

KNOWING ONE'S PEOPLE WELL

In revisionist communist organizations there is no systematic study of cadres. We in the LAWG try to promote the study and analysis of each other. Some of our approach to this we studied in the materials on "Developing a Correct Attitude Towards Oneself." The failure to develop a correct attitude towards oneself is a manifestation of opportunism and conflicts fundamentally with Marxism. It is the 11th type of liberalism that Mao discusses in his article "Combat Liberalism:"

"To be aware of one's own mistakes and yet make no attempt to correct them, taking a liberal attitude towards oneself."

Virtually everyone has their petty-bourgeois characteristics. These take many forms and are not always easy to see. To fight against oneself to get rid of these enemy traits is a fundamental part of Marxism. This is what the LAWG says. This is part of our "line" on how to make a revolution in the U.S. As Mao says "in class society there is only human nature of a class character; there is no human nature above classes. We uphold the human nature of the proletariat and of the masses of the people, while the landlord and bourgeois classes uphold the human nature of their own classes, only they do not say so but make it out to be the only human nature in existence (but) what they call human nature is in essence nothing but bourgeois individualism, and so, in their eyes, proletarian human nature is contrary to human nature." (Mao, Yanan Forum on Art and Literature) In guiding the WSG we have tried to use Marxism in the best way we know how and to demonstrate to you why Marxism-Leninism-Mao-Tse-Tung Thought is the social science of the working class. The most useful tool in life a working class person can acquire and the most difficult to master.

In leading the Worker's Study Group we have learned much from each of you. At the same time we have had differences of opinion with some and practiced Marxism better with some than with others. We have tried to take a Marxist attitude towards each of you. In his article on "Selection, Promotion and Allocation of Cadres" Stalin says that selecting cadres has 5 aspects. The second one he calls "knowing cadres, carefully studying their individual merits and shortcomings, knowing in what post the capacities of a given worker are most likely to develop." This is what we are trying to do in this part of the sum-up. Part of the criteria for taking good care of cadre that the Chinese working class uses is to "help them sum up their experience, carry forward their achievements and correct their mistakes." It is important to know one's people because people decide everything. People cannot play their parts well and develop if we do not know them. In order to guide your future development as communist revolutionaries struggling to lead our class to freedom and liberate society we need to know each of you well. We must base all of our future plans on the facts about each of us and not on wishful thinking. We do not want to fool anyone into thinking that the life of a proletarian fighter is an easy one. At this stage of the revolution the standards for being a communist are very high. It is not easy to reach them. This is why we must help each other and use criticism-self-criticism support well. We know we need to get to know each other much better and we hope that we do justice to each person:

"It is of course right to set a strict standard for the advanced fighters, but this strictness should be a feasible, rational one, not beyond reasonable limits. We should make a concrete analysis of

their shortcomings, but we should not make the error of treating the trifles as questions of principle, accidental errors as deep-seated ones, practical difficulties as ideological problems. Only when we handle things this way can their enthusiasm be brought into play and their weak points be overcome." (Materialist Dialectics Helps Make Ideological Fighters, 53).

EVALUATION OF INDIVIDUALS IN WSG

(alphabetically)

