

MAO TSE-TUNG
ON
ART AND LITERATURE

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS
PEKING



毛泽东

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This edition of *Mao Tse-tung on Art and Literature* is translated from the Chinese text published in December 1958 by the People's Literature Publishing House, Peking. It is a collection of essays and excerpts dealing with art and literature by Mao Tse-tung.

The materials are chronologically arranged.

Most of the contents can be found in the *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*. The rest, such as "On Literary Style", "A Letter About Poetry", and "On 'Letting a Hundred Flowers Blossom', and 'Letting a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend'", are of more recent origin. The titles are mostly taken from the original essays, or their chapter heads or subheads. But the following titles are given by the editor of the Chinese edition: "Myth and Reality", "The Chief Concern of China's Cultural Movement", "What to Praise, What to Condemn", and "On Literary Style",

Printed in the People's Republic of China

CONTENTS

CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE	1
MYTH AND REALITY	4
STUDY	6
THE MAY 4 MOVEMENT	10
NEW-DEMOCRATIC CULTURE	14
REFORM OUR METHOD AND SYSTEM OF STUDY	37
PROPOSE THE PARTY "EIGHT-LEGGED ESSAY"	50
TALKS AT THE YENAN FORUM ON ART AND LITERATURE	75
THE UNITED FRONT IN CULTURAL WORK	123
QUESTIONS OF CULTURE, EDUCATION AND THE INTELLECTUALS	127
THE CHIEF CONCERN OF CHINA'S CULTURAL MOVEMENT	130
WHAT TO PRAISE, WHAT TO CONDEMN	131
ON LITERARY STYLE	132
A LETTER ABOUT POETRY	135
ON "LETTING A HUNDRED FLOWERS BLOSSOM", AND "LETTING A HUNDRED SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT CONTEND"	137

CAMPAIGN FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE

(March 1927)

In China education and culture have always been reserved exclusively for the landlords, and the peasants were denied access to them. But the culture of the landlords is created by the peasants, for its source is the sweat and blood of the peasants. In China 90 per cent of the people have no culture or education, and of these the overwhelming majority are peasants.

With the downfall of the power of the landlords in the rural areas, the peasants' movement for education and culture has begun. The peasants, who hitherto bitterly hated the schools, are now zealously organizing evening classes. The "foreign-style schools" were always unpopular with the peasants. During my home visits in my student days, I used to join in with "foreign-style" students and teachers and stand for the interests of the "foreign-style schools" and always thought the peasants were somehow wrong in opposing such schools. It was during my six months in the countryside in 1925, when I was already a Communist and had adopted the Marxist viewpoint, that I realized I had been wrong and the peasants right. The teaching

materials used in the rural primary schools all dealt with urban matters and were in no way adapted to the needs of the rural areas. Besides, the primary school teachers behaved very badly towards the peasants who, far from finding them helpful, came to dislike them. As a result, the peasants wanted old-style rather than modern schools — “Chinese schools”, as they call them, rather than “foreign schools” — and they preferred the masters of the old-style school to the teachers in the primary schools.

Now the peasants are energetically establishing what they call peasant schools, which are in fact evening classes. Many such schools have been opened and others are being established; on the average there is one school to every township. The peasants are very enthusiastic about establishing such schools, and regard only such schools as their own. The funds for evening classes come from the “public revenue derived from superstitious practices”, the funds of ancestral temple and other kinds of public funds and public property that have been lying idle. The county education boards wanted to use these public funds for establishing primary schools, that is, “foreign-style schools” not adapted to the needs of the peasants, while the peasants wanted to use them for peasant schools; in the end the funds were shared, though in certain places the peasants got them all. With the growth of the peasant movement, the cultural level of the peasants has risen rapidly. Before long tens of thousands of schools will spring up in the rural areas throughout the whole province — something quite different from the futile clamour of the intelligentsia and so-called “educators” for “popular education”, which remained idle words.

*From Report of an Investigation into
the Peasant Movement in Hunan*

MYTH AND REALITY

(August 1937)

... The innumerable transformations in mythology for instance, K'uafu's racing with the sun in the *Book of Mountains and Seas*,¹ Yi's shooting down of nine suns in *Huai Nan Tze*,² Monkey's seventy-two metamorphoses in the *Pilgrimage to the West*,³ the numerous episodes in the *Strange Tales from the Chinese Studio*⁴ of ghosts and foxes metamorphosed into human

¹ Written during the era of the Warring States (403-221 B.C.). In one of the legends K'uafu is described as a superman who runs a race with the sun. Winning the race, he makes a hole in the sun but finally dies of thirst.

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

³ A novel written in the sixteenth century. Sun Wu-k'ung, the hero of the novel, is a brave and resourceful monkey. He has the mysterious power of changing himself at will into seventy-two forms, such as a bird, a tree, a stone, etc.

⁴ A famous collection of 431 tales written by P'u Sung-shan in the seventeenth century.

beings — the transformations of opposites into each other as told in these legends are not actual transformations as manifested in actual contradictions, but are a sort of childish, imaginary, subjectively fancied transformations that are called forth in men's minds by the innumerable transformations of complicated, real contradictions into each other. Marx said: "All mythology masters and dominates and shapes the forces of nature in and through the imagination, hence it disappears as soon as man gains mastery over the forces of nature."¹ Although stories of endless metamorphoses in mythology or nursery tales can delight people because they imaginatively embody man's conquest of the forces of nature and, moreover, the best mythology possesses, as Marx put it, "eternal charm", yet mythology is not based on the specific conditions of actual contradictions and therefore does not scientifically reflect reality. That is to say, in mythology or nursery tales the aspects that constitute contradiction have only a fancied identity, not a real one.

From On Contradiction

¹ Marx, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Eng. ed., Chicago, 1904, pp. 310-311.

STUDY

(October 1938)

As a general rule, all Communist Party members who have some qualifications for study should study the theory of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, the history of our nation and the situation and trend of the current movement; and with the help of the comrades, we must organize education for those who are poorly educated. This general rule has special reference to all cadres, above all to members of the Central Committee and senior cadres who should intensify their study of these subjects. It is impossible for a party to lead a great revolutionary movement to victory without knowledge of revolutionary theory and history, and a profound understanding of the current movement.

The theory of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin is universally applicable. We should not regard it as a dogma, but as a guide to action. We should not merely learn Marxist-Leninist terms and phrases but study Marxism-Leninism as the science of revolution. We should not only understand the general laws which Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin derived from their extensive study of real life and revolutionary experience

but also study their standpoint and approach in examining problems and solving them. Our Party has now a better knowledge of Marxism-Leninism than in the past, but this knowledge is still far from being widespread or deep. Our task is to lead a great nation of several hundred million people to carry on a great and unprecedented struggle. Therefore to spread and deepen the study of Marxism-Leninism is for us a big problem which we must solve promptly and by positive endeavour. I hope that, after this plenary session of the Central Committee, a competition in study will be started throughout the Party, and we shall see who really learns something, and who learns more and better. So far as the people shouldering the main responsibilities of leadership are concerned, if we can have in our Party one to two hundred comrades who have acquired a systematic, not fragmentary, a practical, not abstract, knowledge of Marxism-Leninism, the fighting capacity of our Party will be greatly heightened and our work in defeating Japanese imperialism will be accelerated.

Another task for us is to study our historical heritage and sum it up critically with the Marxist method. Our nation has a history of several thousand years with its own characteristics and its own store of measures. But in these matters we are mere school-boys. The China of today has developed from the past in history; as we are believers in the Marxist approach to history, we must not snap the thread of historical continuity. We must make a summary of the history from Confucius to Sun Yat-sen and possess

ourselves of this valuable heritage. This will give much help in directing the great movement of today. Communists are internationalist-Marxists, but Marxism must be integrated with the specific characteristics of our country and given a national form before it can be put into practice. The great strength of Marxism-Leninism lies in its integration with the specific revolutionary practice of different countries. In the case of the Chinese Communist Party, it is a matter of learning how to apply the theory of Marxism-Leninism to China's specific circumstances. Chinese Communists are part and parcel of the great Chinese nation, and very flesh and blood; if they talk about Marxism apart from China's characteristics, it will be only Marxism in the abstract, Marxism void of matter. Hence how to turn Marxism into a living reality in China, to imbue its every manifestation with the requisite Chinese characteristics, that is, to apply it in accordance with China's characteristics, becomes a problem which the whole Party must understand and quickly solve. The foreign "eight-legged essay"¹ must be banned.

¹ The prescribed form of essay in competitive examination in feudal China from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. It is written to a rigid pattern and a prescribed length; every word in the theme, which consists of a phrase, a sentence or sometimes an entire passage from the *Four Books* of the *Confucian Canon*, must be dealt with, its meaning expounded and implications teased out with fanciful ingenuity. The result is formalized verbiage without real content. The term "eight-legged essay" has therefore been extended to describe any piece of writing stuffed with clichés, jargon and catchphrases.

empty and abstract talk must be stopped and doctrinism must be buried to make way for the fresh and lively things of Chinese style and Chinese flavour which the common folk of China love to see and hear. To separate the content of internationalism from the national form is the practice of those who understand nothing of internationalism; we must closely link the two. There are within our ranks serious mistakes in this respect which must be conscientiously corrected. What are the characteristics of the present movement? What are its laws? How to direct this movement? All these are practical questions. To this day we have not yet fully understood Japanese imperialism and fully understood China. The movement is developing, new things have yet to emerge and are emerging endlessly. To study this movement in its entirety and its development is a great task claiming our constant attention. Anyone who refuses to study these problems seriously and carefully is no Marxist.

Our enemy in study is self-complacency, which must be eliminated before we can really learn anything. The attitude we should adopt is "to learn without self-satisfaction" in regard to ourselves and "to teach without self-righteousness" in regard to others.

From *The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War*

Confucian Analects, Bk. VII, ch. 2.

THE MAY 4 MOVEMENT

(May 1939)

The May 4 Movement twenty years ago marked a new stage in China's bourgeois-democratic revolution against imperialism and feudalism. The campaign for cultural reform, into which the Movement grew, was only one of the forms of this revolution. As a result of the growth and development of new social forces in that period, a mighty camp emerged in China's bourgeois-democratic revolution against imperialism and feudalism, i.e. the camp formed by the working class, the students and the newly-arisen national bourgeoisie. But it was the hundreds of thousands of students who marched heroically in the vanguard of the May 4 Movement. This showed that the May 4 Movement had advanced a step further than the Revolution of 1911.

China's bourgeois-democratic revolution has passed through several stages, as will be seen if we trace it back to its formative period: the Opium War, the War of the T'ai-p'ing Heavenly Kingdom, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894,¹ the Reformist Movement of 1898, the Boxer Movement, the Revolution of 1911, the May

¹ This war broke out as a result of Japan's aggression upon Korea and provocation against China's ground and sea forces.

Movement, the Northern Expedition and the War of the Agrarian Revolution. The Anti-Japanese War today marks another new stage of its development, the greatest, the most vigorous, the most dynamic. The bourgeois-democratic revolution can be considered successful only when foreign imperialist forces and domestic feudal forces have been in the main overthrown and an independent democratic state established. The Opium War and the successive revolutionary stages have characteristics peculiar to each. The most important distinction between them is whether they come before or after the emergence of the Communist Party. However, taken as a whole, all these stages have the features of a bourgeois-democratic revolution. This revolution aims at establishing a social system hitherto unknown in Chinese history, a democratic social system; it has as its precursor feudal society, the semi-colonial, semi-feudal society of the last hundred years, and as its successor socialist society. A Communist, if asked why he strives first for a bourgeois-democratic society

The Chinese forces fought heroically, but the unpreparedness and irresolution of the corrupt and incompetent Manchu government brought about the ultimate defeat. A humiliating treaty was concluded at Shimonoseki (Bakan), whereby the Manchu government agreed to cede Taiwan and the Penghu Islands to Japan, to pay an indemnity of 200,000,000 taels of silver (a tael being about 1.33 ounces), to allow the Japanese to establish factories in China, to open Shashi, Chungking, Soochow and Hangchow as treaty ports, and to let Korea become a vassal state of Japan.

and then for a socialist society, will say: "I follow the inevitable course of history."

Certain social forces are required to bring about the democratic revolution in China. They are the working class, the peasantry, the intelligentsia and the progressive section of the bourgeoisie — in other words the revolutionary workers, peasants, soldiers, intellectuals and businessmen, with the workers and peasants as the main revolutionary forces and the working class as the leader in the revolution. Without these main revolutionary forces, and without the leadership of the working class, it is impossible to carry out the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal democratic revolution. Today the principal enemies of the revolution are the Japanese imperialists and their Chinese collaborators and the fundamental policy in the revolution is the formation of a National Anti-Japanese United Front composed of all the workers, peasants, soldiers, intellectuals and businessmen who oppose Japanese invasion. The final victory in the Anti-Japanese War will be won when this united front is greatly consolidated and developed.

In the movement of the Chinese democratic revolution, the intellectuals were the first among the people to be politically awakened. Both the Revolution of 1911 and the May 4 Movement clearly demonstrate this point, and at the time of the May 4 Movement the intellectuals were more numerous and more politically conscious than at the time of the Revolution of 1911. But if the intellectuals do not identify themselves with the masses of the workers and peasants

they will accomplish nothing. In the final analysis, the line of demarcation between revolutionary intellectuals and non-revolutionary and counter-revolutionary intellectuals is whether they are willing to be identified and actually identify themselves with the mass of workers and peasants. This alone is the line of demarcation in the final analysis, and not lip-service to the Three People's Principles or Marxism. A true revolutionary must be one who is willing to be identified and actually identifies himself with the workers and peasants.

It is now twenty years since the May 4 Movement and nearly two years since the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War. The youth and cultural workers of the nation bear a heavy responsibility in the democratic revolution and the Anti-Japanese War. I hope they understand the nature and the motivating forces of the Chinese revolution and link up their activities with the workers and peasants, go into their midst and carry on propaganda and organizational work among them. The day on which the people of the whole country arise with courage and determination will be the day of victory in the Anti-Japanese War. Let the nation's youth put forth its strength!

NEW-DEMOCRATIC CULTURE

(January 1940)

NEW-DEMOCRATIC CULTURE

We have explained above the historical features of Chinese politics in the new period and the question of the new-democratic republic. We can now proceed to the question of culture.

A given culture is the ideological reflection of the politics and economy of a given society. There is in China an imperialist culture which is a reflection of the political and economic control or partial control of imperialism over China. This culture is promoted and fostered not only by the cultural organizations run directly by the imperialists over China, but also the shameless Chinese toadies. All culture which breeds ideological servility to imperialism belongs to this category. There is also in China a semi-feudal culture which is a reflection of semi-feudal politics and economy and has as its representatives all those who while opposing the new culture and new ideologies advocate the worship of Confucius, the study of the Confucian canon, the old ethical code and the old ideologies. Imperialist culture and semi-feudal culture are affectionate brothers, who have formed a reactionary

alliance to oppose China's new culture. This reactionary culture serves imperialism and the feudal class, and must be swept away. Unless it is swept away, no new culture of any kind can be built up. The new culture and the reactionary culture are locked in a life-and-death struggle: there is no construction without destruction, no release without restraint and no movement without rest.

As to the new culture, it is the ideological reflection of new politics and new economy, and is in their service.

As we have already stated in Section 3, Chinese society has gradually changed in character since the emergence of capitalist economy in China: it is no longer an entirely feudal but a semi-feudal society, though feudal economy still predominates. Compared with feudal economy, capitalist economy is a new economy. The new political forces which have emerged and grown simultaneously with this capitalist new economy are the political forces of the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat. And what ideologically reflects these new economic and political forces and is in their service, is the new culture. Without capitalist economy, without the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat, and without the political forces of these classes, the new ideology or new culture could not have emerged.

All the new political, new economic and new cultural forces are revolutionary forces in China and are opposed to the old politics, old economy and old culture.

The old things are composed of two parts: one is China's own semi-feudal politics, economy and culture and the other is imperialist politics, economy and culture, with the latter leading the alliance. All these are evil and should be completely destroyed. (The struggle between the new and the old in Chinese society is a struggle between the new forces of the people — the various revolutionary classes — and the old forces of imperialism and the feudal class. It is a struggle between revolution and counter-revolution. This struggle has lasted a full hundred years if dated from the Opium War, and nearly thirty years if dated from the Revolution of 1911.)

But as has been said before, revolutions also can be classified into old and new, and what is new in one historical period becomes old in another. The century of China's bourgeois-democratic revolution can be divided into two main stages — a first stage of eighty years and a second of twenty years. Each has a basic historical feature: China's bourgeois-democratic revolution in the first eighty years belongs to the old category, while that in the next twenty years, owing to the change in the international and domestic political situation, belongs to the new category. Old democracy is the feature of the first eighty years, New Democracy the feature of the last twenty years. This distinction holds good in culture as well as in politics.

How does this distinction show itself in culture? This is the topic we shall take up next.

THE HISTORICAL FEATURES OF CHINA'S CULTURAL REVOLUTION

On China's cultural or ideological front, the period preceding the May 4 Movement and the period following it form two distinct historical periods.

Before the May 4 Movement, the struggle on China's cultural front was a struggle between the new culture of the bourgeoisie and the old culture of the feudal class. This was the character of the struggles that took place then between the modern educational system and the imperial competitive examination system,¹ between new learning and old learning, and between Western learning and Chinese learning. The studies in the modern school or new learning or Western learning of that time consisted mainly—we say mainly because they still retained some poisonous traces of Chinese feudalism—in the natural sciences and the bourgeois social and political theories, all of which were needed by the representatives of the bourgeoisie. At that time the ideology of the new learning played a revolutionary role in fighting the Chinese feudal ideology, and served the bourgeois-democratic revolution of the old period. However, because of the flabbiness of the bourgeoisie in China and the advent of the era of imperialism in the world, this bourgeois ideology was easily defeated by the reactionary alliance of the slave ideology of foreign imperialism and the Chinese

¹ Towards the end of the Manchu dynasty enlightened Chinese intellectuals urged the abolition of the old system of competitive examination and the establishment of modern schools.

feudal ideology of going back to the ancients; as soon as this alliance started a small counter-offensive, the new learning furling its banners, muffled its drums and beat a retreat, saving its carcass and losing its soul. The old bourgeois-democratic culture was bound to be defeated because it had become enervated and decayed in the era of imperialism.

