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# POLITICAL WORK: THE LIFELINE OF ALL WORK



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**POLITICAL WORK:  
THE LIFELINE  
OF ALL WORK**

by *Hongqi (Red Flag) Commentator*

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### PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This pamphlet consists of four articles which appeared in 1964 in *Hongqi (Red Flag)*, the theoretical journal of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. The articles, based on the experiences of China's revolution and socialist construction, deal with the importance of political work and the main lessons to be drawn from it. An exhaustive analysis is made of the "Four Firsts" principle in the political work of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, which gives first place: (1) to man in handling the relationship between man and weapons; (2) to political work in handling the relationship between political and other work; (3) to ideological work in relation to routine tasks in political work; and (4) in ideological work to living ideas in handling the relationship between ideas in books and living ideas. With cogent arguments the articles refute the theory of "weapons decide everything", the principle of "material incentive for the individual", the idea of "the whole people" — non-class or above-class ideology — and other revisionist views.

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## THE HUMAN FACTOR COMES FIRST

Comrade Mao Tse-tung has said: "The people, and the people alone, are the motive force of world history."<sup>1</sup>

The creative power of the masses of the people is inexhaustible.

The entire history of social development is above all one in which people enter into certain relations of production for engaging in material production. It is also a history in which people invent and use tools to carry out production. The main difference between man and other animals is that the former can consciously create and use different tools to transform objects of nature, and make them suit his own needs. In the course of production as well as in the struggle against nature, in different historical stages, people constantly improve tools used under different conditions, resulting in the development of techniques of production. Tools serve as an extension of the functions of man's hands and an expansion of his capabilities. By transforming tools and raising their own capabilities because of historical necessity, people also promote change and development in social relations.

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<sup>1</sup>Mao Tse-tung, "On Coalition Government", *Selected Works*, Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1965, Vol. III, p. 257.

The first point of the "Four Firsts" principle<sup>1</sup> in the political work of the People's Liberation Army is giving first place to man in handling the relationship between man and weapons. That is to say, as far as relations between man and matter are concerned, the decisive factor is man and not matter. This is a fundamental viewpoint of Marxism-Leninism. Actually, this must be upheld not only in handling relations between man and weapons in the army, but also in carrying out socialist construction and all other work.

In 1920 when Lenin dwelt on the tasks of socialist economic construction, he said:

It is the class consciousness and firmness of the working class that count here. If the working class is prepared to make sacrifices, if it has shown that it is able to strain every nerve, the problem will be solved. Everything must be directed to the solution of this problem. The determination of the working class, its inflexible adherence to the watchword "Death rather than surrender!" — this is not only a historical factor, it is the decisive, the winning factor.<sup>2</sup>

On the question of war, Lenin pointed out in the same vein: "He wins in war who has bigger reserves, bigger

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<sup>1</sup> The principle of the "Four Firsts" is giving first place: (1) to man in handling the relationship between man and weapons; (2) to political work in handling the relationship between political and other work; (3) to ideological work in relation to routine tasks in political work; and (4) in ideological work to living ideas in handling the relationship between ideas in books and living ideas. — *Tr.*

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Ninth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)", *Selected Works*, FLPH, Moscow, 1952, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 329.

sources of strength, and greater stamina in the masses of the people."<sup>1</sup> He also said:

In any war, victory in the end is determined by the morale of those masses who shed their blood on the field of battle. . . . This realization of the aims and causes of the war by the masses is of enormous significance and assures victory.<sup>2</sup>

Speaking of the experience of civil wars at the 1919 Second All-Russian Congress of Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East, Lenin declared:

. . . weak as they [the peoples of the East] may be, and invincible as may seem the power of the European oppressors, who employ in the struggle all the marvels of technology and the art of war — nevertheless, a revolutionary war waged by oppressed peoples, if it really succeeds in arousing the millions of toilers and exploited, harbours within it such potentialities, such miracles, . . .<sup>3</sup>

It can thus be seen that the viewpoint of giving first place to the human factor is precisely a Leninist one.

To realize this is of paramount importance. This is particularly so for the rising newborn forces and those revolutionary people who are at the moment fighting to seize the victory of revolution and who are building their own countries. Whether they recognize this truth

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, 4th Russian edition, Moscow, Vol. XXX, p. 55.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. XXXI, p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Address to the Second All-Russian Congress of Communist Organizations of the Peoples of the East*, FLPH, Moscow, 1954, p. 10.

or not, how deep their understanding is and whether they can adhere to it under whatever complex conditions — all this has a bearing on the future of their struggle and on the success or failure of the cause of their revolution and construction.

Imperialists and all reactionary ruling classes invariably possess the brutal machines of suppression and superb weapons and equipment. In the face of such enemies, should the revolutionary people be frightened and retreat, or dare they rise in struggle and seize victory? When the imperialists and reactionary rulers resort to violent repression and armed aggression, should they submit to humiliation, compromise and surrender, or dare they take up arms to wage a resolute struggle against their enemies and foil the enemies' aggression?

Most countries which have won victory in socialist and national revolutions were comparatively backward economically and technically. Under these circumstances, should the revolutionary people lose their confidence and sell themselves to the enemy, or should they work energetically to bring about their countries' prosperity through self-reliance?

Concerning these questions, it is only by upholding the principle of giving first place to the human factor and conscientiously organizing and planning their actions in the light of their knowledge of this principle that the revolutionary people can open bright vistas for themselves.

In the course of a war, weapons do exert great influence on its progress and changes in tactics, but in the last analysis the final outcome depends on man. In history as well as in practical life, the carrying on of war has continuously refuted all arguments which one-

sidedly exaggerate the role of weapons and belittle that of man and the thesis that the outcome of war can be decided by certain new weapons.

Wars fought during the bourgeois revolutions — we will omit those of the earlier times here — such as the American War of Independence (1775-83) and the French Revolutionary War (1791-94), all showed that the role of man was of prime importance. In the former, the insurgent forces used inferior weapons to resist British colonialist troops armed with impressive weapons. Though poorly trained and equipped in the early stage of the war, the insurgent forces were well aware that they were fighting for independence, justice and their vital interests. Therefore, they brought into play their courage and wisdom and finally defeated the British. The French revolution also saw poorly equipped forces of a militia type pitted against well-trained and well-equipped mercenaries of the allied countries. In 1792, with the blessings of Great Britain and tsarist Russia, Prussia and Austria carried out armed intervention against the French revolution. The then French revolutionary forces were formed mostly of volunteers. However, inspired by the idea of defending their country and supported by the great patriotic and revolutionary enthusiasm of the masses, they finally drove the interventionist troops from their territory.

In the 19th century, the steady improvement of technique in rifle-manufacturing resulted in the appearance of a highly effective, new-type rifle. At that time, some people believed that this weapon decided everything and that in the face of it individual courage and the strength of the masses of the people were of no avail. The wars

which broke out later, however, proved this argument wrong. As Engels said, in the light of the experience of some of the wars fought at that time, "The tide of military opinion has turned. People again begin to see that men, and not muskets, must win battles."<sup>1</sup>

In the 1890s an American, named A. T. Mahan, advanced the so-called theory that "marine force decides victory", saying that this was the main factor in determining a nation's history. After World War I, G. Douhet, an Italian, chanted that "air force decides victory", while J. F. C. Fuller, an English armyman, maintained that tanks and mechanized weapons alone accounted for 99 per cent of the chances for victory in war, whereas other factors at most constituted only 1 per cent. One by one, all these arguments have gone bankrupt in wars which have been fought.

Nuclear weapons were developed after World War II. The imperialists, the reactionaries of different countries and the modern revisionists have exerted themselves in proclaiming far and wide the power of such weapons, regarding them as playing the decisive role in all wars. They wishfully believe that this weapon of mass destruction can intimidate the revolutionary people and restrain them from resisting. But the history of the past 20 years since the emergence of atomic weapons has again mercilessly proved the bankruptcy of this intimidating argument. It is specifically in this period that more and more oppressed nations and peoples subject to aggression have risen heroically to fight liberation wars. They have used inferior and short-range weapons to defeat

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<sup>1</sup> Engels *As Military Critic*, "The History of the Rifle", Manchester University Press, 1959, p. 64.

the imperialists and reactionaries who possessed modern weapons. When the Cuban people staged their uprising with seven rifles and the Algerians did the same with 500 old shot-guns, they were confronted by tens of thousands of reactionary or colonial troops equipped with modern weapons. But the insurgent forces eventually put the latter to rout. The U.S. imperialists cannot but admit that "overwhelming nuclear strength cannot curb guerrilla warfare". In their war in south Viet Nam, the U.S. imperialists counted on weapons such as helicopters and amphibious armoured cars to wipe out the south Vietnamese people's armed forces, but they have suffered defeat after defeat.

It is a matter of course that in order to defeat their enemies, people in revolt must constantly improve their arms and equipment. But it is by relying on bringing into full play the role of man and on correct strategy and tactics that the people's army solves the question of weapons. And in many cases, they simply seize weapons from enemy hands. In fact, even when it comes to the final decisive battle, the weapons of the people's forces are more often than not inferior in quality to those of the reactionary troops. That is to say, as far as weapons are concerned, many people's wars never got the upperhand from start to finish. The secret of victory lies in man and in winning popular support and manpower.

