manifests itself in a certain quantity, and without quality there can be no quantity. 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.

Ibid., pp. 379-80.

"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.

Ibid., p. 380.

"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.

Ibid.

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 form 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.

Ibid.
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.

Ibid.

Draw two lines of distinction. First, between revolution and counter-revolution, between Yenan and Sian. Some do not understand that they must draw this line of distinction. For example, when they combat bureaucracy, they speak of Yenan as though “nothing is right” there and fail to make a comparison and distinguish between the bureaucracy in Yenan and the bureaucracy in Sian. 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 per cent or to 70 per cent of the whole? It will not do either to understate or to overstate. We must have a fundamental evaluation of a person’s work and establish whether his achievements amount to 30 per cent and his mistakes to 70 per cent, or vice versa. If his achievements amount to 70 per cent 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

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1 Yenan was the headquarters of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China from January 1937 to March 1947; Sian was the centre of the reactionary rule of the Kuomintang in northwestern China. Comrade Mao Tse-tung cited the two cities as symbols of revolution and counter-revolution.
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.

_Ibid._, p. 381.

In the sphere of organization, ensure democracy under centralized guidance. It should be done on the following lines:

(1) The leading bodies of the Party must give a correct line of guidance and find solutions when problems arise, in order to establish themselves as centres of leadership.

(2) The higher bodies must be familiar with the situation in the lower bodies and with the life of the masses so as to have an objective basis for correct guidance.

(3) No Party organization at any level should make casual decisions in solving problems. Once a decision is reached, it must be firmly carried out.

(4) All decisions of any importance made by the Party’s higher bodies must be promptly transmitted to the lower bodies and the Party rank and file.

(5) The lower bodies of the Party and the Party rank and file must discuss the higher bodies’ directives in detail in order to understand their meaning thoroughly and decide on the methods of carrying them out.

XI. THE MASS LINE

The people, and the people alone, are the motive force in the making of world history.


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.

"Preface and Postscript to Rural surveys" (March and April 1941), Selected Works, Vol. III, p. 12.

The masses have boundless creative power. They can organize themselves and concentrate on places and branches of work where they can give full play to their energy; they can concentrate on production in breadth and depth and create more and more welfare undertakings for themselves. Introductory note to "Surplus Labour Has Found a Way Out" (1955), The Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside, Chinese ed., Vol. II.

The present upsurge of the peasant movement is a colossal event. In a very short time, in China's central, southern and northern provinces, several hundred million peasants will rise like a mighty storm, like a hurricane, a force so swift and violent that no power, however great, will be able to hold it back. They will smash all the trammels that bind them and rush forward along the road to liberation. They will sweep all the imperialists, warlords, corrupt officials, local tyrants and evil gentry into their graves. Every revolutionary party and every revolutionary comrade will be put to the test, to be accepted or rejected as they decide. There are three alterna-
tives. To march at their head and lead them? To trail behind them, gesticulating and criticizing? Or to stand in their way and oppose them? Every Chinese is free to choose, but events will force you to make the choice quickly.


The high tide of social transformation in the countryside, the high tide of co-operation, has already reached some places and will soon sweep over the whole country. It is a vast socialist revolutionary movement involving a rural population of more than 500 million, and it has extremely, great and world-wide significance. We should give this movement active, enthusiastic and systematic leadership, and not drag it back by one means or another. Some errors are unavoidable in the process; this is understandable, and they will not be hard to correct. Shortcomings or mistakes found among the cadres and the peasants can be remedied or overcome provided we give them positive help.


The masses have a potentially inexhaustible enthusiasm for socialism. Those who can only follow the old routine in a revolutionary period are utterly incapable of seeing this enthusiasm. They are blind and all is dark ahead of them. At times they go so far as to confuse right and wrong and turn things upside down. Haven't we come across enough persons of this type? Those who simply follow the old routine invariably underestimate the people's enthusiasm. Let something new appear and they always disapprove and rush to oppose it. Afterwards, they have to admit defeat and do a little self-criticism. But the next time something new appears, they go through the same process all over again. This is their pattern of behaviour in regard to
anything and everything new. Such people are always passive, always fail to move forward at the critical moment, and always have to be given a shove in the back before they move a step.

Introductory note to “This Township Went Co-operative in Two Years” (1955), The Socialist Up-surge in China’s Countryside, Chinese ed., Vol. II.

