



LIU SHAOQI

**HOW TO
BE A GOOD
COMMUNIST**

How To Be A Good Communist

by Liu Shaoqi
Written July, 1939

Comrades,

The question I shall discuss is how members of the Communist Party should cultivate and temper themselves. It may not be unprofitable to the building and consolidation of the Party to take up this question at this present time.

I. Why Communists Must Undertake Self Cultivation

Why must Communists undertake to cultivate themselves?

In order to live, man must wage a struggle against nature and make use of nature to produce material values. At all times and under all conditions, his production of material things is social in character. It follows that when men engage in production at any stage of social development, they have to enter into certain relations of production with one another. In their ceaseless struggle against nature, men ceaselessly change nature and simultaneously change themselves and their mutual relations. Men themselves, their social relations, their form of social organization and consciousness were all different from what they are today, and in the future they will again be different.

Mankind and human society are in process of historical development. When human society reached a certain historical stage, classes and class struggle emerged. Every member of a class society exists as a member of a given class and lives in given conditions of class struggle. Man's social being determines his consciousness. In class society the ideology of the members of each class reflects a different position and different class interests. The class struggle constantly goes on among these classes with their different positions, interests and ideologies. Thus it is not only in the struggle against nature but in the struggle of social classes that men change nature, change society and at the same time change themselves.

Marx and Engels said:

“Both for the production on a mass scale of this communist consciousness, and for the success of the cause itself, the alteration of men on a mass scale is necessary, an alteration that can only take place in a practical movement, a *revolution*; the revolution is necessary, therefore, not only the ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way, but also because the class *overthrowing* it can only in a revolution

succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of ages and become fitted to found society anew.”¹

That is to say, the proletariat must conscientiously go through long periods of social revolutionary struggles and, in such struggles change society and change itself.

We should therefore see ourselves as in need of change and capable of being changed. We should not look upon ourselves as immutable, perfect and sacrosanct, as persons who need not and cannot be changed. When we pose the task of remoulding ourselves in social struggle, we are not demeaning ourselves; the objective laws of social development demand it. Unless we do so, we cannot make progress, or fulfill the task of changing society.

We Communists are the most advanced revolutionaries in modern history; to day the changing of society and the world rests upon us and we are the driving force in this change. It is by unremitting struggle against counter-revolutionaries that we Communists change society and the world, and at the same time ourselves.

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, “The German Ideology”, *Collected Works*, Eng. Ed., Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, Vol. V, pp. 52-53

When we say Communists must remould themselves by waging struggles in every sphere against the counter-revolutionaries, we mean that it is through such struggles that they must seek to make progress and must enhance their revolutionary quality and ability. An immature revolutionary has to go through a long process of revolutionary tempering and self-cultivation, a long process of remoulding, before he can become a mature and seasoned revolutionary who can grasp and skillfully apply the laws of revolution. For in the first place, a comparatively immature revolutionary, born and bred in the old society, carries with him the remnants of the various ideologies of that society (including its prejudices, habits and traditions), and in the second he has not been through a long period of revolutionary activity. Therefore he does not yet have a really thorough understanding of the enemy, of the people or of the laws of social development and revolutionary struggle. In order to change this state of affairs, besides learning from past revolutionary experience (the practice of our predecessors), he must himself participate in contemporary revolutionary practice, and in this revolutionary practice and struggle against all

kinds of counter revolutionaries, he must bring his conscious activity into full play and work hard at study and self-cultivation. Only so can he acquire deeper experience and understanding of the laws of social development and revolutionary struggle, acquire a really thorough understanding of the enemy and the people, discover his wrong ideas, habits and prejudices and correct them, and thus raise the level of his political consciousness, cultivate his revolutionary qualities and improve his revolutionary methods. Hence, in order to remould himself and raise his owl level, a revolutionary must take part in revolutionary practice from which he must on no account isolate himself. Moreover, he must strive to conduct self-cultivation and study in the course of practice. Otherwise, it will still be impossible for him to make progress.

For example, several Communists take part in a revolutionary mass struggle together and engage in revolutionary practice under roughly the same circumstances and conditions. It is possible that the effect of the struggle on these Party members will not be at all uniform. Some will make very rapid progress and some who used to lag behind will even forge ahead of

others. Other Party members will advance very slowly. Still others will waver in the struggle and, instead of being pushed forward by revolutionary practice, will fall behind. Why?

Or take another example. Many members of our Party were on the Long March; it was a severe process of tempering for them, and the overwhelming majority made very great progress indeed. But the Long March had the opposite effect on certain individuals in the Party. After having been on the Long March they began to shrink before arduous struggles, and some of them even planned to back out or to run away and later, succumbing to outside allurements, actually deserted the revolutionary ranks. Many Party members took part in the Long March together, and yet its impact and results varied very greatly. Again, why?

