them. As for unjust wars, World War I is an instance in which both sides fought for imperialist interests; therefore the Communists of the whole world firmly opposed that war. The way to oppose a war of this kind is to do everything possible to prevent it before it breaks out and, once it breaks out, to oppose war with war, to oppose unjust war with just war, whenever possible.

Ibid., p. 150.

Revolutionary and revolutionary wars are inevitable in class society and 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.


Revolutionary war is an antitoxin which not only eliminates the enemy’s poison but also purges us of our own filth. Every just, revolutionary war is endowed with tremendous power and can transform many things or clear the way for their transformation. The Sino-Japanese war will transform both China and Japan; provided China perseveres in the War of Resistance and in the united front, the old Japan will surely be transformed into a new Japan and the old China into a new China, and people and everything else in both China and Japan will be transformed during and after the war.


Every Communist must grasp the truth, "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."


The seizure of power by armed force, the settlement of the issue by war, is the central task and the highest form of revolution.
This Marxist-Leninist principle of revolution holds good universally, for China and for all other countries.

Ibid., p. 219.

Without armed struggle neither the proletariat, nor the people, nor the Communist Party would have any standing at all in China and it would be impossible for the revolution to triumph. In these years [the eighteen years since the founding of the Party] the development, consolidation and bolshevization of our Party have proceeded in the midst of revolutionary wars; without armed struggle the Communist Party would assuredly not be what it is today. Comrades throughout the Party must never forget this experience for which we have paid in blood.


According to the Marxist theory of the state, the army is the chief component of state power. Whoever wants to seize and retain state power must have a strong army. Some people ridicule us as advocates of the "omnipotence of war". Yes, we are advocates of the omnipotence of revolutionary war; that is good, not bad; it is Marxist. The guns of the Russian Communist Party created socialism. We shall create a democratic republic. Experience in the class struggle in the era of imperialism teaches us that it is only by the power of the gun that the working class and the labouring masses can defeat the armed bourgeoisie and landlords; in this sense we may say that only with guns can the whole world be transformed.


We are advocates of the abolition of war, we do not want war; but war can only be abolished through war, and in order to get rid of the gun it is necessary to take up the gun.

Ibid.
War, this monster of mutual slaughter among men, will be finally eliminated by the progress of human society, and in the not too distant future too. But there is only one way to eliminate it and that is to oppose war with war, to oppose counter-revolutionary war with revolutionary war, to oppose national counter-revolutionary war with national revolutionary war, and to oppose counter-revolutionary class war with revolutionary class war. . . . When human society advances to the point where classes and states are eliminated, there will be no more wars, counter-revolutionary or revolutionary, unjust or just; that will be the era of perpetual peace for mankind. Our study of the laws of revolutionary war springs from the desire to eliminate all wars; herein lies the distinction between us Communists and all the exploiting classes.


Our country and all the other socialist countries want peace; so do the peoples of all the countries of the world. The only ones who crave war and do not want peace are certain monopoly capitalist groups in a handful of imperialist countries which depend on aggression for their profits.

"Opening Address at the Eighth National Congress of the Communist Party of China" (September 15, 1956).

To achieve a lasting world peace, we must further develop our friendship and cooperation with the fraternal countries in the socialist camp and strengthen our solidarity with all peace-loving countries. We must endeavour to establish normal diplomatic relations, on the basis of mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty and of equality and mutual benefit, with all countries willing to live together with us in peace. We must give active support to the national independence and liberation movement in countries in Asia, Africa
and Latin America as well as to the peace movement and to just struggles in all the countries of the world.

Ibid.

As for the imperialist countries, we should unite with their peoples and strive to coexist peacefully with those countries, do business with them and prevent any possible war, but under no circumstances should we harbour any unrealistic notions about them.

On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People (February 27, 1957), 1st pocket ed., p. 75.

We desire peace. However, if imperialism insists on fighting a war, we will have no alternative but to take the firm resolution to fight to the finish before going ahead with our construction. If you are afraid of war day in day out, what will you do if war eventually comes? First I said that the East Wind is prevailing over the West Wind and war will not break out, and now I have added these explanations about the situation in case war should break out. Both possibilities have thus been taken into account.

Speech at the Moscow Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties (November 18, 1957), quoted in "Statement by the Spokesman of the Chinese Government" (September 1, 1963).

