

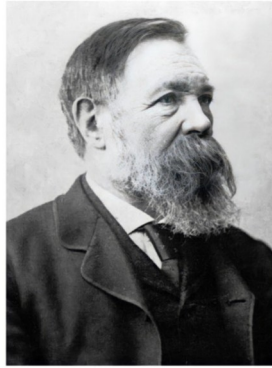
GET ORGANIZED!

**chairman mao on
revolutionary organization,
leadership and analysis**

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This collection of writings by Chinese revolutionary Mao Zedong addresses such topics as the mass line method of leadership, revolutionary organization (democratic centralism) and articles against dogmatism.



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Where Do Correct Ideas Come From?¹

Where do correct ideas come from? Do they drop from the skies? No. Are they innate in the mind? No. They come from social practice, and from it alone; they come from three kinds of social practice, the struggle for production, the class struggle and scientific experiment. It is man's social being that determines his thinking. Once the correct ideas characteristic of the advanced class are grasped by the masses, these ideas turn into a material force which changes society and changes the world. In their social practice, men engage in various kinds of struggle and gain rich experience, both from their successes and from their failures. Countless phenomena of the objective external world are reflected in a man's brain through his five sense organs— the organs of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. At first, knowledge is perceptual. The leap to conceptual knowledge, *i.e.*, to ideas, occurs when sufficient perceptual knowledge is accumulated. This is one process in cognition. It is the first stage in the whole process of cognition, the stage leading from objective matter to subjective consciousness from existence to ideas. Whether or not one's consciousness or ideas (including theories, policies, plans or measures) do correctly reflect the laws of the objective external world is not yet proved at this stage, in which it is not yet possible to ascertain whether they are correct or not. Then

1 This passage is from the "Draft Decision of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on Certain Problems in Our Present Rural Work", which was drawn up under the direction of Comrade Mao Zedong. The passage was written by Comrade Mao Zedong himself in May 1963.

comes the second stage in the process of cognition, the stage leading from consciousness back to matter, from ideas back to existence, in which the knowledge gained in the first stage is applied in social practice to ascertain whether the theories, policies, plans or measures meet with the anticipated success. Generally speaking, those that succeed are correct and those that fail are incorrect, and this is especially true of man's struggle with nature. In social struggle, the forces representing the advanced class sometimes suffer defeat not because their ideas are incorrect; but because, in the balance of forces engaged in struggle, they are not as powerful for the time being as the forces of reaction; they are therefore temporarily defeated, but they are bound to triumph sooner or later. Man's knowledge makes another leap through the test of practice. This leap is more important than the previous one. For it is this leap alone that can prove the correctness or incorrectness of the first leap in cognition, *i.e.*, of the ideas, theories, policies, plans or measures formulated in the course of reflecting the objective external world. There is no other way of testing truth. Furthermore, the one and only purpose of the proletariat in knowing the world is to change it. Often, correct knowledge can be arrived at only after many repetitions of the process leading from matter to consciousness and then back to matter, that is, leading from practice to knowledge and then back to practice. Such is the Marxist theory of knowledge, the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge. Among our comrades there are many who do not yet understand this theory of knowledge. When asked the sources of their ideas, opinions, policies, methods, plans and conclusions, eloquent speeches and long articles they consider the questions strange and cannot answer it. Nor do they comprehend that matter, can be transformed into consciousness and consciousness into matter, although such leaps are phenomena of everyday life. It

is therefore necessary to educate our comrades in the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge, so that they can orientate their thinking correctly, become good at investigation and study and at summing up experience, overcome difficulties, commit fewer mistakes, do their work better, and struggle hard so as to build China into a great and powerful socialist country and help the broad masses of the oppressed and exploited throughout the world in fulfillment of our great internationalist duty.

On Practice²

Before Marx, materialism examined the problem of knowledge apart from the social nature of man and apart from his historical development, and was therefore incapable of understanding the dependence of knowledge on social practice, that is, the dependence of knowledge on production and the class struggle.

Above all, Marxists regard man's activity in production as the most fundamental practical activity, the determinant of all his other activities. Man's knowledge depends mainly on his activity in material production, through which he comes gradually to understand the phenomena, the properties and the laws of nature, and

- 2 There used to be a number of comrades in our Party who were dogmatists and who for a long period rejected the experience of the Chinese revolution, denying the truth that "Marxism is not a dogma but a guide to action" and overawing people with words and phrases from Marxist works, torn out of context. There were also a number of comrades who were empiricists and who for a long period restricted themselves to their own fragmentary experience and did not understand the importance of theory for revolutionary practice or see the revolution as a whole, but worked blindly though industriously. The erroneous ideas of these two types of comrades, and particularly of the dogmatists, caused enormous losses to the Chinese revolution during 1931-34, and yet the dogmatists cloaking themselves as Marxists, confused a great many comrades. "On Practice" was written in order to expose the subjectivist errors of dogmatism and empiricism in the Party, and especially the error of dogmatism, from the standpoint of the Marxist theory of knowledge. It was entitled "On Practice" because its stress was on exposing the dogmatist kind of subjectivism, which belittles practice. The ideas contained in this essay were presented by Comrade Mao Zedong in a lecture at the Anti-Japanese Military and Political College in Yanan in July 1937.

the relations between himself and nature; and through his activity in production he also gradually comes to understand, in varying degrees, certain relations that exist between man and man. None of this knowledge can be acquired apart from activity in production. In a classless society every person, as a member of society, joins in common effort with the other members, enters into definite relations of production with them and engages in production to meet man's material needs. In all class societies, the members of the different social classes also enter, in different ways, into definite relations of production and engage in production to meet their material needs. This is the primary source from which human knowledge develops.

Man's social practice is not confined to activity in production, but takes many other forms—class struggle, political life, scientific and artistic pursuits; in short, as a social being, man participates in all spheres of the practical life of society. Thus man, in varying degrees, comes to know the different relations between man and man, not only through his material life but also through his political and cultural life (both of which are intimately bound up with material life). Of these other types of social practice, class struggle in particular, in all its various forms, exerts a profound influence on the development of man's knowledge. In class society everyone lives as a member of a particular class, and every kind of thinking, without exception, is stamped with the brand of a class.

Marxists hold that in human society activity in production develops step by step from a lower to a higher level and that consequently man's knowledge, whether of nature or of society, also develops step by step from a lower to a higher level, that is, from the shallower to the deeper, from the one-sided to the many-sided. For a very long period in history, men were necessarily confined to a one-sided understanding of the history of

society because, for one thing, the bias of the exploiting classes always distorted history and, for another, the small scale of production limited man's outlook. It was not until the modern proletariat emerged along with immense forces of production (large-scale industry) that man was able to acquire a comprehensive, historical understanding of the development of society and turn this knowledge into a science, the science of Marxism.

Marxists hold that man's social practice alone is the criterion of the truth of his knowledge of the external world. What actually happens is that man's knowledge is verified only when he achieves the anticipated results in the process of social practice (material production, class struggle or scientific experiment). If a man wants to succeed in his work, that is, to achieve the anticipated results, he must bring his ideas into correspondence with the laws of the objective external world; if they do not correspond, he will fail in his practice. After he fails, he draws his lessons, corrects his ideas to make them correspond to the laws of the external world, and can thus turn failure into success; this is what is meant by "failure is the mother of success" and "a fall into the pit, a gain in your wit". The dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge places practice in the primary position, holding that human knowledge can in no way be separated from practice and repudiating all the erroneous theories which deny the importance of practice or separate knowledge from practice. Thus Lenin said, "*Practice is higher than (theoretical) knowledge*, for it has not only the dignity of universality, but also of immediate actuality."³ The Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism has two outstanding characteristics. One is its class nature: it openly avows that dialectical materialism is in the service of the proletariat. The

3 V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's *The Science of Logic*," *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. 38, p. 205.

other is its practicality: it emphasizes the dependence of theory on practice, emphasizes that theory is based on practice and in turn serves practice. The truth of any knowledge or theory is determined not by subjective feelings, but by objective results in social practice. Only social practice can be the criterion of truth. The standpoint of practice is the primary and basic standpoint in the dialectical materialist theory of knowledge.⁴

But how then does human knowledge arise from practice and in turn serve practice? This will become clear if we look at the process of development of knowledge.

In the process of practice, man at first sees only the phenomenal side, the separate aspects, the external relations of things. For instance, some people from outside come to Yen-an on a tour of observation. In the first day or two, they see its topography, streets and houses; they meet many people, attend banquets, evening parties and mass meetings, hear talk of various kinds and read various documents, all these being the phenomena, the separate aspects and the external relations of things. This is called the perceptual stage of cognition, namely, the stage of sense perceptions and impressions. That is, these particular things in Yen-an act on the sense organs of the members of the observation group, evoke sense perceptions and give rise in their brains to many impressions together with a rough sketch of the external relations among these impressions: this is the first stage of cognition. At this stage, man cannot as yet form concepts, which are deeper, or draw logical conclusions.

4 See Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach," Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, in two volumes, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1958, Vol. II, p. 403 and V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1952, pp. 134-6.

As social practice continues, things that give rise to man's sense perceptions and impressions in the course of his practice are repeated many times; then a sudden change (leap) takes place in the brain in the process of cognition, and concepts are formed. Concepts are no longer the phenomena, the separate aspects and the external relations of things; they grasp the essence, the totality and the internal relations of things. Between concepts and sense perceptions there is not only a quantitative but also a qualitative difference. Proceeding further, by means of judgement and inference one is able to draw logical conclusions. The expression in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, "knit the brows and a stratagem comes to mind", or in everyday language, "let me think it over", refers to man's use of concepts in the brain to form judgements and inferences. This is the second stage of cognition. When the members of the observation group have collected various data and, what is more, have "thought them over", they are able to arrive at the judgement that "the Communist Party's policy of the National United Front Against Japan is thorough, sincere and genuine". Having made this judgement, they can, if they too are genuine about uniting to save the nation, go a step further and draw the following conclusion, "The National United Front Against Japan can succeed." This stage of conception, judgement and inference is the more important stage in the entire process of knowing a thing; it is the stage of rational knowledge. The real task of knowing is, through perception, to arrive at thought, to arrive step by step at the comprehension of the internal contradictions of objective things, of their laws and of the internal relations between one process and another, that is, to arrive at logical knowledge. To repeat, logical knowledge differs from perceptual knowledge in that perceptual knowledge pertains to the separate aspects, the phenomena and the external relations of things, whereas

logical knowledge takes a big stride forward to reach the totality, the essence and the internal relations of things and discloses the inner contradictions in the surrounding world. Therefore, logical knowledge is capable of grasping the development of the surrounding world in its totality, in the internal relations of all its aspects.

This dialectical-materialist theory of the process of development of knowledge, basing itself on practice and proceeding from the shallower to the deeper, was never worked out by anybody before the rise of Marxism. Marxist materialism solved this problem correctly for the first time, pointing out both materialistically and dialectically the deepening movement of cognition, the movement by which man in society progresses from perceptual knowledge to logical knowledge in his complex, constantly recurring practice of production and class struggle. Lenin said, "The abstraction of *matter*, of a *law* of nature, the abstraction of *value*, etc., in short, *all* scientific (correct, serious, not absurd) abstractions reflect nature more deeply, truly and *completely*."⁵ Marxism-Leninism holds that each of the two stages in the process of cognition has its own characteristics, with knowledge manifesting itself as perceptual at the lower stage and logical at the higher stage, but that both are stages in an integrated process of cognition. The perceptual and the rational are qualitatively different, but are not divorced from each other; they are unified on the basis of practice. Our practice proves that what is perceived cannot at once be comprehended and that only what is comprehended can be more deeply perceived. Perception only solves the problem of phenomena; theory alone can solve the problem of essence. The solving of both these problems is not separable in the slightest degree from practice. Whoever wants to know a thing has no way of doing so except by coming

5 V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's *The Science of Logic*," *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. 38, p. 161.

into contact with it, that is, by living (practicing) in its environment. In feudal society it was impossible to know the laws of capitalist society in advance because capitalism had not yet emerged, the relevant practice was lacking. Marxism could be the product only of capitalist society. Marx, in the era of laissez-faire capitalism, could not concretely know certain laws peculiar to the era of imperialism beforehand, because imperialism, the last stage of capitalism, had not yet emerged and the relevant practice was lacking; only Lenin and Stalin could undertake this task. Leaving aside their genius, the reason why Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin could work out their theories was mainly that they personally took part in the practice of the class struggle and the scientific experimentation of their time; lacking this condition, no genius could have succeeded. The saying, "without stepping outside his gate the scholar knows all the wide world's affairs", was mere empty talk in past times when technology was undeveloped. Even though this saying can be valid in the present age of developed technology, the people with real personal knowledge are those engaged in practice the wide world over. And it is only when these people have come to "know" through their practice and when their knowledge has reached him through writing and technical media that the "scholar" can indirectly "know all the wide world's affairs". If you want to know a certain thing or a certain class of things directly, you must personally participate in the practical struggle to change reality, to change that thing or class of things, for only thus can you come into contact with them as phenomena; only through personal participation in the practical struggle to change reality can you uncover the essence of that thing or class of things and comprehend them. This is the path to knowledge which every man actually travels, though some people, deliberately distorting matters, argue to the contrary. The most ridiculous person in the

world is the “know all” who picks up a smattering of hearsay knowledge and proclaims himself “the world’s Number One authority”; this merely shows that he has not taken a proper measure of himself. Knowledge is a matter of science, and no dishonesty or conceit whatsoever is permissible. What is required is definitely the reverse—honesty and modesty. If you want knowledge, you must take part in the practice of changing reality. If you want to know the taste of a pear, you must change the pear by eating it yourself. If you want to know the structure and properties of the atom, you must make physical and chemical experiments to change the state of the atom. If you want to know the theory and methods of revolution, you must take part in revolution. All genuine knowledge originates in direct experience. But one cannot have direct experience of everything; as a matter of fact, most of our knowledge comes from indirect experience, for example, all knowledge from past times and foreign lands. To our ancestors and to foreigners, such knowledge was—or is—a matter of direct experience, and this knowledge is reliable if in the course of their direct experience the requirement of “scientific abstraction”, spoken of by Lenin, was—or is—fulfilled and objective reality scientifically reflected, otherwise it is not reliable. Hence a man’s knowledge consists only of two parts, that which comes from direct experience and that which comes from indirect experience. Moreover, what is indirect experience for me is direct experience for other people. Consequently, considered as a whole, knowledge of any kind is inseparable from direct experience. All knowledge originates in perception of the objective external world through man’s physical sense organs. Anyone who denies such perception, denies direct experience, or denies personal participation in the practice that changes reality, is not a materialist. That is why the “know-all” is ridiculous. There is an old Chinese saying, “How can you catch

tiger cubs without entering the tiger's lair?" This saying holds true for man's practice and it also holds true for the theory of knowledge. There can be no knowledge apart from practice.

To make clear the dialectical-materialist movement of cognition arising on the basis of the practice which changes reality—to make clear the gradually deepening movement of cognition— a few additional concrete examples are given below.

In its knowledge of capitalist society, the proletariat was only in the perceptual stage of cognition in the first period of its practice, the period of machine-smashing and spontaneous struggle; it knew only some of the aspects and the external relations of the phenomena of capitalism. The proletariat was then still a “class-in-itself”. But when it reached the second period of its practice, the period of conscious and organized economic and political struggles, the proletariat was able to comprehend the essence of capitalist society, the relations of exploitation between social classes and its own historical task; and it was able to do so because of its own practice and because of its experience of prolonged struggle, which Marx and Engels scientifically summed up in all its variety to create the theory of Marxism for the education of the proletariat. It was then that the proletariat became a “class-for-itself”.

Similarly with the Chinese people's knowledge of imperialism. The first stage was one of superficial, perceptual knowledge, as shown in the indiscriminate anti-foreign struggles of the Movement of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, the Yi Ho Tuan Movement, and so on. It was only in the second stage that the Chinese people reached the stage of rational knowledge, saw the internal and external contradictions of imperialism and saw the essential truth that imperialism had allied itself with China's comprador and feudal classes to oppress

and exploit the great masses of the Chinese people. This knowledge began about the time of the May 4th Movement of 1919.

Next, let us consider war. If those who lead a war lack experience of war, then at the initial stage they will not understand the profound laws pertaining to the directing of a specific war (such as our Agrarian Revolutionary War of the past decade). At the initial stage they will merely experience a good deal of fighting and, what is more, suffer many defeats. But this experience (the experience of battles won and especially of battles lost) enables them to comprehend the inner thread of the whole war, namely, the laws of that specific war, to understand its strategy and tactics, and consequently to direct the war with confidence. If, at such a moment, the command is turned over to an inexperienced person, then he too will have to suffer a number of defeats (gain experience) before he can comprehend the true laws of the war.

“I am not sure I can handle it.” We often hear this remark when a comrade hesitates to accept an assignment. Why is he unsure of himself? Because he has no systematic understanding of the content and circumstances of the assignment, or because he has had little or no contact with such work, and so the laws governing it are beyond him. After a detailed analysis of the nature and circumstances of the assignment, he will feel more sure of himself and do it willingly. If he spends some time at the job and gains experience and if he is a person who is willing to look into matters with an open mind and not one who approaches problems subjectively, one-sidedly and superficially, then he can draw conclusions for himself as to how to go about the job and do it with much more courage. Only those who are subjective, one-sided and superficial in their approach to problems will smugly issue orders or directives the moment they arrive on the scene, without considering

the circumstances, without viewing things in their totality (their history and their present state as a whole) and without getting to the essence of things (their nature and the internal relations between one thing and another). Such people are bound to trip and fall.

Thus it can be seen that the first step in the process of cognition is contact with the objects of the external world; this belongs to the stage of perception. The second step is to synthesize the data of perception by arranging and reconstructing them; this belongs to the stage of conception, judgement and inference. It is only when the data of perception are very rich (not fragmentary) and correspond to reality (are not illusory) that they can be the basis for forming correct concepts and theories.

Here two important points must be emphasized. The first, which has been stated before but should be repeated here, is the dependence of rational knowledge upon perceptual knowledge. Anyone who thinks that rational knowledge need not be derived from perceptual knowledge is an idealist. In the history of philosophy there is the "rationalist" school that admits the reality only of reason and not of experience, believing that reason alone is reliable while perceptual experience is not; this school errs by turning things upside down. The rational is reliable precisely because it has its source in sense perceptions, other wise it would be like water without a source, a tree without roots, subjective, self-engendered and unreliable. As to the sequence in the process of cognition, perceptual experience comes first; we stress the significance of social practice in the process of cognition precisely because social practice alone can give rise to human knowledge and it alone can start man on the acquisition of perceptual experience from the objective world. For a person who shuts his eyes, stops his ears and totally cuts himself off from

the objective world there can be no such thing as knowledge. Knowledge begins with experience—this is the materialism of the theory of knowledge.

The second point is that knowledge needs to be deepened, that the perceptual stage of knowledge needs to be developed to the rational stage—this is the dialectics of the theory of knowledge.⁶ To think that knowledge can stop at the lower, perceptual stage and that perceptual knowledge alone is reliable while rational knowledge is not, would be to repeat the historical error of “empiricism”. This theory errs in failing to understand that, although the data of perception reflect certain realities in the objective world (I am not speaking here of idealist empiricism which confines experience to so-called introspection), they are merely one-sided and superficial, reflecting things incompletely and not reflecting their essence. Fully to reflect a thing in its totality, to reflect its essence, to reflect its inherent laws, it is necessary through the exercise of thought to reconstruct the rich data of sense perception, discarding the dross and selecting the essential, eliminating the false and retaining the true, proceeding from the one to the other and from the outside to the inside, in order to form a system of concepts and theories— it is necessary to make a leap from perceptual to rational knowledge. Such reconstructed knowledge is not more empty or more unreliable; on the contrary, whatever has been scientifically reconstructed in the process of cognition, on the basis of practice, reflects objective reality, as Lenin said, more deeply, more truly, more fully. As against this, vulgar “practical men” respect experience but despise theory, and therefore cannot have a comprehensive view of an entire objective process, lack clear direction and

6 “In order to understand, it is necessary empirically to begin understanding, study, to rise from empiricism to the universal.” (*Ibid.*, p. 197.)

long-range perspective, and are complacent over occasional successes and glimpses of the truth. If such persons direct a revolution, they will lead it up a blind alley.

Rational knowledge depends upon perceptual knowledge and perceptual knowledge remains to be developed into rational knowledge—this is the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge. In philosophy, neither “rationalism” nor “empiricism” understands the historical or the dialectical nature of knowledge, and although each of these schools contains one aspect of the truth (here I am referring to materialist, not to idealist, rationalism and empiricism), both are wrong on the theory of knowledge as a whole. The dialectical-materialist movement of knowledge from the perceptual to the rational holds true for a minor process of cognition (for instance, knowing a single thing or task) as well as for a major process of cognition (for instance, knowing a whole society or a revolution).

But the movement of knowledge does not end here. If the dialectical-materialist movement of knowledge were to stop at rational knowledge, only half the problem would be dealt with. And as far as Marxist philosophy is concerned, only the less important half at that. Marxist philosophy holds that the most important problem does not lie in understanding the laws of the objective world and thus being able to explain it, but in applying the knowledge of these laws actively to change the world. From the Marxist viewpoint, theory is important, and its importance is fully expressed in Lenin's statement, “Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement.”⁷ But Marxism emphasizes the importance of theory precisely and only because it can guide action. If we have a correct theory but merely prate about it, pigeonhole it and do not put it into practice, then that theory, however good, is of no signifi-

7 V. I. Lenin, “What Is to Be Done?”, *Collected Works*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1961, Vol. 5, p. 369.

cance. Knowledge begins with practice, and theoretical knowledge is acquired through practice and must then return to practice. The active function of knowledge manifests itself not only in the active leap from perceptual to rational knowledge, but—and this is more important—it must manifest itself in the leap from rational knowledge to revolutionary practice. The knowledge which grasps the laws of the world, must be redirected to the practice of changing the world, must be applied anew in the practice of production, in the practice of revolutionary class struggle and revolutionary national struggle and in the practice of scientific experiment. This is the process of testing and developing theory, the continuation of the whole process of cognition. The problem of whether theory corresponds to objective reality is not, and cannot be, completely solved in the movement of knowledge from the perceptual to the rational, mentioned above. The only way to solve this problem completely is to redirect rational knowledge to social practice, apply theory to practice and see whether it can achieve the objectives one has in mind. Many theories of natural science are held to be true not only because they were so considered when natural scientists originated them, but because they have been verified in subsequent scientific practice. Similarly, Marxism-Leninism is held to be true not only because it was so considered when it was scientifically formulated by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin but because it has been verified in the subsequent practice of revolutionary class struggle and revolutionary national struggle. Dialectical materialism is universally true because it is impossible for anyone to escape from its domain in his practice. The history of human knowledge tells us that the truth of many theories is incomplete and that this incompleteness is remedied through the test of practice. Many theories are erroneous and it is through the test of practice that their errors are corrected. That is

why practice is the criterion of truth and why “the standpoint of life, of practice, should be first and fundamental in the theory of knowledge”.⁸ Stalin has well said, “Theory becomes purposeless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice, just as practice gropes in the dark if its path is not illumined by revolutionary theory.”⁹

When we get to this point, is the movement of knowledge completed? Our answer is: it is and yet it is not. When men in society throw themselves into the practice of changing a certain objective process (whether natural or social) at a certain stage of its development, they can, as a result of the reflection of the objective process in their brains and the exercise of their subjective activity, advance their knowledge from the perceptual to the rational, and create ideas, theories, plans or programmes which correspond in general to the laws of that objective process. They then apply these ideas, theories, plans or programmes in practice in the same objective process. And if they can realize the aims they have in mind, that is, if in that same process of practice they can translate, or on the whole translate, those previously formulated ideas, theories, plans or programmes into fact, then the movement of knowledge may be considered completed with regard to this particular process. In the process of changing nature, take for example the fulfillment of an engineering plan, the verification of a scientific hypothesis, the manufacture of an implement or the reaping of a crop; or in the process of changing society, take for example the victory of a strike, victory in a war or the fulfillment of an educational plan. All these may be considered the realization of aims one has in mind. But generally

8 V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, p. 141.

9 J. V. Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism", *Problems of Leninism*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954, p. 31.

speaking, whether in the practice of changing nature or of changing society, men's original ideas, theories, plans or programmes are seldom realized without any alteration.

This is because people engaged in changing reality are usually subject to numerous limitations; they are limited not only by existing scientific and technological conditions but also by the development of the objective process itself and the degree to which this process has become manifest (the aspects and the essence of the objective process have not yet been fully revealed). In such a situation, ideas, theories, plans or programmes are usually altered partially and sometimes even wholly, because of the discovery of unforeseen circumstances in the course of practice. That is to say, it does happen that the original ideas, theories, plans or programmes fail to correspond with reality either in whole or in part and are wholly or partially incorrect. In many instances, failures have to be repeated many times before errors in knowledge can be corrected and correspondence with the laws of the objective process achieved, and consequently before the subjective can be transformed into the objective, or in other words, before the anticipated results can be achieved in practice. But when that point is reached, no matter how, the movement of human knowledge regarding a certain objective process at a certain stage of its development may be considered completed.

However, so far as the progression of the process is concerned, the movement of human knowledge is not completed. Every process, whether in the realm of nature or of society, progresses and develops by reason of its internal contradiction and struggle, and the movement of human knowledge should also progress and develop along with it. As far as social movements are concerned, true revolutionary leaders must not only be good at correcting their ideas, theories, plans or pro-

grammes when errors are discovered, as has been indicated above; but when a certain objective process has already progressed and changed from one stage of development to another, they must also be good at making themselves and all their fellow-revolutionaries progress and change in their subjective knowledge along with it, that is to say, they must ensure that the proposed new revolutionary tasks and new working programmes correspond to the new changes in the situation. In a revolutionary period the situation changes very rapidly; if the knowledge of revolutionaries does not change rapidly in accordance with the changed situation, they will be unable to lead the revolution to victory.

It often happens, however, that thinking lags behind reality; this is because man's cognition is limited by numerous social conditions. We are opposed to die-hards in the revolutionary ranks whose thinking fails to advance with changing objective circumstances and has manifested itself historically as Right opportunism. These people fail to see that the struggle of opposites has already pushed the objective process forward while their knowledge has stopped at the old stage. This is characteristic of the thinking of all die-hards. Their thinking is divorced from social practice, and they cannot march ahead to guide the chariot of society; they simply trail behind, grumbling that it goes too fast and trying to drag it back or turn it in the opposite direction.

We are also opposed to "Left" phrase-mongering. The thinking of "Leftists" outstrips a given stage of development of the objective process; some regard their fantasies as truth, while others strain to realize in the present an ideal which can only be realized in the future. They alienate themselves from the current prac-

tice of the majority of the people and from the realities of the day, and show themselves adventurist in their actions.

Idealism and mechanical materialism, opportunism and adventurism, are all characterized by the breach between the subjective and the objective, by the separation of knowledge from practice. The Marxist-Leninist theory of knowledge, characterized as it is by scientific social practice, cannot but resolutely oppose these wrong ideologies. Marxists recognize that in the absolute and general process of development of the universe, the development of each particular process is relative, and that hence, in the endless flow of absolute truth, man's knowledge of a particular process at any given stage of development is only relative truth. The sum total of innumerable relative truths constitutes absolute truth.¹⁰ The development of an objective process is full of contradictions and struggles, and so is the development of the movement of human knowledge. All the dialectical movements of the objective world can sooner or later be reflected in human knowledge. In social practice, the process of coming into being, developing and passing away is infinite, and so is the process of coming into being, developing and passing away in human knowledge. As man's practice which changes objective reality in accordance with given ideas, theories, plans or programmes, advances further and further, his knowledge of objective reality likewise becomes deeper and deeper. The movement of change in the world of objective reality is never-ending and so is man's cognition of truth through practice. Marxism-Leninism has in no way exhausted truth but ceaselessly opens up roads to the knowledge of truth in the course of practice. Our conclusion is the concrete, historical unity of the subjective and the objective, of theory and practice, of

10 See V. I. Lenin, *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, pp. 129-36.

knowing and doing, and we are opposed to all erroneous ideologies, whether “Left” or Right, which depart from concrete history.

In the present epoch of the development of society, the responsibility of correctly knowing and changing the world has been placed by history upon the shoulders of the proletariat and its party. This process, the practice of changing the world, which is determined in accordance with scientific knowledge, has already reached a historic moment in the world and in China, a great moment unprecedented in human history, that is, the moment for completely banishing darkness from the world and from China and for changing the world into a world of light such as never previously existed. The struggle of the proletariat and the revolutionary people to change the world comprises the fulfillment of the following tasks: to change the objective world and, at the same time, their own subjective world—to change their cognitive ability and change the relations between the subjective and the objective world. Such a change has already come about in one part of the globe, in the Soviet Union. There the people are pushing forward this process of change. The people of China and the rest of the world either are going through, or will go through, such a process. And the objective world which is to be changed also includes all the opponents of change, who, in order to be changed, must go through a stage of compulsion before they can enter the stage of voluntary, conscious change. The epoch of world communism will be reached when all mankind voluntarily and consciously changes itself and the world.

Discover the truth through practice, and again through practice verify and develop the truth. Start from perceptual knowledge and actively develop it into rational knowledge; then start from rational knowledge and actively guide revolutionary practice to change both the subjective and the objective world. Practice,

knowledge, again practice, and again knowledge. This form repeats itself in endless cycles, and with each cycle the content of practice and knowledge rises to a higher level. Such is the whole of the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge, and such is the dialectical-materialist theory of the unity of knowing and doing.

On Contradiction¹¹

The law of contradiction in things, that is, the law of the unity of opposites, is the basic law of materialist dialectics. Lenin said, "Dialectics in the proper sense is the study of contradiction *in the very essence of objects*."¹² Lenin often called this law the essence of dialectics; he also called it the kernel of dialectics.¹³ In studying this law, therefore, we cannot but touch upon a variety of questions, upon a number of philosophical problems. If we can become clear on all these problems, we shall arrive at a fundamental understanding of materialist dialectics. The problems are: the two world outlooks, the universality of contradiction, the particularity of contradiction, the principal contradiction and the

11 This essay on philosophy was written by Comrade Mao Zedong in August 1937 after his essay "On Practice" and with the same object of overcoming the serious error of dogmatist thinking to be found in the Party at the time. Originally delivered as lectures at the Anti-Japanese Military and Political College in Yanan, it was revised by the author on its inclusion in his *Selected Works*.

12 V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*" *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. 38, p. 249.

13 In his essay "On the Question of Dialectics", Lenin said, "The splitting in two of a single whole and the cognition of its contradictory parts (see the quotation from Philo on Heraclitus at the beginning of Section 3 'On Cognition' in Lassalle's book on Heraclitus) is the essence (one of the 'essentials', one of the principal, if not the principal, characteristics or features) of dialectics." (*Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. 38, p. 357.) In his "Conspectus of Hegel's *The Science of Logic*", he said, "In brief, dialectics can be defined as the doctrine of the unity of opposites. This grasps the kernel of dialectics, but it requires explanations and development." (*Ibid.*, p. 215.)

principal aspect of a contradiction, the identity and struggle of the aspects of a contradiction, and the place of antagonism in contradiction.

The criticism to which the idealism of the Deborin School has been subjected in Soviet philosophical circles in recent years has aroused great interest among us. Deborin's idealism has exerted a very bad influence in the Chinese Communist Party, and it cannot be said that the dogmatist thinking in our Party is unrelated to the approach of that school. Our present study of philosophy should therefore have the eradication of dogmatist thinking as its main objective.

I. THE TWO WORLD OUTLOOKS

Throughout the history of human knowledge, there have been two conceptions concerning the law of development of the universe, the metaphysical conception and the dialectical conception, which form two opposing world outlooks. Lenin said:

The two basic (or two possible? or two historically observable?) conceptions of development (evolution) are: development as decrease and increase, as repetition, and development as a unity of opposites (the division of a unity into mutually exclusive opposites and their reciprocal relation).¹⁴

Here Lenin was referring to these two different world outlooks.

In China another name for metaphysics is *xuan xue*. For a long period in history whether in China or in Europe, this way of thinking, which is part and parcel of the idealist world outlook, occupied a dominant posi-

14 V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. 38, p. 358.

tion in human thought. In Europe, the materialism of the bourgeoisie in its early days was also metaphysical. As the social economy of many European countries advanced to the stage of highly developed capitalism, as the forces of production, the class struggle and the sciences developed to a level unprecedented in history, and as the industrial proletariat became the greatest motive force in historical development, there arose the Marxist world outlook of materialist dialectics. Then, in addition to open and barefaced reactionary idealism, vulgar evolutionism emerged among the bourgeoisie to oppose materialist dialectics.

The metaphysical or vulgar evolutionist world outlook sees things as isolated, static and one-sided. It regards all things in the universe, their forms and their species, as eternally isolated from one another and immutable. Such change as there is can only be an increase or decrease in quantity or a change of place. Moreover, the cause of such an increase or decrease or change of place is not inside things but outside them, that is, the motive force is external. Metaphysicians hold that all the different kinds of things in the universe and all their characteristics have been the same ever since they first came into being. All subsequent changes have simply been increases or decreases in quantity. They contend that a thing can only keep on repeating itself as the same kind of thing and cannot change into anything different. In their opinion, capitalist exploitation, capitalist competition, the individualist ideology of capitalist society, and so on, can all be found in ancient slave society, or even in primitive society, and will exist forever unchanged. They ascribe the causes of social development to factors external to society, such as geography and climate. They search in an over-simplified way outside a thing for the causes of its development, and they deny the theory of materialist dialectics, which holds that development arises from the contra-

dictions inside a thing. Consequently they can explain neither the qualitative diversity of things, nor the phenomenon of one quality changing into another. In Europe, this mode of thinking existed as mechanical materialism in the 17th and 18th centuries and as vulgar evolutionism at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. In China, there was the metaphysical thinking exemplified in the saying “Heaven changeth not, likewise the Tao changeth not,”¹⁵ and it was supported by the decadent feudal ruling classes for a long time. Mechanical materialism and vulgar evolutionism, which were imported from Europe in the last hundred years, are supported by the bourgeoisie.

As opposed to the metaphysical world outlook, the world outlook of materialist dialectics holds that in order to understand the development of a thing we should study it internally and in its relations with other things; in other words, the development of things should be seen as their internal and necessary self-movement, while each thing in its movement is interrelated and interacts with the things around it. The fundamental cause of the development of a thing is not external but internal; it lies in the contradictoriness within the thing. There is internal contradiction in every single thing, hence its motion and development. Contradictoriness within a thing is the fundamental cause of its development, while its interrelations and interactions with other things are secondary causes. Thus materialist dialectics effectively combats the theory of external causes, or of an external motive force, advanced by metaphysical mechanical materialism and vulgar evolutionism. It is evident that purely external causes can only give rise to mechanical motion, that is,

15 A saying of Dong Zhongshu (179-104 B.C.), a well-known exponent of Confucianism in the Han Dynasty.

to changes in scale or quantity, but cannot explain why things differ qualitatively in thousands of ways and why one thing changes into another. As a matter of fact, even mechanical motion under external force occurs through the internal contradictoriness of things. Simple growth in plants and animals, their quantitative development, is likewise chiefly the result of their internal contradictions. Similarly, social development is due chiefly not to external but to internal causes. Countries with almost the same geographical and climatic conditions display great diversity and unevenness in their development. Moreover, great social changes may take place in one and the same country although its geography and climate remain unchanged. Imperialist Russia changed into the socialist Soviet Union, and feudal Japan, which had locked its doors against the world, changed into imperialist Japan, although no change occurred in the geography and climate of either country. Long dominated by feudalism, China has undergone great changes in the last hundred years and is now changing in the direction of a new China, liberated and free, and yet no change has occurred in her geography and climate. Changes do take place in the geography and climate of the earth as a whole and in every part of it, but they are insignificant when compared with changes in society; geographical and climatic changes manifest themselves in terms of tens of thousands of years, while social changes manifest themselves in thousands, hundreds or tens of years, and even in a few years or months in times of revolution. According to materialist dialectics, changes in nature are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in nature. Changes in society are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in society, that is, the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the contradiction between classes and the contradiction between the old and the new; it is

the development of these contradictions that pushes society forward and gives the impetus for the supersession of the old society by the new. Does materialist dialectics exclude external causes? Not at all. It holds that external causes are the condition of change and internal causes are the basis of change, and that external causes become operative through internal causes. In a suitable temperature an egg changes into a chicken, but no temperature can change a stone into a chicken, because each has a different basis. There is constant interaction between the peoples of different countries. In the era of capitalism, and especially in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, the interaction and mutual impact of different countries in the political, economic and cultural spheres are extremely great. The October Socialist Revolution ushered in a new epoch in world history as well as in Russian history. It exerted influence on internal changes in the other countries in the world and, similarly and in a particularly profound way, on internal changes in China. These changes, however, were effected through the inner laws of development of these countries, China included. In battle, one army is victorious and the other is defeated, both the victory and the defeat are determined by internal causes. The one is victorious either because it is strong or because of its competent generalship, the other is vanquished either because it is weak or because of its incompetent generalship; it is through internal causes that external causes become operative. In China in 1927, the defeat of the proletariat by the big bourgeoisie came about through the opportunism then to be found within the Chinese proletariat itself (inside the Chinese Communist Party). When we liquidated this opportunism, the Chinese revolution resumed its advance. Later, the Chinese revolution again suffered severe setbacks at the hands of the enemy, because adventurism had risen within our Party. When we liquidated this adventurism,

our cause advanced once again. Thus it can be seen that to lead the revolution to victory, a political party must depend on the correctness of its own political line and the solidity of its own organization.

