

Mao Tsetung's Immortal Contributions

Part 2: Revolutionary War and Military Line



Mao Tsetung addresses a meeting marking the third anniversary of the founding of the Chinese People's Anti-Japanese Military and Political College in Yen-an in 1939.

Introduction

This article is the second in a series on the contributions of Mao Tsetung. The first article in this series in *REVOLUTION*, April-May 1978 dealt with Mao's development of the line for revolution in the colonial countries, and in particular the theory and strategy of new democratic revolution. That article pointed out that Mao's line on new democracy was "closely related to Mao Tsetung's great contributions in other fields, in particular with regard to warfare, since Mao fought for and developed the correct analysis that from the beginning to the seizure of power the main form of the Chinese revolution must be armed struggle." This second article in the series will deal with Mao's development of the line of people's war in China and his general contributions to Marxist military line, theory and strategy.

Basis, Fundamental Principles of Mao's Military Line

In formulating a revolutionary line on warfare and Marxist military strategy and theory, Mao summed up and learned from the contributions and writings on this subject of both Marxist revolutionary leaders and other writers and thinkers from various ages, both in China and in other countries. China itself, with its thousands of years of history and repeated uprisings of the masses and revolutionary wars, was rich in experience of warfare, both ancient and more contemporary. Also in the brief period since the proletariat had emerged on the historical scene it had been engaged in a number of countries in revolutionary wars, sometimes together with other classes, including the bourgeoisie, against feudalism, reactionary monarchies or other forces holding back the development of capitalism, and sometimes as an independent force fighting together with other oppressed masses for the seizure of power and the establishment of a workers'

state.

From the first, the leaders of the class conscious workers' movement paid considerable attention to the question of armed struggle and the role of revolutionary violence in advancing society from one historical stage to the next, in particular from capitalism to socialism and ultimately communism. Marx and Engels followed closely and wrote extensively on such historical events as the Civil War in the U.S. as well as various progressive wars in Europe and elsewhere. And in particular they followed closely and gave advice to the uprising of the workers in Paris which established the first, though short-lived, workers' government in 1871, the Paris Commune. They firmly established the basic principle of Marxism that the abolition of capitalism required as a first step the forcible overthrow of the capitalist state and the forcible suppression of the overthrown capitalist class and capitalist elements in order to advance to classless society, communism.

Engels, in such works as his "Introduction" to Marx's *The Class Struggles in France, 1848 to 1850* and his famous *Anti-Duhring* as well as in other works, summed up the recent developments in armaments and other developments which gave rise to necessary changes in the strategy and tactics of modern warfare. And he summed up political lessons from this and their application to the question of the armed uprising of the working class against the rule of capital.

Lenin, in the beginning of the 1905 Revolution in Russia, which he later would term a "dress rehearsal" for the successful seizure of power in 1917, paid particular attention to the question of the tactics of street fighting and armed insurrection which had to be developed in order to confront the military power of the Tsar. In leading the successful insurrection in Russia in 1917, Lenin and Stalin developed Marxist

theory and practice with regard to insurrection and warfare in a capitalist country—though one with backward features such as large-scale survivals of feudalism and backward conditions in the countryside. Lenin and Stalin further developed Marxist theory, strategy and tactics on revolutionary war, the civil war that followed the victorious insurrection in October 1917. It was in this war that the Russian workers and peasants, led by the Bolshevik Party and Lenin and Stalin, defeated not only the overthrown capitalists and landlords in Russia but fourteen reactionary powers that intervened on the side of counter-revolution.

And of course in WW2, in the great patriotic war of the USSR which ended in the defeat of the German Nazis, Stalin brilliantly led the Soviet Red Army and the Soviet people as a whole in waging revolutionary war to defeat the invasion and war of aggression of the Nazis, which became the turning point and decisive factor in the war and the defeat of the fascist axis. In the course of this, Stalin made great contributions to the revolutionary movement internationally and to communist strategy and tactics of warfare and their concrete application.

First Comprehensive Marxist Military Line

But it was Mao Tsetung who was the first among the great Marxist leaders to develop a comprehensive and complete Marxist military line and system of thought on military affairs. For over 20 years Mao Tsetung led the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people and the armed forces under the Communist Party's leadership in waging revolutionary warfare against the warlords, against the reactionary regime of Chiang Kai-shek, then in the united front against Japan in the

Continued on page 2

Mao...

anti-Japanese war, and finally in the war of liberation against Chiang Kai-shek and his U.S. backers, which resulted in the liberation of China in 1949.

Mao's development of Marxism-Leninism with regard to warfare was closely linked with the character of the Chinese revolution. For, as pointed out in last month's article on Mao's contributions, from the beginning the armed revolution was fighting the armed counterrevolution in China. And this was both a specific feature and a specific advantage of the Chinese revolution.

In other words as Mao pointed out and fought for, from the beginning warfare was the main form of the revolutionary struggle in China. This was a truth that Mao established as a basic principle of the Party only through fierce struggle against right opportunists within the Party at the early stages of the Chinese revolution. It was in the course of leading the armed struggle through the various stages of the revolution that Mao fully developed his Marxist military line and strategy and system of thought on military affairs, which guided the Chinese revolution to complete victory and made lasting contributions in greatly enriching Marxism-Leninism on the question of warfare. As Mao himself was to say, for himself as well as the Communist Party and the Chinese masses which it led, it was a question of learning warfare through making warfare.

At the same time, as pointed out earlier, Mao studied and absorbed the rich lessons of warfare, especially progressive wars in China and other countries, and the thinking and analysis of revolutionary leaders and particularly Marxist leaders on the question of warfare. Furthermore, Mao brilliantly applied materialist dialectics to the question of warfare and the development of revolutionary strategy for warfare in China through the various stages of the Chinese revolution. Mao's military works, then, are a rich treasure house not only of Marxist thought on the question of war but also in the application of basic principles of Marxism, in particular materialist dialectics.

Mao's military line was rooted in the basic fact that revolutionary war depends on the masses of people and can only succeed on the basis that it enjoys their support and enlists them actively in the struggle against the counterrevolutionary forces. In other words, as Mao said, a people's war is a war of the masses. This has important application not only in countries like China but universally for the revolutionary struggle in all countries. And while the military line Mao developed has specific relevancy and importance for countries like China during the period of the new democratic revolution, that is, colonial or semi-colonial (or neo-colonial) and semi-feudal countries, the basic principles of Mao's military line have general application to revolutionary warfare in all countries.

From the very beginning, Mao fought for, and through the course of the revolution further deepened and forged, some of these basic principles. Of great importance among these is the principle that the Party must command the gun, and not the other way around, in other words that the Party must lead the revolutionary armed forces and the armed struggle, and the army must never be allowed to become at the same time the political leading force of the revolution or a force independent from the political leadership of the Party; and, linked to this, that man, not weapons, is decisive in warfare, a fundamental truth that Mao fought for, defended and developed in opposition to the opportunism of old and new revisionists, from Bernstein and Kautsky to Khrushchev and Khrushchev-types in China itself.

Further, Mao developed the basic orientation which has application for all oppressed nations and for socialist countries subjected to imperialist aggression, and further for all revolutionary armed forces which start off small and/or weak in opposition to their adversary—the orientation of first proceeding from the strategic defensive and waging the war in such a way as to prepare for and finally go over to the strategic offensive and on that basis carry the warfare through to victory.

In developing his line on revolutionary war, Mao based himself on and forcefully reaffirmed the fundamental Marxist analysis of the question of war. For example, in "Problems Of Strategy In China's Revolutionary War," written in December 1936, Mao pointed out that "War is the highest form of struggle for resolving contradictions, when they have developed to a certain stage, between classes, nations, states, or political groups, and it has existed ever since the emergence of private property and of classes." (Mao, *Selected Military Writings (SMW)*, "Problems Of Strategy In China's Revolutionary War," p. 78)

Mao made clear that the purpose of the proletariat in waging war was to defeat imperialism and reaction and advance society toward the stage of communism, where war would finally be eliminated with the elimination of classes. He vividly showed that it is necessary to wage warfare in order to end warfare; as he graphically put it, in order to get rid of the gun it is necessary to pick up the gun. This is a stinging refutation of revisionist and other bourgeois trash that

preaches passivity and pacifism to the masses in order to set them up for slaughter by the reactionaries and hold back the revolutionary struggle.

Further, in "Problems Of War And Strategy," written in November 1938, Mao explained that "The seizure of power by armed force, the settlement of the issue by war, is the central task and the highest form of revolution. This Marxist-Leninist principle of revolution holds good universally, for China and for all other countries." (SMW, p. 269) Mao immediately added, however, "But while the principle remains the same, its application by the party of the proletariat finds expression in varying ways according to the varying conditions." (Mao, *ibid.*) As on other questions, with regard to the Marxist military line for revolutionary war, Mao concretely analyzed the concrete conditions, combated dogmatism as well as revisionism and on this basis developed the correct military line in opposition to various opportunist military lines.

The correct military line for China's revolution was based on the correct analysis of Chinese society and the character of the Chinese revolution in general, flowing from the semi-colonial, semi-feudal nature of China. It was on this basis that Mao developed the strategy of establishing base areas, waging protracted war to surround the cities by the countryside and finally capture the cities and win nationwide political power, the correct road on which Mao led the Chinese masses in waging the successful revolutionary struggle in China.