But since the May 4 Movement things have gone differently. Since then a fresh and brand-new cultural force has appeared in China, the Communist cultural ideology guided by the Chinese Communists, that is the Communist world outlook and theory of social revolution.) The May 4 Movement took place in 1919 and in 1921 the Chinese Communist Party was founded and China's labour movement actually began; all this happened after the First World War and the October Revolution in Russia, at a time when the national problem and colonial revolutionary movements in the world took on new features; here the connection between the Chinese revolution and the world revolution is quite obvious. (As the new political force, the Chinese proletariat and the Chinese Communist Party entered the Chinese political arena, the new cultural force too, in new uniform and with new weapons, mustering all possible allies and deploying itself in battle array, launched heroic attacks on imperialism, culture and feudal culture.) This new force has made great strides in the domain of the social sciences and of arts and letters, in philosophy, in economics, in political science, in military science, in history, in literature and in art (including drama, film, music, sculpture

and painting). During the last twenty years, wherever this new cultural force directed its attack, a great revolution has taken place in ideological content and in form, for instance, in the style of the written language. Its influence is so great and its power so tremendous that it is invincible wherever it goes. Its scope and the numbers rallied to its cause are unprecedented in Chinese history. Lu Hsun was the greatest figure and a standard-bearer of outstanding courage in this new cultural force. The supreme commander in China's cultural revolution, he was not only a great man of letters, but also a great thinker and a great revolutionary. He was a man of unyielding integrity, free from any trace of obsequiousness or servility; such strength of character is the greatest treasure among the colonial and semi-colonial peoples. Lu Hsun, representing the great majority of the people, had no equal in past Chinese history, and was a national hero on the cultural front, the most correct, the bravest, the firmest, the most loyal and the most zealous hero who stormed and broke into the enemy's front. Lu Hsun's line is the line of the new culture of the Chinese nation.

Lu Hsun

Before the May 4 Movement, the new culture of China was a culture of old democracy and a part of the capitalist cultural revolution of the world bourgeoisie. Since the May 4 Movement, it has become a culture of new democracy and a part of the socialist cultural revolution of the world proletariat.

Before the May 4 Movement, China's new cultural movement, her cultural revolution, was led by the

bourgeoisie, which was still playing a leading role. After the May 4 Movement the ideology of bourgeois culture which lagged even behind bourgeois politics was totally incapable of playing the leading role, and during the revolution could at most merely join to a certain extent an alliance in which the leadership inevitably devolved upon the ideology of proletarian culture. This is a hard fact which no one can deny.

The new-democratic culture is the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal culture of the people; today it is the culture of the anti-Japanese united front. This culture can be led only by the proletarian cultural ideology by communist ideology, and not by the cultural ideology of any other class. New-democratic culture is, in a word, the popular anti-imperialist, anti-feudal culture under the leadership of the proletariat.

THE FOUR PERIODS

A cultural revolution is the ideological reflection of the political and economic revolutions which it serves. In China there is a united front in the cultural revolution as in the political revolution.

The history of the united front in this cultural revolution during the last twenty years is divided into four periods: the first covering the two years from 1919 to 1921; the second, the six years from 1921 to 1927; the third, the ten years from 1927 to 1937; and the fourth, the three years from 1937 up to the present day.

The first period extended from the May 4 Movement of 1919 to the founding of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921. In this period the May 4 Movement was the chief landmark.

The May 4 Movement was an anti-imperialist as well as an anti-feudal movement. Its outstanding historical significance is a feature not found in the Revolution of 1911, namely, a thorough and uncompromising opposition to imperialism and to feudalism. The May 4 Movement had this feature because capitalist economy in China had developed further and because new hopes for the liberation of the Chinese nation had arisen as China's revolutionary intelligentsia saw that three big imperialist powers, Russia, Germany and Austria-Hungary, had collapsed, and two others, Britain and France, had been weakened, while the Russian proletariat had established a socialist state, and the German, Austrian-Hungarian and Italian proletariat had risen in revolution. The May 4 Movement came into being at the call of the world revolution, of the Russian Revolution, and of Lenin. It was part of the world proletarian revolution of that time. Although there was then no Chinese Communist Party, there were large numbers of intellectuals who approved of the Russian Revolution and had some rudiments of communist ideology. The May 4 Movement was the beginning a revolutionary movement of the united front of three sections of people—the communist, the revolutionary petty-bourgeois and the bourgeois intelligentsia, the last forming the right wing of the movement at that time. Its weakness was that

✓ it was confined to the intellectuals and did not secure the participation of the workers and peasants. But as soon as it developed into the June 3 Movement,¹ not only the intelligentsia but also the broad sections of the proletariat, the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie took part, and it became a nationwide revolutionary movement.

The cultural revolution ushered in by the May Movement was uncompromisingly opposed to feudal culture; there had never been such a great and thoroughgoing cultural revolution since the dawn of Chinese history. Raising aloft its banners of opposing the old ethics and promoting the new and of opposing the old literature and promoting the new, the movement made great achievements. However, it was not yet possible to extend the movement widely among the workers and peasants. It put forward the slogan of "Literature for the common people", which referred only to the intelligentsia of the urban bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie. As a breeding-ground of ideas and cadres, the May 4 Movement prepared the way for the founding of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921, and for

¹ A new development of the May 4 patriotic movement. On June 3, students in Peking held public meetings and made speeches in defiance of persecution and repression by the army and police. The strike spread from the students to the workers and businessmen in Shanghai, Nanking, Tientsin, Hangchow, Wuhan, Kiukiang and in the provinces of Shantung and Anhwei. Thus a broad mass movement was launched in which the proletariat, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie all participated.

the May 30 Movement and the Northern Expedition. The bourgeois intelligentsia then constituted the right wing of the May 4 Movement; in the second period, the greater part of it compromised with the enemy and turned reactionary.

In the second period, which had as its landmarks the founding of the Chinese Communist Party, the May 30 Movement and the Northern Expedition, the united front of the three classes formed in the May 4 Movement was maintained and broadened to include the peasantry, and the united front of these classes found its political expression in the co-operation for the first time between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party. Dr. Sun Yat-sen was a great man not only because he led the great Revolution of 1911, which was a democratic revolution of the old period, but also because he was able "to adapt himself to the trends of the world and meet the needs of the masses", by bringing forward the three cardinal revolutionary policies of alliance with Russia, co-operation with the Communists and assistance to the peasants and workers, by interpreting the Three People's Principles in a new light and thus founding the new Three People's Principles with the three cardinal policies. Prior to this, the Three People's Principles had little connection with the educational and academic field or the youth, because they put forward neither the slogan of opposing imperialism nor of opposing the feudal social system and feudal cultural ideology. They were the old Three People's Principles which were looked upon as a banner temporarily held aloft by a group bent

upon seizing power, in plain words, getting government positions, a banner used only in a game of politics. Then came the new Three People's Principles with the three cardinal policies. The co-operation between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party and the joint efforts of the revolutionary members of the two parties extended the new Three People's Principles to the whole of China, to a section of the people in the educational and academic field and to the mass of the student youth. This was entirely due to the development of the original Three People's Principles into the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal new-democratic Three People's Principles with the three cardinal policies. The popularization of the Three People's Principles would have been impossible without such development.

In this period, the revolutionary Three People's Principles became the political basis of the united front of the Kuomintang, the Communist Party and various revolutionary classes and, since "communism is the good friend of the Three People's Principles" a united front of the two ideologies was formed. In terms of social classes, this was a united front of the proletariat, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie. With the Communist Weekly Guide, the Kuomintang's *Republican Daily News* of Shanghai and other newspapers in various places as bases of operation, the two parties jointly advocated the cause of anti-imperialism, combated the feudal education based upon the cult of Confucius and the study of the Confucian canon, and opposed the old

literature and old literary style of writing in the ancient feudal manner in favour of the new literature and the new vernacular style of writing with an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal content. During the war in Kwangtung and the Northern Expedition anti-imperialist and anti-feudal ideology was introduced into China's armed forces and was the means of their reform. Among the millions of the peasant masses, the slogans of "Down with the corrupt officials!" and "Down with the local bullies and bad gentry!" were raised, and great revolutionary struggles were set afoot among the peasants. Thanks to all this and to the aid of the Soviet Union, victory was won in the Northern Expedition. But as soon as the big bourgeoisie had climbed to power, it put an end to this revolution and the political situation entered a new phase.

The third period was the new revolutionary period between 1927 and 1937. By then, of the former four classes in the revolutionary camp, only three, the proletariat, the peasantry and other sections of the petty bourgeoisie, including the revolutionary intelligentsia, remained, because at the end of the last period a change took place within the revolutionary camp: the Chinese big bourgeoisie, with the national bourgeoisie in its wake, went over to the counter-revolutionary camp of the imperialist and feudal forces, whereupon the Chinese revolution inevitably passed to a new stage to be carried on by the people under the sole leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. This was a period of counter-revolutionary campaigns of encir-

clement and annihilation and at the same time of the deepening of the revolutionary movement. There were then two kinds of counter-revolutionary campaigns of encirclement and annihilation, military and cultural. There was also the deepening of the two aspects of the revolution, the agrarian and the cultural. At the instigation of the imperialists, the counter-revolutionary forces of the whole country and of the whole world were all mobilized for both campaigns which lasted no less than ten years and were of unparalleled ruthlessness; hundreds of thousands of Communists and young students were massacred and millions of workers and peasants persecuted. To the people responsible for this wanton cruelty, it seemed that communism and the Communist Party could certainly be suppressed and annihilated once and for all. However, the outcome was exactly the opposite: both campaigns failed miserably. The outcome of the military campaign was the northern march of the Red Army to resist the Japanese, and the outcome of the cultural campaign was the rise of the December 9 Movement of the revolutionary youth in 1935. And the common result of both was the awakening of the people of the whole country. These were the positive results. The most puzzling question of all was: Why did the Kuomintang's cultural campaign also completely fail in the areas under its control, in spite of the fact that the Communist Party was in an utterly defenceless position in all the cultural institutions there? Does this not give food for prolonged and deep thought? Furthermore, it

was in the very midst of this campaign of encirclement and annihilation that the communist Lu Hsun grew to be the giant of China's cultural revolution. ✓

The negative result of the counter-revolutionary campaigns was the invasion of our territory by Japanese imperialism. This is the main reason why even to this day the people of the whole country bitterly resent those ten years of the anti-Communist campaign.

During the struggles of this period, the revolution upheld the popular anti-imperialist and anti-feudal New Democracy and new Three People's Principles, while the counter-revolution imposed a despotism supported by an alliance of the landlord class and the big bourgeoisie, both taking orders from imperialism. That despotism politically and culturally wrecked Dr. Sun Yat-sen's three cardinal policies and his new Three People's Principles with catastrophic consequences to the Chinese nation.

The fourth period is that of the present Anti-Japanese War. ✓ The zigzag course of the Chinese revolution has again led to a united front of four classes with, however, a much wider scope than before, including many representatives of the ruling circles in the upper classes, the national bourgeoisie and the petty bourgeoisie in the middle classes, and all propertyless people in the lower classes so that all classes and social strata of the nation have become members of the alliance and have fought resolutely against Japanese imperialism. ✓ The first stage of this period ended with the fall of Wuhan. During that

stage, the whole country was heading for a bright future; politically there was a tendency towards democratization and culturally there was considerable activity. After the fall of Wuhan came the second stage, during which the political situation underwent many changes, with one section of the big bourgeoisie capitulating to the enemy and another section attempting to put an early end to the resistance. In the cultural sphere, this situation was reflected in the reactionary attitude of people like Yeh Ch'ing and Carson Chang and in the suppression of the freedom of speech and the press.

To overcome this crisis, it is necessary to carry on a firm struggle against all ideas opposed to resistance, unity and progress; unless these reactionary ideas are crushed, there is no hope of victory for the resistance. What will be the future of this struggle? This important question is exercising the minds of people throughout the country. Judging from the domestic and international situation, no matter how many obstacles there are in the path of the resistance, the Chinese people will certainly be victorious. The progress achieved during the twenty years after the May 4 Movement is greater than that in the preceding eighty years, even greater than that in the previous thousands of years of Chinese history. Can't one very well visualize the progress China will make in another twenty years? The unrestrained violence of all dark forces, domestic and foreign, has brought calamity to our nation, but this very violence indicates that, while these forces have still some strength left, it is their last

desperate struggle and that the people are gradually approaching victory. This is true of China, of the East and of the whole world.

WRONG IDEAS ABOUT THE NATURE OF CULTURE

All new things are forged by hard and bitter struggles. Similarly the new culture has taken a zigzag course with three turns in the past twenty years, during which all sorts of things, good and bad, have been tried out.

The bourgeois die-hards are as completely mistaken on the question of culture as on that of political power. Ignorant of the historical features of this new period in China they refuse to recognize the new-democratic culture of the people. Their starting point is bourgeois despotism, which in culture becomes the cultural despotism of the bourgeoisie. It seems that a section — and I refer only to a section — of the so-called men of culture of the European-American school¹ who actually supported the Kuomintang government's Communist-annihilation on the cultural front are now supporting its policy of "containing communism" and "dissolving communism." They do not want the workers and the peasants to be free men either politically or culturally. This road of cultural despotism of the bourgeois die-hards leads nowhere; the domestic and international conditions for it, as for political despotism, are absent. Therefore this cultural despotism is better tucked away.

¹ Represented by the counter-revolutionary Hu Shih.

So far as national culture is concerned, communist ideology plays the guiding role and efforts must be made to spread socialism and communism among the working class and to educate adequately and methodically the peasantry and other sections of the people in socialism. But national culture as a whole is at present not yet socialist.

New-democratic politics, economy and culture all contain a socialist element, which is not casual but decisive, because they are under the leadership of the proletariat. But viewed as a whole, the political, economic and cultural conditions are not yet socialist but new-democratic. For the Chinese revolution in its present stage, with its central task of combating foreign imperialism and domestic feudalism, is a bourgeois-democratic revolution and not yet a socialist revolution which aims at the overthrow of capitalism. In the sphere of national culture, it is wrong to assume that national culture as a whole at present is or should be socialist. That would be to confuse the popularization of communist ideology with the implementation of an immediate programme, and to confuse the application of the communist approach and method in tackling problems, in pursuing studies, in carrying out work and in training cadres with the policy for national education and national culture as a whole in the stage of China's democratic revolution. A national culture with a socialist content must be the reflection of socialist politics and economy. As there is a socialist factor in our politics and economy, so it will be reflected in our national culture, but in

our society as a whole, we have not yet reached the stage where politics and economy are wholly socialist, and therefore there cannot be a wholly socialist national culture. In the same way as the present Chinese revolution is part of the world proletarian socialist revolution, the present new culture of China is also part of and a powerful ally of the world proletarian socialist new culture; but, although it contains the vital factor of socialist culture, the national culture of China as a whole forms part of the world new culture, not as a completely socialist culture, but as the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal new-democratic culture of the people. Just as the present Chinese revolution cannot be separated from the leadership of the Chinese proletariat, so the present new culture of China cannot be separated from the ideological leadership of China's proletarian culture, that is, communist ideological leadership; however, as the task at the present stage consists in leading the people to carry on the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal political and cultural revolutions, so the content of China's present new national culture as a whole is not socialist but new-democratic.

There is no doubt that now is the time for us to popularize more widely communist ideology and to intensify the study of Marxism-Leninism, otherwise we shall be unable to lead the Chinese revolution to the future stage of socialism, or even guide the present democratic revolution to victory. However, we must distinguish the popularization of communist ideology and the communist social system from the implementation of the new-democratic programme and

also distinguish the communist theory and method of tackling problems, of pursuing studies, of carrying out work and of training cadres from the new-democratic line laid down for the national culture as a whole. It is certainly wrong to confuse the two.

It can thus be seen that the content of China's new national culture at the present stage is neither the cultural despotism of the bourgeoisie, nor pure proletarian socialism, but the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal New Democracy of the people under the leadership of proletarian-socialist ideas of culture.

A NATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND MASS CULTURE

The new-democratic culture is national. It opposes imperialist oppression and upholds the dignity and independence of the Chinese nation. It belongs to our own nation, and bears the stamp of our national characteristics. It unites with the socialist and new-democratic cultures of all other nations and establishes with them the relations whereby they can absorb something from each other and help each other to develop, and form together the new world culture; but, being a revolutionary national culture, it can never unite with the reactionary imperialist culture of any nation. [China should freely assimilate from foreign progressive cultures what she needs for her own culture and we did not sufficiently do so in the past. We must assimilate whatever we find useful today, not only from contemporary foreign socialist or new-

democratic cultures, but also from the older cultures of foreign countries, such as those of the capitalist countries in their age of enlightenment. However, we can benefit only if we treat these foreign materials as we do our food, which should be chewed in the mouth, submitted to the working of the stomach and intestines, mixed with saliva, gastric juices and intestinal secretions, and then separated into nutriment to be absorbed and waste matter to be discarded; we should never swallow anything whole or absorb it uncritically. So-called wholesale Westernization¹ is wrong. China has suffered a great deal from the mechanical absorption of things foreign. Likewise, in applying Marxism to China, Chinese Communists must fully and properly unite its universal truth with the specific practice of the Chinese revolution, that is to say, the truth of Marxism must be integrated with the national characteristics and given a definite national form before it can be useful; it must not be applied subjectively as a mere formula. Formula-Marxists are only fooling with Marxism and the Chinese revolution, and there is no place for them in the ranks of the Chinese revolution. China's culture should have its own form, which is national. National in form, new-democratic in content—such is our new culture today.

The new-democratic culture is scientific. Opposed to all feudal and superstitious ideas, it stands for seeking

¹ A view held by a number of "Westernized" Chinese bourgeois intellectuals who adhered to outmoded bourgeois individualism and recommended servile imitation of the European and American examples.

truth from facts, for objective truth and for the unity between theory and practice. In this respect, the scientific thought of the Chinese proletariat can form, against imperialism, feudalism and superstition, a united front with the still progressive bourgeois materialists and natural scientists, but it can never do so with any reactionary idealism. Communists may form an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal united front for political action with certain idealists and even with religious people, but without implying any approval of their idealism or religious doctrines. A splendid old culture was created during the long period of China's feudal society. To chart the process of development of this old culture, to throw away its feudal dross and to assimilate its democratic essence is a necessary condition for the development of our new national culture and for the increase of our national self-confidence, but we must not swallow anything and everything uncritically. In the culture of the past we must separate all the dross of the feudal ruling class from the fine popular elements which are relatively democratic and revolutionary in character. As China's present new politics and new economy have developed out of her old politics and old economy, and China's new culture has also developed out of her old culture, we must respect our own history and not snap the thread of historical continuity. However, this respect for history means only giving history its proper place among the sciences, showing due regard for its dialectical development, but not praising the ancient at the expense of the modern, or recommending any harmful feudal element.

As to the people and the student youth, the essential thing is to direct them not to look backward, but to look forward.

The new-democratic culture belongs to the people, hence it is democratic. It should serve the toiling masses of workers and peasants who make up over 90 per cent of the nation's population, so that they gradually accept it as their own. There should be a difference in degree between the knowledge imparted to the revolutionary cadres and that imparted to the broad revolutionary masses, but they must also be linked; and similarly the raising of cultural standards must be distinguished from popularization but they too must be linked. Revolutionary culture is a powerful revolutionary weapon for the people. Ideologically it prepares the way for the revolution before its outbreak and becomes a necessary and important sector in the general front when the revolution breaks out. Revolutionary cultural workers are the commanders of various ranks on this sector. From the saying: "Without a revolutionary theory, there can be no revolutionary movement",¹ we can see how important the revolutionary cultural movement is to the revolution in practice. The cultural movement and revolutionary practice both have a mass character. Therefore all progressive cultural workers should have their own cultural army in the Anti-Japanese War, and this army is the broad mass of the people. A revolutionary cultural worker who keeps aloof from

¹ Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?* Eng. ed., Moscow, 1947, p. 35.

the people is merely a general without an army, and without enough fire-power to destroy the enemy. To attain this objective, Chinese writing must be reformed under certain conditions, and our spoken language must be brought close to that of the people, for it must be borne in mind that revolutionary culture has its inexhaustible source in the people.