A - Principal proletarian characteristics: Meets the four criteria of Dimitrov better than most. As Dimitrov says: "We must place all the more emphasis on these conditions which determine the correct selection of cadres, because in practice preference is very often given to a comrade who, for example, is able to write well and is a good speaker but is not a man or woman of action and is not suited for the struggle as some other comrade who perhaps may not be able to write or speak so well, but is a staunch comrade, possessing initiative and contacts with the masses, and is capable of going into battle and leading others into battle." Has a high class consciousness and he often comes to mind in reading Liu Shao Chi's "Some Characteristics of the Proletariat." "If workers want to develop and seek their own liberation, not only must they not harm the interests or obstruct the development of other workers and laborers, but they must be in complete solidarity with them. Only then can they develop, elevate, and liberate themselves." Has wide working class experience as farm worker, auto-worker, rubber worker and defense industry worker. Strong ties with masses. His great grandmother is a Navaho with 125 grandchildren. We first met him at a union meeting and decided to make his acquaintance after he verbally destroyed the vice-president of the union at a union meeting. Stripped this labor bureaucrat naked for the masses to see as he really was. A piece of verbal artistry that involved about 5 words. However lacks the discipline to time actions such as this ahead of time and in a prepared manner. Very disarmingly you wonder whether he is hearing at all and then you are surprised to see that he has grasped not only the outlines of the question, but also the essence. Very strong on the mass line. When Liu mentions the characteristics of the proletariat he says "They are deeply concerned with the bitter and difficult circumstances of their own class and the workers of the world. They are concerned with the liberation struggle of toilers everywhere and with news of their victories and defeats, knowing that no matter where the victory or defeat occurs, it is their own. Thus they exhibit the greatest sympathy and show their solidarity with their comrades." Demonstrated solidarity with Vietnamese in resistance to Vietnam War. Has demonstrated strong commitment and best attendance record of anyone in WSG. Hungry for knowledge. Strong desire to progress and asks many questions. Sees self as an apprentice propagandist and activist for the cause but tends to propagandize indiscriminately and not focus on the advanced. Great enthusiasm and would benefit from study of race and the national question.

Principal Petty Bourgeois Characteristics: Weak discipline and liberalism. His strength (close ties with the masses) also becomes his weakness. His close ties are partly dependent on a lack of discipline, a happy-go-lucky easy to be with kind of guy. Comes close to the kind of "pleasure-seeking" Mao refers to in his On Individualism. Lack of discipline also affects relationship with family and kids. Says that the woman question has been difficult

because it challenges the way he has been thinking for 27 years. Has shown progress, but must continue to study the woman question. Lack of discipline also means that while he grasps the materials he can slide into what is easy and comfortable and let general ideas swim in his head without pushing himself hard enough to do hard thinking and planning. Can lapse into liberal attitude towards himself. The two main areas of liberalism which seem to fit are "to let things slide for the sake of peace and friendship when a person has clearly gone wrong, and refrain from principled argument because he is an old acquaintance, a fellow townsman, a schoolmate, a close friend, a loved one, and old colleague or old subordinate. Or to touch on the matter lightly instead of going into it thoroughly, so as to keep on good terms...." And "working half-heartedly and without a plan." Has shown much progress in gaining discipline and good study habits but must realize that we either go forward or backward. Enthusiasm alone is not sufficient and must turn seriousness into developing discipline and combating liberalism since you can't have both Marxism and liberalism at the same time.

C - Principal proletarian characteristics: Ability to find bearings independently and not afraid to assume responsibility in making decisions. Good stamina, discipline and contact with masses. Aggressive about trying to unite theory with practice and finding out answers to her questions. Follows through and does not let things slide. Committed to revolution and has a strong commitment to learning the essence of Marxism. Helped provide leadership in WSG, particularly in sections on American history, criticism-self-criticism-support and the woman question. Able to give criticism and fight against liberalism. Has made a lot of progress in taking good care of cadre and in doing work between meetings.

Principal Petty Bourgeois Characteristics: Her strong desire to "get on with the job," ability to find bearings independently, can also get the best of her and lead to jumping the gun because of lack of investigation and application of the mass line. Seems to have petty-bourgeois attitudes towards organization at times and strong tendency to ultra-democracy. Several errors in trying to provide leadership in WSG came from not analyzing what constitutes leadership and in not seeing her education as a two-fold thing. Past education aids her discipline, study and writing habits which are good, but also means a lot of baggage from the past. Was always strongest uniting theory with practice with examples from her own life experience, and weakest with examples from indirect experience, particularly with things learned from books. "...education is a two-fold thing. Certainly it helps in reading and writing but it hinders in that the commonly the educated have to get rid of the burden of bourgeois rubbish whereas the 'uneducated' may have difficulty with reading and writing but commonly have not got the burden of bourgeois rubbish that the 'educated' have. Lenin dealt with this matter and Chairman Mao gave it graphic treatment in "Oppose Book Worship." The 'educated' must be aware of the problem and strive to overcome it and the 'uneducated' must strive to overcome his problem. Both must work for Marxist-Leninist ideology, politics and organization." (On Striving for Marxism-Leninism in Australia, 66) Has made a lot of progress in overcoming some of her book knowledge and is practicing the mass line much better.

