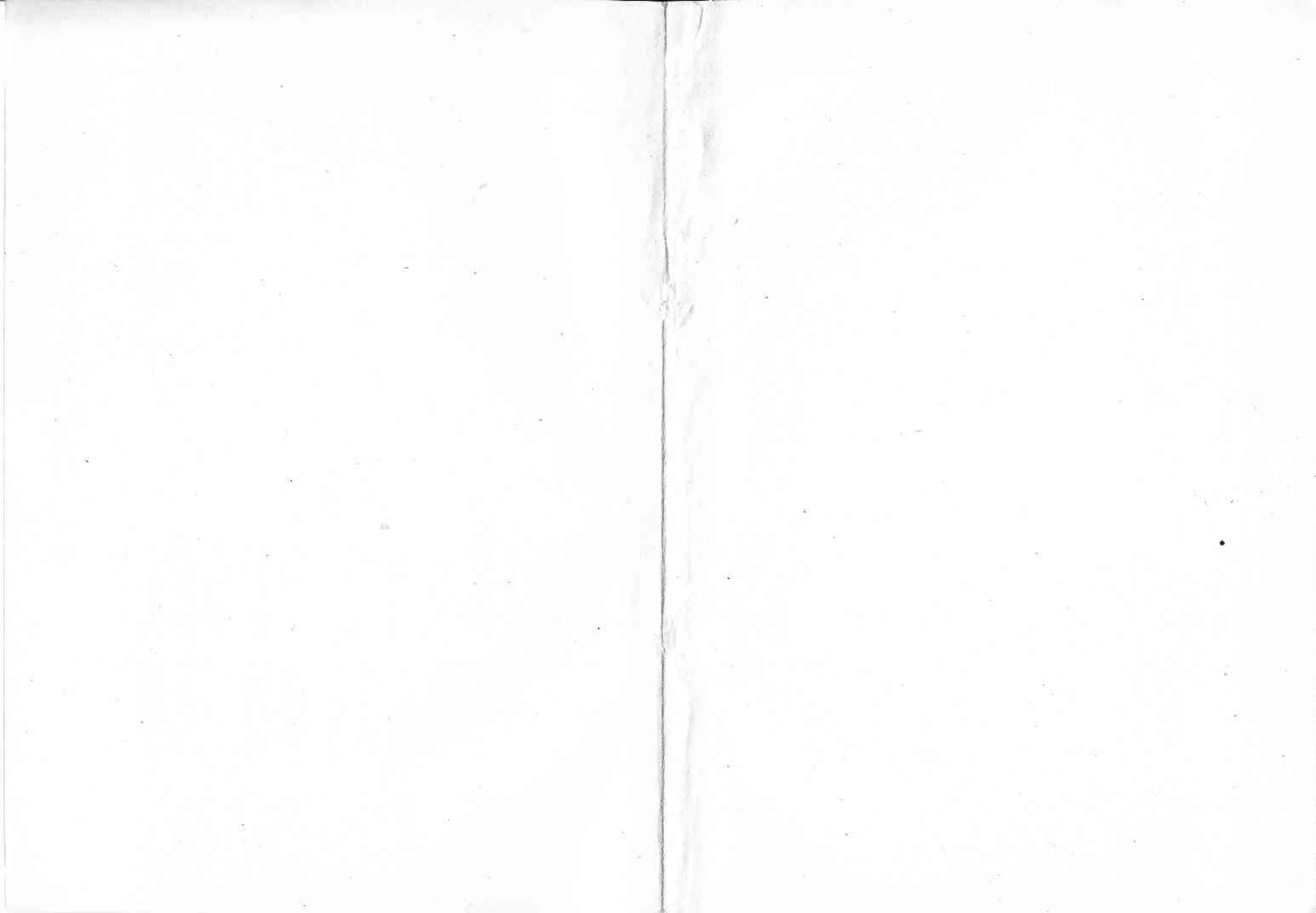




# THE CHINESE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY

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THE  
CHINESE PEOPLE'S  
LIBERATION ARMY

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
TWENTY-THREE YEARS OF A PEOPLE'S ARMY .....	1
TWO HEADS ARE BETTER THAN ONE .....	13
SOLDIERS—BUT NOT ROBOTS .....	19
THE PEN AND THE SWORD .....	27
FISH AND WATER .....	35
HEROES—ONE AND ALL .....	43
CALM AND CONFIDENT OF THE FUTURE .....	53



Mao Tse-tung, Chairman, People's  
Revolutionary Military Council



General Chu Teh,  
Commander-in-Chief, PLA.

Right:— Peng Teh-hual,  
Deputy Commander-in-  
Chief, PLA; Commander,  
First Field Army.



Below

Left:— Hsu Hsiang-chien,  
Chief of Staff, People's  
Revolutionary Military  
Council.

Right:— Nieh Jung-chen,  
Deputy Chief of Staff,  
People's Revolutionary  
Military Council.



Left:—Liu Po-cheng, Com-  
mander, Second Field Army.



Above:— Chen Yi,  
Commander, Third  
Field Army.



Left:— Lin Piao,  
Commander, Fourth  
Field Army.

## TWENTY-THREE YEARS OF A PEOPLE'S ARMY

**A**UGUST 1 of this year marked the 23rd anniversary of the birth of the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA). As is well known, the PLA has made invaluable contributions to the Chinese people's long-drawn-out struggle for national independence and liberation. The PLA is universally recognised as one of the main determining factors in enabling the Chinese revolution to win a nation-wide basic victory.

The reason why the PLA has played such a unique and extraordinarily important part is to be found in the very character and circumstances of the Chinese revolution. As early as 1927, Joseph Stalin, in summing up the experience of the Chinese revolution, pointed out that the characteristic, and at the same time advantageous, feature of the Chinese revolution was that "an armed people fight against an armed counter-revolution." From the very beginning, the Chinese reactionary ruling class openly resorted to armed force to suppress the revolutionary movement, thus compelling the Chinese people to meet force by force. Chairman Mao Tse-tung called serious attention to the urgent importance of armed struggle in China. He said:

"In China, if we give up armed struggle, there will be no place for the proletariat, no place for the people, no place for the Communist Party and no victory for the revolution."

Again, in his book *The Chinese Revolution and the Communist Party of China*, Chairman Mao sounded a prophetic note of warning:

"... In the face of such an enemy, the methods and principal forms of the Chinese revolution cannot be peaceful, but must be armed. The reason is that our enemy does not want to give the Chinese people any possibility of carrying on their activity in peace. The Chinese people have no political freedom whatever. . . . Therefore, it is an incorrect view to think lightly of armed struggle, revolutionary war, guerrilla warfare or the work in the army. . . ."

Because of the tremendous importance of armed struggle in the Chinese revolution it is quite understandable that the PLA should have played a decisive role in making the Chinese revolution what it is today.

During the past 23 years the PLA has developed and consolidated itself under the most difficult conditions. Having gone through the acid test of ten years of the Agrarian Revolutionary War (1927-37), eight years of the Anti-Japanese War (1937-45) and four years of the People's Liberation War (1946-50), the PLA has fully demonstrated that it is an army of the Chinese people and for the Chinese people.

The glorious history of the PLA is the history of the prolonged armed struggle of the Chinese people, under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party,

to liberate China from the yoke of foreign imperialists and domestic reactionaries. However, the armed struggle is part and parcel of the revolutionary movement of the Chinese people as a whole. General Chu Teh, Commander-in-Chief of the PLA, significantly stressed in his article *The Chinese People's Struggle for Liberation*:

"This armed struggle of the Chinese people is not an isolated, purely military struggle. It is an armed struggle based on the firm alliance of the workers and peasants, and uniting at the same time with other sections of the broad masses of the people. This armed struggle is intimately and inseparably linked up with the agrarian revolution of the peasants. Without supporting the peasants' agrarian revolution we could not have organised such an armed struggle. At the same time if the proletariat had not been able to build up a broad united front with the peasantry and with other forces with whom it could unite . . . it could not have led this armed struggle to victory. In other words, such an armed struggle is only possible when it is based on a solid alliance of the workers and peasants. . . ."

The march of events during the past two decades has shown beyond any shadow of doubt that the birth and growth of the PLA is interwoven with the resolute struggle of the broad masses of Chinese workers and peasants.

Early in the spring of 1927 when the Northern Expedition Revolutionary War was rapidly approaching a decisive victory, the Kuomintang reactionaries, headed by Chiang Kai-shek, betrayed the revolution and joined



hands with the imperialists and native feudal forces in suppressing the constantly developing revolutionary struggle of the Chinese people.

A savage reign of terror was unleashed, hundreds of thousands of Communists and revolutionaries were executed by beheading, shot without trial, buried alive or left to rot in jail. This white terror was set in motion by the notorious blood bath of April 12, which has gone down in Chinese history as the date of one of Chiang Kai-shek's greatest mass murders.

The opportunist leadership of the Chinese Communist Party at the time as represented by Chen Tu-hsiu pursued a shameless policy of knuckling under to the bourgeois counter-revolutionary clique of Chiang Kai-shek, Wang Ching-wei and company. Chen Tu-hsiu was violently opposed to the peasant revolution for fear of breaking with the bourgeoisie. He not only refused to arm the workers and peasants to resist the savage onslaught of the KMT reactionary clique but also ordered the disarming of workers and peasants who had already risen in arms to protect themselves from persecution, victimisation and attacks by black reaction, and to defend their hard-won rights. In so doing, Chen Tu-hsiu was playing into the hands of the reactionaries and thus facilitated their attacks on the Chinese people. As a result, the great revolution of 1925-27 suffered a serious setback.