Revolutionary Base Areas

At the very early stages of the Chinese revolution, Mao made and defended the analysis of why red political power could exist in China, that is, why it was possible to establish liberated base areas and use them as the foundation for waging revolutionary war. Mao provided leadership in carrying this out, not only in theory but in practice. In 1927 he led the Autumn Harvest Uprising, from which the armed forces were developed which established the first revolutionary base area in China in the Chinggang Mountains. The basic line of establishing base areas and waging warfare with them as the foundation was itself a brilliant application of Marxist materialist dialectics and provided the means for turning weakness and backwardness in China into a strength for the revolutionary struggle. Mao pointed out that not only was China subjected to imperialist aggression and domination, but that various imperialist powers were contending for control of China and the various reactionary forces in China were aligned with lackeys of these contending imperialists. Therefore the reactionary forces in China were divided. Further, he pointed out that in the vast countryside of China there was "a localized agricultural economy (not a unified capitalist economy)" and this provided the economic base for relatively self-sufficient base areas to exist. (See SMW, "Why Is It That Red Political Power Can Exist In China?," p. 13) From the beginning Mao stressed that the armed struggle in China must be integrated with the agrarian revolution and that it was generally linked to the democratic revolution in China. He stressed that "the regions where China's Red political power has first emerged and is able to last for a long time have not been those unaffected by the democratic revolution...but regions...where the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers rose in great numbers in the course of the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1926 and 1927." (Mao, *ibid.*)

Mao pointed out that the existence and survival of such base areas was an unprecedented event in the history of the world, and he consistently pointed to the material and political reasons why such base areas could exist and could be expanded in the course of revolutionary struggle. In this he had to wage a fierce ideological struggle against putschists in the Chinese Communist Party who wanted to wage big attacks on the cities, rather than establish base areas, who wanted to attempt to seize nationwide power right away and all at once. But even more he had to wage struggle against pessimism and right opportunism, including that of Lin Biao even at this early stage of the Chinese Revolution, in the late 1920s. Such people were raising the question, "How long can we keep the red flag flying?" and doubting and challenging the strategy of establishing base areas and waging protracted warfare. Instead, such people, not believing that a revolutionary high tide in the country was imminent and being despondent in the face of temporary setbacks, wanted to go in for roving guerrilla actions and act as roving rebel bands. Mao pointed out that such an approach would isolate the revolutionary forces and the revolutionary army from the broad masses and was bound to lead to defeat. In refuting this line Mao stressed that "there will soon be a high tide of revolution" throughout the country as a whole, and specifically in response to the question of what was meant by "soon" Mao, in a now famous and powerfully poetic statement, explained it as follows:

"But when I say that there will soon be a high tide of revolution in China, I am emphatically not speaking of something which in the words of some people 'is possibly coming', something illusory, unattainable and devoid of significance for action. It is like a ship far out at sea whose mast-head can already be seen from the shore; it is like the morning sun in the east whose shimmering rays are visible from a high mountain

top; it is like a child about to be born moving restlessly in its mother's womb." (SMW, "A Single Spark Can Start A Prairie Fire," p. 75)

The establishment of base areas was, of course, not an end in itself, but the means and the foundation for waging revolutionary warfare. It was a question of establishing the political power of the masses through armed struggle and then using this as a support and rear area for engaging the enemy in revolutionary warfare. Here again, the role and struggle of the masses was decisive. In establishing the first base area in the Chinggang Mountains as early as 1927, Mao chose an area where the mass struggle was at a high level, and this was a most decisive factor in terms of not only establishing but being able to maintain an independent regime, a liberated base area. With this as a foundation, Mao led not only in formulating but in applying

"the policy of establishing base areas; of systematically setting up political power; of deepening the agrarian revolution; of expanding the people's armed forces by a comprehensive process of building up first the township Red Guards, then the district Red Guards, then the county Red Guards, then the local Red Army troops, all the way up to the regular Red Army troops; of spreading political power by advancing in a series of waves, etc., etc. Only thus is it possible to build the confidence of the revolutionary masses throughout the country, as the Soviet Union has built it throughout the world. Only thus is it possible to create tremendous difficulties for the reactionary ruling classes, shake their foundations and hasten their internal disintegration. Only thus is it really possible to create a Red Army which will become the chief weapon for the great revolution of the future. In short, only thus is it possible to hasten the revolutionary high tide." (SMW, "A Single Spark Can Start A Prairie Fire," p. 66)

It was in this way that the workers' and peasants' army was in fact built up and the armed struggle against the counterrevolutionary forces of Chiang Kai-shek was developed. From very early on, Mao had developed some of the basic principles that were to form the foundation of his military line. He concentrated the many complexities of war into the formulation that the basic principle in war is to "preserve oneself and destroy the enemy." On the other hand he applied materialist dialectics not only to demonstrate how, overall, destroying the enemy is the principal aspect, but to develop out of an understanding of the basic principle in war a whole series of strategic and tactical lines as well as particular methods for waging revolutionary war and specific campaigns and battles within such a war in the concrete conditions of the Chinese revolution at each of its stages, leading to the successful seizure of nationwide political power.

Mao stressed that in fighting battles and attacking the enemy it was necessary to concentrate the forces of the revolutionary army, while in order to develop and spread revolutionary struggle among the masses it was correct to disperse the armed forces of the revolution. Both of these were important, for unless the masses were aroused and unless the armed struggle was integrated with the revolutionary struggle of the masses, in particular the agrarian revolution in the countryside, then despite its heroism and even despite clever tactics in fighting, the Red Army would degenerate into banditry and warlordism. It would lack both a political and economic basis for waging revolutionary war, relying on the masses of people. On the other hand, unless the revolutionary army adopted and successfully carried out correct military strategy and tactics, and in particular the principle of concentrating its forces, amassing a superior force in any particular battle against the enemy, then it would not be able to sustain the base areas it had established and to further arouse and mobilize the masses in revolutionary struggle, build up the armed forces of the revolution and gradually expand the revolutionary war. In "A Single Spark Can Start A Prairie Fire," Mao summed up the military principles which had been developed through the course of three years of armed struggle:

"The tactics we have derived from the struggle of the past three years are indeed different from any other tactics, ancient or modern, Chinese or foreign. With our tactics, the masses can be aroused for struggle on an ever-broadening scale, and no enemy, however powerful, can cope with us. Ours are guerrilla tactics. They consist mainly of the following points:

"Divide our forces to arouse the masses, concentrate our forces to deal with the enemy."

"The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue."

"To extend stable base areas, employ the policy of advancing in waves; when pursued by a powerful enemy, employ the policy of circling around."

"Arouse the largest numbers of the masses in the shortest possible time and by the best possible methods."

"These tactics are just like casting a net; at any moment we should be able to cast it or draw it in. We cast it wide to win over the masses and draw it in to deal with the enemy. Such are the tactics we have used for the past three years." (SMW,

Mao...

"A Single Spark Can Start A Prairie Fire," p. 72)

Of particular importance was what came to be called "the sixteen-character formula: 'The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue.'" Several years later, Mao was to point out that "The sixteen-character formula covered the basic principles for combating 'encirclement and suppression'; it covered the two stages of the strategic defensive and the strategic offensive, and within the defensive, it covered the two stages of the strategic retreat and the strategic counter-offensive. What came later was only a development of this formula." (*SMW*, "Problems Of Strategy In China's Revolutionary War," p. 111) Through the development and application of these principles Mao led the revolutionary armed forces in defeating four successive "encirclement and suppression" campaigns launched by Chiang Kai-shek in an attempt to wipe out the revolutionary armed forces and the revolutionary base areas. All during this period, however, there was sharp opposition and interference within the Communist Party itself from various "left" opportunist lines. Most damaging of these lines was the "left" opportunism of Wang Ming, who was later to flip over into outright right opportunism and capitulationism during the anti-Japanese war and the united front against Japan.

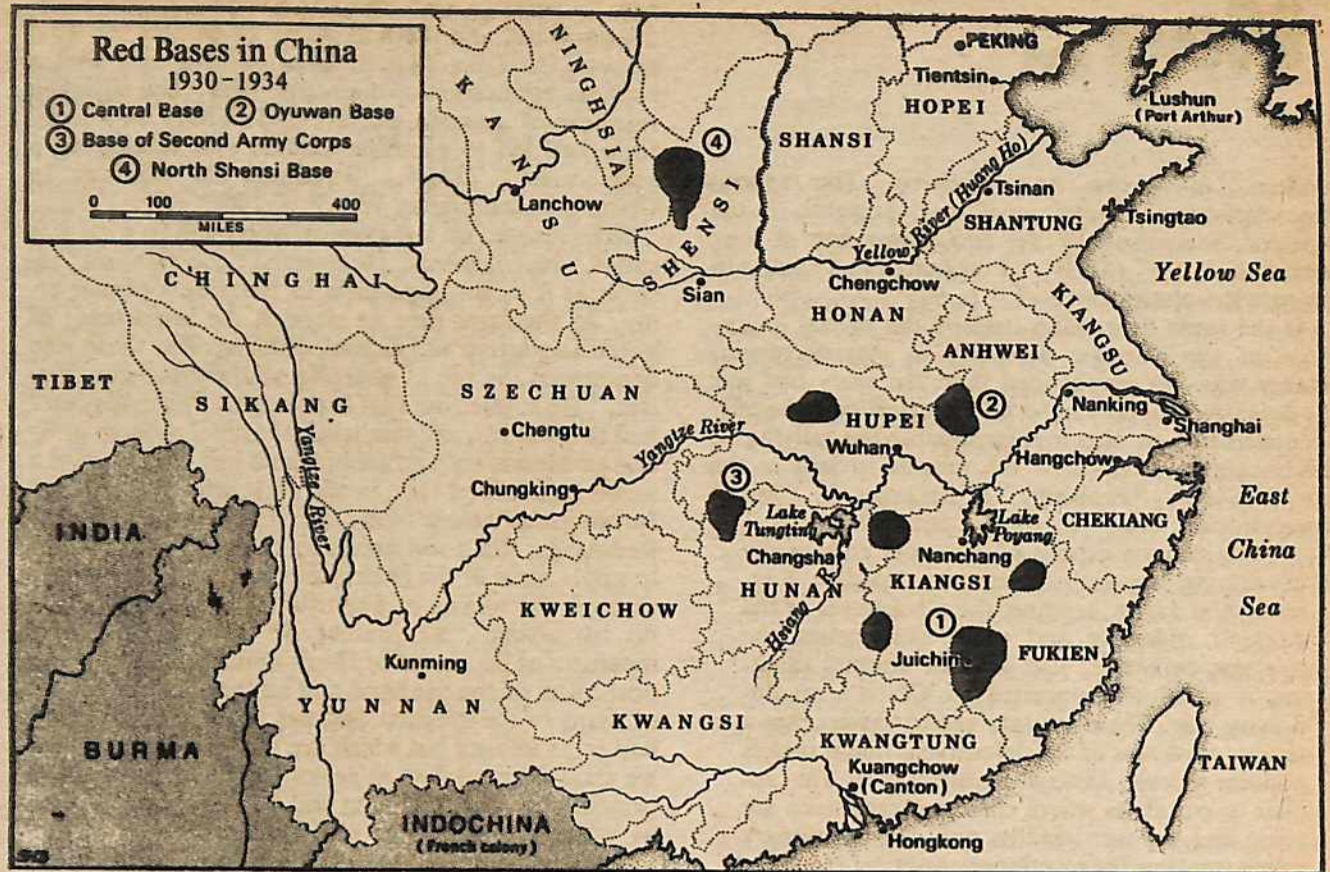
Combating Opportunist Lines

In this period of the early 1930s Wang Ming's "left" opportunist line with regard to military affairs underestimated the enemy and insisted on the strategy of attacking large cities in opposition to the correct line of establishing and linking up base areas and luring the enemy in deep in order to strike at it, concentrate superior forces in particular battles and wipe out its troops, and in this way break through the encirclement and in the particular campaign go from the defensive to the offensive. Owing to the interference and sabotage of this "left" opportunist line, the Chinese Communist Party and the revolutionary army under its leadership were finally unable to defeat the fifth "encirclement and suppression" campaign launched by Chiang Kai-shek against them, and were forced in 1934 to abandon the central base area in the south. Mao Tsetung, summing up these developments, led the Chinese Communist Party's Red Army in carrying out what became a historical event without precedent, the Long March. For two years, fighting on the average of more than one battle a day, and winding over several thousand miles, the Red Army was finally able to break through the encirclement of Chiang Kai-shek's forces and advance to the northwest, establishing base areas there. The advance to the northwest was not simply a question of fighting through, breaking the encirclement and avoiding suppression and annihilation by Chiang Kai-shek's forces, but was directly linked to the question of waging warfare against the Japanese, who had invaded the northeast of China and were preparing to advance into the rest of China.

