hostile element and does not make malicious attacks, and it does not matter if he says something wrong. Leaders at all levels have the duty to listen to others. Two principles must be observed: (1) Say all you know and say it without reserve; (2) Don’t blame the speaker but take his words as a warning. Unless the principle of “Don’t blame the speaker” is observed genuinely and not falsely, the result will not be “Say all you know and say it without reserve”.

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

Education in democracy must be carried on within the Party so that members can understand the meaning of democratic life, the meaning of the relationship between democracy and centralism, and the way in which democratic centralism should be put into practice. Only in this way can we really extend democracy within the Party and at the same time avoid ultra-democracy and the laissez-faire which destroys discipline.


Both in the army and in the local organizations, inner-Party democracy is meant to strengthen discipline and increase combat effectiveness, not to weaken them.

Ibid.

In the sphere of theory, destroy the roots of ultra-democracy. First, it should be pointed out that the danger of ultra-democracy lies in the fact that it damages or even completely wrecks the Party organization and weakens or even completely undermines the party’s fighting capacity, rendering the Party incapable of fulfilling its fighting tasks and thereby causing the defeat of the revolution. Next, it should be pointed out that the source of ultrademocracy consists in the petty bourgeoisie’s individualistic aversion to discipline. When
this characteristic is brought into the Party, it develops into ultra-democratic ideas politically and organizationally. These ideas are utterly incompatible with the fighting tasks of the proletariat.


XVI. EDUCATION AND THE TRAINING OF TROOPS

Our educational policy must enable everyone who receives an education to develop morally, intellectually and physically and become a worker with both socialist consciousness and culture.

On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People (February 27, 1957), Ist pocket ed., p. 44.

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
and arousing a high level of enthusiasm among the masses of cadres and fighters. Only thus will the military consolidation and training proceed smoothly and attain better results.

"The Tasks for 1945" (December 15, 1944).

As for the method of training, we should unfold the mass training movement in which officers teach soldiers, soldiers teach officers and the soldiers teach each other.

"Policy for Work in the Liberated Areas for 1946" (December 15, 1945), Selected Works, Vol. IV, p. 76.

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.


As for the training courses, the main objective should still be to raise the level of technique in marksmanship, bayoneting, grenade-throwing and the like and the secondary objective should be to raise the level of tactics, while special emphasis should be laid on night operations.

"Policy for Work in the Liberated Areas for 1946" (December 15, 1945), Selected Works, Vol. IV, p. 76."
XVII. SERVING THE PEOPLE

We should be modest and prudent, guard against arrogance and rashness, and serve the Chinese people heart and soul. ...


Our point of departure is to serve the people whole-heartedly and never for a moment divorce ourselves from the masses, to proceed in all cases from the interests of the people and not from one's self-interest or from the interests of a small group, and to identify our responsibility to the people with our responsibility to the leading organs of the Party.


The organs of state must practice democratic centralism, they must rely on the masses and their personnel must serve the people.

"On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People" (February 27, 1957), 1st pocket ed., p. 8.

Comrade Bethune's spirit, his utter devotion to others without any thought of self, was shown in his boundless sense of responsibility in his work and his boundless warm-heartedness towards all comrades and the people. Every Communist must learn from him.

..............

We must all learn the spirit of absolute selflessness from him. With this spirit
everyone can be very useful to the people. A man’s ability may be great or small, but if he has this spirit, he is already noble-minded and pure, a man of moral integrity and above vulgar interests, a man who is of value to the people.

"In Memory of Norman Bethune" (December 21, 1939), Selected Works, Vol. II, pp. 337-38.

Our Communist Party and the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies led by our Party are battalions of the revolution. These battalions of ours are wholly dedicated to the liberation of the people and work entirely in the people’s interests.

"Serve the People" (September 8, 1944), Selected Works, Vol. III, p. 227.

All our cadres, whatever their rank, are servants of the people, and whatever we do is to serve the people. How then can we be reluctant to discard any of our bad traits?