This setback, however, taught many valuable though painful lessons. The Communist Party of China, led by Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh, opposed the opportunist leadership of Chen Tu-hsiu and resolutely sup-

ported the armed uprisings of the peasants to defend themselves against the bloody attacks by the reactionaries.

On August 1, 1927, Chu Teh, Chou En-lai, Ho Lung and Yeh Ting led an armed uprising in Nanchang, capital of Kiangsi Province. Taking part in the uprising were the 9th Army under the command of Chu Teh, the 20th Army under the command of Ho Lung, the 11th Army and part of the 4th Army under the command of Yeh Ting, totalling over 30,000 men. These crack forces of Chiang Kai-shek revolted against his gross betrayal and fought at the head of the people. Thus an entirely new army of the Chinese people under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party was born—the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army. In the Anti-Japanese War (1937-1945), it was called the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army. Now it is known as the People's Liberation Army.

The Nanchang Uprising was short-lived. Out-numbered by the enemy, the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army evacuated Nanchang on August 5 and made for Kwangtung Province, from which the Northern Expedition had been launched. Because of the superior strength of the reactionary KMT armed forces, the Red Army's lack of experience and the mistakes committed by its leadership at the time, the Red Army suffered a series of setbacks in southeast Kwangtung. One column turned to Hoifung and Lukfung and joined forces with local armed units of workers and peasants. Another column commanded by Chu Teh turned back to Kiangsi Province and eventually marched into Hunan, and conducted an armed uprising in south Hunan. In May 1928 this

column joined forces in the Ching kang Mountain on the Kiangsi-Hunan border with the Workers' and Peasants' Revolutionary Army organised under the guidance of Mao Tse-tung, culminating in the formation of the Fourth Red Army.

The Nanchang Uprising marks the beginning of the independent creation of the people's armed forces by the Chinese Communist Party, thus opening up a new phase in the Chinese revolution. It was the signal for the outbreak of similar popular armed uprisings elsewhere. Two weeks after the Nanchang Uprising, the peasants in south Hupeh raised the standard of revolt and staged a similar armed uprising. In September, one month after the Nanchang Uprising, armed insurrections of peasants broke out in quick succession in Hunan Province. In east Hunan, armed peasants attacked and occupied many important cities, such as Pingkiang, Liuyang, Liling and Chuchow. This series of peasant armed uprisings is better known in the history of the Chinese revolution as the Autumn Harvest Uprisings.

In October, two months after the Nanchang Uprising, the peasants in east Kwangtung Province took up arms. They created a Workers' and Peasants' Red Army of 10,000 men and set up a revolutionary base at Hoifung and Lukfung.

Discussing the significance and consequences of the Nanchang Uprising, Chairman Mao Tse-tung said in 1938 in his report on *Problems of War and Strategy*:

"The defeat of the revolution has taught many painful lessons. There followed the Nanchang Uprising, the Autumn Harvest Uprisings and the Canton Up-

rising, leading to the founding of the Red Army. It was during this crucial period that our Party came to thoroughly understand the importance of the army. But for the creation of the Red Army and its carrying on of the revolutionary war; or in other words, if the Chinese Communist Party had followed Chen Tu-hsiu's liquidationist line the prosecution of the present prolonged Anti-Japanese War would have been unthinkable."

The joining of forces in the Ching kang Mountain stands out as the first milestone in the history of the Chinese People's Liberation Army. The troops that started the uprising in Nanchang constituted the backbone of the National Revolutionary Army in the great revolution of 1925-27 and had inherited the best traditions created by the Chinese Communist Party in the course of this revolution. Their merging with the revolutionary armed forces that had grown out of the mass movement under the guidance of Mao Tse-tung laid the foundations for the creation of a people's army, an army that enjoyed the full support and confidence of the Chinese people.

Under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung, this people's army of China very quickly developed its own flexible strategy and tactics and worked out a new set of theories, principles and systems, for building up an army under the leadership of the proletariat. These theories, principles and systems were explicitly laid down in the historic Resolution of the Kutien Conference. It will be recalled in this connection that in December 1929, the Communist Party organisation within the Fourth Red Army held its 9th Party Congress at Kutien in west Fukien. The congress reviewed the various non-

proletarian deviations which had manifested themselves in the army and adopted a resolution drafted by Chairman Mao Tse-tung. This resolution, better known as the Resolution of the Kutien Conference, contains nine sections:

1. How to correct the non-proletarian ideology and incorrect tendencies within the Party organisation in the Fourth Red Army.
2. The question of the organisation of the Party.
3. The question of inner-party education.
4. The propaganda work of the Red Army.
5. The question of political training for soldiers.
6. Special education for young soldiers.
7. Abolition of corporal punishment in the army.
8. Privileged treatment for wounded soldiers.
9. The relationship between the military system and the political system in the Red Army.

This resolution is one of the most important writings of Mao Tse-tung on the subject of building up the Party and the army and it is still applicable down to the present day. It is this resolution that has been the main guiding line in building up the people's army from several hundred thousands to five millions after defeating Japanese imperialism, and the American-backed reactionary Kuomintang regime.

Thanks to the correct leadership of Mao Tse-tung, the ill-equipped and numerically-inferior Red Army in Kiangsi held out for seven years after beating back the repeated attacks launched by the KMT under the personal command of Chiang Kai-shek together with his

German advisers. The much-vaunted series of "annihilation campaigns" of the KMT were smashed one after another. During this period the Red Army established a number of revolutionary bases in eleven provinces, including Kiangsi, Hunan, Fukien, Kwangtung, Hupeh, Anhwei, Honan, Szechuan, Shensi, Kansu and Ninghsia, and grew to a force 300,000 strong.

In October 1934, the Red Army started its epic Long March from Kiangsi to Shensi in order to resist Japanese aggression which was getting more and more serious and threatening since the Mukden Incident of 1931. The main body of the Red Army left Kiangsi on October 16, 1934. Fighting its way through eleven strongly-defended provinces in Kuomintang territory and being hotly pursued by KMT troops at its heel, the heroic Red Army covered a distance of 25,000 li (about 8,300 miles) and finally reached north Shensi in October 1935 and built up a new base in Yen-an.

This Long March under the most difficult conditions constitutes the most outstanding demonstration of the revolutionary quality and the class consciousness of the Red Army.

After the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War in 1937 the Red Army was reorganised into the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army. They bore the brunt of the war, engaging 64 per cent of the Japanese troops and 95 per cent of the Chinese puppet armies during the eight years of the Anti-Japanese War in spite of the fact that they were under constant attacks by the Japanese invaders on the one side and by the KMT reactionaries on the other. They inflicted heavy losses totalling 1,700,000 upon the Japanese and puppet troops

in killed, wounded and captured and built up a strong regular army of 930,000 and an irregular force of 2,200,000 people's militia. The Liberated Areas created by the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army extended over nineteen provinces with a combined population of 99,500,000. The creation of such wide Liberated Areas and the determined fighting of the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army provided a sure guarantee for the eventual victory of the Anti-Japanese War.

After the Japanese surrender in 1945, the reactionary KMT regime, headed by Chiang Kai-shek and backed up by the American imperialists, lost no time in using brute force to suppress the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese people. In July, 1946, it launched large-scale armed attacks against the Liberated Areas. The Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army were re-named the Chinese People's Liberation Army as they once again swung into action to meet the KMT's force by force.

In the course of the four years ending June 30, 1950, the PLA annihilated 8,071,350 KMT troops and liberated the whole of Chinese territory with the exception of Taiwan and Tibet. Among the losses sustained by the KMT troops 4,586,750 were taken prisoner, 1,711,110 were casualties, 633,510 surrendered, 846,950 revolted against the KMT and crossed over to the PLA and another 293,030 accepted reorganisation by the PLA.

War materials captured by the PLA during the four years include among other things 54,430 artillery pieces, 319,958 machine guns, 3,161,912 rifles and pistols, 189 warplanes, 200 naval vessels, 622 tanks, 389 armoured cars, 22,012 motor vehicles, 507,984,800 rounds of ammunition, 5,527,400 shells and more than 700 tons

of explosives. In addition, the PLA shot down 190 enemy planes, destroyed 156 enemy tanks and nine enemy naval vessels.

The PLA is now five million strong. In view of its past brilliant record the Chinese people are firmly convinced that the PLA will play still a greater role in strengthening new China's national defence and pushing forward new China's economic construction and will make valuable contributions to the defence of world peace.

TWO HEADS ARE BETTER  
THAN ONE

“A SPARK of fire can set a house ablaze.” This was what Chairman Mao Tse-tung said of the birth of the army of the people at a time when the struggle was extremely bitter and the army was very weak.

After 23 years of struggle, this prophetic pointer of Chairman Mao has come true. The Chinese People's Liberation Army has grown from a tiny force to a gigantic army. It has become an armed force more than five million strong, having defeated the Japanese aggressors and overthrown the reactionary KMT regime which was supported by American imperialists. Now the PLA is a mighty defender of New China and a powerful force safeguarding world peace and people's democracy.

