

## SOCIALISM IN CONFUCIANISM

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CONFUCIUS (551-479 B.C.) WAS BORN INTO A CHINA WHEN IT WAS torn by political upheaval and cultural anarchy. It was an age when a subjective or arbitrary sophistry akin to that in the Greek tradition infringed upon the traditions of China and plunged her into a welter of civil strife. Political contenders were buttressed by preachers of new ideas and panaceas. It was then that Confucius made a defense against these sophistic innovations by reasserting and reviving older principles and practices. The teachings of Confucius, the master, were carried on at least by three schools, but the teachings of all three were written down in their collective works: *Motzu*, *Meng tzu* and *Hsün tzu*. Among these three only Meng tzu-Mencius (372-289 B.C.) was regarded as Confucian orthodox and listed as the thirteenth and last item in the Confucianist canon around 1100 A.D. Meng tzu records chiefly the travels and verbose teachings of Confucius and provides evidence of the polemical ideas among the various schools of Confucius' adherents.

Confucius was recognized as the first ancestor of the religious and literary tradition of China. He had no counterpart in the Western as well as in other oriental traditions. However, the Chinese have never worshipped Confucius nor prayed to him as a god. China has always been a class society where the upper classes are conscious of a natural obligation towards their social inferiors, and the inferiors look up to their superiors for exemplary conduct and right action. Thus by imitation and by a societal osmosis the high moral standards of Confucianism were transmitted down to China's masses. Though China has been a class society socialism abounds in Confucian teachings. Again, though modern socialism originated in Europe, it also germinated in ancient China. We need not take pains in pointing out socialism in the teachings of Confucius and Mencius. These teachings inspired a great number of modern reformers with utopian thought. It stands to reason that social conditions and circumstances in Europe gave rise to the prominence of socialism; nevertheless with the help of Western missionaries Europe soon came to know more about China and Confucianism. The waves of humanism and rationalism which swept Europe in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries seem to have been derived to a certain extent from this new knowledge and have paved the way for socialism.

I shall endeavour in this paper to investigate the extent to which socialism has been preached in Confucianism and to compare Confucianism with Platonism on socialism. I am aware that for those who are well-versed in Chinese classics, such as *Lun yü—The Analects of Confucius* and *Meng*

*tzu—Mencius*, there may be dispute on this subject, particularly with respect to socialism found in "Ching-tien", the Well-Field System. I shall attempt to point out the presence of socialism in Confucian teachings and restrict the sources of my investigation chiefly to *Lun-yü* and *Meng tzu*.

First let us define what is meant by the term "socialism". The term "socialism" was first adopted in 1872 in the *Owenite Co-operative Magazine* to designate tendencies opposed to liberal individualism. George Bernard Shaw understands "socialism" to mean "the complete discarding of the institution of private property . . . and the division of the resultant public income equally and indiscriminately among the entire population". The "sum unique" of Platonic socialism is its regulative principle. It is socialism which disregards the selfish interests of individuals and endeavours to establish justice by organizing society in variegated groups. Othmar Spann, who views popular socialism as an inconsistent medley of collectivism and liberalism has attempted to refurbish such aristocratic socialism in a system called "universalism".

Communitistic socialism purports to be the ideal of absolute equality and seeks to express the *volonté de tous*. Its ideal can be couched in the maxim, probably of stoic origin: "from each according to his capacities, to each according to his needs". However, the ideal of Socialism is not a mechanical equality of all members of society but rather a potential equality—in the maxim of Saint Simon's followers: "from each according to his capacity, to each according to his merit", has as its quintessence not common ownership but the elimination of all unearned increment or profit. We now enter into investigation to what extent Confucianism has a bearing on socialism.