"The Tasks for 1945" (December 15, 1944).

Our duty is to hold ourselves responsible to the people. Every word, every act and every policy must conform to the people’s interests, and if mistakes occur, they must be corrected—that is what being responsible to the people means.

"The Situation and Our Policy After the Victory in the War of Resistance Against Japan" (August 13, 1945), Selected Works, Vol. IV, p. 16.

Wherever there is struggle there is sacrifice, and death is a common occurrence. But we have the interests of the people and the sufferings of the great majority at heart, and when we die for the people it is a
worthy death. Nevertheless, we should do our best to avoid unnecessary sacrifices.

"Serve the People" (September 8, 1944), Selected Works, Vol. III, p. 228.

All men must die, but death can vary in its significance. The ancient Chinese writer Szuma Chien said, "Though death befalls all men alike, it may be heavier than Mount Tai or lighter than a feather." To die for the people is heavier than Mount Tai, but to work for the fascists and die for the exploiters and oppressors is lighter than a feather.


XVIII. PATRIOTISM AND INTERNATIONALISM

Can a Communist, who is an internationalist, at the same time be a partiot? We hold that he not only can be but must be. The specific content of patriotism is determined by historical conditions. There is the "patriotism" of the Japanese aggressors and of Hitler, and there is our patriotism. Communists must resolutely oppose the "patriotism" of the Japanese aggressors and of Hitler. The Communists of Japan and Germany are defeatists with regard to the wars being waged by their countries. To bring about the defeat of the Japanese aggressors and of Hitler by every possible means is in the interests of the Japanese and the German people, and the more complete the defeat the better. ... For the
wars launched by the Japanese aggressors and Hitler are harming the people at home as well as the people of the world. China's case, however, is different, because she is the victim of aggression. Chinese Communists must therefore combine patriotism with internationalism. We are at once internationalists and patriots, and our slogan is, "Fight to defend the motherland against the aggressors." For us defeatism is a crime and to strive for victory in the War of Resistance is an inescapable duty. For only by fighting in defence of the motherland can we defeat the aggressors and achieve national liberation. And only by achieving national liberation will it be possible for the proletariat and other working people to achieve their own emancipation. The victory of China and the defeat of the invading imperialists will help the people of other countries. Thus in wars of national liberation patriotism is applied internationalism.


What kind of spirit is this that makes a foreigner selflessly adopt the cause of the Chinese people's liberation as his own? It is the spirit of internationalism, the spirit of communism, from which every Chinese Communist must learn. ... We must unite with the proletariat of all the capitalist countries, with the proletariat of Japan, Britain, the United States, Germany, Italy and all other capitalist countries, before it is possible to overthrow imperialism, to liberate our nation and people, and to liberate the other nations and peoples of the world. This is our internationalism, the internationalism with which we oppose both narrow nationalism and narrow patriotism.

"In Memory of Norman Bethune" (December 21, 1939), Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 337.

In the fight for complete liberation the oppressed people rely first of all on their own struggle and then, and only then, on international assistance. The people who
have triumphed in their own revolution should help those still struggling for liberation. This is our internationalist duty.


The socialist countries are states of an entirely new type in which the exploiting classes have been overthrown and the working people are in power. The principle of integrating internationalism with patriotism is practised in the relations between these countries. We are closely bound by common interests and common ideals.


The people of the countries in the socialist camp should unite, the people of the countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America should unite, the people of all the continents should unite, all peace-loving countries should unite, and all countries subjected to U. S. aggression, control, intervention or bullying should unite, and so form the broadest united front to oppose the U. S. imperialist policies of aggression and war and to defend world peace.


Things develop ceaselessly. It is only forty-five years since the Revolution of 1911, but the face of China has completely changed. In another forty-five years, that is, in the year 2001, or the beginning of the 21st century, China will have undergone an even greater change. She will have become a powerful socialist industrial country. And that is as it should be. China is a land with an area of 9,600,000 square kilometres and a population of 600
million people, and she ought to have made a greater contribution to humanity. Her contribution over a long period has been far too small. For this we are regretful.