E - Principal proletarian characteristics: Strong ties with the masses and good class consciousness. As Dimitrov says in his criteria "The comrades concerned must be wholly absorbed in the interests of the masses, feel the life pulse of the masses, know their sentiments

and requirements." If you listen to E. in the N.L. movie he does an excellent job of summing up the needs of the masses and relating to where the old, middle aged and young workers are coming from. Has rich experience and has been tested in struggle. Very strong when he links theory with his experience. In particular did an excellent job of describing the principles of dialectics as related to driving trucks. Good at simplifying complex issues. Able to find bearings independently and took initiative to help get WSG going.

Principal Petty-Bourgeois Characteristics: Individualism and cynicism. Still questions his commitment and "absolute devotion to the cause of the working class." Still engaged in a two-line struggle inside himself over his commitment to organization. "Born and brought up in the old society, we all carry within ourselves to varying extent, traces of that society in our thinking and habits. The worst and most dangerous vestige of that old society is individualism. Individualism runs counter to revolutionary morality. The last remaining trace of it will develop at the first opportunity smother revolutionary virtues and prevent us from wholeheartedly struggling for the revolutionary cause...it skillfully induces one to backslide. And everybody knows that it is easier to backslide than to progress." (Ho, On Revolutionary Morality). Can become liberal with himself and subscribe to the bourgeois theory of human nature and pass it off as just being lazy and wanting to kick back. Has been liberal with his wife D. and not engaged in propaganda with her sufficiently. Participation in WSG was very strong at times and at times did not participate to his potential. Most everyone valued his contributions and wish he had made more. Has made more contributions than he probably gives himself credit for because tends to see the negative side stronger than the positive (this is his cynicism).

L - Principal proletarian characteristics: Strong ties with the masses, stamina and hardening in class struggle. Rich experience in life. Able to use this experience very well to show solidarity with others. Understands oppression well in its concrete forms. Has demonstrated ability to find bearings independently and has begun to develop as a propagandist. Able to see to the essence of questions as can be seen in her poems. Not afraid to share her thoughts in writing and everyone has valued her writings for the insights they have had. Her mother and father were deaf mutes and she had many family responsibilities at an early age as well as having her first child at age 14. Has a strong love and skill with children and made a qualitative leap with Marxism during study on the woman question.

Principal Petty Bourgeois Characteristics: Liberalism and world outlook. Not yet a materialist. Continues to have a two-line struggle inside herself between idealism and materialism. Her jobs have been an extension of her skills with children and gives her limited work experience geared around helping those with special handicaps. Because of the amount of pain and suffering she has seen tends to want to deal with helping kids too much in the short run and not realizing the whole picture, that the best way she can help children is to set an example of dedication in becoming a communist and leading the masses. Needs to understand role of state better which a Get Acquainted Session would help her do. Must avoid the trap of reformism, ie of making changes in the system but not changing the whole system. Her liberalism. Tends not to criticize anyone else in meetings other than A. Others cannot learn from her and she cannot correct her mistakes without being more upfront about her opinions and developing herself verbally.