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 in solitude. 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.


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.


To link oneself with the masses, one 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. . . . 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.


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.


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.


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 reflect 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 and that nevertheless our comrades fail to act as leaders of the masses and tail behind certain backward elements, reflecting their views and,
moreover, mistaking them for those of the broad masses.


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.

"Some Questions concerning Methods of Leadership" (June 1, 1943), Selected Works, Vol. III, p. 120.

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.

Ibid., p. 119.

We should go to the masses and learn from them, synthesize their experience into better, articulated 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.

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.


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.


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 elements and to win over the backward elements.

“Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership” (June 1, 1948), Selected Works, Vol. III, p. 118.

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.


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.


Production by the masses, the interests of the masses, the experiences and feelings of the masses — to these the leading cadres should pay constant attention.

Inscription for a production exhibition sponsored by organizations directly under the Central Committee of the Party and the General Headquarters of the Eighth Route Army, *Liberation Daily of Yenan*, November 24, 1943.

We should pay close attention to the well-being of the masses, from the problems of land and labour to those of fuel, rice, cooking oil and salt. ... All such problems concerning the well-being of the masses should be placed on our agenda. We should discuss them, adopt and carry out decisions and check up on the results. We should help the masses to realize that we represent their interests, that our lives are intimately bound up with theirs. We should help them to proceed from these things to an understanding of the higher tasks which we have put forward, the tasks of the revolutionary war, so that they will support the revolution and spread it throughout the country, respond to our political appeals and fight to the end for victory in the revolution.

XII. POLITICAL WORK

The system of Party representatives and of political departments, adopted for the first time in China, entirely changed the complexion of these armed forces. The Red Army, which was founded in 1927, and the Eighth Route Army of today have inherited this system and developed it.

"Interview with the British Journalist James Bertram" (October 25, 1937), Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 54.

The People's Liberation Army has developed its vigorous revolutionary political work, which is an important factor in winning victory over the enemy, on the basis of a people's war and of the principles of unity between army and people, of unity between commanders and fighters and of disintegrating the enemy troops.

"The Present Situation and Our Tasks" (December 25, 1947), Selected Military Writings, 2nd ed., p. 350.

This army has built up a system of political work which is essential for the people's war and is aimed at promoting unity in its own ranks, unity with the friendly armies and unity with the people, and at disintegrating the enemy forces and ensuring victory in battle.


Political work is the life-blood of all economic work. This is particularly true at
a time when the social and economic system is undergoing fundamental change.


"The Party branch is organized on a company basis"; this is an important reason why the Red Army has been able to carry on such arduous fighting without falling apart.

"The Struggle in the Chingkang Mountains" (November 25, 1928), Selected Works, Vol. I, p. 84.

The political work of the Eighth Route Army is guided by three basic principles. First, the principle of unity between officers and men, which means eradicating feudal practices in the army, prohibiting beating and abuse, building up a conscious discipline, and sharing weal and woe—as a result of which the entire army is closely united. Second, the principle of unity be-

tween the army and the people, which means maintaining a discipline that forbids the slightest violation of the people's interests, conducting propaganda among the masses, organizing and arming them, lightening their economic burdens and suppressing the traitors and collaborators who do harm to the army and the people—as a result of which the army is closely united with the people and welcomed everywhere. Third, the principle of disintegrating the enemy troops and giving lenient treatment to prisoners of war. Our victory depends not only upon our military operations but also upon the disintegration of the enemy troops.

"Interview with the British Journalist James Bertram" (October 25, 1937), Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 53.

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 be
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 policy towards prisoners captured from the Japanese, puppet or anti-Communist troops is to set them all free, except for those who have incurred the bitter hatred of the masses and must receive capital punishment and whose death sentence has been approved by the higher authorities. Among the prisoners, those who were coerced into joining the reactionary forces but who are more or less inclined towards the revolution should be won over in large numbers to work for our army. The rest should be released and, if they fight us and are captured again, should again be set free. We should not insult them, take away their personal effects or try to exact recantations from them, but without exception should treat them sincerely and kindly. This should be our policy, however reactionary they may be. It is a very effective way of isolating the camp of reaction.

"On Policy" (December 25, 1940), Selected Works, Vol. II, pp. 446-47.