People all over the world are now discussing whether or not a third world war will break out. On this question, too, we must be mentally prepared and do some analysis. We stand firmly for peace and against war. But if the imperialists insist on unleashing another war, we should not be afraid of it. Our attitude on this question is the same as our attitude towards any disturbance; first, we are against it; second, we are not afraid of it. The First World War was followed by the birth of the Soviet Union with a population of 200 million. The Second World War was followed by the emergence of the socialist camp with a
combined population of 900 million. If the imperialists insist on launching a third world war, it is certain that several hundred million more will turn to socialism, and then there will not be much room left on earth for the imperialists; it is also likely that the whole structure of imperialism will utterly collapse.

On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People (February 27, 1957), 1st pocket ed., pp. 67-68.

Make trouble, fail, make trouble again, fail again... till their doom; that is the logic of the imperialists and all reactionaries the world over in dealing with the people’s cause, and they will never go against this logic. This is a Marxist law. When we say “imperialism is ferocious”, we mean that its nature will never change, that the imperialists will never lay down their butcher knives, that they will never become Buddhas, till their doom.

Fight, fail, fight again, fail again, fight again... till their victory; that is the logic of the people, and they too will never go against this logic. This is another Marxist law. The Russian people’s revolution followed this law, and so has the Chinese people’s revolution.


Just because we have won victory, we must never relax our vigilance against the frenzied plots for revenge by the imperialists and their running dogs. Whoever relaxes vigilance will disarm himself politically and land himself in a passive position.


The imperialists and their running dogs, the Chinese reactionaries, will not resign themselves to defeat in this land of China. They will continue to gang up against the
Chinese people in every possible way. For example, they will smuggle their agents into China to sow dissension and make trouble. That is certain; they will never neglect these activities. To take another example, the imperialists will incite the Chinese reactionaries, and even throw in their own forces, to blockade China’s ports. They will do this as long as it is possible. Furthermore, if they still hanker after adventures, they will send some of their troops to invade and harass China’s frontiers; this, too, is not impossible. All this we must take fully into account.

*ibid.*

The world is progressing, the future is bright and no one can change this general trend of history. We should carry on constant propaganda among the people on the facts of world progress and the bright future ahead so that they will build their confidence in victory.


The commanders and fighters of the entire Chinese People’s Liberation Army absolutely must not relax in the least their will to fight; any thinking that relaxes the will to fight and belittles the enemy is wrong.

VI. IMPERIALISM AND ALL REACTIONARIES ARE PAPER TIGERS

All reactionaries are paper tigers. In appearance, the reactionaries are terrifying, but in reality they are not so powerful. From a long-term point of view, it is not the reactionaries but the people who are really powerful.

"Talk with the American Correspondent Anna Louise Strong" (August 1946), Selected Works, Vol. IV, p. 100.

Just as there is not a single thing in the world without a dual nature (this is the law of the unity of opposites), so imperialism and all reactionaries have a dual nature—they are real tigers and paper tigers at the same time. In past history, before they won state power and for some time afterwards, the slave-owning class, the feudal landlord class and the bourgeoisie were vigorous, revolutionary and progressive; they were real tigers. But with the lapse of time, because their opposites—slave class, the peasant class and the proletariat—grew in strength step by step, struggled against them more and more fiercely, these ruling classes changed step by step into the reverse, changed into reactionaries, changed into backward people, changed into paper tigers. And eventually they were overthrown, or will be overthrown, by the people. The reactionary, backward, decaying classes retained this dual nature even in their last life-and-death struggles against the people. On the one hand, they were real tigers; they devoured people, devoured people by the millions and tens of millions. The cause of the people's struggle went through a period of difficulties and hardships, and along the path there were many twists and turns. To destroy the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism in China took the Chinese people more than a hundred years
and cost them tens of millions of lives before the victory in 1949. Look! Were these not living tigers, iron tigers, real tigers? But in the end they changed into paper tigers, dead tigers, 'bean-curd tigers. These are historical facts. Have people not seen or heard about these facts? There have indeed been thousands and tens of thousands of them! Thousands and tens of thousands! Hence, imperialism and all reactionaries, looked at in essence, from a long-term point of view, from a strategic point of view, must be seen for what they are — paper tigers. On this we should build our strategic thinking. On the other hand, they are also living tigers, iron tigers, real tigers which can devour people. On this we should build our tactical thinking.


I have said that all the reputedly powerful reactionaries are merely paper tigers. The reason is that they are divorced from the people. Look! Was not Hitler a paper tiger? Was Hitler not overthrown? I also said that the tsar of Russia, the emperor of China and Japanese imperialism were all paper tigers. As we know, they were all overthrown. U.S. imperialism has not yet been overthrown and it has the atom bomb. I believe it also will be overthrown. It, too, is a paper tiger.