What is the secret of the PLA's success? The answer to this question is to be found in the unique characteristics possessed by the PLA.

First, the PLA is a people's army led by the Chinese Communist Party. It is entirely different from any reactionary army used by the ruling class as a tool to suppress the revolutionary movement of the people

and to defend the reactionary regime. It has been organised to fight for the interests and welfare of the Chinese nation and people as a whole. Its sacred task has been to fight a just people's war.

Second, the PLA is an army possessed of lofty ideals. It has been educated in Marxism-Leninism, in the teachings of Mao Tse-tung and in patriotism and internationalism. Every PLA man knows for what and for whom he is fighting. He is steadfastly loyal to the cause of the liberation of the Chinese nation and people. He knows the significance and purpose of the Chinese revolution. He also understands that the struggle for the liberation of the Chinese people is an integral part of the world-wide revolutionary struggle for the liberation of the working people.

The PLA is composed of workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals, with workers and peasants constituting approximately 90 per cent. The revolutionary intellectuals in the PLA have accepted Marxism-Leninism as their guiding principle and they are wholeheartedly devoted to serving the people. They know how to educate the men in the revolutionary spirit. They are fully determined to support and carry out the policy of the government. The social composition of the PLA explains why it is a highly politically-minded and class conscious army, basically different from the reactionary armies of the capitalist countries.

Third, the PLA is characterised by its strict discipline which is based on army democracy.

Democracy in the PLA means close cooperation and unity between officer and man. As early as the difficult

days in the Ching-kang Mountain soldiers' committees were formed in the army. No officers were allowed to strike or abuse soldiers. Officers and men shared the same food and were accorded the same treatment.

Democracy in the PLA is demonstrated in various respects—political, military and economic.

By political democracy is meant that officer and man are politically equal. In the PLA there are Revolutionary Soldiers' Committees whose business it is to strengthen the solidarity in the army, to assist in the leadership and to ensure successful fulfilment of all tasks. Every PLA man has the right to criticize any one who disobeys orders, or violates discipline. He has the right to criticize his superiors. However, such criticism is only conducted at certain meetings and none is allowed to indulge in irresponsible criticism outside such meetings.

Members of the Chinese Communist Party play a leading role in the army by setting an example in every activity. They are generally considered model soldiers. Certain Party meetings are open to non-party officers and men. Under certain conditions, non-party PLA men are invited to state their views about Party members and Party organisations in the PLA, particularly in connection with the recommendation and admission of new Party members.

The encouragement and development of political democracy in the PLA has resulted in a considerable strengthening of the prestige and popularity of the Communist Party among the officers and men. It is regarded as a great honour to be a Party member. Many apply for membership in the Chinese Communist Party

on the battle field in the hope of being accepted and admitted as the result of their display in action of bravery and loyalty to the cause.

Political democracy has contributed greatly in raising the political and class consciousness of officers and men in the PLA, who are thus educated to become conscious and staunch fighters for a noble cause.

By military democracy is meant the development of the soldiers' initiative, creative power and intellect in the course of training and in actual warfare. Every PLA man is free to voice his opinions. The PLA believes in the motto that "Two heads are better than one" and attaches the greatest importance to making use of mass intellect, wisdom and experience to overcome difficulties. Before and during engagements, various meetings are held to discuss problems involved in the fighting and to devise practical ways and means to solve such problems. After the fighting, summing-up meetings are held to make a thorough study of the strategy and tactics used in the fighting and to see what experiences can be drawn upon and what lessons can be learnt. This kind of "summing-up" meeting has proved very useful in giving practical education and training to the officers and men of the PLA.

As the result of the development of such military democracy, the PLA men learn to be able to maneuver by carrying out exercises in tactics with the aid of sand table-models showing the principal features of particular terrain, and to practice scouting in the field and holding discussions on the spot, thus combining theory with practice. As long as the soldiers have a clear understanding of the relative strength of the PLA and of the

enemy, and the tasks assigned them, it is only natural that such soldiers who are educated politically and militarily in this way should display exceptional bravery, dogged determination, sharp resourcefulness and selfless devotion to the cause of the Chinese revolution.

The military training in the PLA is also imbued with a democratic spirit. This is what is widely known as the 'mass-line' in the sphere of officer-soldier relations. Education in the PLA is a two-way process. Not only the officers teach the soldiers, but also the soldiers may teach the officers. Besides, the soldiers teach and help one another among themselves. The same is true of officers who also help one another. In the PLA, the intellectuals and the worker-peasant elements help each other. To learn from each other and to profit by alternately learning and teaching constitutes the essence of democratic military training in the PLA.

The PLA is ready and willing to learn from anybody, anywhere, whenever there is anything valuable to learn. It is a common practice that immediately after a battle is over prisoners of war are invited to teach the PLA men to handle any new weapons which the war prisoners formerly used.

In the course of the Anti-Japanese War, the PLA developed mine warfare and tunnel warfare with great success. In the four years of bloody fighting with Chiang Kai-shek's troops who clung to well fortified cities, the PLA devised a number of highly skilful methods of using explosives. This was very helpful at the time when the PLA was weak in artillery fire.

By economic democracy is meant that the PLA's financial matters are placed under democratic control. The soldiers take part in managing their mess arrangements. Accounts are made public at fixed intervals. Each company has its own Economic Committee composed of representatives elected from each platoon and squad.

Because of the improvements in messing and the development of proletarian comradeship, the PLA men are pretty well satisfied with their life in the army.

It is on the basis of such a truly democratic life that the PLA has been able to build up and maintain its extremely high level of army discipline. It is a conscious discipline founded on collective will.

## SOLDIERS—BUT NOT ROBOTS

THE People's Liberation Army lays stress on promoting political and cultural education for its men. The reason is not far to seek. As has already been mentioned, the PLA is an army with lofty ideals. No one can be expected to be a staunch champion for a cause unless he is politically conscious and knows why he should fight for the cause.

In the days of the reactionary bourgeois-landlord army, the ruling class was terrified lest the army should become politically-minded or "play politics." Their long-established rule of conduct for the army was: "Yours is not to reason why; yours is but to fight and die." In other words, the reactionary ruling class just wanted the army to do their bidding without knowing for whom the army was fighting, what the army was fighting about and why the army should fight.

The PLA is an entirely new army—a highly politically-minded army. It is therefore only natural that the PLA should pay the greatest attention to political education.



The overwhelming majority of the PLA men are of worker-peasant origin. The main aim of political education is to develop the political awakening and class consciousness of the commanders and fighters of the PLA. The most effective and practical method for this purpose is to educate the PLA men on the basis of their personal experience of life under reactionary rule. In old China, the broad masses of working people were subject to ruthless and rapacious exploitation and oppression by capitalists, landlords, imperialists and all manner of reactionaries. They toiled all the year around and could hardly earn a bare subsistence.

The first step in political education is to help the men to recall the exploitation and oppression they have suffered in the old society. They are given opportunities to recount their personal experiences of suffering and hardship and glaring social injustice. Gradually they come to understand that their sufferings are by no means isolated instances but can be traced back to the sufferings of the exploited class as a whole. Thus, step by step, they are led to the conclusion that at the root of their sufferings are the feudal landlord system, the reactionary rule of Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang and imperialist aggression.

In this way the officers and men of the PLA come to understand the whys and wherefores of the Chinese revolution and their revolutionary enthusiasm is thereby raised to a still higher level. At the same time, this kind of political education enables them to develop a deep hatred for their enemies. In short, they learn to know what they are fighting for and what they are fighting against.

Many examples could be given to show how cruelly the Chinese people were exploited and enslaved. For instance, the officers and men of one regiment reported that a total of 1,130 of their immediate relatives had either been killed at the behest of landlords or local despots in order that they could take over their land holdings or had been reduced to such depths of poverty in consequence of the landlords' repeated extortions that they had committed suicide, had died of sheer starvation or had been forced to flee from their native villages and had been lost track of.

The full realisation of the desperate situation underlying these staggering figures roused the most profound class hatred of all the PLA men. It is no wonder that at the meetings held in which they publicly recounted their past sufferings and grievances they swore a solemn pledge to exact vengeance against the oppressors by rendering still greater service to the revolution which would free the Chinese people forever from the conditions which gave rise to such cruel suffering.

War prisoners were reformed and educated in the same manner. The majority of them were originally conscripted by Chiang Kai-shek and driven to the front to kill their own class brothers, the working people. Like PLA men, they had also suffered terribly in the old society. Apart from this, they knew well enough what life was like in the reactionary KMT army. When they were dragged into the KMT army, their wives and children were left behind without any care or support. Many homes were thus broken up and many lives lost. After a certain period of appropriate re-education they began to see for themselves who were their enemies and

the enemies of the Chinese people. They finally found the way out in revolution and understood what they should do in this revolution. As a result, great numbers of them volunteered to join the PLA where they fought with great courage. Many of them have been awarded the Combat Hero Medal for rendering distinguished service in action.

Another side of the political education in the PLA consists in ensuring that the PLA men are kept well-informed on current affairs and familiarise themselves with governmental policy.