National, scientific and mass culture is the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal culture of the people, the new-democratic and the new Chinese national culture.

When the new-democratic politics, new-democratic economy and new-democratic culture are combined we shall have a republic of New Democracy, a republic of China in name and in fact, the New China we want to build.

New China is within sight of everyone of us; let us hail her!

New China is like a ship whose mast is appearing above the horizon; let us acclaim her!

Let us welcome with both hands the New China that is ours!

From *On New Democracy*

REFORM OUR METHOD AND SYSTEM OF STUDY

(May 1941)

I suggest that a reform be introduced in the Party's method and system of study. The following are my reasons:

I

The twenty years of the Chinese Communist Party are years of an ever-increasing integration of the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the actual practice of the Chinese revolution. We can see how our understanding of Marxism-Leninism and of the Chinese revolution has been greatly deepened and enriched, if we recall for a moment how superficial and meagre it was in our Party's infancy. For a hundred years, in quest of the truth that would save the country and the people, the finest sons and daughters of the Chinese nation, a nation in deep distress, fought and sacrificed their lives, one stepping into the breach when another fell; they are not unwept and unsung. But it was only after the First World War and the Russian October Revolution that

we found the best truth, Marxism-Leninism, as the best weapon to liberate our nation, and the Chinese Communist Party has advocated, publicized and organized the use of this weapon. Once the actual practice of the Chinese revolution and the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism have been integrated, the Chinese revolution assumes a new aspect. Since the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War, our Party, basing itself on this universal truth, has gone a step further in studying the practice of the resistance to Japan and the present conditions in China and the world, and has also made a start in the study of China's past. These are all very good signs.

II

But we still have weaknesses, and very big ones, too. In my opinion, unless these weaknesses are corrected, we shall not be able to push forward our work or make further advance in our great task of integrating the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the actual practice of the Chinese revolution.

First, the study of current affairs. In spite of some achievements in the study of the present domestic and international situation, the material collected is, for such a large Party as ours, very scrappy and the research undertaken is very desultory in any field, whether political, military, economic or cultural. Generally speaking, in the last twenty years we have not systematically and comprehensively collected

material on these subjects and studied it, nor have we created an atmosphere stimulating investigation and study of actual conditions. Many comrades in our Party have not yet shed their very bad working style, which is utterly opposed to the fundamental spirit of Marxism-Leninism; behaving like "a blindfolded man catching sparrows" or "a blind man groping for fish", they are crude and perfunctory, boastful and easily satisfied with a smattering of knowledge. Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin have taught us to make a serious study of actual conditions and to proceed not from subjective wishes and desires but from objective facts, but many of our comrades run directly counter to this truth.

Secondly, the study of history. Although a few of our members and sympathizers have taken up this subject, they have not studied it in an organized way. Many members are completely in the dark about Chinese history, whether of the last hundred years or of the more remote ages. Many of our Marxist-Leninist scholars are always citing examples of the ancient Greeks, but I am sorry to say that they have clean forgotten our own ancestors. There is no stimulating atmosphere of serious study either of the present or of the past.

Finally, the study of the revolutionary experiences of other countries and of the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism. Many comrades seem to study Marxism-Leninism merely for the sake of study and not for the sake of the practical needs of the revolution. Consequently, though they have read it up, they

cannot digest it. They can only quote words and phrases from Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, but they are unable to make use of the stand, viewpoint and method of these masters in studying the concrete facts about China's present and past or analysing and solving the specific problems of the Chinese revolution. This attitude towards Marxism-Leninism is very harmful, particularly for cadres of the middle and higher ranks.

The three things I have just mentioned—neglect of the study of current affairs, neglect of the study of history and neglect of the application of Marxism-Leninism—all exemplify a very bad style in work. The spread of this style in work has ruined many of our comrades.

Indeed, many comrades in our ranks have been corrupted by this style in work. Unwilling to make systematic and comprehensive investigations of the actual conditions inside and outside the country, the province, the county and the district, they issue orders on the basis of scrappy knowledge or mere guesswork. Isn't such subjectivism still prevalent among many comrades?

Some comrades, instead of feeling ashamed, take pride in their ignorance or scanty knowledge of our own history. The history of the Chinese Communist Party and the history of China in the hundred years since the Opium War are particularly important, and yet very few have any real knowledge of them. As to the study of the economic, political, military and cultural history of the last hundred years, practically

no one has taken it up seriously. Ignorant of our own affairs, some people can only retell stories about ancient Greece and other foreign countries—and even such knowledge, which is quite pitiful, has been picked up bit by bit from the rubbish heap of foreign books!

For several decades, many who studied abroad have this shortcoming. Returning home from Europe, America or Japan, they only talk about the foreign things they have swallowed raw and whole. They become mere gramophones and forget that they have a duty of understanding and creating new things. This shortcoming has also infected the Communist Party.

We are studying Marxism, but in the very study of Marxism many of us use a method that runs directly counter to Marxism. That is, these people have violated the fundamental principle repeatedly enjoined by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin: the unity of theory and practice. Having violated this principle, they have invented an opposite one: the separation of theory from practice. In schools and in the spare-time education of cadres, teachers of philosophy do not guide the students to study the logic of the Chinese revolution, teachers of economics do not guide them to study the characteristic features of Chinese economy, teachers of political science do not guide them to study the tactics of the Chinese revolution, teachers of military science do not guide them to study the strategy and tactics adapted to China's special conditions, and so on and so forth. Consequently, wrong ideas are disseminated and great

harm is done. What a man has learnt in Yen-an, he doesn't know how to apply in Fu County.¹ If professors of economics cannot explain the relationship between the Border Region currency and the national currency,² naturally the students cannot explain it either. Hence, a wayward mental attitude has prevailed among a number of our students: they take little interest in studying China's problems and attach little importance to the Party's directives, but whole-heartedly accept the dogmas inculcated by their teachers as immutable.

Of course, this is not general in our Party, but applies only to the worst type. However, people of this type are found in our Party, and in quite large numbers too, exerting quite a harmful influence; we must not treat the matter casually.

III

In order to drive the point home, I shall contrast two opposing attitudes.

First, the subjectivist attitude.

A person who adopts this attitude does not make a systematic and comprehensive study of actual condi-

¹ About fifty miles south of Yen-an.

² The Border Region currency was issued by the Bank of the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region Government, and the national currency was first issued in 1935 by the four big Kuomintang-controlled banks with the backing of British and American imperialism. The author is referring to the fluctuations in the rate of exchange between these two currencies.

tions, but works by sheer enthusiasm and has a very hazy notion about the present features of China. A person who adopts this attitude snaps the thread of historical continuity, knows only about ancient Greece but not about China—indeed he remains completely ignorant of the China of yesterday and of the day before yesterday. A person who adopts this attitude studies the theory of Marxism-Leninism in the abstract and without definite purpose. He studies Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin not for the sake of finding a stand, approach and method which will enable him to solve the theoretical and tactical problems of the Chinese revolution, but studies theory purely for theory's sake. This is shooting at random rather than aiming at a target. Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin teach us to proceed from actual facts and to derive therefrom the laws which will guide our action. Thus, we should, as Marx has said, appropriate the material in detail and subject it to scientific analysis and synthesis.¹ But many of us are doing precisely the opposite. Those engaged in research work are not interested in studying either China of today or China of yesterday, but confine all their attention to the study of "theories" in the abstract, divorced from reality. Those engaged in practical work pay no attention to objective conditions and often, carried away by enthusiasm, substitute their personal feelings for policies. Both kinds of people are subjectivist and

¹ See Marx, *Capital*, "Preface to the Second Edition", Eng. tr., London, 1946, Vol. I, p. xxix.

ignore the existence of objective things. Their speeches consist in long lists of headings, A, B, C, D, or first, second, third, fourth, and their written articles are bombastic and long-winded. They do not seek truth from facts, but only want to show off and impress people. They are flashy without substance and flimsy without solidity. Opinionated and conceited, these "imperial envoys" strut about fancying themselves the wisest people in the whole wide world.

Such is the style in work of some of our comrades. To adopt this style in one's own behaviour means disaster for oneself; to adopt it in educating others means disaster for others; and to adopt it in directing the revolution means disaster for the revolution. In short, this subjectivist, anti-scientific and anti-Marxist-Leninist method is the worst enemy of the Communist Party, of the working class, of the people and of the nation, a sign of the lack of true Party spirit. We must overthrow this enemy in our path. Only when subjectivism is overthrown can the truth of Marxism-Leninism hold sway, Party spirit be strengthened and the revolution be victorious. It can be said that lack of the scientific attitude, that is, the Marxist-Leninist attitude of integrating theory with practice, means lack of or deficiency in Party spirit.

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

Rushes on the wall — swollen-headed, weak-kneed, and loose in the roots;

Bamboo shoots among the rocks — sharp-tongued, thick-skinned, but hollow in the trunk.

Isn't this an apt description of those who do not take the scientific attitude, who repeat by rote words and phrases from the works of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, who enjoy a reputation without earning it by their knowledge and ability? If any of them really wishes to cure himself of those shortcomings, I advise him to commit to memory this couplet, or, even to pluck up courage and stick a copy of it on the wall of his room. Marxism-Leninism is a science, and science means knowledge honestly come by: absolutely no trickery is permissible. Let us, then, choose to be honest.

Secondly, the Marxist-Leninist attitude.

One who adopts this attitude applies the theory and method of Marxism-Leninism in a systematic and comprehensive study of actual circumstances. He does not rely on sheer enthusiasm, but, as Stalin says, combines revolutionary sweep with practical spirit.¹ One who adopts this attitude will not snap the thread of historical continuity, but will try to know not only ancient Greece but also China, not only the history of foreign revolutions, but also that of the revolutions in China, not only China of today, but also China of yesterday and the day before yesterday. One who adopts this attitude studies the theory of Marxism-

¹ Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, Eng. ed., Moscow, 1953, p. 110.

Leninism with the definite purpose of integrating it with the actual movement of the Chinese revolution and of finding the stand, approach and method to solve the theoretical and tactical problems of the Chinese revolution. This is to aim one's arrow at the target. The target is the Chinese revolution, and the arrow Marxism-Leninism. We Chinese Communists have sought this arrow because we wish to hit the target of the Chinese revolution and the revolution of the East. This means the attitude of seeking truth from facts. Facts mean all things which exist objectively; truth means their inner connection, that is, the laws governing them; and to seek means to study. Proceeding from the actual conditions inside and outside the country, the province, the county or the district we, instead of imposing imaginary laws on them, discover as the guide to our action the laws inherent in them, that is, the inner connections of the events occurring on all sides. In order to do this we rely not on fancy or a fit of enthusiasm, or lifeless books, but on facts existing objectively, on material obtained in detail, and draw therefrom correct conclusions in the light of the general principles of Marxism-Leninism. Such conclusions are not a mere parade of surface phenomena in the order of A, B, C, D, etc., or bombastic clichés, but scientific inferences. This is seeking truth from facts, not showing off to impress people. This is the expression of Party spirit, the Marxist-Leninist style in work which unites theory with practice. It is the minimum requirement of any Communist. One who adopts this

attitude will be neither "swollen-headed, weak-kneed and loose in the roots" nor "sharp-tongued, thick-skinned, but hollow in the trunk".

IV

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

1. Place before the Party the task of making a systematic and comprehensive study of the actual conditions around us. Make a detailed investigation and study, according to the theory and method of Marxism-Leninism, of the economic, financial, political, military, cultural and party activities of our enemy, of our friends and of ourselves, and then draw therefrom the proper and necessary conclusions. To this end, we should direct our comrades' attention to the investigation and study of such practical matters. We should make our comrades understand that the fundamental task of the leading bodies of the Communist Party lies in two important things, namely, to know the conditions and to grasp the policy; the former is what we call knowing the world, and the latter, changing the world. We should make our comrades understand that one has no right to speak on a subject unless one has studied it, and that big talk, idle chatter or a mere parade of surface phenomena in the order of first, second, third, fourth, etc., is of no use at all. Take agitation and propaganda for instance. Unless we know how our enemy, our

friends, and we ourselves have actually carried out this work, we cannot form a correct policy for our own agitation and propaganda. In order to run any department well we must first know its actual conditions. A fundamental link in changing the Party's style in work is to carry out in the Party plans for study and investigation.

2. As to the study of China's history in the past hundred years, people qualified to undertake it should be brought together to work on the principle of co-operation and division of labour, and the previous lack of organization must be remedied. Only when we have studied China's economic, political, military and cultural history separately can we make a study of her history as a whole.

3. In spare-time education for cadres and in cadres' training schools, studies should centre round the actual problems of the Chinese revolution under the guidance of the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism; the method of studying Marxism-Leninism statically and in isolation must be abandoned. In the study of Marxism-Leninism, the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course* is to be used as the principal material. This work is the best synthesis and summary of the world communist movement of the past hundred years, a model, the only perfect model in the whole world, of the unity of theory with practice. When we see how Lenin and Stalin integrated the universal truth of Marxism with the actual practice of the

Soviet revolution, thereby developing Marxism, we shall know how to work in China.

We have traversed a long tortuous road. Errors, however, are often the precursor of truth. I am confident that, in the Chinese revolution and the world revolution at present, which are so intensely alive and richly varied, this reform of our study will certainly yield good results.

OPPOSE THE PARTY "EIGHT-LEGGED ESSAY"

(February 8, 1942)

Comrade K'ai-feng has just stated the purpose of today's meeting. What I want to talk about now is how subjectivism and sectarianism use the Party "eight-legged essay" as an instrument of propaganda or a form of expression. We oppose subjectivism and sectarianism, but if the Party eight-legged essay is not eliminated, the two will still have a hole in which to hide themselves. If we also abolish the Party eight-legged essay, we shall checkmate both subjectivism and sectarianism, and these two monsters, once shown in their true colours, can be easily killed, just as a rat crossing the street is chased by all passers-by.

It would not be a serious matter if someone wrote Party eight-legged essays to be read only by himself. If he passes them on to someone else, then the reading public is doubled and the harm is already serious. If he further has them posted up or mimeographed for circulation, or published in newspapers or as a book, then the situation becomes very serious indeed, because many people will be influenced by them. Writers of Party eight-legged essays, moreover,

always seek a large readership. Thus it becomes imperative to expose and abolish essays of this kind.

This Party eight-legged essay is a form of the foreign eight-legged essay which was attacked by Lu Hsun a long time ago. Why then do we now call it the Party eight-legged essay? Because, besides the foreign flavour, it has also the smell of native soil. Perhaps it can also be counted as some kind of creative work! Who says that our people have produced no creative works at all? Here is one! (*Uproarious laughter.*)

The Party eight-legged essay has a long history in our Party and sometimes became even a very serious problem, particularly during the Agrarian Revolution.

Viewed historically, the Party eight-legged essay is a reaction against the May 4 Movement.

During the May 4 Movement, modern-minded people opposed the classical diction in favour of the vernacular, and the traditional dogmas in favour of science and democracy; in all this they were quite right. The movement was then lively, progressive and revolutionary. The ruling class was indoctrinating students with Confucian teachings and imposing the whole Confucian system as religious dogma upon the people, and all writing was done in the classical style. In short, all things written and taught by the ruling class and its hangers-on were along the lines of the eight-legged essays and dogmas in form as well as in content. These were the old eight-legged essays and the old dogmas. A great achievement of the May 4 Movement was to expose the repulsive ugliness of the old eight-legged essays and the old dogmas and rally the people to fight

against them. Another great achievement closely linked with this was the fight against imperialism; nevertheless the struggle against the old eight-legged essays and the old dogmas remains one of its great achievements.

Later on, however, the foreign eight-legged essays and foreign dogmas appeared. Some people in our Party, having departed from Marxism, developed these imported goods into subjectivism, sectarianism and the Party eight-legged essay. These are the new eight-legged essays and the new dogmas. They have been so deeply ingrained in the minds of many comrades that great efforts are demanded of us today to remedy the situation. Thus we see that the vigorous, progressive and revolutionary movement during the May 4 period, the movement which fought against the old feudal eight-legged essays and dogmas was later turned by some people into its very opposite, and that the new eight-legged essays and dogmas emerged. These things are not alive but dead and stiff, not progressive but retrogressive, not revolutionary but an obstacle to the revolution. In other words, the foreign eight-legged essay or Party eight-legged essay is a reaction against the very nature of the May 4 Movement.

The May 4 Movement, however, had its own weaknesses. Many of the leaders of that time still lacked the critical Marxist approach and generally resorted to the formalist methods of the bourgeoisie. It was quite right for them to oppose the old eight-legged essays and the old dogmas and to advocate science and democracy. But they lacked the critical approach of historical materialism to the existing conditions of their

time, to history and to things foreign, and regarded what is bad as absolutely, completely bad and what is good as absolutely, completely good. This formalistic approach affected the subsequent development of the Movement. In the course of its development, the Movement branched out in two directions. One section of the people, the Communists and some non-Party Marxists, maintained its scientific and democratic spirit and remoulded it on a Marxist basis. Another section took the road of the bourgeoisie, and this marked the development of formalism towards the right. But the situation in the Communist Party was by no means uniform, and a number of its members who lacked a firm grasp of Marxism deviated towards formalism, that is, towards subjectivism, sectarianism and the Party eight-legged essay; this marked the development of formalism towards the left. Thus it is clear that the Party eight-legged essay is not accidental, but is both a reaction against the positive elements of the May 4 Movement and a legacy, continuation or development of its negative elements.

It will be helpful to grasp this point. If it was revolutionary and necessary to fight the old eight-legged essays and the old dogmas during the period of the May 4 Movement, it is also revolutionary and necessary today for us to criticize in the light of Marxism the new eight-legged essays and the new dogmas. Without the fight against the old eight-legged essays and old dogmas, the minds of the Chinese people would not have been freed from bondage nor would China have had any hope of freedom and independence. The May

4 Movement marked merely the beginning of this struggle, and the complete deliverance of the whole people from the domination of the old eight-legged essays and the old dogmas still requires great efforts on our part and remains for us a tremendous task of revolutionary re-education. If today we do not also oppose the new eight-legged essays and the new dogmas, the minds of the Chinese people will be enslaved to another kind of formalism. If we do not get rid of the poison of the Party eight-legged essay and the mistake of doctrinairism found among a section — only a section, of course — of comrades in our Party, then a vigorous revolutionary spirit cannot be aroused, the wrong attitude towards Marxism which has hardened into a habit cannot be corrected, true Marxism cannot be widely disseminated and developed and furthermore, a vigorous struggle cannot be conducted against the influence of the old eight-legged essays and dogmas among the whole people or against that of the foreign eight-legged essays and foreign dogmas among many people, nor can we succeed in making a clean sweep of all these things.