Speech at the Moscow Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties (November 18, 1957).

“Lifting a rock only to drop it on one's own feet” is a Chinese folk saying to describe the behaviour of certain fools. The reactionaries in all countries are fools of this kind. In the final analysis, their persecution of the revolutionary people only serves to accelerate the people's revolutions on a broader and more intense scale. Did not the persecution of the revolutionary people
by the tsar of Russia and by Chiang Kai-shek perform this function in the great Russian and Chinese revolutions?


U. S. imperialism invaded China’s territory of Taiwan and has occupied it for the past nine years. A short while ago it sent its armed forces to invade and occupy Lebanon. The United States has set up hundreds of military bases in many countries all over the world. China’s territory of Taiwan, Lebanon and all military bases of the United States on foreign soil are so many nooses round the neck of U. S. imperialism. The nooses have been fashioned by the Americans themselves and by nobody else, and it is they themselves who have put these nooses round their own necks, handing the ends of the ropes to the Chinese people, the people of the Arab countries and all the peoples of the world who love peace and oppose aggression. The longer the U. S. aggressors remain in those places, the tighter the nooses round their necks will become.

Speech at the Supreme State Conference (September 8, 1958).

Imperialism will not last long because it always does evil things. It persists in grooming and supporting reactionaries in all countries who are against the people, it has forcibly seized many colonies and semi-colonies and many military bases, and it threatens the peace with atomic war. Thus, forced by imperialism to do so, more than 90 per cent of the people of the world are rising or will rise up in struggle against it. Yet imperialism is still alive, still running amuck in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In the West imperialism is still oppressing the people at home. This situation must change. It is the task of the people of the
whole world to put an end to the aggression and oppression perpetrated by imperialism, and chiefly by U. S. imperialism.

Interview with a Hsinhua News Agency correspondent (September 29, 1958).

Riding roughshod everywhere, U. S. imperialism has made itself the enemy of the people of the world and has increasingly isolated itself. Those who refuse to be enslaved will never be cowed by the atom bombs and hydrogen bombs in the hands of the U. S. imperialists. The raging tide of the people of the world against the U. S. aggressors is irresistible. Their struggle against U. S. imperialism and its lackeys will assuredly win still greater victories.


If the U. S. monopoly capitalist groups persist in pushing their policies of aggression and war, the day is bound to come when they will be hanged by the people of the whole world. The same fate awaits the accomplices of the United States.

Speech at the Supreme State Conference (September 8, 1958).

Over a long period we have developed this concept for the struggle against the enemy: strategically we should despise all our enemies, but tactically we should take them all seriously. This also means that we must despise the enemy with respect to the whole, but that we must take him seriously with respect to each and every concrete question. If we do not despise the enemy with respect to the whole, we shall be committing the error of opportunism. Marx and Engels were only two individuals, and yet in those early days they already declared that capitalism would be overthrown throughout the world. But in dealing with
concrete problems and particular enemies we shall be committing the error of adventurism unless we take them seriously. In war, battles can only be fought one by one and the enemy forces can only be destroyed one by one. Factories can only be built one by one. The peasants can only plough the land plot by plot. The same is even true of eating a meal. Strategically, we take the eating of a meal lightly — we know we can finish it. But actually we eat it mouthful by mouthful. It is impossible to swallow an entire banquet in one gulp. This is known as a piecemeal solution. In military parlance, it is called wiping out the enemy forces one by one.

Speech at the Moscow Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties (November 18, 1957).

It is my opinion that the international situation has now reached a new turning point. There are two winds in the world today, the East Wind and the West Wind. There is a Chinese saying, "Either the East Wind prevails over the West Wind or the West Wind prevails over the East Wind." I believe it is characteristic of the situation today that the East Wind is prevailing over the West Wind. That is to say, the forces of socialism have become overwhelmingly superior to the forces of imperialism.

Ibid.
VII. DARE TO STRUGGLE AND DARE TO WIN

People of the world, unite and defeat the U. S. aggressors and all their running dogs! People of the world, be courageous, dare to fight, defy difficulties and advance wave upon wave. Then the whole world will belong to the people. Monsters of all kinds shall be destroyed.


The Communist Party of China, having made a clear-headed appraisal of the international and domestic situation on the basis of the science of Marxism-Leninism, recognized that all attacks by the reactionaries at home and abroad had to be defeated and could be defeated. When dark clouds appeared in the sky, we pointed out that they were only temporary, that the darkness would soon pass and the sun break through.