But we must be modest—not only now, but forty-five years hence as well. We should always be modest. In our international relations, we Chinese people should get rid of great-power chauvinism resolutely, thoroughly, wholly and completely.

"In Commemoration of Dr. Sun Yat-sen" (November 1956).

We must never adopt an arrogant attitude of great-power chauvinism and become conceited because of the victory of our revolution and certain achievements in our construction. Every nation, big or small, has its strong and weak points.

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

XIX. REVOLUTIONARY HEROISM

This army has an indomitable spirit and is determined to vanquish all enemies and never to yield. No matter what the difficulties and hardships, so long as a single man remains, he will fight on.


Give full play to our style of fighting—courage in battle, no fear of sacrifice, no fear of fatigue, and continuous fighting (that is, fighting successive battles in a short time without rest).

"The Present Situation and Our Tasks" (December 25, 1947), Selected Works, Vol. IV, P. 161.
Thousands upon thousands of martyrs have heroically laid down their lives for the people; let us hold their banner high and march ahead along the path crimson with their blood!


Be resolute, fear no sacrifice and surmount every difficulty to win victory.


At a critical moment in the progress of the Northern Expedition, . . . the treacherous and reactionary policies of "party purge" and massacre adopted by the Kuomintang authorities wrecked this national united front—the united front of the Kuomintang, Communist Party and all sections of the people, which embodied the Chinese people's cause of liberation—and all its revolutionary policies. . . . Thereupon unity was replaced by civil war, democracy by dictatorship, and a China full of brightness a China covered in darkness. But the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people were neither cowed nor conquered or exterminated. They picked themselves up, wiped off the blood, buried their fallen comrades and went into battle again. Holding high the great standard of revolution, they rose in armed resistance and over vast territory in China they set up people's governments, carried out land reform, built up a people's army—the Chinese Red Army—and preserved and expanded the revolutionary forces of the Chinese people.


You have many good qualities and have rendered great service, but you must al-
ways remember not to become conceited. You are respected by all, and quite rightly, but this easily leads to conceit. If you become conceited, if you are not modest and cease to exert yourselves, and if you do not respect others, do not respect the cadres and the masses, then you will cease to be heroes and models. There have been such people in the past, and I hope you will not follow their example.

"We must Learn to Do Economic Work" (January 10, 1945), Selected Works, Vol. III, p. 239.

In the fight to wipe out the enemy and to restore and increase industrial and agricultural production, you have overcome many difficulties and hardships and demonstrated immense courage, wisdom and initiative. You are models for the whole Chinese nation, the backbone of the victorious advance of the people's cause in all spheres, pillars of support to the People's Government and bridges linking the People's Government with the great masses.

Message of greetings on behalf of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party to the Meeting of Representatives of National Combat Heroes and Model Workers (September 25, 1950).

We the Chinese nation have the spirit to fight the enemy to the last drop of our blood, the determination to recover our lost territory by our own efforts, and the ability to stand on our own feet in the family of nations.

XX. BUILDING OUR COUNTRY THROUGH DILIGENCE AND FRUGALITY

We must see to it that all our cadres and all our people constantly bear in mind that ours is a big socialist country but an economically backward and poor one, and that this is a very great contradiction. To make China rich and strong needs several decades of intense effort, which will include, among other things, the effort to practise strict economy and combat waste, i.e., the policy of building up our country through diligence and frugality.

On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People (February 27, 1957), 1st pocket ed., p. 71.

Diligence and frugality should be practiced in running factories and shops and all state-owned, co-operative and other enterprises. The principle of diligence and frugality should be observed in everything. This principle of economy is one of the basic principles of socialist economics. China is a big country, but she is still very poor. It will take several decades to make China prosperous. Even then we will still have to observe the principle of diligence and frugality. But it is in the coming few decades, during the present series of five-year plans, that we must particularly advocate diligence and frugality, that we must pay special attention to economy.