Subjectivism, sectarianism and the Party eight-legged essay are all anti-Marxist and meet the needs not of the proletariat but of the exploiting classes. They are a reflection of petty-bourgeois ideology in our Party. China is a country with a very large petty bourgeoisie, an enormous class which surrounds our Party and from which comes a considerable number of our members; these members can hardly be expected to shed their petty-bourgeois tails, long or short, when

they join us. The fanaticism and one-sidedness of petty-bourgeois revolutionaries, if not checked and corrected, are liable to engender subjectivism and sectarianism, of which one form of expression is the foreign or Party eight-legged essay.

It is not easy to eliminate these things and sweep away all their traces. The job must be done properly, that is, by means of well-reasoned arguments. If our arguments are well-reasoned and to the point, they will be effective. We must first shake up the patient by shouting at him, "You are ill!" and then when he is sweating with fright, tell him gently that he needs treatment.

Let us now analyse the Party eight-legged essay and see where its evils lie. We might use poison as the antidote to poison by presenting our case also in "eight legs" and set forth our eight serious indictments.

The first indictment against the Party eight-legged essay is its empty, long-winded wordiness. Some comrades love to write long articles, but such articles are exactly like the foot-bandages of a slut, long and smelly. Why must they write articles so long and yet so empty? The only possible explanation is that they are determined to discourage the people from reading them. The people will shake their heads at the sight of such empty, long-winded articles. How can they be expected to go on reading them? So the only effect of such articles is to mislead naive people, thereby exerting a bad influence and fostering bad habits.

Since June 22 last year the Soviet Union has been fighting a gigantic war against aggression, yet Stalin's

speech on July 3 was no longer than an editorial in our *Liberation Daily*. Had any of our gentlemen written that speech, it would have run to the appalling length of at least scores of thousands of words. We are now fighting a war and should learn how to write short and pithy articles. Although there is as yet no fighting here in Yen-an, our troops at the front are daily engaged in battle, and people in the rear are all saying how busy they are. If articles are too long, who will read them? Some comrades at the front also like to write long reports. They take pains to write them and send them here for us to read. Yet who has the hardihood to read them?

If long and empty articles are no good, then how about short and empty ones? No good either. We must ban all empty talk. But our first and foremost task is to throw immediately into the dustbin the slut's long and smelly foot-bandages. Some might ask, "Isn't *Das Kapital* very long? What are we to do with it?" That is very simple: go on reading it. A proverb has it, "Sing different songs on different mountains"; another runs, "Fit the appetite to the dishes and the dress to the figure". Whatever we do must be done according to existing conditions, and writing articles and making speeches are no exceptions. What we oppose is the long-winded eight-legged essay without substance, but we do not mean that all good writings should be short. Of course we need short articles in war-time, but above all we need articles that have substance. An article without substance is the most unjustifiable and objectionable. The same

applies to speeches; we must stop all empty, long-winded tirades.

The second indictment against the Party eight-legged essay is its attempt to bluff people by pretentiousness. As some Party eight-legged essays are not only long and empty, but also pretentious in order to bluff people, they contain the deadliest poison. Long-winded and empty articles may still be dismissed as merely childish, but pretentious bluffing is worse and, in fact, downright dishonest. Lu Hsun criticized people who sinned in this respect, saying: "Hurling insults and threats is certainly not fighting."¹ What is scientific can bear criticism at any time, for science is truth and fears no refutation. But subjectivist and sectarian stuff in articles and speeches in the style of the Party eight-legged essay is mortally afraid of being refuted and, being cowardly, it bluffs people by pretentiousness, believing that it can thus silence people and proclaim itself the victor. Such stuff will not lead to truth but is an obstacle to truth. Truth does not bluff but reveals itself in sincere and honest words and deeds.

Two terms used to appear in the articles and speeches of some comrades: one was "ruthless struggle" and the other "merciless blows". These measures are entirely necessary in coping with the enemy and enemy ideology, but it is wrong to apply them to our own com-

¹ Title of an essay included in *Northern Dialect with a Southern Accent* (Lu Hsun, *Complete Works*, Chinese ed., Vol. V).

rades. It often happens that enemies and enemy ideas infiltrate into our Party, as described in Item 4 of the Conclusion of the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course*. Against our enemies, we must, of course, resort to ruthless struggle and merciless blows because they are doing the same to us, and any leniency on our part will land us in the very traps laid by these scoundrels. But we should not use these measures against comrades who unwittingly make mistakes; what we should do is to use the method of criticism and self-criticism described in Item 5 of the Conclusion of the same book. In the past, some comrades resorted in such cases to ruthless struggle and merciless blows because in the first place they did not distinguish between friend and foe, and secondly, they were deliberately bluffing. Pretentious bluff is absolutely wrong, no matter with whom one is dealing. As a tactic, bluffing is utterly ineffective against the enemy and can only harm our own comrades. The exploiting classes and the *lumpen*-proletariat normally practise it, but the proletariat has no use for it.

For the proletariat, the sharpest and most effective weapon is a serious and militant scientific attitude. A Communist lives not by bluff but by the truth of Marxism-Leninism, by seeking truth from facts, by science. Needless to say, the idea of attaining fame and position by pretentiousness is utterly contemptible. In short, all organizations, in making decisions and giving instructions, and all comrades, in writing articles and making speeches, must base themselves on Marxist-Leninist truth and seek to serve a useful

purpose. This is the only basis on which we can achieve victory in the revolution; any other is worthless.

The third indictment against the Party eight-legged essay is that it shoots at random without taking its objective into consideration. A few years ago the following slogan appeared on the city wall of Yenan: "Working men and peasants unite to win the War of Resistance!" The idea of the slogan was quite good, but the character "工" [*Kung*, meaning working] was written as "𠂇", with its perpendicular stroke twisted into a zigzag. How about the character "人" [*Jen*, meaning men]? It became "𠂇", with three slanting strokes added to its right leg. The comrade who wrote them was no doubt a disciple of ancient scholars, but it was rather a mystery why he should have written such characters on the wall of Yenan at the time of the War of Resistance. Perhaps he had vowed that he would not allow the common people to read the slogan; it is difficult to explain it otherwise. Communists who really want to do propaganda must consider their public and have in mind those who will read their articles or listen to their speeches and talks; otherwise they are just making up their minds not to be read or listened to by anyone. Many people often take it for granted that what they write and say is plain to all, but actually that is not so. When they write and speak in the style of the Party eight-legged essay, how can people understand them? The saying, to play the harp to a bull, implies a gibe at the audience. If on the contrary our main consideration

Com. concept of art: must serve

is respect for the audience, then the gibe is turned against the player. Why should he strum away without considering his audience? The Party eight-legged essay makes a far worse noise, as raucous as the cry of a raven, and yet it caws insistently at the people. When one shoots an arrow, one must aim at the target; when one plays the harp, one must consider one's audience. Can one then write articles or make speeches without taking the public into account? When any two of us want to strike up a friendship, can we become close friends if we do not know each other's minds and thoughts and feelings? It will never do for our propagandists simply to rattle on without considering, studying, and analysing their public.

The fourth indictment against the Party eight-legged essay is its dry, flat style which reminds one of the *piehsan*.¹ Like our Party eight-legged essay, these starving beggars, known in Shanghai as "little *piehsan*", are wizened and repulsive. If an article or a speech merely repeats over and over, again and again a few catchwords like a schoolboy's composition without spirited and vigorous language, isn't it rather like the dreary speech and repulsive appearance of a *piehsan*? In the case of someone who entered primary school at seven, went to middle school in his teens and graduated from college in his twenties, we should not blame him for the poverty and monotony of his vocabulary because he has never come into contact

¹ Literally "shrunk little wretch", an inclusive name for tramps, loafers, beggars and sneak-thieves.

with the ordinary people. But if we revolutionaries who work with and for the people do not learn the language of the people, we cannot do our work effectively. At present many comrades, even those engaged in propaganda, do not learn that language. Consequently their propaganda is very dull: their articles appeal to few readers and their speeches attract few listeners.

Why should we bother to study language and, what is more, study it intensively? Because one cannot master a language except by hard work. First, we must learn the language of the people. The people's vocabulary is rich, vivid and expressive of real life. Since many of us have not mastered language, our speeches and articles contain few passages that are lively, effective and vigorous, and resemble not a person in good health, but the *piehsan*, sickly, emaciated, a mere bundle of withered flesh and sinews. Secondly, we must borrow what we need from foreign languages. We should not use foreign expressions mechanically or indiscriminately, but borrow from foreign languages what is fine and meets our needs. Our current vocabulary has already incorporated many foreign expressions, because the old Chinese vocabulary is inadequate. For instance, we are now at a meeting of *kanpu* [cadres], and the term *kanpu* is derived from a foreign word. We have still to borrow many more foreign things, not only progressive ideas but also new expressions. Thirdly, we must also learn to use what is still alive in the old Chinese language. We have not exerted ourselves enough in studying the old Chinese language and con-

sequently have not made full and proper use of much that is still alive in it. It goes without saying that we are resolutely opposed to the use of expressions or allusions that are already dead, but what is good and useful should be taken over. At present, since some of our propagandists are poisoned by the Party eight-legged essay, and refuse to make a careful study of what is useful in popular, foreign and old Chinese languages, the people do not welcome their uninspiring propaganda; indeed we have no use for such worthless and incompetent propagandists.

Who are our propagandists? They include not only the teachers, the journalists and the writers, but all our cadres working in every field. Take the military commanders for instance. Though they make no public statements, they must talk to the soldiers and have dealings with the local inhabitants. Isn't that a form of propaganda? Whenever a person speaks to others, that is propaganda. And unless one is dumb, one is bound to speak to others. Thus it is imperative that our comrades should study language.

The fifth indictment against the Party eight-legged essay is its arrangement of items into A, B, C, D . . . like sorting out the stock of a Chinese drug-store. Go and take a look at any Chinese drug-store and there you will see cabinets with numerous drawers, each bearing the label of a drug: toncal, foxglove, rhubarb, or saltpetre — indeed everything that should be there. This method has been taken over by our comrades. In their articles and speeches, their books and reports, first they use the big Chinese numerals, then the small

Chinese numerals, then the characters of the series of the ten and the twelve calendar denotations, and then A, B, C, D, a, b, c, d, the Arabic numerals, and what not. How lucky that the ancient Chinese and the foreigners have made all these symbols for us so that we can set up a Chinese drug-store with the greatest ease! An article bristling with such numerals and symbols neither formulates problems, nor analyses them, nor solves them; it argues neither for nor against anything and, for all its verbiage it has no real content and remains a Chinese drug-store. I am not saying that numerals, letters in alphabetical order and so on are not to be used; all I say is that the approach is wrong. The method imitated from the Chinese drug-store, with which many of our comrades are now infatuated, is the most crude, infantile and philistine of all methods. It is the method of formalism which classifies things according to their external features instead of their internal relations. If in an article, speech or report one merely marshals according to external features a conglomeration of internally unrelated concepts, then one is indulging in mental gymnastics, and may lead others to do the same and rest content with the arrangement of surface phenomena instead of pondering over problems or probing the real nature of things.

What is a problem? It is things in contradiction. Where the contradiction is not solved, there is a problem. Once a controversy arises over a problem, you are bound to be for one side and against the other, and you must formulate the problem. To formulate the

problem, you must first make a general study of the two main aspects of the problem or contradiction so that you can understand the nature of the contradiction; this is the process of discovering the problem. Through a general survey or a summary study, problems can be discovered and formulated, but they cannot be solved. Their solution must be sought through systematic and minute investigation and study, that is, analysis. Analysis is also needed in the formulation of a problem, for otherwise, faced with the bewildering wealth of material, one cannot discern where the crux of the problem, the contradiction, lies. But the analysis needed for the solution of the problem is a systematic and minute analysis. It often happens that a problem has been formulated but cannot yet be solved, because unless we bring to light the internal relations of the factors involved and subject them to systematic and minute analysis, we cannot see clearly the features of the problem, make a synthesis, and then find a good solution. An article or speech, if it is important and is intended to give guidance, should always formulate a problem, analyse it, and then make a synthesis to point out the nature of the problem and suggest the solution; all this certainly cannot be done by any formalist methods. Since infantile, crude, philistine and idle formalist methods are very fashionable in our Party, we must expose them so that everybody will learn to use Marxist methods to study, formulate, analyse and solve problems; only in this way can we improve our work and ensure the victory of the revolution.

The sixth indictment against the Party eight-legged essay is that it shows no sense of responsibility and harms everybody. All the offences indicted above are due partly to immaturity and partly to lack of a sense of responsibility. Take for instance the washing of our faces. We all wash our faces every day, and many of us more than once a day and look carefully in the mirror after washing by way of "investigation and study" (*Uproarious laughter*) in case we have not done justice to our faces. What a sense of responsibility! If our articles and speeches were turned out with the same sense of responsibility, they would not leave much to be desired. If your stuff is not good enough to see the light of day, you had better keep it to yourself. Always bear in mind that it may influence the thoughts and actions of others. If a man does not wash his face for a day or two, it is bad; if he leaves on his face a dirty mark or two, it does not look well; but in neither case is it very serious. It is entirely different with articles or speeches, which are intended solely to influence other people; should our comrades, so serious about their faces, take these things lightly, they would be lacking in a sense of proportion. Many people write articles and make speeches without preliminary study or preparation and, having written them, they do not even bother to go over them in the same way as they would look in the mirror after washing their faces, but send them straight to the press. Often the result can be described as: "A thousand words from the pen in a stream, but ten thousand li away from the theme"; such writers may appear to be geniuses,

but actually they do harm to many. We must get rid of this bad habit which arises from a lack of a sense of responsibility.

The seventh indictment against the Party eight-legged essay is that it poisons the whole Party and endangers the revolution. The eighth indictment is that the dissemination of this poison will be a disaster to the nation. These two indictments are self-evident and require no elaboration. In other words, if the Party eight-legged essay is not discarded but allowed to go unchecked, it will have the worst possible consequences. In the Party eight-legged essay is hidden the poison of subjectivism and sectarianism which, if allowed to spread, will prove disastrous to both the Party and the country.

These eight counts constitute our declaration of war on the Party eight-legged essay.

As a form, the Party eight-legged essay is not only unsuitable for expressing the revolutionary spirit but is apt to stifle it. To develop the revolutionary spirit we must get rid of it and adopt instead a lively and vigorous Marxist-Leninist style. This style has existed for a long time, but it has yet to be enriched and popularized. Once we have destroyed the foreign eight-legged essay and the Party eight-legged essay, we shall have a new style which, enriched and popularized, will further advance the revolution.

The Party eight-legged essay is not, however, confined to articles and speeches, but also found in the agenda of our meetings: 1. Opening announcements; 2. Reports; 3. Discussion; 4. Concluding remarks; 5.

Adjournment. Is it not also in the style of the Party eight-legged essay to repeat this rigid procedure over and over again at every meeting, large or small, here, there and everywhere? Reports presented at meetings almost invariably contain the same points: 1. the international situation; 2. the national situation; 3. the situation in the Border Region; and, 4. the situation in our department; and the sessions often last from morning till night, at which even those who have nothing to say take the floor as if they owed it to others to do so. In short, there is a complete disregard of the actual conditions as well as a stubborn adherence to the rigid old forms and practices. Is it not time to correct all these things?

Many people are now calling for a thorough change in our writing and speaking towards a national style, a scientific approach and mass appeal. This is very good. But a change, to be thorough, must be affected from top to bottom, and inside and out, whereas some people calling for such a change have themselves not changed at all. I would therefore advise these comrades to effect a little change in themselves before they proceed to bring about a thorough change; otherwise they will remain enslaved by doctrinairism and the Party eight-legged essay and will accomplish nothing because they want to grasp what is beyond their reach and do what is beyond their power. Thus one who talks about a thorough change in favour of mass appeal but actually only tries to appeal to his own small group, should be careful, for some day he may come across on the street one of the "masses" who will

embarrass him by saying: "Sir, try your mass appeal on me!" Those who do not just prate about mass appeal but honestly wish to be able to appeal to the masses should learn from the common people; otherwise they cannot effect any change in themselves. Those who clamour about mass appeal but cannot even speak three sentences in the people's language, have obviously never made up their minds to learn from the ordinary people, but in their heart of hearts only want to appeal to their own small group.

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

The first article, selected from the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course*, deals with the way Lenin carried on propaganda. It describes how Lenin wrote a leaflet:

Under Lenin's guidance, the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class was the first body in Russia that began to link Socialism with the working-class movement. When a strike broke out in some factory, the League of Struggle, which through the members of its circles was kept well posted on the state of affairs in the factories, immediately responded by issuing leaflets and Socialist proclamations. These leaflets exposed the oppression of the workers by the manufacturers, explained how the workers should fight for their interests, and set forth the workers' demands. The

leaflets told the plain truth about the ulcers of capitalism, the poverty of the workers, their intolerably hard working day of 12 to 14 hours, and their utter lack of rights. They also put forward appropriate political demands.

You see, one must be "well posted on the state of affairs", and tell "the plain truth". Again:

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

To write a leaflet, one must consult with comrades who are well posted on the state of affairs. It was on the basis of such investigation and study that Lenin wrote his articles and did all his work:

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

Do we agree with Lenin? If we do, we should work in the spirit of Lenin. That is, we must do as Lenin did, and not fill endless pages with empty verbiage, or shoot arrows at random, or become cocksure and boastful.

The second article is selected from Dimitrov's *Report to the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International*. What did Dimitrov say? He said:

We must learn to talk to the masses, not in the language of book formulas, but in the language of

fighters for the cause of the masses, whose every word, whose every idea reflects the innermost thoughts and sentiments of millions.

And again:

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

Well, didn't Dimitrov put his finger on our weak spot? Apparently, the Party eight-legged essay exists in foreign countries as well as in China, and is a common disease (*Laughter*). But, however that may be, we must cure ourselves of it quickly in accordance with Comrade Dimitrov's advice:

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

When writing or speaking always have in mind the rank-and-file worker who must understand you, must believe in your appeal and be ready to follow

you. You must have in mind those for whom you write, to whom you speak.

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

The third article, selected from the *Complete Works of Lu Hsun*, is the author's reply to the magazine *Great Dipper*¹ on how to write. What did Lu Hsun say? He laid down altogether eight rules of writing, some of which I should like to mention here.

Rule 1: "Pay close attention to a great variety of things; observe more, and do not write if you have seen only a little."

He said that we should "pay close attention to a great variety of things", not just one thing or half of it. He asked us to "observe more", not to content ourselves with casual glances. How about us? Don't we often do exactly the opposite and start writing after having seen only a little?

Rule 2: "Don't force yourself to write when you have nothing to write about."

How about us? Don't we often force ourselves to keep on writing when we have evidently nothing to say? It is sheer irresponsibility to pick up the pen and

¹ A monthly published from 1931 to 1932 by the League of Chinese Left-Wing Writers. This letter is included in *The Divided Mind* (Lu Hsun, *Complete Works*, Chinese ed., Vol. IV).

force oneself to write without any preliminary investigation or study.

Rule 4: "Read over your article at least twice after you have finished writing it, and do your best to strike out ruthlessly redundant words, sentences and paragraphs. Rather condense the material for a novel into a sketch than spin out the material for a sketch into a novel."