Weapons are an important factor in war, but not the decisive factor; it is people, not things, that are decisive. The contest of strength is not only a contest of military and economic power, but also a contest of human power and morale. Military and economic power is necessarily wielded by people.

"On Protracted War" (May 1938), Selected Works, Vol. II, pp. 143-44.
The atom bomb is a paper tiger which the U.S. reactionaries use to scare people. It looks terrible, but in fact it isn't. Of course, the atom bomb is a weapon of mass slaughter, but the outcome of a war is decided by the people, not by one or two new types of weapon.

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

Soldiers are the foundation of an army; unless they are imbued with a progressive political spirit and unless such a spirit is fostered through progressive political work, it will be impossible to achieve genuine unity between officers and men, impossible to arouse their enthusiasm for the War of Resistance to the full, and impossible to provide an excellent basis for the most effective use of all our technical equipment and tactics.


The purely military viewpoint is very highly developed among a number of comrades in the Red Army. It manifests itself as follows:

1. These comrades regard military affairs and politics as opposed to each other and refuse to recognize that military affairs are only one means of accomplishing political tasks. Some even say, "If you are good militarily, naturally you are good politically; if you are not good militarily, you cannot be any good politically"—this is to go a step further and give military affairs a leading position over politics.


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.


Recently there has been a falling off in ideological and political work among students and intellectuals, and some unhealthy tendencies have appeared. Some people seem to think that there is no longer any need to concern oneself with politics or with the future of the motherland and the ideals of mankind. It seems as if Marxism was once all the rage but is currently not so much in fashion. To counter these tendencies, we must strengthen our ideological and political work. Both students and intellectuals should study hard. In addition to the study of their specialized subjects, they must make progress both ideologically and politically, which means that they should study Marxism-Leninism, current events and politics. Not to have a correct political point of view is like having no soul. ... All departments and organizations should shoulder their responsibilities in ideological and political work. This applies to the Communist Party, the Youth League, government departments in charge of this work, and especially to heads of educational institutions and teachers.

*On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People* (February 27, 1957), 1st pocket ed., pp 43-44.

After receiving political education, the Red Army soldiers have all become class-conscious and learned the essentials of distributing land, setting up political power, arming the workers and peasants, etc., and they all know they are fighting for themselves, for the working class and the peasantry. Hence they can endure the hardships of the bitter struggle without complaint. Each company, battalion or regiment has its soldiers' committee which represents the in
The correct unfolding of the movement for pouring out grievances (the wrongs done to the labouring people by the old society and by the reactionaries) and the three check-ups (on class origin, preformance of duty and will to fight) greatly heightened the political consciousness of commanders and fighters throughout the army in the fight for the emancipation of the exploited working masses, for nationwide land reform and for the destruction of the common enemy of the people, the Chiang Kai-shek bandit gang. It also greatly strengthened the firm unity of all commanders and fighters under the leadership of the Communist Party. On this basis, the army achieved greater purity in its ranks, strengthened discipline, unfolded a mass movement for training, and further developed its political, economic and military democracy in a completely well-led and orderly way. Thus the army has become united as one man, with everybody contributing his ideas and his strength, an army fearless of sacrifice and capable of overcoming material difficulties, which displays mass heroism and daring in destroying the enemy. Such an army will be invincible.

"On the Great Victory in the Northwest and on the New Type of Ideological Education Movement in the Liberation Army" (March 7, 1948), Selected Military Writings, 2nd ed., pp. 358-59.

In the last few months almost all the People’s Liberation Army has made use of the intervals between battles for large-scale training and consolidation. This has been carried out in a fully guided, orderly and democratic way. It has therefore aroused the revolutionary fervour of the great masses of commanders and fighters, enabled them clearly to comprehend the aim of the war, eliminated certain incorrect ideas.
logical tendencies and undesirable manifestations in the army, educated the cadres and fighters and greatly enhanced the combat effectiveness of the army. From now on, we must continue to carry on this new type of ideological education movement in the army, a movement which has a democratic and mass character.


The educational policy of the college [the Anti-Japanese Military and Political College] is to cultivate a firm and correct political orientation, an industrious and simple style of work, and flexible strategy and tactics. These are the three essentials in the making of an anti-Japanese revolutionary soldier. It is in accordance with these essentials that the staff teach and the students study.