The main reason for the temporary failure of a number of people's armed struggles is to be found not in weapons but in strategic and tactical errors which do not give full play to the role of man. But so long as they can learn their lessons in this respect, they will sooner

or later change their position from weakness to strength and from failure to victory.

All countries that have won victory in revolution must work hard to modernize their armed forces and master all the modern techniques and know-how of war. The more modern the army and the more advanced the military techniques, the more important, instead of more insignificant, becomes the role of man. The modernization of a people's army must be carried out side by side with its revolutionization, with the latter as the foundation. This is because however advanced military techniques are, it is the power of man, his courage, political consciousness and spirit of making sacrifices that decide the final outcome of war. Modern wars particularly underline the fact that advanced military techniques cannot possibly produce their maximum effect without the revolutionization of the army and the advanced political ideas distilled into it.

That the imperialists and reactionaries have done their utmost to brag about the role of certain new weapons while playing down the role of man has its class origin. The reactionary, exploiting classes are divorced from the people and hostile to them. Since they cannot win the people's support, it is only natural that they cannot make full use of the people's strength. Therefore, the only way for them is to put blind faith in weapons. In this way, superior weapons lose their real superiority in their hands and become nothing more than paper tigers for frightening people. Even if under certain circumstances they may temporarily score some victories, they will ultimately be defeated.

Throughout history, the victory of a new mode of production over the old came about because it liberated, in

varying degrees, the productive forces at the time. This was chiefly because the labourers who are the basic force in production were liberated. This makes it possible for them to create or become interested in employing more advanced means of labour, or to make the old means of labour more effective and thereby create higher labour productivity than before.

In societies under the system of exploitation, productive techniques and other means of labour created by the labourers are owned by the exploiters who, in turn, use them as instruments to enslave and exploit the labourers. When it comes to socialist society, the phenomenon of man being enslaved by productive techniques and the means of labour has come to an end. ". . . Man who for the first time becomes the real, conscious lord of nature, because he has now become master of his own social organization."<sup>1</sup> In this situation, man's initiative and his ability to apprehend, control and change nature, are greatly enhanced as never before. Under the leadership of the proletarian party and the state of the proletarian dictatorship, and following the ever deepening understanding of the laws of the objective world, people are able to work out all sorts of miracles as well as create the most up-to-date productive techniques to produce wealth for society.

One of the fundamental differences between socialist and capitalist production is that under the new, socialist relations of production, man's state of mind has undergone a great change. There exists among the masses great, potential strength and enthusiasm for socialism. They no longer look like slaves, they are not inclined to

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, FLPH, Moscow, 1954, p. 392.



rely on others, but are confident of changing the poor and backward face of their country with their own hands. Comrade Mao Tse-tung correctly stated:

China's six hundred million people are, first of all, poor, and secondly, "blank". That may seem like a bad thing, but it is really a good thing. Poor people want change, want to do things, want revolution.<sup>1</sup>

Russia, too, was once an economically and technically backward country. After the victory of the October Revolution, the revisionists of the Second International all said: Russia's productive forces have not developed to the level of realizing socialism, the people are really poor, they are not even civilized, to build socialism in Russia is a mere daydream, sheer nonsense. To this, Lenin answered:

You say that civilization is necessary for the building of Socialism. Very good. But why could we not first create such prerequisites of civilization in our country as the expulsion of the landlords and the Russian capitalists, and then start moving towards Socialism?<sup>2</sup>

To overthrow landlords and capitalists is first of all to relieve the labourers of oppression and make them masters of society, to release the inexhaustible latent energy in them so that they can fight for their own destiny. That is to say, the first thing is to release the energy of the labourers, to get the support and manpower

<sup>1</sup> "Introducing a Co-operative", *Peking Review*, No. 15, 1958, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Our Revolution", *Selected Works*, FLPH, Moscow, 1952, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 727.

needed in the fight for socialism; the next step is to create the necessary advanced material and technical base for the elimination of poverty and backwardness in their country.

As is widely known, this is exactly what the glorious Soviet people did under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union headed by Lenin and later by Stalin.

The historical experience of socialist countries likewise proves that the decisive factor in construction also is man, not matter. Only people with the revolutionary spirit, consciousness and firmness of the proletariat, determined to make self-sacrifices, can build socialism, and on that basis build communism. There are those who cannot really build socialism, let alone communism. These people have lost the proletarian revolutionary spirit and seek only individual material incentive and high wages. Their minds are filled with such bourgeois ideas as "liberty, equality, fraternity", and "humanism", ideas which they use to corrupt the proletariat and paralyse the masses.

In leading the people in construction the primary task of the proletarian party is to attach great importance to the role of man in a socialist society, to bring out fully the potentiality of the masses for socialism, to give full rein to their enthusiasm and readiness "for action and for the revolution" and to organize their strength. The general line of going all out, aiming high, and achieving greater, faster, better and more economical results in building socialism put forward by the Chinese Communist Party proceeds from just such an aim. All the Party's concrete policies and measures on construction work are

also worked out in accordance with this spirit of the general line.

Of course, it is not to be interpreted that man can act freely with no regard for the objective material conditions. Man and matter at any time are the two opposites in a unity. Man is the master of matter, while matter provides certain conditions for man's activity. Man cannot achieve success beyond the limits set by these conditions; but within these limits there is ample room for his initiative to manoeuvre. Within these limits, politics, ideology and man's revolutionary drive can give rise to technique and other material conditions. Numerous facts show that due to differences in people's political consciousness and in the play of their subjective initiative, organizations with approximately the same material and technical conditions may achieve quite different results, some good and some bad. If more attention is given to the role of man, greater, faster, better and more economical results may be achieved in production even with comparatively backward technical equipment, while with more advanced technical equipment, you can get still greater results. On the contrary, if man's initiative is not brought into full play, even with advanced technical equipment production may be reduced to a state of stagnation or even chaos.

Socialist and capitalist enterprises are entirely different in nature. Besides the gradual realization of technical modernization, socialist enterprises require their workers and staff members to revolutionize their thought so that, filled with the revolutionary spirit and enthusiasm of the proletariat, they are wholly dedicated to the cause of socialism and communism. This is the only way to vitalize enterprises, steadily improve their technical moderniza-

tion, and make all modern techniques fully effective for high labour productivity. Capitalist enterprises take the enslaving of the workers as their prerequisite. The modern revisionists use the capitalist principle of profits to adulterate socialist enterprises, and the so-called "individual material incentive" to corrupt the minds of the workers. Thus, in reality, the role of man cannot be really brought into play. The modern revisionists pay lip service to "concern about man"; in fact, they attempt to kill the revolutionary spirit of the people, cause the degeneration of both socialist enterprises and the economic base of socialism.

The spirit of the Taching Oilfield has become a byword among the Chinese people. What is the Taching spirit? In essence it is the proletarian revolutionary spirit in building enterprises, the spirit of giving priority to the human factor.

The Taching Oilfield, a modern oil enterprise newly opened in China, was built on a former wasteland at a difficult time and under trying conditions. There was an acute shortage of machinery and equipment; communications and transport facilities were poor, causing frequent delay in the delivery of supplies; and machine repair workshops were non-existent. Under such circumstances the Taching builders, carrying forward the revolutionary tradition of hard work and self-reliance, subordinated their personal interests to those of the people, the state and society and battled amid hardships without a moment's hesitation. They overcame one unimaginable difficulty after another and achieved greater, faster, better and more economical results in building up a giant modern enterprise in a short space

of four years. In this way they have made a great contribution to China's socialist construction.

The building of the Taching Oilfield embodies the determination of the Chinese people. It proves once again that the Chinese people are fully able to build up their country by their own efforts.

Whether the human factor is given first place in handling relations between man and matter is no small question, but one of world outlook.

The bourgeois world outlook distorts the relations between man and matter in two ways: on the one hand, it one-sidedly exaggerates the role of man's subjective will and negates the existence of the objective material world and its laws, thus tending to subjective idealism which "sees only man, not matter"; on the other hand, it one-sidedly exaggerates the role of matter and holds that man can only remain in a passive and powerless position before matter and cannot actively grasp the laws of the material world, and thereby change it, thus tending to mechanistic materialism which "sees only matter, not man".

Bourgeois rulers propagate the idea of "machines rule man" with the aim of perpetuating their control over the labouring people by means of their machines. They exaggerate the role of weapons to make the labouring people not to dare to wage struggle against their rule of violence. They use this decadent world outlook to examine things and poison the minds of the labouring people. Any labouring person who accepts the influence of the bourgeois world outlook will unavoidably disarm himself morally and become a spineless philistine lacking in will power and action.

Proletarian world outlook opposes both subjective idealism and mechanistic materialism. It holds that man and matter are in a state of a unity, in which man plays the leading role. This is a scientific, revolutionary world outlook. Only when the revolutionary people arm themselves with this proletarian world outlook and eradicate the world outlook of the philistine coward and its influence, can they defeat all their enemies and overcome all kinds of difficulties in revolution or in construction by the revolutionary spirit of daring to struggle and daring to win so as to push forward the cause of revolution and the cause of construction.

(From *Hongqi*, No. 10, 1964)

## POLITICAL WORK: THE LIFELINE OF ALL WORK

The second point of the "Four Firsts" principle in the political work of the People's Liberation Army is that political work must come first when handling the relations between all branches of work, such as work at headquarters, the rear service, military training and culture and education. Good political work is the guarantee that one will do all other work well.