In January 1935 a decisive turning point took place in the history of the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese revolution. An expanded meeting of the Political Bureau of the Party's Central Committee was held in which Mao Tsetung's military line was upheld in opposition to the opportunist line of Wang Ming and others and Mao's leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and the Red Army was affirmed. This laid the basis for correctly carrying out the armed struggle against Japan, which was posing itself as the urgent requirement of the revolutionary struggle at the time.

In solidifying Mao's revolutionary line and leadership with regard to the armed struggle and within the Chinese Communist Party a sharp struggle also had to be waged against the flightism and splittism of Chang Kuo-tao, who attempted to set up a bogus Central Committee in opposition to Mao's leadership and refused to unite his armed forces with those under Mao's leadership to wage the struggle against Japan. Looking at the temporary and superficial phenomenon that the Communist Party and the Red Army under its leadership had lost a large part of their forces through the course of the Long March, and acting in the manner of a warlord attempting to carve out territory for himself, Chang Kuo-tao insisted on retreating away from the task of establishing base areas and using them to engage in revolutionary warfare against the Japanese aggressors. Mao, in opposition to this, insisted that it was through the establishment of these base areas and the waging of the war against Japan and the full mobilization and arousing of the masses for this struggle that the Chinese Communist Party and the revolutionary armed forces would grow and become stronger. Through this struggle Chang Kuo-tao was defeated and soon after defected to the Kuomintang reactionaries.

Through the course of the Long March, keeping firmly in mind the objective of establishing the base areas for waging the struggle against Japan as well as the immediate objective of breaking through and



defeating the "encirclement and suppression" of Chiang Kai-shek, Mao brilliantly applied military strategy. In particular, he led the revolutionary armed forces in gaining the initiative and exercising flexibility under extremely difficult circumstances. Mao pointed out in his military writings that the question of initiative was closely linked to the question of superiority, and it was the case during the Long March that the reactionary forces of Chiang Kai-shek enjoyed strategic superiority in terms of numbers and training as well as armaments. But, taking that into account and applying materialist dialectics and specific principles of military strategy and tactics based on them, Mao led the revolutionary armed forces in establishing tactical superiority in certain battles and in seizing the initiative tactically within the situation where the enemy strategically had superiority. At the same time, Mao also correctly handled the dialectical relationship between the main direction and secondary directions—that is, he led the Red Army in shifting its directions tactically in order to fight battles in the most favorable circumstances, in order to be able to launch surprise attacks on the enemy, while at the same time adhering to the main direction of advancing to the north in order to be able to wage revolutionary warfare against Japanese aggression.

"Problems Of Strategy In China's Revolutionary War," written by Mao in December 1936, summed up the experience of revolutionary war in China under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party up to that point and laid the basis for waging revolutionary war in resistance to Japanese aggression. In this work, Mao reaffirmed the fundamental principle that he had fought for and set forth in earlier works, such as "The Struggle In The Chingking Mountains," in November of 1928, and "On Correcting Mistaken Ideas In The Party" written in December 1929—the principle that the Party must lead the army and the armed struggle and that the revolutionary struggle must have the ideological and political leadership of the proletariat.

In "Problems Of Strategy In China's Revolutionary War" Mao emphasized that: "Therefore, in an era when the proletariat has already appeared on the political stage, the responsibility for leading China's revolutionary war inevitably falls on the shoulders of the Chinese Communist Party." (*SMW*, p. 90) This work was written to combat various erroneous tendencies within the Chinese Communist Party and in particular against various forms of dogmatism and mechanical thinking—either to regard it as sufficient to study and understand the laws of war in general, making no distinction between reactionary and progressive or revolutionary wars; or to mechanically copy the experience of the Civil War in Russia leading to the establishment of the Soviet Union; or to regard the early experience of the Chinese Communist Party when it was still within the Kuomintang as the only valid or most valuable experience, negating the rich lessons of the revolutionary war of ten years against Chiang Kai-shek's reactionary forces that followed the breakup of the alliance with the Kuomintang after Chiang's coup in 1927.

In answering this Mao pointed out that the laws of war, the laws of revolutionary war, and the laws of China's revolutionary war were all subjects which require study, analysis, and solution, and that while there were certain basic principles to warfare in general, to revolutionary warfare in particular, and specifically to China's revolutionary war, it was necessary to continue to apply concrete analysis to concrete conditions and continue to develop the correct military strategy. While the line for waging revolutionary warfare could, of course, not be divorced from an overall analysis of the character of the Chinese revolution in general as well as at the particular stage of resistance against Japan, and while it could not be divorced from a correct political line in general, it was also necessary to study and develop specific lines and

policies on warfare itself. As Mao explained, "Our revolutionary war has proved that we need a correct Marxist military line as well as a correct Marxist political line." (*SMW*, "Problems Of Strategy In China's Revolutionary War," p. 92)

Reviewing the experience of ten years of warfare against the Kuomintang reactionaries Mao pointed out that a specific feature of the Chinese revolution and revolutionary war in China was that China was a very large country and that this afforded the revolutionary forces room for maneuver. Secondly, with regard to the war against Chiang Kai-shek's forces, it had been necessary to take into account the important characteristic that the enemy was big and powerful while, at the beginning of the war, the revolutionary forces, and the Red Army, were small and weak. At the same time, showing the interpenetration and close link between political and military questions, Mao pointed out that an important characteristic of the struggle against the Kuomintang was that the Communist Party firmly upheld and carried out the agrarian revolution, whereas the Kuomintang opposed the agrarian revolution and therefore it lacked support from the peasantry, which the Communist Party was able to mobilize as the main force for the revolution and the main support for revolutionary war.

Summing up these points, Mao showed that it was the case that because of large territory and maneuvering room in China and because of the leadership of the Communist Party and its integration of the agrarian revolution with the armed struggle, it was possible for the Red Army to grow and eventually defeat the enemy. On the other hand he stressed that because of the fact that at the beginning the enemy was big and powerful while the Red Army was small and weak, it was impossible to rapidly defeat the enemy and therefore the revolutionary war in China must of necessity assume a protracted character. Mao's purpose in summing up and analyzing these important characteristics was not only to arm Party members and the masses with a correct understanding of the military line in general, but also to lay the basis for waging the war of resistance against Japan. As he pointed out, "China's revolutionary war, which began in 1924, has passed through two stages, the first from 1924 to 1927, and the second from 1927 to 1936; the stage of national revolutionary war against Japan will now commence." (*SMW*, "Problems Of Strategy In China's Revolutionary War," p. 89) Lessons which had been learned at the cost of great sacrifice and paid for in blood had to be applied concretely to the present struggle against the Japanese aggressors.

Offensive and Defensive

Certain specific characteristics of the war against the Kuomintang might not entirely apply in the war against Japan. For example, in the short run in the war against the Kuomintang the enemy, Chiang Kai-shek's forces, had a large population from which to draw, or press-gang, its troops, whereas in the war against Japanese aggression it was the Chinese nation that had a large population from which to draw its troops while Japan was not capable of fielding as large an army. Nevertheless, the basic principles of revolutionary war which had been forged in the course of the struggle against the Kuomintang must now be applied in waging the revolutionary war against Japan.

And this was true for most of the specific characteristics of the revolutionary war against the Kuomintang. For example, a most important factor which Mao pointed to in summing up the struggle against the "encirclement and suppression" campaigns, was that in these battles "the two forms of fighting, offensive and defensive, are both employed, and here there is no difference from any other war, ancient or

Mao ...

modern, in China or elsewhere. The special characteristic of China's civil war, however, is the repeated alternation of the two forms over a long period of time." (SMW, "Problems Of Strategy In China's Revolutionary War," p. 99)

At the same time, Mao stressed the special importance of the strategic defensive in waging revolutionary war. He emphasized that "In every just war the defensive not only has a lulling effect on politically alien elements, it also makes possible the rallying of the backward sections of the masses to join in the war." (SMW, "Problems Of Strategy In China's Revolutionary War," p.105) He noted that:

"The military experts of the newer and rapidly developing imperialist countries, namely, Germany and Japan, trumpet the advantages of the strategic offensive and come out against the strategic defensive. This kind of military thinking is absolutely unsuited to China's revolutionary war. These military experts assert that a serious weakness of the defensive is that it shakes popular morale, instead of inspiring it. This applies to countries where class contradictions are acute and the war benefits only the reactionary ruling strata or the reactionary political groups in power. But our situation is different." (Mao, *ibid.*)

And Mao summed up the serious errors of those in the Chinese Communist Party who had insisted on not giving up any territory in the face of enemy attacks and wanted to fight the enemy "outside the gates," who advocated striking out in two directions, relying on positional warfare and following the policy of pitting a small force against a larger one rather than the correct policy of concentrating a larger force against a numerically inferior force to wipe it out in any particular battle or campaign. Such people opposed the absolutely correct and necessary policy of luring the enemy in deep, surrounding it with the masses, cutting off its forces into various parts and annihilating them bit by bit. Mao noted that such erroneous arguments were raised in opposition to "guerrilla-ism" but that they would certainly lead to defeat not victory, and that, where they held sway, they had led to exactly that.

Mao emphatically stated that

"Without a doubt these theories and practices were all wrong. They were nothing but subjectivism. Under favorable circumstances this subjectivism manifested itself in petty-bourgeois revolutionary fanaticism and impetuosity, but in times of adversity, as the situation worsened, it changed successively into desperate recklessness, conservatism and flightism. They were the theories and practices of hotheads and ignoramuses; they did not have the slightest flavor of Marxism about them; indeed they were anti-Marxist." (See SMW, "Problems Of Strategy In China's Revolutionary War," pp. 112-113)

Those who held such wrong and opportunist theories had in fact been responsible for the defeat of the Red Army during the fifth "encirclement and suppression" campaign of Chiang Kai-shek. Mao pointed out that they had incorrectly argued that "Even though luring the enemy deep into our territory might have been useful in the past, it would be useless against the enemy's fifth 'encirclement and suppression' campaign in which he adopted the policy of blockhouse warfare. The only way to deal with this campaign, they said, was to divide up our forces for resistance and make short swift thrusts at the enemy." (SMW, "Problems Of Strategy In China's Revolutionary War," p. 118)

At the same time Mao pointed out that passive defense was also wrong and would lead to defeat. He stressed that the point in fighting defensive warfare, and of strategic retreat as a key part of defensive warfare, was in fact to prepare to go over to the counter-offensive. He summed this point up in this way: "Strategic retreat is aimed solely at switching over to the counter-offensive and is merely the first stage of the strategic defensive. The decisive link in the entire strategy is whether victory can be won in the stage of the counter-offensive which follows." (SMW, "Problems Of Strategy In China's Revolutionary War," p. 121)

Once again Mao emphasized the crucial importance of concentrating superior forces tactically within the situation where strategically the enemy had superior numbers as well as superior training and armaments. This came to be capsulized in the formula: "strategy, one against ten; tactics, ten against one." In other words, in the strategic situation where the revolutionary forces were still greatly outnumbered by the counterrevolutionary forces it was necessary in particular battles and campaigns to apply the principle of concentrating an overwhelming force to wipe out a numerically inferior section of the enemy force.