### 1. EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

In the Chinese hierarchical society, as Confucius suggested, members of the ruling class were to be selected on the basis of individual merit. For it was Confucius' belief that political and social disorder arose from the top stratum of society. As it is read in the *Lun Yü*, the ruler and his officials are likened to the wind and the commoners to the grass. When the wind blows, the grass bends. When "chün-tzu", the morally and intellectually superior man serves in government, peace and social order will ensue. But how should we distinguish the intellectually and morally superior man from the mediocre? Confucius took for granted that men are not born equal in intelligence and capacity. However, Confucius proposed equal opportunity of education to both the high and the low. He said: "In education there should be no class distinctions".<sup>1</sup> The Confucian idea purports that education is based on a Grand Union without distinction of the rich and the poor, the high and the low or the wise and the stupid. Whoever is disposed to

<sup>1</sup> *Lun yü Chu su*—The Analects of Confucius, "Wei Ling Kung", Book XV, Ch. 38 in *Ssu pu pei yao* (ed.).

learn will always be welcome. Here again, Confucius sought to make education universal and popular. Mencius, the foremost exponent of Confucius' orthodox doctrine, argued that it is incumbent on the state to provide schools at various levels for the education of the people. We must remember that in his life-time when education had been a prerogative of the hereditary feudal nobility, Confucius who made every effort to implement his doctrine by offering equal instruction to all his disciples regardless of their social origin, should indeed receive credit for his initiative with regard to intellectual emancipation and common education. Thus when Confucius and his followers sought to uphold the feudal system they actually heralded a new social order, based not on hereditary status, but on individual merit. In other words, while lending support to a hierarchical society, they procured means to deal a blow at its inherent injustice and bring about social equity chiefly through education. Confucianism on education can therefore be thought of as a precursor of modern socialism.

Likewise, in conformity with Confucian doctrine Mo-tzu offered similar teachings. He said:

In administering the government, the ancient sage-kings ranked the morally excellent high and exalted the virtuous. If capable, even a farmer or artisan would be employed—commissioned with high rank, remunerated with liberal emoluments, trusted with important charges, and empowered to issue final orders . . . Ranks should be standardized according to virtue, tasks assigned according to office, and rewards given according to labour spent. When emoluments are distributed in proportion to achievements, officials cannot be in constant honour, and people in eternal humility.<sup>2</sup>

This clearly shows that the existence of a hierarchical society, with its discrimination between the ruling and ruled, can be justified by the principle that status and emoluments should be based on achievement and virtue.

In contrast with Confucianism Plato's view of human nature is in opposition to egalitarianism. Men are innately unequal and thus must be classified in a hierarchy of innate ability and merit. This being true, men must all be equally subject to the control of a complex and authoritarian constitution. With regard to education Plato insisted that reason, the noblest part of man, should be the ruling faculty, and that only by intensive training through education can man attain the higher levels of experience to the benefit of a state or society. This group of citizens on a par with Confucius' "chün-tzu" are rulers and guardians of the welfare of all.<sup>3</sup> They are lovers of wisdom and philosophy and regard flabbiness of character and selfishness as unbecoming to them.<sup>4</sup> They show utter repugnance to whatever runs counter to the best interests of the state.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, in opposition

<sup>2</sup> Motzu, Vol. II, Ch. 2 "Shang Hsien", in *Ssu pu pei yao* (ed.) pp. 2a and 2b.

<sup>3</sup> Plato, *Statesman*, translated by Benjamin Jowett (London: Oxford University Press, 1892), 297.

<sup>4</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, translated by Benjamin Jowett (London: Oxford University Press, 1892), 398 E, 412.

<sup>5</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, 412.

to Confucius' universal education Plato subscribed to the opinion that the common people have no access to the advantage of a special education. For in accordance with the aristocratic strain in Plato's social philosophy it is of no avail to offer a higher education to that proportion of the people who are mentally incapable of profiting by education.

## 2. DIVISION OF LABOUR

Although Confucius proposed that in education there should be no class distinctions, the Confucian school believed that human beings were different in intelligence and ability. Thus people in a society could not all be assigned the same roles and bear the same responsibilities. Social organization requires a division of labour and the assignment of different kinds of work to people according to their capacity. There are two types of work, the mental and the physical. Farmers, artisans, and merchants are engaged in the second type. It was incumbent upon them to produce goods and render services. Another group included scholars and officials whose function was to study and to acquire virtue. This class is characterized as the "great man", in contrast to another class, the "small man". The former class not only was superior but was entitled to be served and supported by the latter. This shows a relationship of subordination and superordination. It is read in *Kuo Yü*: "The commoners, the artisans and merchants, each attend to their profession to support the superiors".<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the division of labour was also politically oriented. Mental labour was concerned with governing, whereas physical labour is manual. The point has been emphatically described in *Ch'un-ch'iu Tso chuan*: "It is a rule of the former kings that superior men should labour with their minds and smaller men labour with their strength".<sup>7</sup> In like manner Mencius said:

Some labour with their minds, and some labour with their strength. Those who labour with their minds govern others; those who labour with their strength are governed by others. Those who are governed by others support them: those who govern others are supported by them. This is a principle universally recognized.<sup>8</sup>

Since the work of chün-tzu was considered to contribute more to society and to accept greater responsibility than a member of another class, he deserve more rewards and better material comforts.

In the *Republic* Plato explained that the division of labour was essential to the existence of a society. Increasing size of a community requires division of labour. The fundamental division involves three classes, the rulers-guardians, tantamount to Confucius' "chün-tzu", the soldiers and the farmers-

<sup>6</sup> *Kuo-yü*, Ch. I, p. 16a in *Ssu pu pei yao* (ed.).

<sup>7</sup> *Tso chuan Chu-su*, Ch. 30, p. 16a in *Ssu pu pei yao* (ed.).

<sup>8</sup> *Mencius*, "T'ang Wan Kung", Vol. V, Part I, p. 11a in *Ssu pu Ts'ng kan* (ed.). (Shanghai, 1942).

artisans (Confucius' small men).<sup>9</sup> Justice lies in the harmonious co-operation of these three groups, each performing its proper role. Nevertheless, the guardians, the ruling class or "best men" seek righteousness and must prove that the ruling interest of their lives is to be the highest interest of the state. For it was Plato's insistence that only the guardians, presumably the true philosophers, are fit to rule. Only the man who gains an insight into the nature and function of a state and who strives to bring the actual state into conformity with the ideal, can be entrusted with civil power.

### 3. CONFUCIAN IDEAL GRAND UNION

Confucian socialism amounts to Grand Union. Such a society has been clearly described in *Li Ki* as follows:

When the Grand Union was pursued, a public and common spirit ruled all under the sky; they chose men of talents, virtue and ability; their words were sincere, and what they cultivated was harmony. Thus men did not love their parents only and treated as children only their own sons. A competent provision was secured for the aged till their death, employment for the able-bodied, and the means of growing up to the young. They showed kindness, compassion to the widows, orphans, childless men, and those who were disabled by disease so that they were all sufficiently maintained. Males had their proper works, and females had their homes. . . (They laboured) with their strength, disliking that it should not be exerted, but not exerting it (only) with a view to their own advantage. In this way (selfish) schemings were repressed and found no development. Robber, filchers and rebellious traitors did not show themselves, and hence the outdoors remained open, and were not shut. This was (the period of) what we call the Grand Union.<sup>10</sup>

These texts lay bare socialism in Confucianism. The statement "they chose men of talents, virtue and ability" implies the democratic foundation. Sincere words and the cultivated harmony put much emphasis upon sincerity and peace. That men did not love their parents only nor cherished as children only their own sons has lucidly reflected universal love. The idea that the aged were provided with necessities of life until death, employment was procured for the able-bodied and the means secured for bringing up the young amounts to the realization of social security and welfare, and shows kindness and compassion to widows, orphans and childless men. The equality of the sexes has been urged by what is said in *Li Ki* "Males had their proper works and females their homes". In such a social order selfishness can be abolished, and robbers, filchers and rebellious traitors will not develop to the effect that outdoors remain open. This is a society of Grand Union. In fact, what Confucius called the Grand Union is equivalent to democracy and socialism, and a counterpart of what Plato taught about the

<sup>9</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, translated by Benjamin Jowett, third edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1892), 369 B.

<sup>10</sup> *Li Ki* (Book of Rites), "The Li Yun", Ch. IX, in *Ssu pu pei yao* (ed.), Vol. XXI, p. 2a.

discarding of the selfish interests of individuals and the establishment of justice in a state.