For a long time military struggle was the main feature of the Chinese revolution and all Party work was connected either directly or indirectly with this particular struggle. So the problem of how to handle the relation between politics and military affairs was the outstanding one. Should politics lead military affairs or the other way round? Should the Communist Party command the gun or should it be commanded by the gun? This problem involved the way in which the army should be built and, consequently, the success or failure of the revolutionary cause.

As long ago as the founding of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, Comrade Mao Tse-tung concentrated on this problem. The general principle of putting the army under the Party's leadership and supervision was laid down in the resolution drawn up by Comrade Mao Tse-tung for the Ninth Party Congress of the Fourth Army of the Red Army held at Kutien in 1929. Comrade Mao Tse-tung criticized the purely military viewpoint

as an obstacle to the carrying out of the Party's correct lines. People with this viewpoint refused to recognize that military affairs were only a means of fulfilling political tasks. They counterposed military affairs to politics and claimed that the former should lead the latter, saying: "If you are good militarily, naturally you are good politically; if you are not good militarily, you cannot be any good politically." They, therefore, advocated that organizationally, the army's political departments should be placed under its military departments. In pinpointing the danger of this viewpoint, Comrade Mao Tse-tung said:

If allowed to develop, this idea would involve the danger of estrangement from the masses, control of the government by the army and departure from proletarian leadership—it would be to take the path of warlordism like the Kuomintang army.<sup>1</sup>

Later, Comrade Mao Tse-tung repeatedly pointed out: "Our principle is that the Party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the Party."<sup>2</sup>

It is precisely because our army is the people's army, the army of the proletariat, that in the work of the army we give precedence to political work and emphasize the role of the Party's political leadership. This army needs to absolutely obey the Party's leadership, arm all its personnel with Marxism-Leninism and with Comrade Mao Tse-tung's thinking—the idea of integrating the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete prac-

<sup>1</sup> Mao Tse-tung, "On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party", *Selected Works*, FLP, Peking, Vol. I, 1965, p. 106.

<sup>2</sup> Mao Tse-tung, "Problems of War and Strategy", *Selected Military Writings*, FLP, Peking, 1963, p. 272.

tice of the Chinese revolution. The army should also carry out the programme, line and policy of the Party, the laws and decrees of the government, cultivate conscious discipline and the "three-eight" working style of the army,<sup>1</sup> strictly carry out the principle of unity between officers and men, unity between armymen and civilians and disintegration of the enemy, strengthen the unity within the army and the unity between the army and other departments. This alone can enable the army to have proletarian consciousness and high combat efficiency, to unite closely with the people, be unafraid of any difficulties and hardships and be able to defeat every enemy. And all this can be achieved only by relying on the systematic political work of the Party in the army; without it, this cannot be done.

In order to carry on political work and realize the principle of politics leading military affairs and the Party commanding the army, the Chinese Communist Party has established committees at various levels in the units above the regiment level as the core of the army's united leadership and unity. The Party also introduced the system of leading cadres assuming responsibility under the united collective leadership of the Party committee as the fundamental system whereby the Party leads the

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<sup>1</sup> Under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and Comrade Mao Tse-tung, the Chinese People's Liberation Army acquired a fine style of work during the long and hard revolutionary struggle. Comrade Mao Tse-tung summarized this in three mottoes and eight characters. The three mottoes are: "keep firmly to the correct political orientation", "maintain an industrious and simple style of work", and "be flexible in strategy and tactics"; the eight characters mean unity, alertness, earnestness and activity. This is simplified as the "three-eight" working style.

army. This system embodies the concrete application of the Party's democratic centralism to the army. The leading cadres have a right to make emergency decisions on all important problems when circumstances necessitate this, but generally the problems must first undergo full discussions by the Party committee following which decisions should then be made and carried out. The system of political commissars and political departments is also set up in the army, as the guarantee of the political leadership of the proletarian Party over the army. Political departments are the institutions for Party work. These are established side by side with a system of twin leadership of the military system and the local Party committee over the army, all of which is under the unified leadership of the Party's Central Committee. In this way the local Party committee exercises further supervision over the army.

This system guarantees for our army comprehensive, systematic, frequent and powerful political work and ensures that it is a truly proletarianized revolutionary army under the absolute leadership of the Party, a willing tool of the Party which endeavours to accomplish the political tasks of the Party at any time, in any place and under any circumstances.

After the victory of the revolutionary wars, the People's Liberation Army constitutes the main part of the proletarian state power. To carry forward the glorious tradition of the political work of the People's Liberation Army and to make it increasingly revolutionized and modernized is undoubtedly one of the most important and indispensable conditions for strengthening the proletarian dictatorship.

It is a general principle of Marxism-Leninism to have politics command everything and to regard political work as the heart of every kind of work. This certainly applies not only to the military sphere, but to all other fields as well.

After the seizure of political power, the proletariat was faced with the serious tasks of economic transformation and construction. In the past, we mainly fought battles, only meeting the question of relations between political and military affairs, but now, we are mainly engaged in construction, dealing with the question of relations between politics on the one hand and economy, technique, etc. on the other. As in the past, the question of how to properly handle the relations between these two aspects involves an important principle which has a vital bearing on the basic direction of economic construction, and on the success or failure of the proletarian dictatorship and the cause of revolution and construction.

Some people think it is understandable that politics takes precedence over military affairs, and that military struggle is a means of fulfilling political tasks, because war is "the continuation of politics by other means"; but, they say, after the proletariat has seized political power, politics cannot take first place over economics, because the main task then is economic construction, and, thus, politics must serve the existing economic base. According to these people, therefore, economics should command politics, and not vice versa.

Is this argument correct? No, it is totally wrong.

The unquestionable main task facing the proletariat after it has seized political power, is to carry out economic transformation and construction, and therefore its main energy should be concentrated on economic work

and the struggle to build socialism and communism. But it is far from enough to merely point this out as the main task. We should not only put forward tasks, but also solve the question of how to complete them. How should the economic construction of socialist countries be carried on and according to what direction, line and policy? What should be our attitude and point of view towards this work? If we do not first solve these questions or do not solve them properly then the economic tasks cannot be accomplished, the socialist economy cannot be built.

In other words, as the victory of the past military struggle was primarily determined by the Party's political leadership, so the success of the socialist economic construction depends first of all on the Party's leadership, on the leadership of the state of the proletarian dictatorship; on whether the Party's lines and policies are correct and on whether we can correctly tackle problems from a political point of view. Therefore, politics still remains in command; it is the basic guarantee and prerequisite for the completion of economic work.

Lenin once specifically explained the interrelations between politics and economics during the period of socialism.

In November 1920, when the Soviet political power could afford not to lay emphasis on military struggle and could spare its efforts for the domestic struggle and economic construction, Lenin pointed out: ". . . as it is necessary to demonstrate practically how socialism must be built. All propaganda must be based on the political experience of economic construction."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Speech at the All-Russian Conference of Political Education Units of Provincial and County Departments of Education", *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., 1950, Vol. XXXI, p. 346.

When Trotsky and his followers started a controversy on the question of trade unions and launched attacks on the above-mentioned viewpoint, Lenin reiterated that "politics are the concentrated expression of economics", and "politics cannot but have precedence over economics". He reaffirmed this famous thesis of Marxism and reasserted that there was no exception to it in socialist society. He said:

Politics are the concentrated expression of economics, I repeated in my speech, because I had already heard this totally unjustified—and from the lips of a Marxist totally impermissible—reproach about my "political" approach before. Politics cannot but have precedence over economics. To argue differently means forgetting the ABC of Marxism.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin also said:

. . . the *only* way the matter stands (and it is the only way the matter *can* stand from the Marxian point of view) is that without a proper political approach to the subject the given class cannot maintain its rule, and *consequently* cannot solve *its own production problems*.<sup>2</sup>

It is obvious that the socialist economic base must have at its service a superstructure such as socialist politics. The guarantee of socialist economic construction must be the systematic political work of the proletarian party.

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Present Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin", *Selected Works*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1946, Vol. IX, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

During the socialist period, politics and political work respectively play a new, special and unprecedentedly important role in relation to economics and economic work.

First, the socialist and communist economies, unlike any other economies, do not spontaneously appear or develop. Not only does the socialist economy lack roots in the old society but it has to be created by proletarian political power under the leadership of the Communist Party—the vanguard of the proletariat; even after the birth of a socialist economy, its consolidation, development and transformation into a communist economy cannot take place spontaneously or in an unplanned way; this can be achieved only through the leadership of the Communist Party and through the proletarian state power managing and adjusting the economy in a unified, planned way. The management and leadership of the socialist economy must observe the law of its own development. Only the proletarian political party, and the proletarian state power under its leadership, can consciously master the law of socialist economy, and with this as the basis, formulate correct lines and policies. So the economic workers and the responsible comrades of every economic department and unit should make the Party's lines and policies the starting point of all their actions and consciously carry them out, as well as obey the unified plan of the state. This subordination of the part to the whole is what is meant by placing politics in command. Socialist economic work cannot be done well without this conscious attitude and all-round point of view, or without systematic political work as its guarantee. In this connection, any spontaneous and

arbitrary action or any form of departmentalism will seriously damage the cause of socialist construction.