Confucius advised, "Think twice,"¹ and Han Yu also said, "A deed is accomplished through taking thought";² each was referring to matters in his own times which are now very remote. Today matters have become very complicated and sometimes it is not enough even to think three or four times. Lu Hsun advised us to go over what we have written "at least twice", but how many times "at most"? That he didn't say; in my opinion, it does no harm to go over an important article more than ten times and revise it carefully before it is published. Articles are the reflection of objective events and things which, with their intricacy and complexity, must be studied over and over again before they can be exactly and properly reflected; to be careless and perfunctory in this respect is simply to be ignorant of the ABC of writing.

¹ See *Confucian Analects*, Bk. V, ch. 19 (cf. *The Chinese Classics*, Eng. tr., James Legge, Oxford, 1893, Vol. I, p. 180).

² Han Yu (A.D. 768-824), a famous Chinese writer of the T'ang dynasty. The quotation comes from his essay "The Scholar's Apology".

Rule 6: "Don't coin new-fangled epithets or the like that are intelligible only to yourself."

We have coined too many new-fangled expressions, all of which are intelligible only to ourselves. Sometimes a sentence of forty or fifty words is packed with epithets or the like that are intelligible only to ourselves. Many who never tire of glibly professing to be followers of Lu Hsun, are the very people who turn their backs on his teachings.

The last article is a comment on how to carry on propaganda in keeping with our national usage, made by the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee at its plenary session (the sixth since the Sixth National Congress). At this session held in 1938 we said that any "talk about Marxism apart from China's national characteristics" is "only Marxism in the abstract, Marxism in a vacuum". That is to say, we must oppose all empty talk on Marxism, and any Communist who lives in China must study Marxism in connection with the actual conditions of the Chinese revolution.

The foreign eight-legged essay must be banned, empty and abstract talk must be stopped, and doctrinairism must be buried to make room for the fresh and lively expression of Chinese style and Chinese flavour which the common folk of China love to see and hear. To separate the content of internationalism from national form is the practice of those who understand nothing about internationalism, we on the contrary want to link the two things closely. In this connection there are serious

mistakes in our ranks which must be conscientiously corrected.

In that article we called for banning the foreign eight-legged essay, but some comrades have actually been promoting it. In that article we demanded that empty and abstract talk should be stopped, but some comrades have been obstinately continuing to indulge in it. In that article we called for the burial of doctrinairism, but some comrades have given it a new lease of life. In short, this report endorsed by the plenary session of the Central Committee was dismissed as idle words by many people who were apparently obstinately opposed to it.

Now the Party Centre has decided that we must get rid of the Party eight-legged essay, doctrinairism and the like once and for all, and that is why I have talked at such length. I hope that comrades will think over and analyse what I have said and each make an analysis of his own particular case. Everybody should think things out about himself, talk the results over with his close friends and the comrades around him, and effectively overcome his own weaknesses.

TALKS AT THE YENAN FORUM ON ART AND LITERATURE

(May 1942)

INTRODUCTION TO THE DISCUSSION

(May 2, 1942)

Comrades! You are invited today to exchange views and ascertain the proper relationship between artistic and literary activities and revolutionary activities in general, to determine what is the proper path of development for revolutionary art and literature and how they can give better help to other revolutionary activities, so that we can overthrow our national enemy and accomplish the task of national liberation.

In our struggle for the liberation of the Chinese people there are various fronts, two of which are: the civilians' front and the soldiers' front, or the cultural front and the military front. To defeat the enemy we must rely primarily on armed troops. But this is not enough; we also need a cultural army which is absolutely indispensable for our own unity and the defeat of the enemy. Since the May 4 Movement of 1919 this cultural army has taken shape in China and has contributed to the Chinese revolution by gradually reducing the domain and weakening the influence of feudal

culture and of comprador culture which serves imperialist aggression. To oppose the new culture the Chinese reactionaries can now only resort to "pitting quantity against quality"; in other words, though they are unable to produce anything of merit they have plenty of money and can well afford to turn out an immense quantity of stuff. On the cultural front, art and literature have formed an important sector and done good work since the May 4 Movement. During the ten years' civil war, much progress was made in revolutionary art and literature. Although this movement and the revolutionary war headed in the same general direction, their practical activities lacked co-ordination, because the two brother armies participating in them were cut off from each other by the reactionaries. It is a very good thing that since the outbreak of the War of Resistance, revolutionary artists and writers are coming in increasing numbers to Yen-an and other anti-Japanese base areas. But to arrive at these base areas is not the same as to identify oneself completely with the people here. In pushing forward the revolutionary work, it is necessary to identify oneself completely with the people. The express purpose of our meeting today is to make art and literature a component part of the whole revolutionary machine, to make them a powerful weapon for uniting and educating the people and for attacking and destroying the enemy, and to help the people to fight with one heart and one mind. What are the problems to be solved to achieve this objective? In my opinion, they are the

standpoint, the attitude and the public of the artists and writers, and how they should work and study.

Standpoint: We take the standpoint of the proletariat and the mass of the people. For members of the Communist Party, this means that they should adopt the standpoint of the Party, abide by the spirit and the policy of the Party. Are there any of our artists and writers who still lack a correct or clear understanding of this point? I think there are. Quite a number of our comrades have often deviated from the correct standpoint.

Attitude: Our specific attitudes towards specific things arise from our standpoint. For instance: Should we praise or should we expose? This is a question of attitude. Which of these two attitudes should we adopt? My answer is: Both; it all depends on whom you are dealing with. There are three kinds of people: our enemies, our allies in the united front and our own people, that is, the masses and their vanguard. Towards these three kinds of people there should be three different attitudes. With regard to our enemies, the Japanese imperialists and all other enemies of the people, the task of revolutionary artists and writers is to expose their cruelty and deceit, point out their inevitable defeat and encourage the anti-Japanese army and people to overthrow them by fighting resolutely with one heart and one mind. In our attitude towards our various allies in the united front, we should strengthen unity and at the same time make criticisms, and there should be different kinds of unity and different forms of criticism. We support their resistance to

Japan and commend their achievements. But we ought to criticize them if they do not put up an active resistance. Against anyone who opposes communism and the people and becomes increasingly reactionary, we must adopt an attitude of uncompromising struggle. As to the mass of the people, we should of course honour them, their efforts, their struggles, their army and their party. However, the people also have shortcomings. There is a hang-over of petty-bourgeois ideology among many proletarians and backward ideas are found in both the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie; these are the burdens hampering them in their struggle. We should spend a long time and be patient in educating them and helping them to remove these handicaps and fight against their own shortcomings and errors so that they can take big strides forward. In the course of their struggles they have remoulded or are remoulding themselves, and our art and literature should depict this process. We should not take a one-sided view and make the mistake of ridiculing them or taking a hostile attitude towards them unless they persist in their errors. Our artistic and literary productions should enable them to unite, to advance and to fight with one heart and one mind, discarding what is backward and promoting what is revolutionary; they certainly should not do the opposite.

The public: The question here is: For whom are our artistic and literary works produced? In the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region and the anti-Japanese base areas in North and Central China, the problem is different from that in the Kuomintang-controlled areas

and particularly from that in Shanghai before the War of Resistance. In pre-war Shanghai the public for revolutionary art and literature consisted mainly of a section of the students, office workers and shop assistants. In the Kuomintang-controlled areas the scope has been somewhat extended since the outbreak of the War of Resistance, but these people still remain the main public because the authorities have prevented the workers, peasants and soldiers from gaining access to revolutionary art and literature. Here in our base areas the situation is entirely different. The public is made up of workers, peasants, soldiers and revolutionary cadres. There are students too, but they are either ex-cadres or would-be cadres and therefore different from the students of the old type. The public for our art and literature consists of cadres of all kinds, soldiers in the armed forces, workers in the factories and peasants in the villages who all want to read books and newspapers if they have become literate and if not, to enjoy plays, see pictures, sing songs and hear music. The cadres, for instance, far from being few in number as you might suppose, outnumber considerably the readers of a new book published in the Kuomintang-controlled areas. There one edition of a book usually runs to only two thousand copies and three editions total only six thousand, while here in Yen-an alone there are more than ten thousand cadres who can read. Moreover, many of them are well-steeped revolutionaries who have come from all parts of the country and will go to work in different places, hence the great

importance of their education. For the cadres, our artists and writers must make special efforts.

Since the public for our art and literature is made up of workers, peasants, soldiers and their cadres, the problem arises of how to get to know them and understand them thoroughly. A great deal has to be done in order to understand thoroughly all kinds of people and all sorts of things in the Party organizations and government bodies, in the villages and factories and in the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies. It is the job of our artists and writers to work in their own fields, but their first and foremost duty is to understand the people and understand them thoroughly.

How did our artists and writers stand in this regard in the past? I would say that they lacked thorough knowledge and understanding and therefore the field to display their prowess. What is meant by lack of thorough knowledge? They lacked a thorough knowledge of the people. They were acquainted neither with their subjects nor with their public; in fact they were even perfect strangers to both. They were not intimate with the workers, peasants, soldiers and their cadres. What is meant by lack of understanding? They did not understand the language. They lacked an adequate knowledge of the rich and lively language of the people. Many writers, standing aloof from the people and leading a dull and empty life, are of course unfamiliar with the people's language and not only use an insipid language in their writings, but often coin awkward expressions quite alien to popular usage. Many comrades love to talk about mass appeal, but

what does that mean? It means that the ideas and feelings of our artists and writers should be fused with those of the mass of the workers, peasants and soldiers. In order to do so we should conscientiously study the language of the people. If we find much of the language of the people unintelligible, how can we talk about artistic and literary creation? Lack of field to display one's prowess refers to the fact that one's high-falutin ideas meet with no response from the people. The more you try to prove yourself experienced, to display your prowess, to put yourself over, the less likely are the people to be impressed. If you want to be understood by and identified with the people, you must make up your mind to undergo a long and even painful process of remoulding.

I might mention here my own experience in undergoing a change of heart. As a student and having acquired at school the habits of a student, I used to feel it undignified to do any manual labour, such as carrying my own luggage in the presence of a crowd of fellow students who could not fetch and carry for themselves. At that time it seemed to me that the intellectuals alone were clean while the workers and peasants were rather dirty. I could put on the clothes of other intellectuals because I thought them clean, but would not put on clothes belonging to a worker or peasant because I thought them dirty. The revolution brought me into the ranks of the workers, peasants and soldiers in the revolutionary army, and gradually I became familiar with them and they with me. It was then and only then that a fundamental

change occurred in the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois feelings implanted in me by the bourgeois schools. I came to feel that the unremoulded intellectuals were unclean as compared with the workers and peasants who are the cleanest people, cleaner than the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois intellectuals, even though their hands are blackened by work and their feet smeared with cow dung. This is what is meant by a change of heart, a transformation of the feelings of one class into those of another. If our artists and writers of the intelligentsia want the people to give a warm reception to their works, they must change and remould their ideas and feelings. Otherwise they will be ill-adapted to their task and do nothing worthwhile.

The last problem is that of study. I mean the study of Marxism-Leninism and of society. One who considers himself a Marxist revolutionary writer, especially a Communist writer, must have a knowledge of Marxism-Leninism. Some comrades, however, do not even take the fundamental Marxist viewpoint. For instance, a fundamental Marxist viewpoint is that existence determines consciousness, that is, the objective reality of class struggle and national struggle determines our thoughts and feelings. Some of our comrades, however, reverse the proper order of things and maintain that everything ought to start from love. Now as for love, in a class society there can be only class love; but these comrades are seeking a love that transcends the classes, love in the abstract as well as freedom in the abstract, truth in the abstract, human

nature in the abstract, and so on. This shows that these comrades have been deeply influenced by the bourgeoisie. They must thoroughly rid themselves of this influence and study Marxism-Leninism with an open mind. True, artists and writers must learn how to produce artistic and literary works, but the science of Marxism-Leninism is a required course of study for all revolutionaries, not excepting artists and writers. Artists and writers should also make a study of society, that is, a study of the various classes in society, their mutual relations and respective conditions, their external features and what they feel and think. Only when these things are clearly grasped will our art and literature have a rich content and a correct orientation.

I raise these problems today by way of introduction and hope you will all give your opinions on these and other related questions.

SUMMING UP THE DISCUSSION

(May 23, 1942)

Comrades! We have met three times during this month. In the pursuit of truth, we have carried on heated debates in which scores of Party and non-Party comrades have spoken, uncovering the problems involved, and putting them in specific terms. I think the whole artistic and literary movement will benefit from this.

In any discussion, we should start not from definitions, but from actual facts. We shall be following

the wrong method if we first look up definitions of art and literature in the textbooks and then use them to determine the direction of the present artistic and literary movement or to judge current views and controversies. We are Marxists and have learned from Marxism that in our approach to a problem we should start not from abstract definitions but from objective facts and, by analysing these facts, determine our orientation, our policy and method. We should do the same in our present discussion of art and literature.

What are the facts facing us? The facts are: the War of Resistance that China has been fighting for five years; the world-wide anti-fascist war; the vacillation of China's big landlords and big bourgeoisie in the War of Resistance and their policy of ruthless oppression of the people; the great contributions to the revolution made in the last twenty-three years since May 4, 1919 by the movement of revolutionary art and literature and its many shortcomings; the anti-Japanese democratic base areas of the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies, where large numbers of artists and writers have aligned themselves with the armed forces, and with the workers and peasants; the difference in circumstances and tasks between the artists and writers in our base areas and those in the Kuomintang-controlled areas; and the controversies which have arisen over art and literature in Yenan and other anti-Japanese base areas. These are the undeniable facts in the light of which we have to examine our problems.

What then is the crux of the matter? In my opinion there are two fundamental problems: to work for the people and how to work for the people. If these two problems are not solved, or are only solved inadequately, our artists and writers will not be able to adapt themselves to the circumstances or fit themselves for their tasks, but will come up against a series of difficulties from within and without. My summing-up will centre round these two problems and touch upon some others related to them.

I

The first problem is: For whom are our art and literature intended?

This problem, as a matter of fact, was solved long ago by Marxists, and especially by Lenin. As far back as 1905 Lenin emphatically pointed out that our art and literature should "serve the millions upon millions of working people".¹ It might seem that for our com-

¹ In "The Party's Organization and the Party's Literature", Lenin described the characteristics of proletarian literature as follows:

"This will be a free literature because neither covetousness nor careerism but rather the idea of socialism and feelings for the working people will draw ever fresh forces into its ranks. This will be a free literature because it will serve millions and tens of millions of working people who constitute the strength and future of the country. This will be a free literature because it will fructify the latest events in the revolutionary thought of mankind with the experience and

rades working in art and literature in the anti-Japanese base areas this is no longer a problem and further discussion is unnecessary. But actually this is not the case. Many comrades have by no means arrived at a clear understanding of this problem. Consequently their sentiments, their works, their actions and their views concerning the guiding principles of art and literature have failed more or less to meet the demands of the people or the needs of actual struggles. Among the large numbers of cultured people, of artists, writers and people engaged in artistic and literary pursuits in general who, together with the Communist Party and the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies, have participated in the great struggle for liberation, there may of course be some opportunists who will not remain with us long, but the great majority are energetically working for the common cause. Thanks to the efforts of these comrades, our achievements in literature, drama, music and art have been considerable. Many of them began their work after the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War; others started working for the revolution long before the war, and they underwent many hardships and exercised much influence upon the mass of the people by their actions and their works. Why, then, should I say that even some of these comrades

daily work of the socialist proletariat, creating a permanent inter-relationship between the experience of the past (scientific socialism, which completed the development of socialism from its primitive, utopian forms) with the experience of the present (the present day struggle of our worker comrades)." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russian ed., Moscow, 1947, Vol. X, pp. 30-31).

have not found a clear answer to the question: For whom are art and literature intended? Is it possible that there are people who still maintain that revolutionary art and literature are intended not for the people but for the exploiters and oppressors?

It is true that there are art and literature intended for the exploiters and oppressors. The art and literature for the landlord class are feudal art and literature. Such are the art and literature of the ruling classes of China's feudal epoch. Even today such stuff still has considerable influence in China. The art and literature for the bourgeoisie are bourgeois art and literature. People like Liang Shih-ch'iu,¹ whom Lu Hsun criticized, may talk about art and literature as transcending the classes, but in fact they all uphold bourgeois art and literature in opposition to proletarian art and literature. The art and literature intended for the imperialists, as represented by the works of Chou Tso-jen, Chang Tze-p'ing² and their like, are collaborationist art and literature. So far as we are concerned, art and literature are intended for the masses, and not for any of the above-mentioned types of people. We have said that China's new culture at the present stage is an anti-feudal, anti-imperialist culture of the people under the leadership of the

¹ A member of the counter-revolutionary National Socialist Party. He propagated the literary theory of the American reactionary bourgeoisie, stubbornly opposed the revolution and denounced revolutionary literature.

² Two writers who became collaborators when the Japanese invaders occupied Peking and Shanghai in 1937.

proletariat. Anything that truly belongs to the people is now of necessity under the leadership of the proletariat. Nothing under the leadership of the bourgeoisie can possibly belong to the people. Naturally the same applies to the new art and literature which form part of the new culture. While we should take over the rich legacy and keep up the fine tradition of Chinese and foreign art and literature, we must do so with our eyes upon the people. We do not refuse to make use of the artistic and literary forms of the past, and when we reshape them and fill them with new content, they also become things which serve the revolution and the people.

Who, then, are the people? The overwhelming majority constituting more than 90 per cent of our total population are the workers, peasants, soldiers and the urban petty bourgeoisie. So our art and literature are first of all for the workers, the class which leads the revolution. Secondly, they are for the peasants, the most numerous and steadfast allies in the revolution. Thirdly, they are for the armed workers and peasants, the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies and other people's armed forces, which are the main forces of the revolutionary war. Fourthly, they are for the working people and the intelligentsia of the urban petty bourgeoisie who are also our allies in the revolution and are capable of lasting co-operation with us. These four kinds of people form the overwhelming majority of the Chinese nation and are consequently the mass of the people.

Our art and literature should be intended for these four kinds of people. To serve them we must take the standpoint of the proletariat instead of that of the petty bourgeoisie. Today writers and artists who cling to their individualist petty-bourgeois standpoint cannot truly serve the mass of revolutionary workers, peasants and soldiers, but will be interested mainly in the small number of petty-bourgeois intellectuals. This is the reason why some comrades are unable to find a correct answer to the question: For whom are our art and literature intended? Here I am not referring to their theory. No one in our ranks advocates the theory or says in plain words that the workers, peasants and soldiers are less important than the petty-bourgeois intellectuals. Here I am speaking of their deeds and actions. Do they in their deeds and actions regard the petty-bourgeois intellectuals as more important than the workers, peasants and soldiers? I think they do.