Wherever we happen to be, we must treasure our manpower and material resources, and must not take a short view
and indulge in wastefulness and extravagance. Wherever we are, from the very first year of our work we must bear in mind the many years to come, the protracted war that must be maintained, the counter-offensive, and the work of reconstruction after the enemy's expulsion. On the one hand, never be wasteful or extravagant; on the other, actively expand production. Previously, in some places people suffered a great deal because they did not take the long view and neglected economy in manpower and material resources and the expansion of production. The lesson is there and attention must be called to it.

“We Must Learn to Do Economic Work” (January 10, 1945), Selected Works, Vol. III, p. 244.

In order to speed up this restoration and development [of agricultural production and industrial production in small towns], we must do our utmost, in the course of our struggle for the abolition of the feudal system, to preserve all useful means of production and of livelihood, take resolute measures against anyone's destroying or wasting them, oppose extravagant eating and drinking and pay attention to thrift and economy.

“Speech at a Conference of Cadres in the Shansi-Suiyuan Liberated Area” (April 1, 1948), Selected Works, Vol. IV, p. 238.

Thrift should be the guiding principle in our government expenditure. It should be made clear to all government workers that corruption and waste are very great crimes. Our campaigns against corruption and waste have already achieved some results, but further efforts are required. Our system of accounting must be guided by the principle of saving every copper for the war effort, for the revolutionary cause and for our economic construction.

A dangerous tendency has shown itself late among many of our personnel—an unwillingness to share the joys and hardships of the masses, a concern for personal fame and gain. This is very bad. One way of overcoming it is to simplify our organizations in the course of our campaign to increase production and practise economy and to transfer cadres to lower levels so that a considerable number will return to productive work.

On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People (February 27, 1937), 1st pocket ed., p. 71.

Production by the army for its own support has not only improved the army’s living conditions and lightened the burden on the people, thereby making it possible further to expand the army. In addition, it has had many immediate side-effects. They are as follows:

(1) Improved relations between officers and men. Officers and men work together in production and become like others.

(2) Better attitude to labour. ... since the army began to produce for its own support, the attitude to labour has improved and loafer ways have been overcome.

(3) Strengthened discipline. Far from weakening discipline in battle and in army life, labour discipline in production actually strengthens it.

(4) Improved relations between the army and the people. Once an armed force begins to “Keep house” for itself, encroachments upon the property of the people seldom or never occur. As the army and the people exchange labour and help each other in production, the friendship between them is strengthened.

(5) Less grumbling in the army about the government and improved relations between the two.

(6) An impetus to the great production campaign of the people. Once the army engages in production, the need for government and other organizations to do
likewise becomes more obvious, and they do so more energetically; also, the need for a universal campaign of the whole people to increase production naturally becomes more obvious, and this too is carried on more energetically.


Some people say that if the army units go in for production, they will be unable to train or fight and that if the government and other organizations do so, they will be unable to do their own work. This is a false argument. In recent years our army units in the Border Region have undertaken production on a big scale to provide themselves with ample food and clothing and have simultaneously done their training and conducted their political studies and literacy and other courses much more successfully than before, and there is greater unity than ever within the army and between the army and the people. While there was a large-scale production campaign at the front last year, great successes were gained in the fighting and in addition an extensive training campaign was started. And thanks to production, the personnel of the government and other organizations live a better life and work with greater devotion and efficiency; this is the case both in the Border Region and at the front.

"We Must Learn to Do Economic Work" (January 10, 1945), Selected Works, Vol. III, pp. 243-44.
XXI. SELF-RELIANCE AND ARDVOUS STRUGGLE

On what basis should our policy rest? It should rest on our own strength, and that means regeneration through one's own efforts. We are not alone; all the countries and people in the world opposed to imperialism are our friends. Nevertheless, we stress regeneration through our own efforts. Relying on the forces we ourselves organize, we can defeat all Chinese and foreign reactionaries.