Secondly, socialist economic construction and the transition from socialism to communism take place in an environment of complicated class struggle. A socialist economic system can be established and developed only in a constant struggle against the remnants of old forces and institutions. These old forces and outmoded ideas reflect the old systems and will not easily die. The struggle is bound to be long and tortuous. The aim of the proletariat in leading the whole people in economic construction is to guarantee the completion of the great historical mission entrusted to them, that is, the abolition of all forms of exploitation, classes and the difference between classes, the creation of a communist society and the liberation of mankind. Therefore, in socialist economic construction we must proceed not according to a purely economic viewpoint or from the mere viewpoint of developing the productive forces, but must proceed from a proletarian political standpoint. We must analyse the circumstances, the economic development and the various tendencies in economic work in accordance with the Marxist-Leninist class point of view and the method of class analysis, so as to seek a correct way favourable for the triumph of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie. Nevertheless, in order to resist and divert the direction of the development of the socialist economy, the bourgeoisie and all enemies, both at home and abroad, will make full use of every spontaneous tendency, utilize all the purely economic viewpoints divorced from politics or the point of view of economism and any other tendency liable to weaken the ideological and political leadership of the proletariat. And they will do all this in order to

make socialist economy gradually degenerate and to "turn peaceful economic development into the peaceful disintegration of Soviet power".<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it is very dangerous in a socialist country for economic departments not to strengthen the political work and not to educate the broad masses of the cadres and the people in proletarian politics and ideology, while allowing the following trends to develop unhindered: the emphasis on work without regard to politics, the seeking of purely "material incentives" and the revisionist tendency.

Thirdly, economic construction in socialist countries should persist in the principle of self-reliance, of relying on the working people and the natural resources of the country in building and developing socialism. But this does not mean that economic construction in a socialist country can be separated from international politics, from international class struggle and from the proletarian world revolution as a whole. The cause of the revolution and construction by the proletariat in each country is at the same time an international cause. Every socialist country has the duty of supporting the revolution of all the other peoples and, moreover, its own construction needs the support of the international proletariat and the revolutionary people throughout the world. Therefore in socialist economic construction, one should not only persist in the socialist direction but also observe the principle of proletarian internationalism. One of the tasks of our political work is to encourage the workers of all departments and all units to be concerned about

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Ninth Congress of the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks)", *Selected Works*, FLPH, Moscow, 1952, Vol. II, Part 2, p. 336.



the world revolution and political situation, and to make them understand that our cause of construction cannot be carried on without the assistance of the revolutionary people of the world, that our achievements must be used to support them, and that all tendencies in violation of proletarian internationalism — such as the tendency to great-power chauvinism — must be opposed. Such political education must be carried on extensively and for a long time.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung once said: “Political work is the life-blood of all economic work. This is particularly true at a time when the economic system of a society is undergoing a fundamental change.”<sup>1</sup> Obviously, during the whole period of socialist construction in which the economic system of society is undergoing a fundamental change, our construction work cannot be carried on properly if we do not follow the principle of politics being in command of economics and do not strengthen the revolutionary political work.

Just as the emphasis was on politics at the very beginning of the creation of the people’s army, so today, Comrade Mao Tse-tung emphatically points out that the big army of people organized for socialist economic construction must be built up and adjusted politically. He has repeatedly reminded us that the tendency to disregard politics must be criticized. On the one hand we must oppose armchair politicians and on the other we must oppose the practical man who does not know where he is going. One will become an economist and a technician without direction if one does not attend to ideology

<sup>1</sup>From the Editor’s Note on “A Serious Lesson”, *Socialist Upsurge in China’s Countryside*, FLP, Peking, 1957, p. 302.

and politics but engages instead in everyday routine work. This is very dangerous. Ideological and political work is the guarantee for the completion of economic and technical work and both serve the economic base. Ideology and politics are the heart and soul of our work. An unguarded moment in our ideological and political work will lead economic and technical work astray.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung especially pointed out that all the economic, industrial, agricultural and commercial departments of our country must learn from the P.L.A. the method of establishing and strengthening political work, thus rousing the revolutionary spirit of millions of cadres and masses on the economic front.

In May 1938, Comrade Mao Tse-tung expounded, in his book “On Protracted War”, the way to carry on the work of political mobilization. He said:

What is political mobilization? First, it means telling the army and the people about the political aim of the war [the War of Resistance Against Japan]. It is necessary for every soldier and civilian to understand why the war must be fought and how it concerns him. The political aim of the war is “to drive out Japanese imperialism and build a new China of freedom and equality”; we must proclaim this aim to everybody, to all the soldiers and civilians, before we can create an anti-Japanese upsurge and unite hundreds of millions as one man to contribute their all to the war. Secondly, it is not enough merely to explain the aim to them; the steps and policies for its attainment must also be given, that is, there must be a political programme. We already have the Ten-Point Programme for Resisting Japan and Saving the Nation and also

the Programme of Armed Resistance and National Reconstruction; we should popularize both of them in the army and among the people and mobilize everyone to carry them out. Without a clear-cut, concrete political programme it is impossible to mobilize all the armed forces and the whole people to carry the fight against Japan through to the end. Thirdly, how should we mobilize them? By word of mouth, by leaflets and bulletins, by newspapers, books and pamphlets, through plays and films, through schools, through the mass organizations and through our cadres. What has been done so far in the Kuomintang areas is only a drop in the ocean, and moreover it has been done in a manner ill-suited to the people's tastes and in a spirit uncongenial to them; this must be drastically changed. Fourthly, to mobilize once is not enough, and political mobilization for the War of Resistance must be continuous. Our job is not to recite our political programme mechanically to the people, for nobody will listen to such recitations; we must link the political mobilization for the war with developments in the war and with the life of the soldiers and the people, and make it a continuous movement. This is a matter of immense importance on which our victory in the war primarily depends.<sup>1</sup>

China is now entirely different from what it was during the anti-Japanese war and there are different tasks facing us. Nevertheless, so far as the general principle and method is concerned these statements by Comrade Mao

<sup>1</sup> Mao Tse-tung, "On Protracted War", *Selected Military Writings*, FLP, Peking, 1963, p. 229.

Tse-tung still have practical significance as a guide to our various forms of political work.

What Comrade Mao Tse-tung spoke about was how to mobilize the people and the army to carry on the revolutionary war, today the purpose of our political work is to mobilize all the people to carry on socialist construction. This political work is required to explain the political aim of each kind of job done by the cadres and the masses so as to make them fully realize the political significance of their work, strengthen their revolutionary zeal and enable them to understand the Party's policy and all the steps to be taken in their work. All this is done in order to lead their revolutionary enthusiasm on to the correct track of the Party's policy. During different periods and in the face of various new tasks, such political work should be repeatedly carried out in accordance with the new circumstances and the thinking of the cadres and masses. The political work of the P.L.A. provides us with very rich experiences in this respect.

Facts prove that wherever the method of the P.L.A. is followed, systematic, powerful and revolutionary political work is established, and the Party's leadership is fully realized, true mass movements appear (as distinct from a situation where a few administrative leaders do all the work themselves), and the leaders and the masses show great revolutionary spirit, not bureaucratism or concern only with "material incentives".

In learning from the political work of the P.L.A., we must also learn the way they work out concrete measures to complete each task. This requires that political work should start from reality and then be carried on down to the grassroots level so that it can cover everyday

practical activities. The reason why political work plays such a highly effective role in all our work is because it is based on reality and serves socialist construction. Experiences in the political work of many advanced units prove that political work can be vital and well integrated with economics and techniques only when it is carried out during the process of production, in practical work, in daily life and with every individual. Doing political work in such a way facilitates the carrying out of the Party's lines and policies among the masses, and translates them into actions all of which will result in a mighty material force that quickly pushes work forward.

To sum up, in learning from the P.L.A.'s work in the present various fronts of socialist construction, we should, like the P.L.A., give first place to political work in handling the relations between political and other work, and build and adjust our own ranks with the emphasis on politics. Only by relying upon an army of socialist builders with high political consciousness can we really fulfil the various tasks in construction. This great army will be invincible. All our enemies — whether the class enemy or the forces of nature — will collapse before it and new wonders will continuously be created in human society.

(From *Hongqi*, No. 6, 1964)

## GIVING FIRST PLACE TO IDEOLOGICAL WORK

The Chinese People's Liberation Army has grown up under the guidance of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's thinking. He has repeatedly pointed out that the task of our "progressive political work" is to "imbue" the people with a "progressive political spirit"<sup>1</sup> and that "ideological education is the key link to be grasped in uniting the whole Party for great political struggles".<sup>2</sup>

Back in December 1929, not long after the founding of the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army, Comrade Mao Tse-tung pointed out — in his famous resolution written for the Ninth Party Congress of the Fourth Army of the Red Army — that first place must be given to ideology and politics in the process of building an army, that a firm, proletarian ideological and political leadership must be established in the army and that a pure military viewpoint and other non-proletarian ideas must be eradicated. This resolution enabled the Chinese Red Army to be built entirely on the basis of Marxism-Leninism and Comrade Mao Tse-tung's thinking and to become a genuine, politically firm people's army.

Over the past decades the Chinese people's army has preserved and carried forward the fine tradition of the

<sup>1</sup> Mao Tse-tung, "On Protracted War", *Selected Military Writings*, FLP, Peking, 1963, p. 259.

<sup>2</sup> Mao Tse-tung, "On Coalition Government", *Selected Works*, FLP, Peking, 1965, Vol. III, p. 315.

