts, learned in detail the strength of the workers' pickets in each district, and studied the strongholds and force distribution of the enemy's military and police.