Basically speaking, these phenomena are reflections of our revolutionary ranks of the class struggle in society. Our Party members differ in quality because they differ in social background and have come under different social influences. They differ in their attitude, stand and comprehension in relation to the revolutionary practice, and consequently they develop in different directions in

the course of revolutionary practice. This can clearly be seen in your institute as well. You all receive the same education and training here, and yet because you differ in quality and experience, in degree of effort and self-cultivation, you may obtain different or even contrary results. Hence, subjective effort and self-cultivation in the course of revolutionary struggle are absolutely essential, indeed, indispensable for a revolutionary in remoulding himself and raising his own level.

Whether he joined the revolution long ago or just recently, every Communist who wants to become a good politically mature revolutionary must undergo a long period of tempering in revolutionary struggle, must steel himself in mass revolutionary struggles and all kinds of difficulties and hardships, must sum up the experience gained through practice, make great efforts in self-cultivation, raise his ideological level, heighten his ability and never lose sense of what is new. For only thus can he turn himself into a politically staunch revolutionary of high quality.

Confucius said:

“At fifteen, my mind was bent on learning. At thirty, I could think for myself. At forty, I was no longer perplexed. At fifty, I knew the decree of Heaven. At sixty, my ear was attuned to the truth. At seventy, I can follow my heart’s desire without transgressing what is right.”²

Here the feudal philosopher was referring to his own process of self-cultivation; he did not consider himself to have been born a “sage”.

Mencius, another feudal philosopher, said that no one had fulfilled a “great mission” and played a role in history without first undergoing a hard process of tempering, a process which

“exercises his mind with suffering and toughens his sinews and bones with toil, exposes his body to hunger, subjects him to extreme poverty, thwarts his under-takings and thereby stimulates his mind, tempers his character and adds to his capacities”.³

2 Confucius (551-479 B.C.) was also known as Kong Qiu or Zhongni. A native of Zouyi in the state of Lu (now Qufu County, Shandong Province) in the Spring and Autumn Era, he was the founder of the Confucian school of philosophy. This quotation is from the Confucian Analects, “Wei Zheng”.

3 Mencius (372-289 B.C.), known as Meng Ke, was a native of Zou (now south-eastern Zouxian County, Shandong Province) in the era of the Warring States. He was the main proponent of the Confucian doctrine after Confucius. This quotation is from *Mencius*, Book VI, “Gao Zi”, Part II.

Still more so must Communists give attention to tempering and cultivating themselves in revolutionary struggles, since they have the historically unprecedented “great mission” of changing the world.

Our Communist self-cultivation is the kind essential to proletarian revolutionaries. It must not be divorced from revolutionary practice or from the actual revolutionary movements of the laboring masses, and especially of the proletarian masses.

Comrade Mao Zedong has said:

“Discover the truth through practice, and again through practice verify and develop the truth. Start from perceptual knowledge and actively develop it into rational knowledge; then start from rational knowledge and actively guide revolutionary practice to change both the subjective and the objective world. Practice, knowledge, again practice and again knowledge. This form repeats itself in endless cycles, and with each cycle the content the content of practice and knowledge rises to a higher level. Such is the whole of the dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge, and such is the dialectical-

materialist theory of the unity of knowing and doing.”⁴

Our Party members should temper themselves and intensify their self-cultivation not only in the hardships, difficulties and reverses of revolutionary practice, but also in the course of smooth, successful and victorious revolutionary practice. Some members of our Party cannot stand the plaudits of success and victory; they let victories turn their heads, become brazen, arrogant, and bureaucratic and may even vacillate, degenerate and become corrupted, completely losing their original revolutionary quality. Individual instances of this kind are not uncommon among our Party members. The existence of such a phenomenon in the Party calls for our comrades' sharp attention.

In past ages, before the proletarian revolutionaries appeared on the scene, practically all revolutionaries became corrupted and degenerated with the achievement of victory. They lost their original revolutionary spirit and became obstacles to the further development of the revolution. China's history over the past century, or to speak of more recent times, over the

4 See "On Practice", *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Eng. ed., FLP, Beijing, 1975, Vol. I, p.308.

past fifty years, has shown us that many bourgeois and petty-bourgeois revolutionaries in the past and by the nature of earlier revolutions. Before the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia, all revolutions throughout history invariably ended in the suppression of the rule of one exploiting class by that of another. Thus, once they themselves became the ruling class, these revolutionaries lost their revolutionary quality and turned round to oppress the exploited masses; this was the inexorable law.

But such can never be the case with the proletarian revolution and with the Communist Party. The proletarian revolution is a revolution to abolish all exploitation, oppression and classes. The Communist Party represents the proletariat which is itself exploited but does not exploit others and which can therefore carry the revolution through to the end finally abolish all exploitation and sweep away all the corruption and rottenness in human society. The proletariat is able to build a strictly organized and disciplined party and set up a centralized and at the same time democratic state apparatus, and through the Party and this state apparatus, it is able to lead the masses of the people in

waging unrelenting struggle against all corruption and rottenness and in ceaselessly weeding out of the Party and the state organs all those elements that have become corrupt and degenerate (whatever high office they may hold), thereby preserving the purity of the Party and the state apparatus. This outstanding feature of the proletarian revolution and of the proletarian revolutionary party did not and could not exist in earlier revolutions and revolutionary parties. Members of our Party must be clear on this point, and — particularly when the revolution is successful and victorious and when they themselves enjoy the ever greater confidence and support of the masses — they must sharpen their vigilance, intensify their self-cultivation in proletarian ideology and always preserve their pure proletarian revolutionary character so that they will not fall into the rut of earlier revolutionaries who degenerated in the hour of success.