The dialectical world outlook emerged in ancient times both in China and in Europe. Ancient dialectics, however, had a somewhat spontaneous and naïve character; in the social and historical conditions then prevailing, it was not yet able to form a theoretical system, hence it could not fully explain the world and was supplanted by metaphysics. The famous German philosopher Hegel, who lived in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, made most important contributions to dialectics, but his dialectics was idealist. It was not until Marx and Engels, the great protagonists of the proletarian movement, had synthesized the positive achievements in the history of human knowledge and, in particular, critically absorbed the rational elements of Hegelian dialectics and created the great theory of dialectical and historical materialism that an unprecedented revolution occurred in the history of human knowledge. This theory was further developed by Lenin and Stalin. As soon as it spread to China, it wrought tremendous changes in the world of Chinese thought.

This dialectical world outlook teaches us primarily how to observe and analyze the movement of opposites in different things and, on the basis of such analysis, to indicate the methods for resolving contradictions. It is therefore most important for us to understand the law of contradiction in things in a concrete way.

II. THE UNIVERSALITY OF CONTRADICTION

For convenience of exposition, I shall deal first with the universality of contradiction and then proceed to the particularity of contradiction. The reason is that the universality of contradiction can be explained more

briefly, for it has been widely recognized ever since the materialist-dialectical world outlook was discovered and materialist dialectics applied with outstanding success to analyzing many aspects of human history and natural history and to changing many aspects of society and nature (as in the Soviet Union) by the great creators and continuers of Marxism—Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin; whereas the particularity of contradiction is still not dearly understood by many comrades, and especially by the dogmatists. They do not understand that it is precisely in the particularity of contradiction that the universality of contradiction resides. Nor do they understand how important the study of the particularity of contradiction is in the concrete things confronting us for guiding the course of revolutionary practice. Therefore, it is necessary to stress the study of the particularity of contradiction and to explain it at adequate length. For this reason, in our analysis of the law of contradiction in things, we shall first analyze the universality of contradiction, then place special stress on analyzing the particularity of contradiction, and finally return to the universality of contradiction.

The universality or absoluteness of contradiction has a twofold meaning. One is that contradiction exists in the process of development of all things, and the other is that in the process of development of each thing a movement of opposites exists from beginning to end.

Engels said, “Motion itself is a contradiction.”¹⁶ Lenin defined the law of the unity of opposites as “the recognition (discovery) of the contradictory, mutually exclusive, opposite tendencies in all phenomena and processes of nature (including mind and society).”¹⁷

16 Frederick Engels, “Dialectics. Quantity and Quality”, *Anti-Duhring*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1959, p. 166.

17 V. I. Lenin, “On the Question of Dialectics”, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. 38, pp. 357-58.

Are these ideas correct? Yes, they are. The interdependence of the contradictory aspects present in all things and the struggle between these aspects determine the life of all things and push their development forward. There is nothing that does not contain contradiction; without contradiction nothing would exist.

Contradiction is the basis of the simple forms of motion (for instance, mechanical motion) and still more so of the complex forms of motion.

Engels explained the universality of contradiction as follows:

If simple mechanical change of place contains a contradiction, this is even more true of the higher forms of motion of matter, and especially of organic life and its development.... [L]ife consists precisely and primarily in this—that a being is at each moment itself and yet something else. Life is therefore also a contradiction which is present in things and processes themselves, and which constantly originates and resolves itself; and as soon as the contradiction ceases, life, too, comes to an end, and death steps in. We likewise saw that also in the sphere of thought we could not escape contradictions, and that for example the contradiction between man's inherently unlimited capacity for knowledge and its actual presence only in men who are externally limited and possess limited cognition finds its solution in what is—at least practically, for us—an endless succession of generations, in infinite progress.

...[O]ne of the basic principles of higher mathematics is the contradiction that in certain circumstances straight lines and curves may be the same.... But even lower mathematics teems with contradictions.¹⁸

Lenin illustrated the universality of contradiction as follows:

In mathematics: + and -. Differential and integral.

In mechanics: action and reaction.

In physics: positive and negative electricity.

In chemistry: the combination and dissociation of atoms.

In social science: the class struggle.¹⁹

In war, offense and defense, advance and retreat, victory and defeat are all mutually contradictory phenomena. One cannot exist without the other. The two aspects are at once in conflict and in interdependence, and this constitutes the totality of a war, pushes its development forward and solves its problems.

Every difference in man's concepts should be regarded as reflecting an objective contradiction. Objective contradictions are reflected in subjective thinking, and this process constitutes the contradictory movement of concepts, pushes forward the development of thought, and ceaselessly solves problems in man's thinking.

18 Frederick Engels, *op. cit.*, pp 166-67.

19 V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. 38, p. 357.

Opposition and struggle between ideas of different kinds constantly occur within the Party; this is a reflection within the Party of contradictions between classes and between the new and the old in society. If there were no contradictions in the Party and no ideological struggles to resolve them, the Party's life would come to an end.

Thus it is already clear that contradiction exists universally and in all processes, whether in the simple or in the complex forms of motion, whether in objective phenomena or ideological phenomena. But does contradiction also exist at the initial stage of each process?

Is there a movement of opposites from beginning to end in the process of development of every single thing?

As can be seen from the articles written by Soviet philosophers criticizing it, the Deborin School maintains that contradiction appears not at the inception of a process but only when it has developed to a certain stage. If this were the case, then the cause of the development of the process before that stage would be external and not internal. Deborin thus reverts to the metaphysical theories of external causality and of mechanism. Applying this view in the analysis of concrete problems, the Deborin School sees only differences but not contradictions between the kulaks and the peasants in general under existing conditions in the Soviet Union, thus entirely agreeing with Bukharin. In analyzing the French Revolution, it holds that before the Revolution there were likewise only differences but not contradictions within the Third Estate, which was composed of the workers, the peasants and the bourgeoisie. These views of the Deborin School are anti-Marxist. This school does not understand that each and every difference already contains contradiction and that difference itself is contradiction. Labor and capital have been in contradiction ever since the two classes came into being, only at first the contradiction had not yet

become intense. Even under the social conditions existing in the Soviet Union, there is a difference between workers and peasants and this very difference is a contradiction, although, unlike the contradiction between labor and capital, it will not become intensified into antagonism or assume the form of class struggle; the workers and the peasants have established a firm alliance in the course of socialist construction and are gradually resolving this contradiction in the course of the advance from socialism to communism. The question is one of different kinds of contradiction, not of the presence or absence of contradiction. Contradiction is universal and absolute, it is present in the process of development of all things and permeates every process from beginning to end.

What is meant by the emergence of a new process? The old unity with its constituent opposites yields to a new unity with its constituent opposites, whereupon a new process emerges to replace the old. The old process ends and the new one begins. The new process contains new contradictions and begins its own history of the development of contradictions.

As Lenin pointed out, Marx's *Capital* gave a model analysis of this movement of opposites which runs through the process of development of things from beginning to end. This is the method that must be employed in studying the development of all things. Lenin, too, employed this method correctly and adhered to it in all his writings.

In *Capital*, Marx first analyzes the simplest, most ordinary and fundamental, most common and everyday relation of bourgeois (commodity) society, a relation encountered billions of times, *viz.* the exchange of commodities. In this very simple phenomenon (in this "cell" of bourgeois society) analysis reveals all the contradictions (or the germs of all the contradictions) of modern society. The subsequent exposition shows us the devel-

opment (both growth and movement) of these contradictions and of this society in the [summation] of its individual parts, from its beginning to its end.

Lenin added, "Such must also be the method of exposition (or study) of dialectics in general."²⁰

Chinese communists must learn this method; only then will they be able correctly to analyze the history and the present state of the Chinese revolution and infer its future.

III. THE PARTICULARITY OF CONTRADICTION

Contradiction is present in the process of development of all things; it permeates the process of development of each thing from beginning to end. This is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction which we have discussed above. Now let us discuss the particularity and relativity of contradiction.

This problem should be studied on several levels.

First, the contradiction in each form of motion of matter has its particularity. Man's knowledge of matter is knowledge of its forms of motion, because there is nothing in this world except matter in motion, and this motion must assume certain forms. In considering each form of motion of matter, we must observe the points which it has in common with other forms of motion. But what is especially important and necessary, constituting as it does the foundation of our knowledge of a thing, is to observe what is particular to this form of motion of matter, namely, to observe the qualitative difference between this form of motion and other forms. Only when we have done so can we distinguish between things. Every form of motion contains within itself its own particular contradiction. This particular contradiction constitutes the particular essence which distinguishes one thing from another. It is the internal cause

20 *Ibid.*, pp. 358-59.

or, as it may be called, the basis for the immense variety of things in the world. There are many forms of motion in nature, mechanical motion, sound, light, heat, electricity, dissociation, combination and so on. All these forms are interdependent, but in its essence each is different from the others. The particular essence of each form of motion is determined by its own particular contradiction. This holds true not only for nature but also for social and ideological phenomena. Every form of society, every form of ideology, has its own particular contradiction and particular essence.

The sciences are differentiated precisely on the basis of the particular contradictions inherent in their respective objects of study. Thus the contradiction peculiar to a certain field of phenomena constitutes the object of study for a specific branch of science. For example, positive and negative numbers in mathematics; action and reaction in mechanics; positive and negative electricity in physics; dissociation and combination in chemistry; forces of production and relations of production, classes and class struggle, in social science; offense and defense in military science; idealism and materialism, the metaphysical outlook and the dialectical outlook, in philosophy; and so on—all these are the objects of study of different branches of science precisely because each branch has its own particular contradiction and particular essence. Of course, unless we understand the universality of contradiction, we have no way of discovering the universal cause or universal basis for the movement or development of things; however, unless we study the particularity of contradiction, we have no way of determining the particular essence of a thing which differentiates it from other things, no way of discovering the particular cause or particular basis for the movement or development of a thing, and no way of distinguishing one thing from another or of demarcating the fields of science.

As regards the sequence in the movement of man's knowledge, there is always a gradual growth from the knowledge of individual and particular things to the knowledge of things in general. Only after man knows the particular essence of many different things can he proceed to generalization and know the common essence of things.

When man attains the knowledge of this common essence, he uses it as a guide and proceeds to study various concrete things which have not yet been studied, or studied thoroughly, and to discover the particular essence of each; only thus is he able to supplement, enrich and develop his knowledge of their common essence and prevent such knowledge from withering or petrifying. These are the two processes of cognition: one, from the particular to the general, and the other, from the general to the particular. Thus cognition always moves in cycles and (so long as scientific method is strictly adhered to) each cycle advances human knowledge a step higher and so makes it more and more profound. Where our dogmatists err on this question is that, on the one hand, they do not understand that we have to study the particularity of contradiction and know the particular essence of individual things before we can adequately know the universality of contradiction and the common essence of things, and that, on the other hand, they do not understand that after knowing the common essence of things, we must go further and study the concrete things that have not yet been thoroughly studied or have only just emerged. Our dogmatists are lazy-bones. They refuse to undertake any painstaking study of concrete things; they regard general truths as emerging out of the void; they turn them into purely abstract unfathomable formulas, and thereby completely deny and reverse the normal sequence by which man comes to know truth. Nor do they understand the interconnection of the two pro-

cesses in cognition—from the particular to the general and then from the general to the particular. They understand nothing of the Marxist theory of knowledge.

It is necessary not only to study the particular contradiction and the essence determined thereby of every great system of the forms of motion of matter, but also to study the particular contradiction and the essence of each process in the long course of development of each form of motion of matter. In every form of motion, each process of development which is real (and not imaginary) is qualitatively different. Our study must emphasize and start from this point.

Qualitatively different contradictions can only be resolved by qualitatively different methods. For instance, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is resolved by the method of socialist revolution; the contradiction between the great masses of the people and the feudal system is resolved by the method of democratic revolution; the contradiction between the colonies and imperialism is resolved by the method of national revolutionary war; the contradiction between the working class and the peasant class in socialist society is resolved by the method of collectivization and mechanization in agriculture; contradiction within the Communist Party is resolved by the method of criticism and self-criticism; the contradiction between society and nature is resolved by the method of developing the productive forces. Processes change, old processes and old contradictions disappear, new processes and new contradictions emerge, and the methods of resolving contradictions differ accordingly. In Russia, there was a fundamental difference between the contradiction resolved by the February Revolution and the contradiction resolved by the October Revolution, as well as between the methods used to resolve them. The principle of using different methods to resolve different contradictions is one which Marxist-

Leninists must strictly observe. The dogmatists do not observe this principle; they do not understand that conditions differ in different kinds of revolution and so do not understand that different methods should be used to resolve different contradictions; on the contrary, they invariably adopt what they imagine to be an unalterable formula and arbitrarily apply it everywhere, which only causes setbacks to the revolution or makes a sorry mess of what was originally well done.

In order to reveal the particularity of the contradictions in any process in the development of a thing, in their totality or interconnections, that is, in order to reveal the essence of the process, it is necessary to reveal the particularity of the two aspects of each of the contradictions in that process; otherwise it will be impossible to discover the essence of the process. This likewise requires the utmost attention in our study.

There are many contradictions in the course of development of any major thing. For instance, in the course of China's bourgeois-democratic revolution, where the conditions are exceedingly complex, there exist the contradiction between all the oppressed classes in Chinese society and imperialism, the contradiction between the great masses of the people and feudalism, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the contradiction between the peasantry and the urban petit-bourgeoisie on the one hand and the bourgeoisie on the other, the contradiction between the various reactionary ruling groups and so on. These contradictions cannot be treated in the same way since each has its own particularity; moreover, the two aspects of each contradiction cannot be treated in the same way since each aspect has its own characteristics. We who are engaged in the Chinese revolution should not only understand the particularity of these contradictions in their totality, that is, in their interconnections, but should also study the two aspects of each

contradiction as the only means of understanding the totality. When we speak of understanding each aspect of a contradiction, we mean understanding what specific position each aspect occupies, what concrete forms it assumes in its interdependence and in its contradiction with its opposite, and what concrete methods are employed in the struggle with its opposite, when the two are both interdependent and in contradiction, and also after the interdependence breaks down. It is of great importance to study these problems. Lenin meant just this when he said that the most essential thing in Marxism, the living soul of Marxism, is the concrete analysis of concrete conditions.²¹ Our dogmatists have violated Lenin's teachings; they never use their brains to analyze anything concretely, and in their writings and speeches they always use stereotypes devoid of content, thereby creating a very bad style of work in our Party.

In studying a problem, we must shun subjectivity, one-sidedness and superficiality. To be subjective means not to look at problems objectively, that is, not to use the materialist viewpoint in looking at problems. I have discussed this in my essay "On Practice." To be one-sided means not to look at problems all-sidedly, for example, to understand only China but not Japan, only the Communist Party but not the Kuomintang, only the proletariat but not the bourgeoisie, only the peasants but not the landlords, only the favorable conditions but not the difficult ones, only the past but not the future, only individual parts but not the whole, only the defects but not the achievements, only the plaintiff's case but not the defendant's, only underground revolutionary work but not open revolutionary work and so on. In a word, it means not to understand the characteristics of both aspects of a contradiction. This is what we mean by looking at a problem one-sidedly. Or it may be called

21 See "Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War", Note 10, p. 251 of this volume.

seeing the part but not the whole, seeing the trees but not the forest. That way it is impossible to find the method for resolving a contradiction, it is impossible to accomplish the tasks of the revolution, to carry out assignments well or to develop inner-Party ideological struggle correctly. When Sun Wuzi said in discussing military science, “Know the enemy and know yourself, and you can fight a hundred battles with no danger of defeat,” he was referring to the two sides in a battle. Wei Chengyi of the Tang Dynasty also understood the error of one-sidedness when he said, “Listen to both sides and you will be enlightened, heed only one side and you will be benighted.” But our comrades often look at problems one-sidedly, and so they often run into snags. In the novel *Shuihu Zhuan*, Song Jiang thrice attacked Zhu Village.²² Twice he was defeated because he was ignorant of the local conditions and used the wrong method. Later he changed his method; first he investigated the situation, and he familiarized himself with the maze of roads, then he broke up the alliance between the Li, Hu and Zhu Villages and sent his men in disguise into the enemy camp to lie in wait, using a stratagem similar to that of the Trojan Horse in the foreign story. And on the third occasion he won. There are many examples of materialist dialectics in *Shuihu Zhuan*, of which the episode of the three attacks on Zhu Village is one of the best.

Lenin said:

22 *Water Margin (Shuihu Zhuan)*, a famous 14th century Chinese novel, describes a peasant war towards the end of the Northern Song Dynasty. Zhu Village was in the vicinity of Liangshanpo, where Song Jiang, leader of the peasant uprising and hero of the novel, established his base. Zhu Chaofeng, the head of this village, was a despotic landlord.

...[I]n order really to know an object we must embrace, study, all its sides, all connections and “mediations.” We shall never achieve this completely, but the demand for all-sidedness is a safeguard against mistakes and rigidity.²³

We should remember his words. To be superficial means to consider neither the characteristics of a contradiction in its totality nor the characteristics of each of its aspects; it means to deny the necessity for probing deeply into a thing and minutely studying the characteristics of its contradiction, but instead merely to look from afar and, after glimpsing the rough outline, immediately to try to resolve the contradiction (to answer a question, settle a dispute, handle work, or direct a military operation). This way of doing things is bound to lead to trouble. The reason the dogmatist and empiricist comrades in China have made mistakes lies precisely in their subjectivist, one-sided and superficial way of looking at things. To be one-sided and superficial is at the same time to be subjective. For all objective things are actually interconnected and are governed by inner laws, but instead of undertaking the task of reflecting things as they really are some people only look at things one-sidedly or superficially and who know neither their interconnections nor their inner laws, and so their method is subjectivist.

Not only does the whole process of the movement of opposites in the development of a thing, both in their interconnections and in each of the aspects, have particular features to which we must give attention, but each stage in the process has its particular features to which we must give attention to.

23 V. I. Lenin, “Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Present Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin”, *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., International Publishers, New York, 1943, Vol. IX, p. 66.

The fundamental contradiction in the process of development of a thing and the essence of the process determined by this fundamental contradiction will not disappear until the process is completed; but in a lengthy process the conditions usually differ at each stage. The reason is that, although the nature of the fundamental contradiction in the process of development of a thing and the essence of the process remain unchanged, the fundamental contradiction becomes more and more intensified as it passes from one stage to another in the lengthy process. In addition, among the numerous major and minor contradictions which are determined or influenced by the fundamental contradiction, some become intensified, some are temporarily or partially resolved or mitigated, and some new ones emerge; hence the process is marked by stages. If people do not pay attention to the stages in the process of development of a thing, they cannot deal with its contradictions properly.

For instance, when the capitalism of the era of free competition developed into imperialism, there was no change in the class nature of the two classes in fundamental contradiction, namely, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, or in the capitalist essence of society; however, the contradiction between these two classes became intensified, the contradiction between monopoly and non-monopoly capital emerged, the contradiction between the colonial powers and the colonies became intensified, the contradiction among the capitalist countries resulting from their uneven development manifested itself with particular sharpness, and thus there arose the special stage of capitalism, the stage of imperialism. Leninism is the Marxism of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution precisely because Lenin and Stalin have correctly explained

these contradictions and correctly formulated the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution for their resolution.

Take the process of China's bourgeois-democratic revolution, which began with the Revolution of 1911; it, too, has several distinct stages. In particular, the revolution in its period of bourgeois leadership and the revolution in its period of proletarian leadership represent two vastly different historical stages. In other words, proletarian leadership has fundamentally changed the whole face of the revolution, has brought about a new alignment of classes, given rise to a tremendous upsurge in the peasant revolution, imparted thoroughness to the revolution against imperialism and feudalism, created the possibility of the transition from the democratic revolution to the socialist revolution and so on. None of these was possible in the period when the revolution was under bourgeois leadership. Although no change has taken place in the nature of the fundamental contradiction in the process as a whole, i.e., in the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, democratic-revolutionary nature of the process (the opposite of which is its semi-colonial and semi-feudal nature), nonetheless this process has passed through several stages of development in the course of more than twenty years; during this time many great events have taken place—the failure of the Revolution of 1911 and the establishment of the regime of the Northern warlords, the formation of the first national united front and the revolution of 1924-27, the break-up of the united front and the desertion of the bourgeoisie to the side of the counterrevolution, the wars among the new warlords, the Agrarian Revolutionary War, the establishment of the second national united front and the War of Resistance Against Japan. These stages are marked by particular features such as the intensification of certain contradictions (e.g., the Agrarian Revolutionary War and the Japanese

invasion of the four northeastern provinces), the partial or temporary resolution of other contradictions (e.g., the destruction of the Northern warlords and our confiscation of the land of the landlords), and the emergence of yet other contradictions (e.g., the conflicts among the new warlords, and the landlords' recapture of the land after the loss of our revolutionary base areas in the south).

In studying the particularities of the contradictions at each stage in the process of development of a thing, we must not only observe them in their interconnections or their totality, we must also examine the two aspects of each contradiction.

For instance, consider the Kuomintang and the Communist Party. Take one aspect, the Kuomintang. In the period of the first united front, the Kuomintang carried out Sun Yat-sen's "Three Great Policies" of alliance with Russia, co-operation with the Communist Party, and assistance to the peasants and workers; hence it was revolutionary and vigorous, it was an alliance of various classes for the democratic revolution. After 1927, however, the Kuomintang changed into its opposite and became a reactionary bloc of the landlords and big bourgeoisie. After the Sian Incident in December 1936, it began another change in the direction of ending the civil war and co-operating with the Communist Party for joint opposition to Japanese imperialism. Such have been the particular features of the Kuomintang in the three stages. Of course, these features have arisen from a variety of causes. Now take the other aspect, the Chinese Communist Party. In the period of the first united front, the Chinese Communist Party was in its infancy; it courageously led the revolution of 1924-27 but revealed its immaturity in its understanding of the character, the tasks and the methods of the revolution, and consequently it became possible for Chen Duxiuism, which appeared during the lat-

ter part of this revolution, to assert itself and bring about the defeat of the revolution. After 1927, the Communist Party courageously led the Agrarian Revolutionary War and created the revolutionary army and revolutionary base areas; however, it committed adventurist errors which brought about very great losses both to the army and to the base areas. Since 1935 the Party has corrected these errors and has been leading the new united front for resistance to Japan; this great struggle is now developing. At the present stage, the Communist Party is a Party that has gone through the test of two revolutions and acquired a wealth of experience. Such have been the particular features of the Chinese Communist Party in the three stages. These features, too, have arisen from a variety of causes. Without studying both these sets of features we cannot understand the particular relations between the two parties during the various stages of their development, namely, the establishment of a united front, the break-up of the united front, and the establishment of another united front. What is even more fundamental for the study of the particular features of the two parties is the examination of the class basis of the two parties and the resultant contradictions which have arisen between each party and other forces at different periods. For instance, in the period of its first cooperation with the Communist Party, the Kuomintang stood in contradiction to foreign imperialism and was therefore anti-imperialist; on the other hand, it stood in contradiction to the great masses of the people within the country—although in words it promised many benefits to the working people, in fact it gave them little or nothing. In the period when it carried on the anti-Communist war, the Kuomintang collaborated with imperialism and feudalism against the great masses of the people and wiped out all the gains they had won in the revolution, and thereby intensified its contradictions with them. In

the present period of the anti-Japanese war, the Kuomintang stands in contradiction to Japanese imperialism and wants co-operation with the Communist Party, without however relaxing its struggle against the Communist Party and the people or its oppression of them. As for the Communist Party, it has always, in every period, stood with the great masses of the people against imperialism and feudalism, but in the present period of the anti-Japanese war, it has adopted a moderate policy towards the Kuomintang and the domestic feudal forces because the Kuomintang has pressed itself in favor of resisting Japan. The above circumstances have resulted now in alliance between the two parties and now in struggle between them, and even during the periods of alliance there has been a complicated state of simultaneous alliance and struggle. If we do not study the particular features of both aspects of the contradiction, we shall fail to understand not only the relations of each party with the other forces but also the relations between the two parties.

It can thus be seen that in studying the particularity of any kind of contradiction—the contradiction in each form of motion of matter, the contradiction in each of its processes of development, the two aspects of the contradiction in each process, the contradiction at each stage of a process, and the two aspects of the contradiction at each stage—in studying the particularity of all these contradictions, we must not be subjective and arbitrary but must analyze it concretely. Without concrete analysis there can be no knowledge of the particularity of any contradiction. We must always remember Lenin's words, the concrete analysis of concrete conditions.

Marx and Engels were the first to provide us with excellent models of such concrete analysis.

When Marx and Engels applied the law of contradiction in things to the study of the socio-historical process, they discovered the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, they discovered the contradiction between the exploiting and exploited classes and also the resultant contradiction between the economic base and its superstructure (politics, ideology, etc.), and they discovered how these contradictions inevitably lead to different kinds of social revolution in different kinds of class society.

When Marx applied this law to the study of the economic structure of capitalist society, he discovered that the basic contradiction of this society is the contradiction between the social character of production and the private character of ownership. This contradiction manifests itself in the contradiction between the organized character of production in individual enterprises and the anarchic character of production in society as a whole. In terms of class relations, it manifests itself in the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Because the range of things is vast and there is no limit to their development, what is universal in one context becomes particular in another. Conversely, what is particular in one context becomes universal in another. The contradiction in the capitalist system between the social character of production and the private ownership of the means of production is common to all countries where capitalism exists and develops; as far as capitalism is concerned, this constitutes the universality of contradiction. But this contradiction of capitalism belongs only to a certain historical stage in the general development of class society; as far as the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production in class society as a whole is concerned, it constitutes the particularity of contradiction. However, in the course of dissecting the particularity of all these

contradictions in capitalist society, Marx gave a still more profound, more adequate and more complete elucidation of the universality of the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production in class society in general.

Since the particular is united with the universal and since the universality as well as the particularity of contradiction is inherent in everything, universality residing in particularity, we should, when studying an object, try to discover both the particular and the universal and their interconnection, to discover both particularity and universality and also their interconnection within the object itself, and to discover the interconnections of this object with the many objects outside it. When Stalin explained the historical roots of Leninism in his famous work, *The Foundations of Leninism*, he analyzed the international situation in which Leninism arose, analyzed those contradictions of capitalism which reached their culmination under imperialism, and showed how these contradictions made proletarian revolution a matter for immediate action and created favorable conditions for a direct onslaught on capitalism. What is more, he analyzed the reasons why Russia became the cradle of Leninism, why tsarist Russia became the focus of all the contradictions of imperialism, and why it was possible for the Russian proletariat to become the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat. Thus, Stalin analyzed the universality of contradiction in imperialism, showing why Leninism is the Marxism of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, and at the same time analyzed the particularity of tsarist Russian imperialism within this general contradiction, showing why Russia became the birth-place of the theory and tactics of proletarian revolution and how the universality of contradiction is contained

in this particularity. Stalin's analysis provides us with a model for understanding the particularity and the universality of contradiction and their interconnection.

On the question of using dialectics in the study of objective phenomena, Marx and Engels, and likewise Lenin and Stalin, always enjoin people not to be in any way subjective and arbitrary but, from the concrete conditions in the actual objective movement of these phenomena, to discover their concrete contradictions, the concrete position of each aspect of every contradiction and the concrete interrelations of the contradictions. Our dogmatists do not have this attitude in study and therefore can never get anything right. We must take warning from their failure and learn to acquire this attitude, which is the only correct one in study.

The relationship between the universality and the particularity of contradiction is the relationship between the general character and the individual character of contradiction. By the former we mean that contradiction exists in and runs through all processes from beginning to end; motion, things, processes, thinking—all are contradictions. To deny contradiction is to deny everything. This is a universal truth for all times and all countries, which admits of no exception. Hence the general character, the absoluteness of contradiction. But this general character is contained in every individual character; without individual character there can be no general character. If all individual character were removed, what general character would remain? It is because each contradiction is particular that individual character arises. All individual character exists conditionally and temporarily and hence is relative.

This truth concerning general and individual character, concerning absoluteness and relativity, is the quintessence of the problem of contradiction in things; failure to understand it is tantamount to abandoning dialectics.

IV. THE PRINCIPAL CONTRADICTION AND THE PRINCIPAL ASPECT OF A CONTRADICTION

There are still two points in the problem of the particularity of contradiction which must be singled out for analysis, namely, the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction.

There are many contradictions in the process of development of a complex thing, and one of them is necessarily the principal contradiction whose existence and development determine or influence the existence and development of the other contradictions.

For instance, in capitalist society the two forces in contradiction, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, form the principal contradiction. The other contradictions, such as those between the remnant feudal class and the bourgeoisie, between the peasant petit-bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie, between the proletariat and the peasant petit-bourgeoisie, between the non-monopoly capitalists and the monopoly capitalists, between bourgeois democracy and bourgeois fascism, among the capitalist countries and between imperialism and the colonies, are all determined or influenced by this principal contradiction.

In a semi-colonial country such as China, the relationship between the principal contradiction and the non-principal contradictions presents a complicated picture.

When imperialism launches a war of aggression against such a country, all its various classes, except for some traitors, can temporarily unite in a national war against imperialism. At such a time, the contradiction between imperialism and the country concerned becomes the principal contradiction, while all the contradictions among the various classes within the country (including what was the principal contradiction,

between the feudal system and the great masses of the people) are temporarily relegated to a secondary and subordinate position. So it was in China in the Opium War of 1840, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 and the Yihetuan War of 1900, and so it is now in the present Sino-Japanese War.

But in another situation, the contradictions change position. When imperialism carries on its oppression not by war, but by milder means—political, economic and cultural—the ruling classes in semi-colonial countries capitulate to imperialism, and the two form an alliance for the joint oppression of the masses of the people. At such a time, the masses often resort to civil war against the alliance of imperialism and the feudal classes, while imperialism often employs indirect methods rather than direct action in helping the reactionaries in the semi-colonial countries to oppress the people, and thus the internal contradictions become particularly sharp. This is what happened in China in the Revolutionary War of 1911, the Revolutionary War of 1924-27, and the ten years of Agrarian Revolutionary War after 1927. Wars among the various reactionary ruling groups in the semi-colonial countries, e.g., the wars among the war-lords in China, fall into the same category.

When a revolutionary civil war develops to the point of threatening the very existence of imperialism and its running dogs, the domestic reactionaries, imperialism often adopts other methods in order to maintain its rule; it either tries to split the revolutionary front from within or sends armed forces to help the domestic reactionaries directly. At such a time, foreign imperialism and domestic reaction stand quite openly at one pole while the masses of the people stand at the other pole, thus forming the principal contradiction which determines or influences the development of the other contradictions. The assistance given by various capitalist countries to the Russian reactionaries after the

October Revolution is an example of armed intervention. Chiang Kai-shek's betrayal in 1927 is an example of splitting the revolutionary front.

But whatever happens, there is no doubt at all that at every stage in the development of a process, there is only one principal contradiction which plays the leading role.

Hence, if in any process there are a number of contradictions, one of them must be the principal contradiction playing the leading and decisive role, while the rest occupy a secondary and subordinate position. Therefore, in studying any complex process in which there are two or more contradictions, we must devote every effort to finding its principal contradiction. Once this principal contradiction is grasped, all problems can be readily solved. This is the method Marx taught us in his study of capitalist society. Likewise Lenin and Stalin taught us this method when they studied imperialism and the general crisis of capitalism and when they studied the Soviet economy. There are thousands of scholars and men of action who do not understand it, and the result is that, lost in a fog, they are unable to get to the heart of a problem and naturally cannot find a way to resolve its contradictions.

As we have said, one must not treat all the contradictions in a process as being equal but must distinguish between the principal and the secondary contradictions, and pay special attention to grasping the principal one. But, in any given contradiction, whether principal or secondary, should the two contradictory aspects be treated as equal? Again, no. In any contradiction the development of the contradictory aspects is uneven. Sometimes they seem to be in equilibrium, which is however only temporary and relative, while unevenness is basic. Of the two contradictory aspects, one must be principal and the other secondary. The principal aspect is the one playing the leading role in

the contradiction. The nature of a thing is determined mainly by the principal aspect of a contradiction, the aspect which has gained the dominant position.

But this situation is not static; the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction transform themselves into each other and the nature of the thing changes accordingly. In a given process or at a given stage in the development of a contradiction, A is the principal aspect and B is the non-principal aspect; at another stage or in another process the roles are reversed—a change determined by the extent of the increase or decrease in the force of each aspect in its struggle against the other in the course of the development of a thing.

We often speak of “the new superseding the old”. The supersession of the old by the new is a general, eternal and inviolable law of the universe. The transformation of one thing into another, through leaps of different forms in accordance with its essence and external conditions—this is the process of the new superseding the old. In each thing there is contradiction between its new and its old aspects, and this gives rise to a series of struggles with many twists and turns. As a result of these struggles, the new aspect changes from being minor to being major and rises to predominance, while the old aspect changes from being major to being minor and gradually dies out. And the moment the new aspect gains dominance over the old, the old thing changes qualitatively into a new thing. It can thus be seen that the nature of a thing is mainly determined by the principal aspect of the contradiction, the aspect which has gained predominance. When the principal aspect which has gained predominance changes, the nature of a thing changes accordingly.

In capitalist society, capitalism has changed its position from being a subordinate force in the old feudal era to being the dominant force, and the nature of society

has accordingly changed from feudal to capitalist. In the new, capitalist era, the feudal forces changed from their former dominant position to a subordinate one, gradually dying out. Such was the case, for example, in Britain and France. With the development of the productive forces, the bourgeoisie changes from being a new class playing a progressive role to being an old class playing a reactionary role, until it is finally overthrown by the proletariat and becomes a class deprived of privately owned means of production and stripped of power, when it, too, gradually dies out. The proletariat, which is much more numerous than the bourgeoisie and grows simultaneously with it but under its rule, is a new force which, initially subordinate to the bourgeoisie, gradually gains strength, becomes an independent class playing the leading role in history, and finally seizes political power and becomes the ruling class. Thereupon the nature of society changes and the old capitalist society becomes the new socialist society. This is the path already taken by the Soviet Union, a path that all other countries will inevitably take.

Look at China, for instance. Imperialism occupies the principal position in the contradiction in which China has been reduced to a semi-colony, it oppresses the Chinese people, and China has been changed from an independent country into a semi-colonial one. But this state of affairs will inevitably change; in the struggle between the two sides, the power of the Chinese people which is growing under the leadership of the proletariat will inevitably change China from a semi-colony into an independent country, whereas imperialism will be overthrown and old China will inevitably change into New China.

The change of old China into New China also involves a change in the relation between the old feudal forces and the new popular forces within the country. The old feudal landlord class will be overthrown, and

from being the ruler it will change into being the ruled; and this class, too, will gradually die out. From being the ruled the people, led by the proletariat, will become the rulers. Thereupon, the nature of Chinese society will change and the old, semi-colonial and semi-feudal society will change into a new democratic society.

Instances of such reciprocal transformation are found in our past experience. The Ching Dynasty which ruled China for nearly three hundred years was overthrown in the Revolution of 1911, and the revolutionary Tung Meng Hui under Sun Yat-sen's leadership was victorious for a time. In the Revolutionary War of 1924-27, the revolutionary forces of the Communist-Kuomintang alliance in the south changed from being weak to being strong and won victory in the Northern Expedition, while the Northern warlords who once ruled the roost were overthrown. In 1927, the people's forces led by the Communist Party were greatly reduced numerically under the attacks of Kuomintang reaction, but with the elimination of opportunism within their ranks they gradually grew again. In the revolutionary base areas under Communist leadership, the peasants have been transformed from being the ruled to being the rulers, while the landlords have undergone a reverse transformation. It is always so in the world, the new displacing the old, the old being superseded by the new, the old being eliminated to make way for the new, and the new emerging out of the old.

At certain times in the revolutionary struggle, the difficulties outweigh the favorable conditions and so constitute the principal aspect of the contradiction and the favorable conditions constitute the secondary aspect. But through their efforts the revolutionaries can overcome the difficulties step by step and open up a favorable new situation; thus a difficult situation yields place to a favorable one. This is what happened after the failure of the revolution in China in 1927 and during

the Long March of the Chinese Red Army. In the present Sino-Japanese War, China is again in a difficult position, but we can change this and fundamentally transform the situation as between China and Japan. Conversely, favorable conditions can be transformed into difficulty if the revolutionaries make mistakes. Thus the victory of the revolution of 1924-27 turned into defeat. The revolutionary base areas which grew up in the southern provinces after 1927 had all suffered defeat by 1934.