Mao also pointed out that another important characteristic of the operations of the revolutionary army which flowed from the fact that the enemy had technical superiority over it was that it fought with fluid and not fixed battle lines. And through analyzing the opportunist line which had led to defeat in the face

of Chiang Kai-shek's fifth "encirclement and suppression" campaign and had forced the Chinese Communist Party and the Red Army to embark on what became the Long March, Mao pointed out, with a brilliant application of dialectics, that "The mistaken rejection of guerrilla warfare and fluidity on a small scale had led to guerrilla warfare and fluidity on a great scale." (SMW, "Problems Of Strategy In China's Revolutionary War," p. 140)

Mao insisted on a dialectical approach to what was called "guerrilla-ism." He rejected "guerrilla-ism" insofar as it meant opposition to building a regular army. At the same time he stressed the importance of guerrilla warfare and defended this against those who denounced the use of guerrilla warfare as "guerrilla-ism." He pointed out that in this sense "guerrilla-ism" had two aspects, and that while the revolutionary army and revolutionary warfare in China had developed to a much higher level than in the early stages of the first formation of armed units, the first building up of the Red Army, still it was necessary to retain and continue to apply some of the principles which had been forged through the waging of guerrilla war. He summed this up by saying, "At present we oppose the wrong measures of the period of the domination of 'Left' opportunism on the one hand and on the other the revival of many of the irregular features which the Red Army had in its infancy but which are now unnecessary. But we should be resolute in restoring the many valuable principles of army building and of strategy and tactics by which the Red Army has consistently won its victories." (SMW, "Problems Of Strategy In China's Revolutionary War," p. 142)

Finally in this work, Mao reaffirmed the all-important principle of waging warfare of annihilation, that is fighting battles and campaigns not merely to rout the enemy but to thoroughly wipe it out and achieve a quick victory in battles. This, again, was a masterful application of dialectics, of applying the tactics of quick victory and annihilation to the situation where the strategic orientation must be a protracted war and a war of attrition to gradually and over a fairly long period of time wipe out large numbers of enemy forces and in this way wear down and finally defeat the enemy.

Guerrilla Warfare

A year and a half later, after almost a year of experience in the war of resistance to Japan, Mao wrote "Problems Of Strategy In Guerrilla War Against Japan" in May 1938. As a note to this article explained, it was written as part of a struggle against those inside and outside the Party who "belittled the important strategic role of guerrilla warfare and pinned their hopes on regular warfare alone, and particularly on the operations of the Kuomintang forces. Comrade Mao Tse-tung refuted this view and wrote this article to show the correct road of development for anti-Japanese guerrilla warfare." (SMW, p. 153)

In this work Mao reiterated the basic principle that the war must be fought at its beginning stages and throughout most of its duration as a strategically defensive war and that it must be a protracted war. This was necessary and also could be turned to the advantage of the revolutionary war, owing to the fact that on the one hand Japan was a strong country and was waging a war of aggression, an unjust war, while China was weak in terms of technical ability and level of development of its productive forces but was waging a just war of resistance which could and must rely upon the strength of the masses of people. Because of these factors it was the case that Japan could and would occupy large parts of Chinese territory. This increased the necessity and importance of waging guerrilla warfare, especially within the areas generally occupied by the Japanese aggressors.

Mao pointed out that "the basic principle of guerrilla warfare must be the offensive, and guerrilla warfare is more offensive in its character than regular warfare." (SMW, p. 158) He stressed, however, that the offensive in guerrilla warfare must take the form of surprise attacks. He further emphasized that in guerrilla warfare it was even more important than in regular warfare to fight battles of quick decision. Guerrilla warfare is by its nature more dispersed than even mobile warfare but, Mao insisted, at the same time the principle of concentrating a superior force to strike at a small part of the enemy remains valid and important in guerrilla warfare.

In the overall sense, during the entire war, Mao said, regular warfare would be principal and guerrilla warfare secondary. However, regular warfare meant principally mobile warfare and only secondarily positional warfare. Mobile war refers to warfare fought by regular units with rear base areas and on a relatively large scale, applying the principle of moving and fighting, moving in order to fight; guerrilla warfare is generally fought by more irregular units, mainly for the purpose of harassing the enemy in its own territory. Mao summed up that, mainly through regular—and principally mobile—warfare but with guerrilla warfare playing an important though secondary role, the road to victory lay in "the accumulation of many minor victories to make a major victory." (SMW, "Problems Of Strategy In Guerrilla War Against Japan," p. 159) In other words, in both regular as well as guerrilla warfare it was necessary to stress the principles of fighting battles of quick decision, of concentrating a big force to strike at a small section of the enemy forces and to annihilate the

enemy forces piece by piece, thus through a protracted process carrying out a war of attrition against the enemy until it was weakened to the point where the final *coup de grace* could be delivered to it.

Mao also gave emphasis to the question of developing guerrilla war into mobile war through the course of the anti-Japanese war. He pointed out that "Since the war is protracted and ruthless, it is possible for the guerrilla units to undergo the necessary steeling and gradually to transform themselves into regular forces, so that their mode of operations is gradually regularized and guerrilla warfare develops into mobile warfare. The necessity and possibility of this development must be clearly recognized by the guerrilla commanders if they are to persist in, and systematically carry out, the policy of turning guerrilla warfare into mobile warfare." (SMW, "Problems Of Strategy In Guerrilla War Against Japan," p. 181)

In formulating that principle Mao criticized those who took the purely military approach, pointing out that "They do not realize that the development of guerrilla warfare into mobile warfare means not the abandonment of guerrilla warfare, but the gradual formation, in the midst of widespread guerrilla warfare, of a main force capable of conducting mobile warfare, a force around which there must still be numerous guerrilla units carrying on extensive guerrilla operations. These guerrilla units are powerful auxiliaries to the main force and serve as inexhaustible reserves for its continuous growth." (SMW, "Problems Of Strategy In Guerrilla War Against Japan," p. 184) And Mao went on to add that the principle of decentralized command in campaigns or battles should be applied to regular as well as guerrilla war—in short that it was necessary to have unified strategy and overall a centralized strategic command but at the same time decentralized command and initiative and flexibility in waging particular campaigns and battles.

"On Protracted War"

Written at the same time as "Problems Of Strategy In Guerrilla War Against Japan" Mao's "On Protracted War" was a broader and more general statement summing up the principles of war and revolutionary war in particular and setting down the policies and overall strategic orientation for the war of resistance to Japan. Mao pointed out that the war of the Chinese nation in resistance to Japan was a war "which has no precedent in the history of the East, and which will go down as a great war in world history too." (SMW, "On Protracted War," p. 187)

In this work Mao forcefully combated and refuted the theory of China's inevitable subjugation as well as the theory of quick victory, both of which had considerable currency within China generally as well as in the Chinese Communist Party itself, though the former, the theory of subjugation and its outlook of capitulation, constituted overall the greater danger. Mao analyzed once again and in a thorough way the factors which explained both why it was possible for China to wage a victorious war of resistance to Japan and why on the other hand it must be a protracted war. He criticized both the notion that since Japan was superior to China in arms and technology therefore China could not wage a successful war of resistance and the notion, which he described as groundlessly optimistic that Japan could be easily defeated, a notion which, he pointed out, belittled the strategic role of guerrilla warfare in the war against Japan.

Mao thoroughly and all-sidedly answered the argument that China would not be able to achieve victory. He concretely analyzed the specific features of the anti-Japanese war and the international situation in which it was taking place. He pointed out that Japan, while temporarily powerful and enjoying technical superiority over China, was after all an imperialist power and therefore moribund, while on the other hand China was historically in an era of progress—the proletariat and its Party had emerged on the scene and was leading the war of resistance against Japan. Mao further pointed out that internationally there was the existence of the Soviet Union and wide-scale progressive and revolutionary movements in various countries throughout the world which were opposed to Japan's war of aggression against China.

On the basis of a concrete analysis of the different strengths and weaknesses of Japan and China Mao summed up once again that:

"... Japan can ride roughshod over China for a certain time and to a certain extent, that China must unavoidably travel a hard stretch of road, and that the War of Resistance will be a protracted war and not a war of quick decision; nevertheless, it follows from the other contrast—a small country, retrogression and meagre support versus a big country, progress and abundant support—that Japan cannot ride roughshod over China indefinitely but is sure to meet final defeat, while China can never be subjugated but is sure to win final victory." (SMW, "On Protracted War," p. 201)

This was a sharp ideological struggle which had decisive effect in relation to the military struggle against Japan. At that time, at the beginning of the war, it was not at all clear, looking only on the surface and without examining the essence of things, that backward China could defeat advanced Japan. Because of this the tendencies to capitulate and to attempt to avoid pro-



Mao Tsetung delivers the report "On Protracted War" at the Chinese People's Anti-Japanese Military and Political College in May, 1938.

Mao ...

tracted war were greatly strengthened.

Mao forcefully combatted those who wanted to adopt a policy of capitulation and concession to Japan and who promoted the erroneous notion that this would halt Japan's advances throughout China and induce Japan to rest content with its seizure of only certain parts of northern China. Mao pointed to the imperialist nature of Japan, which was in fierce rivalry with other imperialist powers, and he showed how Japan could not stand still with a partial seizure of China but must push deeper into the interior of China. Basing himself on a class analysis not only of the forces within China but internationally and the relationship between the internal and external forces, Mao pointed out that the Kuomintang "depends on Britain and the United States and hence will not capitulate to Japan unless they tell it to." (SMW, "On Protracted War," p. 204) Thus, Mao pointed out, the tendency to capitulate and compromise with Japanese imperialism, while great and dangerous, could and would be overcome by relying on the masses of Chinese people and the Chinese nation as a whole, which overwhelmingly favored and demanded resistance to Japan.