Tempering and self-cultivation in revolutionary practice and tempering and self-cultivation in proletarian ideology are important for every Communist, especially after the seizure of political power. The Communist Party did not drop from heaven but was born out of the

Chinese society. Every member of the Communist party has come from this society, is living in it today and is constantly exposed to its seamy side. It is not surprising then that Communists, whether they are of proletarian or non-proletarian origin and whether they are old or new members of the Party, should carry with them to a greater or lesser the thinking and habits of the old society. In order to preserve our purity as vanguard fighters of the proletariat and to enhance our revolutionary quality and working ability that is essential for every Communist to work hard to temper and cultivate himself in every respect.

These are the reasons why Communists must undertake self-cultivation. I shall now discuss the criteria for Communist self-cultivation.

II. Be Worthy Pupils of Marx and Lenin

The constitution of the party stipulates that membership is open to any member who accepts the Programme and Constitution of the Party organizations, pays membership dues and works in one of the Party organizations. No one can be a Party member unless he fulfills these requirements. But no Communist should rest content with being a Party member who merely fulfills the minimum requirements; as laid down in the Party Constitution, he should strive to make progress ceaselessly raise the level of his political consciousness and diligently study Marxism-Leninism, as manifested throughout their lives.

Engels said of Marx:

“...Marx was before all else a revolutionist. His real mission in life was to contribute, in one way or another, to the overthrow of capitalist society and of the state institutions which it had brought into being, to contribute to the liberation of the modern

proletariat, which he was the first to make conscious of its own position and of its needs, conscious of the needs of its emancipation. Fighting was his element. And he fought with a passion, a tenacity and a success such as few could rival.”⁵

Engels also said of Marx:

“None of us has the breadth of vision with which he, whenever it was necessary to act quickly, did the right thing and tackled the decisive issue.”⁶

Stalin said concerning the necessity of our learning from the example of Lenin:

“Remember, love and study Ilyich, our teacher, our leader. Fight and defeat our enemies, home and foreign – in the way that Ilyich taught us. Build the new society, the new way of life, the new culture in the way that Ilyich taught us. Never refuse to do the little things, for from the little things are built the big things – that is one of Ilyich's important behests.”⁷

On another occasion Stalin said:

5 *On Marx* Eng. ed., FLP, Beijing, 1975. pp. 17-18.

6 Letter to J.P. Becker, October 15, 1884. Quoted from *Frederick Engels* by Yelena Stepanova, Eng. ed., FLP, Moscow, p. 221.

7 J. V. Stalin, to “*Rabochaya Gazeta*”, *Works*, Eng. ed., FLP, Moscow, 1954, Vol. VII, p. 15.

“The electors, the people, must demand that their deputies should remain equal to their tasks, that in their work they should not sink to the level of political philistines, that in their posts definite as Lenin was, that they should be as fearless in battle and as merciless towards the complicated and some danger or other looms on the horizon, that they should be as free from all requiring a comprehensive orientation and a comprehensive weighing of all the pros and cons as Lenin did.”⁸

These are the concise characterizations of Marx by Engels and of Lenin by Stalin. That is how all members of our Party should learn from the thinking and qualities of Marx and Lenin and strive to be their worthy pupils. Some say that the that the thinking and qualities of such great revolutionary geniuses as the founders of Marxism-Leninism cannot be acquired and that it is impossible to raise one's thinking and qualities to their high level. They regard the founders of Marxism-Leninism as born geniuses, as mysterious beings. Is such a view correct? I think not.

⁸ J. V. Stalin, *Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Voters of the Stalin Electoral Area, Moscow*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1945, pp. 12-13.

True enough, the average Party comrade is far from possessing the great gifts and profound scientific knowledge of the founders of Marxism-Leninism, and most of our comrades cannot attain to their deep and broad erudition in the theory of proletarian revolution. But it is perfectly possible for our comrades to grasp the theory and method of Marxism-Leninism, cultivate the style of Marx and Lenin in work and in struggle, constantly heighten their revolutionary quality and become statesmen of the type of Marx and Lenin, if they really have the will. take a really conscious and consistent stand as vanguard fighters of the proletariat, really acquire the communist world outlook, never isolate themselves from the current deep and great revolutionary movement of the proletariat and all the laboring masses, and exert themselves in study, self-tempering and self-cultivation.

There is a saying of Menicus', "Everybody can be a Yao or a Shun."⁹ I think that was well said. Every Communist should keep his feet on the ground, seek the truth from the facts, work hard at tempering himself, work conscientiously at self-cultivation and do his best

9 From *Menicus*, Book VI, "Gao Zi", Part II.

to improve his own thinking and quality. He should not regard the thinking and qualities of such great revolutionaries as the founders of Marxism-Leninism as beyond his reach, give up and be afraid to advance. For if he does so, he will become a "political philistine", a piece of "rotten wood that cannot be carved".