When we engage in study, the same holds good for the contradiction in the passage from ignorance to knowledge. At the very beginning of our study of Marxism, our ignorance of or scanty acquaintance with Marxism stands in contradiction to knowledge of Marxism. But by assiduous study, ignorance can be transformed into knowledge, scanty knowledge into substantial knowledge, and blindness in the application of Marxism into mastery of its application.

Some people think that this is not true of certain contradictions. For instance, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the productive forces are the principal aspect; in the contradiction between theory and practice, practice is the principal aspect; in the contradiction between the economic base and the superstructure, the economic base is the principal aspect; and there is no change in their respective positions. This is the mechanical materialist conception, not the dialectical materialist conception. True, the productive forces, practice and the economic base generally play the principal and decisive role; whoever denies this is not a materialist. But it must also be admitted that in certain conditions, such aspects as the relations of production, theory and the superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role. When it is impossible for the productive forces to develop without

a change in the relations of production, then the change in the relations of production plays the principal and decisive role. The creation and advocacy of revolutionary theory plays the principal and decisive role in those times of which Lenin said, "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement."²⁴ When a task, no matter which, has to be performed, but there is as yet no guiding line, method, plan or policy, the principal and decisive thing is to decide on a guiding line, method, plan or policy. When the superstructure (politics, culture, etc.) obstructs the development of the economic base, political and cultural changes become principal and decisive. Are we going against materialism when we say this? No. The reason is that while we recognize that in the general development of history the material determines the mental and social being determines social consciousness, we also—and indeed must—recognize the reaction of mental on material things, of social consciousness on social being and of the superstructure on the economic base. This does not go against materialism; on the contrary, it avoids mechanical materialism and firmly upholds dialectical materialism.

In studying the particularity of contradiction, unless we examine these two facets—the principal and the non-principal contradictions in a process, and the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction—that is, unless we examine the distinctive character of these two facets of contradiction, we shall get bogged down in abstractions, be unable to understand contradiction concretely and consequently be unable to find the correct method of resolving it. The distinctive character or particularity of these two facets of contradiction represents the unevenness of the forces that are in contradiction. Nothing in this world develops absolutely

24 V. I. Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?", *Collected Works*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1961, Vol. V, p. 369.

evenly; we must oppose the theory of even development or the theory of equilibrium. Moreover, it is these concrete features of a contradiction and the changes in the principal and non-principal aspects of a contradiction in the course of its development that manifest the force of the new superseding the old. The study of the various states of unevenness in contradictions, of the principal and non-principal contradictions and of the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction constitutes an essential method by which a revolutionary political party correctly determines its strategic and tactical policies both in political and in military affairs. All Communists must give it attention.

V. THE IDENTITY AND STRUGGLE OF THE ASPECTS OF A CONTRADICTION

When we understand the universality and the particularity of contradiction, we must proceed to study the problem of the identity and struggle of the aspects of a contradiction.

Identity, unity, coincidence, interpenetration, interpermeation, interdependence (or mutual dependence for existence), interconnection or mutual co-operation—all these different terms mean the same thing and refer to the following two points: first, the existence of each of the two aspects of a contradiction in the process of the development of a thing presupposes the existence of the other aspect, and both aspects coexist in a single entity; second, in given conditions, each of the two contradictory aspects transforms itself into its opposite. This is the meaning of identity.

Lenin said:

Dialectics is the teaching which shows how opposites can be and how they happen to be (how they become) identical—under what condi-

tions they are identical, transforming themselves into one another,--why the human mind should take these opposites not as dead, rigid, but as living, conditional, mobile, transforming themselves into one another.²⁵

What does this passage mean?

The contradictory aspects in every process exclude each other, struggle with each other and are in opposition to each other. Without exception, they are contained in the process of development of all things and in all human thought. A simple process contains only a single pair of opposites, while a complex process contains more. And in turn, the pairs of opposites are in contradiction to one another.

That is how all things in the objective world and all human thought are constituted and how they are set in motion.

This being so, there is an utter lack of identity or unity. How then can one speak of identity or unity?

The fact is that no contradictory aspect can exist in isolation. Without its opposite aspect, each loses the condition for its existence. Just think, can any one contradictory aspect of a thing or of a concept in the human mind exist independently? Without life, there would be no death; without death, there would be no life. Without "above", there would be no "below"; without "below", there would be no "above". Without misfortune, there would be no good fortune; without good fortune, there would be no misfortune. Without facility, there would be no difficulty without difficulty, there would be no facility. Without landlords, there would be no tenant-peasants; without tenant-peasants, there would be no landlords. Without the bourgeoisie, there

25 V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's *The Science of Logic*", *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, pp. 97-98.

would be no proletariat; without the proletariat, there would be no bourgeoisie. Without imperialist oppression of nations, there would be no colonies or semi-colonies; without colonies or semi-colonies, there would be no imperialist oppression of nations. It is so with all opposites; in given conditions, on the one hand they are opposed to each other, and on the other they are interconnected, interpenetrating, interpermeating and interdependent, and this character is described as identity. In given conditions, all contradictory aspects possess the character of non-identity and hence are described as being in contradiction. But they also possess the character of identity and hence are interconnected. This is what Lenin means when he says that dialectics studies "how opposites can be ... identical". How then can they be identical? Because each is the condition for the other's existence. This is the first meaning of identity.

But is it enough to say merely that each of the contradictory aspects is the condition for the other's existence, that there is identity between them and that consequently they can coexist in a single entity? No, it is not. The matter does not end with their dependence on each other for their existence; what is more important is their transformation into each other. That is to say, in given conditions, each of the contradictory aspects within a thing transforms itself into its opposite, changes its position to that of its opposite. This is the second meaning of the identity of contradiction.

Why is there identity here, too? You see, by means of revolution the proletariat, at one time the ruled, is transformed into the ruler, while the bourgeoisie, the erstwhile ruler, is transformed into the ruled and changes its position to that originally occupied by its opposite. This has already taken place in the Soviet Union, as it will take place throughout the world. If

there were no interconnection and identity of opposites in given conditions, how could such a change take place?

The Kuomintang, which played a certain positive role at a certain stage in modern Chinese history, became a counter-revolutionary party after 1927 because of its inherent class nature and because of imperialist blandishments (these being the conditions); but it has been compelled to agree to resist Japan because of the sharpening of the contradiction between China and Japan and because of the Communist Party's policy of the united front (these being the conditions). Things in contradiction change into one another, and herein lies a definite identity.

Our agrarian revolution has been a process in which the landlord class owning the land is transformed into a class that has lost its land, while the peasants who once lost their land are transformed into small holders who have acquired land, and it will be such a process once again. In given conditions having and not having, acquiring and losing, are interconnected; there is identity of the two sides. Under socialism, private peasant ownership is transformed into the public ownership of socialist agriculture; this has already taken place in the Soviet Union, as it will take place everywhere else. There is a bridge leading from private property to public property, which in philosophy is called identity, or transformation into each other, or interpenetration.

To consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat or the dictatorship of the people is in fact to prepare the conditions for abolishing this dictatorship and advancing to the higher stage when all state systems are eliminated. To establish and build the Communist Party is in fact to prepare the conditions for the elimination of the Communist Party and all political parties. To build a revolutionary army under the leadership of the Communist Party and to carry on revolutionary war is in fact to

prepare the conditions for the permanent elimination of war. These opposites are at the same time complementary.

War and peace, as everybody knows, transform themselves into each other. War is transformed into peace; for instance, the First World War was transformed into the post-war peace, and the civil war in China has now stopped, giving place to internal peace. Peace is transformed into war; for instance, the Kuomintang-Communist co-operation was transformed into war in 1927, and today's situation of world peace may be transformed into a second world war. Why is this so? Because in class society such contradictory things as war and peace have an identity in given conditions.

All contradictory things are interconnected; not only do they coexist in a single entity in given conditions, but in other given conditions, they also transform themselves into each other. This is the full meaning of the identity of opposites. This is what Lenin meant when he discussed "how they happen to be (how they become) identical—under what conditions they are identical, transforming themselves into one another".

Why is it that "the human mind should take these opposites not as dead, rigid, but as living, conditional, mobile, transforming themselves into one another"? Because that is just how things are in objective reality. The fact is that the unity or identity of opposites in objective things is not dead or rigid, but is living, conditional, mobile, temporary and relative; in given conditions, every contradictory aspect transforms itself into its opposite. Reflected in man's thinking, this becomes the Marxist world outlook of materialist dialectics. It is only the reactionary ruling classes of the past and present and the metaphysicians in their service who regard opposites not as living, conditional, mobile and transforming themselves into one another, but as dead and rigid, and they propagate this fallacy everywhere to

delude the masses of the people, thus seeking to perpetuate their rule. The task of Communists is to expose the fallacies of the reactionaries and metaphysicians, to propagate the dialectics inherent in things, and so accelerate the transformation of things and achieve the goal of revolution.

In speaking of the identity of opposites in given conditions, what we are referring to is real and concrete opposites and the real and concrete transformations of opposites into one another. There are innumerable transformations in mythology, for instance, Kuafu's race with the sun in *Shan Hai Jing*,²⁶ Yi's shooting down of nine suns in *Huainanzi*,²⁷ the Monkey King's seventy-two metamorphoses in *Xi You Ji*,²⁸ the numerous episodes of ghosts and foxes metamorphosed into human beings in the *Strange Tales of Liao Zhai*,²⁹ etc. But these legendary transformations of opposites are not concrete changes reflecting concrete contradic-

26 *Shan Hai Jing* (*Book of Mountains and Seas*) was written in the era of the Warring States (403-221 B.C.). In one of its fables Kuafu, a superman, pursued and overtook the sun. But he died of thirst, whereupon his staff was transformed into the forest of Deng.

27 Yi is one of the legendary heroes of ancient China, famous for his archery. According to a legend in *Huainanzi*, compiled in the 2nd century B.C., there were ten suns in the sky in the days of Emperor Yao. To put an end to the damage to vegetation caused by these scorching suns, Emperor Yao ordered Yi to shoot them down. In another legend recorded by Wang Yi (2nd century A.D.), the archer is said to have shot down nine of the ten suns.

28 *Xi You Ji* (*Pilgrimage to the West*) is a 16th century novel, the hero of which is the monkey god Sun Wukong. He could miraculously change at will into seventy-two different shapes, such as a bird, a tree and a stone.

29 *The Strange Tales of Liao Zhai*, written by Pu Songling in the 17th century, is a well-known collection of 431 tales, mostly about ghosts and fox spirits.

tions. They are naive, imaginary, subjectively conceived transformations conjured up in men's minds by innumerable real and complex transformations of opposites into one another. Marx said, "All mythology masters and dominates and shapes the forces of nature in and through the imagination; hence it disappears as soon as man gains mastery over the forces of nature."³⁰ The myriads of changes in mythology (and also in nursery tales) delight people because they imaginatively picture man's conquest of the forces of nature, and the best myths possess "eternal charm", as Marx put it; but myths are not built out of the concrete contradictions existing in given conditions and therefore are not a scientific reflection of reality. That is to say, in myths or nursery tales the aspects constituting a contradiction have only an imaginary identity, not a concrete identity. The scientific reflection of the identity in real transformations is Marxist dialectics.

Why can an egg but not a stone be transformed into a chicken? Why is there identity between war and peace and none between war and a stone? Why can human beings give birth only to human beings and not to anything else? The sole reason is that the identity of opposites exists only in necessary given conditions. Without these necessary given conditions there can be no identity whatsoever.

Why is it that in Russia in 1917 the bourgeois-democratic February Revolution was directly linked with the proletarian socialist October Revolution, while in France the bourgeois revolution was not directly linked with a socialist revolution and the Paris Commune of 1871 ended in failure? Why is it, on the other hand, that the nomadic system of Mongolia and Central Asia has been directly linked with socialism? Why is it that the

30 Karl Marx, "Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy", *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Eng. ed., Chicago, 1904, pp. 310-11.

Chinese revolution can avoid a capitalist future and be directly linked with socialism without taking the old historical road of the Western countries, without passing through a period of bourgeois dictatorship? The sole reason is the concrete conditions of the time. When certain necessary conditions are present, certain contradictions arise in the process of development of things and, moreover, the opposites contained in them are interdependent and become transformed into one another; otherwise none of this would be possible.

Such is the problem of identity. What then is struggle? And what is the relation between identity and struggle?

Lenin said:

The unity (coincidence, identity, equal action) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative. The struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, just as development and motion are absolute.³¹

What does this passage mean?

All processes have a beginning and an end, all processes transform themselves into their opposites. The constancy of all processes is relative, but the mutability manifested in the transformation of one process into another is absolute.

There are two states of motion in all things, that of relative rest and that of conspicuous change. Both are caused by the struggle between the two contradictory elements contained in a thing. When the thing is in the first state of motion, it is undergoing only quantitative and not qualitative change and consequently presents the outward appearance of being at rest. When the thing is in the second state of motion, the quantitative

31 V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. 38, p. 358.

change of the first state has already reached a culminating point and gives rise to the dissolution of the thing as an entity and thereupon a qualitative change ensues, hence the appearance of a conspicuous change. Such unity, solidarity, combination, harmony, balance, stalemate, deadlock, rest, constancy, equilibrium, solidity, attraction, etc., as we see in daily life, are all the appearances of things in the state of quantitative change. On the other hand, the dissolution of unity, that is, the destruction of this solidarity, combination, harmony, balance, stalemate, deadlock, rest, constancy, equilibrium, solidity and attraction, and the change of each into its opposite are all the appearances of things in the state of qualitative change, the transformation of one process into another. Things are constantly transforming themselves from the first into the second state of motion; the struggle of opposites goes on in both states but the contradiction is resolved through the second state. That is why we say that the unity of opposites is conditional, temporary and relative, while the struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute.

When we said above that two opposite things can coexist in a single entity and can transform themselves into each other because there is identity between them, we were speaking of conditionality, that is to say, in given conditions two contradictory things can be united and can transform themselves into each other, but in the absence of these conditions, they cannot constitute a contradiction, cannot coexist in the same entity and cannot transform themselves into one another. It is because the identity of opposites obtains only in given conditions that we have said identity is conditional and relative. We may add that the struggle between opposites permeates a process from beginning to end and makes one process transform itself into another, that it is ubiquitous, and that struggle is therefore unconditional and absolute.

The combination of conditional, relative identity and unconditional, absolute struggle constitutes the movement of opposites in all things.

We Chinese often say, “Things that oppose each other also complement each other.”³² That is, things opposed to each other have identity. This saying is dialectical and contrary to metaphysics. “Oppose each other” refers to the mutual exclusion or the struggle of two contradictory aspects. “Complement each other” means that in given conditions the two contradictory aspects unite and achieve identity. Yet struggle is inherent in identity and without struggle there can be no identity.

In identity there is struggle, in particularity there is universality, and in individuality there is generality. To quote Lenin, “. . . there is an absolute in the relative.”³³

VI. THE PLACE OF ANTAGONISM IN CONTRADICTION

The question of the struggle of opposites includes the question of what is antagonism. Our answer is that antagonism is one form, but not the only form, of the struggle of opposites.

In human history, antagonism between classes exists as a particular manifestation of the struggle of opposites. Consider the contradiction between the exploiting and the exploited classes. Such contradictory classes coexist for a long time in the same society, be it slave society, feudal society or capitalist society, and they struggle with each other; but it is not until the con-

32 The saying “Things that oppose each other also complement each other” first appeared in the *History of the Earlier Han Dynasty* by Pan Ku, a celebrated historian in the 1st century A.D. It has long been a popular saying.

33 V. I. Lenin, “On the Question of Dialectics”, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. 38, p. 358.

tradiction between the two classes develops to a certain stage that it assumes the form of open antagonism and develops into revolution. The same holds for the transformation of peace into war in class society.

Before it explodes, a bomb is a single entity in which opposites coexist in given conditions. The explosion takes place only when a new condition, ignition, is present. An analogous situation arises in all those natural phenomena which finally assume the form of open conflict to resolve old contradictions and produce new things.

It is highly important to grasp this fact. It enables us to understand that revolutions and revolutionary wars are inevitable in class society and that without them, it is impossible to accomplish any leap in social development and to overthrow the reactionary ruling classes and therefore impossible for the people to win political power. Communists must expose the deceitful propaganda of the reactionaries, such as the assertion that social revolution is unnecessary and impossible. They must firmly uphold the Marxist-Leninist theory of social revolution and enable the people to understand that social revolution is not only entirely necessary but also entirely practicable, and that the whole history of mankind and the triumph of the Soviet Union have confirmed this scientific truth.

However, we must make a concrete study of the circumstances of each specific struggle of opposites and should not arbitrarily apply the formula discussed above to everything. Contradiction and struggle are universal and absolute, but the methods of resolving contradictions, that is, the forms of struggle, differ according to the differences in the nature of the contradictions. Some contradictions are characterized by open antagonism, others are not. In accordance with the concrete development of things, some contradictions which

were originally non-antagonistic develop into antagonistic ones, while others which were originally antagonistic develop into non-antagonistic ones.

As already mentioned, so long as classes exist, contradictions between correct and incorrect ideas in the Communist Party are reflections within the Party of class contradictions. At first, with regard to certain issues, such contradictions may not manifest themselves as antagonistic. But with the development of the class struggle, they may grow and become antagonistic. The history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union shows us that the contradictions between the correct thinking of Lenin and Stalin and the fallacious thinking of Trotsky, Bukharin and others did not at first manifest themselves in an antagonistic form, but that later they did develop into antagonism. There are similar cases in the history of the Chinese Communist Party. At first the contradictions between the correct thinking of many of our Party comrades and the fallacious thinking of Chen Duxiu, Zhang Guodao and others also did not manifest themselves in an antagonistic form, but later they did develop into antagonism. At present the contradiction between correct and incorrect thinking in our Party does not manifest itself in an antagonistic form, and if comrades who have committed mistakes can correct them, it will not develop into antagonism. Therefore, the Party must on the one hand wage a serious struggle against erroneous thinking, and on the other give the comrades who have committed errors ample opportunity to wake up. This being the case, excessive struggle is obviously inappropriate. But if the people who have committed errors persist in them and aggravate them, there is the possibility that this contradiction will develop into antagonism.

Economically, the contradiction between town and country is an extremely antagonistic one both in capitalist society, where under the rule of the bourgeoisie

the towns ruthlessly plunder the countryside, and in the Kuomintang areas in China, where under the rule of foreign imperialism and the Chinese big comprador bourgeoisie the towns most rapaciously plunder the countryside. But in a socialist country and in our revolutionary base areas, this antagonistic contradiction has changed into one that is non-antagonistic; and when communist society is reached it will be abolished.

Lenin said, "Antagonism and contradiction are not at all one and the same. Under socialism, the first will disappear, the second will remain."³⁴ That is to say, antagonism is one form, but not the only form, of the struggle of opposites; the formula of antagonism cannot be arbitrarily applied everywhere.

VII. CONCLUSION

We may now say a few words to sum up. The law of contradiction in things, that is, the law of the unity of opposites, is the fundamental law of nature and of society and therefore also the fundamental law of thought. It stands opposed to the metaphysical world outlook. It represents a great revolution in the history of human knowledge. According to dialectical materialism, contradiction is present in all processes of objectively existing things and of subjective thought and permeates all these processes from beginning to end; this is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction. Each contradiction and each of its aspects have their respective characteristics; this is the particularity and relativity of contradiction. In given conditions, opposites possess identity, and consequently can coexist in a single entity and can transform themselves into each other; this again is the particularity and relativity of contradiction.

34 V. I. Lenin, "Remarks on N. I. Bukharin's *Economics of the Transitional Period*" *Selected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow-Leningrad, 1931, Vol. 11, p. 357.

But the struggle of opposites is ceaseless, it goes on both when the opposites are coexisting and when they are transforming themselves into each other, and becomes especially conspicuous when they are transforming themselves into one another; this again is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction. In studying the particularity and relativity of contradiction, we must give attention to the distinction between the principal contradiction and the non-principal contradictions and to the distinction between the principal aspect and the non-principal aspect of a contradiction; in studying the universality of contradiction and the struggle of opposites in contradiction, we must give attention to the distinction between the different forms of struggle. Otherwise we shall make mistakes. If, through study, we achieve a real understanding of the essentials explained above, we shall be able to demolish dogmatist ideas which are contrary to the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and detrimental to our revolutionary cause, and our comrades with practical experience will be able to organize their experience into principles and avoid repeating empiricist errors. These are a few simple conclusions from our study of the law of contradiction.

Rectify the Party's Style of Work³⁵

The Party School opens today and I wish it every success.

I would like to say something about the problem of our Party's style of work.

Why must there be a revolutionary party? There must be a revolutionary party because the world contains enemies who oppress the people and the people want to throw off enemy oppression. In the era of capitalism and imperialism, just such a revolutionary party as the Communist Party is needed. Without such a party it is simply impossible for the people to throw off enemy oppression. We are Communists, we want to lead the people in overthrowing the enemy, and so we must keep our ranks in good order, we must march in step, our troops must be picked troops and our weapons good weapons. Without these conditions the enemy cannot be overthrown.

What is the problem now facing our Party? The general line of the Party is correct and presents no problem, and the Party's work has been fruitful. The Party has several hundred thousand members who are leading the people in extremely hard and bitter struggles against the enemy. This is plain to everybody and beyond all doubt.

35 This speech was delivered by Comrade Mao Zedong, February 1, 1942 at the opening of the Party School of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. *Rectify the Party's Style of Work* is one of Mao's basic works on the rectification movement.

Then is there or is there not any problem still facing our Party? I say there is and, in a certain sense, the problem is quite serious.

What is the problem? It is the fact that there is something in the minds of a number of our comrades which strikes one as not quite right, not quite proper.

In other words, there is still something wrong with our style of study, with our style in the Party's internal and external relations and with our style of writing. By something wrong with the style of study we mean the malady of subjectivism. By something wrong with our style in Party relations we mean the malady of sectarianism. By something wrong with the style of writing we mean the malady of stereotyped Party writing.³⁶ All these are wrong, they are ill winds, but they are not like the wintry north winds that sweep across the whole sky. Subjectivism, sectarianism and stereotyped Party writing are no longer the dominant styles, but merely gusts of contrary wind, ill winds from the air-raid tunnels. *[Laughter.]* It is bad, however, that such winds should still be blowing in the Party. We must seal off the pas-

36 Stereotyped writing, or the "eight-legged essay", was the special form of essay prescribed in the imperial examinations under China's feudal dynasties from the 15th to the 19th centuries; it consisted in juggling with words, concentrated only on form and was devoid of content. Structurally the main body of the essay had eight parts— presentation, amplification, preliminary exposition, initial argument, inceptive paragraphs, middle paragraphs, rear paragraphs and concluding paragraphs, and the fifth to eighth parts each had to have two "legs", *i.e.*, two antithetical paragraphs, hence the name "eight-legged essay". The "eight-legged essay" became a byword in China denoting stereotyped formalism and triteness. Thus "stereotyped Party writing", characterizes the writings of certain people in the revolutionary ranks who piled up revolutionary phrases and terms higgledy-piggledy instead of analyzing the facts. Like the "eight-legged essay", their writings were nothing but verbiage.

sages which produce them. Our whole Party should undertake the job of sealing off these passages, and so should the Party School. These three ill winds, subjectivism, sectarianism and stereotyped Party writing, have their historical origins. Although no longer dominant in the whole Party, they still constantly create trouble and assail us. Therefore, it is necessary to resist them and to study, analyse and elucidate them.

Fight subjectivism in order to rectify the style of study, fight sectarianism in order to rectify the style in Party relations, and fight Party stereotypes in order to rectify the style of writing— such is the task before us.

To accomplish the task of overthrowing the enemy, we must accomplish the task of rectifying these styles within the Party. The style of study and the style of writing are also the Party's style of work. Once our Party's style of work is put completely right, the people all over the country will learn from our example. Those outside the Party who have the same kind of bad style will, if they are good and honest people, learn from our example and correct their mistakes, and thus the whole nation will be influenced. So long as our Communist ranks are in good order and march in step, so long as our troops are picked troops and our weapons are good weapons, any enemy, however powerful, can be overthrown.

Let me speak now about subjectivism.

Subjectivism is an improper style of study; it is opposed to Marxism-Leninism and is incompatible with the Communist Party. What we want is the Marxist-Leninist style of study. What we call style of study means not just style of study in the schools but in the whole Party. It is a question of the method of thinking of comrades in our leading bodies, of all cadres and Party members, a question of our attitude towards Marxism-

Leninism, of the attitude of all Party comrades in their work. As such, it is a question of extraordinary, indeed of primary, importance.

Certain muddled ideas find currency among many people. There are, for instance, muddled ideas about what is a theorist, what is an intellectual and what is meant by linking theory and practice.

Let us first ask, is the theoretical level of our Party high or low? Recently more Marxist-Leninist works have been translated and more people have been reading them. That is a very good thing. But can we therefore say that the theoretical level of our Party has been greatly raised? True, the level is now somewhat higher than before. But our theoretical front is very much out of harmony with the rich content of the Chinese revolutionary movement, and a comparison of the two shows that the theoretical side is lagging far behind. Generally speaking, our theory cannot as yet keep pace with our revolutionary practice, let alone lead the way as it should. We have not yet raised our rich and varied practice to the proper theoretical plane. We have not yet examined all the problems of revolutionary practice—or even the important ones—and raised them to a theoretical plane. Just think, how many of us have created theories worthy of the name on China's economics, politics, military affairs or culture, theories which can be regarded as scientific and comprehensive, and not crude and sketchy? Especially in the field of economic theory: Chinese capitalism has had a century of development since the Opium War, and yet not a single theoretical work has been produced which accords with the realities of China's economic development and is genuinely scientific. Can we say that in the study of China's economic problems, for instance, the theoretical level is already high? Can we say that our Party already has economic theorists worthy of the name? Certainly not. We have read a great many Marxist-Leninist books, but

can we claim, then, that we have theorists? We cannot. For Marxism-Leninism is the theory created by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin on the basis of practice, their general conclusion drawn from historical and revolutionary reality. If we merely read their works but do not proceed to study the realities of China's history and revolution in the light of their theory or do not make any effort to think through China's revolutionary practice carefully in terms of theory, we should not be so presumptuous as to call ourselves Marxist theorists. Our achievements on the theoretical front will be very poor indeed if, as members of the Communist Party of China, we close our eyes to China's problems and can only memorize isolated conclusions or principles from Marxist writings. If all a person can do is to commit Marxist economics or philosophy to memory, reciting glibly from Chapter 1 to Chapter 10, but is utterly unable to apply them, can he be considered a Marxist theorist? No! He cannot. What kind of theorists do we want? We want theorists who can, in accordance with the Marxist-Leninist stand, viewpoint and method, correctly interpret the practical problems arising in the course of history and revolution and give scientific explanations and theoretical elucidations of China's economic, political, military, cultural and other problems. Such are the theorists we want. To be a theorist of this kind, a person must have a true grasp of the essence of Marxism-Leninism, of the Marxist-Leninist stand, viewpoint and method and of the theories of Lenin and Stalin on the colonial revolution and the Chinese revolution, and he must be able to apply them in a penetrating and scientific analysis of China's practical problems and discover the laws of development of these problems. Such are the theorists we really need.

The Central Committee of our Party has now made a decision calling upon our comrades to learn how to apply the Marxist-Leninist stand, viewpoint and

method in the serious study of China's history, and of China's economics, politics, military affairs and culture, and to analyze every problem concretely on the basis of detailed material and then draw theoretical conclusions. This is the responsibility we must shoulder.

Our comrades in the Party School should not regard Marxist theory as lifeless dogma. It is necessary to master Marxist theory and apply it, master it for the sole purpose of applying it. If you can apply the Marxist-Leninist viewpoint in elucidating one or two practical problems, you should be commended and credited with some achievement. The more problems you elucidate and the more comprehensively and profoundly you do so, the greater will be your achievement. Our Party School should also lay down the rule to grade students good or poor according to how they look at China's problems after they have studied Marxism-Leninism, according to whether or not they see the problems clearly and whether or not they see them at all.

Next let us talk about the question of the "intellectuals". Since China is a semi-colonial, semi-feudal country and her culture is not well developed, intellectuals are particularly treasured. On this question of the intellectuals, the Central Committee of the Party made the decision³⁷ over two years ago that we should win over the great numbers of intellectuals and, insofar as they are revolutionary and willing to take part in the resistance to Japan, welcome them one and all. It is entirely right for us to esteem intellectuals, for without revolutionary intellectuals the revolution cannot triumph. But we all know there are many intellectuals who fancy themselves very learned and assume airs of erudition

37 This was the decision on recruiting intellectuals adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in December 1939, which is printed under the title "Recruit Large Numbers of Intellectuals" in the *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Vol. II.

without realizing that such airs are bad and harmful and hinder their own progress. They ought to be aware of the truth that actually many so-called intellectuals are, relatively speaking, most ignorant and the workers and peasants sometimes know more than they do. Here some will say, "Ha! You are turning things upside down and talking nonsense." [*Laughter.*] But, comrades, don't get excited; there is some sense in what I am saying.

What is knowledge? Ever since class society came into being the world has had only two kinds of knowledge, knowledge of the struggle for production and knowledge of the class struggle. Natural science and social science are the crystallization of these two kinds of knowledge, and philosophy is the generalization and summation of the knowledge of nature and the knowledge of society. Is there any other kind of knowledge? No. Now let us take a look at certain students, those brought up in schools that are completely cut off from the practical activities of society. What about them? A person goes from a primary school of this kind all the way through to a university of the same kind, graduates and is reckoned to have a stock of learning. But all he has is book-learning; he has not yet taken part in any practical activities or applied what he has learned to any field of life. Can such a person be regarded as a completely developed intellectual? Hardly so, in my opinion, because his knowledge is still incomplete. What then is relatively complete knowledge? All relatively complete knowledge is formed in two stages: the first stage is perceptual knowledge, the second is rational knowledge, the latter being the development of the former to a higher stage. What sort of knowledge is the students' book-learning? Even supposing all their knowledge is truth, it is still not knowledge acquired through their own personal experience, but consists of theories set down by their predecessors in summarizing experience of the struggle for production and of the

class struggle. It is entirely necessary that students should acquire this kind of knowledge, but it must be understood that as far as they are concerned such knowledge is in a sense still one-sided, something which has been verified by others but not yet by themselves. What is most important is to be good at applying this knowledge in life and in practice. Therefore, I advise those who have only book-learning but as yet no contact with reality, and also those with little practical experience, to realize their own shortcomings and become a little more modest.

How can those who have only book-learning be turned into intellectuals in the true sense? The only way is to get them to take part in practical work and become practical workers, to get those engaged in theoretical work to study important practical problems. In this way our aim can be attained.

What I have said will probably make some people angry. They will say, "According to your explanation, even Marx would not be regarded as an intellectual." I say they are wrong. Marx took part in the practice of the revolutionary movement and also created revolutionary theory. Beginning with the commodity, the simplest element of capitalism, he made a thorough study of the economic structure of capitalist society. Millions of people saw and handled commodities every day but were so used to them that they took no notice. Marx alone studied commodities scientifically. He carried out a tremendous work of research into their actual development and derived a thoroughly scientific theory from what existed universally. He studied nature, history and proletarian revolution and created dialectical materialism, historical materialism and the theory of proletarian revolution. Thus Marx became a most completely developed intellectual, representing the acme of human wisdom; he was fundamentally different from those who have only book-learning. Marx undertook detailed

investigations and studies in the course of practical struggles, formed generalizations and then verified his conclusions by testing them in practical struggles— this is what we call theoretical work. Our Party needs a large number of comrades who will learn how to do such work. In our Party there are many comrades who can learn to do this kind of theoretical research; most of them are intelligent and promising and we should value them. But they must follow correct principles and not repeat the mistake of the past. They must discard dogmatism and not confine themselves to ready-made phrases in books.

There is only one kind of true theory in this world, theory that is drawn from objective reality and then verified by objective reality; nothing else is worthy of the name of theory in our sense. Stalin said that theory becomes aimless when it is not connected with practice.³⁸ Aimless theory is useless and false and should be discarded. We should point the finger of scorn at those who are fond of aimless theorizing. Marxism-Leninism is the most correct, scientific and revolutionary truth, born out of and verified by objective reality, but many who study Marxism-Leninism take it as lifeless dogma, thus impeding the development of theory and harming themselves as well as other comrades.

On the other hand, our comrades who are engaged in practical work will also come to grief if they misuse their experience. True, these people are often rich in experience, which is very valuable, but it is very dangerous if they rest content with their own experience. They must realize that their knowledge is mostly perceptual and partial and that they lack rational and comprehensive knowledge; in other words, they lack theory and

38 See J. V. Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism", *Problems of Leninism*, Eng. ed., FLPH Moscow, 1954. p. 31.

their knowledge, too, is relatively incomplete. Without comparatively complete knowledge it is impossible to do revolutionary work well.

Thus, there are two kinds of incomplete knowledge, one is ready-made knowledge found in books and the other is knowledge that is mostly perceptual and partial; both are one-sided. Only an integration of the two can yield knowledge that is sound and relatively complete.

In order to study theory, however, our cadres of working-class and peasant origin must first acquire an elementary education. Without it they cannot learn Marxist-Leninist theory. Having acquired it, they can study Marxism-Leninism at any time. In my childhood I never attended a Marxist-Leninist school and was taught only such things as, “The Master said: ‘How pleasant it is to learn and constantly review what one has learned.’”³⁹ Though this teaching material was antiquated, it did me some good because from it I learned to read. Nowadays we no longer study the Confucian classics but such new subjects as modern Chinese, history, geography and elementary natural science, which, once learned, are useful everywhere. The Central Committee of our Party now emphatically requires that our cadres of working-class and peasant origin should obtain an elementary education because they can then take up any branch of study— politics, military science or economics. Otherwise, for all their rich experience they will never be able to study theory.

It follows that to combat subjectivism we must enable people of each of these two types to develop in whichever direction they are deficient and to merge with the other type. Those with booklearning must develop in the direction of practice; it is only in this way that they will stop being content with books and avoid

39 This is the opening sentence of the *Confucian Analects*, a record of the dialogues of Confucius and his disciples.

committing dogmatist errors. Those experienced in work must take up the study of theory and must read seriously; only then will they be able to systematize and synthesize their experience and raise it to the level of theory, only then will they not mistake their partial experience for universal truth and not commit empiricist errors. Dogmatism and empiricism alike are subjectivism, each originating from an opposite pole.

Hence there are two kinds of Subjectivism in our Party, dogmatism and empiricism. Each sees only a part and not the whole. If people are not on guard, do not realize that such one-sidedness is a shortcoming and do not strive to overcome it, they are liable to go astray.

However, of the two kinds of subjectivism, dogmatism is still the greater danger in our Party. For dogmatists can easily assume a Marxist guise to bluff, capture and make servitors of cadres of working-class and peasant origin who cannot easily see through them; they can also bluff and ensnare the naive youth. If we overcome dogmatism, cadres with book-learning will readily join with those who have experience and will take to the study of practical things, and then many good cadres who integrate theory with experience, as well as some real theorists, will emerge. If we overcome dogmatism, the comrades with practical experience will have good teachers to help them raise their experience to the level of theory and so avoid empiricist errors.

Besides muddled ideas about the “theorist” and the “intellectual”, there is a muddled idea among many comrades about “linking theory and practice”, a phrase they have on their lips every day. They talk constantly about “linking”, but actually they mean “separating”, because they make no effort at linking. How is Marxist-Leninist theory to be linked with the practice of the Chinese revolution? To use a common expression, it is by “shooting the arrow at the target”. As the arrow is to the target, so is Marxism-Leninism to the Chinese revo-

lution. Some comrades, however, are “shooting without a target”, shooting at random, and such people are liable to harm the revolution. Others merely stroke the arrow fondly, exclaiming, “What a fine arrow! What a fine arrow!”, but never want to shoot it. These people are only connoisseurs of curios and have virtually nothing to do with the revolution. The arrow of Marxism-Leninism must be used to shoot at the target of the Chinese revolution. Unless this point is made clear, the theoretical level of our Party can never be raised and the Chinese revolution can never be victorious.

Our comrades must understand that we study Marxism-Leninism not for display, nor because there is any mystery about it, but solely because it is the science which leads the revolutionary cause of the proletariat to victory. Even now, there are not a few people who still regard odd quotations from Marxist-Leninist works as a ready-made panacea which, once acquired, can easily cure all maladies. These people show childish ignorance, and we should enlighten them. It is precisely such ignorant people who take Marxism-Leninism as a religious dogma. To them we should say bluntly, “Your dogma is worthless.” Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin have repeatedly stated that our theory is not a dogma but a guide to action. But such people prefer to forget this statement which is of the greatest, indeed the utmost, importance. Chinese Communists can be regarded as linking theory with practice only when they become good at applying the Marxist-Leninist stand, viewpoint and method and the teachings of Lenin and Stalin concerning the Chinese revolution and when, furthermore, through serious research into the realities of China's history and revolution, they do creative theoretical work to meet China's needs in different spheres. Merely talking about linking theory and practice without actually doing anything about it is of no use, even if

one goes on talking for a hundred years. To oppose the subjectivist, one-sided approach to problems, we must demolish dogmatist subjectiveness and one-sidedness.