#### 4. CONFUCIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Confucian foreign policy is also imbued with socialism. In *Lun-Yü* he said:

Rulers of states and chiefs of families are not troubled lest their people should be few, but are troubled lest they should not keep their several places; that they are not troubled with fears of poverty, but are troubled with fears of a want of contented repose among the people in their several places. For when the people keep their several places, there will be no poverty; when harmony prevails, there will be no scarcity of people; and when there is such a contented repose, there will be no rebellious upsettings.<sup>11</sup>

This Confucian equalization of rich and poor is, what socialist states have nowadays, predicated on equal distribution. Socialists have considered an unequal distribution to be the gravest evil, whence all social turbulent phenomena have taken root. Confucius foresaw in ancient times such social ills and did not spare himself to urge upon the states the need of an equal distribution. As for those people who were unsubmitive, Confucius insisted that all the influence of civil virtue shall be cultivated to attract them; and when they have been so attracted, they must be made contented and tranquil.

Confucius' theory of equalizing poor and rich has reflected what modern socialism has emphasized on the question of distribution. Socialism has conceded an unequal distribution to be the most serious flaw in modern world and to entail social disorder, which was foreseen by Confucius in ancient times. As for his foreign policy, Confucius, in dealing with unsubmitive remote people, advocated the cultivation of civil culture and virtue. Such a point of view is obviously in opposition to jingoism and colonialism, but in accord with orthodox socialism and peaceful foreign policy. It seems that although the Confucius' thought is trite in the modern world, it was workable in the ancient and feudalistic society two thousand years ago.

#### MENCIUS' DOCTRINE ON SOCIALISM

Mencius, the staunch follower of Confucius carried further the latter's socialistic ideas. Mencius was almost contemporaneous with Plato. Both of them put forward similar ideas of socialism though they appeared in two different words. Mencius' thought is more progressive than Confucius', and was not simply an advocate of the greater importance of people than that of rulers. His economic thought is rife with ideas of socialism. He said:

I would ask you, in the remoter districts, observing the nine-squares division, to reserve one division to be cultivated on the system of mutual aid, and, in the more central parts of kingdom, to make the people pay for themselves a tenth part of their produce... A square "li" covers nine squares of land,

<sup>11</sup> *Lun yü Chu su*, "Ke She", Book XVI, Ch. I, p. 1b in *Ssu pu pei yao* (ed.).

which nine squares contain nine hundred "mow". The central square is the public field, and eight families, each having its private hundred "mow", cultivate in common the public field. And not till public work is finished, may they presume to attend to their private affairs.<sup>12</sup>

The well-field system or "ching-t'ien" of Mencius was laid out like the character "井" or well for his eight families' fields and a ninth, the common field. In the *Chou-li* (Book of Chou) nine "fu"—cultivators comprise a "ching" or well and "kou", drains, four feet wide and deep marked off one "ching", well from another; a square often "ching" by ten was a "ch'eng" and between "ch'eng" there were "hsu", ditches, eight feet wide and deep.<sup>13</sup> For some the well-field system was the basis for socialism; for others, it became a form of which the content was a trans-national universal stage. However, on the basis of a modern translation of Mencius' text, the well-field system has been thought of as the socialistic goal of men or feudalism.

Among Confucius' followers one group adhered to socialist outer commitment to strive for perfect government, a commitment concurrent with the monarch's interest in restraining private aggrandizement in land, and the other group subscribed to the inner commitment to morality in an egalitarian spirit from such hierarchically ordered possessors as the bureaucrats themselves.<sup>14</sup> In *Shih-ching* (Book of Poems) the well-field system is described as follows: "Rain (was petitioned) on our public field and then on our private field."<sup>15</sup> We see this as a symbol of the relation of the empire to the family. Ku Yen-wu said: "The Sage-kings knowing the primacy of the empire, yet knew, too, that man's original nature had a private impulse".<sup>16</sup> The kings sympathized with conferred lands in the well-field system and so joined communal and private in the empire. Around the turn of the twentieth century (1858-1927) K'ang Yu-wei, in his preface tribute to Confucius, held that Confucius had devised the well-field system in which land was allotted to every man and thus slavery in ancient China was abolished.<sup>17</sup> Likewise in 1899 Liang Ch'i-ch'ao (1873-1928) said: "China's ancient well-field system stands on the same plane as modern socialism". T'ang Ssu-t'ung was of the same opinion and wrote: "With the well-field system or ching-t'ien the government of the world can be made one, that is, "ching-t'ien" makes the rich and the poor equals".<sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Mencius, "T'ang Wan Kung", Part I, Vol. V, in *Ssu pu Ts'ung kan*, Vol. XIV, pp. 7a-8a.