PLA men are also given lectures at regular intervals on the military situation, the relative strength of the enemy and of the PLA and the over-all situation of a given great battle. The purpose of such lectures is to help the men understand that victory is definitely on their side. They also attend lectures on Chairman Mao Tse-tung's teachings in connection with military affairs. In consequence, they know perfectly well why the PLA is an ever-victorious army, why it is growing from strength to strength whereas the enemy is losing out.

Thanks to the regular lectures on current affairs, officers and men of the PLA follow the developments in the situation both at home and abroad with the closest attention and interest. They are keen to keep abreast of the times. Therefore, it is not to be wondered at that they respond so enthusiastically to the calls of the government under any circumstances. For example, when floods and drought caused havoc and distress last year, PLA men lost no time in launching a drive to help the

people in the flood-stricken areas. They also generously donated for the relief of unemployed workers in Shanghai.

In addition, the policies of the Chinese Communist Party and of the government are given the widest possible publicity in the army. This is the reason why the majority of the PLA men have a basic understanding of the policies with regard to the united front, the agrarian reform, commerce and industry, war prisoners, etc. Moreover, they all work hard to see that these policies are correctly carried out.

A third form of the political education in the PLA is that of making the PLA men acquainted with the glorious traditions of the Chinese Communist Party and of the PLA. The PLA is an army of the people and for the people. It is related to the people by ties of blood. Unity between the army and the people is the main source of strength of the PLA, and the basic reason why the PLA is invincible.

That the PLA has developed from scattered guerrilla units to a mighty force of five million men during the period of 23 years and has played a decisive part in overthrowing the reactionary regime of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism is due primarily to the fact that the PLA is led by the vanguard of the Chinese proletariat, the Communist Party of China. The Party mapped out the correct political and military lines for the PLA to follow, thus enabling it to withstand all tests. China was a semi-feudal and semi-colonial nation, having enemies inside and outside the country. Without a mighty people's

force led by the Communist Party the victory of the Chinese revolution would have been impossible.

The Chinese Communist Party has its own glorious revolutionary traditions. Educated in these traditions, the PLA has displayed excellent qualities—being resolute, consistent, courageous and uncompromising. The PLA is not afraid of reverses or difficulties. On the contrary, the PLA has been tempered in the course of overcoming extreme difficulties and trials.

Education in patriotism and internationalism is carried out in the PLA. This kind of education is designed to educate the men to love their country and consolidate the people's democratic dictatorship on the one hand, and on the other to play its part in defending world peace. The PLA knows that the victory of the Chinese revolution is inseparable from the victory of the Soviet Union over the German and Japanese fascists and that assistance by the Soviet Union and the progressive people all over the world contributed much to the Chinese cause. For this PLA men are thankful from the bottom of their hearts to Stalin, the great revolutionary teacher of mankind, to the Soviet people and to all peace-loving and democratic peoples throughout the world.

Officers and men of the PLA understand that they must learn from the Soviet Army in order to modernise China's national defence forces. They ardently hope that in the future China can be transformed into a Socialist state like the Soviet Union. They are also aware of the significance of the struggle of the oppressed peoples in the colonial and semi-colonial countries and the revolutionary struggle of the working people in the

imperialist countries. They see before them two entirely different worlds—two entirely different societies. One is full of happiness and brightness, the other of darkness and misery.

Education in patriotism and internationalism teaches PLA men that the struggle of the Chinese people is closely linked up with the struggle for peace and democracy of the working people throughout the world. The PLA is deeply concerned with the national liberation movement everywhere and regards every victory of the movement as a victory also for the Chinese people. The armed invasion of Korea by American imperialism roused immediate and nation-wide indignation and protest in the PLA. News of the disastrous American defeats in Korea and the victorious onward march of Korean people's army was received with jubilation. The PLA not only takes pride in its own achievements, whether on the field of battle or on the production front—it welcomes with joy every new victory won by the democratic forces in other countries in the fight against internal oppression and imperialist aggression.



Above:—Mao Tse-tung, (third from left) with leaders of the Red Army after the "Autumn Harvest Uprising" in 1927.

Below:—The Red Army on the Long March in 1934-35.



Above:— Chairman Mao and General Chu Teh planning operations during the Anti-Japanese War.



Left:— A people's militia unit entering a city.

(Right top)—PLA infantry marching past.

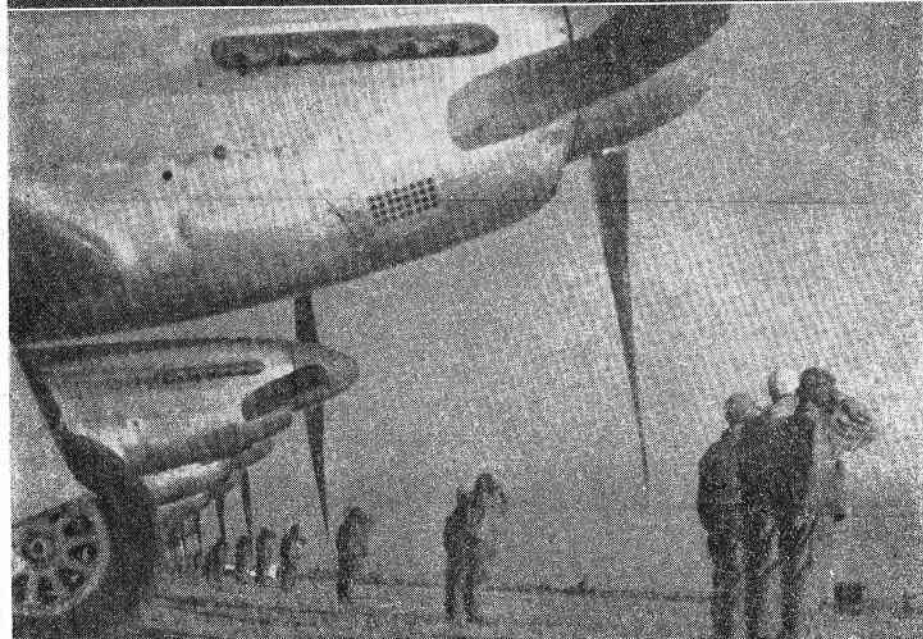


(Right bottom)—Tank units of the PLA.





Left top:—Sailors of the People's Navy on parade.



Left bottom:— A bomber squadron of the People's Air Force.



PLA men signing Stockholm peace appeal.



A proud family send-off for a young peasant about to join the PLA.



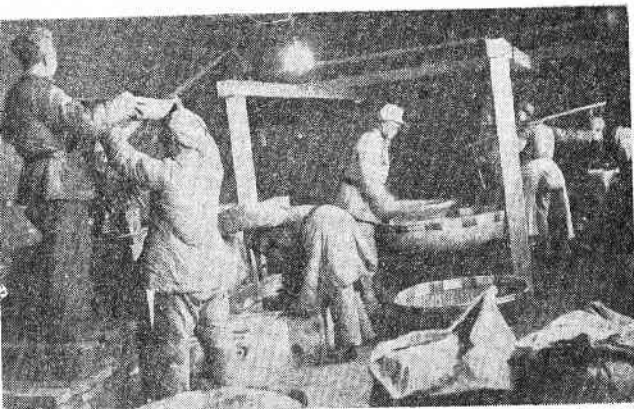
PLA men reading their own wall paper.

(Right:—On next page) Hearty welcome  
for the PLA in Chungking.





Ploughing up former wasteland with retained cavalry horses.



Milling flour for the Army mess.



PLA man learns a new trade.

## THE PEN AND THE SWORD

THE Chinese People's Liberation Army is not only an army fighting with swords and guns; it also wields the pen as a weapon. The PLA man is both a first-class fighter and a cultured person.

Life in the PLA teems with creative activity, the pleasures of learning and the joys which come from the knowledge that the army is in the service of a noble cause. Army life in the PLA can never be dull or boring for the soldier as is the case in a reactionary army where the rank and file so often get "browned-off" and turn to women and wine for solace in their boredom and resentment against the effects of the reactionary class basis of the army.

In the barracks, on the march, or even in the course of action, various cultural activities are conducted for the entertainment and education of the PLA men. These activities include the editing and publication of popular army papers, reading of poetry and ballads, group singing, sports and games, painting, drawing, group discussion, etc. These are very useful in livening up the soldiers' routine and in heightening their morale.



When the PLA is on the march, cultural activities usually take the form of the publication of leaflets and "news-extras" and the organisation of what has come to be known in the PLA as the "radio station" and the "telephone." Roadside poems and political education stations are yet other mediums used. Leaflets and "news-extras" are small mimeographed sheets written and edited by the soldiers themselves. The soldiers write about incidents on the march or about their life. The leaflets often contain pointed criticism of bad conduct and pay high tribute to those who have done exceptionally well. In the autumn of 1949 a little song entitled "Love Thy Feet" was very popular with the rank and file of the PLA. The song was written by an infantryman when the PLA was about to cross the Yangtse River. It runs something like this:

Very useful is a pair of feet,  
Without us you can't do a darn thing.  
I am happy to learn we're marching again,  
For here comes a chance of rendering service.

In case you get blisters,  
Gently pierce them, dry them and apply kerosene.  
For Heaven's sake, don't peel the blisters.  
Let us have a bath when you camp down  
And don't you forget to give us credit at summing-up time.