So much for today about combating subjectivism in order to rectify the style of study throughout the Party.

Let me now speak about the question of sectarianism.

Having been steeled for twenty years, our Party is no longer dominated by sectarianism. Remnants of sectarianism, however, are still found both in the Party's internal relations and in its external relations. Sectarian tendencies in internal relations lead to exclusiveness towards comrades inside the Party and hinder inner-Party unity and solidarity, while sectarian tendencies in external relations lead to exclusiveness towards people outside the Party and hinder the Party in its task of uniting the whole people. Only by uprooting this evil in both its aspects can the Party advance unimpeded in its great task of achieving unity among all Party comrades and among all the people of our country.

What are the remnants of inner-Party sectarianism? They are mainly as follows:

First, the assertion of "independence". Some comrades see only the interests of the part and not the whole; they always put undue stress on that part of the work for which they themselves are responsible and always wish to subordinate the interests of the whole to the interests of their own part. They do not understand the Party's system of democratic centralism; they do not realize that the Communist Party not only needs democracy but needs centralization even more. They forget the system of democratic centralism in which the minority is subordinate to the majority, the lower level to the higher level, the part to the whole and the entire membership to the Central Committee. Zhang Guo-

dao⁴⁰ asserted his “independence” of the Central Committee of the Party and as a result “asserted” himself into betraying the Party and became a Kuomintang agent. Although the sectarianism we are now discussing is not of this extremely serious kind, it must still be guarded against and we must do away completely with all manifestations of disunity. We should encourage comrades to take the interests of the whole into account. Every Party member, every branch of work, every statement and every action must proceed from the interests of the whole Party; it is absolutely impermissible to violate this principle.

Those who assert this kind of “independence” are usually wedded to the doctrine of “me first” and are generally wrong on the question of the relationship between the individual and the Party. Although in words they profess respect for the Party, in practice

40 Zhang Guodao was a renegade from the Chinese revolution. In early life, speculating on the revolution he joined the Chinese Communist Party. In the Party he made many mistakes resulting in serious crimes. The most notorious of these was his opposition in 1935 to the Red Army's northward march and his defeatism and liquidationism in advocating withdrawal by the Red Army to the minority-nationality areas on the Sichuan-Xikang borders; what is more, he openly carried out traitorous activities against the Party and the Central Committee, established his own bogus central committee, disrupted the unity of the Party and the Red Army, and caused heavy losses to the Fourth Front Army of the Red Army. But thanks to patient education by Comrade Mao Zedong and the Central Committee, the Fourth Front Army and its numerous cadres soon returned to the correct leadership of the Central Committee of the Party and played a glorious role in subsequent struggles. Zhang Guodao, however, proved incorrigible and in the spring of 1938 he slipped out of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region and joined the Kuomintang secret police.

they put themselves first and the Party second. What are these people after? They are after fame and position and want to be in the limelight. Whenever they are put in charge of a branch of work, they assert their "independence". With this aim, they draw some people in, push others out and resort to boasting, flattery and touting among the comrades, thus importing the vulgar style of the bourgeois political parties into the Communist Party. It is their dishonesty that causes them to come to grief. I believe we should do things honestly, for without an honest attitude it is absolutely impossible to accomplish anything in this world. Which are the honest people? Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin are honest, men of science are honest. Which are the dishonest people? Trotsky, Bukharin, Chen Duxiu and Zhang Guodao are extremely dishonest; and those who assert "independence" out of personal or sectional interest are dishonest too. All sly people, all those who do not have a scientific attitude in their work, fancy themselves resourceful and clever, but in fact they are most stupid and will come to no good. Students in our Party School must pay attention to this problem. We must build a centralized, unified Party and make a clean sweep of all unprincipled factional struggles. We must combat individualism and sectarianism so as to enable our whole Party to march in step and fight for one common goal.

Cadres from the outside and those from the locality must unite and combat sectarian tendencies. Very careful attention must be given to the relations between outside and local cadres because many anti-Japanese base areas were established only after the arrival of the Eighth Route Army or the New Fourth Army and much of the local work developed only after the arrival of outside cadres. Our comrades must understand that in these conditions it is possible for our base areas to be consolidated and for our Party to take root there only when the two kinds of cadres unite as one and when a

large number of local cadres develop and are promoted; otherwise it is impossible. Both the outside and the local cadres have their strong and weak points, and to make any progress they must overcome their own weak points by learning from each other's strong points. The outside cadres are generally not up to the local cadres in familiarity with local conditions and links with the masses. Take me for instance. Although I have been in northern Shaanxi five or six years, I am far behind the local comrades in understanding local conditions and in links with the people here. Our comrades going to the anti-Japanese base areas in Shanxi, Hebei, Shandong and other provinces must pay attention to this. Moreover, even within the same base area, owing to the fact that some districts develop earlier and others later, there is a difference between the local cadres of a district and those from outside it. Cadres who come from a more developed to a less developed district are also outside cadres in relation to that locality, and they, too, should pay great attention to fostering and helping local cadres. Generally speaking, in places where outside cadres are in charge, it is they who should bear the main responsibility if their relations with the local cadres are not good. And the chief comrades in charge should bear greater responsibility. The attention paid to this problem in some places is still very inadequate. Some people look down on the local cadres and ridicule them, saying, "What do these locals know? Clodhoppers!" Such people utterly fail to understand the importance of local cadres; they know neither the latter's strong points nor their own weaknesses and adopt an incorrect, sectarian attitude. All outside cadres must cherish the local cadres and give them constant help and must not be permitted to ridicule or attack them. Of course, the local cadres on their part must learn from the strong points of the outside cadres and rid themselves of inappropriate, narrow views so that they and

the outside cadres become as one, with no distinction between “them” and “us”, and thus avoid sectarian tendencies.

The same applies to the relationship between cadres in army service and other cadres working in the locality. They must be completely united and must oppose sectarian tendencies. The army cadres must help the local cadres, and vice versa. If there is friction between them, each should make allowance for the other and carry out proper self-criticism. Generally speaking, in places where army cadres are actually in positions of leadership, it is they who should bear the main responsibility if their relations with the local cadres are not good. Only when the army cadres understand their own responsibility and are modest in their attitude towards the local cadres can the conditions be created for the smooth progress of our war effort and our work of construction in the base areas.

The same applies to the relationship among different army units, different localities and different departments. We must oppose the tendency towards selfish departmentalism by which the interests of one's own unit are looked after to the exclusion of those of others. Whoever is indifferent to the difficulties of others, refuses to transfer cadres to other units on request, or releases only the inferior ones, “using the neighbour's field as an outlet for his overflow”, and does not give the slightest consideration to other departments, localities or people— such a person is a selfish departmentalist who has entirely lost the spirit of communism. Lack of consideration for the whole and complete indifference to other departments, localities and people are characteristics of a selfish departmentalist. We must intensify our efforts to educate such persons and to make them understand that selfish departmentalism is a sectarian tendency which will become very dangerous, if allowed to develop.

Another problem is the relationship between old and new cadres. Since the beginning of the War of Resistance, our Party has grown enormously, and large numbers of new cadres have emerged; that is a very good thing. In his report to the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (B), Comrade Stalin said, "...there are never enough old cadres, there are far less than required, and they are already partly going out of commission owing to the operation of the laws of nature." Here he was discussing the cadres situation and not only the laws of nature. If our Party does not have a great many new cadres working in unity and co-operation with the old cadres, our cause will come to a stop. All old cadres, therefore, should welcome the new ones with the utmost enthusiasm and show them the warmest solicitude. True, new cadres have their shortcomings. They have not been long in the revolution and lack experience, and unavoidably some have brought with them vestiges of the unwholesome ideology of the old society, remnants of the ideology of petty-bourgeois individualism. But such shortcomings can be gradually eliminated through education and tempering in the revolution. The strong point of the new cadres, as Stalin has said, is that they are acutely sensitive to what is new and are therefore enthusiastic and active to a high degree—the very qualities which some of the old cadres lack.⁴¹ Cadres, new and old, should respect each other, learn from each other and overcome their own shortcomings by learning from each other's strong points, so as to unite as one in the common cause and guard against sectarian tendencies. Generally speaking, in places where the old cadres are mainly in charge, it is they who should bear the chief responsibility if relations with the new cadres are not good.

41 See J. V. Stalin, "Report to the Eighteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. (B.) on the Work of the Central Committee", *Problems of Leninism*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954, pp. 784-86.

All the above—relations between the part and the whole, relations between the individual and the Party, relations between outside and local cadres, relations between army cadres and other cadres working in the locality, relations between this and that army unit, between this and that locality, between this and that department and relations between old and new cadres—are relations within the Party. In all these relations it is necessary to enhance the spirit of communism and guard against sectarian tendencies, so that the ranks of our Party will be in good order, march in step and therefore fight well. This is a very important problem which we must solve thoroughly in rectifying the Party's style of work. Sectarianism is an expression of subjectivism in organizational relations; if we want to get rid of subjectivism and promote the Marxist-Leninist spirit of seeking truth from facts, we must sweep the remnants of sectarianism out of the Party and proceed from the principle that the Party's interests are above personal or sectional interests, so that the Party can attain complete solidarity and unity.

The remnants of sectarianism must be eliminated from the Party's external as well as its internal relations. The reason is this: we cannot defeat the enemy by merely uniting the comrades throughout the Party, we can defeat the enemy only by uniting the people throughout the country. For twenty years the Communist Party of China has done great and arduous work in the cause of uniting the people of the whole country, and the achievements in this work since the outbreak of the War of Resistance are even greater than in the past. This does not mean, however, that all our comrades already have a correct style in dealing with the masses and are free from sectarian tendencies. No. In fact, sectarian tendencies still exist among a number of comrades, and in some cases to a very serious degree. Many of our comrades tend to be overbearing in their rela-

tions with non-Party people, look down upon them, despise or refuse to respect them or appreciate their strong points. This is indeed a sectarian tendency. After reading a few Marxist books, such comrades become more arrogant instead of more modest, and invariably dismiss others as no good without realizing that in fact their own knowledge is only half-baked. Our comrades must realize the truth that Communist Party members are at all times a minority as compared with non-Party people. Supposing one out of every hundred persons were a Communist, then there would be 4,500,000 Communists among China's population of 450,000,000. Yet, even if our membership reached this huge figure, Communists would still form only one per cent of the whole population, while 99 per cent would be non-Party people. What reason can we then have for not co-operating with non-Party people? As regards all those who wish to co-operate with us or might co-operate with us, we have only the duty of co-operating and absolutely no right to shut them out. But some Party members do not understand this and look down upon, or even shut out, those who wish to co-operate with us. There are no grounds whatsoever for doing so. Have Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin given us any grounds? They have not. On the contrary, they have always earnestly enjoined us to form close ties with the masses and not divorce ourselves from them. Or has the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China given us any grounds? No. Among all its resolutions there is not a single one that says we may divorce ourselves from the masses and so isolate ourselves. On the contrary, the Central Committee has always told us to form close ties with the masses and not to divorce ourselves from them. Thus any action divorcing us from the masses has no justification at all and is simply the mischievous result of the sectarian ideas some of our comrades have themselves concocted. As such sectarianism remains very serious

among some of our comrades and still obstructs the application of the Party line, we should carry out extensive education within the Party to meet this problem. Above all, we should make our cadres really understand how serious the problem is and how utterly impossible it is to overthrow the enemy and attain the goal of the revolution unless Party members unite with the non-Party cadres and with non-Party people.

All sectarian ideas are subjectivist and are incompatible with the real needs of the revolution; hence the struggle against sectarianism and the struggle against subjectivism should go on simultaneously.

There is no time today to talk about the question of stereotyped Party writing; I shall discuss it at another meeting. Stereotyped Party writing is a vehicle for filth, a form of expression for subjectivism and sectarianism. It does people harm and damages the revolution, and we must get rid of it completely.

To combat subjectivism we must propagate materialism and dialectics. However, there are many comrades in our Party who lay no stress on the propaganda either of materialism or of dialectics. Some tolerate subjectivist propaganda and regard it with equanimity. They think they believe in Marxism, but make no effort to propagate materialism and do not give it a thought or express any opinion when they hear or read subjectivist stuff. This is not the attitude of a Communist. It allows many of our comrades to be poisoned by subjectivist ideas, which numb their sensitivity. We should therefore launch a campaign of enlightenment within the Party to free the minds of our comrades from the fog of subjectivism and dogmatism and should call upon them to boycott subjectivism, sectarianism and stereotyped Party writing. Such evils are like Japanese goods, for only our enemy wishes us to preserve them and continue to befuddle ourselves with them; so we should advocate a boycott against them, just as we boycott

Japanese goods.⁴² We should boycott all the wares of subjectivism, sectarianism and stereotyped Party writing, make their sale difficult, and not allow their purveyors to ply their trade by exploiting the low theoretical level in the Party. Our comrades must develop a good nose for this purpose; they should take a sniff at everything and distinguish the good from the bad before they decide whether to welcome it or boycott it. Communists must always go into the whys and wherefores of anything, use their own heads and carefully think over whether or not it corresponds to reality and is really well founded; on no account should they follow blindly and encourage slavishness.

Finally, in opposing subjectivism, sectarianism and stereotyped Party writing we must have in mind two purposes: first, “learn from past mistakes to avoid future ones”, and second, “cure the sickness to save the patient”. The mistakes of the past must be exposed without sparing anyone's sensibilities; it is necessary to analyze and criticize what was bad in the past with a scientific attitude so that work in the future will be done more carefully and done better. This is what is meant by “learn from past mistakes to avoid future ones”. But our aim in exposing errors and criticizing shortcomings, like that of a doctor curing a sickness, is solely to save the patient and not to doctor him to death. A person with appendicitis is saved when the surgeon removes his appendix. So long as a person who has made mistakes does not hide his sickness for fear of treatment or persist in his mistakes until he is beyond cure, so long as he honestly and sincerely wishes to be

42 Boycotting Japanese goods was a method of struggle frequently used by the Chinese people against Japanese imperialist aggression in the first half of the 20th century, as in the patriotic May 4th Movement of 1919, after the September 18th Incident of 1931, and during the War of Resistance Against Japan.

cured and to mend his ways, we should welcome him and cure his sickness so that he can become a good comrade. We can never succeed if we just let ourselves go, and lash out at him. In treating an ideological or a political malady, one must never be rough and rash but must adopt the approach of “curing the sickness to save the patient”, which is the only correct and effective method.

I have taken this occasion of the opening of the Party School to speak at length, and I hope comrades will think over what I have said. [*Enthusiastic applause.*]

Reform Our Study⁴³

I propose that we should reform the method and the system of study throughout the Party. The reasons are as follows:

I

The twenty years of the Communist Party of China have been twenty years in which the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism has become more and more integrated with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution. If we recall how superficial meagre our understanding of Marxism-Leninism and of the Chinese revolution was during our Party's infancy, we can see how much deeper and richer it is now. For a hundred years, the finest sons and daughters of the disaster-ridden

43 Comrade Mao Zedong made this report to a cadres' meeting in Yanan in May 1941. The report and the two articles, "Rectify the Party's Style of Work" and "Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing", are Comrade Mao Zedong's basic works on the rectification movement. In these he summed up, on the ideological plane, past differences in the Party over the Party line and analyzed the petty-bourgeois ideology and style which, masquerading as Marxism-Leninism, were prevalent in the Party, and which chiefly manifested themselves in subjectivist and sectarian tendencies, their form of expression being stereotyped Party writing. Comrade Mao Zedong called for a Party-wide movement of Marxist-Leninist education to rectify style of work in accordance with the ideological principles of Marxism-Leninism. His call very quickly led to a great debate between proletarian and petty-bourgeois ideology inside and outside the Party. This consolidated the position of proletarian ideology inside and outside the Party, enabled the broad ranks of cadres to take a great step forward ideologically and the Party to achieve unprecedented unity.

Chinese nation fought and sacrificed their lives, one stepping into the breach as another fell, in quest of the truth that would save the country and the people. This moves us to song and tears. But it was only after World War I and the October Revolution in Russia that we found Marxism-Leninism, the best of truths, the best of weapons for liberating our nation. And the Communist Party of China has been the initiator, propagandist and organizer in the wielding of this weapon. As soon as it was linked with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution, the universal truth of Marxism Leninism gave an entirely new complexion to the Chinese revolution. Since the outbreak of the War of Resistance Against Japan, our Party, basing itself on the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism, has taken a further step in its study of the concrete practice of this war and in its study of China and the world today, and has also made a beginning in the study of Chinese history. These are all very good signs.

II

However, we still have shortcomings, and very big ones too. Unless we correct these shortcomings, we shall not, in my opinion, be able to take another step forward in our work and in our great cause of integrating the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution.

First, take the study of current conditions. We have achieved some success in our study of present domestic and international conditions, but for such a large political party as ours, the material we have collected is fragmentary and our research work unsystematic on each and every aspect of these subjects, whether it be the political, military, economic or cultural aspect. Generally speaking, in the last twenty years we have not done systematic and thorough work in collecting and study-

ing material on these aspects, and we are lacking in a climate of investigation and study of objective reality. To behave like “a blindfolded man catching sparrows”, or “a blind man groping for fish”, to be crude and careless, to indulge in verbiage, to rest content with a smattering of knowledge— such is the extremely bad style of work that still exists among many comrades in our Party, a style utterly opposed to the fundamental spirit of Marxism-Leninism. Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin have taught us that it is necessary to study conditions conscientiously and to proceed from objective reality and not from subjective wishes; but many of our comrades act in direct violation of this truth.

Second, take the study of history. Although a few Party members and sympathizers have undertaken this work, it has not been done in an organized way. Many Party members are still in a fog about Chinese history, whether of the last hundred years or of ancient times. There are many Marxist-Leninist scholars who cannot open their mouths without citing ancient Greece; but as for their own ancestors— sorry, they have been forgotten. There is no climate of serious study either of current conditions or of past history.

Third, take the study of international revolutionary experience, the study of the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism. Many comrades seem to study Marxism-Leninism not to meet the needs of revolutionary practice, but purely for the sake of study. Consequently, though they read, they cannot digest. They can only cite odd quotations from Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin in a one-sided manner, but are unable to apply the stand, viewpoint and method of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin to the concrete study of China's present conditions and her history or to the concrete analysis and solution of the problems of the Chinese revolution. Such

an attitude towards Marxism-Leninism does a great deal of harm, particularly among cadres of the middle and higher ranks.

The three aspects I have just mentioned, neglect of the study of current conditions, neglect of the study of history and neglect of the application of Marxism-Leninism, all constitute an extremely bad style of work. Its spread has harmed many of our comrades.

There are indeed many comrades in our ranks who have been led astray by this style of work. Unwilling to carry on systematic and thorough investigation and study of the specific conditions inside and outside the country, the province, county or district, they issue orders on no other basis than their scanty knowledge and "It must be so because it seems so to me". Does not this subjectivist style still exist among a great many comrades?

There are some who are proud, instead of ashamed, of knowing nothing or very little of our own history. What is particularly significant is that very few really know the history of the Communist Party of China and the history of China in the hundred years since the Opium War. Hardly anyone has seriously taken up the study of the economic, political, military and cultural history of the last hundred years. Ignorant of their own country, some people can only relate tales of ancient Greece and other foreign lands, and even this knowledge is quite pathetic, consisting of odds and ends from old foreign books.

For several decades, many of the returned students from abroad have suffered from this malady. Coming home from Europe, America or Japan, they can only parrot things foreign. They become gramophones and forget their duty to understand and create new things. This malady has also infected the Communist Party.

Although we are studying Marxism, the way many of our people study it runs directly counter to Marxism. That is to say, they violate the fundamental principle earnestly enjoined on us by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, the unity of theory and practice. Having violated this principle, they invent an opposite principle of their own, the separation of theory from practice. In the schools and in the education of cadres at work, teachers of philosophy do not guide students to study the logic of the Chinese revolution; teachers of economics do not guide them to study the characteristics of the Chinese economy; teachers of political science do not guide them to study the tactics of the Chinese revolution; teachers of military science do not guide them to study the strategy and tactics adapted to China's special features; and so on and so forth. Consequently, error is disseminated, doing people great harm. A person does not know how to apply in Fuxian⁴⁴ what he has learned in Yanan. Professors of economics cannot explain the relationship between the Border Region currency and the Kuomintang currency,⁴⁵ so naturally the students cannot explain it either. Thus a perverse mentality has been created among many students; instead of showing an interest in China's problems and taking the Party's directives seriously, they give all their hearts to the supposedly eternal and immutable dogmas learned from their teachers.

44 Fuxian County is about seventy kilometers south of Yanan.

45 The Border Region currency consisted of the currency notes issued by the Bank of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region Government. The Kuomintang currency was the paper currency issued by the four big Kuomintang bureaucrat-capitalist banks from 1935 onwards with British and US imperialist support. Comrade Mao Zedong was referring to the fluctuations in the rates of exchange between these two currencies.

Of course, what I have just said refers to the worst type in our Party, and I am not saying that it is the general case. However, people of this type do exist; what is more, there are quite a few of them and they cause a great deal of harm. This matter should not be treated lightly.

III

In order to explain this idea further, I should like to contrast two opposite attitudes.

First, there is the subjectivist attitude.

With this attitude, a person does not make a systematic and thorough study of the environment, but works by sheer subjective enthusiasm and has a blurred picture of the face of China today. With this attitude, he chops up history, knows only ancient Greece but not China and is in a fog about the China of yesterday and the day before yesterday. With this attitude, a person studies Marxist-Leninist theory in the abstract and without any aim. He goes to Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin not to seek the stand, viewpoint and method with which to solve the theoretical and tactical problems of the Chinese revolution but to study theory purely for theory's sake. He does not shoot the arrow at the target but shoots at random. Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin have taught us that we should proceed from objective realities and that we should derive laws from them to serve as our guide to action. For this purpose, we should, as Marx has said, appropriate the material in detail and subject it to scientific analysis and synthesis.⁴⁶ Many of our people do not act in this way but do

46 "The latter [the method of inquiry] has to appropriate the material in detail, to analyze its different forms of development, to trace out their inner connection. Only after this work is done, can the actual movement be adequately described." See Karl Marx, "Afterword to the Second German Edition" of *Capital*.

the opposite. A good number of them are doing research work but have no interest in studying either the China of today or the China of yesterday and confine their interest to the study of empty "theories" divorced from reality. Many others are doing practical work, but they too pay no attention to the study of objective conditions, often rely on sheer enthusiasm and substitute their personal feelings for policy. Both kinds of people, relying on the subjective, ignore the existence of objective realities. When making speeches, they indulge in a long string of headings, A, B, C, D, 1, 2, 3, 4, and when writing articles, they turn out a lot of verbiage. They have no intention of seeking truth from facts, but only a desire to curry favour by claptrap. They are flashy without substance, brittle without solidity. They are always right, they are the Number One authority under Heaven, "imperial envoys" who rush everywhere. Such is the style of work of some comrades in our ranks. To govern one's own conduct by this style is to harm oneself, to teach it to others is to harm others, and to use it to direct the revolution is to harm the revolution. To sum up, this subjectivist method which is contrary to science and Marxism-Leninism is a formidable enemy of the Communist Party, the working class, the people and the nation; it is a manifestation of impurity in Party spirit. A formidable enemy stands before us, and we must overthrow him. Only when subjectivism is overthrown can the truth of Marxism-Leninism prevail, can Party spirit be strengthened, can the revolution be victorious. We must assert that the absence of a scientific attitude, that is, the absence of the Marxist-Leninist approach of uniting theory and practice, means that Party spirit is either absent or deficient.

There is a couplet which portrays this type of person. It runs:

The reed growing on the wall— top-heavy, thin-stemmed and shallow of root;

The bamboo shoot in the hills— sharp-tongued, thick-skinned and hollow inside.

Is this not an apt description of those who do not have a scientific attitude, who can only recite words and phrases from the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin and who enjoy a reputation unwarranted by any real learning? If anyone really wishes to cure himself of his malady, I advise him to commit this couplet to memory or to show still more courage and paste it on the wall of his room. Marxism-Leninism is a science, and science means honest, solid knowledge; there is no room for playing tricks. Let us, then, be honest.

Secondly, there is the Marxist-Leninist attitude.

With this attitude, a person applies the theory and method of Marxism-Leninism to the systematic and thorough investigation and study of the environment. He does not work by enthusiasm alone but, as Stalin says, combines revolutionary sweep with practicalness. With this attitude he will not chop up history. It is not enough for him to know ancient Greece, he must know China; he must know the revolutionary history not only of foreign countries but also of China, not only the China of today but also the China of yesterday and of the day before yesterday. With this attitude, one studies the theory of Marxism-Leninism with a purpose, that is, to integrate Marxist-Leninist theory with the actual movement of the Chinese revolution and to seek from this theory the stand, viewpoint and method with which to solve the theoretical and tactical problems of the Chinese revolution. Such an attitude is one of shooting the arrow at the target. The “target” is the Chinese revolution, the “arrow” is Marxism-Leninism. We Chinese Communists have been seeking this arrow because we

want to hit the target of the Chinese revolution and of the revolution of the East. To take such an attitude is to seek truth from facts. "Facts" are all the things that exist objectively, "truth" means their internal relations, that is, the laws governing them, and "to seek" means to study. We should proceed from the actual conditions inside and outside the country, the province, county or district, and derive from them, as our guide to action, laws which are inherent in them and not imaginary, that is, we should find the internal relations of the events occurring around us. And in order to do that we must rely not on subjective imagination, not on momentary enthusiasm, not on lifeless books, but on facts that exist objectively; we must appropriate the material in detail and, guided by the general principles of Marxism-Leninism, draw correct conclusions from it. Such conclusions are not mere lists of phenomena in A, B, C, D order or writings full of platitudes, but are scientific conclusions. Such an attitude is one of seeking truth from facts and not of currying favour by claptrap. It is the manifestation of Party spirit, the Marxist-Leninist style of uniting theory and practice. It is the attitude every Communist Party member should have at the very least. He who adopts this attitude will be neither "top-heavy, thin-stemmed and shallow of root" nor "sharp-tongued, thick-skinned and hollow inside".

IV

In accordance with the above views, I would like to make the following proposals:

1. We should place before the whole Party the task of making a systematic and thorough study of the situation around us. On the basis of the theory and method of Marxism-Leninism, we should make a detailed investigation and study of developments in the economic, financial, political, military, cultural and party activities

of our enemies, our friends and ourselves, and then draw the proper and necessary conclusions. To this end, we should direct our comrades' attention to the investigation and study of these practical matters. We should get our comrades to understand that the twofold basic task of the leading bodies of the Communist Party is to know conditions and to master policy; the former means knowing the world and the latter changing the world. We should get our comrades to understand that without investigation there is no right to speak, and that bombastic twaddle and a mere list of phenomena in 1, 2, 3, 4 order are of no use. Take propaganda work, for instance; if we do not know the situation with regard to the propaganda of our enemies, our friends and ourselves, we shall be unable to decide on a correct propaganda policy. In the work of any department, it is necessary to know the situation first and only then can the work be well handled. The fundamental link in changing the Party's style of work is to carry out plans for investigation and study throughout the Party.

2. As for China's history in the last hundred years, we should assemble qualified persons to study it, in cooperation and with a proper division of labour, and so overcome the present disorganized state of affairs. First it is necessary to make analytical studies in the several fields of economic history, political history, military history and cultural history, and only then will it be possible to make synthetical studies.

3. As for education for cadres whether at work or in schools for cadres, a policy should be established of focusing such education on the study of the practical problems of the Chinese revolution and using the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism as the guide, and the method of studying Marxism-Leninism statically and in isolation should be discarded. Moreover, in studying Marxism-Leninism, we should use the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*,

Short Course as the principal material. It is the best synthesis and summing-up of the world communist movement of the past hundred years, a model of the integration of theory and practice, and so far the only comprehensive model in the whole world. When we see how Lenin and Stalin integrated the universal truth of Marxism with the concrete practice of the Soviet revolution and thereby developed Marxism, we shall know how we should work in China.

We have made many detours. But error is often the precursor of what is correct. I am confident that in the context of the Chinese revolution and the world revolution, which is so intensely alive and so richly varied, this reform of our study will certainly yield good results.

Oppose Book Worship⁴⁷

I. NO INVESTIGATION, NO RIGHT TO SPEAK

Unless you have investigated a problem, you will be deprived of the right to speak on it. Isn't that too harsh? Not in the least. When you have not probed into a problem, into the present facts and its past history, and know nothing of its essentials, whatever you say about it will undoubtedly be nonsense. Talking nonsense solves no problems, as everyone knows, so why is it unjust to deprive you of the right to speak? Quite a few comrades always keep their eyes shut and talk nonsense, and for a Communist that is disgraceful. How can a Communist keep his eyes shut and talk nonsense?

It won' t do!

It won't do!

You must investigate!

You must not talk nonsense!

47 *Oppose Book Worship* was written by Mao Zedong in May 1930. It stresses the importance of social investigation and attacks dogmatism.

When it was reprinted in 1961, Mao wrote: "This is an old article which was written to oppose dogmatism in the Red Army at that time. At that time we did not use the term *Jiaotiaozhuyi* (dogmatism) but rather *Benbenzhuyi* (book worship). The article was written approximately in the spring of 1930. It has already been 30 years since I have read it. In January 1961, I suddenly found it in the Central Revolutionary Museum. The Central Revolutionary Museum had found it in the Fujian Longyan Area committee. In reading it I find that it still has some use, so I have had printed a good many copies as reference for comrades."

II. TO INVESTIGATE A PROBLEM IS TO SOLVE IT

You can't solve a problem? Well, get down and investigate the present facts and its past history! When you have investigated the problem thoroughly, you will know how to solve it. Conclusions invariably come after investigation, and not before. Only a blockhead cudgels his brains on his own, or together with a group, to "find solution" or "evolve an idea" without making any investigation. It must be stressed that this cannot possibly lead to any effective solution or any good idea. In other words, he is bound to arrive at a wrong solution and a wrong idea.

There are not a few comrades doing inspection work, as well as guerrilla leaders and cadres newly in office, who like to make political pronouncements the moment they arrive at a place and who strut about, criticizing this and condemning that when they have only seen the surface of things or minor details. Such purely subjective nonsensical talk is indeed detestable. These people are bound to make a mess of things, lose the confidence of the masses and prove incapable of solving any problem at all.

When they come across difficult problems, quite a number of people in leading positions simply heave a sigh without being able to solve them. They lose patience and ask to be transferred on the ground that they "have not the ability and cannot do the job"; These are cowards' words. Just get moving on your two legs, go the rounds of every section placed under your charge and "inquire into everything"⁴⁸ as Confucius did, and then you will be able to solve the problems, however little is your ability; for although your head may be empty before you go out of doors, it will be empty no longer when you return but will contain all sorts of material

48 See Confucian *Analects*, Book III, *Pa Yi*: "When Confucius entered the Ancestral Temple he inquired into everything."

necessary for the solution of the problems, and that is how problems are solved. Must you go out of doors? Not necessarily. You can call a fact-finding meeting of people familiar with the situation in order to get at the source of what you call a difficult problem and come to know how it stands now, and then it will be easy to solve your difficult problem.

Investigation may be likened to the long months of pregnancy, and solving a problem to the day of birth. To investigate a problem is, indeed, to solve it.

III. OPPOSE BOOK WORSHIP

Whatever is written in a book is right— such is still the mentality of culturally backward Chinese peasants. Strangely enough, within the Communist Party there are also people who always say in a discussion, “Show me where it's written in the book.” When we say that a directive of a higher organ of leadership is correct, that is not just because it comes from “a higher organ of leadership” but because its contents conform with both the objective and subjective circumstances of the struggle and meet its requirements. It is quite wrong to take a formalistic attitude and blindly carry out directives without discussing and examining them in the light of actual conditions simply because they come from a higher organ. It is the mischief done by this formalism which explains why the line and tactics of the Party do not take deeper root among the masses. To carry out a directive of a higher organ blindly, and seemingly without any disagreement, is not really to carry it out but is the most artful way of opposing or sabotaging it.

The method of studying the social sciences exclusively from the book is likewise extremely dangerous and may even lead one onto the road of counter-revolution. Clear proof of this is provided by the fact that whole batches of Chinese Communists who confined

themselves to books in their study of the social sciences have turned into counter-revolutionaries. When we say Marxism is correct, it is certainly not because Marx was a “prophet” but because his theory has been proved correct in our practice and in our struggle. We need Marxism in our struggle. In our acceptance of his theory no such formalization of mystical notion as that of “prophecy” ever enters our minds. Many who have read Marxist books have become renegades from the revolution, whereas illiterate workers often grasp Marxism very well. Of course we should study Marxist books, but this study must be integrated with our country's actual conditions. We need books, but we must overcome book worship, which is divorced from the actual situation.

How can we overcome book worship? The only way is to investigate the actual situation.

IV. WITHOUT INVESTIGATING THE ACTUAL SITUATION, THERE IS BOUND TO BE AN IDEALIST APPRAISAL OF CLASS FORCES AND AN IDEALIST GUIDANCE IN WORK, RESULTING EITHER IN OPPORTUNISM OR IN PUTSCHISM

Do you doubt this conclusion? Facts will force you to accept it. Just try and appraise the political situation or guide the struggle without making any investigation, and you will see whether or not such appraisal or guidance is groundless and idealist and whether or not it will lead to opportunist or putschist errors. Certainly it will. This is not because of failure to make careful plans before taking action but because of failure to study the specific social situation carefully before making the plans, as often happens in our Red Army guerrilla units. Officers of the Li Kui⁴⁹ type do not discriminate when

49 Li Kui was a hero in the well-known Chinese novel *Water Margin* which describes the peasant war that occurred towards the end of the Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127). He was simple,

they punish the men for offenses. As a result, the offenders feel they have been unfairly treated, many disputes ensue, and the leaders lose all prestige. Does this not happen frequently in the Red Army?

We must wipe out idealism and guard against all opportunist and putschist errors before we can succeed in winning over the masses and defeating the enemy. The only way to wipe out idealism is to make the effort and investigate the actual situation.

**V. THE AIM OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
INVESTIGATION IS TO ARRIVE AT A CORRECT
APPRAISAL OF CLASS FORCES AND THEN TO
FORMULATE CORRECT TACTICS FOR THE
STRUGGLE**

This is our answer to the question: Why do we have to investigate social and economic conditions? Accordingly, the object of our investigation is all the social classes and not fragmentary social phenomena. Of late, the comrades in the Fourth Army of the Red Army have generally given attention to the work of investigation,⁵⁰

outspoken and very loyal to the revolutionary cause of the peasants, but crude and tactless.

50 Mao Zedong has always laid great stress on investigation, regarding social investigation as the most important task and the basis for defining policy in the work of leadership. The work of investigation was gradually developed in the Fourth Army of the Red Army on Mao Zedong's initiative. He stipulated that social investigation should be a regular part of the work, and the Political Department of the Red Army prepared detailed forms covering such items as the state of the mass struggle, the condition of the reactionaries, the economic life of the people and the amount of land owned by each class in the rural areas. Wherever the Red Army went, it first made itself familiar with the class situation in the locality and then formulated slogans suited to the needs of the masses.

but the method many of them employ is wrong. The results of their investigation are therefore as trivial as a grocer's accounts, or resemble the many strange tales a country bumpkin hears when he comes to town, or are like a distant view of a populous city from a mountain top. This kind of investigation is of little use and cannot achieve our main purpose. Our main purpose is to learn the political and economic situation of the various social classes. The outcome of our investigation should be a picture of the present situation of each class and the ups and downs of its development. For example, when we investigate the composition of the peasantry, not only must we know the number of owner-peasants, semi-owner peasants and tenant-peasants, who are differentiated according to tenancy relationships, but more especially we must know the number of rich peasants, middle peasants and poor peasants, who are differentiated according to class or stratum. When we investigate the composition of the merchants, not only must we know the number in each trade, such as grain, clothing, medicinal herbs, etc., but more especially we must know the number of small merchants, middle merchants and big merchants. We should investigate not only the state of each trade, but more especially the class relations within it. We should investigate the relationships not only between the different trades but more especially between the different classes. Our chief method of investigation must be to dissect the different social classes, the ultimate purpose being to understand their interrelations, to arrive at a correct appraisal of class forces and then to formulate the correct tactics for the struggle, defining which classes constitute the main force in the revolutionary struggle, which classes are to be won over as allies and which classes are to be overthrown. This is our sole purpose.

What are the social classes requiring investigation?

They are:

The industrial proletariat
The handicraft workers
The farm laborers
The poor peasants
The urban poor
The lumpen-proletariat
The master handicraftsmen
The small merchants
The middle peasants
The rich peasants
The landlords
The commercial bourgeoisie
The industrial bourgeoisie

In our investigation we should give attention to the state of all these classes or strata. Only the industrial proletariat and industrial bourgeoisie are absent in the areas where we are now working, and we constantly come across all the others. Our tactics of struggle are tactics in relation to all these classes and strata.