Party's political work and constantly enriched it with its own creativeness. It pays great attention to the organization of ideological work, in which, as a result, everybody including military and administrative cadres bears a part. In the light of the situation and tasks of different periods it educates the men in Marxism-Leninism, in Comrade Mao Tse-tung's thinking—the idea of integrating the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the revolution and construction in China. In this way our army has been able to constantly raise the proletarian consciousness of its rank and file. Owing to the education and training received in the people's army, millions of ordinary workers and peasants and many students and other intellectuals of petty-bourgeois origin have gradually revolutionized themselves [in thinking and action] and become steadfast, politically conscious fighters and mainstays in revolution and construction.

Doubtlessly, the rich experience accumulated by the People's Liberation Army in its ideological and political work is a precious asset of our Party and state. It is of great value to all our work at all times.

Marxist-Leninists always maintain that ideology and theory play an important part in historical development. Work is done by man, and man's activities are governed by his ideology. There are many different kinds of social ideologies. Advanced, revolutionary ideas help promote social development and accomplish the new tasks arising from it, while old, backward, or reactionary ideas hinder social development or even pull it back. New social ideologies and theories are born out of new social tasks set forth by the development of society's material life. Once they come into being, they become a strong

force, or, under certain circumstances, even a decisive force. The creation and propaganda of revolutionary ideologies and theories is decisive and of prime importance when the masses have not yet come to understand the new tasks brought on by social development, when, as Lenin said, "Without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement."<sup>1</sup> The deeper and wider the spread of revolutionary ideology, the faster and more powerful will be the revolutionary movement. Marx has said: "Theory too becomes a material force as soon as it grips the masses."<sup>2</sup> Lenin also said, "Man's consciousness not only reflects the objective world, but creates it."<sup>3</sup>

For Marxist-Leninists it is precisely because of this that the initiation of any cause must begin with ideological construction. That is to say, whether the work can be done well or whether the task can be successfully fulfilled depends to a decisive degree on the state of mind of the people, on what ideologies they follow in their actions, on whether their ideology conforms with realities. Revolutionary work can only be done by people with revolutionary ideas. And revolutionary ideas are propagated by revolutionary parties and advanced revolutionary elements.

In the past, to seize state power, the proletariat had first to spread revolutionary ideas and arouse the masses,

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Selected Works*, FLPH, Moscow, 1950, Vol. I, Part 1, p. 227.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx, "Zur Kritik der Hegelschen Rechtsphilosophie. Einleitung", *Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, Ger. ed., Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1958, Vol. I, p. 385.

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's Book *The Science of Logic*", *Collected Works*, FLPH, Moscow, 1961, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 212.

and then organize them to struggle consciously for the victory of the revolution. Is it still necessary to list as a primary task the propagating of revolutionary thinking, i.e., ideological work, after the proletariat has come to power, and when the ruling proletarian party is leading the people in the socialist revolution and socialist construction?

Our Party is now the governing party and is at the head of state power, and as such carries out its work by means of the state authority. Our administrative and economic work is becoming increasingly complicated and heavy. A great deal of work requires issuing administrative orders. In such circumstances, some people may think that to fulfil their tasks it seems enough merely to rely on authority and orders, and on organizational leadership; that it is enough to be engrossed in economic work, with no need to pay special attention to ideological work, to care about the ideological conditions of the cadres and masses. Or they may think that it is enough to do some ideological work only when a political campaign is on, and there is no need for day-to-day, systematic work in this field.

Are these views correct? Of course, they are not. The question raised here is by no means of little significance. Actually it is of great importance — it concerns whether our work has a real revolutionary character, and whether our socialist cause can move forward smoothly.

Historical experience has proved that in order to carry out socialist revolution and socialist construction, the proletarian party, after seizing power, should still give first place to spreading revolutionary ideas, i.e., ideological work.

Firstly, socialist revolution and socialist construction are the people's own cause. In this respect, only if we continue to educate the masses in revolutionary ideas and raise their political awareness can they work for the cause of revolution and construction consciously, wholeheartedly and energetically and can there be a genuine socialist movement.

Secondly, class struggle continues to exist under socialism; especially is it very complicated and sharp on the political and ideological fronts. The establishment of a totally new socialist system requires clearing people's minds of all survivals of old ideas and traditions and making a clean break with them. Without victory in the socialist revolution on the ideological and political fronts, the proletariat will be unable to ensure the victory of socialism and avoid the restoration of capitalism.

The aim of spreading revolutionary ideas among the masses and giving them a socialist and communist education is to help them become increasingly revolutionized, that is, to help the masses to abandon capitalist ideology and all other outmoded ideas and conventions in favour of proletarian and communist ideas and to be truly aware of the need to carry out uninterrupted revolution and make continuous progress in the interest of communism.

Is it possible then for people of a socialist society to raise their political awareness and spontaneously heighten their socialist and communist ideology without the party and the state power of the proletariat instilling revolutionary ideas in them? Can they rely solely on their own efforts in a continuous process of revolutionizing themselves? Reality has proved that this cannot be done.

If only internal conditions are taken into consideration, a socialist society (externally, it is encircled by capitalism), not long grown out of the old society, still retains traces of the latter in many aspects. Lenin correctly said: "The corpse of bourgeois society cannot be nailed in a coffin and buried."<sup>1</sup> In a socialist society "the corpse of capitalism is decaying and disintegrating in our midst, polluting the air and poisoning our lives, enmeshing that which is new, fresh, young and virile in thousands of threads and bonds of that which is old, moribund and decaying".<sup>2</sup>

This is particularly true in the realm of ideology. Lenin pointed out: ". . . the bourgeois ideology is far older in origin than the socialist ideology; because it is more fully developed. . . ."<sup>3</sup> Bourgeois ideology, apart from remaining in people's minds, is also carefully and attractively preserved in a variety of forms (certain cultural heritages, for instance). It will continue to exert influence over a long period.

The triumph of the socialist system has created the social and material conditions for the complete eradication of the economic base which gives rise to old ideas. It also arms the masses with socialist and communist thinking. Freed from the oppression of the system of exploitation and the bondage of the system of private ownership, the masses in a socialist society, especially former small producers, on the one hand have a great enthusiasm for socialism, and their political conscious-

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *A Letter to American Workers*, FLPH, Moscow, 1952, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Selected Works*, FLPH, Moscow, 1950, Vol. I, Part 1, p. 246.

ness has reached a level never before attained. But on the other hand, they are in varying degrees held back by old ideas and traditions and their outlook still retains many vestiges of the old society. They can see for themselves and clearly sense that the socialist system is far superior to the old social system and that socialism is the only way by which they can get rid of exploitation, poverty and backwardness, and gain common prosperity. However, they still are not quite accustomed to some of the new things coming in the wake of the socialist system, while ways dating back thousands of years which they have been accustomed to, still exercise varying degrees of influence. Whenever there is a chance, old ideas, capitalist as well as feudal, can creep back into the minds of some people. Sometimes, it is more in keeping with habit and more natural for such people to go to see a performance of an old play with harmful ideas and refresh their memories of these ideas than to accept a new idea or view. Thus, in an environment of complicated class struggle, so far as the ordinary people — especially those who were formerly small producers — are concerned, they may accept socialist and communist ideas under certain circumstances, i.e., when education in proletarian ideas is being vigorously carried out. They may accept capitalist ideology under other circumstances, i.e., when this education is slackened or entirely given up.

Even those brought up in a socialist society are not born with a socialist ideology. It is a far from easy task to bring them up as a young generation with socialist and communist consciousness. Born into a new society, they have the advantage of receiving from the very beginning the education of the new society. But then, precisely because they were brought up in the new

society, they have no idea of the old one and do not really understand what is meant by oppression and exploitation of man by man; they do not really know the meaning of classes and class struggle. Thus, they are unable to get a quick and true understanding of how the new society came into being, and how it should be built; nor can they understand the new society by comparison with the old. This is their weakness, and it is a big one. These people are comparatively lacking in immunity to an environment of complicated class struggle. For this reason, if not enough attention is paid to their education, they can be contaminated by the corpse of the old society and will be affected by the harmful ideas embodied in all sorts of leftovers from it, or even mistakenly treat these things as worthwhile. Thus, under certain circumstances, i.e., when education in proletarian ideas is being vigorously carried out, some of them can be brought up to become worthy heirs of communism while under other circumstances, i.e., when this education is being slackened or given up, they can be enthralled by capitalism.

Therefore, what is important and decisive under socialism remains the ideological leadership of the party and the state power of the proletariat, and the ideological education they provide. Marxism-Leninism, that omnipotent weapon of the spirit, must be relied on. In a certain sense, such ideological education is now more important than at any time in the past.

In his work "What Is to Be Done?", Lenin said:

. . . the *only* choice is: either the bourgeois or the socialist ideology. There is no middle course (for humanity has not created a "third" ideology, and,

moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or above-class ideology). Hence, to belittle the socialist ideology *in any way*, to *turn away from it in the slightest degree* means to strengthen bourgeois ideology.<sup>1</sup>

Lenin's scientific proposition applies not only to capitalist societies, but also to socialist societies, that is, to the entire historical period of the transition from the capitalist to the classless, communist society.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung pointed out in his book *On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People*: ". . . it [Marxism] enjoys a different position in the socialist countries. But even in these countries, there are non-Marxist as well as anti-Marxist ideologies."<sup>2</sup>

Whether in capitalist or socialist societies, this means the existence of antagonism between proletarian and bourgeois ideologies, between Marxist thinking and non-Marxist and anti-Marxist thinking. The only difference lies in the fact that in capitalist societies, bourgeois ideology and all kinds of non-Marxist and anti-Marxist thinking reign. Under such circumstances, the activities and spread of bourgeois ideology and the attacks it makes on Marxism more often than not assume an open, flagrant and unscrupulous form. However, in socialist societies where proletarian ideology — Marxist thinking — dominates, these usually assume a covert and camouflaged form.