"The Situation and Our Policy After the Victory in the War of Resistance Against Japan" (August 13, 1945), Selected Works, Vol. IV, p. 20.

We stand for self-reliance. We hope for foreign aid but cannot be dependent on it; we depend on our own efforts, on the creative power of the whole army and the entire people.

"We Must Learn to Do Economic Work" (January 10, 1945), Selected Works, Vol. III, p. 241.

To win country-wide victory is only the first step in a long march of ten thousand li. ... The Chinese revolution is great, but the road after the revolution will be longer, the work greater and more arduous. This must be made clear now in the Party. The comrades must be helped to remain modest, prudent and free from arrogance and rashness in their style of work. The comrades must be helped to preserve the style of plain living and hard struggle.

"Report to the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China" (March 5, 1949), Selected Works, Vol. IV, p. 374."
We must thoroughly clear away all ideas among our cadres of winning easy victories through good luck, without hard and bitter struggle, without sweat and blood.

"Build Stable Base Areas in the Northeast" (December 28, 1945), Selected Works, Vol. IV, p. 84.

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. At the same time, we must tell the people and tell our comrades that there will be twists and turns in our road. There are still many obstacles and difficulties along the road of revolution. The Seventh Congress of our Party assumed that the difficulties would be many, for we preferred to assume there would be more difficulties rather than less. Some comrades do not like to think much about difficulties. But difficulties are facts; we must recognize as many difficulties as there are and should not adopt a "policy of non-recognition". We must recognize difficulties, analyse them and combat them. There are no straight roads in the world; we must be prepared to follow a road which twists and turns and not try to get things on the cheap. It must not be imagined that one fine morning all the reactionaries will go down on their knees of their own accord. In a word, while the prospects are bright, the road has twists and turns. There are still many difficulties ahead which we must not overlook. By uniting with the entire people in a common effort, we can certainly overcome all difficulties and win victory.

"On the Chungking Negotiations" (October 17, 1945), Selected Works, Vol. IV, pp. 59-60.

Anyone who sees only the bright side but not the difficulties cannot fight effectively for the accomplishment of the Party's tasks.

The wealth of society is created by the workers, peasants and working intellectuals. If they take their destiny into their own hands, follow a Marxist-Leninist line and take an active attitude in solving problems instead of evading them, there will be no difficulty in the world which they cannot overcome.


The comrades throughout the Party must take all this fully into account and be prepared to overcome all difficulties with an indomitable will and in a planned way. The reactionary forces and we both have difficulties. But the difficulties of the reactionary forces are insurmountable because they are forces on the verge of death and have no future. Our difficulties can be overcome because we are new and rising forces and have a bright future.


In times of difficulty we must not lose sight of our achievements, must see the bright future and must pluck up our courage.


New things always have to experience difficulties and setbacks as they grow. It is sheer fantasy to imagine that the cause of socialism is all plain sailing and easy success, without difficulties and setbacks or the exertion of tremendous efforts.

On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People (February 27, 1957), 1st pocket ed., pp. 32-33.
At certain times in the revolutionary struggle, the difficulties outweigh the favourable conditions and so constitute the principal aspect of the contradiction and the favourable conditions constitute the secondary aspect. But through their efforts the revolutionaries can overcome the difficulties step by step and open up a favourable new situation; thus a difficult situation yields place to a favourable one.


What is work? Work is struggle. There are difficulties and problems in those places for us to overcome and solve. We go there to work and struggle to overcome these difficulties. A good comrade is one who is more eager to go where the difficulties are greater.