Another serious shortcoming in our past investigations has been the undue stress on the countryside to the neglect of the towns, so that many comrades have always been vague about our tactics towards the urban poor and the commercial bourgeoisie. The development of the struggle has enabled us to leave the mountains for the plains.⁵¹ We have descended physically, but we are still up in the mountains mentally. We must under-

51 Here “the mountains” are the Jinggang mountain area along the borders of Jiangxi and Hunan Provinces; the “plains” are those in southern Jiangxi and western Fujian. In January 1929, Mao Zedong led the main force of the Fourth Army of the Red Army down from the Jinggang Mountains to southern Jiangxi and western Fujian in order to set up two large revolutionary base areas.

stand the towns as well as the countryside, or we shall be unable to meet the needs of the revolutionary struggle.

VI. VICTORY IN CHINA'S REVOLUTIONARY STRUGGLE WILL DEPEND ON THE CHINESE COMRADES' UNDERSTANDING OF CHINESE CONDITIONS

The aim of our struggle is to attain socialism via the stage of democracy. In this task, the first step is to complete the democratic revolution by winning the majority of the working class and arousing the peasant masses and the urban poor for the overthrow of the landlord class, imperialism and the Kuomintang regime. The next step is to carry out the socialist revolution, which will follow on the development of this struggle. The fulfillment of this great revolutionary task is no simple or easy job and will depend entirely on correct and firm tactics on the part of the proletarian party. If its tactics of struggle are wrong, or irresolute and wavering, the revolution will certainly suffer temporary defeat. It must be borne in mind that the bourgeois parties, too, constantly discuss their tactics of struggle. They are considering how to spread reformist influences among the working class so as to mislead it and turn it away from Communist Party leadership, how to get the rich peasants to put down the uprisings of the poor peasants and how to organize gangsters to suppress the revolutionary struggles. In a situation when the class struggle grows increasingly acute and is waged at close quarters, the proletariat has to depend for its victory entirely on the correct and firm tactics of struggle of its own party, the Communist Party. A Communist Party's correct and unswerving tactics of struggle can in no circumstance be created by a few people sitting in an office; they emerge in the course of mass struggle, that is, through

actual experience. Therefore, we must at all times study social conditions and make practical investigations. Those comrades who are inflexible, conservative, formalistic and groundlessly optimistic think that the present tactics of struggle are perfect, that the *Book of Documents*⁵² of the Party's Sixth National Congress guarantees lasting victory, and that one can always be victorious merely by adhering to the established methods. These ideas are absolutely wrong and have nothing in common with the idea that Communists should create favorable new situations through struggle; they represent a purely conservative line. Unless it is completely discarded, this line will cause great losses to the revolution and do harm to these comrades themselves. There are obviously some comrades in our Red Army who are content to leave things as they are, who do not seek to understand anything thoroughly and are groundlessly optimistic, and they spread the fallacy that "this is proletarian". They eat their fill and sit dozing in their offices all day long without ever moving a step and going out among the masses to investigate. Whenever they open their mouths, their platitudes make people sick. To awaken these comrades we must raise our voices and cry out to them:

Change your conservative ideas without delay!

Replace them by progressive and militant Communist ideas!

Get into the struggle!

Go among the masses and investigate the facts!

52 *The Book of Documents* consisted of the resolutions adopted at the Sixth National Congress of the Communist Party of China in July 1928, including the political resolution and the resolutions on the peasant question, the land question, the organization of political power, etc. Early in 1929 the Front Committee of the Fourth Army of the Red Army published these resolutions in book form for distribution to the Party organizations in the Red Army and to the local Party organizations.

VII. THE TECHNIQUE OF INVESTIGATION

1. Hold fact-finding meetings and undertake investigation through discussions.

This is the only way to get near the truth, the only way to draw conclusions. It is easy to commit mistakes if you do not hold fact-finding meetings for investigation through discussions but simply rely on one individual relating his own experience. You cannot possibly draw more or less correct conclusions at such meetings if you put questions casually instead of raising key-questions for discussion.

2. What kind of people should attend the fact-finding meetings?

They should be people well acquainted with social and economic conditions. As far as age is concerned, older people are best, because they are rich in experience and not only know what is going on but understand the causes and effects. Young people with experience of struggle should also be included, because they have progressive ideas and sharp eyes. As far as occupation is concerned, there should be workers, peasants, merchants, intellectuals, and occasionally soldiers, and sometimes even vagrants. Naturally, when a particular subject is being looked into, those who have nothing to do with it need not be present. For example, workers, peasants and students need not attend when commerce is the subject of investigation.

3. Which is better, a large fact-finding meeting or a small one?

That depends on the investigator's ability to conduct a meeting. If he is good at it, a meeting of as many as a dozen or even twenty or more people can be called. A large meeting has its advantages; from the answers you get fairly accurate statistics (*e.g.*, in finding out the percentage of poor peasants in the total peasant popu-

lation) and fairly correct conclusions (*e.g.*, in finding out whether equal or differentiated land redistribution is better). Of course, it has its disadvantages too; unless you are skillful in conducting meetings, you will find it difficult to keep order. So the number of people attending a meeting depends on the competence of the investigator. However, the minimum is three, or otherwise the information obtained will be too limited to correspond to the real situation.

4. Prepare a detailed outline for the investigation.

A detailed outline should be prepared beforehand, and the investigator should ask questions according to the outline, with those present at the meeting giving their answers. Any points which are unclear or doubtful should be put up for discussion. The detailed outline should include main subjects and sub-headings and also detailed items. For instance, taking commerce as a main subject, it can have such sub-headings as cloth, grain, other necessities and medicinal herbs; again, under cloth, there can be such detailed items as calico, homespun and silk and satin.

5. Personal participation.

Everyone with responsibility for giving leadership — from the chairman of the township government to the chairman of the central government, from the detachment leader to the commander-in-chief, from the secretary of a Party branch to the general secretary— must personally undertake investigation into the specific social and economic conditions and not merely rely on reading reports. For investigation and reading reports are two entirely different things.

6. Probe deeply.

Anyone new to investigation work should make one or two thorough investigations in order to gain full knowledge of a particular place (say, a village or a town) of a particular problem (say, the problem of grain or

currency). Deep probing into a particular place or problem will make future investigation of other places or problems easier.

7. Make your own notes.

The investigator should not only preside at fact-finding meetings and give proper guidance to those present but should also make his own notes and record the results himself. To have others do it for him is no good.

Preface to Rural Surveys⁵³

The present rural policy of the Party is not one of Agrarian Revolution as during the ten years' civil war, but is a rural policy for the National United Front Against Japan. The whole Party should carry out the Central Committee's directives of July 7 and December 25, 1940, and the directives of the forthcoming Seventh National Congress. The following material is being published to help comrades find a method for studying problems. Many of our comrades still have a crude and careless style of work, do not seek to understand things thoroughly and may even be completely ignorant of conditions at the lower levels, and yet they are responsible for directing work. This is an extremely dangerous state of affairs. Without a really concrete knowledge of the actual conditions of the classes in Chinese society there can be no really good leadership.

The only way to know conditions is to make social investigations, to investigate the conditions of each social class in real life. For those charged with directing work, the basic method for knowing conditions is to concentrate on a few cities and villages according to a plan, use the fundamental viewpoint of Marxism, *i.e.*, the method of class analysis, and make a number of thorough investigations. Only thus can we acquire even the most rudimentary knowledge of China's social problems.

53 This preface was written by Mao on March 17, 1941.

To do this, first, direct your eyes downward, do not hold your head high and gaze at the sky. Unless a person is interested in turning his eyes downward and is determined to do so, he will never in his whole life really understand things in China.

Second, hold fact-finding meetings. Certainly, no all-round knowledge can be acquired merely by glancing this way and that and listening to hearsay. Of the data I obtained through fact-finding meetings, those on Hunan Province and on Jinggangshan have been lost. The materials published here consist mainly of the “Survey of Xingguo”, the “Survey of Changgang Township” and the “Survey of Caixi Township”. Holding fact-finding meetings is the simplest, most practicable and most reliable method, from which I have derived much benefit; it is a better school than any university. Those attending such meetings should be really experienced cadres of middle and lower ranks, or ordinary people. In my investigations of five counties in Hunan Province and two counties in Jinggangshan, I approached responsible cadres of middle rank; in the Xunwu investigation I approached cadres of the middle and lower ranks, a poor *xiucai*,⁵⁴ a bankrupt ex-president of the chamber of commerce and a petty official in charge of county revenue who had lost his job. All of these people gave me a great deal of information I had never even heard of. The man who for the first time gave me a complete picture of the rottenness of Chinese jails was a petty jailer I met during my investigation in Hengshan County, Hunan. In my investigations of Xingguo County and Changgang and Caixi townships, I approached comrades working at the township level and ordinary peasants. These cadres, the peasants, the *xiucai*, the jailer, the merchant and the revenue clerk were all my esteemed teachers, and as their pupil I had to be

54 A *xiucai* was a holder of the lowest degree in the imperial examinations.

respectful and diligent and comradely in my attitude; otherwise they would have paid no attention to me, and, though they knew, would not have spoken or, if they spoke, would not have told all they knew. A fact-finding meeting need not be large; from three to five or seven or eight people are enough. Ample time must be allowed and an outline for the investigation must be prepared; furthermore, one must personally ask questions, take notes and have discussions with those at the meeting. Therefore one certainly cannot make an investigation, or do it well, without zeal, a determination to direct one's eyes downward and a thirst for knowledge, and without shedding the ugly mantle of pretentiousness and becoming a willing pupil. It has to be understood that the masses are the real heroes, while we ourselves are often childish and ignorant, and without this understanding it is impossible to acquire even the most rudimentary knowledge.

I should like to repeat that the main purpose of publishing this reference material is to indicate a method for finding out the conditions prevailing at the lower levels; it is not to have comrades memorize the specific material and the conclusions drawn from it. Speaking generally, the infant bourgeoisie of China has not been able, and never will be able, to provide relatively comprehensive or even rudimentary material on social conditions, as the bourgeoisie in Europe, America and Japan has done; we have therefore no alternative but to collect it ourselves. Speaking specifically, people engaged in practical work must at all times keep abreast of changing conditions, and this is something for which no Communist Party in any country can depend on others. Therefore, everyone engaged in practical work must investigate conditions at the lower levels. Such investigation is especially necessary for those who know theory but do not know the actual conditions, for otherwise they will not be able to link theory

with practice. Although my assertion, “No investigation, no right to speak”, has been ridiculed as “narrow empiricism”, to this day I do not regret having made it; what is more, I still insist that without investigation there cannot possibly be any right to speak. There are many people who “the moment they alight from the official carriage” make a hullabaloo, spout opinions, criticize this and condemn that; but, in fact, ten out of ten of them will meet with failure. For such views or criticisms, which are not based on thorough investigation, are nothing but ignorant twaddle. Countless times our Party suffered at the hands of these “imperial envoys”, who rushed here, there and everywhere. Stalin rightly says that “theory becomes purposeless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice”. And he rightly adds that “practice gropes in the dark if its path is not illumined by revolutionary theory”.⁵⁵ Nobody should be labelled a “narrow empiricist” except the “practical man” who gropes in the dark and lacks perspective and foresight.

Today I still feel keenly the necessity for thorough research into Chinese and world affairs; this is related to the scantiness of my own knowledge of Chinese and world affairs and does not imply that I know everything and that others are ignorant. It is my wish to go on being a pupil, learning from the masses, together with all other Party comrades.

55 J. V. Stalin, “The Foundations of Leninism”, *Problems of Leninism*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954, p. 31.

Twenty Manifestations of Bureaucracy⁵⁶

With our administrative offices so out of touch with reality, bureaucratism is an easy illness to catch. Bureaucratism inevitably leads to separatism. We discovered a clear example of this with the “Yuejin” incident.⁵⁷ There is also regionalism below. The roots are all in bureaucratism. The year before last, many cadres were sent down [into production]. I drafted the document that resulted in them being sent down. Some people say they want to oppose it— that they can’t stand it. The problem is bureaucratism.

Bureaucratism is a legacy left over by the exploiting class. We and the external party minister hope to rely on your advice.

Bureaucratism as a way of thinking manifests a combination of individualism, decentralism, selfish departmentalism, liberalism, commandism, routinism and organizational sectarianism. Therefore, bureaucratism is bound to be linked to these “isms.” In short, we must concentrate on opposing the ideological style of the exploiting class. On March 1st, the Five-Antis directives of the Central Committee said: “Bureaucratism is on the rise.” I think it is universal.

I’ll try to summarize 20 manifestations of bureaucracy:

56 This document was written by Mao in 1963.

57 The Yuejin was a freighter that sank in May 1963 after hitting rocks. Investigations showed that three reports on the danger of the route of the Yuejin were filed and ignored because of the complicated bureaucracy of the Ministry of Transport.

1. At the highest level there is very little knowledge; they do not understand the opinion of the masses; they do not investigate and study; they do not grasp specific policies; they do not conduct political and ideological work; they are divorced from reality, from the masses, and from the leadership of the Party; they always issue orders, and the orders are usually wrong, they certainly mislead the country and the people; at the least they obstruct the consistent adherence to the party line and policies; and they cannot meet with the people. The bureaucratism is divorced from leadership and from the masses.

2. They are conceited, complacent, and they aimlessly discuss politics. They do not grasp their work, they are subjective and one-sided; they are careless; they do not listen to people; they are truculent and arbitrary; they impose orders; they do not care about reality; they maintain blind control. This is authoritarian bureaucratism.

3. They are very busy from morning until evening, they labor bitterly the whole year long. But they work without investigation, they don't study people, they do not prepare before speaking and they don't do any planning for their work. This is a headless, brainless, bureaucratism without direction.

4. They operate as an officialdom, where they are the only ones who count. No one can get close; they are intimidating and arrogant to cadres and curse at will. This is the bureaucratism of lordship.

5. They don't learn and are useless, ashamed to ask others; they exaggerate and lie and make a fool of themselves; they deceive the top and hide things from others; they write off their own wrongs, and take all the credit, blaming others for mistakes. This is dishonest bureaucratism.

6. They don't study politics, don't engage in their work, push work off onto others and in case of trouble they fear taking responsibility; they procrastinate and have long-term indecision; they engage in haggling in their work and are politically insensitive. This is irresponsible bureaucratism.

7. They work in a perfunctory manner just to subsist, muddling along, stirring up discord with others and make many mistakes; they flatter those above and pull down those below, are two-faced and smooth and slick. This is the bureaucratism of working just to feed yourself.

8. They can't grasp politics, they can't master their work, they say what they think people want to hear and talk to everyone in the same tone; they take their pay without doing work; they make up things for the sake of appearances and are indiscriminate in their leadership. This bureaucratism that is satisfied with incompetence.

9. They are confused and chaotic, and don't have a mind of their own; they muddle through, they are idle all day wasting time. This is confused and useless bureaucratism.

10. They submit approval for documents without reading them; if their approval is wrong, they don't admit it; They read by letting others do the reading, and when others are reading, they are asleep. They have countless thoughts but don't discuss things with others, pushing everything off onto others so that they don't have to take responsibility. They pretend to understand those below them, even if they don't by criticizing and giving orders summarily; they go along to get along with those on the same level. This is lazy bureaucratism.

11. Government offices grow bigger and bigger, personnel is enormously complex, there's redundancy in the hierarchy, assets are wasted, there's a lot of people, they have many trouble, and they are running around in circles frantically while neglecting their proper duties.

There are too many people for too little work and the level of efficiency is low. This is institutional bureaucratism.

12. They don't read instructions and don't approve reports; they don't circulate meetings or use reports that have been submitted and they don't communicate or discuss. This is bureaucratism of formalism.

13. They want to enjoy themselves and engage in back door deals. They're afraid of hardships. If one person is promoted, then all his cronies will also ascend. If one person is made an official, the whole family will enjoy the benefits. Internally and externally everyone is being treated to meals and given gifts. This is bureaucratism of special favors.

14. The bigger the official gets, the worse his temperament, the bigger his house, the better the furnishings, the higher his living requirements. The more the supplies they receive, the more they dispense and the lower the price. This is the bureaucratism of putting on official airs.

15. They do everything for self and selfish profit; they use their public office for private interests; they embezzle from the public, knowingly breaking the law; they eat a lot and earn a lot and don't give anything back. This is selfish, individualist bureaucratism.

16. They compete for acclaim and power while reaching out to the Party; they haggle over every penny, find fault in all of the work, they are cozy when it comes to their comrades, and are indifferent to the masses. This is the bureaucratism for power struggles.

17. These are leaders of many different minds who can't unite with each other; they have multiple political lines and their work disorganized; the top and the bottom are divorced from each other, and they try to push each other out; there is no centralization, nor is there any democracy. This is disunited bureaucratism.

18. There's don't heed any organization and appoint personal friends; they form cliques to further their own private interests and protect each other, individual and factional interests stand above all else; they harm the larger public for the sake of small individual interests. This is sectarian bureaucratism.

19. Their revolutionary will has deteriorated and their political life has degenerated. They relying on old accomplishments to "eat," putting on official airs. They love leisure and hate work, taking scenic tours. They don't use their brains nor their hands; they don't care about the interests of the country or the people. This is degenerate bureaucratism.

20. They encourage harmful tendencies, indulge bad people and bad things, retaliate, suppress democracy, oppress the masses, protect bad people; they don't differentiate between the enemy and ourselves and flout the law. This is bureaucratism that encourages harmful tendencies.

In short, cadres divorced from reality, divorced from the masses, and ignoring the interests of the masses will harm the party's line and policy. To not work as ordinary workers, to not be with the masses and share their joys and hardships; to give politically empty talk, be dishonest, irresponsible, incapable, useless, immersed in transactionism, special favors, selfishness, disunity, sectarianism—will finally end in degeneration.

The ideological, social, historical, and ideological roots of bureaucratism are the ideological ways of the exploiting class, including bourgeois individualism and pragmatism, as well as feudal patriarchy. (The four major families in the *Dream of the Red Chamber* included forty serf owners, two-thirds of whom were bureaucrats.)

The roots of class society: the new bourgeoisie, the old bourgeoisie, and urban and rural feudal forces. There is capitalist siege internationally, and imperialism and revisionism are united.

Historical roots: Our revolution smashed the old state apparatus and established a new state apparatus, but the old ruling power, traditional influence, and the old personnel were retained. The policy was correct, but it brought side effects. In 1951, the focus of the “Three Antis” was against corruption. In 1957, the focus was against Rightism. Last year, was mainly criticizing decentralism, so bureaucratism has not been the focus for many years. The soil for breeding bureaucratism is fertile, which is also the soil for revisionism and dogmatism.

Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership⁵⁸

1. There are two methods which we Communists must employ in whatever work we do. One is to combine the general with the particular; the other is to combine the leadership with the masses.

2. In any task, if no general and widespread call is issued, the broad masses cannot be mobilized for action. But if persons in leading positions confine themselves to a general call—if they do not personally, in some of the organizations, go deeply and concretely into the work called for, make a break-through at some single point, gain experience and use this experience for guiding other units—then they will have no way of testing the correctness or of enriching the content of their general call, and there is the danger that nothing may come of it. In the rectification movement of 1942, for example, there were achievements wherever the method of combining the general call with particular and specific guidance was used, but there were no achievements wherever this method was not used. In the rectification movement of 1943, each bureau and sub-bureau of the Central Committee and each area and prefectural Party committee, in addition to making a general call (a rectification plan for the whole year), must do the following things, gaining experience in the process. Select two or three units (but not too many)

58 This decision on methods of leadership was written by Comrade Mao Zedong for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, June 1, 1943. It spells out the “mass line” method of leadership.

from the organization itself and from other organizations, schools or army units in the vicinity. Make a thorough study of those units, acquire a detailed knowledge of the development of the rectification movement in them and a detailed knowledge of the political history, the ideological characteristics, the zeal in study and the strong and weak points in the work of some (again not too many) representative members of their personnel. Furthermore, give personal guidance to those in charge to find concrete solutions for the practical problems facing those units. The leaders in every organization, school or army unit must do likewise, as each of these has a number of subordinate units. Moreover, this is the method by which the leaders combine leading and learning. No one in a leading position is competent to give general guidance to all the units unless he derives concrete experience from particular individuals and events in particular subordinate units. This method must be promoted everywhere so that leading cadres at all levels learn to apply it.

3. Experience in the 1942 rectification movement also proves it is essential for the success of the rectification that a leading group should be formed in each unit in the course of the movement, made up of a small number of activists and with the heads of the given unit as its nucleus, and that this leading group should link itself closely with the masses taking part in the movement. However active the leading group may be, its activity will amount to fruitless effort by a handful of people unless combined with the activity of the masses. On the other hand, if the masses alone are active without a strong leading group to organize their activity properly, such activity cannot be sustained for long, or carried forward in the right direction, or raised to a high level. The masses in any given place are generally composed of three parts, the relatively active, the intermediate and the relatively backward. The leaders must therefore

be skilled in uniting the small number of active elements around the leadership and must rely on them to raise the level of the intermediate element and to win over the backward elements. A leading group that is genuinely united and linked with the masses can be formed only gradually in the process of mass struggle, and not in isolation from it. In the process of a great struggle, the composition of the leading group in most cases should not and cannot remain entirely unchanged throughout the initial, middle and final stages; the activists who come forward in the course of the struggle must constantly be promoted to replace those original members of the leading group who are inferior by comparison or who have degenerated. One fundamental reason why the work in many places and many organizations cannot be pushed ahead is the lack of a leading group which is united, linked with the masses and kept constantly healthy. A school of a hundred people certainly cannot be run well if it does not have a leading group of several people; or a dozen or more, which is formed in accordance with the actual circumstances (and not thrown together artificially) and is composed of the most active, upright and alert of the teachers, the other staff and the students. In every organization, school, army unit, factory or village, whether large or small, we should give effect to the ninth of Stalin's twelve conditions for the bolshevization of the Party, namely, that on the establishment of a nucleus of leadership.⁵⁹ The criteria for such a leading group should be the four which Dimitrov enumerated in his discussion of cadres policy— absolute devotion to the cause, contact with the masses, ability independently to find one's bearings and observance of discipline.⁶⁰ Whether in carrying out the central tasks —war, production, education

59 See J. V. Stalin, "The Prospects of the Communist Party of Germany and the Question of Bolshevization", *Works*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954, Vol. VII, p. 39.

(including rectification)— or in checking-up on work, examining the cadres' histories, or in other activities, it is necessary to adopt the method of linking the leading group with the masses, in addition to that of linking the general call with particular guidance.

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

5. The concept of a correct relationship between the leading group and the masses in an organization or in a struggle, the concept that correct ideas on the part of the leadership can only be “from the masses, to the masses”, and the concept that the general call must be combined with particular guidance when the leadership's ideas are being put into practice— these concepts must be propagated everywhere during the present rectification movement in order to correct the mistaken viewpoints among our cadres on these questions. Many comrades do not see the importance of, or are not good at, drawing together the activists to form a nucleus of leadership, and they do not see the importance of, or are not good at, linking this nucleus of leadership

60 See Georgi Dimitrov, “Unity of the Working Class Against Fascism”, *Selected Articles and Speeches*, Eng. ed., Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1951, pp. 138-39.

closely with the masses, and so their leadership becomes bureaucratic and divorced from the masses. Many comrades do not see the importance of, or are not good at, summing up the experience of mass struggles, but fancying themselves clever, are fond of voicing their subjectivist ideas, and so their ideas become empty and impractical. Many comrades rest content with making a general call with regard to a task and do not see the importance of, or are not good at, following it up immediately with particular and concrete guidance, and so their call remains on their lips, or on paper or in the conference room, and their leadership becomes bureaucratic. In the present rectification movement we must correct these defects and learn to use the methods of combining the leadership with the masses and the general with the particular in our study, in the check-up on work and in the examination of cadres' histories; and we must also apply these methods in all our future work.

6. Take the ideas of the masses and concentrate them, then go to the masses, persevere in the ideas and carry them through, so as to form correct ideas of leadership— such is the basic method of leadership. In the process of concentrating ideas and persevering in them, it is necessary to use the method of combining the general call with particular guidance, and this is a component part of the basic method. Formulate general ideas (general calls) out of the particular guidance given in a number of cases, and put them to the test in many different units (not only doing so yourself, but by telling others to do the same); then concentrate the new experience (sum it up) and draw up new directives for the guidance of the masses generally. Comrades should do this in the present rectification movement, and also in, every other kind of work. Better leadership comes with greater skill in doing this.

7. In relating to subordinate units any task (whether it concerns the revolutionary war, production or education; the rectification movement, check-up on work or the examination of cadres' histories; propaganda work, organizational work or anti-espionage, or other work), a higher organization and its departments should in all cases go through the leader of the lower organization concerned so that he may assume responsibility; in this way both division of labour and unified centralized leadership are achieved. A department at a higher level should not go solely to its counterpart at the lower level (for instance, a higher department concerned with organization, propaganda or anti-espionage should not go solely to the corresponding department at the lower level), leaving the person in over-all charge of the lower organization (such as the secretary, the chairman, the director or the school principal) in ignorance or without responsibility. Both the person in over-all charge and the person with specific responsibility should be informed and given responsibility. This centralized method, combining division of labour with unified leadership, makes it possible, through the person with over-all responsibility, to mobilize a large number of cadres — on occasion even an organization's entire personnel — to carry out a particular task, and thus to overcome shortages of cadres in individual departments and turn a good number of people into active cadres for the work in hand. This, too, is a way of combining the leadership with the masses. Take, for instance, the examining of cadres' histories. If the job is done in isolation, if it is done only by the few people in the organization department in charge of such work, it certainly cannot be done well. But if it is done through the administrative head of a particular organization or school, who mobilizes many or even all of his staff, or many or even all of his students, to take part in the work, while at the same time the leading members of the organization department at

the higher level give correct guidance, applying the principle of linking the leadership with the masses, then undoubtedly the task of examining the cadres' histories will be satisfactorily accomplished.

8. In any given place, there cannot be a number of central tasks at the same time. At any one time there can be only one central task, supplemented by other tasks of a second or third order of importance. Consequently, the person with over-all responsibility in the locality must take into account the history and circumstances of the struggle there and put the different tasks in their proper order; he should not act upon each instruction as it comes from the higher organization without any planning of his own, and thereby create a multitude of "central tasks" and a state of confusion and disorder. Nor should a higher organization simultaneously assign many tasks to a lower organization without indicating their relative importance and urgency or without specifying which is central, for that will lead to confusion in the steps to be taken by the lower organizations in their work and thus no definite results will be achieved. It is part of the art of leadership to take the whole situation into account and plan accordingly in the light of the historical conditions and existing circumstances of each locality, decide correctly on the center of gravity and the sequence of the work for each period, steadfastly carry through the decision, and make sure that definite results are achieved. This is also a problem of method of leadership, and care must be taken to solve it when applying the principles of combining the leadership with the masses and the general with the particular.

9. Details concerning methods of leadership are not dealt with here; it is hoped that comrades in all localities will themselves do some hard thinking and give full play to their own creativeness on the basis of the principles here set forth. The harder the struggle, the greater

the need for Communists to link their leadership closely with the demands of the vast masses, and to combine general calls closely with particular guidance, so as to smash the subjectivist and bureaucratic methods of leadership completely. All the leading comrades of our Party must at all times counterpose scientific, Marxist methods of leadership to subjectivist, bureaucratic methods of leadership and use the former to overcome the latter. Subjectivists and bureaucrats do not understand the principles of combining the leadership with the masses and the general with the particular; they greatly impede the development of the work of the Party. To combat subjectivist and bureaucratic methods of leadership, we must promote scientific, Marxist methods of leadership both extensively and intensively.

Excerpt from *On Coalition Government*⁶¹

[...]

The universal truth of Marxism-Leninism, which reflects the practice of proletarian struggle throughout the world, becomes an invincible weapon for the Chinese people when it is integrated with the concrete practice of the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese proletariat and people. This the Communist Party of China has achieved. Our Party has grown and advanced through staunch struggle against every manifestation of dogmatism and empiricism, which runs counter to this principle. Dogmatism is divorced from concrete practice, while empiricism mistakes fragmentary experience for universal truth; both kinds of opportunist thinking run counter to Marxism. In the course of its twenty-four years of struggle our Party has successfully fought such wrong thinking and it is still doing so, thus greatly consolidating itself ideologically. Our Party now has 1,210,000 members. The overwhelming majority have joined during the War of Resistance, and there are various impurities in their ideology. The same is true of some of the members who joined the Party before the war. The work of rectification in the last few years has been most successful and has gone a long way towards removing these impurities. This work should be contin-

61 *On Coalition Government* was the political report made by Comrade Mao Zedong to the Seventh National Congress of the Communist Party of China on April 24, 1945, only months before victory against the Japanese aggressors in World War II. This excerpt helps explain the relationship of the Party to the masses, the Party's mass line method of leadership, and self-criticism.

ued and ideological education within the Party should be developed still more extensively in the spirit of “learning from past mistakes to avoid future ones” and “curing the sickness to save the patient”. We must enable the Party’s leading cadres at all levels to understand that close integration of theory and practice is a hallmark distinguishing our Party from all other political parties. Therefore ideological education is the key link to be grasped in uniting the whole Party for great political struggles. Unless this is done, the Party cannot accomplish any of its political tasks.

Another hallmark distinguishing our Party from all other political parties is that we have very close ties with the broadest masses of the people. Our point of departure is to serve the people wholeheartedly and never for a moment divorce ourselves from the masses, to proceed in all cases from the interests of the people and not from the interests of individuals or groups, and to understand the identity of our responsibility to the people and our responsibility to the leading organs of the Party. Communists must be ready at all times to stand up for the truth, because truth is in the interests of the people; Communists must be ready at all times to correct their mistakes, because mistakes are against the interests of the people. Twenty-four years of experience tell us that the right task, policy and style of work invariably conform with the demands of the masses at a given time and place and invariably strengthen our ties with the masses, and the wrong task, policy and style of work invariably disagree with the demands of the masses at a given time and place and invariably alienate us from the masses. The reason why such evils as dogmatism, empiricism, commandism, tailism, sectarianism, bureaucracy and an arrogant attitude in work are definitely harmful and intolerable, and why anyone suffering from these maladies must overcome them, is that they alienate us from the masses. Our congress should

call upon the whole Party to be vigilant and to see that no comrade at any post is divorced from the masses. It should teach every comrade to love the people and listen attentively to the voice of the masses; to identify himself with the masses wherever he goes and, instead of standing above them, to immerse himself among them; and, according to their present level, to awaken them or raise their political consciousness and help them gradually to organize themselves voluntarily and to set going all essential struggles permitted by the internal and external circumstances of the given time and place. Commandism is wrong in any type of work, because in overstepping the level of political consciousness of the masses and violating the principle of voluntary mass action it reflects the disease of impetuosity. Our comrades must not assume that everything they themselves understand is understood by the masses. Whether the masses understand it and are ready to take action can be discovered only by going into their midst and making investigations. If we do so, we can avoid commandism. Tailism in any type of work is also wrong, because in falling below the level of political consciousness of the masses and violating the principle of leading the masses forward it reflects the disease of dilatoriness. Our comrades must not assume that the masses have no understanding of what they themselves do not yet understand. It often happens that the masses outstrip us and are eager to advance a step when our comrades are still tailing behind certain backward elements, for instead of acting as leaders of the masses such comrades reflect the views of these backward elements and, moreover, mistake them for those of the broad masses. In a word, every comrade must be brought to understand that the supreme test of the words and deeds of a Communist is whether they conform with the highest interests and enjoy the support of the overwhelming majority of the people. Every comrade must be helped

to understand that as long as we rely on the people, believe firmly in the inexhaustible creative power of the masses and hence trust and identify ourselves with them, no enemy can crush us while we can crush every enemy and overcome every difficulty.

Conscientious practice of self-criticism is still another hallmark distinguishing our Party from all other political parties. As we say, dust will accumulate if a room is not cleaned regularly, our faces will get dirty if they are not washed regularly. Our comrades' minds and our Party's work may also collect dust, and also need sweeping and washing. The proverb "Running water is never stale and a door-hinge is never worm-eaten" means that constant motion prevents the inroads of germs and other organisms. To check up regularly on our work and in the process develop a democratic style of work, to fear neither criticism nor self-criticism, and to apply such good popular Chinese maxims as "Say all you know and say it without reserve", "Blame not the speaker but be warned by his words" and "Correct mistakes if you have committed them and guard against them if you have not"— this is the only effective way to prevent all kinds of political dust and germs from contaminating the minds of our comrades and the body of our Party. The reason for the great effectiveness of the rectification movement, the purpose of which was "to learn from past mistakes to avoid future ones and to cure the sickness to save the patient", was that the criticism and self-criticism we carried out were honest and conscientious, and not perfunctory and distorted. As we Chinese Communists, who base all our actions on the highest interests of the broadest masses of the Chinese people and who are fully convinced of the justice of our cause, never balk at any personal sacrifice and are ready at all times to give our lives for the cause, can we be reluctant to discard any idea, viewpoint, opinion or method which is not suited to the needs of the people?

Can we be willing to allow political dust and germs to dirty our clean faces or eat into our healthy organism? Countless revolutionary martyrs have laid down their lives in the interests of the people, and our hearts are filled with pain as we the living think of them— can there be any personal interest, then, that we would not sacrifice or any error that we would not discard?

[...]

The United Front in Cultural Work⁶²

The purpose of all our work is the overthrow of Japanese imperialism. Like Hitler, Japanese imperialism is approaching its doom. But we must continue our efforts, for only so can we achieve its final overthrow. In our work the war comes first, then production, then cultural work. An army without culture is a dull-witted army, and a dull-witted army cannot defeat the enemy.

The culture of the Liberated Areas already has its progressive side, but it still has a backward side. The Liberated Areas already have a new culture, a people's culture, but a good many vestiges of feudalism survive. Among the 1,500,000 people of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region there are more than 1,000,000 illiterates, there are 2,000 practitioners of witchcraft, and the broad masses are still under the influence of superstition. These are enemies inside the minds of the people. It is often more difficult to combat the enemies inside people's minds than to fight Japanese imperialism. We must call on the masses to arise in struggle against their own illiteracy, superstitions and unhygienic habits. For this struggle a broad united front is indispensable. And this united front has to be particularly broad in a place like the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region, which has a sparse population, poor communications and a low cultural base to start from and in addition is fighting a war. Hence, in our education we must have not only regular primary and secondary schools but also scattered, irregular village

62 This speech was delivered by Comrade Mao Zedong at a conference of cultural and educational workers of the Shanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region on October 30, 1944.

schools, newspaper-reading groups and literacy classes. Not only must we have schools of the modern type but we must also utilize and transform the old-style village schools.

In the arts, we must have not only modern drama but also the Shensi opera and the *yangge* dance. Not only must we have new Shensi operas and new *yangge* dances, but we must also utilize and gradually transform the old opera companies and the old *yangge* troupes, which comprise 90 per cent of all *yangge* troupes. This approach is even more necessary in the field of medicine. In the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region the human and animal mortality rates are both very high, and at the same time many people still believe in witchcraft. In such circumstances, to rely solely on modern doctors is no solution. Of course, modern doctors have advantages over doctors of the old type, but if they do not concern themselves with the sufferings of the people, do not train doctors for the people, do not unite with the thousand and more doctors and veterinarians of the old type in the Border Region and do not help them to make progress, then they will actually be helping the witch doctors and showing indifference to the high human and animal mortality rates. There are two principles for the united front: the first is to unite, and the second is to criticize, educate and transform. In the united front, capitulationism is wrong, and so is sectarianism with its exclusiveness and contempt for others. Our task is to unite with all intellectuals, artists and doctors of the old type who can be useful, to help them, convert them and transform them. In order to transform them, we must first unite with them. If we do it properly, they will welcome our help.

Our culture is a people's culture; our cultural workers must serve the people with great enthusiasm and devotion, and they must link themselves with the

masses, not divorce themselves from the masses. In order to do so, they must act in accordance with the needs and wishes of the masses. All work done for the masses must start from their needs and not from the desire of any individual, however well-intentioned. It often happens that objectively the masses need a certain change, but subjectively they are not yet conscious of the need, not yet willing or determined to make the change. In such cases, we should wait patiently. We should not make the change until, through our work, most of the masses have become conscious of the need and are willing and determined to carry it out. Otherwise we shall isolate ourselves from the masses. Unless they are conscious and willing, any kind of work that requires their participation will turn out to be a mere formality and will fail. The saying "Haste does not bring success" does not mean that we should not make haste, but that we should not be impetuous; impetuosity leads only to failure. This is true in any kind of work, and particularly in the cultural and educational work the aim of which is to transform the thinking of the masses. There are two principles here: one is the actual needs of the masses rather than what we fancy they need, and the other is the wishes of the masses, who must make up their own minds instead of our making up their minds for them.