For proletarian ideology and Marxist thinking to firmly maintain their predominant position in socialist societies,

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Selected Works*, FLPH, Moscow, 1950, Vol. I, Part 1, pp. 243-244.

<sup>2</sup> Foreign Languages Press, Peking, 1960, p. 50.

unceasing ideological struggles are necessary — it is not enough merely to rely on the state power and material force of the ruling proletariat. Proletarian ideology is subject to the combined pressure and encirclement of all the old ideas that have existed down through the history of practically the whole world, not of a single country alone. Although bourgeois ideology has lost its predominant position under socialism, it remains a strong force — the more so, since it uses all sorts of covert means to contend for ground with proletarian ideology and pave the way for reinstating capitalism. This makes the struggle in the realm of ideology still more complicated and acute. The proletariat seeks to transform the world according to its own world outlook as does the bourgeoisie. In this respect, the question whether socialism or capitalism will win can only be settled in a long historical period.

To deny that antagonism between the ideologies of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat continues to exist in a socialist society and to spread nonsense about what is called the ideology of “the whole people”, i.e., non-class or above-class ideology, is nothing but deliberate subterfuge. It is an attempt to repudiate stealthily the dominant position and guidance of Marxism-Leninism, the ideology of the proletariat, and to return to bourgeois ideological domination, thus creating the conditions for the restoration of capitalism.

Obviously, it follows that, if the work of disseminating socialist and communist ideas is cut down in a socialist society and proletarian ideology abandons the field, then bourgeois ideology will take over. Wherever proletarian ideology dominates over bourgeois ideology, the movement for socialism is bound to develop vigorously and

the truth of Marxism-Leninism is bound to prevail. On the contrary, wherever bourgeois ideology prevails over proletarian ideology, there is bound to be inertia and many deplorable things will inevitably occur.

Educating the masses in revolutionary ideas, in socialist and communist ideas and enabling them to become increasingly revolutionized should be done in a variety of ways and means. It should be based on the present revolutionary practice of the class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment. The key point here lies in revolutionizing the thinking of the cadres, in other words, continuously raising the level of their understanding of Marxism-Leninism. This is because the work of spreading revolutionary ideas among the masses and strengthening ideological leadership must be done through the cadres. The continuous revolutionization of the cadres' thinking, the consequent improvement in the style of work of the leaders and the strengthening of leadership are a prerequisite for the masses to become increasingly revolutionized.

Our country has a big army of cadres. Their ideological conditions are different. Some of them have gone through many revolutionary trials and achieved a high ideological and political level; some have been less tempered; while a fairly large number of them are newcomers to their particular field of work. But all of them, whatever category they belong to, should continue to raise their ideological level and become increasingly revolutionized.

The situation both inside and outside our country continues to develop. We are confronted by many new tasks and new problems. Today's class struggle and struggle for production are different from the past. Both are



more complicated, involving many more problems. Some people among us often make themselves out to be well acquainted with class struggle. But what happens when they are faced with questions like these. What is the relationship between different classes in society after the socialist transformation has been in the main completed? How does the class struggle operate in various fields and what form does it take? And what are the interrelations of the class struggle at home and abroad? All they can do is to answer these questions in words, but not with any real understanding, or they understand them only theoretically, and when it comes to specific questions they are easily puzzled or even misled, throwing what they read from Marxist-Leninist literature to the winds. It is after going through the struggle in the last few years that many comrades among us gradually deepened their understanding of the class struggle in socialist societies. The struggle with modern revisionism has particularly enabled people to see the seriousness of this question and realize that there still exist in socialist societies classes and class struggle, and therefore there still exists the social foundation that can give rise to opportunism and revisionism. It should be noted, however, that many among us still remain quite ignorant of this important subject — the class struggle in socialist societies — and in this respect have a long way to go before being able to grasp Comrade Mao Tse-tung's thinking.

For this reason, we need to temper ourselves anew and study anew. That is, we need to steel ourselves anew in ideology and restudy Marxist-Leninist works as well as the works of Comrade Mao Tse-tung in the revolutionary

practice of the new class struggle, struggle for production and scientific experiment, and in the struggle against imperialism and modern revisionism. For this purpose, we should also study all sorts of material provided as negative examples which include writings by modern and old-line revisionists, and articles in which imperialism evaluates modern revisionism. On many great issues of our times, we should clearly understand what contemporary revolutionaries, the Marxist-Leninists, have done for the defence of Marxist-Leninist principles, and how the modern revisionists have made use of the absurd theories of the old-line revisionists in opposing Marxism-Leninism. We should do this in order to increase our discerning power and immunity both ideologically and politically. When we say we should temper ourselves in ideology, we also mean that we should remould our ways of thinking. In other words we should learn to analyse things by the use of the Marxist-Leninist dialectical method, and guard against and overcome the metaphysical method of thinking. The latter blinds us to changes and developments in things and situations, narrows our vision, keeps our thought inert and makes us content with things as they are. Anyone who refuses to learn afresh and temper himself anew will lag behind and may even degenerate and accept revisionism if he does not continue to revolutionize himself.

Stalin said quite aptly:

It must be accepted as an axiom that the higher the political level and the Marxist-Leninist knowledge of the workers in any branch of state or Party work, the better and more fruitful will be the work itself, and

the more effective the results of the work; and, vice versa, the lower the political level of the workers, and the less they are imbued with the knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, the greater will be the likelihood of disruption and failure in the work, of the workers themselves becoming shallow and deteriorating into paltry plodders, of their degenerating altogether.<sup>1</sup>

The more effective the work of continuously revolutionizing the thinking of the cadres, the more vigorous will be the work of our leading organs and the more effective will be the work of the leadership.

At present, the main work of leading organs at different levels, including the state's leading economic bodies, is to assume leadership in building the country. What are the main objects to which this leadership directs itself? Is it to "lead" large tracts of land? Is it to "lead" heap after heap of manufactured machinery? But then, the land has to be cultivated by man, and the machines have to be used by man. Without man, all land and machinery are worthless; there would be no use for them. It is clear therefore the task of leading organs is primarily to lead man, to do good work on man. The leading economic bodies should correctly handle relationships between man on the one hand, and, on the other hand, land, machinery, and all the rest of the means of production as well as all objects of labour. They also should correctly handle relationships between man and man. Without correct handling of these, it is impossible to do a really good job in economic work. Lead-

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<sup>1</sup>J. V. Stalin, "Report on the Work of the Central Committee to the Eighteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. (B.)", *Problems of Leninism*, FLPH, Moscow, 1947, p. 629.

ing organs at various levels therefore should orientate their work to the masses and reality, and be closely linked with the masses and reality, and really work speedily, concretely and timely in the midst of the masses, down at the grassroots organizations and in the frontlines of production. They must do away with routinism and bureaucracy in all forms and overcome the defects of finding satisfaction in issuing administrative orders only, neglecting ideological education, and sloppiness in their style of work. To achieve this, it is undoubtedly necessary to begin with the continuous revolutionization of the cadres' thinking.

The economic base for socialism has been built in our country. Such a base must have a corresponding superstructure to serve it and help it develop and consolidate. The ideological conditions of leading organs at different levels and of cadres constitute an extremely important part of the socialist superstructure. Only when this part of the superstructure becomes revolutionized can this take place in the other parts. Only then, can the superstructure be suited to the socialist economic base, and the initiative and creativeness of the masses for socialist construction be brought into full play.

From the above it is clear that the need to learn from the experience of the political work of the People's Liberation Army arises from the needs of the work in various fields and of the revolutionary situation. The work in the army requires—in war time or in peace time—a higher degree of concentration, discipline and obedience to orders than all other work. Because of this, however, the People's Liberation Army does not deem it right to neglect ideological-political work. On the contrary, in all circumstances it persists in giving first

place to this work. For decades it has done a good, thorough job in this field, an indication that the army has lived up to Comrade Mao Tse-tung's thinking and practised Marxist-Leninist leadership.

The methods, forms and requirements for political work in various institutions are and should be different because all their specific conditions are different. However, they should all bear one thing in mind, that is, the necessity to spread — through systematic, day-to-day political work — the ideas of communism and Marxism-Leninism among the masses and cadres in order to raise their ideological-political level and enable them to become increasingly revolutionized. We say "systematic" and "day-to-day" because we cannot hope to do a thoroughgoing job of political work merely through political campaigns. Nor can it be done if it is left to the dictates of our whims or to a few political workers while the leading administrative personnel are excluded. No, we should see that everybody assumes his responsibility in this respect and devises a fairly complete set of methods, in which the key link, the ideological work, must be given close attention.

Doing ideological work well is, in short, bringing into play the power of man in a socialist society. The strength of the socialist system, in the final analysis, is built on this basis and on the enthusiasm of the masses for socialism. If we are capable of giving full play to the power of man and to the enthusiasm of the masses for socialism, our revolution and construction will always stand in an invincible position.