<sup>13</sup> *Chou li* (Book of Chou), t'se 6, Ch. 12 in *Ssu pu Ts'ung kan* (ed.), p. 18b.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph R. Levenson, "Ill Wind in the Well-field: The Erosion of the Confucian Ground of Controversy" in *The Confucian Persuasion*, ed. by Arthur F. Wright (Stanford University Press, 1960), p. 270.

<sup>15</sup> *Shih-ching* (Book of Poem), Ch. 21 "Fu t'ien chih shih" in *Mo shih Chu-su*, Vol. XIV in *Ssu pu pei yao* ed., p. 10a.

<sup>16</sup> Ku Yen-wu, *Jih Chih lu—Record of Knowledge Day by Day* (Shanghai, 1933), I, Ch. 3, p. 12.

<sup>17</sup> L. C. Thompson, trans. *Ta T'ung shu—The One World Philosophy of K'ang Yu-wei* (London, 1958), pp. 137, 211.

<sup>18</sup> T'ang Ssu-t'ung, "Jen Hsüeh"—*Study of Benevolence in T'ang Ssu-t'ung Chuan Chi—Collected Works of T'ang Ssu-t'ung* (Peking, 1954), p. 69.

The well-field system of Mencius excels the well-field system described in *Chou-li* on the ground that land was owned by the kingdom and was apportioned to every man to cultivate. This is unlike the private ownership of land by the state or aristocrat in which people were allotted land, yet they were rendered slave peasant.

## 2. THE ECONOMIC SYSTEM OF HUSBANDRY

In presenting further description of socialism Mencius stated:

Let mulberry trees be planted about the homesteads with their five mow, and persons of fifty years may be clothed with silk. In keeping fowls, pigs, dogs and swine, let not their times of breeding be neglected, and persons of seventy years may eat flesh. Let there not be taken away the time that is proper for the cultivation of the farm with its hundred mow, and the family of several mouths that is supported by it shall not suffer from hunger. . . . It never has been that the ruler of a state, where such results were seen—persons of seventy wearing silk and eating flesh, and the black-haired people suffering neither from hunger nor cold,—did not attain to the imperial dignity.<sup>19</sup>

This passage laid bare the higher principles which completed royal government. After the due regulation of husbandry and provision for the certain livelihood of other people, there must come the business of education. The schools aimed at the practice of archery, as a trial of virtue and skill. It refers to the inculcation of human relations by the institution of schools. Thus Confucius said: "The means of education should be provided for all, the poor as well as the rich".<sup>20</sup> When this principle was put into practice, one is bound to become a regnant emperor. Such a description of the social and economic system has brought out socialism in clear relief.

Likewise, Plato was convinced that the good state is a rational state, and that the good ruler (wise princes called by Mencius) is the man who knows precisely the plan of life which will bring about happiness to his people. Like a doctor looking after our bodily health and attending us when we are ill, the ruler must direct our whole life, plan our existence, and order our thoughts and emotions. He must not be beguiled by our complaints or tempted by our bribes. He must care so much about the plan which he knows to be our welfare that he can overlook the distress and pain we shall suffer, just as the doctor must neglect our suffering if he is to save our life.<sup>21</sup>

Elsewhere Mencius wrote: "There must be in the territory of T'ang men of a superior grade, and there must be in it countrymen. If there were not men of a superior grade, there would be none to rule the countrymen. If there were no countrymen, there would be none to support the men of

<sup>19</sup> Mencius, "Hwuy of Leang", Part I, Ch. 3, Book 1 in *Ssu pu pei yao* ed., p. 4b-5a.

<sup>20</sup> *Lun yü Chu-su*, "Wei Ling King", Book XV, Ch. 38 in *Ssu pu pei yao* (ed.).