Historically, all reactionary forces on the verge of extinction invariably conduct a last desperate struggle against the revolutionary forces, and some revolutionaries are apt to be deluded for a time by this phenomenon of outward strength but inner weakness, failing to grasp the essential fact that the enemy is nearing extinction while they themselves are approaching victory.


If they [the Kuomintang] fight, we will wipe them out completely. This is the way
things are: if they attack and we wipe them out, they will have that satisfaction; wipe out some, some satisfaction; wipe out more, more satisfaction; wipe out the whole lot, complete satisfaction. China's problems are complicated, and our brains must also be a little complicated. If they start fighting, we fight back, fight to win peace.

"On the Chungking Negotiations" (October 17, 1945), Selected Works, Vol. IV, p. 56.

If anyone attacks us and if the conditions are favourable for battle, we will certainly act in self-defence to wipe him out resolutely, thoroughly, wholly and completely (we do not strike rashly, but when we do strike, we must win). We must never be cowed by the bluster of reactionaries.

"On Peace Negotiations with the Kuomintang — Circular of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China" (August 26, 1945), Selected Works, Vol. IV, p. 49.

As far as our own desire is concerned, we don't want to fight even for a single day. If circumstances force us to fight, we fight to the finish.

"Talk with the American Correspondent Anna Louise Strong" (August 1946), Selected Works, Vol. IV, p. 97.

We are for peace. But so long as U. S. imperialism refuses to give up its arrogant and unreasonable demands and its scheme to extend aggression, the only course for the Chinese people is to remain determined to go on fighting side by side with the Korean people. Not that we are warlike. We are willing to stop the war at once and leave the remaining questions for later settlement. But U. S. imperialism is not willing to do so. All right then, let the fighting go on. However many years U. S. 'imperialism wants to fight, we are ready to fight right up to the moment when it is willing to stop, right up to the moment of com-
plete victory for the Chinese and Korean peoples.

Speech at the Fourth Session of the First National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (February 7, 1953).

We should rid our ranks of all impotent thinking. All views that overestimate the strength of the enemy and underestimate the strength of the people are wrong.

"The Present Situation and Our Tasks" (December 25, 1947), Selected Works, Vol. IV, p. 173.

The oppressed peoples and nations must not pin their hopes for liberation on the "Sensibleness" of imperialism and its lackeys. They will only triumph by strengthening their unity and persevering in their struggle.


No matter when this country-wide civil war breaks out, we must be well prepared. If it comes early, say, tomorrow morning, we should also be prepared. That is point one. In the present international and domestic situation it is possible that for a time the civil war may be kept restricted in scale and localized. That is point two. Point one is what we should prepare for, point two is what has existed for a long time. In short, we must be prepared. Being prepared, we shall be able to deal properly with all kinds of complicated situations.

"The Situation and Our Policy After the Victory in the War of Resistance Against Japan" (August 13, 1945), Selected Works, Vol. IV, p. 22.
VIII. PEOPLE'S WAR

The revolutionary war is a war of the masses; it can be waged only by mobilizing the masses and relying on them.

"Be concerned with the Well-Being of the Masses, Pay Attention to Methods of Work" (January 27, 1934), Selected Works, Vol. I, p. 147.

What is a true bastion of iron? It is the masses, the millions upon millions of people who genuinely and sincerely support the revolution. That is the real iron bastion which it is impossible, and absolutely impossible, for any force on earth to smash. The counter-revolution cannot smash us; on the contrary, we shall smash it. Rallying millions upon millions of people round the revolutionary government and expanding our revolutionary war, we shall wipe out all counter-revolution and take over the whole of China.

Ibid., p. 150.

The richest source of power to wage war lies in the masses of the people. It is mainly because of the unorganized state of the Chinese masses that Japan dares to bully us. When this defect is remedied, then the Japanese aggressor, like a mad bull crashing into a ring of flames, will be surrounded by hundreds of millions of our people standing upright, the mere sound of their voices will strike terror into him, and he will be burned to death. ibid., p. 186.

The imperialists are bullying us in such a way that we will have to deal with them seriously. Not only must we have a powerful regular army, we must also organize contingents of the people's militia
on a big scale. This will make it difficult for the imperialists to move a single inch in our country in the event of invasion.

Interview with a Hsinhua News Agency correspondent (September 29, 1958).