We should of course adopt a correct attitude towards learning from the qualities of the founders of Marxism-Leninism and towards the learning of Marxism-Leninism itself. Otherwise it is impossible to learn anything, let alone to learn it well. In fact, there are different kinds of people in our ranks with different attitudes towards such learning.

These are people who, when studying Marx and Lenin, fail to get to the essence of Marxism-Leninism, but only learn its terms and phrases superficially. Although they read Marxist-Leninist literature, they are unable to use its principles and conclusions as a guide to action and apply them to concrete, practical problems in real life. They are content to learn isolated principles and conclusions by rote, and even to style themselves as "the genuine" Marxist-Leninists; but they are certainly not genuine Marxist-Leninists and their actions and

methods are diametrically opposed to Marxism-Leninism.

We have had not a few people of this type in the Chinese Communist Party. We had certain representatives of dogmatism at one time who were even worse. These people knew absolutely nothing about Marxism-Leninism and could only babble Marxist-Leninist phraseology, and yet they regarded themselves as China's Marx or China's Lenin, posed as such in the Party and had the impudence to require that our Party members should revere them as Marx and Lenin are revered, support them as "the leaders" and accord them loyalty and devotion. They went so far as to appoint themselves "the leaders" without being chosen, climbed into positions of authority, issued orders to the Party like patriarchs, tried to lecture our Party, abused everything in the Party, willfully attacked and punished our Party members and pushed them around. Those people had no sincere desire to study Marxism-Leninism or fight for the realization of communism – they were just careerists in the Party, termites in the communist movement. Such people were bound to be opposed and eventually unmasked and

discarded by the rank and file. And indeed they were discarded by our Party members. But can we say with full confidence that no such people will reappear in our Party? No, we cannot yet say no.

Then there are people of exactly the opposite kind. They see themselves above all as pupils of the founders of Marxism-Leninism, conscientiously study the theory of Marxism-Leninism and strive to grasp its essence and spirit. They look up to the noble character and proletarian revolutionary qualities of the founders, and in the course of revolutionary struggles they conscientiously carry on self-cultivation and examine themselves to see if their handling of affairs, their dealings with people and their own behavior conform to the spirit of Marxism-Leninism. They are well read in Marxism-Leninism but at the same time they make a special effort to investigate and analyze living reality, to study the characteristics of their own time and all aspects of the situation facing the proletariat of their own country, and to integrate the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the revolution in their own country. They do not content themselves with memorizing Marxist-Leninist

principles and conclusions, but take a firm Marxist-Leninist stand learn the Marxist-Leninist method and act accordingly, giving spirited guidance in every revolutionary struggle, and thus they transform reality and at the same time transform themselves. Every one of their actions without exception is guided by the general principals of Marxism-Leninism and is devoted to the victory of the proletarian cause, the liberation of the nation and all mankind, and the triumph of Communism.

The attitude of these people is the only correct one. It is the one attitude towards studying Marxism-Leninism and learning from the qualities of its founders that will enable us to become communist proletarian revolutionaries of the Marx and Lenin type.

A person who really takes pain to cultivate himself and to be a faithful pupil of the founders of Marxism-Leninism will lay special stress on maintaining the Marxist-Leninist stand and using the Marxist-Leninist viewpoint and method to solve the problems arising in the revolutionary movement lead by the proletariat, as the founders of Marxism-Leninism did. He will give no thought whatsoever to his own position or fame in the

Party, nor will he ever claim to be a Marx or a Lenin, nor require nor expect others to have the same high respect for him as for Marx or Lenin, for he does not think he has any right to do so. Yet such a person will enjoy the considered respect and support of the mass of the Party members just because he acts in this way, because he is always honest and loyal, brave and firm, and shows great ability in the revolutionary struggle.

Of course it is not easy to model ourselves on the founders of Marxism-Leninism and to be their faithful and worthy pupils. But we can become their faithful and worthy pupils if we are strong-willed and determined to fight hard for the cause of communism, if we diligently study Marxism-Leninism amid the great revolutionary struggles of the masses and are good at summing up experience and if we temper and cultivate ourselves in every respect and devote our whole lives to the proletarian communist cause.

III. The Self-Cultivation of Communists and the Revolutionary Practice of the Masses

In order to become faithful and worthy pupils of the founders of Marxism-Leninism, we must engage in all round self-cultivation in the course of the great and protracted revolutionary struggles of the proletariat and the masses. We must engage in self-cultivation in the Marxist-Leninist theory; self cultivation in applying the Marxist-Leninist stand, view point and method to the study and handling of all problems; self-cultivation in proletarian ideology and morality; self-cultivation in upholding unity in the Party, practicing criticism and self-criticism and observing discipline; self cultivation in developing the style of hard work and persistent struggle; self-cultivation in building close ties with the masses; self cultivation in various branches of scientific knowledge, etc. We are all members of the Communist Party and therefore we must all without exception carry on self-cultivation in these respects. However, since Party members differ from one another in political

consciousness, experience of struggle, field of work, cultural level and in the conditions in which they work, it is natural that comrades should differ to some extent in the various aspects of self-cultivation to which they must pay special attention of which they must stress.