<sup>21</sup> R.H.S. Crossman, "Plato and the Perfect State", in *Plato: Totalitarian or Democrat*. Essays Selected and Introduced by Thomas L. Thorson (N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 33.



superior grade".<sup>22</sup> Plato expounded similar ideas, when he held that the civilians and the vast majority of the population, the peasants and artisans are engaged in the production and distribution of wealth. Their function is to provide the material foundation of social welfare and their happiness is to enjoy the just fruits of their labours under a stable government. The gentlemen, on the other hand, unsullied by trade and menial labours of agriculture and craftsmanship, serve as public administrators and must rule in Plato's state.<sup>23</sup> Here again, in the *Republic* Plato drew a blueprint of a Utopia and had convinced himself of a possible enjoyment of a blissful life here. From this motive he embarked on describing how to apply rational principles to social organization so that an ideal society would come true. He insisted that the public administration shall be committed to philosophers on the ground that by dint of competence which the higher education brought about they were capable of leading society to reach its happy goal. In this state work is to be distributed to each according to his ability; education and support of children must be provided by the state. Women and men should work abreast and bear responsibility towards the state. However, unlike Mencius, Plato upheld communism: "From each according to his ability and to each according to his needs", and the community of wives and children. In this state there is neither dictator or tyranny nor a noticeable hiatus of poor and rich. Apart from Plato's fallacious communistic ideas, what is defective is the existence of slavery.

As for the division of labour Mencius has succinctly expressed the same ideas as Confucius' and said: "Greater men have their proper business, and little men have their proper business. . . . In the case of any single individual, whatever articles he can acquire are ready to his hand, being produced by the various handicraftsmen".<sup>24</sup> In like manner, Plato recognized the need for correlating the different types of occupation.<sup>25</sup> The common people are engaged in the occupations as skilled artisans, industrial and agricultural workers. The soldiers are bound to maintain order at home and repel invaders, and the guardians rule the state.<sup>26</sup> This principle of division of labour and co-operation has laid the foundation of socialism and has been equally adopted by both Confucius and Plato. Whereas Plato built an ideal commonwealth, Confucius established the Grand Union.

One may be eager to know what has become actually of Confucianism in Communist China. Confucius asserted a "benevolent government" using moral virtues and the dictates of propriety as the criteria for judging people. The practice of the dictates of propriety redounds to respect for others

<sup>22</sup> Mencius, "T'ang Wan Kung", Part I, Vol. V, in *Ssu pu Ts'ung kan* (ed.), p. 18b.

<sup>23</sup> R.H.S. Crossman, "Plato and the Perfect State", *op. cit.*, p. 34.

<sup>24</sup> Mencius, "T'ang Wan Kung", Part I, Vol. V, in *Ssu pu Ts'ung kan* (ed.), p. 11a.

<sup>25</sup> *The Republic* by Plato, translated by Benjamin Jowett, third edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1892), 370 B.

<sup>26</sup> Plato, *Statesman*, translated by B. Jowett (London: Oxford University Press, 1892), 303.

and the treatment of people on an equal footing. On the other hand, the more the countries are on an unequal footing, the more there will be the hostility towards one another. In fact, what Confucius meant by "benevolence" had all the people in mind, that is to say, "benevolence" means "love of people"—a recognition of man's right to survive. Whereas Confucius' "love of people" subjectively imparts loving the ruling classes, objectively it means love of the masses and benevolence with all the people. In the *People's Daily*—Jen Min Jih Pao—we read that "Forum on Confucius" was held and assailed Confucius and Confucian scholars whose crimes included "fanatical exaltation of Confucius as a scholar and teacher", "acclamation of the Confucian principles of 'benevolent government' and 'rule of moral virtues.'" <sup>27</sup> According to the declaration of the Communist Party in the Forum, for more than two thousand years China's reactionary ruling class adored Confucius as a "holy man" and took advantage of Confucian concepts to subject labouring people under the yoke. Confucian ideas therefore became heavy spiritual fetters imposed on the working people. Today in the socialist new China, the people have made a clean sweep of Confucian concepts and capitalist and revisionist ideas which serve to exploit the proletariat. As the vanguard for destroying Confucian ideas *Red Guard* has made the following comments:

1. Those people who have worshipped Confucius as a paragon of virtue had glorified him to the point of hysterical frenzy want to establish the absolute authority of Confucius in the hope of unifying the thought, language and feelings of 700 million people under the auspices of Confucian ideas. They use every conceivable means of disparaging and attacking Mao Tze-tung's thought. Under no circumstances should this be tolerated. We will certainly shatter Confucian thought and establish instead the absolute authority of Mao Tze-tung's thought.