Considering the revolutionary war as a whole, the operations of the people's guerrillas and those of the main forces of the Red Army complement each other like a man's right arm and left arm, and if we had only the main forces of the Red Army without the people's guerrillas, we would be like a warrior with only one arm. In concrete terms, and especially with regard to military operations, when we talk of the people in the base area as a factor, we mean that we have an armed people. That is the main reason why the enemy is afraid to approach our base area.


Unquestionably, victory or defeat in war is determined mainly by the military, political, economic and natural conditions on both sides. But not by these alone. It is also determined by each side's subjective ability in directing the war. In his endeavour to win a war, a military strategist cannot overstep the limitations imposed by the material conditions; within these limitations, however, he can and must strive for victory. The stage of action for a military strategist is built upon objective material conditions, but on that stage he can direct the performance of many a drama, full of sound and colour, power and grandeur.

Ibid., pp. 190–91.

The object of war is specifically "to preserve oneself and destroy the enemy" (to destroy the enemy means to disarm him or "deprive him of the power to resist", and does not mean to destroy every member of his forces physically). In ancient warfare, the spear and the shield were used, the spear to attack and destroy the enemy, and
the shield to defend and preserve oneself. To the present day, all weapons are still an extension of the spear and the shield. The bomber, the machine-gun, the longrange gun and poison gas are developments of the spear, while the air-raid shelter, the steel helmet, the concrete fortification and the gas mask are developments of the shield. The tank is a new weapon combining the functions of both spear and shield. Attack is the chief means of destroying the enemy, but defence cannot be dispensed with. In attack the immediate object is to destroy the enemy, but at the same time it is self-preservation, because if the enemy is not destroyed, you will be destroyed. In defence the immediate object is to preserve yourself, but at the same time defence is a means of supplementing attack or preparing to go over to the attack. Retreat is in the category of defence and is a continuation of defence, while pursuit is a continuation of attack. It should be pointed out that destruction of the enemy is the primary object of war and self-preservation the secondary, because only by destroying the enemy in large numbers can one effectively preserve oneself. Therefore attack, the chief means of destroying the enemy, is primary, while defence, a supplementary means of destroying the enemy and a means of self-preservation, is secondary. In actual warfare the chief role is played by defence much of the time and by attack for the rest of the time, but if war is taken as a whole, attack remains primary.


All the guiding principles of military operations grow out of the one basic principle: to strive to the utmost to preserve one's own strength and destroy that of the enemy. ... How then do we justify the encouragement of heroic sacrifice in war? Every war exacts a price, sometimes an extremely high one. Is this not in contradiction with "preserving oneself"? In fact, there
is no contradiction at all; to put it more exactly, sacrifice and self-preservation are both opposite and complementary to each other. For such sacrifice is essential not only for destroying the enemy but also for preserving oneself—partial and temporary "non-preservation" (sacrifice, or paying the price) is necessary for the sake of general and permanent preservation. Form this basic principle stems the series of principles guiding military operations, all of which—from the principles of shooting (taking cover to preserve oneself, and making full use of fire-power to destroy the enemy) to the principles of strategy—are permeated with the spirit of this basic principle. All technical principles and all principles concerning tactics, campaigns and strategy represent applications of this basic principle. The principle of preserving oneself and destroying the enemy is the basis of all military principles.

"Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla War Against Japan" (May 1938), Selected Works, Vol. II, pp. 81-82.

Our principles of operation are:

1. Attack dispersed, isolated enemy forces first; attack concentrated, strong enemy forces later.

2. Take small and medium cities and extensive rural areas first; take big cities later.

3. Make wiping out the enemy's effective strength our main objective; do not make holding or seizing a city or place our main objective. Holding or seizing a city or place is the outcome of wiping out the enemy's effective strength, and often a city or place can be held or seized for good only after it has changed hands a number of times.

4. In every battle, concentrate an absolutely superior force (two, three, four and sometimes even five or six times the enemy's strength), encircle the enemy forces completely, strive to wipe them out thoroughly and do not let any escape from the net. In special circumstances, use the method of dealing the enemy crushing blows, that is, concentrate all our strength to make a frontal attack and
an attack on one or both of his flanks, with the aim of wiping out one part and routing another so that our army can swiftly move its troops to smash other enemy forces. Strive to avoid battles of attrition in which we lose more than we gain or only break even. In this way, although inferior as a whole (in terms of numbers), we shall be absolutely superior in every part and every specific campaign, and this ensures victory in the campaign. As time goes on, we shall become superior as a whole and eventually wipe out all the enemy.