The "radio station" is a very lively medium for promoting morale-boosting education. The station comprises a large sheet of cloth suspended from two poles. Men who have been commended have their names pinned on to the cloth together with the details of the actions

which have earned them the honour. When the marching troops come to a halt, one of the army propaganda workers addresses the men, using the "radio station" announcements as his theme.

The "telephone" is the passing of messages from mouth to mouth when the troops are on the march. Some examples are: "Pass this message forward, Comrade X has carried a shell seven miles," "Pass this backward, if you have get blisters on your feet don't forget to treat them properly when we camp down," or "Comrade So-and-So, can you tell how many of the enemy we have wiped out on the banks of the Yangtse River?"

Messages like this and humorous quips are passed back and forth and help in creating a lively and merry atmosphere in which the soldiers forget about their fatigue.

Roadside poems are morale-boosting items written in chalk at vantage points along the road where the marching troops pass by. On one occasion soldiers, thirsty from long marching, were restrained from drinking impure cold water from an enticing pool because of advice thus chalked on the roadside. The advice was in poem form:

The water is deep,  
The water is cool,  
But drinking this impure water  
Will make you fall ill.

On another occasion a PLA mess sergeant was carrying a sack of rice on his back. From a small hole in the sack, rice began to trickle down the road. Pretty

soon, there was chalked on the roadside this little poem:

Man is iron, but rice is steel,  
Without rice we'll be hungry.

The people grow rice by the sweat of their brows,  
Because they want us to win the war.

This little hint worked wonders and afterwards no more of the precious rice was wasted.

Political education stations are arranged systematically by the literary and artistic troupes who are part of the army. Members of the troupes stage all kinds of concerts and recreational programmes and shows at places where the marching troops are scheduled to take a rest.

Various other means are used to maintain and raise the morale in the army. Those most commonly employed include "trench handbills," "bulletin-boards," "rife-barrel poems," and "combat pictorials."

The trench handbills are simply written, illustrated with drawings and sketches. They deal with morale, the commendation of model soldiers, democracy in the army and strategy and tactics. These handbills also teach the PLA men how to combat any new weapons employed by the enemy, how to join the Communist Party at the front, etc. The handbills are very popular with the soldiers, who commit them to memory.

Rifle-barrel poems are rhymed verses written and pasted on rifle butts, gun barrels and different kinds of arms. They may even be found on the poles used for carrying the army mess tins. These poems are simple and can easily be committed to memory. They help to

spur the commanders and fighters of the PLA to hate and despise the enemy and enhance their firm confidence in victory.

Other popular recreational activities in the PLA are plays, songs and drawings. In the mass get-togethers and parties the soldiers act parts in the plays written by and about themselves. As the plays are portrayals of real characters the soldiers are familiar with, keen interest is shown by players and spectators alike.

These "soldier-acts-soldier" plays are written collectively. When the subject matter is decided upon, efforts are made to find the actual soldiers who had taken part in the incidents as performers. The final version of the play is written only after the play has been rehearsed a number of times.

Such plays are mostly devoted to commending model soldiers and to educating backward soldiers. Sometimes they deal with problems concerning important activities of the army at different times. These theatricals are very popular in the PLA. In 60 days one army unit organised 80 theatrical performances and trained 1,670 amateur theatrical personnel. All in all, they staged 411 performances with 389 different programmes. Another unit composed 108 short plays within two months. One division introduced a new dance, "The Soldier's, Dance", which was based on the movements involved in bayonetting, shooting, throwing hand-grenades and building of defence works. All these recreational activities are greatly liked by the officers and men of the PLA and have contributed much to their entertainment and education.

Cultural studies occupy a highly important place in the daily life and work of the PLA. Officers and men draw up their own study plans and they all do their utmost not only to fulfil but to exceed their plans. From their meagre living allowance, they provide themselves with notebooks and writing paper. They also make their own blackboards and chalk as well as small sandtrays in which they practise writing Chinese characters with pens shaped from wood or twigs.

What is most interesting and significant is that the selection of reading matter is based on the practical needs of the PLA men and on their actual experience in life. Thus, the principle of linking up theory with practice is skillfully put into effect with great success.

A grading system is adopted in the cultural studies in the PLA. For example, beginners are taught the simplest Chinese characters in common use and gradually led from the simple to the complex. Those who already know three or four hundred characters are taught how to make sentences. The establishment of collective study linked with individual study has produced outstanding results. When problems are raised, solutions are found in the course of the group discussions.

PLA barracks resemble a school. During rest time PLA men can be seen learning to write, reviewing their lessons, or helping each other in groups of twos or threes. There is very little noise and no one is unoccupied or loafing around.

The PLA men are learning pretty fast and with astounding success. According to available statistics,

the percentage of officers and men in two divisions in Manchuria who can read 400 Chinese characters increased from 33 to 53 in the first quarter of this year and the percentage of those who can read 1,000 characters rose from 13 to 22.

It is not the men alone who are enthusiastic about cultural studies. Officers are also paying the greatest attention to raising their cultural level, knowing perfectly well as they do that it is utterly impossible to study modern military science and technique without possessing an appropriate cultural level. For example, the commander of a certain army in Manchuria took great pains to learn Russian although he is 45 years old. Officers of worker-peasant origin are particularly interested in cultural studies because they have learned from their painful experience that they have been greatly handicapped in their work by their low cultural level.

Side by side with the elevation of their cultural level, the PLA men have become more skillful in their work. Some of them can read official papers, letters of introduction, army papers and other simple printed matter. They no longer need to ask others to read their family letters. When PLA men write letters home, they proudly add at the end of their letters: "I wrote this letter myself."

The officers and men take an active interest in physical culture and in hygiene. Particularly worthy of mention is the hygienic movement in the companies. Many companies have elected public health committees. Under the guidance and encouragement of the revolutionary soldiers, these committees are charged with the

organisation and inspection of personal and public sanitation and hygiene. When PLA men reach a new place, they clean up the streets, and leave the houses they stay in extremely clean and tidy. This prompts the inhabitants of the city and countryside to improve their hygienic conditions, thus making a great contribution to the popular sanitation movement. In the army itself, the recreational activities and the development of sanitation and hygiene have played an important part in the maintenance of health and in preventing and reducing the incidence of disease.

In short, the PLA is not only a war machine, it is also a school where life is both rigorous and lively and where the officers and men are not only trained to become tough fighters but also educated to become cultured people. When they are demobilised and return to civilian life they very quickly play an outstanding part in the work of building up New China.

## FISH AND WATER

AS has already been mentioned elsewhere, the PLA is an army of the people and for the people. It is therefore interesting and informative to see how the relations stand between the army and the people.

In the early difficult days of the Army, Chairman Mao Tse-tung personally worked out "three disciplinary rules" \* and "eight points for attention" \*\* for the Army. This list of do's and don't's has since come to be accepted as the universal rule of conduct for the PLA and has played a considerable part in developing and maintaining exceptionally high discipline in the

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\* *Three disciplinary rules:*

1. *Obey orders under all circumstances.*
2. *Do not take a single needle or a piece of thread from the people.*
3. *Hand in all booty to the government.*

\*\* *Eight points for attention:*

1. *Talk to the people politely.*
2. *Observe fair dealing in all business transactions.*
3. *Return everything you have borrowed.*
4. *Pay for anything you have damaged.*
5. *Do not beat or scold the people.*
6. *Do not damage crops.*
7. *Do not fool around with women.*
8. *Do not ill-treat prisoners of war.*

PLA. Every PLA man can recite from memory these rules and points and is determined to carry them out both in letter and in spirit. They also form the theme of popular songs which are sung by soldiers and civilians alike.

In the Resolution of the Kutien Conference (1929), Chairman Mao Tse-tung pointed out that the Army should help to fulfil the political mission of the proletariat and that in addition to fighting in the field, the Army should take up the gigantic task of organising the masses, arming them, educating them and helping them in every possible way. The PLA has won the support of the people because it faithfully represents the interests of the people and is closely united with the people in the common struggle.

The Communist Party and the PLA have always attached great importance to maintaining the closest possible relations between the army and the people. It has been stressed time and again that what water is to fish the people are to the Army. An army without the confidence and support of the people would be like a fish out of water.

Thus the PLA has won the complete confidence and the wholehearted support of the people. The PLA supports the government policy and loves the people, just as in the same way the people love the army. All officers and men of the PLA understand perfectly well that it is their duty to carry out the policy of the government, to observe discipline and to refrain from encroaching in any way upon the interests of the people. They understand that the PLA as a revolutionary army should

fight for the interests and welfare of the people. They also understand that the government is the government of the people, a government of their own. Therefore, the PLA engages in the work of production whenever time and circumstances permit in order to lighten the burden of military expenditure on the government and the people and in order to assist the government in developing national economy.

During the Anti-Japanese War many army units grew their own food supplies and were able to meet part of their operational expenses. The army built its own barracks, made its own furniture and manufactured the tools it needed for production. Some army units not only abstained from borrowing draught animals from the people but often would lend their animals to the peasants.