At the same time Mao refuted the erroneous arguments of the theorists of quick victory and pointed to the fundamental unity between the theory of subjugation and the theory of quick victory. Speaking of those who advocated quick victory Mao said pointedly, "they lack the courage to admit that the enemy is strong while we are weak," and base their strategy on this subjectivism. (See SMW, "On Protracted War," p. 206) Further about such people Mao said:

"Unable to endure the arduous trials of a protracted war and eager for an early triumph, the impetuous theorists of quick victory clamor for a strategically decisive engagement the moment the situation takes a slightly favorable turn. To do what they want would be to inflict incalculable damage on the entire war, spell finis to the protracted war, and land us in the enemy's deadly trap; actually, it would be the worst policy. Undoubtedly, if we are to avoid decisive engagements, we shall have to abandon territory, and we must have the courage to do so when (and only when) it becomes completely unavoidable. At such times we should not feel the slightest regret, for this policy of trading space for time is

correct." (SMW, "On Protracted War," p. 255)

Mao answered those who called such a policy one of non-resistance, pointing to the truth that unless the strategy of protracted war and the various principles that were inevitably part of it were applied, and in place of these the strategy of the theorists of quick victory was adopted, then this would inevitably land the Chinese nation in the position of subjugation. Mao summed this point up in the following way:

"Not to fight at all but to compromise with the enemy—that is non-resistance, which should not only be denounced but must never be tolerated. We must resolutely fight the War of Resistance, but in order to avoid the enemy's deadly trap, it is absolutely necessary that we should not allow our main forces to be finished off at one blow, which would make it difficult to continue the War of Resistance—in brief, it is absolutely necessary to avoid national subjugation. To have doubts on this point is to be shortsighted on the question of the war and is sure to lead one into the ranks of the subjugationists. We have criticized the desperate recklessness of 'only advance, never retreat' precisely because, if it became the fashion, this doctrine would make it impossible to continue the War of Resistance and would lead to the danger of ultimate national subjugation." (SMW, "On Protracted War," pp. 255-256)

Summing up the basis of the two erroneous kinds of thinking—the theory of subjugation and the theory of quick victory—and formulating in opposition to both of these the correct understanding, Mao made the following concise formulation:

"In the eyes of the subjugationists the enemy are supermen and we Chinese are worthless, while in the eyes of the theorists of quick victory we Chinese are supermen and the enemy are worthless. Both are wrong. We take a different view; the War of Resistance Against Japan is a protracted war, and the final victory will be China's. These are our conclusions." (SMW, "On Protracted War," p. 263)

Three Stages in War of Resistance

In this work Mao also analyzed the basic stages which the war of resistance to Japan would pass through. He explained that there would be three basic stages, the first covering the period in which Japan would be on the strategic offensive and the Chinese war of resistance would be one of the strategic defensive. This would be a period in which mobile warfare would be the main form while guerrilla warfare, and secondarily to guerrilla warfare positional warfare,

would be supplementary to mobile warfare.

The second stage of the war, Mao said, would be a strategic stalemate. In this period guerrilla warfare would assume the position of the main form, supplemented by mobile warfare, because the objective would be to threaten the enemy's consolidation of the areas it occupied and to harass it in its occupied areas.

The third stage would be that of the strategic counter-offensive by the forces of resistance to Japan. To go over to this stage would require the accumulation of strength of the forces of the Chinese nation in resistance to Japan as well as a shift in the international situation to one more favorable to China's war of resistance. In this stage mobile warfare would again become principal, but guerrilla war would continue and positional warfare would increase in importance.

Overall this analysis of Mao's of the development of the war was proved correct by the actual events in the war itself. As he was later to sum up after the victory of the anti-Japanese war and at the start of the war of liberation against Chiang Kai-shek and his U.S. imperialist masters, it proved to be the case during the anti-Japanese war that "the dispersal of our forces for guerrilla warfare was primary, and the concentration of our forces for mobile warfare was supplementary." (SMW, "Concentrate A Superior Force To Destroy The Enemy Forces One By One," p. 317) By this Mao meant that, taking the course of the anti-Japanese war as a whole and analyzing the succession of battles which accumulated to lay the basis for final victory, guerrilla warfare assumed the first place while mobile warfare assumed an important but secondary place. This was linked to the fact that the stage of stalemate in the war was fairly lengthy. In "On Protracted War," Mao had already anticipated and explained the basis for this with the formulation that "with regard to the whole, mobile warfare is primary and guerrilla warfare supplementary; with regard to the parts, guerrilla warfare is primary and mobile warfare supplementary." (SMW, "On Protracted War," p. 189)

People, Not Weapons, Decisive

While setting forth in "On Protracted War" the basic orientation and strategic principles for the war of resistance against Japan, and as a necessary part of this, Mao also criticized and refuted a number of other erroneous concepts. Crucial to defeating the theory of national subjugation was the criticism of the mistaken notion that "weapons decide everything." This upside-down view was naturally a powerful prop in support of the argument that Japan, superior in weapons and technology, was bound to defeat China, which was inferior in these things.

Mao forcefully answered the arguments of those who put forward such a line:

"At this point, the exponents of national subjugation and of compromise will again rush in and say, 'To move from inferiority to parity China needs a military and economic power equal to Japan's, and to move from parity to superiority she will need a military and economic power greater than Japan's. But this is impossible, hence the above conclusions are not correct.'

"... This is the so-called theory that 'weapons decide everything', which constitutes a mechanical approach to the question of war and a subjective and one-sided view. Our view is opposed to this; we see not only weapons but also people. Weapons are an important factor in war, but not the decisive factor; it is people, not things, that are decisive. The contest of strength is not only a contest of military and economic power, but also a contest of human power and morale. Military and economic power is necessarily wielded by people. If the great majority of the Chinese, of the Japanese and of the people of other countries are on the side of our War of Resistance Against Japan, how can Japan's military and economic power, wielded as it is by a small minority through coercion, count as superiority? And if not, then does not China, though wielding relatively inferior military and economic power, become the superior?" (SMW, "On Protracted War," pp. 217-218)

Against the technical superiority of Japan Mao stressed that the strength of the Chinese masses led and mobilized politically to wage a war of resistance could, in combination with the correct military line based on the principle of people's war, lead to victory. Mao put it this way: "The mobilization of the common people throughout the country will create a vast sea in which to drown the enemy, create the conditions that will make up for our inferiority in arms and other things, and create the prerequisites for overcoming every difficulty in the war." (SMW, "On Protracted War," p. 228)

Speaking further of the relationship between people and weapons and of the need for the Chinese people and the revolutionary army and the Chinese Communist Party to correctly handle this relationship Mao emphasized that:

"The reform of our military system requires its modernization and improved technical equipment, without which we cannot drive the enemy back across the Yalu River. In our employment of troops we need progressive, flexible strategy and tactics, without which we likewise cannot win victory. Nevertheless, soldiers are the foun-



Mao talks with young fighters of the Eighth Route Army in Yen-an in 1939.

Mao...

...ation of an army; unless they are imbued with a progressive political spirit, and unless such a spirit is fostered through progressive political work, it will be impossible to achieve genuine unity between officers and men, impossible to arouse their enthusiasm for the War of Resistance to the full, and impossible to provide a sound basis for the most effective use of all our technical equipment and tactics." (SMW, "On Protracted War," p. 259)

Closely linked to this, Mao stressed the importance of what he termed "man's conscious dynamic role," specifically in relation to war. He pointed out that though the objective conditions—the objective strengths and weaknesses of opposing sides in a war—set the possibility for victory or defeat, yet they don't determine the outcome of the war. The actual achievement of victory or actual defeat will also depend on the subjective factor, namely the concept of directing and the waging of the war. Hence the importance of a correct military line, in close connection with a correct overall political line, and hence also the importance of studying the laws of war and the concrete features of the particular war being waged and, as Mao stressed, of learning warfare through warfare.

Mao emphasized both that in the overall sense war could not be separated from politics nor military line from an overall political line, and on the other hand that war has its own particular features which cannot be simply equated with politics in general but must be concretely studied, applied, summed up and developed in the course of waging a revolutionary war. In short, Mao stressed that it was impossible to win a revolutionary war without on the one hand widespread political mobilization and arming the masses to consciously wage and support the struggle, and on the other hand without concretely applying a correct military line. This military line must be based on the fact that the war was a just war, a people's war, and at the same time it must be rooted in the concrete conditions of China at that time in the context of the international situation and the international struggle.

Following exactly this method, Mao not only formulated and fought for the basic strategy of protracted war but summarized and concentrated fully the tactics for carrying out such a war:

"In a word, the above operational principle for fighting campaigns and battles is one of 'quick-decision offensive warfare on exterior lines'. It is the opposite of our strategic principle of 'protracted defensive warfare on interior

lines', and yet it is the indispensable principle for carrying out this strategy." (SMW, "On Protracted War," pp. 233-234)

"Interior lines" refers to a situation in which one's army is surrounded by the enemy. Strategically this was the situation for most of China's war of resistance to Japan. However, brilliantly applying materialistic dialectics, Mao developed the operational principles for tactically reversing this situation—that is, in fighting battles or campaigns surround parts of the enemy and force them into battles at a disadvantageous situation where they have only interior lines. Carrying this out depended on the strategy of establishing base areas and on the crucial principle of luring the enemy in deep.

At the same time, because strategically the enemy was more powerful and surrounded the revolutionary army, it was necessary to launch offensive battles of annihilation and to fight battles of quick victories. Otherwise the reserves of the overall superior forces of the enemy could be brought to bear and the tactical advantage of the revolutionary army would be turned into its opposite and a defeat rather than a victory would be the result. Further, as he had done all during the Long March and in the battles before it, Mao developed and applied the principle of achieving initiative and flexibility within the situation where the enemy was strategically superior. Applying again the principle of "man's conscious dynamic role," Mao pointed out that:

"In the struggle, correct subjective direction [i.e. correct direction by the subjective factor, leadership in the war] can transform inferiority into superiority and passivity into initiative, and incorrect subjective direction can do the opposite. The fact that every ruling dynasty was defeated by revolutionary armies shows that mere superiority in certain respects does not guarantee the initiative, much less the final victory. The inferior side can wrest the initiative and victory from the superior side by securing certain conditions through active subjective endeavor in accordance with the actual circumstances." (SMW, "On Protracted War," p. 239)

These analyses of Mao's of the essential basic principles of revolutionary war in China's conditions then were indispensable for victory in the war of resistance against Japan and the advance of the Chinese revolution overall. In formulating and fighting for a correct military line for the war of resistance against Japan and for revolutionary war in China in general, Mao, as noted earlier, had to not only concretely apply Marxist principles to the situation in China, but had to combat various erroneous tendencies, in particular those that attempted to mechanically copy and apply in China the experience of the October Revolution in Russia, which set the general strategic orientation for revolution and the seizure of power in the capitalist coun-

tries.

Applying Marxism to China's Conditions

"Problems Of War And Strategy" was written by Mao in November of 1938 to combat these erroneous lines. In it he stressed the difference between a country like China—a colonial or semi-colonial and semi-feudal country—and the capitalist countries. Specifically he pointed out that:

"On the issue of war, the Communist Parties in the capitalist countries oppose the imperialist wars waged by their own countries; if such wars occur, the policy of these Parties is to bring about the defeat of the reactionary governments of their own countries. The one war they want to fight is the civil war for which they are preparing. But this insurrection and war should not be launched until the bourgeoisie becomes really helpless, until the majority of the proletariat are determined to rise in arms and fight, and until the rural masses are giving willing help to the proletariat. And when the time comes to launch such an insurrection and war, the first step will be to seize the cities, and then advance into the countryside, and not the other way about. All this has been done by Communist Parties in capitalist countries, and it has been proved correct by the October Revolution in Russia.

