

On the Question of Whether Imperialism and All Reactionaries Are Real Tigers

December 1, 1958

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HERE I would like to answer the question of whether imperialism and all reactionaries are real tigers. The answer is that they are at once real tigers and paper tigers, they are in the process of being changed from real into paper tigers. Change means transformation. Real tigers are transformed into paper tigers, into their opposite. This is true of all things, and not just social phenomena. I answered this question several years ago: Despise the enemy strategically and take full account of him tactically. But why take full account of him if he is not a real tiger? Apparently there are still people around who do not get the point, so we must do some more explaining.

Just as there is not a single thing in the world without a dual nature (this is the law of the unity of opposites), so imperialism and all reactionaries have a dual nature — they are at the same time real tigers and paper tigers. In the past, before they won state power and for some time afterwards, the slave-owning class, the feudal landlord class and the bourgeoisie were vigorous, revolutionary and progressive; they were real tigers. But with the lapse of time, because their opposites — the slave class, the peasant class and the proletariat — gradually grew in strength and struggled against them ever more fiercely, these ruling classes changed step by step into the reverse, changed into

reactionaries, changed into backward people, changed into paper tigers. And eventually they were overthrown, or will be overthrown, by the people. The reactionary, backward, decaying classes retained this dual nature even in the face of the people's final decisive struggle against them. On the one hand, they were real tigers; they devoured people, devoured people by the millions and tens of millions. The cause of the people's struggle went through times of difficulty and hardship, and along the path there were many twists and turns. The destruction of the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism in China took the Chinese people more than a hundred years and cost them tens of millions of lives before victory in 1949. Look! Weren't they living tigers, iron tigers, real tigers? But on the other hand, they eventually changed into paper tigers, dead tigers, bean-curd tigers. These are historical facts. Haven't people seen or heard about these facts? There have been thousands and tens of thousands of them! Thousands and tens of thousands! Hence, imperialism and all reactionaries, looked at in essence, from a long-term point of view, from a strategic point of view, must be seen for what they are — paper tigers. On this we should build our strategic thinking. But they are also living tigers, iron tigers, real tigers, they can devour people. On this we should build our tactical thinking. This holds true

of the struggle against nature as well as against the class enemy. Both the 12-year 40-article programme for agricultural development and the 12-year programme for the development of science which we published in 1956 proceed from this basic concept of Marxism, the concept of the unity of opposites, that is, the concept of the dual nature of the development of the universe, the concept of the dual nature of the development of things, the concept that a thing invariably manifests itself in a process and that every process without exception has a dual nature. On the one hand, we should take these struggles lightly, they are easy to handle, they are not much of a problem, there is nothing to worry about, and we shall certainly achieve success and be victorious. On the other hand, we should take them seriously, they are not so easy to handle, they present quite a problem and must not be treated casually, and we cannot be victorious without hard work and arduous struggle. Fear and fearlessness fall under the law of the unity of opposites. There is no such thing in this world as an absolutely fearless person, a carefree type without a single worry. Worry attends men from their birth. Students are worried about exams and children about their parents' partiality for their brothers or sisters. Besides, there are numerous adversities and calamities, infirmities and diseases, running a fever of 41 degrees and other mishaps, as expressed in the saying, "In nature there are unexpected storms and in life unpredictable vicissitudes," and so on and so forth. The difficulties we encounter in class struggle and the struggle against nature are far greater in number. But except for cowards and the opportunist gentlemen, most people, and primarily the proletariat and the Communists, invariably put optimism and contempt for difficulties first. And only then do they take full account of things, of every piece of work, of scientific research, analyse each contradictory aspect of things, dig into them and come to understand the laws of motion of nature and society. It will then be possible to grasp

these laws and become relatively free to apply them to successively solving the problems facing us, to handling contradictions and accomplishing our tasks so that hard going can be transformed into easy going, real tigers into paper tigers, the lower stage of a revolution into its higher stage, the democratic revolution into the socialist revolution, socialist ownership by the collective into socialist ownership by the whole people, socialist ownership by the whole people into communist ownership by the whole people, an annual production of several million tons of steel into one of tens of millions of tons or even several hundred million tons of steel, and an output of over a hundred catties or several hundred catties of grain per *mou* into one of several thousand or even tens of thousands of catties of grain per *mou*. Comrades, it is our task to bring about these transformations. Comrades, possibility and reality are two things and they are two opposites of a single unity. Spurious possibility and genuine possibility are again two things and two opposites of a single unity. We should keep our heads cool and our heads hot, which are also two opposites of a single unity. Soaring enthusiasm means hotheadedness and scientific analysis cool-headedness. Some people in our country are a bit too hotheaded at present. They are in no mood to allow a cooling off period, unwilling to make an analysis and all for hotheadedness. Comrades, such an attitude is not good for people in positions of leadership and they may trip and fall. These persons should make a point of cooling off their heads. Some others prefer cool-headedness to hotheadedness. They do not like some of the things that are going on and cannot keep pace with them. Those who take a wait-and-see attitude and those who want to eventually settle accounts with their opponents belong to this category. In regard to these people, we must gradually make their heads hotter.

Wuchang,

December 1, 1958.

Peking Review, Nos. 37-38