(5) Fight no battle unprepared, fight no battle you are not sure of winning; make every effort to be well prepared for each battle, make every effort to ensure victory in the given set of conditions as between the enemy and ourselves.

(6) Give full play to our style of fighting—courage in battle, no fear of sacrifice, no fear of fatigue, and continuous fighting (that is, fighting successive battles in a short time withoutrest).

(7) Strive to wipe out the enemy when he is on the move. At the same time, pay attention to the tactics of positional attack and capturer enemy fortified points and cities.

(8) With regard to attacking cities, resolutely seize all enemy fortified points and cities which are weakly defended. At opportune moments, seize all enemy fortified points and cities defended with moderate strength, provided circumstances permit. As for all strongly defended enemy fortified points and cities, wait till conditions are ripe and then take them.

(9) Replenish our strength with all the arms and most of the personnel captured from the enemy. Our army's main sources of manpower and materiel are at the front.

(10) Make good use of the intervals between campaigns to rest, train and consolidate our troops. Periods of rest, training and consolidation should not in general be very long, and the enemy
should so far as possible be premitted no breathing space.
These are the main methods the People's Liberation Army has employed in defeating Chiang Kai-shek. They are the result of the tempering of the People's Liberation Army in long years of fighting against domestic and foreign enemies and are completely suited to our present situation. ... our strategy and tactics are based on a people's war; no army opposed to the people can use our strategy and tactics.

"The Present Situation and Our Tasks" (December 25, 1947), Selected Military Writings, 2nd ed., pp. 349-50.

Without preparedness superiority is not real superiority and there can be no initiative either. Having grasped this point, a force which is inferior but prepared can often defeat a superior enemy by surprise attack.


IX. THE PEOPLE'S ARMY

Without a people's army the people have nothing.


This army is powerful because all its members have a conscious discipline; they have come together and they fight not for the private interests of a few individuals or a narrow clique, but for the interests of the broad masses and of the whole nation. The sole purpose of this army is to stand firmly with the Chinese people and to serve them whole-heartedly.

Ibid, p. 264.
The Chinese Red Army is an armed body for carrying out the political tasks of the revolution. Especially at present, the Red Army should certainly not confine itself to fighting; besides fighting to destroy the enemy’s military strength, it should shoulder such important tasks as doing propaganda among the masses, organizing the masses, arming them, helping them to establish revolutionary political power and setting up Party organizations. The Red Army fights not merely for the sake of fighting but in order to conduct propaganda among the masses, organize them, arm them, and help them to establish revolutionary political power. Without these objectives, fighting loses its meaning and the Red Army loses the reason for its existence.


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 these two tasks and in mass work, we can overcome our difficulties and defeat Japanese imperialism.

Our national defence will be consolidated and no imperialist will be allowed to invade our territory again. Our people's armed forces must be maintained and developed with the brave and steeled People's Liberation Army as their foundation. We will have not only a powerful army but also a powerful air force and a powerful navy.

Opening address at the First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (September 21, 1949).

Our principle is that the Party commands the gun, and the gun must never be allowed to command the Party.


All our officers and fighters must always bear in mind that we are the great People's Liberation Army, we are the troops led by the great Communist Party of China. Pro-

Vided we constantly observe the directives of the Party, we are sure to win.

X. LEADERSHIP OF PARTY COMMITTEES

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 regional 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 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. ... 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.

"On Strengthening the Party Committee System" (September 20, 1948), Selected Works, Vol. IV, pp. 267-68.

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 regional bureau or sub-regional 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 fulfil 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 parts”, 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.

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 regional bureaus and between the regional bureaus and the area Party committees.

“Ibid. , pp. 377-78.”

“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 Lao Tzu, “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”. The result is that they lack a common language.

“Ibid., pp. 378.

Ask your subordinates about matters you don’t understand or don’t know, and do not lightly express your approval or disapproval. ... We should never pretend to know what we don’t know. We should “not feel ashamed to ask and learn from people below” 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. ... What the cadres at the lower levels say may or may not be correct; after hearing it, we must analyse it. We must heed the correct views and act upon them. ... 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 criti-
cized.

Ibid., pp. 378-79.

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 oth-
ers. But if all ten fingers press down at once, there is no melody. To produce good music, the ten fingers should move rhythm-
ically and in co-ordination. A Party commitee 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. Mem-
bers of Party commitees must learn to “play the piano” well.

Ibid., p. 379.

“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 slacken-
ing. 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.

Ibid.

“Have a head for figures.” That is to say, we must attend to the quantitative as-
pect of a situation or problem and make a basic quantitative analysis. Every quality