"China is different however. The characteristics of China are that she is not independent and democratic but semi-colonial and semi-feudal, that internally she has no democracy but is under feudal oppression and that in her external relations she has no national independence but is oppressed by imperialism. It follows that we have no parliament to make use of and no legal right to organize the workers to strike. Basically, the task of the Communist Party here is not to go through a long period of legal struggle before launching insurrection and war, and not to seize the big cities first and then occupy the countryside, but the reverse." (SMW, "Problems Of War And Strategy," pp. 269-270)

Summing up the history of the Chinese revolution to that point Mao forcefully drew the basic lesson that without armed struggle as the main form it would have been impossible to advance the revolutionary movement. He noted that the Chinese Communist Party at first failed to fully grasp this and that even after this basic understanding was achieved still erroneous lines, political and military, led to setbacks in the armed struggle against Chiang Kai-shek after his complete betrayal in 1927 and to serious defeats and setbacks in fighting the fifth "encirclement and suppression" in particular. It was in this work that Mao formulated his now famous statement that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun" and stressed that it was necessary for all communists to fully grasp this principle.

At the same time he reaffirmed the decisive principle that the Party must lead the armed struggle and the revolutionary army and not the other way around, or as he formulated it then, "Our principle is that the party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the party." Mao linked this to the all-important question of waging successful guerrilla warfare, emphasizing that only with the leadership of the Communist Party could guerrilla warfare be persevered in and both supplement regular war and at a certain point develop into regular warfare.

In line with this Mao concluded this work by stressing once again the importance of studying military theory and strategy and the further strengthening of the whole Party in its grasp not only of the correct political line in general but in particular of military affairs and the laws and principles of revolutionary war. This was decisive in developing and implementing the correct policies and tactics for, and leading the masses in, waging the protracted war of resistance against Japan.

During the course of this war Mao not only summed up and gave further guidance to the development of the revolutionary war in China itself but followed closely and analyzed the development of the international struggle and the world war which broke out in 1939. In particular, at an early point in the historic battle of Stalingrad in the Soviet Union, Mao summed up that this would in fact be the turning point in the whole of WW2. On October 12, 1942 Mao wrote an editorial for LIBERATION DAILY in Yen-an (where the Communist Party leadership was headquartered) in which he analyzed the development of the battle of Stalingrad and predicted the victory of the Soviet army and the shift in the whole war in favor of the Soviet Union, the Chinese people and the forces worldwide who were allied with them. This article was written as a further refutation of pessimism and ended with the clear-cut statement: "All those who take a pessimistic view of the world situation should change their point of view." (SMW, "The Turning Point In WWII," p. 299)

In fact within three years the defeat of the fascist imperialists of Japan and Germany, and of the whole fascist Axis, was achieved. In China it was achieved on the basis of carrying out Mao Tsetung's revolutionary political line and military line. In "On Coalition Government," a report to the 7th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party delivered by Mao Tsetung on the eve of the victory of the anti-Japanese war, he

Continued on page 7



A contingent of Red Army troops at the Kiangsi base in 1931 before the Long March.

Mao...

summed up the victorious course of the war and the role of the armed forces under the leadership of the Communist Party in that war, Mao noted that at the beginning of the war even within the Communist Party itself "there were some who looked down on this army and thought that the main reliance for resistance to Japan should be placed on the Kuomintang." (See *SMW*, p. 301) He emphasized that the revolutionary army under the leadership of the Party "is powerful because all its members have a discipline based on political consciousness; they have come together and they fight not for the private interests of a few individuals or a narrow clique, but for the interests of the broad masses and of the whole nation. The sole purpose of this army is to stand firmly with the Chinese people and to serve them wholeheartedly." (*SMW*, p. 302)

Mobilizing the Masses

Mao summed up and stressed once again the importance of mobilizing the masses broadly for the war and organizing the masses into militia to fight in coordination with the regional forces of the People's Liberation Army, while at the same time having a main force of the army capable of fighting in different regions according to the different requirements of the war. In other words it was the full mobilization of the Chinese nation for people's war, for carrying out the strategic line of protracted war and the various tactics and principles of operation that Mao developed for carrying out such a war, that resulted in victory in the war of resistance to Japan. Mao sharply pointed out that a force representing reactionary classes and therefore incapable of fundamentally relying on the masses could not carry out, let alone lead, such a war. In short: "Only by waging such a people's war can we defeat the national enemy. The Kuomintang has failed precisely because of its desperate opposition to a people's war." (*SMW*, p. 304)

In fact, as noted in the previous article in this series, during the anti-Japanese war, while nominally fighting the Japanese, Chiang Kai-shek adopted a passive and defeatist stance towards the Japanese aggressors and concentrated much of his fire against the Communist Party and the armed forces and base areas under its leadership. But, under Mao Tsetung's leadership, the Chinese Communist Party beat back such attacks and at the same time maintained the united front against Japan, while also maintaining its independence and initiative. It carried out Mao's political line and military line and on this basis greatly expanded the armed forces and base areas under its leadership and played the leading and decisive part in mobilizing the Chinese nation to wage people's war, in the form of a protracted war of resistance, and finally defeat Japan.

Summing up, on the eve of the victorious conclusion of this war, its main lessons and the underlying causes of the policies and actions of the various forces involved in it, Mao looked ahead and politically armed the Chinese Communist Party, and laid the basis for arming the broad masses of people, with the understanding that they could not give up their weapons and subordinate themselves to the Kuomintang, which was attempting to seize the fruits of the victory the Chinese people had paid for in blood in the anti-Japanese war. It was in this work that Mao made another of his now famous statements, "Without a people's army the people have nothing." (See *SMW*, p. 306) This was a crucial point to stress not only in summing up the

whole course of the anti-Japanese war and the Chinese revolution up to that point but in waging struggle then and preparing to continue the revolution in the situation right after that war and carry the struggle forward in the next stage.

When Chiang Kai-shek refused to carry out democratic reform and to dismantle his one-party regime, and instead attempted to usurp power throughout China, launching a civil war against the Chinese Communist Party and the armed forces and base areas under its leadership, Mao led the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese masses in waging revolutionary war against this counterrevolutionary war of Chiang Kai-shek and his U.S. backers. In guiding this armed struggle Mao applied the principles and strategy of revolutionary war that had been developed under his leadership in the Chinese revolution up to that point.

Concentrate a Superior Force

In an article written in September 1946, "Concentrate A Superior Force To Destroy The Enemy Forces Once By One," Mao set the orientation for the Chinese Communist Party, the revolutionary army and the Chinese masses in carrying forward the strategy of people's war and in particular fighting battles of annihilation to defeat an enemy that at the beginning of the war was superior in numbers and had superior weapons and superior technology. Applying the basic principles of people's war to the concrete situation then Mao wrote that:

"In the present civil war, since conditions have changed, the method of fighting should change too. The concentration of our forces for mobile warfare should be primary, and the dispersal of our forces for guerrilla warfare should be supplementary. Now that Chiang Kai-shek's army has acquired more powerful weapons, it is necessary for our army to lay special stress on the method of concentrating a superior force to wipe

out the enemy forces one by one." (See *SMW*, p. 317)

In October 1946 Mao wrote "A Three Months' Summary" in which he analyzed the development of the war of liberation against Chiang Kai-shek and the U.S. imperialists in its beginning phase up to that point. As was noted in the article in last month's *REVOLUTION*, at this point in the development of the Chinese revolution there was an intense struggle within the Chinese Communist Party over the question of whether or not it was possible to wage a successful revolutionary war against Chiang Kai-shek, backed as he was by U.S. imperialism. Mao began this "Summary" with the forceful reiteration of the Central Committee's directive of July 20 of that year—that indeed it was possible to defeat Chiang Kai-shek and that the whole Party must be confident about this.

Mao then proceeded to analyze the "fundamental political and economic contradictions which Chiang Kai-shek cannot resolve and which are the basic cause rendering our victory certain and Chiang's defeat inevitable." (*SMW*, "A Three Months' Summary," p. 321) He went on to analyze the specific contradictions in the military sphere which would be the direct cause of the victory of the revolutionary forces and the defeat of Chiang Kai-shek, namely the fact that Chiang's battle lines were overextended and he had from a long-term point of view a shortage of troops.

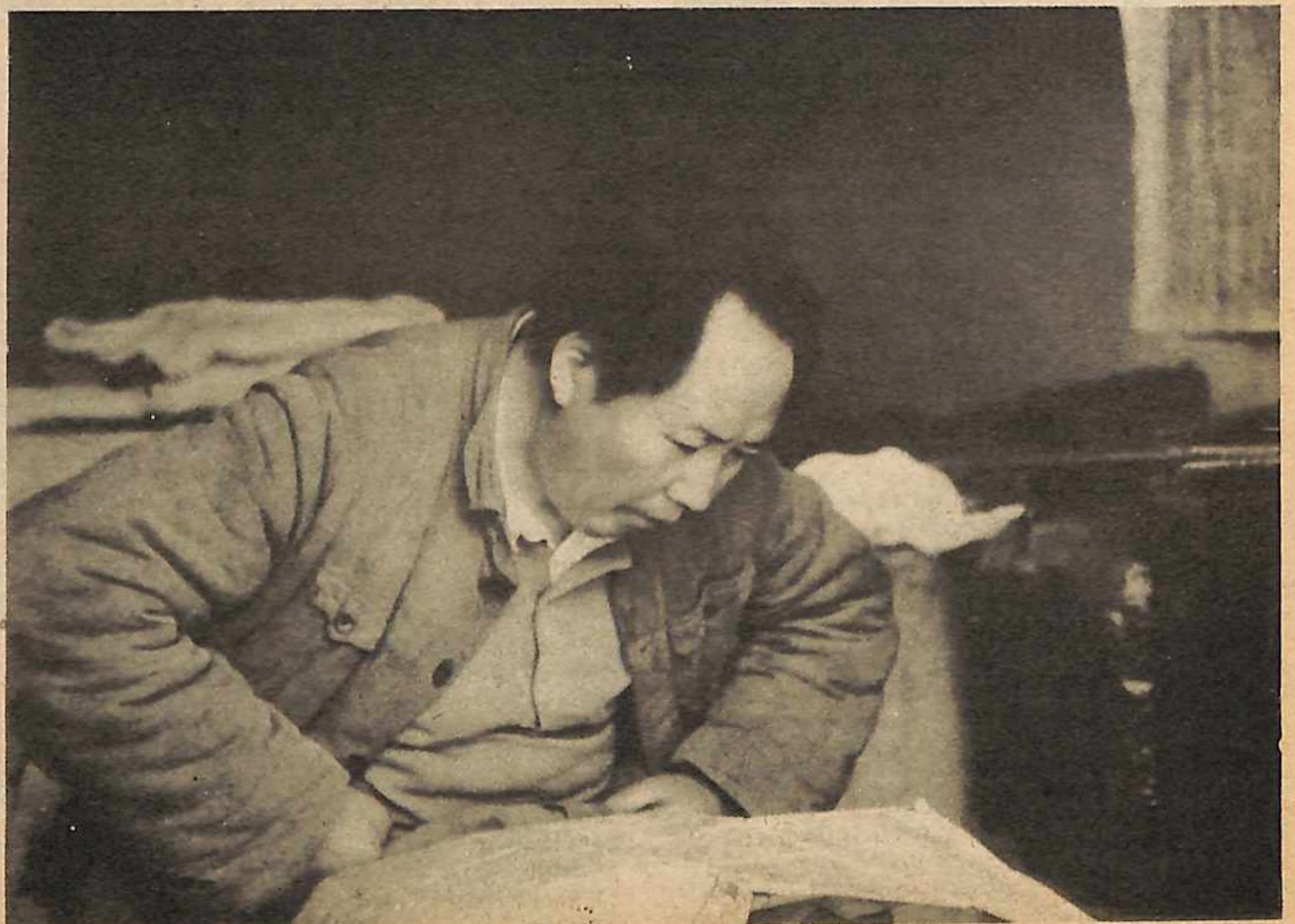
However, to translate this into actual victory it was necessary to uphold and strictly apply the basic principles of fighting by the method of concentrating a superior force to wipe out the enemy forces one by one; fighting battles of decisive victory; fighting, as Mao said, when conditions were favorable and moving away when they were not favorable, fighting in a tactical way on exterior lines, offensively and in quick-decision battles. These and other basic principles which Mao had developed through the course of the revolutionary wars in China, and in particular the war of resistance to Japan, were still valid and had to be applied to the war against Chiang Kai-shek's forces at that time in order to bring about the actual victory. (See *SMW*, p. 327)