There is an ancient Chinese fable called "The Foolish Old Man Who Removed the Mountains". It tells of an old man who lived in northern China long, long ago and was known as the Foolish Old Man of North Mountain. His house faced south and beyond his doorway stood the two great peaks, Taihang and Wangwu, obstructing the way. With great determination, he led his sons in digging up these mountains hoe in hand. Another greybeard, known as the Wise Old Man, saw them and said derisively, "How silly of you to do this! It is quite impossible for you few to dig up these two huge mountains." The Foolish Old Man replied, "When I die, my sons will carry on; when they die, there will be my grandsons, and then their sons and grandsons, and so on to infinity. High as they are, the mountains cannot grow any higher and with every bit we dig, they will be that much lower. Why can't we clear them away?" Having refuted the Wise Old Man's wrong view, he went on digging every day, unshaken in his conviction. God was moved
by this, and he sent down two angels, who carried the mountains away on their backs. Today, two big mountains lie like a dead weight on the Chinese people. One is imperialism, the other is feudalism. The Chinese Communist Party has long made up its mind to dig them up. We must persevere and work unceasingly, and we, too, will touch God’s heart. Our God is none other than the masses of the Chinese people. If they stand up and dig together with us, why can’t these two mountains be cleared away?


XXII. METHODS OF THINKING AND METHODS OF WORK

The history of mankind is one of continuous development from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom. This process is never-ending. In any society in which classes exist, class struggle will never end. In classless society the struggle between the new and the old and between truth and falsehood will never end. In the fields of the struggle for production and scientific experiment, mankind makes constant progress and nature undergoes constant change; they never remain at the same level. Therefore, man has constantly to sum up experience and go on discovering, inventing, creating and
advancing. Ideas of stagnation, pessimism, inertia and complacency are all wrong. They are wrong because they agree neither with the historical facts of social development over the past million years, nor with the historical facts of nature so far known to us (i.e., nature as revealed in the history of celestial bodies, the earth, life, and other natural phenomena.)


Natural science is one of man’s weapons in his fight for freedom. For the purpose of attaining freedom in society, man must use social science to understand and change society and carry out social revolution. For the purpose of attaining freedom in the world of nature, man must use natural science to understand, conquer and change nature and thus attain freedom from nature.

Speech at the inaugural meeting of the Natural Science Research Society of the Border Region (February 5, 1940).

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 other is its practicality; it emphasizes the dependence of theory on practice, emphasizes that theory is based on practice and in turn serves practice.

"On Practice" (July 1937), Selected Works, Vol. 1, p. 297.

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.

Ibid., p. 304.
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.

Ibid.

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 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.


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.

*Ibid.,* p. 3.

Whoever wants to know a thing has no way of doing so except by coming into contact with it, that is, by living (practising) in its environment. ... 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 theory and methods of revolution, you must take part in revolution. All genuine knowledge originates in direct experience.


Knowledge begins with practice, and theoretical knowledge which is acquired
through practice 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.


It is well known that when you do anything, unless you understand its actual circumstances, its nature and its relations to other things, you will not know the laws governing it, or know how to do it, or be able to do it well.


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".


We are Marxists, and Marxism teaches that in our approach to a problem we should start from objective facts, not from abstract definitions, and that we should derive our guiding principles, policies and measures from an analysis of these facts.


The most fundamental method of work which all Communists must firmly bear in
mind is to determine our working policies according to actual conditions. When we study the causes of the mistakes we have made, we find that they all arose because we departed from the actual situation at a given time and place and were subjective in determining our working policies.


Idealism and metaphysics are the easiest things in the world, because people can talk as much nonsense as they like without basing it on objective reality or having it tested against reality. Materialism and dialectics, on the other hand, need effort. They must be based on and tested by objective reality. Unless one makes the effort, one is liable to slip into idealism and metaphysics.

Introductory note to "Material on the Hu Feng Counter-Revolutionary Clique" (May 1955).

When we look at a thing, we must examine its essence and treat its appearance merely as an usher at the threshold, and once we cross the threshold, we must grasp the essence of the thing; this is the only reliable and scientific method of analysis.

"A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire" (January 5, 1930), Selected Works, Vol. 1, p. 119.

The fundamental cause of the development of a thing is not external but internal; it lies in the contradictoriness within the thing. This internal contradiction exists 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.

"On Contradiction" (August 1937), Selected Works, Vol. 1, p. 313.

It [materialist dialectics] holds that external causes are the condition of change and internal causes are the basis of change,