The PLA is always ready and willing to help and to serve the people. When the situation at the front was relatively quiet and during intervals between battles, the Army, with its men and draught animals, cooperated with the local governments in helping the poor people, and the dependents of soldiers and others who had fallen in the fight. The army helped the people with ploughing, sowing, planting and harvesting on the farms. It was a point of honour to refuse any remuneration for their work—not even a single cigarette or meal would be accepted from the peasants. The soldiers always observed the strictest discipline in this matter entirely of their own accord.

While engaged in production the Army was on the very best of terms with the people and assistance was

rendered to one another in all possible ways. PLA men would be seen ploughing wasteland for the peasants, while peasant women on their part bred pigs and chickens for the Army and mended the soldiers' uniforms and clothes.

In addition, the army helped the government to organise the local inhabitants into mutual-aid groups for labour service and to set up cooperatives. The army lent its buildings, grain, implements, draught animals and seeds to refugees and needy peasants so that they could start production.

Today, the PLA is engaged in large-scale production throughout the country. The PLA is not only an army of national defence, but an army of production as well.

The PLA also helps the people to raise their cultural level. So far the most important step that has been taken in this respect is the promotion of sanitation and hygiene and popular education among the people. In 1944 the army hospitals and the medical service in the Shansi-Kansu-Ninghsia border region treated 33,670 persons and accepted 491 in-patients free of charge. The army helped the people to acquire the elements of scientific knowledge with a view to stamping out superstition. Once an epidemic broke out in a district near Yen-an. The medical service of the army hastened to the scene and set up an emergency hospital to fight the epidemic. The doctors gave blood transfusions to save the lives of dying patients and the nurses cared for the patients day and night. After a week 82 patients recovered. During the same time the army medical service took advantage

of the opportunity to convince the conservative and superstitious peasants of the imperative need for improving public health. The medical units taught the villagers the best way to dig and look after wells, popularised a code of sanitation and started medical training classes. All this was carried out under the most difficult material conditions during the Anti-Japanese War when the Liberated Areas were blockaded by the Japanese imperialists and by the Chiang Kai-shek reactionaries.

The PLA helps the people to open schools and organise reading groups. The teaching materials are selected to meet the standards and requirements of the villagers. When the PLA was on the march it carries out extensive propaganda work among the people, popularising the policies of the government, and teaching the villagers to sing new songs and hold meetings.

The PLA observes strict discipline at all times and under all circumstances. No PLA man would take a needle or a sheet of paper from the people. No one would pocket the fountain pens, gold rings, watches and other valuables founded on dead enemy soldiers. They know that all such booty should be handed in to the government.

PLA men would rather sleep on the sidewalks or stand in the rain than intrude upon the hospitality of private homes for shelter. This perfect discipline displayed by the PLA after the liberation of such "treaty ports" as Shanghai, Tientsin and Hankow won widespread admiration. Even the most reactionary ill-wishers

and bitter critics of the PLA, both foreign and Chinese, had to admit that the behaviour of the PLA was "correct" and "exemplary".

It is precisely because cordial relations exist between the Army and the people that the PLA has been able to win the most enthusiastic support of the people. This is also the clue as to why the PLA has been able to score victory after victory even under the most difficult conditions. Mothers and wives would send their sons and husbands to the army. Workers and peasants in the rural districts would organise themselves into local people's militia or self-defence corps to conduct widespread guerrilla warfare behind enemy lines in coordination with the actions of the PLA. Day and night people transported food and ammunition to the front. Women and children took part in collecting information about the enemy and in looking after wounded soldiers of the PLA.

It is no secret that the long series of victories gained by the PLA during the past 23 years of its existence is due to the fact that it has had the sympathy and backing of the broad masses of the people. Just because the PLA is an army of the people and for the people, its strategy and tactics are those of a people's war. Both Japanese and American imperialism as well as the Kuomintang, headed by Chiang Kai-shek, failed to learn anything from the PLA's strategy and tactics, much as they would have liked to turn the tables by employing the PLA's own methods against it. The reason for this is quite simple. Chairman Mao Tse-tung dealt with this question in his report on *The Current Situation and*

*Our Tasks* to a session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on December 25, 1947, pointing out inter alia:

" . . . These methods have been worked out by the PLA in the course of a prolonged war with the internal and external enemies and they are entirely compatible with the situation now facing us. The Chiang Kai-shek gang and the military personnel of American imperialism in China are well-acquainted with these military methods of ours. On several occasions Chiang Kai-shek summoned his generals and other high-ranking officers to special lectures at which copies of our military textbooks and other documents seized in the war were distributed for discussion and study with a view to devising counter-measures. American military personnel suggested that Chiang Kai-shek adopt this or that sort of strategy and tactics designed to 'wipe out' the People's Liberation Army. In addition, Americans personally took part in training troops for Chiang Kai-shek and furnished them with military supplies. But all this failed to save the Chiang Kai-shek gang from defeat. This is because our strategy and tactics are built on the basis of a people's war and no anti-popular army can hope to employ our strategy or tactics. . ."

In actual fact, the relationship between the Army and the people speaks volumes for the creative strategy and tactics the PLA has adopted under the guidance of Chairman Mao Tse-tung.

## HEROES—ONE AND ALL

CHAIRMAN Mao Tse-tung, in his report *On Coalition Government* submitted to the 7th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 1945 analysed the causes for the indomitable spirit of the people's army. He stated: "The men in the army observe discipline voluntarily. They are united in a battle for the rights and interests of the vast majority of the people, and not for the petty interests of a narrow-minded clique. They have developed firm, unquestioning loyalty to the cause of the Chinese revolution."

From mercenary soldiers one doesn't expect valour of a high order. More often looting, raping of defenceless women and cruelty to prisoners and the civil population are the characteristics mainly shown in the field by such soldiers who fight because they are paid to. And cowardice often goes hand in hand with these objectionable qualities.

The soldiers of Hitler's army, indoctrinated with racist and other reactionary ideas proved in the end to be no match for the mass heroism and intransigent fighting spirit of Soviet soldiers imbued with a Communist outlook on life and with high moral qualities.



The forcibly conscripted and ill-treated soldiers of the KMT proved incapable of matching the selfless heroism and invincible qualities of the PLA men.

Mass heroism is a phenomenon which is only capable of being displayed consistently and under all circumstances by an army which has indissoluble ties with the common people, by soldiers who are politically alert and intelligent men who know that they are fighting in the most progressive and just of causes and who are conscious that if they fail their own people will be subjected to a life worse than death itself.

Such fighters, who are also cultured men, give of their very utmost and are prepared to undertake all necessary risks and face all sacrifices because they know that the common people are giving all their strength to support them, because they know that they possess moral qualities superior to those of their enemies and because they are imbued with firm confidence in their invincibility. Such an army is the Chinese People's Liberation Army. Its deeds of heroism are legion and are unmatched in the military history of China's many wars. Pride in its valour is a precious attribute of the Chinese people.

During the long bitter years of war against the Japanese and against the Kuomintang the PLA men accomplished many a heroic deed, sometimes under such heavy odds that it seemed miraculous. The following are some of the innumerable real life stories of heroic self-sacrifice on the part of PLA men. The Chinese people like to hear these stories over and over.

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Countless acts of mass and individual heroism took place during the famous Long March from Kiangsi to Shensi in 1934-35, a distance of 8,300 miles. The march itself was as heroic in its execution as it was in its conception, and has no parallel in the world's military history.

Space permits mention of but one characteristic example of the heroism of the soldiers of the then Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, the predecessor of the modern PLA.

The army on the march had reached the Wu River in Kweichow. It was in January and the raging, icy waters barred their advance. The Kuomintang army leaders sought desperately to prevent the Red Army from crossing the river, in order that it could be cut off and attacked by superior KMT forces who were making forced marches to attack it from the rear.

The KMT had destroyed all ferry-boats in the vicinity as well as all bridges and had four regiments who were keeping up a murderous cross-fire spread out along the river banks facing the Red Army. In this crucial situation, from amongst many volunteers, a group of 18 young Communists were selected to make a crossing and to establish a bridgehead on the enemy-held bank. These young heroes held a discussion and laid their plans to outwit the enemy and to make certain that they did not fail in their attempt on which so much was at stake.

Stripping to the skin, the small group, under cover of darkness, entered the raging, icy torrents with pistols and handgrenades weighted round their necks. Silently, and doing their utmost to avoid observation when the

enemy fired observation flares, they succeeded in crossing; stealthily avoiding the enemy's sentries and outposts they crept up the hilly bank. Just as cautiously they infiltrated to the rear of the enemy soldiers who were guarding the river bank.

At a given signal from their leader they flung their grenades at short range and opened fire with their pistols. Taken by surprise the entire platoon of the enemy on guard was wiped out and the heroic group was able to form a bridgehead until other Red Army men forced their way across the river to reinforce them. In this manner the bridgehead was continually expanded until the whole of the Red Army troops were across and able to break through to resume their victorious march.

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In 1943, the Japanese launched an offensive against the Chih Mon Mountain Area in Central Shantung Province, attempting to get control of the Ta-Ku, Pan-Ku, and Shui-Chuan-Ku Mountains and to capture the Eighth Route Army's operational base in Central Shantung. Since the Eighth Route Army controlled the South and North Tai-Ku Mountains, gateways to the area, the Japanese could not penetrate into it. In the winter of 1943 the Eighth Route Army wrote, with its own blood, the epic of the battle against the combined onslaught of the Japanese and puppet troops.