In a telegram, "The Concept Of Operations For The Northwest War Theatre," sent by Mao Tsetung to the Northwest Field Army in April 1947, he stressed the importance of keeping the enemy on the run, tiring him out, wearing him down, reducing him to extreme fatigue and conditions of starvation and then launching the offensive to destroy him. Without doing this, Mao said, it would be impossible to win final victory.

Again, during this war of liberation against Chiang Kai-shek and the U.S. imperialists behind him, a struggle arose within the Chinese Communist Party over the question of whether or not to temporarily give up some territory in order to lure Chiang Kai-shek's forces in, divide them up and defeat them one by one. Specifically, in 1947 Chiang Kai-shek amassed large forces for a direct attack on the area of Yen-an, the base area where the Chinese Communist Party leadership and the leadership of the People's Liberation Army was headquartered. In the face of this there were some in the Chinese Communist Party who argued that it was wrong to retreat temporarily from the Yen-an area and that instead an all-out fight should be waged to defend it.

Mao defeated this erroneous line and gave leadership and direction to the liberation forces in waging a tactical retreat and circling around and isolating, chopping up and annihilating large forces of Chiang Kai-shek's army one by one, using the methods of mobile warfare and the basic principle of concen-

Continued on page 8



Mao studies a military map in 1947 in Northern Shensi Province while leading the liberation war.

Mao...

trating a superior force in battles, fighting offensively and wiping out the enemy in quick-decision warfare.

Going on the Offensive

The tremendous success in this campaign marked the turning point in the war of liberation. In September of 1947 Mao set forth an inner-Party directive entitled "Strategy For The Second Year Of The War Of Liberation," which set forth the task of carrying the war into the Kuomintang areas and switching from the strategic position of fighting on interior lines to fighting on exterior lines, that is going over from the strategic defensive in which the enemy was encircling and attacking to the strategic offensive in which the liberation army was encircling and attacking the enemy.

During that period the liberation army launched the countrywide offensive which was, in the space of two years, to lead to complete victory in the war of liberation. In setting forth the strategy for this offensive Mao stressed that "the operational principles of our army remain the same as those laid down before." (SMW, "Strategy For The Second Year Of The War Of Liberation," p. 332) And he summarized once again these basic operational principles. In "The Present Situation And Our Tasks," written in December of 1947, Mao set down in more fully developed form these basic operational principles, which have come to be known as the ten major principles of operation (see box).

Once again in this work, "The Present Situation And Our Tasks," written at the point when the liberation army had gone over to the strategic offensive and victory could be clearly seen on the horizon, Mao summed up the crucial importance at an earlier point, in fact at the beginning of the war of liberation, at correctly assessing the domestic and international situation and on this basis recognizing the possibility for successfully waging a revolutionary war against the counterrevolutionary war that Chiang Kai-shek had unleashed. Mao pointed out that at the beginning of the war when Chiang Kai-shek initially seized certain cities and grabbed territory he became swelled with arrogance; he mistook the strategy of the liberation army—of fighting first from the strategic defensive—for strategic weakness on the part of the liberation army. Mao pointed out that:

"We said then that Chiang Kai-shek's superiority in military forces was only transient, a factor which could play only a temporary role, that U.S. imperialist aid was likewise a factor which could play only a temporary role, while the anti-popular character of Chiang Kai-shek's war and the feelings of the people were factors that would play a constant role, and that in this respect the People's Liberation Army was in a superior position. Patriotic, just and revolutionary in character, the war waged by the People's Liberation Army was bound to win the support of the people of the whole country. This was the political foundation for victory over Chiang Kai-shek. The experience of eighteen months of war has fully confirmed our judgement." (SMW, "The Present Situation And Our Tasks," p. 348)

Mao not only stressed that the major principles of operation for the revolutionary army developed through the course of earlier warfare were still correct and applicable but that it would be impossible for Chiang Kai-shek's army to make use of these principles. He noted that Chiang Kai-shek and the U.S. imperialists were fully aware of the strategy and principles of the People's Liberation Army but that this knowledge could not save Chiang Kai-shek. Mao pointedly said that "The reason is that our strategy and tactics are based on a people's war; no army opposed to the people can use our strategy and tactics." (SMW, p. 350) A revolutionary war, a war of the masses, can and must be fought only according to military principles which are in conformity with relying upon the masses and mobilizing their strength as the backbone of the war. A reactionary war can never be fought on this basis.

Masses Are Bastion of Iron

And the reverse is also true. A revolutionary war can never be fought without relying on the masses of people and mobilizing them as the strength and bastion of iron, as Mao said, of the revolutionary war. For example such things as launching surprise attacks, evading the enemy, circling around, retreating and then turning a retreat into a counter-offensive, concentrating superior forces for attack in battles and campaigns and in general conducting guerrilla and mobile warfare—all these depend upon the firm support of the masses of people. Without that support the enemy will be able to upset the element of surprise through gaining intelligence, he will be able to thwart attempts at surprise attacks and evasion, to determine the point where a retreat is to be turned into a counter-offensive, etc., and will be able to defeat the attempts of carrying out mobile warfare as well as guerrilla warfare.

Ten Major Principles of Operation

- (1) Attack dispersed, isolated enemy forces first; attack concentrated, strong enemy forces later.
- (2) Take small and medium cities and extensive rural areas first; take big cities later.
- (3) Make wiping out the enemy's effective strength our main objective; do not make holding or seizing a city or place our main objective. Holding or seizing a city or place is the outcome of wiping out the enemy's effective strength, and often a city or place can be held or seized for good only after it has changed hands a number of times.
- (4) In every battle, concentrate an absolutely superior force (two, three, four and sometimes even five or six times the enemy's strength), encircle the enemy forces completely, strive to wipe them out thoroughly and do not let any escape from the net. In special circumstances, use the method of dealing the enemy crushing blows, that is, concentrate all our strength to make a frontal attack and an attack on one or both of his flanks, with the aim of wiping out one part and routing another so that our army can swiftly move its troops to smash other enemy forces. Strive to avoid battles of attrition in which we lose more than we gain or only break even. In this way, although inferior as a whole (in terms of numbers), we shall be absolutely superior in every part and every specific campaign, and this ensures victory in the campaign. As time goes on, we shall become superior as a whole and eventually wipe out all the enemy.
- (5) Fight no battle unprepared, fight no battle you are not sure of winning; make every effort to be well prepared for each battle, make every effort to ensure victory in the given set of conditions as between the enemy and ourselves.
- (6) Give full play to our style of fighting—courage in battle, no fear of sacrifice, no fear of fatigue, and continuous fighting (that is, fighting successive battles in a short time without rest).
- (7) Strive to wipe out the enemy when he is on the move. At the same time, pay attention to the tactics of positional attack and capture enemy fortified points and cities.
- (8) With regard to attacking cities, resolutely seize all enemy fortified points and cities which are weakly defended. At opportune moments, seize all enemy fortified points and cities defended with moderate strength, provided circumstances permit. As for strongly defended enemy fortified points and cities, wait till conditions are ripe and then take them.
- (9) Replenish our strength with all the arms and most of the personnel captured from the enemy. Our army's main sources of manpower and *matériel* are at the front.
- (10) Make good use of the intervals between campaigns to rest, train and consolidate our troops. Periods of rest, training and consolidation should not in general be very long, and the enemy should so far as possible be permitted no breathing space.

(SMW, "The Present Situation And Our Tasks," pp. 349-350)

So, too, a regime which does not depend on the masses of people to support it and supply it both with provisions and with soldiers, but which, like the army of Chiang Kai-shek, is forced to press-gang soldiers into its service and has its technical base resting upon the exploitation of the masses, is bound to be riddled with internal contradictions and its army is bound to be characterized by low morale, particularly in circumstances where it is very difficult to engage the enemy on your own terms and where there is no quick victory. This is an expression of the truth that people, not weapons, are decisive in warfare.

Three Decisive Campaigns

When the People's Liberation Army had entered into the country-wide counter-offensive and was approaching the hour of victory, Mao developed specific principles of operation for three decisive campaigns in the Chinese people's war of liberation against Chiang Kai-shek and U.S. imperialism. These were the Liaohsi-Shenyang campaign, the Huai-Hai campaign and the Peiping-Tientsin campaign. Mao drafted the telegrams to the armed forces of the People's Liberation Army involved in these campaigns. In fact "The Concept Of Operations For The Liaohsi-Shenyang Campaign" and "The Concept Of Operations For The Peiping-Tientsin Campaign" were not only general instructions for carrying out these decisive campaigns but also represented sharp struggle against opportunists, including most especially Lin Piao, in the leadership of these particular forces of the People's Liberation Army. Lin Piao, showing his right deviationism, wanted to drag his feet and was afraid to launch the all-out attack to carry through these decisive campaigns—in particular of Liaohsi-Shenyang and Peiping-Tientsin.