(From *Hongqi*, No. 5, 1964)

## IDEOLOGICAL WORK MUST BE BASED ON REALITY

The fundamental question in our ideological work is whether it should be based on mere academic studies or on reality. The "Four Firsts" principle in the political work of the People's Liberation Army suggests that in handling the relationship between education by books and education by living ideas, we must give first place to living ideas in ideological work. In other words, our ideological work must start from reality and practical problems: it must not proceed from books or abstract theories and principles.

In regard to this, the People's Liberation Army has accumulated rich experiences during the course of its political-ideological work. Let us first briefly introduce the following ten points based on experiences in the ideological work of the P.L.A.'s companies:

1. Creatively study and apply Mao Tse-tung's thinking and make this the fundamental task of the whole army's political-ideological work. Basically, one should set out to study with specific problems in mind. Then one should creatively study the urgently needed theories and combine study and application. In this way, immediate results will be achieved.

2. Start by making proletarian class education the foundation of all political and ideological education. With this as the basis, carry on education in patriotism, in-

ternationalism and revolutionary heroism, as well as in the traditions of our Party and our army.

3. Proceed from reality, and grasp the following two aspects. First, promptly pass on the lines, policies and decisions of the Party's Central Committee and the instructions of the higher units and make a thorough study of them. Secondly, at all times frequently investigate and get to know the concrete conditions and the state of mind of all the units of the company. Combine these two aspects and knit together the leadership and the masses; in short, carry out the policy of "from the masses and back to the masses".

4. Deal with problems in their embryo and work quickly and correctly to prevent their development. This means one should anticipate the trends of thought in people's minds and the problems likely to arise, and be good at dealing promptly with problems.

5. Persist in educating and convincing others by the use of reason. Generally speaking, the ideological problems that face cadres and soldiers involve the right and wrong ideas found among the people. Therefore the principle of "unity-criticism-unity" must be used. Tackle ideological problems by seeking truth from facts, by the use of concrete analysis, and through education by patient persuasion.

6. Raise the people's ideological level step by step. It is impossible for all people to have the same ideological level and political consciousness. Therefore, there is a difference between the advanced, the medium and the backward. The majority must be taken into consideration when ideological education is being carried on. And the method of education most acceptable to the majority

must be used so that they are gradually raised to an advanced level.

7. Combine political and ideological campaigns with day-to-day education. Do not only lay emphasis on political and ideological movements at a particular period, but also pay great attention to day-to-day ideological education.

8. Mobilize the masses and make everybody take a part in ideological work. Report and give timely praise to fine people and deeds; expose and rectify bad trends in time; and promptly tackle the problems that occur.

9. Combine the priority of ideology with the solution of practical problems. Do not only attach importance to the solving of the ideological problems of the masses and to their political progress, but also remember to tackle their practical problems, and be concerned with their well-being.

10. Use living teaching material and living methods. This means one should carry on education through the personal experiences of the masses, using concrete facts from real life, praising fine people and deeds.

The above ten points fully reflect the spirit of carrying on ideological work on the basis of reality.

The general task of our ideological work is to propagate Marxism-Leninism among the cadres and masses. Comrade Mao Tse-tung says: "By Marxism we mean living Marxism which plays an effective role in the life and struggle of the masses, not Marxism in words."<sup>1</sup> Lenin once expressed the same idea when he wrote:

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<sup>1</sup> Mao Tse-tung, "Talks at the Yen-an Forum on Literature and Art", *Selected Works*, FLP, Peking, 1965, Vol. III, p. 79.

“What is necessary is not leblose Knochen,<sup>1</sup> but living life.”<sup>2</sup> Marxism will live for ever because it is the most scientific and most revolutionary truth which arises out of the actual struggle of the proletariat and because it is continuously confirmed by reality. It is only when Marxism is isolated from reality that its application and development become hindered. Therefore, the key point is to combine theory with practice and to propagate and study Marxism-Leninism in order to solve practical problems. Only when this is done can the people master living Marxism-Leninism.

Engels once described how some bourgeois activists and thinkers faced reality and took an active part in actual struggles during the period of the bourgeois revolution. He said:

But what is especially characteristic of them is that they almost all pursue their lives and activities in the midst of the contemporary movements, in the practical struggle; they take sides and join in the fight, one by speaking and writing, another with the sword, many with both. . . . Men of the study are the exception: either persons of second or third rank or cautious philistines who do not want to burn their fingers.<sup>3</sup>

Even bourgeois revolutionary thinkers understand that their ideological work cannot be separated from reality. So how can we, as proletarian revolutionaries and ideological and theoretical workers, take the philistine atti-

<sup>1</sup> Meaning “lifeless bones”.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, “Conspectus of Hegel’s Book *The Science of Logic*”, *Collected Works*, FLP, Moscow, 1961, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 89.

<sup>3</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, “Introduction to *Dialectics of Nature*”, *Selected Works*, FLP, Moscow, 1951, Vol. II, p. 58.

tude of separating theory from reality towards the true revolutionary science — Marxism-Leninism? And, moreover, how can we do this when we are struggling for the cause of communism?

In the article “Reform Our Study” Comrade Mao Tse-tung points out two diametrically opposed attitudes towards study. One is the subjectivist attitude: “With this attitude, a person studies Marxist-Leninist theory in the abstract and without any aim. He goes to Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin not to seek the stand, viewpoint and method with which to solve the theoretical and tactical problems of the Chinese revolution but to study theory purely for theory’s sake. He does not shoot the arrow at the target but shoots at random.”<sup>1</sup> The other attitude is that of the Marxist-Leninist: “With this attitude, one studies the theory of Marxism-Leninism with a purpose, that is, to integrate Marxist-Leninist theory with the actual movement of the Chinese revolution and to seek from this theory the stand, viewpoint and method with which to solve the theoretical and tactical problems of the Chinese revolution. Such an attitude is one of shooting the arrow at the target.”<sup>2</sup>

In order to adhere to the correct direction of ideological work, Comrade Mao Tse-tung undertook a long struggle against the bad, subjectivist style of study in the Party. It was a struggle against the ideology and style of work of dogmatists and empiricists.

During the period of the Chinese democratic revolution, there emerged within the Party some dogmatists who mechanically took over and applied the experiences

<sup>1</sup> Mao Tse-tung, *Selected Works*, FLP, Peking, 1965, Vol. III, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

of foreign countries. They, too, encouraged the study of Marxism-Leninism, but to them the simple recitation and copying of some phrases and words from Marxist books was the solution to all problems, even though they had no knowledge of actual conditions. The dogmatists also repeatedly advocated in words that theory should be linked with practice, but they never put this into practice. Quite a number of people doing research work were not interested in studying the current reality of China, and engaged instead in the study of empty "theory". In opposing this dogmatist trend, Comrade Mao Tse-tung suggested that in studying Marxism-Leninism, emphasis should be laid on the study of existing conditions, on the study of history, and on the application of theory. Opposing the isolated, one-sided and static method of study, he worked out another method by which Marxism-Leninism should be taught to cadres. Guided by the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism this method revolved around the study of the practical problems of the Chinese revolution. In regard to propaganda work among the masses, he said it must be done in a way which would appeal to the masses. He emphasized, therefore, the importance of writing articles with substance and with a respect for actual facts. It follows, therefore, that we must first have a thorough knowledge of the people to whom the propaganda is directed. Thus, we must not engage in propaganda without making an analysis and study of the people.

At the same time, Comrade Mao Tse-tung opposed the empiricist tendency within the Party. Those with this tendency neglect the study of theories, never understand the need to relate practical problems to questions of

theory, and ignore the need to discover the laws of development in actual work. They are quite often perplexed by individual phenomenon or place too much faith on their own limited experiences. This is another expression of the error of separating theory from practice. Comrade Mao Tse-tung points out that the way to overcome this shortcoming among comrades is to demand that they earnestly learn to sum up their own experiences in accordance with Marxist theory so as to systematize these experiences and thus gain a fuller knowledge.

As is widely known, the two above-mentioned subjectivist tendencies did serious damage to the democratic revolution of China. However, we finally gained one victory after another and eventually defeated a strong enemy and established the people's socialist New China. How was this possible? Because Comrade Mao Tse-tung led the Party in overcoming these erroneous tendencies and in learning to use Marxist-Leninist theories to solve practical problems in Chinese society and to discover the laws of development in the Chinese revolution. And because he led the Party in laying down strategies and tactics for the revolution according to the characteristics of Chinese society, and in rallying and organizing the Chinese people in accordance with these strategies and tactics.

Marx said: "Theory will always become reality among a people only to such an extent as it meets the needs of the people."<sup>1</sup> It is undoubtedly a great event in the his-

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx, "On a Critique of Hegel's Juridical Philosophy. Introduction", *Collected Works of Marx and Engels*, Ger. ed., Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1958, Vol. I, p. 386.

tory of the development of Marxism-Leninism for the Chinese communists, under Comrade Mao Tse-tung's guidance, to closely integrate the universal tenets of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution, to gear them to the needs of the Chinese people, and to widely spread the revolutionary truth of Marxism-Leninism in a vast country with such a huge population.

The P.L.A. advocates "study with specific problems in mind" and directs ideological education at practical problems—such is the glorious tradition of our Party's ideological and theoretical work. We must carry out this tradition at all times and under all circumstances. In fact, it is more necessary than ever for us to pay attention to and continue the development of this tradition, because we are living in a new historical epoch of great changes and amidst new international and domestic revolutionary struggles.