South and North Tai-Ku are two peaks covering an area of 420 and 240 square metres respectively and were defended by only 93 ERA soldiers. In order to capture these, the Japanese used two artillery and air force

units and one puppet army regiment directed by Yamada, chief-of-staff of the Japanese 12th Army and General Ishii of the Japanese 32nd Division, in the attack on November 13, 1943.

They thought that they could defeat the Eighth Route Army as easily as they had defeated the Kuomintang forces. They were astonished when what they met was not capitulation but stiff resistance. They intensified their fire, but the defenders watched unperturbed the assault from their trenches through the thickening smoke of heavy bombardment. During the first four days of the attack, for all their pains, the enemy only suffered growing casualties and wasted their ammunition. Inspired by their will to hold the line and confidence in ultimate victory the Eighth Route Army men dug themselves in.

After regrouping their forces, the enemy launched new attacks on November 16, using aircraft and artillery. Part of the defence works was destroyed but it was repaired under heavy fire, the Eighth Route Army men keeping up their defence all the while.

Making no progress, the enemy resorted to various tricks. They sent aged people, women, and children whom they had caught, to the defence positions to plead with the fighters to surrender. This tactics, which had proved useful in demoralising the KMT troops, only increased the anger of the fighters of the Eighth Route Army. Upon receiving the demands to surrender, they answered. "Tell them that we'll never give in! Bombs and artillery won't settle the matter. If the enemy has any stomach for fighting, why don't they show up?"

This reply momentarily silenced the enemy. Their next move was an attempt to storm the mountain fortress.

Up to this time the communication lines of the beleaguered soldiers had not been severed. Several times supplies and letters were brought through the blockade. Their morale was fortified when they received a communication from a higher source that victory would be assured if their delaying action could hold the enemy at bay for another week or ten days.

The situation was increasingly difficult. Communications were cut. The fighters on one peak could not even communicate with their comrades on the other. Continued bombardment blasted their positions and thick smoke spiralled over the fortifications. Nevertheless, the fighting went on.

The Japanese resorted to the cruel and wanton use of poison gas. With tears in their eyes the fighters sneezed, vomited, and some fainted from time to time. Even so, they kept up the fight in their shattered fortresses despite hunger and day and night bombing.

The onslaught was increasing heavily hour by hour. The Japanese had inched to within almost 60 metres. The very earth shook under the force of the barrage. Zero hour neared. But the Eighth Route Army fighters held on and finally they received permission to beat a tactical retreat, having accomplished their mission of gaining time. On the night of November 27, two weeks after the initial assault, they clambered down the mountains, bringing their wounded with them, using ropes when necessary. They finally succeeded in breaking through the enemy encirclement of some 1,600 men.

And so the defence of the South and North Tai-Ku Mountains came to an end. The heroes received the highest meritorious rewards. The enemy had paid dearly in men and ammunition for the positions. The heroism of the indomitable fighters will be cherished for ever at the ruins on the Tai-Ku Mountains.

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This heroism may be matched by the fighters defending Tashan. In October 1948, the PLA was launching an attack on Chinchow, a strategic point on the Peking-Mukden Railway. The enemy had added two divisions to the five defending the city. Additional large forces marching from Hulutao and Chihsi in the south to reinforce the defence, were already within half a day's march of the city. Their advance had to be halted at all costs.

A specially selected task force of the PLA was ordered to halt the enemy at Tashan at any price. On the left was the sea; on the right, high mountains; and in front of them a piece of narrow flat land dotted with farm houses. The enemy advanced to within 400 metres and rained an average of 5,000 salvos on them daily. They attacked from the air, sea, and mountains. The villages were razed to the ground. Defence works were destroyed and rebuilt time and time again. Many of the defenders lost their hearing and developed hemorrhage in their ears but they stood their ground, fighting in relays. One idea dominated their minds. "The enemy shall not pass. We must give the men attacking Chinchow their chance." When the pillboxes were wrecked, the defenders fought from trenches.

When these were blasted, they fought from shell holes. When they used up their bullets they flung grenades and when these were gone they used stones. Some of the men said, "Even if we die, we will do our part to halt the enemy." Others quickly corrected them, "We must fight as long as we are alive!"

The wounded refused to be helped to leave the front, not willing to take an able bodied man from the fight. They insisted on making their own way, those who had lost their sight carried those who had been badly wounded, helping each other get to the rear. The motto of the men in the lines was, "as long as we breathe, we will not give ground." This was the spirit in which the Tashan defenders fought and won their victory. Their comrades attacking Chinchow did not fail them. With surprising rapidity, they broke into Chinchow in 31 hours, thus severing Chiang Kai-shek's life line to Manchuria.

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Another gallant episode is that of the ten-men pontoon bridge. During the Huaihai campaign of November 1948, a unit of the PLA were given the mission of pursuing the 63rd KMT Army commanded by Huang Po-tao. When they were 30 miles northwest of Suhsien, northern Anhwei, a stream 30 feet wide separated them from the enemy, who started heavy firing from the opposite bank. The order was given to build a bridge. With great difficulty it was constructed, but there were no supports available. Comrade Fan Tien-fu, a squad leader, volunteered to serve as such and immediately

nine others followed suit. They waded into the icy water, supporting the bridge on their shoulders and three companies began to pass over it. The men in the water began to tire and were well-nigh frozen. The pontoon bridge inexorably inched lower and lower in the water. Comrade Sung Hsieh-kuo, one of the ten and a Party member shouted, "Let's shut our mouths, grit our teeth, throw out our chests, and see it through!" Thus encouraged they summoned up all their remaining strength; the pontoon held until the last man was across. The advancing PLA overtook and wiped out the retreating enemy.

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The same spirit of tenacity was displayed by the soldiers attacking Lunghua in western Jehol, May 1948. The enemy was offering resistance from pillboxes scattered throughout the city. In the northwestern part of the city there was a pillbox spanning a ditch which the PLA men had to cross. Two attempts to demolish it having failed, Tung Tsun-jui, a Party member who had participated in both previous attempts, volunteered to try again. He struggled up to the pillbox with a box of explosives and was just about to pull the clip when he thought, perhaps the pillbox is too high. Immediately he held the box up and pulled the clip. A flash, then an explosion and when the air cleared, the pillbox had been blown to bits, as was also the gallant comrade Tung.

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Heroism of a similar order was displayed by Liang Shih-yin, a private and a Party member. He was participating in the attack on Chinchow in October 1948. When almost four squads of men had been either killed or wounded by the enemy firing from behind a redoubt, Liang could control himself no longer. Snatching up a Mill's bomb and braving the enemy's fire, he rushed up to the redoubt and deliberately threw the bomb into one of the apertures from which the enemy were firing. Before it could explode the bomb was tossed back through the aperture. Quick as a flash the PLA hero snatched it and held it against the pillbox with his body, blowing up both redoubt and himself.

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These are but a few cases of outstanding bravery, devotion to duty and readiness for self-sacrifice on the part of the PLA men. It does not fall to the lot of every soldier to be able to demonstrate his individual bravery on the field of battle. But the examples quoted can be regarded as being representative of an army that deserves to be called an army of heroes.

## CALM AND CONFIDENT OF THE FUTURE

THE principal task of the People's Liberation Army, as laid down in the Common Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, is "to wage the people's war of liberation to the very end, to liberate all the territory of China and to achieve the unification of China." Moreover, on the foundation of the victory of the people's war of liberation, it is the duty of the PLA to strengthen the military forces of the State, to maintain law and order, to suppress counter-revolution and to consolidate New China's national defence.

Article 24 of the Common Programme states: "The armed forces of the People's Republic of China shall, during peace time, systematically take part in agricultural and industrial production in order to assist in national construction work, provided their military duties are not thereby hampered."

In order to liberate all the territory of China and to achieve the unification of China, the PLA is now making adequate preparations for liberating Taiwan and Tibet.

The PLA's confidence in its ability to liberate Taiwan and Tibet is so strongly established that it cannot be shaken by any intimidation or threat. The bellicose statement issued by United States President Truman on June 27 to the effect that the American Seventh Fleet would help the KMT remnants hold Taiwan and to obstruct the Chinese people's liberation of the island aroused nation-wide indignation among the Chinese people and in the PLA. Officers and men of the PLA wrote letters to Government leaders, voicing their determination to make the most thorough preparations and to conduct a most resolute struggle for the liberation of Taiwan.

Wei Lai-kuo, champion marksman of the Third Field Army, who has 361 enemy dead to his credit, wrote in his letter: "None of the provocations or threats made by the American imperialists can stop the victorious march of the PLA. In the course of completely routing over eight million KMT troops who had been equipped and trained by US military personnel the PLA has learned to know that American imperialism is nothing but a paper tiger. We have both the confidence and strength to fulfil the honourable mission of liberating Taiwan."

In order to help with maintaining law and order throughout the country, the PLA has to shoulder the task of mopping up the remnant reactionary armed bands.

During the course of its military operations from April 1949, when it began to cross the Yangtse River, up to the end of the same year, the PLA succeeded in

rounding up, in the main, the remnant enemy troops on the mainland. However, American imperialism and its running dog, Chiang Kai-shek, systematically left behind on the mainland a number of armed bands. From time to time secret agents were stealthily sent to the mainland from Taiwan for the purpose of inciting and directing these armed bands in carrying out subversive activities.