Many comrades are concerned with studying the petty-bourgeois intellectuals, analysing their psychology, giving effective expression to their life and excusing or even defending their shortcomings, rather than guiding the intellectuals to get closer, together with themselves, to the workers, peasants and soldiers, join in their actual struggles, give expression to their life and educate them. Many comrades who are petty-bourgeois in origin and intellectuals themselves, seek friends only in the ranks of the intellectuals and concentrate their attention on studying and describing them. This would be quite proper if their studies and descriptions were made from a proletarian

standpoint. But this is not the case, or at any rate not completely. They take the standpoint of the petty bourgeoisie and their works are a form of self-expression of the petty bourgeoisie, as can be seen in quite a number of our artistic and literary productions. They often express great sympathy for the intellectuals of petty-bourgeois origin, they sympathize with or even praise their shortcomings. On the other hand, they seldom come into contact with the workers, peasants and soldiers, do not understand or study them, do not have close friends among them and do not show much skill in depicting them; if and when they do depict them, the result is merely petty-bourgeois intellectuals in the clothing of working people. In certain respects they also love the workers, peasants and soldiers and the cadres springing from them; but in some respects and at times they do not love them: they do not appreciate their emotions, their manners, their budding art and literature such as wall newspapers, murals, folk songs, and folk tales. To be sure they sometimes like these things too, but only because these things have novelty value, or because they can borrow from them to embellish their own works, or because certain backward features appeal to them. At other times they openly despise things of this kind and prefer what belongs to the petty-bourgeois intellectuals or even the bourgeoisie. The feet of these comrades are still planted squarely on the side of the petty-bourgeois intellectuals, or, to put it more elegantly, their innermost soul is still the domain of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia. Thus they have not found the answer

or at any rate, an unequivocal answer to the question: For whom are art and literature intended? I have in mind not only the newcomers to Yen-an, but also many who have been to the front and worked for a number of years in our base areas and in the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies.

A complete solution of this problem will require a long time, maybe eight or ten years. But, no matter how long it takes, we must find the solution, and it must be unequivocal and complete. Our artists and writers must fulfil this task; they must gradually shift their standpoint over to the side of the workers, peasants and soldiers, to the side of the proletariat by going into their midst and plunging into the actual struggle and by studying Marxism and society. Only in this way can we have art and literature that are genuinely for the workers, peasants and soldiers, and genuinely proletarian.

For whom are art and literature intended? This is a fundamental question, a question of principle. Hitherto the controversies, divergences, conflicts and discord among some of our comrades have not arisen on this fundamental issue of principle but on secondary issues or even issues that do not involve any principle. On this question of principle, however, the disputants have shown little divergence but have in almost perfect agreement tended to some extent to look down on the workers, peasants and soldiers and isolate themselves from the people. I say "to some extent" because, generally speaking, those comrades are not like the Kuomintang in its disdain of the workers,

peasants and soldiers and its isolation from the people, but all the same the tendency is there. Unless this fundamental question is answered, it will be difficult to answer many other questions.

Take, for instance, the question of sectarianism in artistic and literary circles, which is also a question of principle. Only by putting forward and effectively carrying out such slogans as "Serve the workers and peasants!" "Serve the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies!" and "Go into the midst of the people!" can we get rid of sectarianism; in no other way can the problem be solved. Lu Hsun once said:

The necessary condition for the united front is a common aim. . . . The discord in our front shows that we are not agreed on the aim, some working only for small groups and others working in fact for themselves. If we all aim at serving the mass of workers and peasants, our front will of course be united.¹

The same problem cropped up in Shanghai in Lu Hsun's time just as it now crops up in Chungking. In such places it is difficult to solve the problem completely, because the authorities there oppress the revolutionary artists and writers and deprive them of the freedom to go into the midst of the workers, peasants and soldiers. But here among us the situation is entirely different. Here revolutionary artists and writers are encouraged to work and mix freely with the workers,

¹ Lu Hsun, "My View on the Alliance of Left-Wing Writers", *Complete Works*, Chinese ed., Vol. IV.

peasants and soldiers and given full freedom to go into their midst and create genuinely revolutionary art and literature. With us here, then, the problem is nearing solution. But, to be nearing the solution is not the same as arriving at a complete and unequivocal solution and it is precisely for this complete and unequivocal solution that we must, as we have already said, study Marxism and society. By Marxism we mean not Marxist catchwords, but living Marxism which has practical bearings on the life and struggle of the people. When Marxist catchwords are transformed into Marxism in real life, there will be no more sectarianism. And then not only will the problem of sectarianism be solved but many other problems as well.

II

Having solved the problem of whom to serve, we come now to the problem of (how to serve.) As our comrades put it: Should we devote ourselves to elevation¹ or to popularization?

In the past some comrades to some extent or even very much despised and neglected popularization and

¹ "Elevation" is used to translate the Chinese term *t'i-kao* which as employed in this connection does not seem to have an exact English equivalent. It means, as can be seen from the context, the raising of standard or level in literary appreciation, criticism and creation.

unduly stressed elevation. It is right to stress elevation, but it is wrong to stress it exclusively in disregard of any other factor and to excess. The lack of clarity and thoroughness in the solution of the problem of whom to serve shows itself also in this connection. Since they have not solved that problem, these comrades naturally fail to find the proper criterion for what they mean by elevation and popularization, let alone an understanding of the proper relation between the two. Since our art and literature are primarily intended for the workers, peasants and soldiers, popularization means diffusion of art and literature among them while elevation means the raising of their artistic and literary standards. What should we popularize among them? The stuff needed and readily accepted by the feudal landlord class? By the bourgeoisie? Or by the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia? No, none of these will do. We must popularize what is needed and can be readily accepted by the workers, peasants and soldiers themselves. Consequently the duty of learning from the workers, peasants and soldiers precedes the task of educating them. This is even more true of elevation. There must be a level from which to elevate. When we lift a bucket of water, for instance, are we not lifting something that lies on the ground rather than hangs in mid-air? What then is the level from which the standard of our art and literature is to be raised? From the feudal level? The bourgeois level? Or the level of the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia? No. It can only be raised from the level of the workers, peasants and soldiers. And this means not that we

raise the workers, peasants and soldiers to the level of the feudal class, the bourgeoisie or the petty-bourgeois intelligentsia, but that we raise them up along their own line of ascent, along the line of ascent of the proletariat. Here again the task of learning from the workers, peasants and soldiers comes in. Only by making the workers, peasants and soldiers our point of departure can we have a correct understanding of elevation and popularization and find the proper relation between the two.

What in the last analysis is the source of all art and literature? Ideological expressions in the form of artistic or literary work are the product of the human brain reflecting the life of a given society. Revolutionary art and literature are the products of the brains of revolutionary artists and writers reflecting the life of the people. In the life of the people there lies a mine of raw material for art and literature, namely, things in their natural state, crude but at the same time the most lively, rich and fundamental; in this sense, they throw all art and literature into the shade and provide for them a unique and inexhaustible source. This is the only source; there can be no other. Some may ask: Is there not another source in the books, in the artistic and literary works of past ages and foreign countries? As a matter of fact, these works are not the source but the stream; they are the products which our predecessors and the foreigners created out of the artistic and literary raw material they lit upon in the people's life of their own times and in their own countries. We must take over all the fine artistic and literary legacy

wrong,

and critically assimilate from it what is useful to us and learn from its example when we try to work over the artistic and literary raw material found in the life of the people in our own times and in our own country. It makes a difference whether or not one has such examples to learn from, a difference which explains why some works are refined and others crude, some polished and others rough, some superior and others inferior, some smoothly and others laboriously executed. Therefore we must not reject the legacy of the ancients and the foreigners, even though it is feudal or bourgeois, or refuse to learn from them. But inheritance of a legacy and learning from examples should never take the place of our own creative work, for nothing can take its place. The most sterile and harmful doctrinairism in art and literature consists in uncritically borrowing and copying from our predecessors and foreigners.

All revolutionary artists and writers of China, all artists and writers of promise, must for long periods of time unreservedly and whole-heartedly go into the midst of the masses, into the midst of the workers, peasants and soldiers: they must temper themselves in the flames of struggle and go to the only, the broadest and richest source to observe, learn, study and analyse various persons, various classes and various communities, all the vivid patterns of life and struggle and all the raw material of art and literature before they can proceed to creative work. Otherwise, for all their labour, they will have nothing to work on and will become the kind of "phoney artists or writers"

whose example Lu Hsun, in his will, so earnestly cautioned his son not to follow.¹

Though man's social life is the only source of art and literature and is incomparably richer and more vivid, the people are not satisfied with life alone and demand art and literature. Why? Because, although both are beautiful, life as reflected in artistic and literary works can and ought to be on a higher level and of a greater intensity than real life, in sharper focus and more typical, nearer the ideal, and therefore more universal. Revolutionary art and literature should create all kinds of characters drawn from real life and help the people to make new history. For instance, there are on the one hand the victims of hunger, cold and oppression and on the other those who exploit and oppress their fellow men, and this contrast exists everywhere and seems quite commonplace; artists and writers, however, can create art and literature out of such daily occurrences by bringing them into organized form and sharper focus and making the contradictions and struggles typical of life and so awaken and arouse the masses and impel them to unite and struggle to change their environment. Without such art and literature, this task cannot be fulfilled or at least not so effectively and speedily fulfilled.

What are popularization and elevation in art and literature? What is the relation between the two? Works of popularization, being comparatively simple and plain, are more readily accepted by the mass of

¹ See Lu Hsun, "Death", Complete Works, Chinese ed., Vol. VI.

the people of today. On the other hand, works of a higher artistic level demand a more subtle workmanship, and therefore it is harder to produce them and also harder for them to become immediately popular among the mass of the people at present. The problem facing the workers, peasants and soldiers today is this: They are engaged in a ruthless and sanguinary struggle against the enemy, they are illiterate and uncultured as a result of the prolonged rule of the feudal and bourgeois classes and therefore they badly need a widespread campaign of enlightenment; they eagerly seek culture, knowledge, art and literature which meet their immediate needs, are readily acceptable and can heighten their will to fight and their confidence in victory and strengthen their unity, and thus enable them to fight with one heart and one mind. In meeting this primary need, we are not to "embellish the brocade with embroidery" but to "offer fuel in snowy weather". Under present conditions, therefore, popularization is the more pressing task. To despise and neglect it is wrong.

However, there is no sharp dividing line between popularization and elevation. Even now it is possible to popularize some works of higher quality; moreover the cultural level of the people will continue to rise. If popularization remains at the same level, supplying month after month and year after year such stuff as "Little Cowherd",¹ or such reading

¹ A popular Chinese operetta with a cast of only two characters, a cowherd and a village girl. With its songs reworded

material as "man, hand, mouth, knife, cow, goat",¹ will not the teacher and the taught remain at the same level? What is such popularization worth? The people need popularization to start with, and then elevation and further elevation. Popularization is popularization for the people and elevation is elevation for the people. Elevation does not take place in mid-air, nor behind closed doors, but is based on popularization. It is at one and the same time conditioned by and gives orientation to popularization. In China the revolution and revolutionary culture develop unevenly and spread only gradually; while in one place popularization and elevation on the basis of popularization may have been carried out, in other places even popularization may not have begun. Thus the lessons drawn from experiences of popularization leading to elevation in one place may serve as a guide in another place to avoid the repetition of the same trials and errors. Internationally, the helpful experiences of foreign countries, especially of the Soviet Union, can serve as our guide. Thus our elevation is based on popularization while our popularization is guided by elevation. Far from being an obstacle to elevation, popularization in our sense affords a basis for our work of elevation on a limited scale at present, and creates the necessary conditions for our work of elevation on a much more extensive scale in the future.

for the purpose of anti-Japanese propaganda, it was immensely popular in the early days of the War of Resistance.

¹ In Chinese, these are simple characters of few strokes, usually given in the first lessons of old primers.

Besides the elevation that directly answers the needs of the people there is the elevation that answers their needs indirectly, the elevation needed by the cadres. The cadres, being advanced members of the people, are generally better educated and need a higher level of art and literature; it would be a mistake to ignore this need. Anything done for the cadres is done wholly for the people, because it is only through the cadres that we can give education and guidance to the people. If we depart from this objective, if what we give to the cadres cannot help them to educate and guide the people, then our work of elevation will be like random shooting, a departure from our fundamental principle of serving the people.

To sum up: through the creative labour of revolutionary artists and writers the raw material of art and literature in the life of the people becomes art and literature in an ideological form in the service of the people. There are, on the one hand, the more advanced art and literature developed on the basis of elementary art and literature and needed by the more advanced section of the people or primarily by the cadres and, on the other, elementary art and literature produced under the guidance of the more advanced art and literature which often meet the urgent needs of the overwhelming majority of the people of today. Whether advanced or elementary, our art and literature are intended for the people, primarily for the workers, peasants and soldiers, created for them and enjoyed by them.

Now that we have solved the problem of the proper relation between popularization and elevation, the problem of the proper relation between specialists and popularizers can be readily settled. Our specialists not only serve the cadres, but also — and chiefly — serve the people. Our writers should pay attention to the wall newspapers of the people and the reportage writings in the armed forces and the villages. Our dramatists should pay attention to the small troupes in the armed forces and the villages. Our musicians should pay attention to the songs of the people. Our artists should pay attention to the fine arts of the people. All these comrades should keep in close touch with the popularizers of art and literature among the people, help and guide them and learn from them, and through them draw inspiration from the people to enrich and invigorate their art so that what they produce with their special skills will not be empty, lifeless fantasies detached from the people and from reality. Specialists are very valuable to our cause and should be respected. But they should also be reminded that no revolutionary artist or writer can produce any work of significance unless he is in close touch with the people, gives expression to their thoughts and feelings, and becomes their loyal spokesman. Only by speaking for the people can he educate them and only by becoming their pupil can he become their teacher. If he regards himself as the master of the people, or as an aristocrat who lords it over the "lower orders", then the people will have no use for

to have
to share
their
values

him, however talented he may be, and there is no future for his work.

Is this utilitarianism? Materialists are not opposed to utilitarianism in general, but to the utilitarianism of the feudal, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois classes and to those hypocrites who attack utilitarianism in words but embrace the most selfish and shortsighted utilitarianism in deeds. In this world there is no utilitarianism which transcends the classes; in a class society utilitarianism is either of this or of that particular class. We are proletarian, revolutionary utilitarians and we take as our point of departure the uniting of the present and future interests of the great majority, more than 90 per cent, of the people of the country; therefore we are revolutionary utilitarians who pursue interests of the broadest scope and the longest range, not narrow utilitarians who are concerned only with what is limited and immediate. If, for instance, you reproach the people for their utilitarianism, and yet for the benefit of an individual or a clique you insist upon placing on the market and advertising among the people a work pleasing only to a few but useless or even harmful to most people, then you are not only insulting the people but blinded by your own conceit. A thing is good only when it brings real benefit to the people. Your work, which caters only for a few for the time being, may be as good as "The Spring Snow", but it is the "Song of the Rustics"¹ that appeals to the people; and if you simply

¹ This and "The Spring Snow" were songs of the third century B.C. sung by the people of Ch'u, one of the largest states

denounce instead of trying to improve the taste of the people, you will be wasting your words. The problem now is how to integrate "The Spring Snow" with the "Song of the Rustics", to integrate elevation with popularization. If the two are not integrated, then the most artistic product of any kind of specialist skill will only serve the most narrow utilitarian end; one may flatter oneself and call this art pure and noble, but the people will not agree.

Having solved the problem concerning the fundamental principle of serving the workers, peasants and soldiers and how to serve them, we have also solved such problems as whether to depict the bright or the dark side of life and how to achieve unity among our artists and writers. If we are all agreed upon the fundamental principle, then it must be adhered to by our artists and writers, in our schools of art and literature, in our artistic and literary publications and organizations, and in all our artistic and literary activities. It is wrong to deviate from this principle, and anything at variance with it must be duly corrected.

III

Since our art and literature are intended for the people, we can proceed to discuss a problem of inner-

in ancient China. When a singer sang "The Spring Snow" only a few dozens would join in the chorus, but when he sang the "Song of the Rustics", thousands of people joined in.

Party relations, the relation between the Party's artistic and literary activity and the Party's activity as a whole, and a problem of the Party's external relations, the relation between the Party's artistic and literary activity and non-Party artistic and literary activity, the problem of the united front in art and literature.

Let us consider the first problem. In the world today all culture, all art and literature belong to definite classes and follow definite political lines. There is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art which stands above classes or art which runs parallel to or remains independent of politics. Proletarian art and literature are part of the whole cause of the proletarian revolution, in the words of Lenin, "cogs and screws in the whole machine".¹ Therefore the Party's artistic and literary activity occupies a definite and assigned position in the Party's total revolutionary work and is subordinated to the prescribed revolutionary task of the Party in a given revolutionary period. Any opposition to this assignment will certainly lead to dualism or pluralism, and in essence amounts to Trotsky's

¹ In "The Party's Organization and the Party's Literature" Lenin said: "The cause of literature should form a part of the entire cause of the proletariat and become one of the 'cogs and screws' in the great united, social-democratic machine operated by the whole awakened vanguard of the working class." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russian ed., Moscow, 1947, Vol. X, p. 27.)

formula: "politics — Marxist; art — bourgeois". We do not want to stress unduly the importance of art and literature, but we are also against underestimating it. Art and literature are subordinate to politics, but in turn exert a great influence on politics. As a part of the whole cause of the revolution, as the cogs and screws in the whole machine, revolutionary art and literature are necessary and indispensable, though in comparison with some other parts, less important, less essential, secondary. If we had no art and literature even in the broadest and most general sense, then the revolutionary movement could not be carried on to victory. It would be a mistake not to realize this.

Furthermore, in saying that art and literature are subordinate to politics, we mean class politics and mass politics, not the so-called politics of a few statesmen. Politics, whether revolutionary or counter-revolutionary, represent the struggle of one class against another, not the activity of a few individuals. Revolutionary struggles on the ideological and artistic fronts must be subordinate to the political struggle because only through politics can the needs of the class and the people be expressed in concentrated form. A revolutionary statesman or political expert who has mastered the science or art of revolutionary politics is merely a leader of millions of mass-statesmen with the task of collecting their ideas and, after judicious sifting and summing-up, handing them back for the people to accept and act upon; he is not the aristocratic "statesman" who draws up plans out of touch with

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reality, fondly imagining that he has a monopoly of wisdom. This is the essential difference between the statesmen of the proletariat and those of the decadent bourgeoisie. That is why there is perfect harmony between the political character of our art and literature and the truthfulness of their presentation. It would be a mistake not to recognize this point and cheapen the politics and statesmanship of the proletariat.

Let us consider next the question of the united front in art and literature. Since art and literature are subordinate to politics and since China's first and foremost political problem today is resistance to Japan, Party artists and writers must first of all unite on this issue with all non-Party petty-bourgeois artists and writers who sympathize with the Party, and all bourgeois and landlord-class artists and writers who support the resistance. We should also seek unity on the issue of democracy, but as some anti-Japanese artists and writers do not accept this, the range of unity will be more limited. Then again, we must seek unity on the issues peculiar to artistic and literary circles, those of method and style, but as we are for socialist realism, to which certain other people object, the range of unity may be further limited. Thus unity can be achieved on one issue while struggle and criticism take place on other issues. As all issues are at the same time separate and inter-related, even on the issue forming the basis of unity, such as resistance to Japan, there are at the same time struggle and criticism. In a united front, unity to the exclusion of struggle and

struggle to the exclusion of unity are wrong policies, for instance, the lines of Right capitulationism and tailism or "Left" exclusivism and sectarianism followed by some comrades in the past. The same is true of art and literature as of politics.