To Be Attacked by the Enemy Is Not a Bad Thing but a Good Thing (May 26, 1939), 1st pocket ed. P. 3.

Our nation has always had a traditional style of hard struggle, which we should develop.... What is more, the Communist Party has always advocated a firm and correct political orientation. ... This orientation is inseparable from a style of hard struggle. Without a firm and correct political orientation, it is impossible to promote a style of hard struggle. Without the style of hard struggle, it is impossible to maintain a firm and correct political orientation.

"Speech at the Yen'an Rally in Celebration of International Labour Day" (May 1, 1939).

Be united, alert, earnest and lively.
Motto for the Anti-Japanese Military and Political College.

What really counts in the world is conscientiousness, and the Communist Party is most particular about being conscientious.

Talk at a meeting with Chinese students and trainees in Moscow (November 17, 1957).
XIII. RELATIONS BETWEEN OFFICERS AND MEN

Our army has always had two policies. First, we must be ruthless to our enemies, we must overpower and annihilate them. Second, we must be kind to our own, to the people, to our comrades and to our superiors and subordinates, and unite with them.

Speech at the reception given by the Central Committee of the Party for model study delegates from the Rear Army Detachments (September 18, 1944.)

We hail from all corners of the country and have joined together for a common revolutionary objective. ... Our cadres must show concern for every soldier, and all people in the revolutionary ranks must care for each other, must love and help each other.


A movement to support the cadres and cherish the soldiers should be launched in every army unit, calling on the cadres to cherish the soldiers and the soldiers to support the cadres. They should speak up about each other’s shortcomings and mistakes and quickly correct them. In this way they will be able to achieve a very good internal unity.

“The Tasks for 1945” (December 15, 1944).

Many people think that it is wrong methods that make for strained relations between officers and men and between the army and the people, but I always tell them that it is a question of basic attitude (or basic principle), of having respect for the soldiers and the people. It is from this attitude that the various policies, methods
and forms ensue. If we depart from this attitude, then the policies, methods and forms will certainly be wrong, and the relations between officers and men and between the army and the people are bound to be unsatisfactory. Our three major principles for the army’s political work are, first, unity between officers and men; second, unity between the army and the people; and third, the disintegration of the enemy forces. To apply these principles effectively, we must start with this basic attitude of respect for the soldiers and the people, and of respect for the human dignity of prisoners of war once they have laid down their arms. Those who take all this as a technical matter and not one of basic attitude are indeed wrong, and they should correct their view.

"On Protracted War" (May 1938), Selected Works, Vol. 11, pp. 18687.

Communists must use the democratic method of persuasion and education when working among the labouring people and must on no account resort to commandism or coercion. The Chinese Communist Party faithfully adheres to this Marxist-Leninist principle.

On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People (February 27, 1957), 1st pocket ed., p. 15.

Our comrades must understand that ideological remoulding involves long-term, patient and painstaking work, and they must not attempt to change people’s ideology, which has been shaped over decades of life, by giving a few lectures or by holding a few meetings. Persuasion, not compulsion, is the only way to convince them. Compulsion will never result in convincing them. To try to convince them by force simply won’t work. This kind of method is permissible in dealing with the enemy, but absolutely impermissible in dealing with comrades or friends.

We must make a distinction between the enemy and ourselves, and we must not adopt an antagonistic stand towards comrades and treat them as we would the enemy. In speaking up, one must have an accident desire to protect the cause of the people and raise their political consciousness, and there must be no ridiculing or attacking in one's approach.

_Ibid., p. 20._

XIV. RELATIONS BETWEEN THE ARMY AND THE PEOPLE

The army must become one with the people so that they see it as their own army. Such an army will be invincible...

"On Protracted War" (May 1938), _Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 186._

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, we can surmount any difficulty, and no enemy can crush us while we can crush any enemy.

Wherever our comrades go, they must build good relations with the masses, be concerned for them and help them overcome their difficulties. We must unite with the masses; the more of the masses we unite with, the better.


The army in the Liberated Areas must support the government and cherish the people, while the democratic governments must lead the people in the work of supporting the army and giving preferential treatment to the families of soldiers fighting Japan. In this way relations between the army and the people will become still better.