The PLA in the past year carried out a number of vigorous mopping-up campaigns against these armed bands. As the result of extensive mobilisation of the people, these mopping-up campaigns assumed the nature of a great mass movement and have been crowned with success. Small groups of roving bandits, however, are still to be found in the remote corners of the newly liberated areas in southwest China. A final mopping-up drive is being carried on against them by the PLA under considerable topographical difficulties. The completion of this task will be of tremendous importance in helping to preserve law and order in the newly-liberated areas and in facilitating economic construction.

The PLA is confronted with a new great task of consolidating New China's national defence. The brilliant record of the PLA amply demonstrates that the PLA is a highly efficient army imbued with tremendous revolutionary zeal and possessed of excellent fighting qualities.

In the most difficult years of the Agrarian Revolutionary War and of the Anti-Japanese War, the PLA proved its worth and established its reputation as an army of tough and battle-hardened fighters. It is an

army that has developed its own strategy and tactics to meet special conditions in China. The resounding successes of the PLA in out-maneuvring and defeating in guerrilla warfare the vastly superior Japanese armies and the American-trained and American-equipped KMT troops have won world-wide recognition and admiration.

However, it would be misleading and wrong to assume that the PLA is specialised only in guerrilla warfare. The successful carrying out of positional warfare following the turn from the defensive to the offensive on a nation-wide scale and the subsequent annihilation of the crack divisions of Chiang Kai-shek in the great battles for Nanking, Shanghai, Hankow, Canton and Hainan Island fully proves that the PLA is an army that is capable of fighting "regular" warfare as well as guerrilla warfare.

With the liberation of the mainland and the speedy restoration of industry, the material conditions for strengthening and modernising the PLA and the further training of the PLA in the all-round mastery of modern weapons and revolutionary military science are much better than ever before. The PLA is now doing its utmost to build up a powerful navy and a powerful air force. In view of the outstanding achievements the PLA has made in the past under the most difficult conditions there can be no doubt whatsoever that the PLA will meet with equally brilliant success in this respect.

The PLA is leaving no stone unturned in consolidating New China's national defence. It is standing ready to safeguard the hard-won fruits of the victory of the Chinese revolution and to defend Chinese territory

against any imperialist invasion. The US invasion of Korea and Taiwan and air attacks on Chinese towns near Manchuria's border aroused the vigilance of the PLA. Should the occasion arise, the PLA is confident of its ability to deal smashing blows to any imperialist country that should dare to violate the sovereignty and territory of the new Chinese People's Republic.

In order to take part in agricultural and industrial production and thus assist in national construction work, the PLA will have to play an outstanding part in developing production. The PLA is not only an army of national defence, it is also an army of production. In the six months since the liberation of most of the mainland, with several million men able to devote a major part of their energies to productive projects, apart from military training and study, it has become something more—an important factor in the effort to repair the ravages of war and lay the foundation for prosperity in the countryside. This great army is now taking part in the work of production and construction in the vast area extending from Manchuria to South China, and from Sinkiang to East China on the coast.

Since the majority of PLA men are of worker-peasant origin, the PLA has inherited a glorious tradition of labour. During the difficult years of the blockade enforced by the Japanese imperialists and by the reactionary KMT government in an effort to starve them to surrender, the Eighth Route Army and the New Fourth Army took up various kinds of labour and production work and were able in consequence to tide over those extremely difficult years and finally succeeded in beating the enemy.

Chairman Mao Tse-tung issued a general directive on December 5, 1949 concerning the PLA's participation in the work of production and construction. In the course of this Chairman Mao explained that by shouldering a part of the task of production the Army would be helping the people all over the country to conquer the difficulties left behind by a long war and in speeding up the new democratic construction. The army concentrates on work that adds to the country's real wealth. Commercial transactions are strictly prohibited. The directive provides that 40 per cent of the proceeds from production should be distributed to the men taking part, and the remaining 60 per cent should be divided into three equal parts—one for reinvestment, one for daily expenses and the third for the payment of taxes. This directive has won warm support in the army throughout the country. Officers and men of the PLA answered Chairman Mao's call with enthusiasm and promptitude.

But it is mainly in the sphere of agricultural production that the PLA is now engaged. According to available figures the PLA has reclaimed and tilled a total of more than three million *mow*\* of land during the first half of 1950. More than 1,500,000 *mow* has been reclaimed by the PLA in Northwest China, 650,000 *mow* in Northeast China, and about 770,000 *mow* in Central-South China. In North China, dozens of State farms, covering approximately 210,000 *mow* and equipped with modern farming implements, are now being run by the PLA.

The enthusiasm which the PLA has shown in the course of carrying out agricultural work, particularly in

\* A *mow* equals about 1/15 of a hectre.

regard to land never previously brought under cultivation is very impressive and touching. On stony and barren hillsides, in desolate grasslands and deserts, the indomitable officers and men of the PLA pitched their tents. With tools in hands and food in their knapsacks, they toiled away, battling against foul weather, rock-like soil and the barrenness and loneliness of the desert. They finally overcame all difficulties and succeeded in reclaiming and sowing land which had been previously regarded as waste and unproductive.

Another comparatively large-scale task of production and construction taken up by the PLA is that of water conservancy. PLA units stationed in Sinkiang, Kansu, Ninghsia and Chinghai in Northwest China have all carried out tremendous irrigation works. This not only met the needs of the army but also served the peasants. It is therefore small wonder that the peasants should have supported the army.

The "imperial irrigation system" in the southern suburbs of Ining in Sinkiang which used to irrigate 320,000 *mow* of land had been choked up and out of use for the past seventy years. By dint of arduous labour, the PLA restored it to working order. A mass meeting was held on April 18, 1950 to celebrate its re-opening. When the river water gushed out from the newly-cleared channel to the fields previously sown by the peasants, the Uighur peasants of the villages along the channel were so overjoyed that they clapped their hands and exclaimed: "Long Live Mao Tse-tung!" "Salute the People's Liberation Army, the army of the people!"

In the great project for harnessing the river system that criss-crosses North China and used to be the cause



of perennial floods, the army volunteered to take on the lion's share of this year's work. They contacted the water conservancy bureau and arranged to handle part of the project, including dyke building on 20 rivers, canal digging and construction of irrigation works. Within three months this huge work was completed. The PLA in Central-South China also took part in water conservancy projects such as dredging rivers and clearing irrigation ditches.

Another highly important work in production and construction in which the PLA has taken part is the building of railways and highways. PLA men in the Northwest are now improving the Tienshui-Paochi section of the Lunghai Railway. This section is 150 kilometres long and the construction work was started in 1939. Because the Kuomintang officers then in charge were corrupt the construction work was far below standard. The gradients were too abrupt and the railbed not firm enough. The line was "completed" in 1945. But during the rainy season the railbed caved in and collapsed. As a result, the line had never been opened to traffic. The Tienshui-Paochi stretch winds through sparsely-populated narrow valleys and high mountains. There were very few houses along the line. PLA men had to dig caves and build huts for themselves. To find fuel and materials for the job, they had to cross the Wei River at daybreak and climb the Chingling Mountain through pathless, thorny woods and thick weeds to cut down trees and bamboo and gather firewood and grass. The work started in April 1950 and will be completed within a year.

In Southwest China, the PLA has taken over responsibility for laying the rails for the Chengtu-Chungking Railway. The blue-print for the construction of this artery in the Great Szechuan Basin had been pigeon-holed for 40 years. Construction work on this railway was started in 1936 by the reactionary KMT Government but only the surveying of the land and constructing stone blocks and bridges had been completed by the time Szechuan Province was liberated. The PLA started work on the line in June 1950 and it is estimated that the line will be opened to traffic by the end of 1951.

In the various military areas, the PLA has taken part in smaller-scale highway building and bridge-repairing work.

In addition, the PLA has also been engaged in other productive labour such as fishing, animal husbandry, handicraft work and transport. This productive labour of the PLA has brought a tremendous amount of wealth to the country and helped the Government to reduce its present financial difficulties. The work of the PLA in production is a long-term affair. Its effects are merging with those of the workers and peasants and are making themselves felt month by month in the steady, sustained, all-out effort that will gradually and surely create a fundamental transformation in this vast country within the next few years.

As the biggest single organised force in the land, their pioneering work spreads to many spheres and their first six months' results, with the experience they are gaining, promise well for future developments.

Moreover, the PLA is proceeding with demobilisation in order to help with speeding up production and construction. Chairman Mao Tse-tung in his report to the Third Plenum of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party pointed out that the PLA, while preserving its main forces, should demobilise part of its troops in 1950, but only on condition that sufficient forces to liberate Taiwan and Tibet are guaranteed. Demobilised soldiers are being given every possible facility and help so that they can settle down to productive work.

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By Mao Tse-tung

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(Pp.44)

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TION WAR (Pp.78)

ON THE PARTY By Liu Shao-chi (Pp.206)

700 MILLIONS FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY  
(Pp.82)

COMPLETE AND CONSOLIDATE THE VICTORY  
(Pp.48)

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(Pp.25)

CHINA WINS ECONOMIC BATTLES (Pp.58)

CHINA FIGHTS FOR PEACE (Pp.64)

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