When Zeng Zi, in ancient times, said, "I reflect on myself three times a day,"¹⁰ he was discussing self-examination. The Book of Odes in the famous lines, "There is our elegant and accomplished prince, as knife and file make smooth the bone, as jade is wrought by chisel and stone..."¹¹ referred to the need for help and criticism among friends. What all this shows is that very hard work and very earnest self-cultivation are essential if one is to make progress. But the "self-cultivation" perused by many people in the past was generally idealistic, formalistic, abstract and divorced from social practice. They exaggerated the role of subjective intentions, thinking that so long as they had "good will" in the abstract, they could transform reality, society and themselves. Of course this is absurd. Our self-

10 Zeng Zi (505-436 B.C.), also known as Zeng Sheng, was a native of Wucheng in the state of Lu (now Feixian County, Shandong Province) in the Spring and Autumn Era, and one of Confucius' disciples. This quotation is from the *Confucian Analects*, "Xue Er".

11 Originally entitled *Poems* and later, *The Book of Odes*, this is the earliest collection of poetry in China. Edited in the Spring and Autumn Era, its 305 poems fall into three categories: "ballads", "dynastic hymns" and "sacrificial songs". The quotation here is from the "Odes of Wei", "Qi Ao".

cultivation cannot be done that way. We are revolutionary materialists; our self-cultivation cannot be separated from the revolutionary practices of the masses.

For us it is most important to never divorce ourselves from the current revolutionary struggle of the masses, but to identify ourselves with it, in order to study, sum up and apply the revolutionary experience of the past. This means that we must cultivate and temper ourselves in revolutionary practice and that in turn our self-cultivation and tempering are undertaken solely for the sake of the people and of revolutionary practice. It means that we must modestly learn the Marxist-Leninist stand, viewpoint and method, learn from the noble proletarian quality of the founders of Marxism-Leninism and apply all this in our practice, in our words and deeds, our daily life and work, constantly correcting or eliminating anything in our ideology contrary to it and strengthening our own proletarian communist ideology and character. It means that we should listen modestly to the opinions and criticisms of our Party comrades and of the masses, make a careful study of the practical problems in our life and work, carefully sum

up and draw lessons from our experience in work, and that, in the light of all this, we should ascertain whether our understanding of Marxism-Leninism and our use of the Marxist-Leninist method are correct and check up on our shortcomings and mistakes so as to overcome them and improve our work. Furthermore, on the basis of new experience we should ascertain whether there are any individual conclusions or aspects of Marxism-Leninism that need supplementing, enriching and developing. In short, we must integrate the universal truth of Marxism- Leninism with the concrete practice of the revolution.

This is the method of self-cultivation for us communists. It is entirely different from those methods of self-cultivation which are idealistic and divorced from the revolutionary practice of the masses.

In order to persevere in this Marxist-Leninist method of cultivation, we must resolutely oppose and thoroughly eradicate one of the worst vices bequeathed to us by the old society in the field of education and study, namely, the separation of theory from practice. In the old society many people who studied thought it unnecessary, or even impossible to act upon what they had learned, and

though they wrote and spoke abundantly of justice and morality, in fact they were out and out scoundrels. Although the Kuomintang reactionaries memorize the "Three People's Principles"¹² and recite Sun Yat-Sen's Testament,¹³ in actual fact they bleed the people white with taxes, practice corruption and slaughter, oppress the masses, are opposed to "those nations who treat us as equals", and go as far as to compromise with or surrender to the national enemy. An old Xiucai¹⁴ once told me that of all the teachings of Confucius he was able to observe only this one, "For him no food can ever be too dainty and no minced meat too fine"¹⁵ and that he could not observe the rest and had never intended to. Since that is what these people are like, why do they run schools and study the "teachings of the sages"? They are after advancement and money, use the "teachings of the sages" to oppress the exploited, and deceive the people by paying lip service to justice and morality. This is

12 The Three People's Principles were the principles and programmes put forward by Sun Yat-Sen on the questions of nationalism, democracy and the people's livelihood during China's bourgeois-democratic revolution. At the First National Congress of the Kuomintang in 1924, Sun Yat-Sen restated the Three People's Principles. Thus the old Three People's Principles were transformed into the new Three People's Principles characterized by the Three Great Policies

13 The Testament made by Sun Yat-Sen on his deathbed on March 11, 1925 reads as follows: "For forty years I have devoted myself to the cause of the national revolution with the aim of winning freedom and equality for China. My experience during these forty years has firmly convinced me that to achieve this aim we must arouse the masses of the people and unite in a common fight with those nations of the world which treat us as equals. At present the revolution is not yet completed. All my comrades must Programme of National Reconstruction, the Three People's Principles written by me, and the Manifesto of the First National Congress of the Kuomintang, until this aim is advocated recently must be realized within the shortest possible time. This is what I wished to call your attention to."