A Talk to the Editorial Staff of the *Shanxi-Suiyuan Daily*⁶³

Our policy must be made known not only to the leaders and to the cadres but also to the broad masses. Questions concerning policy should as a rule be given publicity in the Party papers or periodicals. We are now carrying out the reform of the land system. The policies on land reform should be published in the papers and broadcast on the radio so that the broad masses all know them. Once the masses know the truth and have a common aim, they will work together with one heart. This is like fighting a battle; to win a battle the fighters as well as the officers must be of one heart. After the troops in northern Shaanxi went through training and consolidation and poured out their grievances against the old social order, the fighters heightened their political consciousness and became clear on why they were fighting and how they should fight; every one of them rolled up his sleeves for battle, their morale was very high and as soon as they went into action they won a victory. When the masses are of one heart, everything becomes easy. A basic principle of Marxism-Leninism is to enable the masses to know their own interests and unite to fight for their own interests. The role and power of the newspapers consists in their ability to bring the Party programme, the Party line, the Party's general and specific policies, its tasks and methods of work before the masses in the quickest and most extensive way.

63 April 2, 1948.

There are people in our leading organs in some places who think that it is enough for the leaders alone to know the Party's policies and that there is no need to let the masses know them. This is one of the basic reasons why some of our work cannot be done well. For over twenty years our Party has carried on mass work every day, and for the past dozen years it has talked about the mass line every day. We have always maintained that the revolution must rely on the masses of the people, on everybody's taking a hand, and have opposed relying merely on a few persons issuing orders. The mass line, however, is still not being thoroughly carried out in the work of some comrades; they still rely solely on a handful of people working coolly and quietly by themselves. One reason is that, whatever they do, they are always reluctant to explain it to the people they lead and that they do not understand why or how to give play to the initiative and creative energy of those they lead. Subjectively, they too want everyone to take a hand in the work, but they do not let other people know what is to be done or how to do it. That being the case, how can everyone be expected to get moving and how can anything be done well? To solve this problem the basic thing is, of course, to carry out ideological education on the mass line, but at the same time we must teach these comrades many concrete methods of work. One such method is to make full use of the newspapers. To run a newspaper well, to make it interesting and absorbing, to give correct publicity in the newspapers to the Party's general and specific policies and to strengthen the Party's ties with the masses through the newspapers— this is an important question of principle in our Party's work which is not to be taken lightly.

You comrades are newspapermen. Your job is to educate the masses, to enable the masses to know their own interests, their own tasks and the Party's general and specific policies. Running a newspaper is like all

other work, it must be done conscientiously if it is to be done well, if it is to be lively. With our newspapers, too, we must rely on everybody, on the masses of the people, on the whole Party to run them, not merely on a few persons working behind closed doors. Our papers talk about the mass line every day, yet frequently the mass line is not carried out in the work of the newspaper office itself. For instance, misprints often crop up in the papers simply because their elimination has not been tackled as a serious job. If we apply the method of the mass line, then when misprints appear, we should assemble the entire staff of the paper to discuss nothing but this matter, tell them clearly what the mistakes are, explain why they occur and how they can be got rid of and ask everyone to give the matter serious attention. After this has been done three times, or five times, such mistakes can certainly be overcome. This is true of small matters, and of big matters, too.

To be good at translating the Party's policy into action of the masses, to be good at getting not only the leading cadres but also the broad masses to understand and master every movement and every struggle we launch— this is an art of Marxist-Leninist leadership. It is also the dividing line that determines whether or not we make mistakes in our work. If we tried to go on the offensive when the masses are not yet awakened, that would be adventurism. If we insisted on leading the masses to do anything against their will, we would certainly fail. If we did not advance when the masses demand advance, that would be Right opportunism. Chen Duxiu's opportunist error consisted precisely in lagging behind the awakening of the masses, being unable to lead the masses forward and even opposing their forward march. There are many comrades who still don't understand these questions. Our papers should propagate these ideas well so that everyone can understand them.

To teach the masses, newspaper workers should first of all learn from the masses. You comrades are all intellectuals. Intellectuals are often ignorant and often have little or no experience in practical matters. You can't quite understand the pamphlet "How to Analyze the Classes in the Rural Areas" issued in 1933; on this point, the peasants are more than a match for you, for they understand it fully as soon as they are told about it. Over 180 peasants in two districts of Kuohsien County met for five days and settled many problems concerning the distribution of land. If your editorial department were to discuss those problems, I am afraid you would discuss them for two weeks without settling them. The reason is quite simple; you do not understand those problems. To change from lack of understanding to understanding, one must do things and see things; that is learning. Comrades working on the newspapers should go out by turns to take part in mass work, in land reform work for a time; that is very necessary. When not going out to participate in mass work, you should hear a great deal and read a great deal about the mass movements and devote time and effort to the study of such material. Our slogan in training troops is, "Officers teach soldiers, soldiers teach officers and soldiers teach each other". The fighters have a lot of practical combat experience. The officers should learn from the fighters, and when they have made other people's experience their own, they will become more capable. Comrades working on the newspapers, too, should constantly study the material coming from below, gradually enrich their practical knowledge and become experienced. Only thus will you be able to do your work well, will you be able to shoulder your task of educating the masses.

The *Shanxi-Suiyuan Daily* made very great progress following the conference of secretaries of prefectural Party committees last June. Then the paper was rich in

content, sharp, pungent and vigorous; it reflected the great mass struggles, it spoke for the masses. I liked reading it very much. But since January this year, when we began to correct “Left” deviations, your paper seems to have lost some of its spirit; it is not clear-cut enough, not pungent enough, has become less informative and does not have much appeal for the reader. Now you are examining your work and summing up your experience; this is very good. When you have summed up your experience in combating Right and “Left” deviations and become more clear-headed, your work will improve.

The struggle against Right deviations waged by the *Shanxi-Suiyuan Daily* from last June on was completely correct. In that struggle you did a very conscientious job and fully reflected the actual situation in the mass movement. You made comments, in the form of editorial notes, on the viewpoints and materials which you regarded as wrong. There were shortcomings too in some of your later comments, but the conscientious spirit was good. Your shortcomings lay chiefly in drawing the bow-string much too tight. If a bow-string is too taut, it will snap. The ancients said, “The principle of Kings Wen and Wu was to alternate tension with relaxation.”⁶⁴ Now “relax” a bit and the comrades will become more clear-headed. You achieved successes in your work, but there were also shortcomings, mainly “Left” deviations. Now you are making an over-all summing-up and, after correcting the “Left” deviations, you will achieve greater successes.

64 From the *Book of Rites*, “Miscellaneous Records”, Part II. “Kings Wen and Wu could not keep a bow in permanent tension without relaxation. Nor would they leave it in a permanent state of relaxation without tension. The principle of Kings Wen and Wu was to alternate tension with relaxation.” Wen and Wu were the first two kings of the Zhou Dynasty (12th- 3rd century B.C.).

When we are correcting deviations, some people look on the work of the past as utterly fruitless and all wrong. That is not right. These people fail to see that the Party has led a huge number of peasants to obtain land, overthrown feudalism, consolidated the Party organizations and improved the cadres' style of work, and that now it has also corrected the "Left" deviations and educated the cadres and masses. Are all these not great achievements? We should be analytical with regard to our work and the undertakings of the masses, and should not negate everything. In the past "Left" deviations arose because people had no experience. Without experience it is hard to avoid mistakes. From inexperience to experience, one must go through a process. Through the struggles against the Right and "Left" deviations in the short period since June last year, people have come to understand what struggle against Right deviations means and what struggle against "Left" deviations means. Without this process, people would not understand.

After you have examined your work and summed up your experience, I am sure that your paper will be run even better. You must retain the former merits of your paper— it should be sharp, pungent and clear-cut, and it should be run conscientiously. We must firmly uphold the truth, and truth requires a clear-cut stand. We Communists have always disdained to conceal our views. Newspapers run by our Party and all the propaganda work of our Party should be vivid, clear-cut and sharp and should never mutter and mumble. That is the militant style proper to us, the revolutionary proletariat. Since we want to teach the people to know the truth and arouse them to fight for their own emancipation, we need this militant style. A blunt knife draws no blood.

Get Organized!⁶⁵

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party I would like to say a few words at this reception it is giving for the labour heroes and heroines and other model workers in production elected from the villages, the factories, the armed forces, the government and other organizations and the schools in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region. What I want to say can be summed up in the words, "Get organized!" This year the peasant masses and the people in the army, the government and other organizations, the schools and the factories of the Border Region have been conducting a production campaign in accordance with the resolutions of the meeting of senior cadres convened last winter by the Northwest Bureau of the Central Committee. Great achievements and advances have been scored in every field of production this year and the Border Region has taken on a new look. Facts have fully borne out the correctness of the policy adopted by the conference of senior cadres. The gist of this policy is to organize the masses, to mobilize and organize into a great army of labour all the available forces without exception—the people, the army, the government and other organizations and the schools—all men and women, young and old, who can contribute their labour power on a part-time or full-time basis. We have an army for fighting as well as an army for labour. For fighting we have the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies; but even they do a dual job, warfare and production. With these two kinds of armies, and with a fighting army skilled in

65 Comrade Mao Zedong made this speech at a reception in honor of the labor heroes of the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region on November 29, 1943. It touches on having a mass viewpoint, integrating with the masses well, and mobilizing the masses.

these two tasks and in mass work, we can overcome our difficulties and defeat Japanese imperialism. If the achievements of our production campaign in the Border Region in recent years were not great or remarkable enough to prove this conclusively, our achievements this year have really done so, as we have all seen with our own eyes.

In all the armed units of the Border Region that have been allotted land this year, the soldiers have on the average cultivated eighteen *mou* per person; and they can produce or make practically everything— food (vegetables, meat and cooking oil), clothing (cotton-padded clothes, woollen knitwear and footwear), shelter (cave-dwellings, houses and meeting halls), articles of daily use (tables, chairs, benches and stationery), and fuel (firewood, charcoal and coal). By using our own hands we have attained the objective of “ample food and clothing”. Every soldier needs to spend only three months of the year in production and can devote the remaining nine months to training and fighting. Our troops depend for their pay neither on the Kuomintang government, nor on the Border Region Government, nor on the people, but can fully provide for themselves. What a vitally important innovation for our cause of national liberation! During the last six and a half years of the War of Resistance, the anti-Japanese base areas have been subjected to the enemy's policy of “burn all, kill all, loot all”, the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region has been tightly blockaded by the Kuomintang and we were reduced to the direst straits financially and economically; if our troops had been able to do nothing except fight, we would never have solved our problems. Now our troops in the Border Region have learned to produce, and so have some of the troops at the front, while others are learning. If every man in our heroic and combat-worthy Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies becomes able not only to fight and do mass work but

also to produce, we need fear no difficulty and shall be “invincible under heaven”,⁶⁶ to use the words of Mencius. Our organizations and schools have also taken a big step forward this year. Only a small part of their expenditure has come from the government, most of it being covered by their own production; they have grown 100 percent of the vegetables they consume as compared with 50 percent last year, considerably increased their consumption of meat by raising pigs and sheep, and established many workshops for making simple necessities. As the army, the organizations and the schools now meet their own material needs fully or for the most part, less is taken in taxation from the people, who can therefore enjoy more of the fruits of their labour. As soldiers and civilians are alike increasing production, all have ample food and clothing and are happy. In our factories, too, production has been stepped up, secret agents have been combed out and productivity has risen greatly. Throughout the Border Region, labour heroes have come forward in great numbers in agriculture and industry, in the organizations and the schools, and also in the army; we can say that production in the Border Region has been set on the right path. All this comes from organizing the strength of the masses.

To organize the strength of the masses is one policy. Is there a contrary policy? Yes, there is. It is one that lacks the mass viewpoint, fails to rely on the masses or organize them, and gives exclusive attention to organizing the small number of people working in the financial, supply or trading organizations, while paying no attention to organizing the masses in the villages, the army, the government and other organizations, the schools and factories; it treats economic work not as a broad movement or as an extensive front, but only as an expedient for meeting financial deficits. That is the other

66 From *Mencius*, Book III, “Gongsun Chou,” Part I, Chapter 5.

policy, the wrong policy. Such a policy formerly existed in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region, but after the correct guidance given over these years, and especially after the senior cadres' conference last year and the mass movement this year, the number of people who still think this way is probably small. In the base areas in northern and central China, where fighting is intense and the leading bodies have not given it enough attention, the production campaign of the masses has not yet become widespread. However, since the Central Committee's directive of October 1⁶⁷ this year, preparations are being made everywhere for a production campaign next year. Conditions at the front are more difficult than in the Border Region; not only is there heavy fighting, but natural disasters have occurred in some places. Nevertheless, we must mobilize the entire Party, the government and the army and the civilian population both to fight against the enemy and to engage in production, in order to support the war, to cope with the enemy's policy of "burn all, kill all, loot all" and to provide disaster relief. With the experience already gained in the last few years in production at the front, and with the ideological, organizational and material preparations this winter, an extensive campaign can be and must be launched next year. In the front-line areas where fighting is going on, it is not yet possible to have "ample food and clothing" but quite possible and, indeed, imperative to "use our own hands and overcome difficulties".

The co-operatives are now the most important form of mass organization in the economic field. Although it is unnecessary to insist on attaching the label co-operative to the productive activities of the masses in our

67 The Central Committee's directive of October 1 was "Spread the Campaigns to Reduce Rent, Increase Production and 'Support the Government and Cherish the People' in the Base Areas".

army, our government and other organizations and our schools, these activities are of a co-operative nature, being carried on under centralized leadership to meet the material needs of various departments, units and individuals through mutual help and joint labor. They are co-operatives of a sort.

Among the peasant masses a system of individual economy has prevailed for thousands of years, with each family or household forming a productive unit. This scattered, individual form of production is the economic foundation of feudal rule and keeps the peasants in perpetual poverty. The only way to change it is gradual collectivization, and the only way to bring about collectivization, according to Lenin, is through co-operatives.⁶⁸ We have already organized many peasant co-operatives in the Border Region, but at present they are only of a rudimentary type and must go through several stages of development before they can become co-operatives of the Soviet type known as collective farms. Ours is a new-democratic economy, and our co-operatives are still organizations for collective labour based on an individual economy (on private property). Furthermore, they are of several types. One type is the organization of agricultural labour for mutual aid, such as the “teams for the exchange of labor” and “teams for the exchange and hire of labor”;⁶⁹ this kind of organiza-

68 See V. I. Lenin, “On Cooperation” in *Collected Works*, Vol. 33.

69 “Teams for the exchange of labor” and “teams for the exchange and hire of labor” were both labour organizations for collective mutual aid in agriculture in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region. Labor-exchange is a means by which the peasants adjust labour power among themselves. Man-workdays were exchanged for man-workdays, ox-workdays for ox-workdays, man-workdays for ox-workdays etc. Peasants who joined labor-exchange teams contributed their labor power or animal power to cultivate the land of each member-family collectively and in rotation. In settling accounts, the workday was taken as the unit

tion was known as the “mutual-aid working group” or “plowing team”⁷⁰ in the Red areas in Jiangxi and is now called the “mutual-aid group” in some places at the front. So long as they are collective mutual-aid organizations which the people join voluntarily (compulsion must never be used), all of them are good, no matter how they are named, no matter whether they are each composed of a few, a few dozen or hundreds of people, or whether they are composed entirely or partly of people who can contribute full-time labor; no matter whether the members render each other mutual aid in terms of manpower, animal power or implements, or they live and eat together during the busy farming season; and no matter whether the organizations are temporary or permanent. These methods of collective mutual aid are the inventions of the masses themselves. In the past we summed up such experience among the

of exchange those who contributed more man-workdays or animal-workdays were paid for the difference by those who contributed less. “Teams for the exchange and hire of labor” were usually formed by peasants with insufficient land. Besides exchanging work among themselves for mutual aid, their members also hired themselves out collectively to families which were short of labor power.

- 70 Mutual-aid working groups and plowing teams, based on individual farming, were formed by peasants in the Red areas to facilitate production through a better organization of labor power. On the principle of voluntary participation and mutual benefit, the members did an equal amount of work for each other, or if one could not give another as much help as he received he made up the difference in cash. Apart from helping each other, the teams gave preferential treatment to the families of Red Army soldiers and worked for bereaved old folk without any pay except for meals during the work. As these measures of mutual aid were of great help to production and were carried out on a reasonable basis they won the warm support of the masses.

masses in Jiangxi, and now we are summing it up in northern Shanxi. In the Border Region mutual aid in labour has become much more systematic and better developed, after being encouraged by the meeting of senior cadres last year and put into practice all through the current year. Many labor-exchange teams in the Border Region have done their plowing, planting, weeding and reaping collectively, and the harvest this year is double that of last. Now that the masses have seen these substantial results, undoubtedly more and more people will adopt the practice next year. We do not expect to organize into co-operatives in one year all the hundreds of thousands of people in the Border Region who can contribute full-time or part-time labour, but this objective can be realized within a few years. All women, too, should be mobilized to do a certain amount of productive work. All loafers must be reformed into good citizens through participation in production. Such collective mutual-aid producers' co-operatives should be extensively and voluntarily organized in all the anti-Japanese base areas in northern and central China.

Besides the collective mutual-aid co-operative for agricultural production, there are three other varieties: the multi-purpose cooperative like the Southern District Co-operative of Yanan, which combines the functions of producers', consumers', transport (salt transport) and credit co-operatives; the transport co-operative (salt transport team); and the handicraft co-operative.

With these four kinds of co-operatives among the masses and the collective labour co-operatives in the army, the schools and the government and other organizations, we can organize all the forces of the people into a great army of labor. This is the only road to liberation for the people, the only road from poverty to prosperity and the only road to victory in the War of Resistance.

Every Communist must learn to organize the labor of the masses. Communists with an intellectual background must also learn to do so; once they have set their minds on it, they can learn in six months or a year. They can help the masses to organize production and to sum up experience. When our comrades have learned, among other skills, to organize the labour of the masses—to help the peasants draw up their household production plans, to set up labor-exchange teams, salt transport teams and multi-purpose co-operatives, to organize production in the army, the schools and the government and other organizations, to organize production in the factories, develop emulation in production, encourage and reward labour heroes, and arrange production exhibitions—when our comrades have learned to bring the creative power and initiative of the masses into play, we shall certainly be able to drive out the Japanese imperialists and, together with the whole people, build up a new China.

We Communists must be able to integrate ourselves with the masses in all things. If our Party members spend their whole lives sitting indoors and never go out to face the world and brave the storm, what good will they be to the Chinese people? None at all, and we do not need such people as Party members. We Communists ought to face the world and brave the storm, the great world of mass struggle and the mighty storm of mass struggle. “Three cobblers with their wits combined equal Zhuge Liang the mastermind.”⁷¹ In other words, the masses have great creative power. In fact there are thousands upon thousands of Zhuge Liangs among the Chinese people; every village, every town has its own. We should go to the masses and learn from them, synthesize their experience into better, articu-

71 Zhuge Liang was a statesman and strategist in the period of the Three Kingdoms (221-265) who became a symbol of resourcefulness and wisdom in Chinese folklore.

lated principles and methods, then do propaganda among the masses, and call upon them to put these principles and methods into practice so as to solve their problems and help them achieve liberation and happiness. If our comrades doing local work are isolated from the masses, fail to understand their feelings and to help them organize their production and improve their livelihood, and if they confine themselves to collecting “public grain for national salvation” without realizing that 10 percent of their energy is quite enough for this purpose provided they first devote 90 per cent to helping the masses solve the problem of “private grain for the people’s own salvation”, then these comrades are contaminated with the Kuomintang style of work and covered with the dust of bureaucracy. The Kuomintang only demands things from the people and gives them nothing in return. If a member of our Party acts in this way, his style of work is that of the Kuomintang, and his face, caked with the dust of bureaucracy, needs a good wash in a basin of hot water. In my opinion, this bureaucratic style is to be found in local work in all our anti-Japanese base areas, and there are comrades who are isolated from the masses because they lack the mass viewpoint. We must firmly do away with this style of work before we can have close ties with the masses.

In addition, a kind of warlord style is to be found in our army work, a style also characteristic of the Kuomintang whose army is divorced from the masses. Our troops must observe the correct principles that govern relations between the army and the people, between the army and the government, between the army and the Party, between officers and men, and between military work and political work, and relations among the cadres, and must never commit the errors of warlordism. Officers must cherish their men and must not be indifferent to their well-being or resort to corporal punishment; the army must cherish the people and

never encroach upon their interests; the army must respect the government and the Party and never “assert independence”. Our Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies are the armed forces of the people; they have always been very good, and are indeed the best in the country. But it is true that in recent years errors of warlordism of a certain kind have arisen, and some comrades in the army have become arrogant and high-handed in their behavior towards the soldiers, the people, the government and the Party, always blaming the comrades doing local work but never themselves, always seeing their own achievements but never their own shortcomings, and always welcoming flattery but never criticism. Such phenomena are to be found, for example, in the Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region. The tendency has been basically overcome as a result of the conference of senior cadres and the meeting of military and political cadres last year and of the campaigns to “support the government and cherish the people” and “support the army” during the Spring Festival⁷² this year, but there is still a residue which we must make further efforts to eradicate. These faults are also to be found in the base areas in northern and central China, and the Party organizations and the army there must endeavor to eradicate them.

Whether it is the tendency towards bureaucracy in local work or towards warlordism in army work, the fault is of the same nature, namely, isolation from the masses. The overwhelming majority of our comrades are good comrades. Those who have this fault can correct it once they have been criticized and their mistakes pointed out. But self-criticism is imperative and wrong tendencies must be squarely faced and conscientiously corrected. If anyone fails to criticize the tendency towards bureaucracy in local work or towards war-

72 The Spring Festival is New Year's Day in the Chinese Lunar calendar.

lordism in army work, it means that he wants to retain the Kuomintang style and keep the dust of bureaucracy or warlordism on his otherwise clean face, and he is not a good Communist. If these two tendencies are eliminated, all our work, including, of course, the production campaign, will proceed smoothly.

Our Border Region has taken on a totally different look because great results have been achieved here in production, whether among the peasant masses, or in the government and other organizations, the schools, the army or in the factories, and the relations between the army and the people have greatly improved. All this indicates that our comrades have a stronger mass viewpoint and have made great progress in becoming one with the masses. Nevertheless, we must not be complacent but continue our self-criticism and strive for further progress. We must strive for further progress in production, too. As our faces are apt to get dirty, we must wash them every day; as the floor is apt to gather dust, we must sweep it every day. Even though the tendencies towards bureaucracy in local work and warlordism in army work have been basically overcome, these bad tendencies may arise again. We are surrounded by the serried forces of Japanese imperialism and Chinese reaction, and we live in the midst of the undisciplined petty bourgeoisie, and hence great gusts of dirt of bureaucracy and warlordism blow in our faces daily. Therefore, we must not become complacent over every success. We should check our complacency and constantly criticize our shortcomings, just as we should wash our faces or sweep the floor every day to remove the dirt and keep them clean.

Labor heroes and model workers in production! You are leaders of the people, you have been very successful in your work, and I hope you, too, will not grow complacent. I hope that when you get back to the counties in the sub-regions of Guanzhong, Longdong, Sanbian,

Suide and Yanan,⁷³ when you get back to your organizations, schools, army units or factories, you will lead the people, lead the masses and work still better, and first of all get the masses organized on a voluntary basis into co-operatives, get them even better organized and in even greater numbers. I hope that, when you go back, you will do this work and propagate it, so that by next year's conference of labor heroes we shall have achieved still greater results.

73 The Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region was divided into these five sub-regions.

Talk at the Seven Thousand Cadres Conference⁷⁴

Comrades! I have a few points to raise. Altogether there are six points I want to talk about. The main substance of what I want to say is the problem of democratic centralism, but at the same time I want to talk about a number of other problems.

1. THE WAY THIS CONFERENCE IS BEING RUN

This enlarged central work conference is being attended by over 7,000 people. At the start of the conference several comrades prepared a draft report. Before this draft had been discussed by the Political Bureau, I suggested to them that instead of first holding a meeting of the Political Bureau to discuss it, we should rather immediately issue it to the comrades who are participating in this conference so that everyone could comment on it and put forward ideas. Comrades, there are among you people from various fields and localities, various provincial, district and county committees, and from the Party committees of various enterprises. There are people from various central

⁷⁴ The *Seven Thousand Cadres Conference* was convened by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, drawing more than 7,000 Party cadre from all over the country. The conference met from January 11th to February 7th, 1962. This speech by Chairman Mao, delivered on January 30th, discusses democratic centralism and the mass line. Mao gives a self-criticism for his errors in leadership during the Great Leap Forward campaign of 1958-62.

departments. The majority of you have more contact with the lower levels, and should have more understanding of situations and problems than us comrades on the Standing Committee, the Political Bureau and the Secretariat. Furthermore, since you all hold different positions you can raise problems from different angles. That is why we invited you to put forward ideas and issued the draft report to you. The result has been a lively discussion in which many ideas have been put forward, not all of them along the lines of the basic policy of the Central Committee. Later, a drafting committee of twenty-one was set up, including responsible members from regional bureaus of the Central Committee. After eight days of discussion they produced a second draft written report. It should be said that in this second draft report the Central Committee has collected together the results of over 7,000 people's discussion. Without your ideas this second draft could not have been written. In it both the first and second parts have many revisions. This is due to your efforts. I hear that you all consider the second draft to be not bad, and an improvement on the first. If we had not used this method, but held the conference in the usual manner, we would have heard the report first and held a discussion afterwards. Everyone would have approved it with a show of hands and we wouldn't have done as well as this.

This is a question of how to hold meetings. First of all, draft reports are distributed, and those present are invited to submit their ideas and amendments. Then a new report is prepared. When this report is presented it shouldn't be read out word by word, but some supplementary ideas should be expounded and the changes should be explained. In this way we can promote democracy more fully, gather wisdom from all directions, and compare all the different points of view. Also our meetings will be more lively. The purpose of this

conference is to sum up the working experience of the past twelve years and especially the working experience of the last four years. There are many problems, so there may be many ideas being put forward, thus creating conditions favourable for this type of conference. Is it possible for all conferences to adopt this method? No, it is not possible. To use this method we must have plenty of time. We can sometimes use this method at meetings of our people's congresses. Comrades from provincial committees, district committees, and county committees, when you convene conferences in future you may also adopt this method under suitable conditions. Of course when you are busy you usually cannot spend a lot of time on conferences. But when conditions are right, why not try it out?

What sort of method is this? It's the method of democratic centralism, the method of the mass line. First democracy, then centralism; coming from the masses, returning to the masses; integration of the leadership with the masses. This is the first point I wanted to talk about.

2. THE QUESTION OF DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM

It seems that some of our comrades still don't understand democratic centralism as described by Marx and Lenin. Some of these comrades are already veteran revolutionaries, of the 1938 mold or some other mold—anyway, they've been members of the Communist Party for several decades and still don't understand this question. They are afraid of the masses, afraid of the masses speaking out, afraid of mass criticism. What possible reason is there for Marxist-Leninists to be afraid of the masses? While they avoid mentioning their own mistakes, these comrades are likewise afraid of having their mistakes mentioned by the masses. The more they're afraid, the more they're going to be

haunted by ghosts. I think one should not be afraid. What is there to be afraid of? Our attitude is to hold fast to the truth and be ready at any time to correct our mistakes. The question of right or wrong, correct or incorrect in our work has to do with the contradictions among the people. To resolve contradictions among the people we can't use curses or fists, still less guns or knives. We can only use the method of discussion, reasoning, criticism and self-criticism. In short, we can only use democratic methods, the method of letting the masses speak out.

Both inside and outside the Party there must be a full democratic life, which means conscientiously putting democratic centralism into effect. We must conscientiously bring questions out into the open, and let the masses speak out. Even at the risk of being cursed we should still let them speak out. The result of their curses at the worst will be that we are thrown out and cannot go on doing this kind of work—demoted or transferred. What is so impossible about that? Why should a person only go up and never go down? Why should one only work in one place and never be transferred to another? I think that demotion and transfer, whether it is justified or not, does good to people. They thereby strengthen their revolutionary will, are able to investigate and study a variety of new conditions and increase their useful knowledge. I myself have had experience in this respect and gained a great deal of benefit. If you do not believe me, why not try it yourselves. Sima Qian⁷⁵ said: “When King Wen was detained, he produced the *Book of Changes*; when Confucius was in distress, he compiled the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. Qu Yuan was exiled and so composed the *Li Sao*. Zuo Qiuming

75 Sima Qian (c. 145-90 B.C.) was China's first great historian, who compiled the *Shiji* (*Historical Records*) relating the history of China from the origins to his own day. The foregoing passage is from his autobiography, appended to that work.

lost his sight and the *Guoyu* followed. Sun Tzu was mutilated before he wrote his book on military science. Lu Pu-wei was transferred to the Shu region and so the world inherited his *Lu Lan*. Han Fei was imprisoned in the Kingdom of Qin and wrote because he could not keep his anger to himself. Of the hundreds of poems and prose works written the majority were written by sages who were experiencing anger and frustration.”

In modern times, people have had doubts about whether in fact King Wen produced the *Book of Changes* or Confucius compiled the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, and we can leave these examples aside and let the specialists solve these problems. But Sima Qian believed these things to be true. And it is a fact that King Wen was detained and that Confucius was in distress. Except for the one about Zuo Qiuming’s going blind, the events related by Sima Qian all refer to the incorrect handling of people by their superiors in ancient times. There were cases where we also handled some cadres incorrectly and no matter whether their handling was completely incorrect or only partially so, after re-examination they should be rehabilitated according to the merits of each case. But generally speaking, this incorrect treatment—demotion or transfer—tempers their revolutionary will and enables them to absorb much new knowledge from the masses.

I must point out that I am not advocating the indiscriminate wrong treatment of our cadres, our comrades, or anybody else, in the way in which the ancients detained King Wen, harassed Confucius, exiled Qu Yuan and removed Sun Tzu’s kneecaps. I am not in favour of this way of doing things—I oppose it. What I mean is that at every stage of human history there have always been such cases of mishandling. In class societies such cases are numerous. Even in a socialist society such things cannot be entirely avoided either, whether it be in a period of leadership by a correct or an incorrect

line. There is however one distinction: namely, that during a period of correct line of leadership, as soon as it has been discovered that things have been mishandled, people can be cleared and rehabilitated, apologies can be made to them, so that their minds can be set at rest and they can lift up their heads again. But during a time when leadership follows an incorrect line, this way of doing things becomes impossible. Then the only thing for those who represent the correct line, at a suitable opportunity to use the methods of democratic centralism to take the initiative to set mistakes right. As for those who have themselves made mistakes, after their mistakes have been criticized by comrades and their cases have been appraised by the higher levels and they are given correct treatment, then if they are demoted or transferred one hardly need say that this demotion or transfer may be helpful to them in correcting their mistakes and gaining new knowledge.

At present, there are some comrades who are very afraid of the masses initiating discussion and putting forward ideas which differ from those of the leading organs or the leaders. Whenever a problem is being discussed, they suppress the initiative of the masses and don't allow them to speak out. This attitude is abominable. Democratic centralism is written into our Party Constitution and state Constitution, but they don't apply it. Comrades, we are revolutionaries. If we have really made mistakes, mistakes which are harmful to the cause of the Party and the people, we should seek the opinions of the masses and of comrades and criticize ourselves. Such self-criticism should sometimes be repeated several times over. If once is not enough and people are not satisfied, it should be done a second time; if they are still not satisfied, then it should be done a third time; it should go on until nobody has any more criticisms. Some provincial Party committees have done just this. A few provinces have shown some

initiative and let people speak out. The early ones started self-criticism in 1959, the late starters began in 1961. Some provinces, such as Henan, Gansu and Qinghai, were forced to carry out self-criticism. Some people say there are other provinces which seem to be starting self-criticism only now. But no matter whether they carry out self-criticism on their own initiative or are forced to do so, no matter whether they do so early or late, provided they look squarely at their mistakes and are willing to admit and correct them and let the masses criticize them—provided they adopt this attitude, we should always welcome it.

Criticism and self-criticism is a method. It is a method of resolving contradictions among the people and it is the only method. There is no other. But if we do not have a full democratic life and do not truly implement democratic centralism, then this method of criticism and self-criticism cannot be applied.

Don't we have many difficulties right now? It is impossible to overcome these difficulties unless we rely on the masses and arouse the enthusiasm of the masses and the cadres. But if you don't explain the situation to the masses and the cadres, open your hearts to them and let them voice their opinions, they will still be afraid of you and won't dare speak. It will be impossible to arouse their enthusiasm. In 1957 I said that we should create "a political situation in which we have both centralism and democracy, both discipline and freedom, both unity of will and personal ease of mind and liveliness." We should have this political climate both within the Party and outside. Without this political climate the enthusiasm of the masses cannot be mobilized. We cannot overcome difficulties without democracy. Of course, it is even more impossible to do so without centralism, but if there's no democracy there won't be any centralism.

Without democracy there cannot be any correct centralism because people's ideas differ, and if their understanding of things lacks unity then centralism cannot be established. What is centralism? First of all it is a centralization of correct ideas, on the basis of which unity of understanding, policy, planning, command and action are achieved. This is unity through centralism. If people still do not understand problems, if they have ideas but have not expressed them, or are angry but still have not vented their anger, how can you achieve this unity through centralism? Without democracy, it is impossible to sum up experience correctly. Without democracy, without ideas coming from the masses, it is impossible to formulate good lines, principles, policies or methods. Our leading organs merely play the role of a processing plant in the establishment of a good line and good general and specific policies and methods. Everyone knows that if a factory has no raw material it cannot do any processing. If the raw material is not adequate in quantity and quality it cannot produce good finished products. Without democracy, you have no understanding of what is happening down below; the situation will be unclear; you will be unable to collect sufficient opinions from all sides; there can be no communication between top and bottom; top-level organs of leadership will depend on one-sided and incorrect material to decide issues, thus you will find it difficult to avoid being subjectivist; it will be impossible to achieve unity of understanding and unity of action, and impossible to achieve true centralism. Is not the main item for discussion at this session of our conference opposition to decentralism and the strengthening of centralized unification? If we fail to promote democracy in full measure, then will this centralism and this unification be true or false? Will it be real or empty? Will it be correct or incorrect? Of course it must be false, empty and incorrect.

Our centralism is centralism built on the foundation of democracy. Proletarian centralism is centralism with a broad democratic base. The Party committee at various levels is the organ which implements centralized leadership. But the leadership of the Party committees is a collective leadership; matters cannot be decided arbitrarily by the first secretary alone. Within Party committees democratic centralism should be the sole mode of operation. The relationship between the first secretary and the other secretaries and committee members is one of the minority obeying the majority. For example, in the Standing Committee and the Political Bureau situations like this often arise: when I say something, no matter whether it is correct or incorrect, provided that everyone disagrees with me, I will accede to their point of view because they are the majority. I am told that the situation exists within some provincial Party committees, district Party committees and county Party committees, whereby in all matters whatever the first secretary says goes. This is quite wrong. It is nonsense if whatever one person says goes. I am referring to important matters, not to the routine work which comes in the wake of decisions. All important matters must be discussed collectively, different opinions must be listened to seriously, and the complexities of the situation and partial opinions must be analysed. Account must be taken of various possibilities and estimates made of the various aspects of a situation: which are good, which bad, which easy, which difficult, which possible and which impossible. Every effort must be made to be both cautious and thorough. Otherwise you have one-man tyranny. Such first secretaries should be called tyrants and not 'squad leaders' of democratic centralism. Once upon a time there was a certain Xiang Yu, who was called the tyrant of Western Chu. He hated listening to opinions which differed from his own. One Fan Zeng offered him advice, but Xiang Yu didn't listen

to what he had to say. There was another man named Liu Bang, the founder of the Han Dynasty, who was better at accepting ideas different from his own. An intellectual called Li Yiji went to see Liu Bang, and announced himself as a scholar of the school of Confucius. Liu Bang said there was a war on and he couldn't see scholars. Li Yiji flared up and said to the gatekeeper: "You get in there again and say that I'm a drinking man from Gaoyang, not a scholar." The gatekeeper did as he was told. "All right, ask him in." When Li Yiji entered, Liu Bang was washing his feet, but he quickly got up to welcome him. Still angry because Liu Bang had refused to see a scholar, Li Yiji gave him a dressing down. He said, "Look here, do you want to conquer the world or don't you? Why do you take an elder so lightly?" Li Yiji was then over 60 and Liu Bang was younger, so Li called himself an "elder." At this, Liu Bang apologized and promptly accepted Li Yiji's plan of seizing the county of Chenliu. This incident can be found in the biographies of Li Yiji and Lu Jia in *The Historical Records*.