This stemmed from Lin Piao's rightist view and his tendency to overestimate the enemy, which had occurred several times at decisive points in the history of the Chinese revolution and which had been criticized by Mao at several key junctures, included as far back as 1930 when Mao wrote "A Single Spark Can Start A Prairie Fire" to counter the pessimism of Lin Piao and others who were committing right deviations. In the telegram on "The Concept Of Operations For The Peiping-Tientsin Campaign," drafted on December 11, 1948, Mao emphatically warned Lin Piao and others that "You should on no account overrate the enemy's combat effectiveness." (SMW, p. 377)

With the carrying out of Mao's specific directives on these decisive campaigns and with the achievement of victory in these campaigns the success of the war of liberation became fundamentally assured. Still, of course, it was necessary to vigorously carry the war of liberation against Chiang Kai-shek's reactionary forces through to the end and to resolutely, thoroughly, completely and wholly wipe them out, as Mao said. At this point, in late 1948—early 1949, the U.S. imperialists and their Kuomintang lackeys, facing imminent defeat, began to make attempts to politically maneuver and employ new dual tactics—that is, to continue the war against the People's Liberation Army while at the same time attempting to organize an opposition faction within the revolutionary camp

which would split that camp and conclude a "peace" with the Kuomintang, leaving it still in power. Again, Mao led the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese masses in successfully continuing and carrying forward the revolutionary war while at the same time exposing the maneuvers of officials within the Kuomintang, backed by U.S. imperialism, for an "honorable peace" on reactionary terms.

In this way the broadest masses of the Chinese people were won over to unity with the revolutionary movement, and the enemy—imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, as represented by the Kuomintang and its U.S. backers—was isolated to the extreme and finally dealt a crushing and thorough defeat. Thus, after more than 20 years of almost continual warfare, China had finally achieved national liberation and the Chinese people had been emancipated from the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism. On October 1, 1949 the People's Republic of China, led by the working class and its Communist Party, was founded as the crowning victory of the revolutionary armed struggle of the Chinese people.

Worldwide Significance of Mao's Military Line

Once again, it was the leadership of Mao Tsetung, his revolutionary political line and his revolutionary military line, which guided the Chinese people in winning this great victory. And the political and military line of Mao Tsetung has great significance not only for the Chinese revolution and not only historically but for revolutions in colonial and semi-colonial (or neo-colonial) and semi-feudal countries today and for revolutionary struggles and revolutionary wars generally. Through leading the Chinese revolution, which was (as noted before) from its beginning to the seizure of state power an armed struggle, Mao developed and enriched Marxist theory and strategy on warfare and developed a comprehensive Marxist system of military thinking which is of great value and significance for the international proletariat.

As noted in last month's article, almost immediately after the victory of the Chinese revolution, starting in the year following the founding of the People's Republic, China aided the Korean people in resisting the war of aggression by U.S. imperialism, and Chinese volunteers took part in this war on a broad scale.

There was struggle within the Chinese Communist Party and army over what military line to carry out in the war to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea. Mao, while taking into account the specific features of that war, argued that the basic line, strategy and principles that had been developed in the course of the various stages of the revolutionary armed struggle in China basically applied. In 1953, at the conclusion of the war, Mao made a speech which stressed that while the factor of leadership was important in the victories scored in the war, "the most important factor is the contribution of ideas by the masses." And he added that "Our experience is that reliance on the people together with a fairly correct leadership enables us to defeat a better-

Continued on page 9

Mao...

equipped enemy with our inferior equipment." (*Selected Works*, Vol. 5, "Our Great Victory In The War To Resist U.S. Aggression And Aid Korea And Our Future Tasks," pp. 116-117)

At the same time, while stressing and explaining the vital importance for China to carry out its internationalist tasks and aid Korea in resisting U.S. aggression, Mao emphasized that "we will invade no one anywhere but if others invade us, we will fight back and fight to a finish." Here again Mao was reaffirming the basic principles of people's war upon which the successful armed struggle of the Chinese people in liberating China had been founded.

Throughout the 1950s, while U.S. imperialism with its atomic weapons, continued to threaten the socialist countries including China and the people of other countries with aggression in various parts of the world, Mao continued to uphold the orientation which he had set forth years earlier—that U.S. imperialism was a paper tiger and specifically that even the atom bomb could not enable U.S. imperialism to win in a war of aggression against China. Once again Mao stood firmly by the principles which had guided the successful armed struggle of the Chinese people in winning their liberation. In a statement in July 1956, "U.S. Imperialism Is A Paper Tiger," Mao stressed once more that the reason that the Chinese Communist Party and the revolutionary armed forces under its leadership were able to triumph over the reactionary forces in China was because they were linked with, relied upon and mobilized the masses of people. He summarized this in the basic law that "small forces linked with the people become strong, while big forces opposed to the people become weak." (*Selected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 309)

A year later in November 1957 at the Moscow meeting of representatives of Communist and Workers' Parties, Mao sharply combatted the revisionist betrayal by Khrushchev and his attempt to put over the line that U.S. imperialism was all-powerful because it had superior weapons, including atomic weapons, and that the development of new weapons, in particular atomic weapons, changed the basic principles of war. Mao proclaimed once again the basic principle of strategically despising the enemy, including a big and powerful force like U.S. imperialism, while tactically respecting and taking it seriously, a principle that was applied in China's revolutionary war and found expression in the orientation of waging people's war and relying on the strength of the masses while carrying out the policy in campaigns and battles of concentrating a superior force to annihilate and defeat the enemy forces one by one. (See *Selected Works*, Vol. 5, pp. 517-518)

Combating Revisionist Military Line

Mao continued to uphold this basic military line in opposition to revisionists in the Soviet Union and in China itself, who argued, as revisionists have his-

torically argued, that weapons, not people, are decisive in warfare. While of course stressing that China should develop its national defense and achieve the most modern weapons, Mao insisted that the development of new weapons, including nuclear weapons, did not change the basic principles of war and revolutionary wars in particular. He continued to give emphasis to the development not only of a regular army but also to the broad armed forces of the masses of people, as expressed organizationally in the development of the militia, which would be an important force in addition to the regular people's army in the waging of a revolutionary war against imperialist aggression in China.

In 1958, in a speech at the group leaders' forum of the enlarged meeting of the military affairs committee, Mao criticized the Soviets' military doctrine and military strategy because it was all based on the offensive and was opposed to the basic principles of waging people's war. (See *Chairman Mao Talks to the People*, edited by Stuart Schram, p. 128)

Several years later, in the early 1960s, in criticizing a Soviet textbook on political economy Mao stressed that it was important to achieve modernization of the economy, and that this had particular significance in regard to the question of war and defending the country, but that it could not be made decisive in the development of military strategy. He noted that:

"For now we are holding off on general automation. Mechanization has to be discussed, but with a sense of proportion. If mechanization and automation are made too much of, it is bound to make people despise partial mechanization and production by native methods. In the past we had such diversions, when everybody was demanding new technology, new machinery, the large scale, high standards; the native, the medium, or small in scale were held in contempt. We did not overcome this tendency until we promoted concurrently native and foreign, large and medium and small." (*A Critique of Soviet Economics*, a translation of three writings by Mao, see "Reading Notes on the Soviet Text *Political Economy*," pp. 91-92, Monthly Review Press, translation by Moss Roberts)

Mao specifically drew the link between this and the question of warfare:

"We will adopt advanced technology, but this cannot gainsay [negate] the necessity and the inevitability of backward technology for a period of time. Since history began, revolutionary wars have always been won by those whose weapons were deficient, lost by those with the advantage in weapons. During our civil war, our War of Resistance Against Japan, and our War of Liberation, we lacked nationwide political power and modernized arsenals. If one cannot fight unless one has the most modern weapons, that is the same as disarming one's self." (*A Critique of Soviet Economics*, *ibid.*)

Once again, Mao was basing himself on the rich experience of the Chinese revolution as well as the revolutionary struggles in other countries and on the basic principles of military line and strategy which he had developed over a long period in leading the armed struggle of the Chinese people and in summing up further the development of revolutionary wars in the

world.

Later, Mao spoke to this basic principle immediately after the 9th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in 1969. This was a time when U.S. aggression against Vietnam was at a high point, with the stationing of hundreds of thousands of troops in southern Vietnam and aggression against the North, while at the same time Soviet aggressive acts were intensifying on the northern border of China. Mao once again reaffirmed the basic strategic orientation and principles of warfare which, in opposition to various revisionist lines, he insisted still applied to the situation in China in the face of the threat of imperialist aggression at that time. He pointedly declared:

"Others may come and attack us but we shall not fight outside our borders. We do not fight outside our borders. I say we will not be provoked. Even if you invite us to come out we will not come out, but if you should come and attack us we will deal with you. It depends on whether you attack on a small scale or a large scale. If it is on a small scale we will fight on the border. If it is on a large scale then I am in favor of yielding some ground. China is no small country. If there is nothing in it for them I don't think they will come. We must make it clear to the whole world that we have both right and advantage on our side. If they invade our territory then I think it would be more to our advantage, and we would then have both right and advantage. They would be easy to fight since they would fall into the people's encirclement. As for things like aeroplanes, tanks and armored cars, everywhere experience proves that they can be dealt with." (*Chairman Mao Talks to the People*, pp. 285-286)

One year later Mao issued a statement in support of the Indochinese people's struggle against U.S. aggression, which was also a declaration of support for the revolutionary struggles of the peoples of the world. In this statement Mao emphasized that a small country can defeat a big country and a weak country can defeat a strong country if the people dare to rise in struggle, take up arms, rely on their own strength and fight to become masters of their own country. This was not only based on a summation of the heroic struggle and experience in revolutionary warfare of the peoples of Indochina but also a summation of the long years of revolutionary armed struggle in China itself, especially after the establishment of the first base areas. For these revolutionary base areas represented in essence a state, a revolutionary regime, and the historical experience of the Chinese revolution exactly marked the process of a small and weak state, the liberated base areas, defeating a more powerful state by carrying out people's war. It marked the process of a revolutionary army, relying on the masses of people, defeating a reactionary army which at the start of the war was superior technologically and even in numbers. This has great significance for revolutionary warfare in all countries.

Down to the very end Mao Tsetung not only continued to champion and support revolution in China but also the revolutionary struggles of the peoples of the world. And it can be clearly seen that Mao Tsetung's overall analysis and basic line and theory on the question of warfare, as on other questions, is a powerful weapon for the revolutionary people in all countries and has enduring and universal significance, though its concrete application may differ from country to country. On the question of warfare and military line, as on other questions, Mao Tsetung has made truly immortal contributions to the revolutionary struggle of the working class and oppressed peoples throughout the world and to the cause of communism. ■



Chinese People's Volunteers unit during Korean War defends a position against U.S. invaders attack.