The cause of building a great socialist state is unprecedented. It is unprecedented because our goal is the greatest and noblest in China's history and because the work we do to reach this goal is completely new to us. During the socialist period the class struggle, the struggle for production and scientific experiment are vastly different from all the other revolutionary movements of the past. The universal truths of Marxism-Leninism point out the direction for correct understanding, and therefore we must make an earnest study of Marxist-Leninist classics and find in them the guide for our thinking. But we have to use our own brains to reach concrete conclusions on many practical questions. As Lenin said:

We do not claim that Marx knew or Marxists know the road to socialism down to the last detail. It would be nonsense to claim anything of the kind. What we know is the direction of this road, and the class forces that follow it; the specific, practical details will come to light only through the *experience of the millions* when they take things into their own hands.<sup>1</sup>

Socialist revolution and socialist construction have confronted us with quite a number of new problems, which compel us to think and seek out answers. For instance, what are the characteristics of the classes and class struggle in a socialist society? How to consolidate and develop the proletarian dictatorship? How to prevent capitalist forces from springing up, and how to prevent their restoration? How to develop socialist production and carry out distribution? How to handle the relationship between the individual and the collective? How to advance art and science in socialist society? How to promote the revolutionization of ideology of the cadres and masses?

As everyone knows, in addition to the domestic problems there is a large-scale polemic going on in the international sphere between the Marxist-Leninists and the modern revisionists. The modern revisionists have been attempting to emasculate the revolutionary soul of Marxism-Leninism, and thus openly turn from Marxism-Leninism by wantonly distorting the reality of the world and using as a pretext the "new conditions" and "new characteristics" in the international situation following

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "From a Publicist's Diary", *Collected Works*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1964, Vol. XXV, p. 281.

the Second World War. In this way, many new questions have been presented to the people of the world: what are the new conditions and new characteristics in the international situation since the Second World War; what new characteristics has modern imperialism; has the nature of imperialism changed; can U.S. imperialism decide the fate of the world as the modern revisionists assert; who is the creator of human history as proved by all historical experiences; what should be the relationship between revolution, war and peace in the contemporary world; how should the relation between socialism and imperialism be handled; how should the relation between socialist countries be handled; what is the state of the world revolution at present and what will be its future; how should the revolutionary movement of the oppressed people and nations be appraised and treated; do the numerous facts of the revolutionary movements of the world's people continue to prove that the revolutionary principles of Marxism-Leninism are undoubtedly correct or do they prove that these principles are outmoded; what is the essence of modern revisionism and what is its source; what is the nature of this polemic and what will be its future.

In actual life no one can avoid all the above important domestic and international issues. In fact, they are closely related to everybody's life. The work and struggle of every department, and even the thinking of the masses, are mostly concerned with these questions and cannot operate independently of them. Obviously, our ideological work should provide scientific answers to these questions and all the other ones arising from them.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung says:

What are the characteristics of the present movement? What are its laws? How is it to be directed? These are all practical questions. . . . The movement is developing, new things have yet to emerge, and they are emerging in an endless stream. To study this movement in its entirety and in its development is a great task claiming our constant attention. Whoever refuses to study these problems seriously and carefully is no Marxist.<sup>1</sup>

We must pay constant attention to the new questions that arise from actual struggles, both international and domestic. We must study them and find out the laws of development of every kind of work and movement. Only with this as the basis can we lay down the correct general line and policy to guide the struggle and the specific lines and policies to be followed. These lines and policies are vital Marxism-Leninism in action. The task of our ideological work is precisely to educate the masses, explain various important current problems, carry out practical struggles step by step and lead the masses forward on the basis of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tse-tung's thinking and the Party's lines and policies.

How should we educate the masses in the Party's lines and policies and carry them out? By mechanically reading them out? By pushing them through without any regard for specific conditions? No, we cannot do this, because the Party's lines and policies arise out of the summing-up of the practical experiences of the masses

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<sup>1</sup> Mao Tse-tung, "The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War", *Selected Works*, FLP, Peking, 1965, Vol. II, p. 210.



in various regions and fields. Therefore, they become the general directive when applied to the concrete conditions of a specific region or field of work. When the conclusions drawn from the experiences of the masses are taken back to them these conclusions must be carried out according to the actual situation of the masses. In other words, the Party's lines and policies must be everywhere closely linked with the concrete conditions and the thinking of the masses. Only in this way can the practical ideological problems of the masses be effectively tackled, and the Party's policies be translated into actions by the masses.

In a period of great social changes, actual life is both rich and complex. Drastic changes are taking place among all classes and social strata, with various social forces regrouping themselves according to the new circumstances. Mass movements are developing with great momentum. The masses are constantly creating new things, but there are still many unfamiliar things to which people are not accustomed. People of different classes respond differently to, take different attitudes towards and raise different questions about the Party's lines and policies. This applies to the masses as well as to the cadres. As the ranks of revolutionary cadres expand, more and more "new-comers" are drawn in. In carrying out the policies they meet all kinds of problems and sometimes become indecisive. The "veterans" also face many new problems under the new conditions. Our ideological work should first of all be directed at these practical problems. We should differentiate between their different natures and use different methods to explain and tackle them. In this connection, the ideological

education of the P.L.A. companies has accumulated many good experiences.

Practice always comes first. During the process where the masses master the correct policy and turn it into action, new problems will arise, thus making it necessary for us to go down to the masses, gather new experiences and draw new conclusions. For example, take the class relation of socialist society. Our Party's policies formulated during the period of socialist transformation correctly handled the class relations at that time, but many new problems of class relations came into being after the socialist transformation of the ownership of the means of production was basically completed, and this necessitated a gradual deepening of our understanding. The abolition of all exploiting classes is bound to be a prolonged process which cannot be completed immediately after the change in the ownership of the means of production; new bourgeois elements may emerge in a socialist society; and in the countryside for a long historical period after collectivization, we must organize the poor peasants and lower middle peasants as the forces on which we rely. All these practical experiences have undoubtedly led to a new development in our Party's class policies and have added a new content to them in every respect. The theoretical explanations of this new content will certainly develop Marxist-Leninist theory a step further. If we ignore all the different kinds of new problems that arise from practice and do not analyse them in a Marxist-Leninist way, then our policies and theories will lag behind and thus adversely affect or seriously damage the cause of socialism and communism.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung says:

In all the practical work of our Party, all correct leadership is necessarily "from the masses, to the masses". This means: take the ideas of the masses (scattered and unsystematic ideas) and concentrate them (through study turn them into concentrated and systematic ideas), then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action, and test the correctness of these ideas in such action. Then once again concentrate ideas from the masses and once again go to the masses so that the ideas are persevered in and carried through. And so on, over and over again in an endless spiral, with the ideas becoming more correct, more vital and richer each time. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

By carrying on living ideological education we mean that our ideological work must also go through the recurring process of "from the masses, to the masses". Such ideological work is vital and effective.

In order to answer the various questions arising from the practical struggles and to sum up the practical experiences, we naturally need to frequently consult the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Comrade Mao Tse-tung. Creatively studying and applying Marxism-Leninism means to study and apply Marxism-Leninism during the process of "from the masses, to the masses" in order to answer and solve the specific questions which occur.

In fact, many of our comrades have acquired the habit of studying and applying Marxism-Leninism in this way.

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<sup>1</sup>Mao Tse-tung, "Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership", *Selected Works*, FLP, Peking, 1965, Vol. III, p. 119.

When they meet to discuss work or during the course of daily routine, many comrades often read or consult again and again the appropriate works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin and Comrade Mao Tse-tung in order to solve the problems arising from their work and to sum up their experiences. Such studies, digested bit by bit, are very penetrating and make it easier to achieve success and produce immediate results. This is because the purpose of such study is to apply what one has learned, as a result of which one's understanding becomes deepened. This method has gradually spread to the masses, especially among a large number of the activists, who, in order to better understand the Party's policy and be creative at work, have set themselves the important task of studying the writings of Comrade Mao Tse-tung. This will in turn undoubtedly promote the development of our Party's ideological work.

The experiences of the P.L.A. prove that to grasp living ideas and to study with specific problems in mind does not mean that it is impossible or unnecessary to study theory systematically. So long as you study with specific problems in mind, study them one by one, in real earnestness and with persistence, day after day and month after month, you will gradually acquire a systematic knowledge of Marxism-Leninism and form the habit of being eager to learn and of going deeply into theories.

The idea that one should study with specific problems in mind does not exclude systematic reading. Particularly high-ranking cadres and ideological and theoretical workers should not only systematically study the works of Comrade Mao Tse-tung, but should also deeply read the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. The pur-

pose of systematic study is to meet the needs of the domestic and international struggle; at present, it is to satisfy the demands of socialist revolution and socialist construction, especially those that arise out of the struggle against modern revisionism. This is studying Marxism-Leninism in the midst of struggle and studying with a purpose. This method of study is the best way to link theory with practice.

Under certain conditions the habit of separating theory from practice will grow. Therefore, we demand that ideological work should take first place. But if it is not based on reality and if it is divorced from practice, then our ideological work will prove ineffective and lose its importance. Therefore, we should frequently re-evaluate and check up on our ideological work in order to enable it to further meet the needs of the people, the needs of the development of the situation.

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