Liu Bang was a hero whom the historians of the feudal period called a straightforward, open-minded man, who listened to advice and was as relaxed as a flowing river. Liu Bang and Xiang Yu fought for many years. In the end Liu Bang won and Xiang Yu was defeated. This was no accident. Today some of our first secretaries can't even match the Liu Bang of the feudal period, and are somewhat like Xiang Yu. If these comrades don't change, they'll ultimately be overthrown. Isn't there an opera called *The Tyrant Bids His Lady Farewell*?⁷⁶ If these comrades remain unchanged, the day will come when they too will be "bidding their ladies farewell." [Laughter] Why do I have to put the matter so

76 A Beijing opera, based on the account in the *Shiji* about Xiang Yu's farewell from his favorite, the lady Yu, on the eve of his final defeat.

strongly? It's because I hope that by speaking a bit sarcastically, I can prick some comrades and get them to give this some hard thought. It will be best if they can't sleep for a night or two. If they can sleep, then I'll be the unhappy one because they still haven't felt any pain.

Some of our comrades can't bear to hear any opinion contrary to their own and can't tolerate any criticism. That is very wrong. During this conference, the group meeting of one province started off in a very lively manner, but as soon as the secretary of the provincial Party committee went to sit in, a hush fell and nobody said a word. Comrade provincial Party secretary, what is the purpose of your attendance at meetings? Why don't you stay in your own room and think about problems and let others all take part in the discussion? When this kind of atmosphere is engendered and people don't dare to speak in your presence, then it is up to you to keep away. If you have made mistakes, then you should carry out self-criticism, let others speak, let others criticize you. On June 12 last year, the last day of the working conference in Beijing called by the Central Committee, I talked about my own shortcomings and mistakes. I asked the comrades to convey what I said to the provinces and localities. I found out later that many localities were not informed. It's as if my mistakes could or should be kept hidden. Comrades, they mustn't be kept hidden! Of all the mistakes made by the Central Committee I am responsible for those directly related to me and I have a share of the responsibility for those not directly related to me, because I am the Chairman of the Central Committee. It's not that I want other people to shirk their responsibility. There are some other comrades who also bear responsibility, but the person primarily responsible should be me. All you who are our provincial, prefectural and county Party committee secretaries, right down to the secretaries of Party committees of districts, enterprises and communes, since you

have taken on the job of first secretary you must bear the responsibility for mistakes and shortcomings in the work.

Those of you who shirk responsibility or who are afraid of taking responsibility, who do not allow people to speak, who think you are tigers, and that nobody will dare to touch your backside, whoever has this attitude, ten out of ten of you will fail. People will always speak out sooner or later. You think that nobody will really dare to touch the backside of tigers like you? They damn well will!

Unless we fully promote people's democracy and inner-Party democracy and unless we fully implement proletarian democracy, it will be impossible for China to have true proletarian centralism. Without a high degree of democracy it is impossible to have a high degree of centralism and without a high degree of centralism it is impossible to establish a socialist economy.

And what will happen to our country if we fail to establish a socialist economy? It will turn into a revisionist state, indeed a bourgeois state, and the dictatorship of the proletariat will turn into a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, and a reactionary, fascist dictatorship at that. This is a question which demands the utmost vigilance. I hope comrades will give a great deal of thought to it.

Without democratic centralism, the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be consolidated. To practice democracy among the people and to exercise dictatorship over the enemies of the people—these two aspects are not to be separated. When they are combined, we have proletarian dictatorship, or what may be called people's democratic dictatorship. Our slogan is: "A people's democratic dictatorship led by the proletariat and based on the alliance of the workers and peasants." How does the proletariat exercise leadership? It leads through the Communist Party. The Communist Party is

the vanguard of the proletariat. The proletariat unites with all classes and strata who favor, support and participate in socialist revolution and socialist construction, and exercises dictatorship over the reactionary classes or rather their remnants. In our country, where the system of exploitation of man by man has already been destroyed and the economic base of the landlord class and the bourgeoisie done away with, the reactionary classes are no longer as formidable as in the past. For example, they are no longer as formidable as in 1949 when the People's Republic was founded, or as in 1957 when the bourgeois rightists frenziedly attacked us. Therefore, we speak of them as the remnants of the reactionary classes. But in no case should we underestimate these remnants. We must carry on our struggle against them. The reactionary classes which have been overthrown still seek a comeback. And in socialist society new bourgeois elements continue to emerge. Classes and class struggle exist throughout the socialist stage. This struggle is long and complex and at times even very acute. Our instruments of dictatorship must be strengthened, not weakened. Our public security system is in the hands of comrades who follow the correct line. But it is possible that security departments in one place or another are in the hands of bad people. And there are also a few comrades doing public security work who don't rely on the masses or on the Party. In ferreting out counterrevolutionaries, they don't follow the line of working through the masses under the leadership of the Party committees, but rely solely on secret work, on so-called professional work. Professional work is necessary; investigation and interrogation are absolutely necessary in dealing with counterrevolutionaries. But the most important thing is to follow the mass line under the leadership of the Party committee. It is especially necessary to rely on the masses and the Party in exercising dictatorship over the reactionary classes as a

whole. Dictatorship over the reactionary classes does not mean the physical elimination of all reactionary class elements; the aim is to remold them, to remold them by suitable methods, to make them into new men. Without broad democracy for the people, it is impossible for the dictatorship of the proletariat to be consolidated or for political power to be stable. Without democracy, without arousing the masses and without supervision by the masses, it is impossible to exercise effective dictatorship over the reactionaries and bad elements or to remold them effectively; they will continue to make trouble and may stage a comeback. We must be vigilant on this question and I hope comrades will give it a good deal of thought too.

3. WHICH CLASSES SHOULD WE UNITE WITH?

Which classes should we unite with and which classes should we repress? This is a question of basic standpoint.

The working class should unite with the peasantry, the urban petit-bourgeoisie and the patriotic national bourgeoisie, and first and foremost with the peasantry. Intellectuals such as scientists, engineers and technicians, professors, teachers, writers, artists, actors, medical workers and journalists do not constitute a class; they are attached either to the bourgeoisie or to the proletariat. Are we to unite only with those intellectuals who are revolutionary? No. So long as intellectuals are patriotic, we shall unite with them and help them do their work well. Workers, peasants, urban petit-bourgeois elements, patriotic intellectuals, patriotic capitalists and other patriotic democrats together comprise more than 95 percent of the population. Under our people's democratic dictatorship, they all belong to the category of the people. And among the people we must practice democracy.

Those whom the people's democratic dictatorship should repress are landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, bad elements and anti-communist rightists. The counterrevolutionaries, bad elements and anti-communist rightists represent the landlord class and the reactionary bourgeoisie. These classes and bad people comprise about 4 or 5 percent of the population. It is they whom we must compel to undergo remolding. It is they who are the object of the people's democratic dictatorship.

With whom do we stand? With the masses who comprise over 95 percent of the population? Or with the landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, bad elements and rightists who comprise 4 or 5 percent of the population? We must side with the people and never with their enemies. This is a question of the basic standpoint of a Marxist-Leninist.

Just as this holds true within our country, it also holds true internationally. Sooner or later, the people of all countries, the masses comprising more than 90 percent of the world's population, will want revolution and support Marxism-Leninism. They won't support revisionism; though some people may support it for a while, they will eventually cast it aside. They are bound to awaken gradually, they are bound to oppose imperialism and reaction, and they are bound to oppose revisionism. A true Marxist-Leninist must stand firmly on the side of the masses who comprise over 90 percent of the world's population.

4. UNDERSTANDING THE OBJECTIVE WORLD

Man's understanding of the objective world, his leap from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom, involves a process. Take, for instance, the question of how to carry out the democratic revolution in China. From its founding in 1921 to its Seventh Congress in

1945, 24 years elapsed before our Party reached complete unity of understanding on this question. During this period we underwent a Party-wide rectification movement which lasted three and a half years, from the spring of 1942 to the summer of 1945. It was a thorough-going movement and the method of democracy was adopted, that is to say, no matter who had made mistakes, it was all right provided he acknowledged and corrected them. What is more, everybody helped him to acknowledge and correct them. This was called “learning from past mistakes to avoid future ones and curing the sickness to save the patient” or “starting from the desire for unity, distinguishing right from wrong through criticism or struggle, and arriving at a new unity on a new basis.” It was at that time that the formula “unity—criticism—unity” came into being. The rectification movement helped the comrades of the whole Party to reach unity of understanding. It was in that period, and especially after the rectification movement, that the problems of how the democratic revolution ought to be conducted and how the general line of the Party and its specific policies ought to be formulated were completely solved.

In the period between the founding of the Party and the War of Resistance Against Japan, we had the Northern Expedition and the ten years of the Agrarian Revolutionary War. We won two victories and met with two defeats. The Northern Expedition was victorious, but in 1927 the revolution suffered a defeat. Spectacular successes were achieved in the Agrarian Revolutionary War and the Red Army grew to a strength of 300,000. But later we again suffered reverses and our army of 300,000 was reduced to only some 20,000 in the Long March. After it reached northern Shaanxi, it took in some recruits but still fell short of 30,000, that is, less than one-tenth of the original 300,000. After all, which was stronger, the army of 300,000 or the army of less than

30,000? The army of less than 30,000, because having sustained those heavy reverses and gone through those extreme hardships, we had become tempered and experienced and had rectified the erroneous line and restored the correct line. In the report to this conference, it is said that we have become stronger, not weaker, because our line was correct and our achievements were primary in the past four years and because we have become experienced through making mistakes in our practical work and suffering from them. This is exactly how things stand. In the period of the democratic revolution, we came to understand this objective world of China only after we had experienced victory, then defeat, victory again, then defeat again, only after we had twice drawn comparisons. On the eve and in the course of the War of resistance Against Japan, I wrote a number of essays, such as *Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War*, *On Protracted War*, *On New Democracy* and *Introducing "The Communist,"* and I drafted a number of documents on policy and strategy for the Central Committee. All of them sum up revolutionary experience. These essays and documents could only be written at that time and not before, because until then we hadn't been through storm and stress and couldn't compare our two victories and two defeats, and therefore we weren't adequately experienced and couldn't fully understand the laws governing the Chinese revolution.

Generally speaking, it was the Chinese, and not the comrades of the Communist International handling Chinese problems, who succeeded in gaining an understanding of this objective world of China. These comrades in the Communist International didn't understand Chinese society, the Chinese nation, and the Chinese revolution—or we can say that they didn't under-

stand them well. For a long time we ourselves failed to have a clear understanding of China as an objective world, not to mention the foreign comrades!

It was not until the period of the War of Resistance Against Japan that we formulated a general line for the Party and a whole set of specific policies that suited the prevailing conditions. It was only then that we came to understand the Chinese democratic revolution, this realm of necessity, and that we gained freedom. By that time, we had already been making revolution for some 20 years. Through all those years there was a considerable degree of blindness in our revolutionary work. If anyone claims that any comrade—for instance, any comrade of the Central Committee, or for that matter, I myself—completely understood the laws governing the Chinese revolution right from the start, then he is a braggart and you must on no account believe him. It just wasn't so. In the past, and especially in the early years, all we had was a passion for revolution, but when it came to how to make revolution, what the targets were, which targets should come first and which later, and which had to wait until the next stage, we didn't have clear or at least wholly clear ideas for a fairly long time. In giving a historical account of how we Chinese Communists got to know, with much difficulty yet successfully, the laws governing the Chinese revolution in the period of democratic revolution, I hope to guide comrades to understand one thing: that getting to know the laws governing the building of socialism necessarily involves a process. We must take practice as the starting-point and move from having no experience to having some experience, from having little experience to having more experience, from the building of

socialism, this still unknown realm of necessity, to the realm of freedom, a leap in cognition—the attainment of freedom through the gradual overcoming of our blindness and the gradual understanding of the objective laws.

We still lack experience in the building of socialism. I've discussed this problem with delegations of fraternal Parties from several countries. I told them that we had no experience in building a socialist economy.

I have also discussed this problem with some journalists from capitalist countries, among them an American called Edgar Snow. He had long wanted to come to China, and in 1960 we let him. I had a talk with him. I said, "As you know, we have a set of experiences, a set of principles, policies and measures with regard to politics, military affairs and class struggle; but when it comes to socialist construction, we hadn't done any in the past, and we still don't have experience. You may say, "Haven't you been at it for 11 years?" Well yes, we have, but we still lack knowledge and experience. Even if we are beginning to acquire a little, it doesn't amount to much." Snow wanted me to say something about China's long-term construction plans. I said, "I don't know," and he said, "You're being too cautious." I replied, "It's not a question of being cautious. I really don't know, we just don't have the experience." Comrades, it's true that we don't know, we still lack experience and really don't have such long-term plans yet. 1960 was the very year we ran into a lot of difficulties. In 1961 I spoke of these things again during a discussion with Montgomery. He said, "In another 50 years you'll be terrific." What he meant was that after 50 years we would become powerful and would be "aggressive" towards others, but not before that. He had already expressed this view to me when in China in 1960. I said, "We are Marxist-Leninists, ours is a socialist state, not a capitalist state, and therefore we won't perpetrate

aggression against others whether in 100 years or 10,000 years. As for the construction of a powerful socialist economy in China, 50 years won't be enough, it will take 100 years or even more. In your own country the development of capitalism has taken several hundred years. We won't count the 16th century, since the Middle Ages weren't over yet. But from the 17th century to the present is already more than 360 years. In our country, the building of a powerful socialist economy will take more than 100 years, I reckon." What period was the 17th century? It was the end of the Ming and the beginning of the Qing Dynasty. Another century was to elapse before we came to the first half of the 18th century, or the Qianlong period of the Qing Dynasty, the period when the author of *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, Cao Xueqin, lived, a period which gave birth to fictional characters like Jia Baoyu, who was dissatisfied with the feudal system. In the Qianlong period, the buds of capitalist relations of production already existed in China, but it remained a feudal society, such is the social background of the emergence of the multitude of fictional characters in the Daguang Garden. Before this, in the 17th century, capitalism was already developing in a number of European countries. It has taken over 300 years for the capitalist productive forces to develop to their present state. Socialism is vastly superior to capitalism and our economy will develop faster than those of the capitalist countries. But China has a large population, had little to start with and is economically backward, so that in my opinion it will be impossible for her to affect a tremendous expansion of the productive forces to catch up with and overtake the world's most advanced capitalist countries in less than 100 years. Perhaps it will actually take only a few decades—say, 50 years—as some people envisage. If it does turn out that way, well, thank heaven and earth, and it will be wonderful! But I would advise comrades to anticipate more

difficulties and so to envisage a somewhat longer period. It took more than 300 years to build up a powerful capitalist economy: what would be wrong with building a powerful socialist economy in our country in about 50 to 100 years? The next 50 to 100 years or so, beginning from now, will be a great era of radical change in the social system throughout the world, and earth-shaking era without equal in any previous historical period. Living in such an era, we must be prepared to engage in tremendous struggles which in form will have many features different from those of struggles in the past. In this undertaking, we must integrate in the best possible way the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete realities of China's socialist construction and with those of the world revolution now and in the future and, through practice, gradually get to know the objective laws of struggle. We must be prepared to suffer many failures and setbacks resulting from our blindness, and thereby gain experience and win final victory. When we see things in this light, there are many advantages in envisaging a longer period of time, whereas harm might result from envisaging a shorter period.

In socialist construction, we are still acting blindly to a very large extent. For us the socialist economy is in many respects a still unknown realm of necessity. Take me by way of example. There are many problems in the work of economic construction which I still don't understand. I know very little about industry and commerce for instance. I know something about agriculture, but this is only relatively speaking—I still don't know much. To know more about agriculture one should understand soils, botany, crop cultivation, agro-chemistry, farm machinery and so on. One should also understand the different branches of agriculture, such as grain, cotton, edible oil, hemp, silk, tea, sugar, vegetables, tobacco, fruit, medicinal herbs and miscellaneous products.

There are animal husbandry and forestry too. I myself am a believer in the theory of the Soviet soil scientist Vasily R. Williams. In his work on soil Williams advocated combining farming, forestry and animal husbandry. I think we must have this three-way combination, or agriculture will suffer. I would advise comrades to make a serious study of all these problems of agricultural production when you have some respite from work. I too would like to study them a little more. Up to now, however, my knowledge of these matters has been very scanty. I have paid rather more attention to problems relating to the relations of production, to the system. When it comes to the productive forces, I know very little. As for our Party as a whole, our knowledge of socialist construction is very inadequate. In the forthcoming period we should accumulate experience and study hard, and in the course of practice gradually deepen our understanding and become clearer on the laws of socialist construction. We must put in a lot of hard work and investigate and study it in earnest. We must go down to selected spots at the grass roots, to the production brigades and production teams, and to the factories and shops. We used to do rather well in making investigation and study, but after we entered the cities we didn't do it seriously. In 1961 we pushed it once again, and now the situation has changed somewhat. But it has not yet become common practice among the leading cadres —especially senior leading cadres— in some places, departments and enterprises. Some provincial Party secretaries have still not gone down to stay at selected spots. If the provincial Party secretaries don't go, how can they ask prefectural Party secretaries and county Party secretaries to do so? This is bad and must be changed.

Twelve years have passed since the founding of the People's Republic of China. These 12 years can be divided into a first period of eight years and a second of

four years. 1950 to the end of '57 constitute the first eight years, 1958 to the present is the second four years. In this conference of ours, we have made a first attempt at summing up the experience of our past work, mainly that of the last four years. This summing-up is reflected in the report to the conference. We have already formulated, or are formulating, or shall formulate, specific policies in various fields. Already formulated are such draft regulations as the 60 articles on rural people's communes, the 70 articles on industrial enterprises, the 60 articles on higher education and the 14 articles on scientific research, all of which have already come into force or are being carried out on trial basis. They will be revised in the future, some perhaps drastically. Among those which are already in the process of formulation are the regulations on commercial work. Among those which will be formulated in the future are the regulations on middle-school and primary-school education. We should also formulate some regulations on the work of our Party and government organs and mass organizations. The army has already formulated some regulations. In short, we should do a good job in summing up our experience in industry, agriculture, commerce and culture and education, and in the army, the government and the Party, and work out a complete set of principles, policies and measures so that our work in these seven sectors will progress along the correct path.

It is not enough to have the General Line; it is also necessary that, under the leadership of the General Line, in the domains of industry, agriculture, commerce, education, army, government and Party, there should be a complete set of concrete general and specific policies and methods which are suited to our conditions. Only then is it possible to persuade the masses and the cadres. We should use these as teaching materials to educate them, so that they may be united in understanding and action. Only then will it be possible to

attain victory in the task of revolution and construction; otherwise it is impossible. On this point, even as far back as the War of Resistance to Japan, we already had a profound understanding. At that time we acted in this way, and therefore the cadres and masses had a unified understanding of the complete set of concrete general and specific policies and methods of the democratic revolutionary period, and thus there was unified action and we therefore attained victory in the democratic revolutionary task of that period. This everybody knows. During the period of socialist revolution and construction, our revolutionary tasks in the first few years were: in the countryside to complete the reform of the feudal land system and then to implement agricultural cooperation; in the cities to implement the socialist transformation of capitalist industrial and commercial enterprises. In the field of economic construction our task then was to rehabilitate the economy and implement the first five-year plan. Both in the revolution and in construction at that time we had a General Line which was appropriate to the objective conditions and which had abundant persuasive power. We also had a complete set of general and specific policies and methods under the leadership of the General Line. Therefore we could educate the cadres and masses, unify their understanding, and the work was carried out relatively well. This everybody also knows. But in those days the situation was such that, since we had no experience in economic construction, we had no alternative but to copy the Soviet Union. In the field of heavy industry especially, we copied almost everything from the Soviet Union, and we had very little creativity of our own. At that time it was absolutely necessary to act thus, but at the same time it was also a weakness—a lack of creativity and lack of ability to stand on our own feet. Naturally this could not be our long-term strategy. From 1958 we decided to make self-reliance our major policy and

striving for foreign aid a secondary aim. At the Second Session of the Party's Eighth Congress in 1958, we adopted the General Line of 'going all out and aiming high to achieve greater, faster, better and more economical results in building socialism'. In the same year the people's communes were also established, and the slogan of a 'Great Leap Forward' was issued. For a certain period after the General Line of socialist construction was proclaimed, we still hadn't had the time nor the possibility to formulate a complete set of concrete general and specific policies and methods which were appropriate to the conditions, since our experience was still not sufficient. Under these circumstances the cadres and the masses still did not have a complete set of teaching materials, nor had they received any systematic education on policy and so it wasn't possible to have genuinely unified understanding and action. It only became possible after the passage of time, the experience of setbacks and difficulties, and the gaining of both positive and negative experience. Now it's all right, we already have these things or are now formulating them. Thus we can now more judiciously carry out the socialist revolution and socialist construction. In order to formulate a complete set of concrete general and specific policies and methods under the guidance of the General Line, it is necessary to allow ideas to come from the masses and to adopt the method of systematic and thorough investigation and study, and examine historically the successful and unsuccessful experiences in our work. Only then may we discover the laws inherent in objective things and not created by people's subjective imaginations; and only then may we be able to formulate various regulations which are appropriate to the circumstances. This is a very important matter and I ask the comrades here to please pay attention to it.

In industry, agriculture, commerce, education, military affairs, government and Party, in all these seven domains the Party leads in all things. The Party has to lead industry, agriculture, commerce, culture, education, the army and government. Generally speaking, our Party is very good. Our Party is mainly composed of workers and poor peasants. The great majority of our cadres are good, they all work industriously, but we must also see that in our Party there still exist some problems; we mustn't imagine that everything is good with the state of our Party. At present we have over seventeen million Party members, and among these members almost eighty per cent became members after the founding of the state: they joined the Party in the fifties. Only twenty percent joined before the founding of our state, and among these twenty percent of our members, those who joined the Party before 1930, that is to say those who joined the Party during the twenties according to the estimate of eight years ago were some 800-odd people. Some of these have died in the past two years so now I am afraid there may only be 700-odd people left. Among both old and new Party members—especially among the new members there are always some people whose characters and working styles are impure. Those people are individualists, bureaucrats, subjectivists, some have even become degenerate elements. There are some people who adopt the guise of Communist Party members, but they in no way represent the working class; instead they represent the bourgeoisie. All is not pure within the Party. We must see this point, otherwise we shall suffer.

This is my fourth point. Our understanding of the objective world must pass through a process. In the beginning we do not understand, or do not completely understand, and it is only through repeated practice which leads to achievements and victories, tumbles and setbacks, and through the comparison of successes and

failures that it is possible to have gradually developed complete or relatively complete understanding. When that point is reached, we shall have more initiative, enjoy greater freedom and become somewhat wiser. Freedom is the recognition of necessity and the transformation of the objective world. Only on the basis of the recognition of necessity can people have freedom of action. This is the dialectics of freedom and necessity. What we call necessity is an objectively existing law. Before we recognize it our behaviour cannot be conscious; it has elements of blindness. Under these conditions we are foolish people. Haven't we done many foolish things during the last few years?

5. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

On this question I am only going to say a few words. Whether in China or in other countries of the world, when all is said and done, over 90 percent of the population will eventually support Marxism-Leninism. There are still many people in the world who have not awakened because of the deceptions of the social-democrats, revisionists, imperialists and reactionaries. But sooner or later they will gradually awaken and support Marxism-Leninism. The truth of Marxism-Leninism is irresistible. Sooner or later the masses of the people will rise in revolution. Sooner or later the world revolution will triumph. Sooner or later those who forbid others to make revolution, such as the characters in Lu Xun's book,⁷⁷ Squire Zhao, Squire Jian and the bogus foreign devil who did not allow Ah Q to make revolution, will be defeated.

The Soviet Union was the first socialist state, and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was created by Lenin. Although the leadership of the Soviet Party and state has now been usurped by revisionists, I would

77 A reference to *The True Story of Ah Q* by Lu Xun.

advise comrades to remain firm in the conviction that the masses of the Soviet people and of Soviet Party members and cadres are good, that they desire revolution and that revisionist rule will not last long. Whatever the time—now or in the future, in our generation or in the generations to come—we should learn from the Soviet Union and study its experience. If we don't learn from the Soviet Union, we'll make mistakes. People may ask, since the Soviet Union is under the rule of the revisionists, should we still learn from it? What we should study is the good people and good things of the Soviet Union, the good experience of the Soviet Party, the good experience of Soviet workers and peasants and of those intellectuals who have close ties with the laboring people. As for the bad people and bad things of the Soviet Union and the Soviet revisionists, we should treat them as teachers by negative example and draw lessons from them.

We should always uphold the principle of proletarian internationalist unity. We always maintain that the socialist countries and the world communist movement must unite firmly on the basis of Marxism-Leninism. The revisionists of the world never stop abusing us. Our attitude is, let them do as they wish. We will duly reply when necessary. Our Party has become accustomed to being abused. Leaving aside those who attacked us in the past, what about the present? Abroad, the imperialists abuse us, the reactionaries of various countries abuse us, and the revisionists abuse us; at home, Chiang Kai-shek abuses us, and likewise the landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, bad elements and Rightists. This has been the case for a long time and we are already used to it. But are we isolated? I for one don't feel isolated. Over 7,000 people are present here. How can more than 7,000 people be isolated? *[Laughter]* Our country has over 600 million people. Our people are united. How can more than 600 million people be

isolated? The masses of the people of all countries are already standing, or are going to stand, together with us. Is it possible for us to be isolated?

6. WE MUST UNITE THE WHOLE PARTY AND THE WHOLE PEOPLE

We must unite the whole Party and the whole people. We must unite the advanced elements and the activists inside and outside the Party and unite the middle elements in order to bring along those who lag behind. In this way, we can unite the whole Party and the whole people. Only by relying on such unity can we do our work well, overcome difficulties and build up China. To unite the whole Party and the whole people does not mean that we do not have our own position. Some people say that the Communist Party is a “party of the whole people,” but we do not view things in this way. Our Party is the political party of the proletariat, its vanguard, a fighting force armed with Marxism-Leninism. We are on the side of the masses who comprise over 95 percent of the total population. In no case do we stand on the side of the landlords, rich peasants, counterrevolutionaries, bad elements and Rightists who make up 4 to 5 percent of the population. The same is true in the international sphere; we advocate unity with all Marxist-Leninists, with all revolutionary people, with the people in general. In no case do we want unity with the anti-Communist and anti-popular imperialists and reactionaries. Whenever possible we’ll establish diplomatic relations with them too and strive for peaceful coexistence with them on the basis of the Five Principles. But this is in a category different from our unity with the people of all countries.

If unity is to prevail throughout the Party and the nation, we must give full play to democracy and let people speak up. This holds both inside and outside the

Party. Comrades from the provincial prefectural and county Party committees, when you return, you must let people speak out. All comrades absent or present, must act in this way. All leading members of the Party must promote inner-Party democracy and let people speak out. What are the limits? One is that Party discipline must be observed, the minority being subordinate to the majority and the entire membership to the Central Committee. Another limit is that no secret faction must be organized. We are not afraid of open opponents, we are only afraid of secret opponents. Such people do not speak the truth to your face, what they say is only lies and deceit. They don't express their real intention. As long as a person doesn't violate discipline and doesn't engage in secret factional activities, we should allow him to speak out and shouldn't punish him if he says wrong things. If people say wrong things, they can be criticized, but we should convince them with reason. What if they are still not convinced? As long as they abide by the resolutions and the decisions taken by the majority, the minority can reserve their opinions. It is advantageous to allow the minority both inside and outside the Party to do so. If they are allowed to reserve their incorrect opinions for the time being, they can correct them in the future. Quite often the ideas of the minority turn out to be correct. Such cases are common in history. In the beginning, truth is not in the hands of the majority of people, but in those of a minority. Marx and Engels held the truth in their hands, but in the beginning they were in the minority. For a long period Lenin was also in the minority. We have had similar experience in our own Party. When our Party was ruled by Chen Duxiu and also when the "Left" opportunist lines prevailed, truth was not in the hands of the majority in the leading organs but on the contrary in the hands of the minority. Historically, the doctrines of natural scientists such as Copernicus, Galileo and Darwin

were not recognized by the majority of people for a very long time, but on the contrary were considered incorrect. In their time they were in the minority. When our Party was founded in 1921, we only had a few dozen members; we were also in the minority, but those few dozen people represented the truth and represented China's destiny.

There is also the question of arrests and executions on which I want to say something. At present, only a dozen or so years after victory in the revolution, as long as elements of the overthrown reactionary classes have not been reformed and, what is more, as long as some of them are still plotting restoration, a few must be arrested and executed; otherwise the people's anger cannot be placated and the people's dictatorship consolidated. But we must not arrest people lightly, and especially we must not execute people lightly. Some bad people, some bad elements and degenerate elements who have infiltrated into our ranks, ride on the backs of the people, piss and shit on them, behaving in a vicious and unrestrained way, and seriously violate laws and discipline. They are petty Chiang Kai-sheks. We must have a way of dealing with this type of people. The worst among them who have committed heinous crimes have to be arrested and some executed. For if we don't arrest or execute any of them, we won't be able to placate the people's anger. This is what we mean when we say. "We can't avoid arrests, and we can't avoid executions." But we absolutely must not arrest too many or execute too many. As for those whose arrest is optional or whose execution is optional, we must definitely not arrest or execute them. There was a fellow called Pan Hannian who once served as vice-mayor of Shanghai. Previously he had secretly capitulated to the Kuomintang and had become a member of the C.C. Clique.⁷⁸

78 C.C. clique; a reactionary Kuomintang faction led by the two Chen brothers, nephews of Chiang Kai-shek's first patron Chen

He is now in jail, and we haven't executed him. If we kill one fellow like Pan Hannian, thereby relaxing the restraints on execution, then all those like him would have to be executed. There was another fellow called Wang Shiwei who was a secret Kuomintang agent. While in Yanan, he wrote an article entitled "The Wild Lily," in which he attacked the revolution and vilified the Communist Party. He was later arrested and killed. The execution was carried out by the security organs themselves while they were on the march; the decision was not made by the Central Committee. We have often made criticisms on this very matter; we thought that he shouldn't have been executed. If he was a secret agent and wrote articles to attack us and refused to reform till death, why not leave him there or let him go and do labour? It isn't good to kill people. We should arrest and execute as few people as possible. If we arrest people and execute people at the drop of a hat, the end result would be that everybody would fear for themselves and nobody would dare to speak. In such an atmosphere there wouldn't be much democracy.

Also we mustn't put hats on people indiscriminately. Some of our comrades are in the habit of persecuting people with hats. As soon as they open their mouths hats come flying out; they frighten people so that they don't dare speak. Of course one cannot avoid hats altogether. Aren't there many hats in the report to the conference? Isn't "decentralism" a hat? But we mustn't put hats on people without due consideration, so that every Tom, Dick and Harry is labelled with "decentralism", and everybody becomes labelled with "decentralism". It is better that hats should be put on by people themselves and they should fit the wearers, rather than that they should be put on them by others. If people put a few hats on themselves and other people don't agree

Qimei, who played a role in creating the quasi-fascist "Blue Shirts" in the 1930s.

that they should wear those hats, then they should be removed. This will make for a very good democratic atmosphere. We advocate not to grasp at others' faults, not to put hats on people, not to flourish the big stick. The aim is to make people unafraid in their hearts and let them dare to express their opinions.

We should adopt a well-intentioned helpful attitude towards those who have made mistakes, and towards those who do not allow people to speak out. We must not create the kind of atmosphere in which people feel that they cannot afford to make mistakes and that there would be terrible consequences if they made any mistakes, and if once they made mistakes they would never raise their heads again. When a person has made mistakes, as long he sincerely wants to make amends, as long as he has really made a self-criticism, then we must show that we accept him. When people make their self-criticism the first or second time, we must not ask too much of them. It does not matter if their self-examinations are not yet thorough, we should allow them to think again and give them well-intentioned help. People need help from others; we should help those comrades who have made mistakes to understand their mistakes. If people sincerely carry out self-criticism and are willing to correct mistakes, then we should forgive them and adopt a lenient policy towards them. As long as their achievements are still of primary importance, as long as they are competent, they can be allowed to continue in their posts.

Here in my speech I have criticized certain phenomena and criticized certain comrades, but I have not named them. I have not pointed out who Tom, Dick and Harry are. You yourselves must have some ideas in your minds. *[Laughter]* For shortcomings and mistakes in our work in the last few years, the responsibility rests first with the Central Committee and in the Central Committee, primarily with me; second, the responsibil-

ity rests with the Party committees of the provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions; third, with the prefectural Party committees; fourth, with the county Party committees; and fifth, with the Party committees of enterprises and people's communes. In short, everyone has his share of responsibility.

Comrades, when you return, you must revitalize democratic centralism. The comrades of the county Party committees should lead the commune Party committees in revitalizing democratic centralism. First of all we must establish and strengthen collective leadership, and not practice the type of leadership which has long been diagnosed as "decentralism." Under this method the Party committee secretaries and members do their bits separately; they cannot have real collective discussions, nor can they have real collective leadership.

If we are to promote democracy we must encourage others to criticize us and listen to their criticisms. To be able to withstand criticism we must first take measures to carry out self-criticism. We must examine whatever needs examining for one hour or at most two hours. If everything is to be brought out in the open, it will take as long as that. If others consider we have not done enough, then let them say so. If what they say is right, we will accept their opinion. When we allow others to speak, should we be active or passive in our attitude? Of course it is better to be active. What can we do if we are forced on to the defensive? In the past we were undemocratic and so we find ourselves on the defensive. No matter. Let everybody criticize us. As for me, I will not go out during the day; I will not go to the theatre at night. Please come and criticize me day and night [*Laughter*]. Then I will sit down and think about it carefully, not sleep for two or three nights, think about it until I understand it, and then write a sincere self-examination. Isn't that the way to deal with it? In short, let other people speak out. The heavens will not fall and

you will not be thrown out. If you do not let others speak, then the day will surely come when you are thrown out.

So much for my speech today. The central point I have discussed is the question of how to realize democratic centralism and how to promote democracy inside and outside the Party. I recommend that comrades consider this question carefully. Some comrades still lack the democratic centralist way of thinking. Now is the time they should begin to acquire this way of thinking and begin to understand this question. If we give full play to democracy, we can mobilize the enthusiasm of the broad masses inside and outside the Party and unite the broad masses who comprise more than 95 percent of the whole population. When we have achieved this, we will be able to do our work better and better and overcome the difficulties we meet all the more quickly. Our cause will then develop much more smoothly. [*Enthusiastic applause*]

Methods of Work of Party Committees⁷⁹

1. The secretary of a Party committee must be good at being a “squad leader”. A Party committee has ten to twenty members; it is like a squad in the army, and the secretary is like the “squad leader”. It is indeed not easy to lead this squad well. Each bureau or sub-bureau of the Central Committee now leads a vast area and shoulders very heavy responsibilities. To lead means not only to decide general and specific policies but also to devise correct methods of work. Even with correct general and specific policies, troubles may still arise if methods of work are neglected. To fulfill its task of exercising leadership, a Party committee must rely on its “squad members” and enable them to play their parts to the full. To be a good “squad leader”, the secretary should study hard and investigate thoroughly. A secretary or deputy secretary will find it difficult to direct his “squad” well if he does not take care to do propaganda and organizational work among his own “squad members”, is not good at handling his relations with committee members or does not study how to run meetings successfully. If the “squad members” do not march in step, they can never expect to lead tens of millions of people in fighting and construction. Of course, the relation between the secretary and the committee members is one in which the minority must obey the majority, so it is different from the relation between a squad leader and his men. Here we speak only by way of analogy.

79 This was part of Comrade Mao Zedong’s concluding speech at the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on March 13, 1949.

2. Place problems on the table. This should be done not only by the “squad leader” but by the committee members too. Do not talk behind people's backs. Whenever problems arise, call a meeting, place the problems on the table for discussion, take some decisions and the problems will be solved. If problems exist and are not placed on the table, they will remain unsolved for a long time and even drag on for years. The “squad leader” and the committee members should show understanding in their relations with each other. Nothing is more important than mutual understanding, support and friendship between the secretary and the committee members, between the Central Committee and its bureaus and between the bureaus and the area Party committees. In the past this point received little attention, but since the Seventh Party Congress much progress has been made in this respect and the ties of friendship and unity have been greatly strengthened. We should continue to pay constant attention to this point in the future.

3. “Exchange information.” This means that members of a Party committee should keep each other informed and exchange views on matters that have come to their attention. This is of great importance in achieving a common language. Some fail to do so and, like the people described by Laozi, “do not visit each other all their lives, though the crowing of their cocks and the barking of their dogs are within hearing of each other”.⁸⁰ The result is that they lack a common language. In the past some of our high-ranking cadres did not have a common language even on basic theoretical problems of Marxism-Leninism, because they had not studied enough. There is more of a common language in the Party today, but the problem has not yet been fully

80 The quotation is from *Laozi*, Chapter 80.

solved. For instance, in the land reform there is still some difference in the understanding of what is meant by “middle peasants” and “rich peasants”.