14 Xiucai: a learned individual whom has passed the Imperial examination.

15 From the *Confucian Analects*, "Xiang Dang"

typical of the attitude of the exploiting classes of the old society towards the sages they "worship". Needless to say, when we Communists study Marxism-Leninism an all that is best in our national heritage, we must never adopt such an attitude. What we learn we must practice. Being proletarian revolutionaries who are honest and pure in purpose, we cannot be untrue to ourselves, to the people, or to those who went before us. This is an outstanding characteristic as well as a great merit of Communists.

Is it possible that the old society's separation of theory from practice can have no influence on us? No, it is not! It is true that none of you students are studying Marxism-Leninism for the sake of advancement and money and or oppressing the exploited. Yet is it possible to maintain that none of you ever entertains the idea that your thoughts, words, deeds and life do not necessarily have to be guided by Marxist-Leninist principles or that you do not intend to put all the principles that you have learned into practice? Is it possible that none of you ever thinks of studying Marxism-Leninism or going deeper into the theory as a means of getting ahead in life, of showing off and becoming famous? I cannot guarantee

that none of you thinks along these lines. That kind of thinking runs counter to Marxism-Leninism and to the basic Marxist-Leninist principle of the integration of theory and practice. Certainly we must study theory, but we must also practice what we learn. And it is for the sake of practice, of the Party, of the people, and of the victory of the revolution that we study theory.

Comrade Mao Zedong has said:

“The great strength of Marxism-Leninism lies precisely in its integration with the concrete revolutionary practice of all countries. For the Chinese Communist Party, it is a matter of learning to apply the theory of Marxism-Leninism to the specific circumstances of China. For the Chinese Communists who are part of the great Chinese nation, flesh of its flesh and blood of its blood, any talk about Marxism in isolation from China's characteristics is merely Marxism in the abstract, Marxism in a vacuum. Hence to apply Marxism concretely in China so that its every manifestation has an indubitable Chinese character, i.e., to apply Marxism in the light of China's specific characteristics, becomes a problem which it is

urgent for the whole Party to understand and solve. Foreign stereotypes must be abolished, there must be less singing of empty, abstract tunes, and dogmatism must be laid to rest; they must be replaced by the fresh, lively Chinese style and spirit which the common people of China love.”¹⁶

Our comrades must study the theory of Marxism-Leninism by following the method Comrade Mao Zedong speaks of here.

16 "The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War" *Selected Works of Mao Zedong of Mao Zedong*, Eng. ed., FLP, Beijing, 1975, Vol. II, pp. 209-10.

IV. The Unity of Theoretical Study and Ideological Self-Cultivation

We Communists must not separate our study of theory from our ideological self-cultivation. We must remould ourselves and temper our proletarian ideology not only in the practice of revolution but in the study of Marxism-Leninism.

The view is current among some members of our Party that a firm and purely proletarian stand is irrelevant to a Party member's understanding and mastery of the theory and method of Marxism-Leninism. They believe that one can thoroughly understand and genuinely master the Marxist-Leninist theory and method even though one's proletarian stand may not be very firm and one's ideology not very pure (i.e., it may be tainted with the remnants of non-proletarian ideas). They believe that the theory and method of Marxism-Leninism can be mastered merely through book learning. This view is wrong.

Marxism-Leninism is the science of proletarian revolution, the science by which the working class builds socialism and communism. It can be thoroughly understood and mastered only by those who have a firm proletarian stand and who have made the ideals of the proletariat their own. Without a firm proletarian stand and pure proletarian ideals it is impossible for anyone to thoroughly understand or master the science of Marxism-Leninism. The science of Marxism-Leninism is of little or no use to anyone who is not a genuine revolutionary, who is not a proletarian revolutionary to the core, who does not want to bring about socialism and communism throughout the world and emancipate all mankind, to anyone who does not want revolution or is unwilling to carry it through to the end and wants to stop half-way.

We often come across very fine Party members from the working class who are not well grounded in Marxist-Leninist theory and who may not do so well as others in an examination in which Marxist-Leninist works and formulations have to be quoted from memory. Yet in studying Marxism-Leninism, provided it is explained to them in language they understand, they generally show

much keener interest and far greater comprehension than some Party members from the intelligentsia. For example, the section in Capital concerning surplus value is difficult for some Party members, but not for those from the working class. The reason is that in the process of production and of struggle against the capitalists, the workers come to know all too well how the capitalists calculate wages and working hours, exploit the workers for profit and oppress them. Therefore, they generally understand Marx's theory of surplus value more profoundly than do some Party members from other classes. When we say that many Party members from the working class are readier to accept Marxism-Leninism, we do not, of course mean that their class-background makes them born Marxist-Leninists. We mean that provided they study Marxist-Leninist theory modestly and diligently and have a real grasp of the method of seeking the truth from the facts, those comrades who have a firm and purely proletarian stand and are free from personal prejudice or other blemishes are certain to be keener and more correct than the others in their observation and handling of practical problems. In the struggle, too, these comrades will prove more

able to discern the truth and will uphold it more courageously and unhesitatingly.

Also, we come across many Party members of non-proletarian origin who differ in their development owing to their differing attitudes towards the relation between Marxist-Leninist study and ideological self-cultivation. Generally speaking, when they join the revolution such people do not have a firm and clear-cut proletarian stand, are not very correct or pure in their ideology, and to a greater or lesser extent carry over various non-proletarian ideas from the old society.