Petty-bourgeois artists and writers in China constitute an important force in the united front of art and literature. In spite of their many ideological and artistic shortcomings, they are, comparatively speaking, in favour of the revolution and comparatively close to the working people. Therefore it is especially important to help them to overcome their shortcomings and win them over to the front that serves the working people.

IV

One of the principal methods of struggle in the artistic and literary world is criticism. Art and literary criticism should be developed and, as many comrades have rightly pointed out, our work in this respect has been quite inadequate. Such criticism presents a complex problem and requires a great deal of special study. Here I shall stress only the basic problem of criteria in criticism. I shall also comment briefly on certain other problems and wrong ideas put forward by some comrades.

There are two criteria in art and literary criticism: political and artistic. According to the political criterion, all works are good which strengthen unity and resistance to Japan, encourage the people to be of one

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There are two criteria in art and literary criticism: political and artistic. According to the political criterion, all works are good which strengthen unity and resistance to Japan, encourage the people to be of one

heart and one mind and oppose retrogression and promote progress; on the other hand, all works are bad which undermine unity and resistance to Japan, sow dissension and discord among the people and oppose progress and drag the people back.

How can we tell the good from the bad — by the motive (subjective intention) or by the effect (practical results on society)? Idealists stress motive and ignore effect, while mechanical materialists stress effect and ignore motive; in contradistinction to both, we dialectical materialists insist on the unity of motive and effect. The motive of serving the people is inseparable from the effect of winning their approval, and we must unite the two. The motive of serving the individual or a small clique is not good, nor can the motive of serving the people be good if it does not produce the effect of winning their support and benefiting them. In examining the subjective intention of an artist, that is, whether his motive is good and proper, we do not judge by his professions but by the effect of his activities, mainly his works, on society and the people. Social practice and its effect are the criteria for judging the subjective intention or the motive.

We reject sectarianism in our criticism and, on the general principle of unity for resistance to Japan, we must permit the appearance of all artistic and literary works expressing every kind of political opinion. But at the same time we must firmly uphold our principles in our criticism, and adhere to our standpoint and severely criticize and repudiate all artistic and literary

works containing anti-national, anti-scientific, anti-popular and anti-Communist views, because such works proceed from the motive and produce the effect of undermining unity and resistance to Japan.

According to the artistic criterion, all works are good or comparatively good that are of a high artistic quality, and bad or comparatively bad that are of a low artistic quality. Of course, this distinction also depends on social effect. As there is hardly an artist who does not consider his own work excellent, our criticism ought to permit the free competition of all varieties of artistic works; but on the other hand, these works should be correctly assessed according to artistic criteria so that we can gradually raise art of a lower level to a higher level, and transform art which does not meet the requirements of the struggle of the people into art that does.

There are thus a political criterion and an artistic criterion. How are the two related? Politics is not the equivalent of art, nor is a general world outlook equivalent to the method of artistic creation and criticism. We believe there is neither an abstract and absolutely unchangeable political criterion, nor an abstract and absolutely unchangeable artistic criterion, for every class in a class society has its own political and artistic criteria. But all classes in all class societies place the political criterion before the artistic. The bourgeoisie always rejects proletarian artistic and literary works, no matter how great their artistic achievement. The proletariat too must treat the art and literature of the past according to their attitude to the

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ap. political

people and whether they are progressive in the light of history. Some works which are completely reactionary from the political point of view may yet be of some artistic merit. But the more artistic such a work may be, the greater harm will it do to the people, and the more reason for us to reject it. The contradiction between reactionary political content and artistic form is a common characteristic of the art and literature of all exploiting classes in their decline. What we demand is unity of politics and art, of content and form, and of the revolutionary political content and the highest possible degree of perfection in artistic form. Works of art, however politically progressive, are ineffective if they lack artistic quality. Therefore we are opposed equally to works with wrong political approaches and to the tendency of poster and slogan style which is correct only in political approach but lacks artistic power. We must carry struggle on two fronts in art and literature.

Both these tendencies exist in the minds of many of our comrades. Those who tend to neglect artistic quality should strive to cultivate it. But as I see it, the political side is at present the greater problem. Lack of elementary political knowledge on the part of some comrades has given rise to all kinds of confused ideas. Let me give a few instances found in Yen-an.

One example is "the theory of human nature". Is there such a thing as human nature? Of course there is. But there is only human nature in the concrete, no human nature in the abstract. In a class society there is only human nature that bears the stamp of a class;

human nature that transcends classes does not exist. We uphold the human nature of the proletariat and of the mass of the people, while the landlord and bourgeois classes uphold the human nature of their own classes as if — though they do not say so outright — it were the only kind of human nature. The human nature boosted by certain petty-bourgeois intellectuals is also divorced from or opposed to that of the mass of the people; what they call human nature is in substance nothing but bourgeois individualism, and consequently in their eyes proletarian human nature is contrary to their human nature. This is the theory of human nature advocated by some people in Yen-an as the so-called basis of their theory of art and literature. It is utterly mistaken.

There is another view: "The fundamental point of departure for art and literature is love, the love of mankind". Now love may serve as a point of departure, but there is still a more fundamental one. Love is a concept, a product of objective practice. Fundamentally, we do not start from a concept but from objective practice. Our artists and writers who come from the intelligentsia love the proletariat because the impact of society has made them feel that they share the same fate with the proletariat. We hate Japanese imperialism because the Japanese imperialists oppress us. There is no love or hatred in the world that has not its cause. There has not been any such all-embracing love of mankind since the division of mankind into classes. All the ruling classes in the past liked to advocate this love, and so did many of the so-called sages and wise men,

but nobody has ever put it into practice for the very good reason that it is impracticable in a class society. Genuine love of mankind will be born only when class distinctions have been eliminated throughout the world. It is the classes that have caused the division of society into many antagonistic sections and it will be only after their elimination, certainly not now, that love of all mankind can exist. We cannot love our enemies or social evils; our aim is to eliminate both. How can our artists and writers fail to understand this common sense view?

Others say: "Art and literature have always described the bright as well as the dark side of things impartially and equally." This statement contains a number of confused ideas. Art and literature have not always done so. Many petty-bourgeois writers have never found the bright side and have devoted their works to exposing the dark side, the so-called literature of exposure; some have even made it their special mission to preach pessimism and misanthropy.

On the other hand, Soviet literature during the period of socialist reconstruction portrays mainly the bright side. It also describes weaknesses and bad characters, but such descriptions are not included for the sake of equal treatment of both sides but only to accentuate the brightness of the whole picture. Bourgeois writers in periods of reaction portray the revolutionary masses as ruffians and the bourgeois as saints, thus reversing the bright and dark sides. Only truly revolutionary artists and writers can correctly solve the problem whether to extol or to expose. The fundamental task

of all revolutionary artists and writers is to expose all dark forces which endanger the people and to extol all the revolutionary struggles of the people.

It is also said that "the task of art and literature has always been to expose". This sort of argument, like the previous one, arises from lack of knowledge of the science of history. We have already shown that the task of art and literature does not consist solely in exposure. For the revolutionary artists and writers the objects to be exposed can never be the people, but only the aggressors, exploiters and oppressors and the evil effects of their activities on the people. The people have their shortcomings too, but these are to be removed by means of criticism and self-criticism within the ranks of the people themselves, and one of the most important tasks of art and literature is to conduct such criticism and self-criticism. We should not regard such criticism as "exposure" of the people. Our fundamental problem is how to educate the people and raise their level. Only counter-revolutionary artists and writers describe the people as born fools and the revolutionary masses as tyrannical mobs.

Others say: "This is still a period of the feuilleton, and the style of Lu Hsun still meets the needs." Living in a realm of reaction and deprived of freedom of speech, Lu Hsun was entirely right in choosing as his weapons scorching satire and freezing irony in the form of feuilletons. We too must make the fascists, the Chinese reactionaries and everything endangering the people the butt of our remorseless satire; but in the Border Region of Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia and the anti-

Japanese base areas in the enemy's rear, where counter-revolutionaries alone are deprived of freedom and democratic rights, our revolutionary writers who are in full enjoyment of these things must no longer write feuilletons simply in the style of Lu Hsun. Here we can shout at the top of our voices, and need not resort to ambiguous and veiled expressions which tax the understanding of the mass of the people. In dealing with the people themselves as distinct from their enemies, Lu Hsun even in his feuilleton period did not ridicule or attack the revolutionary masses and the revolutionary parties, and employed a style entirely different from that of his feuilletons against the enemy. We must, as we have already said, criticize the shortcomings of the people, but we do so from their standpoint and out of a sincere desire to protect and educate them. If we treat our comrades like enemies, then we are taking the standpoint of the enemy. Are we then to give up satire altogether? No. Satire is always necessary. But there are different kinds of satire, satire of our enemies, satire of our allies and satire of ourselves — each of them reflects a different attitude. We are not opposed to satire in general, but we must not abuse it.

Still others say: "We are not given to praise and eulogy; works which extol the bright side of things are not necessarily great, nor are works which depict the dark side necessarily worthless." If you are a bourgeois artist or writer, you will extol not the proletariat but the bourgeoisie, and if you are a proletarian artist or writer, you will extol not the bourgeoisie but

the proletariat and the working people: you must do one or the other. Those works which extol the bright side of the bourgeoisie are not necessarily great while those which depict its dark side are not necessarily worthless, and those works which extol the bright side of the proletariat are not necessarily worthless, while those works which depict the so-called dark side of the proletariat are certainly worthless. Are these not facts recorded in the history of art and literature? Why should we not extol the people who make the history of mankind? Why should we not extol the proletariat, the Communist Party, the New Democracy and socialism? Of course, there are persons who have no enthusiasm for the people's cause and stand aloof, looking with cold indifference on the struggle and the victory of the proletariat and its vanguard, and take pleasure only in singing endless praises of themselves, and perhaps a few persons in their own coterie. Such petty-bourgeois individualists are naturally unwilling to praise the heroic deeds of the revolutionary people or to heighten their courage in struggle and confidence in victory. They are the corrupters in the revolutionary ranks; the revolutionary people have indeed no use for such "singers".

Another opinion has also been expressed: "It is not a matter of standpoint; the standpoint is correct, the intention is good, and the understanding is sound, but the expression is faulty and produces a bad effect." I have already spoken about the dialectical materialist view of motive and effect. Now I want to ask: Can the effect be separated from the standpoint? Anyone

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who bases his actions only on his motive and disregards the effect is very much like a doctor who hands out prescriptions and does not care how many patients die of them. Or what of a political party which keeps on making pronouncements but does nothing about carrying them out? Is its standpoint correct? Are its intentions good? Of course, anyone can be mistaken in estimating beforehand the effect of a certain action; but are his intentions really good if he adheres to the old course of action even when its bad effects have become evident? In judging an artist or a writer, we must look at the practice and the effect, just as in judging a political party or a doctor. Anyone who has a truly good intention must take the effect into consideration, sum up his experiences and study the proper methods or, in the case of artistic creation, the means of expression. Anyone who has a truly good intention must criticize with the utmost candour the shortcomings and mistakes in his work and make up his mind to correct them. That is why the Communists have adopted the method of self-criticism. Only such a standpoint is correct. It is only through such a process of conscientious and responsible practice that we can arrive at a gradual understanding and firm grasp of the correct standpoint. If we refuse to proceed along this line in our practice, then, for all our complacent assertion to the contrary, we really have no understanding of the correct standpoint.

We have also heard people say: "To advocate the study of Marxism is a repetition of the mistake of using dialectical materialist formulas in our creative work,

and this will stifle our creative impulse." We study Marxism in order to apply the dialectical materialist and historical materialist viewpoint in our approach to the world, to society and to art and literature, but not in order to turn our works of art and literature into philosophical discourses. Marxism includes realism in artistic and literary creation, but cannot replace it, just as it includes atomics and electronics in physics but cannot replace them. Empty, cut-and-dried doctrinaire formulas will certainly destroy our creative impulse; indeed they destroy Marxism itself. Doctrinaire Marxism is not Marxist but anti-Marxist. But will not Marxism destroy any creative impulses? It will; it will certainly destroy the creative impulses that arise from feudal, bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology, from liberalism, individualism and nihilism, from art-for-art's sake, from the aristocratic, decadent and pessimistic outlook—indeed any creative impulse that is not rooted in the people and the proletariat. So far as proletarian artists and writers are concerned, should not these creative impulses be destroyed? I think they should; indeed they must be utterly destroyed and while they are being destroyed, new things can be built up.

V

What is the significance of these problems which face us in Yenan artistic and literary circles? They signify that in our artistic and literary circles incorrect

styles in work still exist to a serious extent; that we need a thoroughgoing and serious campaign to correct them and to remove such defects as idealism, doctrinairism, utopianism, empty talk, contempt of practice and aloofness from the people which are still found among our comrades.

Many of our comrades remain confused about the difference between the proletariat and the petty bourgeoisie. Many Party members are Communists only in the organizational sense; ideologically they are not fully Communists or are not Communists at all. Those who are not ideologically Communists still carry in their heads many of the rotten ideas of the exploiting classes and have not the slightest understanding of proletarian ideology, communism, or the Party. They say to themselves: "Proletarian ideology! Isn't it just the same old stuff?" They have no idea that to acquire this stuff is by no means easy; some people, for instance, have never in their lives had the slightest trace of a Communist about them, and are bound to end up by leaving the Party.

Therefore, though the majority of our Party and in our ranks are clean and honest, we must nevertheless make a conscientious organizational and ideological overhaul, so that we can better advance the revolution and win earlier victory. But an organizational overhaul presupposes an ideological overhaul, and we have to combat non-proletarian ideas with proletarian ideas. In artistic and literary circles in Yen-an an ideological struggle, which is entirely necessary, has already begun. By various ways and means, including artistic

and literary means, intellectuals of petty-bourgeois origin always stubbornly try to express themselves, spread their own opinions, and demand that the Party and the world should be remoulded in their image. In these circumstances it is our duty to say to them bluntly: "Comrades! Your stuff won't do! The proletariat cannot compromise with you; to yield to you is to yield to the big bourgeoisie and the big landlord class and to risk the destruction of our Party and our country." Whom then should we take as the model? We can only remould the Party and the world in the image of the vanguard of the proletariat. We hope our comrades in artistic and literary circles will realize the seriousness of this great controversy and actively join in this struggle, so that everyone of them will have a clean bill of health and our whole Party will become truly united and consolidated ideologically and organizationally.

As a result of ideological confusion many comrades have failed to distinguish clearly between our revolutionary base areas and Kuomintang-controlled areas and have consequently made many mistakes. A number of comrades have arrived here from the garrets of Shanghai;¹ in coming from such garrets to the revolutionary base areas, they have passed not only from one region to another, but also from one historical epoch to another. One is a semi-feudal, semi-colonial society under the rule of the big landlords and big bourgeoisie,

¹ In Shanghai, in those days, the impecunious artists, writers, intellectuals, and small office employees mostly lived in cheap and congested quarters.

while the other is a revolutionary society of New Democracy under the leadership of the proletariat. Arrival at our bases means coming under a regime of the mass of the people, a regime unprecedented in the thousands of years of Chinese history. Here we find an entirely different set of people around us and an entirely different public for our propaganda. The past epoch is gone and gone for ever. We must therefore unite unhesitatingly with the new mass of the people. If, living among the new people, you comrades still, as I said before, lack thorough knowledge and understanding of them and thus lack the field to display your prowess, then you will meet with difficulties not only when you go to the villages, but right here in Yen-an. Some comrades think that they would rather go on writing for the readers in the "big rear",¹ as they understand the conditions there well and can thus produce works of "national significance". This view is entirely wrong. The big rear is also changing and the readers there expect authors in the revolutionary base areas to tell them about new people and a new world, not to bore them with the same old stories. Therefore the more a work is intended for the people of the revolutionary bases, the more national significance will it have. A.

¹ During the Anti-Japanese War people used to call the vast areas under Kuomintang control in south-western and north-western China which were not occupied by the Japanese, the "big rear", as distinguished from the "small rear" — the anti-Japanese base areas in the enemy rear under Communist leadership.

Fadeyev's *The Nineteen*¹ only tells the story of a small guerrilla unit and does not cater for the tastes of the readers of the old world; yet it has produced a worldwide effect, or at any rate, as all of you here well know, a tremendous effect in China. China is going forward, not backward, and it is the revolutionary base areas, not any backward, retrogressive regions, that are leading her forward. This is the fundamental fact that you comrades must first of all clearly recognize in the course of the campaign to correct style in work.

Since we must adapt ourselves to the new epoch of the people, we must find a complete solution to the problem of the relationship between the individual and the people. Lu Hsun's couplet should be our motto: "With frowning brows I disdainfully defy the thousands who point accusing fingers at me; with bowed head I meekly submit like an ox for the child to ride on."² The thousands refer to our enemies, and we will never yield to them no matter how fierce they may be. The child refers to the proletariat and the mass of the people. Every Communist, revolutionary, revolutionary artist or writer should follow the example of Lu Hsun and be the ox for the proletariat and the mass of the people, "bending his back to the burden until he breathes his last".³ Before the intellectuals

¹ Published in 1927 and translated into Chinese by Lu Hsun.

² Lu Hsun, "In Mockery of Myself", *Complete Works*, Chinese ed., Vol. VII.

³ A famous quotation from one of Chukeh Liang's memorials to the throne. Chukeh Liang (A.D. 181-234), who lived in the

can unite with and work for the masses, they must go through a process in which they and the people come to know and understand each other. Although this process may be and is sometimes bound to be full of suffering and conflict, once you have made up your minds you will be equal to the test.

What I have said today covers only some of the fundamental problems of the direction of our artistic and literary movement; many other specific problems await further study. I believe that you comrades are determined to go in this direction. I also believe that, in the course of the campaign to correct style in work and in your long period of study and work in the future, you will be able to remould yourselves, change the character of your work, create many excellent things which will be warmly welcomed by the people, and advance to a glorious new stage the artistic and literary movement in our revolutionary base areas and throughout the whole country.

Epoch of the Three Kingdoms, has become among the Chinese a byword for statesmanship, wisdom and passionate loyalty to a good cause.

THE UNITED FRONT IN CULTURAL WORK

(October 30, 1944)

〈The purpose of all our work is the defeat of Japanese imperialism.〉 Like Hitler, the Japanese imperialists are heading for disaster. But we have to make further efforts to bring about their final destruction. 〈In our work the prosecution of the war occupies the first place, production comes next, and then cultural work.〉 An army without culture is an ignorant army, and an ignorant army cannot defeat the enemy.

There are two sides to the culture of the liberated areas, the progressive and the backward. The people's new culture has already emerged, but a good many vestiges of feudalism still remain. Among the 1,500,000 population of the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region there are more than one million illiterates and two thousand witch doctors, and the people are still enslaved by superstition. These are enemies lying hidden in the minds of the people. It is often more difficult to defeat these enemies than Japanese imperialism. We must tell the people to wage a struggle against their own illiteracy, superstitions and unhygienic habits. To carry out such a struggle there

must be a broad united front. And this united front has to be particularly broad in a place like the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region, which is thinly populated, poorly provided with communications, culturally backward and moreover involved in war.