In the course of these campaigns, the army on its side and the Party and the government on theirs should thoroughly examine the shortcomings and mistakes of 1943, and should resolutely correct them in 1944. From now on, such campaigns should be launched everywhere in the first month of every lunar year, and in the course of them the pledges to "support the government and cherish the people" and "support the army and give preferential treatment to the families of soldiers fighting Japan".—Tr.

1Campaigns to "support the government and cherish the people" and to "support the army and give preferential treatment to the families of soldiers fighting Japan".—Tr.
to the families of soldiers fighting Japan should be read out time and again, and there should be repeated self-criticism before the masses of any high-handed behaviour by the troops in the base areas towards the Party or government personnel or towards civilians, or of any lack of concern for the troops shown by the Party or government personnel or the civilians (each side criticizing itself and not the other) in order that these shortcomings and mistakes may be thoroughly corrected.

"Spread the Campaigns to Reduce Rent, Increase Production and ‘Support the Government and Cherish the People’ in the Base Areas” (October 1, 1943), Selected Works, Vol. III, p. 135.

XV. DEMOCRACY IN THE THREE MAIN FIELDS

A proper measure of democracy should be put into effect in the army, chiefly by abolishing the feudal practice of bullying and beating and by having officers and men share weal and woe. Once this is done, unity will be achieved between officers and men, the combat effectiveness of the army will be greatly increased, and there will be no doubt of our ability to sustain the long, cruel war.


Apart from the role played by the Party, the reason why the Red Army has been able to carry on in spite of such poor
material conditions and such frequent engagements is its practice of democracy. The officers do not beat the men; officers and men receive equal treatment; soldiers are free to hold meetings and to speak out; trivial formalities have been done away with; and the accounts are open for all to inspect. ... In China the army needs democracy as much as the people do. Democracy in our army is an important weapon for undermining the feudal mercenary army.

"The Struggle in the Chingkang Mountains" (November 25, 1928). 

The policy for political work in our army units is fully to arouse the rank and file, the commanders and all working personnel in order to achieve three major objectives through a democratic movement under centralized leadership, namely, a high degree of political unity, better living conditions, and better military technique and tactics. The Three Check-ups and Three Improvements now being enthusiastically carried out in our army units are intended to attain the first two of these objectives through the methods of political and economic democracy.

With regard to economic democracy, the representatives elected by the soldiers must be ensured the right to assist (but not to bypass) the company leadership in managing the company's supplies and mess.

With regard to military democracy, in periods of training there must be mutual instruction as between officers and soldiers.

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1 The "Three Check-ups" and "Three Improvements" constituted an important movement for Party consolidation and for ideological education in the army which was carried out by our Party in conjunction with the land reform during the People's War of Liberation. In the localities, the "Three Check-ups" meant checking on class origin, ideology and style of work; in the armed units, the check-ups were on class origin, performance of duty and will to fight. The "Three Improvements" meant organizational consolidation, ideological education and rectification of style of work.
and among the soldiers themselves; and in periods of fighting the companies at the front must hold big and small meetings of various kinds. Under the direction of the company leadership, the rank and file should be roused to discuss how to attack and capture enemy positions and how to fulfill other combat tasks. When the fighting lasts several days, several such meetings should be held. This kind of military democracy was practised with great success in the battle of Panlung in northern Shensi and in the battle of Shihchiachuang in the Shansi-Chahar-Hopei area. It has been proved that the practice can only do good and can do no harm whatsoever.

"The Democratic Movement in the Army" (January 30, 1948), Selected Military Writings, 2nd ed., p. 353.

In the present great struggle, the Chinese Communist Party demands that all its leading bodies and all its members and cadres should give the fullest expression to their initiative, which alone can ensure victory.

This initiative must be demonstrated concretely in the ability of the leading bodies, the cadres and the Party rank and file to work creatively, in their readiness to assume responsibility, in the exuberant vigour they show in their work, in their courage and ability to raise questions, voice opinions and criticize defects, and in the comradely supervision that is maintained over the leading bodies and the leading cadres. Otherwise, “initiative” will be an empty thing. But the exercise of such initiative depends on the spread of democracy in Party life. It cannot be brought into play if there is not enough democracy in Party life. Only in an atmosphere of democracy can large numbers of able people be brought forward.


Anyone should be allowed to speak out, whoever he may be, so long as he is not a