Obviously these ideas come into direct conflict with the principles of Marxism-Leninism, and since the people take different attitudes, the results of the conflict differ. In studying Marxism-Leninism, some people correctly combine theoretical study with their ideological self-cultivation, using Marxist-Leninist principles to fight and overcome whatever is backward in their thinking. In this way they achieve a more truly proletarian stand and a more undiluted proletarian ideology, and learn how to apply Marxist-Leninist principles to the solution of practical problems. We have many such Party members. Others, however, go the opposite way; they have a lot of

old junk accumulated in their heads and many stubborn habits, prejudices and selfish desires, but the lack of determination to remould themselves. In studying Marxism-Leninism they do not make use of its principles to criticize and repudiate whatever is backward in their own ideology, but employ it as a weapon to further their own private ends, and this is carried to the point where the principles of Marxism-Leninism are so distorted by their old prejudices that these people can neither reach a correct understanding of these principles nor grasp the spirit and essence of Marxism-Leninism. When they handle practical problems in the course of revolutionary struggle, the habits and prejudices which they have brought with them from the old society and their individualistic calculations led them to think in terms of personal gain or loss, to be hesitant and vacillating and incapable of going deeply into things in a free untrammelled way or of courageously upholding the truth, and they conceal or distort the truth unintentionally, or even deliberately. These people are absolutely incapable of guiding their lives by the principals of Marxism-Leninism, and hence incapable of dealing with practical problems promptly,

correctly and realistically according to these principles; sometimes they even adopt a negative attitude when practical problems have already been correctly solved according to these principals by the Party organization, or by comrades other than themselves. Such things are neither rare nor unusual, but are quite common.

Thus we can say that it is impossible for a Party member who lacks a clear-cut firm proletarian stand and a correct, purely proletarian ideology to achieve a thorough understanding and real mastery of the theory and method of Marxism-Leninism as a weapon in the revolutionary struggle. In other words a Party member must have the noble stand of the proletariat in order to become versed in Marxist-Leninist theory.

At the same time, we should add that no Party member can maintain a proletarian stand and express a proletarian ideology concretely in every revolutionary struggle unless he studies the theory and method of Marxism-Leninism diligently and guides his thinking and action accordingly.

There are some Party members who think it quite enough to have revolutionary firmness and to fight

bravely, and that it does not matter much whether they study and undertake self-cultivation in Marxist-Leninist theory. Some comrades even think that a good class origin or a good personal class status is all that is needed to make them vanguard proletarian fighters, thus obviating the need to study Marxism-Leninism. There are other comrades who never study it earnestly in the course of work or struggle, though they generally admit the importance of theory. All such attitudes are obviously wrong.

The theory of Marxism-Leninism is our weapon for studying every phenomenon and dealing with every question, and especially for studying all social phenomena and dealing with all social questions. If we do not know how to wield the weapon of Marxist-Leninist theory, we shall be unable correctly to understand and deal with the problems confronting us in the revolutionary struggle and shall be in danger of losing our bearings and departing from the revolutionary proletarian stand, or even, whether consciously or unconsciously, of becoming opportunists of one kind or another, captives and yes-men of the bourgeoisie.

Revolutionary firmness and courage in the struggle are precious qualities which every Communist must possess. Besides these qualities, Communists must have the ability to find the right way to conduct the revolution and carry on the struggle in different historical periods and under different conditions of struggle, if they are to win the victory for the revolution and realize the highest ideal of communism. Only by applying Marxism-Leninism can we correctly solve such important questions in the revolutionary struggle as the question of whom to rely upon, whom to unite with and whom to overthrow, the question of who are our direct allies, who is the main enemy and who are the secondary enemies, the question of rallying all possible allies, including even secondary enemies under certain conditions, to defeat the main enemy, and the question of making timely changes in strategy and tactics to meet changing situations. Without mastering the weapon of Marxism-Leninism and attaining a high degree of self-cultivation in Marxist-Leninist theory, we cannot possibly maintain a firm, correct proletarian stand on every important question in the revolutionary struggle, or formulate the policies which are most advantageous

to the cause of the proletarian revolution or champion the overall, long term interests of the proletarian revolutionary struggle amid the complex situations and sharp changes, when it is necessary for us to make detours and turns.