R - Principal proletarian characteristics: Ability to find bearings independently and willingness to take responsibilities. A strong thirst for knowledge and ability to relate to theory. Brings to mind Lenin's famous quote from "Retrograde Trend in Russian Social Democracy:" "Every working-class movement brings (the advanced workers) to the fore, those who can win the confidence of the laboring masses, who devote themselves entirely to the education and organization of the proletariat, who accept socialism consciously, and who...despite their...living conditions, despite the stultifying penal servitude of factory labor, possess so much character and will power that they study, study, study and turn themselves into conscious Social-Democrats - 'the working class intelligentsia.'" Has made good use of independent study and has realized that when study becomes a habit you must do much more than what is being done in the group. Has made good use of a Marxist library and explored it on his own. Has demonstrated real guts in class struggle in factory work. The kind of guy who knows how to let the foreman know where it is at and get away with it. Strong understanding of imperialism and will push self to read a book two or three times if necessary in order to get the understanding. Often calls himself lazy but there are not many with this kind of discipline. 7 years of karate.

Principal petty bourgeois characteristics: Ability to find his bearings independently also becomes a weakness when it takes the form of individualism. Great^{est} weakness is his individualism and his liberalism. Like E you could tell that he had much more to contribute than was doing. The individualism takes the form of not being a good teacher. Being too reserved and too formal about self tends to limit ability as a teacher. Concentrates on content. Tends to state the facts clearly and succinctly in leading study of an article, but not skilled at drawing others experience into the presentation. Becomes more of a presentation than a discussion. Has made a lot of progress on individualism and willing to put himself through changes, to remould his world outlook, as can be seen in his relationship with S. Gaining a grasp on how the personal is political which he formerly lacked. Individualism took several forms in specific instances also in WSG, 1) during course of WSG toyed with idea of an RU study group that was being set up letting his curiosity get the better of his principles. Curiosity should be satisfied through more systematic study of other groups. Ready for theoretical work; 2) made a tentative decision to move to Portland which did not involve a political commitment in the reason for moving. But was open to struggle. With struggle and support from others made a decision not to move. This was a two-line struggle inside him and a testing of his class stand and devotion to the cause of the working class. Was too reserved about sharing this struggle in WSG and realizing that we learn both from positive and negative examples. Ties with masses not yet strong enough and work experience of last job (minimally socialized work) and being laid off has limited his ability to learn through teaching. Needs to become a propagandist in order to learn more and also to struggle against his liberalism which takes the form of the third type: "To let things drift if they do not affect one personally; to say as little as possible while knowing perfectly well what is wrong, to be worldly wise and play safe and seek only to avoid blame."

S - Principal proletarian characteristics: Strong ties with the masses and ability to get to the essence of questions particularly from the class viewpoint. This can be seen in her poems and in her ability to use examples from her own life experience and in the lessons of Marxism. This has enabled her to play a strong role in meetings and being able to involve others and help them to talk about themselves. Showed individual initiative and willingness to

find bearings independently (examples, volunteered for the difficult job of treasurer of the WSG and did a good job of leading discussion of articles). Put a value on collective spirit of the group and wrote notes to the group when she had to miss meetings. Demonstrated a good grasp of the woman question. Not liberal and will give criticisms. Able to treat her daughter as a friend as well as a child and encourages her to be mature, independent and self-reliant.

Principal petty-bourgeois characteristics: Class consciousness still not strong and tends to see the trees and not the whole forest. Limited work experience, much welfare experience, one factory job. Affected strongly by sexist attitudes. Sees that sexism causes men to look down on her, but does not yet understand how the capitalists cause her to look down on other women - thus hindering solidarity and fostering unnecessary jealousy on her part. Has been gaining in confidence and work experience. The more she becomes committed to Marxism, to educate, discipline and organize the proletariat, the more she'll increase her resistance to the class prejudices we are subjected to by the bourgeoisie and help her daughter fight them too. Demonstrated a willingness to struggle and risk herself in discussions over moving to Portland. Excitement for Marxism not matched yet by good study habits. Not yet convinced enough of Marxism to want others to be Marxists, but has potential as a propagandist as can be seen in her songs.

DW and KD
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P.S. Evaluations of RW, KD, DW and JW will come next week when we are studying how to summarize our experience with leadership and develop our understanding of what makes a good leader and a bad leader.