2. It is only the dictatorship of the proletariat that can offer democracy to the people and impose dictatorship over all reactionaries. The reactionaries denounce us as not being "benevolent". That they want a "benevolent" government from us means doing away with proletarian dictatorship. If their schemes and plots are met with success, our Party and our country will be brought to ruin and the revolution will be a failure.

3. The relationships between slave-owners and slaves, between landlords and peasants and between capitalists and workers are those of exploiters and the exploited. The struggle between them is a life-and-death and implacable struggle devoid of the idea of "loving one another". In a Socialist society in which class struggle still exists, the principal reason why these monsters and demons have publicly propagated the idea of "loving one another" is to blur the class boundary and disown class struggle.

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<sup>27</sup> "The Forum on Confucius", in *Jen Min Jih Pao*—The People's Daily, January 10, 1967, p. 4. The report "The Forum on Confucius" is published in *The People's Daily* in Chinese and here translated into English.

These comments have made it clear that in the great proletarian cultural revolution nowadays one of the Communist paramount tasks is to putrefy the rigid feudal corpse of Confucius and obliterate all of the reactionary Confucian ideas and tenets.

### CONCLUSION

The multifarious social and political ideas of Confucius and his followers appear in the *Book of Odes*, the *Book of History*, the *Book of Change* and the *Book of Rites* which became the "Old Testament" of Confucianism.<sup>28</sup> *The Analects of Confucius* or the Sayings of Confucius, the *Book of Mencius*, the *Book of Filial Piety*, the *Doctrine of the Mean* and the *Great Learning*<sup>29</sup> which formed the "New Testament" contain the verbose Confucian tenets. In their political thought Confucius and Mencius were socialistically inclined. Both laid down principles of humanitarianism and benevolent rule by the wisest members of society. Mencius stressed the importance of taking heed of the voices of the people. He devoted much attention to the problem of land distribution, conservation and of hunting through closed seasons in terms of economic life. He maintained that poverty entails crime and that responsibility for such crime rests with the ruler. Confucius, on the other hand, was in favour of government granaries, aid to transportation and state relief for orphans and the aged, widows and widowers, apart from private charities.

The government should make as its objective not the pleasure of the rulers but the happiness of its subjects. To this end Confucius advocated such measures as reduction of taxation, mitigation of severe punishment and abstention from needless wars. It is Confucius' belief that the state should be a wholly cooperative enterprise. The right to govern depended upon the ability to make the government well-organized and the people contented. This in turn depends upon the possession of virtue and ability which can develop by dint of education. Like Plato, Confucius did not advocate advanced education for all but believed that some education must be offered even to the humblest citizens for two reasons: (1) Since ability does not depend on birth, only a greater opportunity of education can enable the most capable to develop themselves for their own good as well as that of society. (2) Since the state is a co-operative enterprise, it is in dire need of enlightened citizens to serve it effectively.

The administration was conducted by ministers regardless of rank; they were selected not because of their ancestry but of their personal qualities so that a man of very humble origin could be elevated to wield the foremost

<sup>28</sup> *The Book of Odes* (Shih Ching), *The Book of History* (Shih shu), *The Book of Change* (I Ching), and *The Book of Rites* (I Li).

<sup>29</sup> *The Analects of Confucius* (Lun Yu), *The Book of Mencius* (Meng Tze), *The Book of Filial Piety* (Hsiao Ching), *the Doctrine of the Mean* (Chung yung), *The Great Learning* (Ta hsiao).

power over the entire empire. However, considering that men have by nature been endowed with different degrees of intelligence and capacities, there ought to be social classes: scholars and officials labouring with their minds rightly deserve the service of those who are engaged in manual labour. This constitutes the division of labour and the principle of subordination and superordination in society. Confucius was of the belief that in case the rulers and their subjects discharge consciously their duty towards one another and enjoy bliss, the Grand Union would take shape in action.