In education we must have centralized, formal primary and middle schools and also local, informal village schools, together with newspaper-reading groups and literacy classes. We must not only have up-to-date schools, but must also make use of the old-style village schools and improve them. In the arts, we must have the Ch'in operas¹ and *yangko*² as well as modern drama. Besides new Ch'in operas and new *yangko*, we should utilize and gradually remould the old dramatic troupes and the old *yangko* teams that make up 90 per cent of the total of the existing *yangko* teams. In medicine this principle is even more important. In the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region the human and animal mortality rate is very high and yet many people still pin their faith on witchcraft. In such circumstances, we cannot solve our problems by merely relying on modern doctors. Of course, doctors with modern training are better than those of the old school, but unless they feel deeply about the sufferings of the people, train more

¹ An old-style opera of Shensi Province, so named because the province formed the main part of the state of Ch'in in ancient times.

² A folk dance with songs, very popular among the Chinese peasants.

doctors in modern methods to work for the people and co-operate with the more than a thousand old-style doctors and veterinary surgeons to help them to improve their skill, they will in fact be aiding and abetting the witch doctors and looking on unmoved at the deaths of large numbers of people and cattle.

There are two principles governing this united front: one is unity and the other is criticism, education and remoulding. In forming a united front, capitulationism is as wrong as sectarian intolerance and arrogance.

Our task is to unite with all the old-type intellectuals, artists and doctors who can be of use and help them by educating and remoulding them. In order to remould them we must first unite with them. They will welcome our help if only we act properly towards them.

Ours is a people's culture, so our cultural workers must show the greatest devotion in serving the people, and must be united with and not isolated from the people. To be united with the people we must proceed according to their demands and wishes. In working for the people we must start from their needs, not from our own wishes, however good. It often happens that while the introduction of reforms of one sort or another is objectively necessary, the people are not conscious of this and have neither the wish nor the determination to put them into effect; in that case, we should wait patiently until most of them are awakened to the necessity by our persuasion and are willing and determined to introduce the reforms

themselves. Otherwise we shall certainly isolate ourselves from the people. Unless the people are awakened and willing, any kind of work that needs their participation will turn out to be an empty formality and end in failure. The saying, "haste brings no success"¹ does not mean that we should not make haste, but that we should not take hasty action which is bound to fail. This is true of any kind of work and particularly of cultural and educational work involving the ideological remoulding of the people. So we have two principles: first, what the people actually need rather than what we fancy they need; and second, what the people are willing and determined to do rather than what we are determined to do on their behalf.

¹ Quotation from *Confucian Analects*, Bk. XIII, ch. 17.

QUESTIONS OF CULTURE, EDUCATION AND THE INTELLECTUALS

(April 24, 1945)

The calamities which foreign and feudal oppression have brought upon the Chinese people also affect our national culture. The progressive cultural and educational institutions and progressive cultural workers and educators have been particularly affected. Large numbers of people's educators, teachers, scientists, engineers, technicians, physicians, journalists, writers, artists and other cultural workers are needed to sweep away imperialist and feudal oppression and build a new-democratic China. They must have the will to serve the people and work hard. All intellectuals who have rendered distinguished service to the people should be esteemed as valuable assets of the nation and society. Since China is culturally backward as the result of imperialist and feudal oppression and since the Chinese people's struggle for liberation urgently needs the participation of the intellectuals, the question of the intelligentsia is obviously very important. In the Chinese people's struggle for liberation during the past half century, especially since the May 4 Movement of 1919 and during the

eight years since the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War, large numbers of revolutionary intellectuals have played an important part. They will play an even more important part in the forthcoming struggles. The people's government should therefore systematically train various categories of intellectuals from among the people to serve as cadres and take care to befriend and re-educate all available intellectuals who can be of service.

The elimination of illiteracy among 80 per cent of the population is an important task for New China.

Proper and resolute measures must be taken to eliminate completely all servile, feudal and fascist culture and education.

Energetic action must be taken to prevent and combat epidemics and diseases among the people and to promote public hygiene and medical services.

As to the old type of cultural and educational workers and physicians, we must take appropriate steps to educate them so that they may acquire a new attitude and new methods to serve the people.

The Chinese people's culture and education must be new-democratic with the aim of building up her own national, scientific and popular culture and education.

It is wrong to adopt a policy of excluding foreign culture, for we must fully assimilate progressive foreign culture to help the development of China's new culture; but the policy of indiscriminate introduction of foreign culture into China is also wrong, for we must assimilate it critically to meet the actual

needs of the Chinese people. We should take the new culture created by the Soviet Union as our model in building the people's culture. Similarly we must neither totally reject nor uncritically accept China's ancient culture, but must judiciously sift it and take over what will help the development of China's new culture.

From On Coalition Government

THE CHIEF CONCERN OF CHINA'S CULTURAL MOVEMENT

(April 1945)

△ The peasantry is the chief concern of China's cultural movement at the present stage. Would not the elimination of illiteracy, universal education, art and literature for the people and public health service become largely idle talk if the 360 million peasants were left out of account?

In saying this, of course, I am not overlooking the political, economic and cultural importance of the remaining ninety million people, particularly the working class, which is politically the most awakened and therefore the best qualified to lead the whole revolutionary movement; there should be no misunderstanding on this point.

From On Coalition Government

WHAT TO PRAISE, WHAT TO CONDEMN

(1951)

In the view of many writers, historical development consists not in the replacement of the old by the new, but in the preservation of the old from extinction through every effort; not in the overthrow of the reactionary feudal rulers, who ought to be overthrown, by means of class struggle, but in the rejection of the class struggle of the oppressed people and submission to these rulers, as was the case with Wu Hsun. Our writers have not looked into Chinese history to ascertain who were the enemies oppressing the Chinese people, or whether any praise should be given to those who submitted to such enemies and served them. Nor have they tried to find out what are the new forms of social economy, the new class forces, the new personalities and ideas that have appeared in China fighting against the old forms of social economy and their superstructure (politics, culture, etc.) in more than a century since the Opium War of 1840, and thus to determine what is to be commended and praised, what is not to be commended and praised, and what is to be condemned.

ON LITERARY STYLE

(1955)

We want to thank the anonymous author of this article. Bubbling with enthusiasm, he gives a detailed description in vivid terms of a district in the process of building co-operatives. His article makes no small contribution to the cause of co-operation throughout the country. We hope every province, special administrative region and county will be able to bring forth one or more articles as good as this one.

From the Editor's Note on "The Party Secretary Takes the Lead and All the Party Members Help Run the Co-ops,"
Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside

The method described in this article — "Make four comparisons and five calculations" — is a very useful way of showing the peasants clearly which system is good and which is bad. They understand the moment they hear it. Such methods are extremely convincing. They are a far cry from the sort of thing done by those comrades who are incompetent in propaganda and over-simplify the problem with such slogans as "Either you follow the road of the Communist

Party or you follow the road of Chiang Kai-shek." This is just labelling people to cow them into compliance instead of coming forward with something positive and stirring. But taking the peasants' own experiences and analysing them in detail—now there is a method that is really effective.

From the Editor's Note on "Strengthening the Co-op — a Good Example," *Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside*

This article is very well written. It deserves to be recommended to all Party and Youth League committees on a county and district level, and to all township branches. All co-operatives should follow the example it describes. The writer understands the Party line and speaks directly to the point. He expresses himself well, too. You know what he means at a glance and his article is free of Party jargon. In this regard, we should like to call the reader's attention to the fact that many comrades are extremely fond of using Party jargon in their articles. Their writing is neither vivid nor graphic. It gives you a headache to read it. They care little for grammar or phrasing, preferring something which is a cross between the literary and the colloquial. Here garrulous and repetitive, there archaically cryptic, it is as if they were deliberately trying to make their readers suffer. Of the more than 170 articles in this book, quite a few are heavy with Party jargon. Only after several

revisions could they be made fairly readable. Even so, some are still obscure, clumsy and difficult to understand. They would not have been included were it not for the importance of their content. How many years will it be before we see a little less of that Party jargon which gives us such a headache? The comrades who edit our newspapers and periodicals must pay attention to this question. They should demand of the writers articles that are vivid, clear and well put together. Moreover, they should personally help the writers with revisions.

Editor's Note on "Political Work in the Co-ops," *Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside*

A LETTER ABOUT POETRY

(January 1957)

January 12, 1957

Dear Keh-chia and Comrades,

I received your kind letter some time ago and am sorry to be so late in replying. As you wished, I have now copied out on separate sheets all my classical poems that I can remember as well as the eight that you sent to me. They make eighteen altogether. Herewith I enclose these poems and put them at your disposal.

Up to now I have never wanted to make these things known in any formal way, because they are written in the old style. I was afraid this might encourage a wrong trend and exercise a bad influence on young people. Besides, they are not up to much as poetry, and there is nothing outstanding about them. However, if you feel that they should be published and that at the same time misprints can be corrected in those poems already in circulation, then publish them by all means.

It is very good that we are to have the magazine *Poetry*. I hope it will grow and flourish exceedingly. Of course our poetry should be written mainly in the

modern form. We may write some verse in classical forms as well, but it would not be advisable to encourage young people to do this, because these forms would restrict their thought and they are difficult to learn. I merely put forward this opinion for your consideration.

Fraternal greetings!

Mao Tse-tung

ON "LETTING A HUNDRED FLOWERS BLOSSOM", AND "LETTING A HUNDRED SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT CONTEND"

(February 1957)

"Let a hundred flowers blossom", and "let a hundred schools of thought contend", "long-term coexistence and mutual supervision" — how did these slogans come to be put forward?

They were put forward in the light of the specific conditions existing in China, on the basis of the recognition that various kinds of contradictions still exist in a socialist society, and in response to the country's urgent need to speed up its economic and cultural development.

The policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend is designed to promote the flourishing of the arts and the progress of science; it is designed to enable a socialist culture to thrive in our land. Different forms and styles in art can develop freely and different schools in science can contend freely. We think that it is harmful to the growth of art and science if administrative measures are used to impose one particular style of art or school of thought and to ban another.

Questions of right and wrong in the arts and sciences should be settled through free discussion in artistic and scientific circles and in the course of practical work in the arts and sciences. They should not be settled in summary fashion. A period of trial is often needed to determine whether something is right or wrong. In the past, new and correct things often failed at the outset to win recognition from the majority of people and had to develop by twists and turns in struggle. Correct and good things have often at first been looked upon not as fragrant flowers but as poisonous weeds. Copernicus' theory of the solar system and Darwin's theory of evolution were once dismissed as erroneous and had to win through over bitter opposition. Chinese history offers many similar examples. In socialist society, conditions for the growth of new things are radically different from and far superior to those in the old society. Nevertheless, it still often happens that new, rising forces are held back and reasonable suggestions smothered.

The growth of new things can also be hindered, not because of deliberate suppression, but because of lack of discernment. That is why we should take a cautious attitude in regard to questions of right and wrong in the arts and sciences, encourage free discussion, and avoid hasty conclusions. We believe that this attitude will facilitate the growth of the arts and sciences.

Marxism has also developed through struggle. At the beginning, Marxism was subjected to all kinds of attack and regarded as a poisonous weed. It is still

being attacked and regarded as a poisonous weed in many parts of the world. However, it enjoys a different position in the socialist countries. But even in these countries, there are non-Marxist as well as anti-Marxist ideologies. It is true that in China, socialist transformation, in so far as a change in the system of ownership is concerned, has in the main been completed, and the turbulent, large-scale, mass class struggles characteristic of the revolutionary periods have in the main concluded. But remnants of the overthrown landlord and comprador classes still exist, the bourgeoisie still exists, and the petty bourgeoisie has only just begun to remould itself. Class struggle is not yet over. The class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the class struggle between various political forces, and the class struggle in the ideological field between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie will still be long and devious and at times may even become very acute. The proletariat seeks to transform the world according to its own world outlook, so does the bourgeoisie. In this respect, the question whether socialism or capitalism will win is still not really settled. Marxists are still a minority of the entire population as well as of the intellectuals. Marxism therefore must still develop through struggle. Marxism can only develop through struggle — this is true not only in the past and present, it is necessarily true in the future also. What is correct always develops in the course of struggle with what is wrong. The true, the good and the beautiful always exist in comparison with the false, the evil and

the ugly, and grow in struggle with the latter. As mankind in general rejects an untruth and accepts a truth, a new truth will begin struggling with new erroneous ideas. Such struggles will never end. This is the law of development of truth and it is certainly also the law of development of Marxism.

It will take a considerable time to decide the issue in the ideological struggle between socialism and capitalism in our country. This is because the influence of the bourgeoisie and of the intellectuals who come from the old society will remain in our country as the ideology of a class for a long time to come. Failure to grasp this, or still worse, failure to understand it at all, can lead to the gravest mistakes — to ignoring the necessity of waging the struggle in the ideological field. Ideological struggle is not like other forms of struggle. Crude, coercive methods should not be used in this struggle, but only the method of painstaking reasoning. Today, socialism enjoys favourable conditions in the ideological struggle. The main power of the state is in the hands of the working people led by the proletariat. The Communist Party is strong and its prestige stands high. Although there are defects and mistakes in our work, every fair-minded person can see that we are loyal to the people, that we are both determined and able to build up our country together with the people, and that we have achieved great successes and will achieve still greater ones. The vast majority of the bourgeoisie and intellectuals who come from the old society are patriotic; they are willing to serve their

flourishing socialist motherland, and they know that if they turn away from the socialist cause and the working people led by the Communist Party, they will have no one to rely on and no bright future to look forward to.

People may ask: Since Marxism is accepted by the majority of the people in our country as the guiding ideology, can it be criticized? Certainly it can. As a scientific truth, Marxism fears no criticism. If it did, and could be defeated in argument, it would be worthless. In fact, aren't the idealists criticizing Marxism every day and in all sorts of ways? As for those who harbour bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideas and do not wish to change, aren't they also criticizing Marxism in all sorts of ways? Marxists should not be afraid of criticism from any quarter. Quite the contrary, they need to steel and improve themselves and win new positions in the teeth of criticism and the storm and stress of struggle. Fighting against wrong ideas is like being vaccinated — a man develops greater immunity from disease after the vaccine takes effect. Plants raised in hot-houses are not likely to be robust. Carrying out the policy of "letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend" will not weaken but strengthen the leading position of Marxism in the ideological field.

What should our policy be towards non-Marxist ideas? As far as unmistakable counter-revolutionaries and wreckers of the socialist cause are concerned, the matter is easy: we simply deprive them of their

freedom of speech. But it is quite a different matter when we are faced with incorrect ideas among the people. Will it do to ban such ideas and give them no opportunity to express themselves? Certainly not. It is not only futile but very harmful to use crude and summary methods to deal with ideological questions among the people, with questions relating to the spiritual life of man. You may ban the expression of wrong ideas, but the ideas will still be there. On the other hand, correct ideas, if pampered in hot-houses without being exposed to the elements or immunized from disease, will not win out against wrong ones. That is why it is only by employing methods of discussion, criticism and reasoning that we can really foster correct ideas, overcome wrong ideas, and really settle issues.

The bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie are bound to give expression to their ideologies. It is inevitable that they should stubbornly persist in expressing themselves in every way possible on political and ideological questions. You can't expect them not to do so. We should not use methods of suppression to prevent them from expressing themselves, but should allow them to do so and at the same time argue with them and direct well-considered criticism at them.

There can be no doubt that we should criticize all kinds of wrong ideas. It certainly would not do to refrain from criticism and look on while wrong ideas spread unchecked and acquire their market. Mistakes should be criticized and poisonous weeds fought against wherever they crop up. But such criticism

should not be doctrinaire. We should not use the metaphysical method, but strive to employ the dialectical method. What is needed is scientific analysis and fully convincing arguments. Doctrinaire criticism settles nothing. We don't want any kind of poisonous weeds, but we should carefully distinguish between what is really a poisonous weed and what is really a fragrant flower. We must learn together with the masses of the people how to make this careful distinction, and use the correct methods to fight poisonous weeds.

While criticizing doctrinairism, we should at the same time direct our attention to criticizing revisionism. Revisionism, or rightist opportunism, is a bourgeois trend of thought which is even more dangerous than doctrinairism. The revisionists, or right opportunists, pay lip-service to Marxism and also attack "doctrinairism". But the real target of their attack is actually the most fundamental elements of Marxism. They oppose or distort materialism and dialectics, oppose or try to weaken the people's democratic dictatorship and the leading role of the Communist Party, oppose or try to weaken socialist transformation and socialist construction. Even after the basic victory of the socialist revolution in our country, there are still a number of people who vainly hope for a restoration of the capitalist system. They wage a struggle against the working class on every front, including the ideological front. In this struggle, their right-hand men are the revisionists.

On the surface, these two slogans — “let a hundred flowers blossom” and “let a hundred schools of thought contend” — have no class character: the proletariat can turn them to account, so can the bourgeoisie and other people. But different classes, strata and social groups each have their own views on what are fragrant flowers and what are poisonous weeds. So what, from the point of view of the broad masses of the people, should be the criteria today for distinguishing between fragrant flowers and poisonous weeds?

In the political life of our country, how are our people to determine what is right and what is wrong in our words and actions? Basing ourselves on the principles of our Constitution, the will of the overwhelming majority of our people and the political programmes jointly proclaimed on various occasions by our political parties and groups, we believe that, broadly speaking, words and actions can be judged right if they:

(1) Help to unite the people of our various nationalities, and do not divide them;

(2) Are beneficial, not harmful, to socialist transformation and socialist construction;

(3) Help to consolidate, not undermine or weaken, the people's democratic dictatorship;

(4) Help to consolidate, not undermine or weaken, democratic centralism;

(5) Tend to strengthen, not to cast off or weaken, the leadership of the Communist Party;

(6) Are beneficial, not harmful, to international socialist solidarity and the solidarity of the peace-loving peoples of the world.

Of these six criteria the most important are the socialist path and the leadership of the Party. These criteria are put forward in order to foster, and not hinder, the free discussion of various questions among the people. Those who do not approve of these criteria can still put forward their own views and argue their case. When the majority of the people have clear-cut criteria to go by, criticism and self-criticism can be conducted along proper lines, and these criteria can be applied to people's words and actions to determine whether they are fragrant flowers or poisonous weeds. These are political criteria. Naturally, in judging the truthfulness of scientific theories or assessing the aesthetic value of works of art, other pertinent criteria are needed, but these six political criteria are also applicable to all activities in the arts or sciences. In a socialist country like ours, can there possibly be any useful scientific or artistic activity which runs counter to these political criteria?

All that is set out above stems from the specific historical conditions in our country. Since conditions vary in different socialist countries and with different Communist Parties, we do not think that other countries and Parties must or need to follow the Chinese way.

*From On the Correct Handling of
Contradictions Among the People*

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外文出版社出版（北京）
1960年7月第一版
編號：（英）1050—105
00096