4. Ask your subordinates about matters you don't understand or don't know, and do not lightly express your approval or disapproval. Some documents, after having been drafted, are withheld from circulation for a time because certain questions in them need to be clarified and it is necessary to consult the lower levels first. We should never pretend to know what we don't know, we should “not feel ashamed to ask and learn from people below”⁸¹ and we should listen carefully to the views of the cadres at the lower levels. Be a pupil before you become a teacher; learn from the cadres at the lower levels before you issue orders. In handling problems, this should be the practice of all bureaus of the Central Committee and Party committees of the fronts, except in military emergencies or when the facts of the matter are already clear. To do this will not lower one's prestige, but can only raise it. Since our decisions incorporate the correct views of the cadres at the lower levels, the latter will naturally support them. What the cadres at the lower levels say may or may not be correct; we must analyze it. We must heed the correct views and act upon them. The reason why the leadership of the Central Committee is correct is chiefly that it synthesizes the material, reports and correct views coming from different localities. It would be difficult for the Central Committee to issue correct orders if the localities did not provide material and put forward opinions. Listen also to the mistaken views from below; it is wrong not to listen to them at all. Such views, however, are not to be acted upon but to be criticized.

81 The quotation is from the *Confucian Analects*, Book V, “Kungyeh Chang.”

5. Learn to “play the piano”. In playing the piano all ten fingers are in motion; it won't do to move some fingers only and not others. But if all ten fingers press down at once, there is no melody. To produce good music, the ten fingers should move rhythmically and in co-ordination. A Party committee should keep a firm grasp on its central task and at the same time, around the central task, it should unfold the work in other fields. At present, we have to take care of many fields; we must look after the work in all the areas, armed units and departments, and not give all our attention to a few problems, to the exclusion of others. Wherever there is a problem, we must put our finger on it, and this is a method we must master. Some play the piano well and some badly, and there is a great difference in the melodies they produce. Members of Party committees must learn to “play the piano” well.

6. “Grasp firmly.” That is to say, the Party committee must not merely “grasp”, but must “grasp firmly”, its main tasks. One can get a grip on something only when it is grasped firmly, without the slightest slackening. Not to grasp firmly is not to grasp at all. Naturally, one cannot get a grip on something with an open hand. When the hand is clenched as if grasping something but is not clenched tightly, there is still no grip. Some of our comrades do grasp the main tasks, but their grasp is not firm and so they cannot make a success of their work. It will not do to have no grasp at all, nor will it do if the grasp is not firm.

7. “Have a head for figures.” That is to say, we must attend to the quantitative aspect of a situation or problem and make a basic quantitative analysis. Every quality manifests itself in a certain quantity, and without quantity there can be no quality. To this day many of our comrades still do not understand that they must attend to the quantitative aspect of things— the basic statistics, the main percentages and the quantitative

limits that determine the qualities of things. They have no “figures” in their heads and as a result cannot help making mistakes. For instance, in carrying out the land reform it is essential to have such figures as the percentages of landlords, rich peasants, middle peasants and poor peasants among the population and the amount of land owned by each group, because only on this basis can we formulate correct policies. Whom to call a rich peasant, whom a well-to-do middle peasant, and how much income derived from exploitation makes a person a rich peasant as distinct from a well-to-do middle peasant—in all these cases too, the quantitative limits must be ascertained. In all mass movements we must make a basic investigation and analysis of the number of active supporters, opponents and neutrals and must not decide problems subjectively and without basis.

8. “Notice to Reassure the Public.” Notice of meetings should be given beforehand; this is like issuing a “Notice to Reassure the Public”, so that everybody will know what is going to be discussed and what problems are to be solved and can make timely preparations. In some places, meetings of cadres are called without first preparing reports and draft resolutions, and only when people have arrived for the meeting are makeshifts improvised; this is just like the saying, “Troops and horses have arrived, but food and fodder are not ready”, and that is no good. Don't call a meeting in a hurry if the preparations are not completed.

9. “Fewer and better troops and simpler administration.” Talks, speeches, articles and resolutions should all be concise and to the point. Meetings also should not go on too long.

10. Pay attention to uniting and working with comrades who differ with you. This should be borne in mind both in the localities and in the army. It also applies to relations with people outside the Party. We have come

together from every corner of the country and should be good at uniting in our work not only with comrades who hold the same views as we but also with those who hold different views. There are some among us who have made very serious mistakes; we should not be prejudiced against them but should be ready to work with them.

11. Guard against arrogance. For anyone in a leading position, this is a matter of principle and an important condition for maintaining unity. Even those who have made no serious mistakes and have achieved very great success in their work should not be arrogant. Celebration of the birthdays of Party leaders is forbidden. Naming places, streets and enterprises after Party leaders is likewise forbidden. We must keep to our style of plain living and hard work and put a stop to flattery and exaggerated praise.

12. Draw two lines of distinction. First, between revolution and counter-revolution, between Yanan and Xian.⁸² Some do not understand that they must draw this line of distinction. For example, when they combat bureaucracy, they speak of Yanan as though “nothing is right” there and fail to make a comparison and distinguish between the bureaucracy in Yanan and the bureaucracy in Xian. This is fundamentally wrong. Secondly, within the revolutionary ranks, it is necessary to make a clear distinction between right and wrong, between achievements and shortcomings and to make clear which of the two is primary and which secondary. For instance, do the achievements amount to 30 percent or to 70 percent of the whole? It will not do either to understate or to overstate. We must have a funda-

82 Yanan was the headquarters of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China from January 1937 to March 1947; Xian was the center of the reactionary rule of the Kuomintang in northwestern China. Comrade Mao Zedong cited the two cities as symbols of revolution and counter-revolution.

mental evaluation of a person's work and establish whether his achievements amount to 30 per cent and his mistakes to 70 percent, or vice versa. If his achievements amount to 70 percent of the whole, then his work should in the main be approved. It would be entirely wrong to describe work in which the achievements are primary as work in which the mistakes are primary. In our approach to problems we must not forget to draw these two lines of distinction, between revolution and counter-revolution and between achievements and shortcomings. We shall be able to handle things well if we bear these two distinctions in mind; otherwise we shall confuse the nature of the problems. To draw these distinctions well, careful study and analysis are of course necessary. Our attitude towards every person and every matter should be one of analysis and study.

The members of the Political Bureau and I personally feel that only by using the above methods can Party committees do their work well. In addition to conducting Party congresses well, it is most important for the Party committees at all levels to perform their work of leadership well. We must make efforts to study and perfect the methods of work so as to raise further the Party committees' level of leadership.

On Strengthening the Party Committee System⁸³

The Party committee system is an important Party institution for ensuring collective leadership and preventing any individual from monopolizing the conduct of affairs. It has recently been found that in some (of course not all) leading bodies it is the habitual practice for one individual to monopolize the conduct of affairs and decide important problems. Solutions to important problems are decided not by Party committee meetings but by one individual, and membership in the Party committee has become nominal. Differences of opinion among committee members cannot be resolved and are left unresolved for a long time. Members of the Party committee maintain only formal, not real, unity among themselves. This situation must be changed. From now on, a sound system of Party committee meetings must be instituted in all leading bodies, from the bureaus of the Central Committee to the prefectural Party committees; from the Party committees of the fronts to the Party committees of brigades and military areas (sub-commissions of the Revolutionary Military Commission or leading groups); and the leading Party members' groups in government bodies, people's organizations, the news agency and the newspaper offices. All important problems (of course, not the unimportant, trivial problems, or problems whose solutions have already been decided after discussion at meetings and need

83 This decision was drafted by Comrade Mao Zedong for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on September 20, 1948.

only be carried out) must be submitted to the committee for discussion, and the committee members present should express their views fully and reach definite decisions which should then be carried out by the members concerned. The same procedure should be followed by Party committees below the prefectural and brigade levels. In the higher leading bodies there should also be meetings of the leading cadres in the departments (for example, the propaganda department and the organizational department), commissions (for example, the labour women's and youth commissions), schools (for example, Party schools) and offices (for example, the research offices). Of course, we must see to it that the meetings are not too long or too frequent and they must not get bogged down in discussion of petty matters lest the work be hindered. On important problems which are complicated and on which opinions differ, there must, in addition, be personal consultations before the meeting to enable the members to think things over lest decisions by the meeting become a mere formality or no decision can be reached. Party committee meetings must be divided into two categories, standing committee meetings and plenary sessions, and the two should not be confused. Furthermore, we must take care that neither collective leadership nor personal responsibility is overemphasized to the neglect of the other. In the army, the person in command has the right to make emergency decisions during battle and when circumstances require.

Oppose Stereotyped Party Writing⁸⁴

Comrade Kai Feng has just stated the purpose of today's meeting. I now want to discuss the ways subjectivism and sectarianism use stereotyped Party writing (or the Party "eight-legged essay") as their instrument of propaganda or form of expression. We are fighting against subjectivism and sectarianism, but they will still have a hiding-place to lurk in if at the same time we do not get rid of stereotyped Party writing. If we destroy that too, we shall "checkmate" subjectivism and sectarianism and make both these monsters show themselves in their true colors, and then we shall easily be able to annihilate them, like "rats running across the street with everyone yelling: Kill them! Kill them!"

It does not matter much if a person produces stereotyped Party writings only for himself to read. If he passes them on to someone else, the number of readers is doubled, and already no small harm is done. If he has them posted up, mimeographed, printed in newspapers or published in book form, then the problem becomes indeed a big one, for they can influence many people. And those who produce stereotyped Party writing always seek large audiences. Thus it has become imperative to expose and destroy it.

Stereotyped Party writing is, moreover, one brand of the "foreign stereotype," which was attacked by Lu Xun a long time ago.⁸⁵ Why then do we call it the Party

84 This speech was delivered by Comrade Mao Zedong at a cadres' meeting in Yanan in February 1942.

85 Opposition to stereotyped writing, whether old or new, runs all through Lu Xun's works. The foreign stereotype was developed after the May 4th Movement by some shallow bourgeois and

“eight-legged essay?” Because, besides its foreign flavor, it has some smell of native soil. Perhaps it too can be counted as creative work of a sort! Who says our people have not produced any creative works? Here is one!
[Loud laughter.]

Stereotyped Party writing has a long history in our Party; particularly during the Agrarian Revolution, it sometimes became quite rampant.

Viewed historically, stereotyped Party writing is a reaction to the May 4th Movement.

During the May 4th Movement, modern-minded people opposed the use of the classical Chinese language and advocated vernacular Chinese, opposed the traditional dogmas and advocated science and democracy, all of which was quite right. The movement then was vigorous and lively, progressive and revolutionary. In those days the ruling classes indoctrinated students with Confucian teachings and compelled the people to venerate all the trappings of Confucianism as religious dogma, and all writers used the classical language. In short, what was written and taught by the ruling classes and their hangers-on was in the nature of stereotyped writing and dogma, both in content and in form. That was the old stereotype and the old dogma. A

petty-bourgeois intellectuals and, disseminated by them, existed for a long time among revolutionary cultural workers. In a number of essays, Lu Xun fought against the foreign stereotype as found in their ranks and condemned it in these terms:

A clean sweep should be made of all stereotyped writings, whether old or new.... For instance, it is also a kind of stereotype if all one can do is to “hurl insults”, “threaten” or even “pass sentence” and merely copy old formulas and apply these indiscriminately to every fact, instead of specifically and concretely using formulas derived from science to interpret the new facts and phenomena which emerge every day.

tremendous achievement of the May 4th Movement was its public exposure of the ugliness of the old stereotype and the old dogma and its call to the people to rise against them. Another great and related achievement was its fight against imperialism, but the struggle against the old stereotype and the old dogma remains one of the great achievements of the May 4th Movement. Later on, however, foreign stereotyped writing and foreign dogma came into being. Running counter to Marxism, certain people in our Party developed the foreign stereotype and dogma into subjectivism, sectarianism and stereotyped Party writing. These are the new stereotype and the new dogma. They have become so deeply ingrained in the minds of many comrades that today we still have a very strenuous job of remolding to do. Thus we see that the lively, vigorous, progressive and revolutionary movement of the May 4th period which fought the old feudal stereotyped writing and dogma was later turned by some people into its very opposite, giving rise to the new stereotyped writing and dogma. The latter are not lively and vigorous but dead and stiff, not progressive but retrogressive, not revolutionary but obstacles to revolution. That is to say, the foreign stereotyped writing, or stereotyped Party writing, is a reaction to the original nature of the May 4th Movement. The May 4th Movement, however, had its own weaknesses. Many of the leaders lacked the critical spirit of Marxism, and the method they used was generally that of the bourgeoisie, that is, the formalist method. They were quite right in opposing the old stereotype and the old dogma and in advocating science and democracy. But in dealing with current conditions, with history, and with things foreign, they lacked the critical spirit of historical materialism and regarded what was bad as absolutely and wholly bad and what was good as absolutely and wholly good. This formalist approach to problems affected the subsequent course

of the movement. In its development, the May 4th Movement divided into two currents. One section inherited its scientific and democratic spirit and transformed it on the basis of Marxism; this is what the Communists and some non-Party Marxists did. Another section took the road of the bourgeoisie; this was the development of formalism towards the Right. But within the Communist Party too the situation was not uniform; there, too, some members deviated and, lacking a firm grasp of Marxism, committed errors of formalism, namely, the errors of subjectivism, sectarianism and stereotyped Party writing. This was the development of formalism towards the "Left." So it can be seen that stereotyped Party writing is no accident, but is, on the one hand, a reaction to the positive elements of the May 4th Movement and, on the other, a legacy, a continuation or development of its negative elements. It is useful for us to understand this point. Just as it was revolutionary and necessary to fight the old stereotyped writing and the old dogmatism during the period of the May 4th Movement, so it is revolutionary and necessary today for us to use Marxism to criticize the new stereotyped writing and the new dogmatism. If there had been no fight against the old stereotype and the old dogmatism during the May 4th period, the minds of the Chinese people would not have been freed from bondage to them, and China would have no hope of freedom and independence. This task was merely begun in the period of the May 4th Movement, and a very great effort—a huge job of work on the road of revolutionary remolding—is still necessary to enable the whole people to free themselves completely from the domination of the old stereotype and dogmatism. If today we do not oppose the new stereotyped writing and the new dogmatism, the minds of the Chinese people will be fet-

tered by formalism of another kind. If we do not get rid of the poison of stereotyped Party writing and the error of dogmatism found among a section (only a section, of course) of Party comrades, then it will be impossible to arouse a vigorous and lively revolutionary spirit, to eradicate the bad habit of taking a wrong attitude towards Marxism and to disseminate and develop true Marxism; furthermore, it will be impossible to conduct an energetic struggle against the influence of the old stereotyped writing and dogma among the whole people, and against that of foreign stereotyped among many of the people, and impossible to attain the purpose of demolishing and sweeping away these influences.

Subjectivism, sectarianism and stereotyped Party writing—all three are anti-Marxist and meet the needs not of the proletariat but of the exploiting classes. They are a reflection of petit-bourgeois ideology in our Party. China is a country with a very large petit bourgeoisie and our Party is surrounded by this enormous class; a great number of our Party members come from this class, and when they join the Party they inevitably drag in with them a petit-bourgeois tail, be it long or short. Unless checked and transformed, the fanaticism and one-sidedness of petit-bourgeois revolutionaries can easily engender subjectivism and sectarianism, of which foreign stereotyped writing, or stereotyped Party writing, is one form of expression.

It is not easy to clean out these things and sweep them away. It must be done properly, that is, by taking pains to reason with people. If we reason earnestly and properly, it will be effective. The first thing to do in this reasoning process is to give the patient a good shake-up by shouting at him, "You are ill!" so as to administer a shock and make him break out in a sweat, and then to give him sincere advice on getting treatment.

Let us now analyze stereotyped Party writing and see where its evils lie. Using poison as an antidote to poison, we shall imitate the form of the stereotyped eight-section essay and set forth the following “eight legs,” which might be called the eight major indictments.

The first indictment against stereotyped Party writing is that it fills endless pages with empty verbiage. Some of our comrades love to write long articles with no substance, very much like the “foot-bindings of a slattern, long as well as smelly.” Why must they write such long and empty articles? There can be only one explanation; they are determined the masses shall not read them. Because the articles are long and empty, the masses shake their heads at the very sight of them. How can they be expected to read them? Such writings are good for nothing except to bluff the naive, among whom they spread bad influences and foster bad habits. On June 22 last year the Soviet Union began waging a gigantic war against aggression, and yet Stalin’s speech on July 3 was only the length of an editorial in our *Liberation Daily*. Had any of our gentlemen written that speech, just imagine! It would have run to tens of thousands of words at a minimum. We are in the midst of a war, and we should learn how to write shorter and pithier articles. Although there is as yet no fighting here in Yanan, our troops at the front are daily engaged in battle, and the people in the rear are busy at work. If articles are too long, who will read them? Some comrades at the front, too, like to write long reports. They take pains over writing them and send them here for us to read. But who has the hardihood to read them? If long and empty articles are no good, are short and empty ones any better? They are no good either. We should forbid all empty talk. But the first and foremost task is to throw the long, smelly foot-bindings of the slattern into the dustbin. Some may ask, “Isn’t *Capital*

very long? What are we to do about that?" The answer is simple, just go on reading it. There is a proverb, "Sing different songs on different mountains"; another runs, "Fit the appetite to the dishes and the dress to the figure." Whatever we do must be done according to actual circumstances, and it is the same with writing articles and making speeches. What we oppose is long-winded and empty stereotyped writing, but we do not mean that everything must necessarily be short in order to be good. True, we need short articles in war time, but above all we need articles that have substance. Articles devoid of substance are the least justifiable and the most objectionable. The same applies to speechmaking; we must put an end to all empty, long-winded speeches.

The second indictment against stereotyped Party writing is that it strikes a pose in order to intimidate people. Some stereotyped Party writing is not only long and empty, but also pretentious with the deliberate intention of intimidating people; it carries the worst kind of poison. Writing long-winded and empty articles may be set down to immaturity, but striking a pose to overawe people is not merely immature but downright knavish. Lu Xun once said in criticism of such people, "Hurling insults and threats is certainly not fighting."³ What is scientific never fears criticism, for science is truth and fears no refutation. But those who write subjectivist and sectarian articles and speeches in the form of Party stereotypes fear refutation, are very cowardly, and therefore rely on pretentiousness to overawe others, believing that they can thereby silence people and "win the day." Such pretentiousness cannot reflect truth but is an obstacle to truth. Truth does not strike a pose to overawe people but talks and acts honestly and sincerely. Two terms used to appear in the articles and speeches of many comrades, one being "ruthless struggle" and the other "merciless blows." Measures of

that kind are entirely necessary against the enemy or against enemy ideology, but to use them against our own comrades is wrong. It often happens that enemies and enemy ideology infiltrate into the Party, as is discussed in Item 4 of the Conclusion of the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course*. Against these enemies, we must undoubtedly resort to ruthless struggle and merciless blows, because the scoundrels use these very measures against the Party; if we were tolerant of them, we should fall right into their trap. But the same measures should not be used against comrades who occasionally make mistakes; to them we should apply the method of criticism and self-criticism, the method indicated in Item 5 of the Conclusion of the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course*. The comrades who in the past loudly advocated “ruthless struggle” and “merciless blows” against comrades who occasionally made mistakes did so because, for one thing, they failed to make any analysis of the persons they were dealing with and, for another, they were striking a pose in an effort to intimidate. This method is no good, no matter whom you are dealing with. Against the enemy this tactic of intimidation is utterly useless, and with our own comrades it can only do harm. It is a tactic which the exploiting classes and the lumpen-proletariat habitually practice, but for which the proletariat has no use. For the proletariat the sharpest and most effective weapon is a serious and militant scientific attitude. The Communist Party lives by the truth of Marxism-Leninism, by seeking truth from facts, by science, and not by intimidating people. Needless to say, the idea of attaining fame and position for oneself by pretentiousness is even more contemptible. In short, when organizations make decisions and issue instructions and when comrades write articles and make speeches,

they must without exception depend on Marxist-Leninist truth and seek to serve a useful purpose. This is the only basis on which victory in the revolution can be achieved; all else is of no avail.

The third indictment against stereotyped Party writing is that it shoots at random, without considering the audience. A few years ago a slogan appeared on the Yanan city wall which read, "Working men and peasants, unite and strive for victory in the War of Resistance Against Japan!" The idea of the slogan was not at all bad, but the character "工" [*gong*, meaning working] in "工人" [*gong ren*, meaning working men], was written as "丄" with its perpendicular stroke twisted into a zigzag. How about the character "人" [*ren*, meaning men]? It became "𠤎" with three slanting strokes added to its right leg. The comrade who wrote this was no doubt a disciple of the ancient scholars, but it is rather baffling why he should have written such characters in such a place, on the Yanan city wall, at the time of the War of Resistance. Perhaps he had taken a vow that the common people should not read them; it is difficult to explain otherwise. Communists who really want to do propaganda must consider their audience and bear in mind those who will read their articles and slogans or listen to their speeches and their talk; otherwise they are in effect resolving not to be read or listened to by anyone. Many people often take it for granted that what they write and say can be easily understood by everybody, when it is not so at all. How can people understand them when they write and speak in Party stereotypes? The saying "to play the lute to a cow" implies a gibe at the audience. If we substitute the idea of respect for the audience, the gibe is turned against the player. Why should he strum away without considering his audience? What is worse, he is producing a Party stereotype as raucous as a crow, and yet he

insists on cawing at the masses. When shooting an arrow, one must aim at the target; when playing the lute, one must consider the listener; how, then, can one write articles or make speeches without taking the reader or the audience into account? Suppose we want to make friends with a person, whoever he may be, can we become bosom friends if we do not understand each other's hearts, do not know each other's thoughts? It simply will not do for our propagandists to rattle on without investigating, studying and analyzing their audience.

The fourth indictment against stereotyped Party writing is its drab language that reminds one of a *biesan*. Like our stereotyped Party writing, the creatures known in Shanghai as "little biesan" are wizened and ugly. If an article or a speech merely rings the changes on a few terms in a classroom tone without a shred of vigor or spirit, is it not rather like a *biesan*, drab of speech and repulsive in appearance? If someone enters primary school at seven, goes to middle school in his teens, graduates from college in his twenties and never has contact with the masses of the people, he is not to blame if his language is poor and monotonous. But we are revolutionaries working for the masses, and if we do not learn the language of the masses, we cannot work well. At present many of our comrades doing propaganda work make no study of language. Their propaganda is very dull, and few people care to read their articles or listen to their talk.

Why do we need to study language and, what is more, spend much effort on it? Because the mastery of language is not easy and requires painstaking effort. First, let us learn language from the masses. The people's vocabulary is rich, vigorous, vivid and expressive of real life. It is because many of us have not mastered language that our articles and speeches contain few vigorous, vivid and effective expressions and resemble not a

hale and healthy person, but an emaciated *biesan*, a mere bag of bones. Secondly, let us absorb what we need from foreign languages. We should not import foreign expressions mechanically or use them indiscriminately, but should absorb what is good and suits our needs. Our current vocabulary has already incorporated many foreign expressions, because the old Chinese vocabulary was inadequate. For instance, today we are holding a meeting of *ganbu* [cadres], and the term *ganbu* is derived from a foreign word. We should continue to absorb many fresh things from abroad, not only progressive ideas but new expressions as well. Thirdly, let us also learn whatever is alive in the classical Chinese language. Since we have not studied classical Chinese hard enough, we have not made full and proper use of much that is still alive in it. Of course, we are resolutely opposed to the use of obsolete expressions or allusions, and that is final; but what is good and still useful should be taken over. Those who are badly infected by stereotyped Party writing do not take pains to study what is useful in the language of the people, in foreign languages, or in classical Chinese, so the masses do not welcome their dry and dull propaganda, and we too have no need for such poor and incompetent propagandists. Who are our propagandists? They include not only teachers, journalists, writers and artists, but all our cadres. Take the military commanders, for instance. Though they make no public statements, they have to talk to the soldiers and have dealings with the people. What is this if not propaganda? Whenever a man speaks to others, he is doing propaganda work. Unless he is dumb, he always has a few words to say. It is therefore imperative that our comrades should all study language.

The fifth indictment against stereotyped Party writing is that it arranges items under a complicated set of headings, as if starting a Chinese pharmacy. Go and

take a look at any Chinese pharmacy, and you will see cabinets with numerous drawers, each bearing the name of a drug—toncal, foxglove, rhubarb, saltpetre... indeed, everything that should be there. This method has been picked up by our comrades. In their articles and speeches, their books and reports, they use first the big Chinese numerals, second the small Chinese numerals, third the characters for the ten celestial stems, fourth the characters for the twelve earthly branches, and then capital A, B, C, D, then small a, b, c, d, followed by the Arabic numerals, and what not! How fortunate that the ancients and the foreigners created all these symbols for us so that we can start a Chinese pharmacy without the slightest effort. For all its verbiage, an article that bristles with such symbols, that does not pose, analyze or solve problems and that does not take a stand for or against anything is devoid of real content and nothing but a Chinese pharmacy. I am not saying that such symbols as the ten celestial stems, etc., should not be used, but that this kind of approach to problems is wrong. The method borrowed from the Chinese pharmacy, which many of our comrades are very fond of, is really the most crude, infantile and philistine of all. It is a formalist method, classifying things according to their external features instead of their internal relations. If one takes a conglomeration of concepts that are not internally related and arranges them into an article, speech or report simply according to the external features of things, then one is juggling with concepts and may also lead others to indulge in the same sort of game, with the result that they do not use their brains to think over problems and probe into the essence of things, but are satisfied merely to list phenomena in ABCD order. What is a problem? A problem is the contradiction in a thing. Where one has an unresolved contradiction, there one has a problem. Since there is a problem, you have to be for one side and

against the other, and you have to pose the problem. To pose the problem, you must first make a preliminary investigation and study of the two basic aspects of the problem or contradiction before you can understand the nature of the contradiction. This is the process of discovering the problem. Preliminary investigation and study can discover the problem, can pose the problem, but cannot as yet solve it. In order to solve the problem it is necessary to make a systematic and thorough investigation and study. This is the process of analysis. In posing the problem too, analysis is needed; otherwise, faced with a chaotic and bewildering mass of phenomena, you will not be able to discern where the problem or contradiction lies. But here, by the process of analysis we mean a process of systematic and thorough analysis. It often happens that although a problem has been posed it cannot be solved because the internal relations of things have not yet been revealed, because this process of systematic and thorough analysis has not yet been carried out; consequently we still cannot see the contours of the problem clearly, cannot make a synthesis and so cannot solve the problem well. If an article or speech is important and meant to give guidance, it ought to pose a particular problem, then analyze it and then make a synthesis pointing to the nature of the problem and providing the method for solving it; in all this, formalist methods are useless. Since infantile, crude, philistine and lazy-minded formalist methods are prevalent in our Party, we must expose them; only thus can everybody learn to use the Marxist method to observe, pose, analyze and solve problems; only thus can we do our work well and only thus can our revolutionary cause triumph.

The sixth indictment against stereotyped Party writing is that it is irresponsible and harms people wherever it appears. All the offenses mentioned above are due partly to immaturity and partly to an insuffi-

cient sense of responsibility. Let us take washing the face to illustrate the point. We all wash our faces every day, many of us more than once, and inspect ourselves in the mirror afterwards by way of “investigation and study” [*loud laughter*], for fear that something may not be quite right. What a great sense of responsibility! If we wrote articles and made speeches with the same sense of responsibility, we would not be doing badly. Do not present what is not presentable. Always bear in mind that it may influence the thoughts and actions of others. If a man happens not to wash his face for a day or two, that of course is not good, and if after washing he leaves a smudge or two, that too is not so pleasing, but there is no serious danger. It is different with writing articles or making speeches; they are intended solely to influence others. Yet our comrades go about this task casually; this means putting the trivial above the important. Many people write articles and make speeches without prior study or preparation, and after writing an article, they do not bother to go over it several times in the same way as they would examine their faces in the mirror after washing, but instead offhandedly send it to be published. Often the result is “A thousand words from the pen in a stream, but ten thousand *li* away from the theme.” Talented though these writers may appear, they actually harm people. This bad habit, this weak sense of responsibility, must be corrected.

The seventh indictment against stereotyped Party writing is that it poisons the whole Party and jeopardizes the revolution. The eighth indictment is that its spread would wreck the country and ruin the people. These two indictments are self-evident and require no elaboration. In other words, if stereotyped Party writing is not transformed but is allowed to develop unchecked, the consequences will be very serious indeed. The poison of subjectivism and sectarian-

ism is hidden in stereotyped Party writing, and if this poison spreads it will endanger both the Party and the country.

The aforesaid eight counts are our call to arms against stereotyped Party writing.

As a form, the Party stereotype is not only unsuitable for expressing the revolutionary spirit but is apt to stifle it. To develop the revolutionary spirit it is necessary to discard stereotyped Party writing and instead to adopt the Marxist-Leninist style of writing, which is vigorous, lively, fresh and forceful. This style of writing has existed for a long time, but is yet to be enriched and spread widely among us. When we have destroyed foreign stereotyped writing and stereotyped Party writing, we can enrich our new style of writing and spread it widely, thereby advancing the Party's revolutionary cause.

The Party stereotype is not only confined to articles and speeches, but is also found in the conduct of meetings. "1. Opening announcement; 2. report; 3. discussion; 4. conclusions; and 5. adjournment." If this rigid procedure is followed at every meeting, large or small, everywhere and every time, is not that another Party stereotype? When "reports" are made at meetings they often go as follows: "1. the international situation; 2. the domestic situation; 3. the Border Region; and 4. our own department"; and the meetings often last from morning till night, with even those having nothing to say taking the floor, as though they would let the others down unless they spoke. In short, there is a disregard for actual conditions and deadly adherence to rigid old forms and habits. Should we not correct all these things too?

Nowadays many people are calling for a transformation to a national, scientific and mass style. That is very good. But "transformation" means thorough change, from top to bottom and inside out. Yet some people

who have not made even a slight change are calling for a transformation. I would therefore advise these comrades to begin by making just a little change before they go on to “transform,” or else they will remain entangled in dogmatism and stereotyped Party writing. This can be described as having grandiose aims but puny abilities, great ambition but little talent, and it will accomplish nothing. So whoever talks glibly about “transformation to a mass style” while in fact he is stuck fast in his own small circle had better watch out, or some day one of the masses may bump into him along the road and say, “What about all this ‘transformation’, sir? Can I see a bit of it, please?” and he will be in a fix. If he is not just prating but sincerely wants to transform to a mass style, he must really go among the common people and learn from them, otherwise his “transformation” will remain up in the air. There are some who keep clamoring for transformation to a mass style but cannot speak three sentences in the language of the common people. It shows they are not really determined to learn from the masses. Their minds are still confined to their own small circles.

At this meeting copies of *A Guide to Propaganda*, a pamphlet containing four articles, have been distributed, and I advise our comrades to read and re-read it.

The first piece, composed of excerpts from the History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course, deals with the way Lenin did propaganda work. It describes, among other things, how Lenin wrote leaflets:

Under Lenin’s guidance, the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class was the first body in Russia that began to *unite Socialism with the working-class movement*. When a strike broke out in some factory, the League of Struggle, which through the

members of its circles was kept well posted on the state of affairs in the factories, immediately responded by issuing leaflets and Socialist proclamations. These leaflets exposed the oppression of the workers by the manufacturers, explained how the workers should fight for their interests, and set forth the workers' demands. The leaflets told the plain truth about the ulcers of capitalism, the poverty of the workers, their intolerably hard working day of 12 to 14 hours, and their utter lack of rights. They also put forward appropriate political demands.

Take note, "well posted" and "told the plain truth!"
Again:

With the collaboration of the worker Babushkin, Lenin at the end of 1894 wrote the first agitational leaflet of this kind and an appeal to the workers of the Semyannikov Works in St. Petersburg who were on strike.

To write a leaflet, you must consult with comrades who are well posted on the state of affairs. It was on the basis of such investigation and study that Lenin wrote and worked.

Every leaflet greatly helped to stiffen the spirit of the workers. They saw that the Socialists were helping and defending them.⁸⁶

86 See *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1951, pp. 36-37.

Do we agree with Lenin? If we do, we must work in the spirit of Lenin. That is, we must do as Lenin did and not fill endless pages with verbiage, or shoot at random without considering the audience, or become self-opinionated and bombastic.

The second piece is composed of excerpts from Dimitrov's statements at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International. What did Dimitrov say? He said:

We must learn to talk to the masses, not in the language of book formulas, but in the language of fighters for the cause of the masses, whose every word, whose every idea reflects the innermost thoughts and sentiments of millions.⁸⁷

And again:

The masses cannot assimilate our decisions unless we learn to speak the language which the masses understand. We do not always know how to speak simply, concretely, in images which are familiar and intelligible to the masses. We are still unable to refrain from abstract formulas which we have learned by rote. As a matter of fact, if you look through our leaflets, newspapers, resolutions and theses, you will find that they are often written in a language and style so heavy that they are difficult for even our Party functionaries to understand, let alone the rank-and-file workers.⁸⁸

87 George Dimitrov, *The Fascist Offensive & Unity of the Working Class*, Foreign Languages Press, Paris, 2020, pp. 86-87.

88 *Ibid.*, p. 103.

Well? Does not Dimitrov put his finger on our weak spot? Apparently, stereotyped Party writing exists in foreign countries as well as in China, so you can see it is a common disease. [*Laughter.*] In any case, we should cure our own disease quickly in accordance with Comrade Dimitrov's injunction.

Every one of us must make this a law, a Bolshevik law, an elementary rule:

*When writing or speaking always have in mind the rank-and-file worker who must understand you, must believe in your appeal and be ready to follow you! You must have in mind those for whom you rewrite, to whom you speak.*⁸⁹

This is the prescription made out for us by the Communist International, a prescription that must be followed. Let it be a *law* for us!

The third article, selected from the *Complete Works of Lu Xun*, is the author's reply to the magazine *The Dipper*,⁹⁰ discussing how to write. What did Lu Xun say? Altogether he set forth eight rules of writing, some of which I shall pick out for comment here.

Rule 1: "Pay close attention to all manner of things; observe more, and if you have observed only a little, then do not write."

What he says is, "pay close attention to all manner of things," not just to one thing or half a thing. He says "observe more," not just take a look or half a look. How about us? Don't we often do exactly the opposite and write after having observed only a little?

89 *Ibid.*, p. 105.

90 *The Dipper* was a monthly published in 1931 and 1932 by the League of Chinese Left-Wing Writers.

Rule 2: “Do not force yourself to write when you have nothing to say.”

What about us? Don't we often force ourselves to write a great deal when it is all too clear that there is nothing in our heads? It is sheer irresponsibility to pick up the pen and “force ourselves to write” without investigation or study.

Rule 4: “After writing something, read it over twice at least, and do your utmost to strike out non-essential words, sentences and paragraphs, without the slightest compunction. Rather condense the material for a novel into a sketch, never spin out the material for a sketch into a novel.”

Confucius advised, “Think twice,”⁹¹ and Han Yu said, “A deed is accomplished through taking thought.”⁹² That was in ancient times. Today matters have become very complicated, and sometimes it is not even enough to think them over three or four times. Lu Xun said, “Read it over twice at least.” And at most? He did not say, but in my opinion it does no harm to go over an important article more than ten times and to revise it conscientiously before it is published. Articles are the reflection of objective reality, which is intricate and complex and must be studied over and over again before it can be properly reflected; to be slipshod in this respect is to be ignorant of the rudiments of writing.

91 From *Confucian Analects*, Book V, “Gongye Chang.”

92 Han Yu (768-824) was a famous Chinese writer of the Tang Dynasty. In his essay “The Scholar’s Apologia” he wrote, “A deed is accomplished through taking thought and fails through lack of thought.”

Rule 6: “Do not coin adjectives or other terms that are intelligible to nobody but yourself.”

We have “coined” too many expressions that are “intelligible to nobody.” Sometimes a single clause runs to forty or fifty words and is packed with “adjectives or other terms that are intelligible to nobody.” Many who never tire of professing to follow Lu Xun are the very ones who turn their backs on him!

The last piece is taken from the report on how to develop a national style of propaganda, which was adopted at the Sixth Plenary Session of the Sixth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. At that session held in 1938, we said that “any talk about Marxism apart from China’s specific characteristics is only Marxism in the abstract, Marxism in a vacuum.” That is to say, we must oppose all empty talk about Marxism, and Communists living in China must study Marxism by linking it with the realities of the Chinese revolution.

The report said:

Foreign stereotypes must be abolished, there must be less singing of empty, abstract tunes, and dogmatism must be laid to rest; they must be replaced by the fresh, lively Chinese style and spirit which the common people of China love. To separate internationalist content from national form is the practice of those who do not understand the first thing about internationalism. We, on the contrary, must link the two closely. In this matter there are serious errors in our ranks which should be conscientiously overcome.

The abolition of foreign stereotypes was demanded in that report, yet some comrades are still promoting them. Less singing of empty, abstract tunes was demanded, yet some comrades are obstinately singing more. The demand was made that dogmatism be laid to rest, yet some comrades are telling it to get out of bed. In short, many people have let this report which was adopted at the Sixth Plenary Session go in one ear and out of the other, as if willfully opposed to it.

The Central Committee has now made the decision that we must discard stereotyped Party writing, dogmatism and the like once and for all, and that is why I have come and talked at some length. I hope that comrades will think over and analyze what I have said and that each comrade will also analyze his own particular case. Everyone should carefully examine himself, talk over with his close friends and the comrades around him whatever he has clarified and really get rid of his own defects.