Consider, for instance, our Party's experience in carrying out the policy of the national united front against Japan. Before the Incident of July 7, 1937,¹⁷ certain comrades did not understand that the contradiction between the Chinese nation and Japanese imperialism had become the principal one while the contradictions among the different classes and political groups within the country had become secondary. As a result, they opposed the Party's policy of forming a national united front against Japan. of uniting all patriotic classes, strata, political parties and social groupings for joint resistance, and especially of uniting with the Kuomintang to fight Japan. Although these comrades thought they were taking a firm proletarian stand in opposing the Party's correct policy, they actually departed from it and plunged into "closed-

¹⁷ The Lugouqiao Incident is also known as the Incident of July 7, 1937. Lugouqiao, over ten kilometers away from Beijing, is the southwestern gateway to the city. On July 7th, 1937, the Japanese invading forces attacked the Chinese garrison at Lugouqiao. In fluence4d by a vigorous nationwide anti-Japanese movement and encouraged by the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese troops there rallied to resist Japan. This incident marked the beginning of the Chinese people's heroic war of resistance against Japan, which lasted for eight years.

doorism" and sectarianism. Had we acted in accordance with their wrong views, the proletariat and its political party would have been unable to unite and lead all the patriotic classes, strata, parties and social groupings for the purpose of defeating Japanese imperialism; instead, the forces of the Anti-Japanese National United Front would have been weakened and the proletariat and its political party would have been isolated to the detriment of the struggle to resist Japan and save China. After the July 7th Incident, when our Party had formed the Anti-Japanese National United front with the Kuomintang, certain comrades went to the other extreme, maintaining that since the Kuomintang had joined in the resistance to Japan, there was hardly any distinction between it and the Communist Party. They adopted a policy of capitulation by appeasing the big landlord and big bourgeois classes and the Kuomintang. and opposed the Party's policy of upholding its independence within the united front. While they over estimated the strength of and placed undue trust in the Kuomintang, on which they pinned all their hopes for resisting Japan and saving China, they had no confidence in the strength of the Communist Party and the people, did not place their

hopes on the Communist Party and therefore did not dare freely to expand the Party and the anti-Japanese people's revolutionary forces and to resolutely fight against the Kuomintang's policy of opposing and restricting the Communist Party. The comrades with this approach styled themselves as the true representatives of the proletariat, but in essence their policy would have made the proletariat a vassal or an appendage of the bourgeoisie, and would have caused the proletariat to lose the leadership of the Anti-Japanese National United Front. These "Left" and Right mistakes are both striking examples of the failure to take a firm proletarian stand and to identify the correct path for advancing the revolutionary cause when major changes are occurring in the political situation.

The proletariat cannot just emancipate itself alone; it must fight for the emancipation of all the working people, the emancipation of the nation and of all mankind, for only thus can it fully emancipate itself. The proletariat must rid the whole of human society of exploitation, oppression and class struggle once and for all, for only thus can it genuinely and finally emancipate itself. Hence a firm proletarian stand must be sharply

differentiated from 'closed-doorism' and sectarianism. In waging struggles the proletariat and its political party must establish close ties with the masses of working people, form revolutionary alliances with other revolutionary classes and parties and lead the working masses and all their allies forward together; they must represent the interests of more than ninety per cent of the population of the country. To have a firm proletarian stand is to represent at all times and in all circumstances the highest interests of the overwhelming majority of the people, which, we must understand, are also the highest class interests of the proletariat. On the other hand, a firm proletarian stand must be sharply differentiated from all appeasement and capitulation. In waging revolutionary struggles the proletariat and its political party must draw clear lines of distinction not only between themselves and the landlord class and the bourgeoisie but also between themselves and the revolutionary democrats of the petty bourgeoisie, and must even make some distinction between themselves and the masses of working people. In the revolutionary struggle they must at all times firmly maintain their independence and be free from any bourgeois or other

non-proletarian class influence. In every stage of the development of the revolutionary struggle they must combine the interests of the part with the interests of the whole and immediate interests with long-term interests. As Marx and Engels said of Communists:

“1. In the national struggles of the proletarians of different countries, they point out and bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality.

2. In the various stages of development which the struggle of the working class against the bourgeoisie has to pass through, they always and everywhere represent the interests of the movement as a whole.”¹⁸

During his struggle to organize a political party of the proletariat at the end of the 19th century, Lenin said:

“The consciousness of the masses and of the workers cannot be genuine class consciousness, unless the workers learn to observe from concrete, and above all from topical (current), political facts and events, every other social class and all

18 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, Eng. ed., FLP, Beijing, 1977, p. 49.

manifestations of the intellectual, ethical and political life of these classes; unless they learn to apply in practice the materialist analysis and the materialist estimate of all aspects of the life and activity of all classes, strata and groups of the population.”¹⁹

Further:

“The Social-Democrat's²⁰ ideal should not be a trade-union secretary, but a tribune of the people, able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it takes place, no matter what stratum of class of people it affects; he must be able to generalize all these manifestations to produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; he must be able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to explain his socialist convictions and democratic demands to all and everyone the world-historic significance of the proletariat's struggle for emancipation.”²¹

19 V. I. Lenin, *What is To Be Done?* Eng. ed., FLP, Beijing, 1978, p. 87. p. 126

20 Referring to Russian Social Democratic Labor Party members, not to the Social Democrats of our modern day.

21 V. I. Lenin, *What is To Be Done?* Eng. ed., FLP, Beijing, 1978

To fulfill the requirements cited by Lenin in these two passages, we Communists must of course unceasingly take part in the revolutionary practice and thus increase our perceptual knowledge and accumulate practical experience. But it must be pointed out, perceptual knowledge and practical experience alone are not sufficient. As Comrade Mao Zedong has said:

“Fully to reflect a thing in its totality, to reflect its essence, to reflect its inherent laws, it is necessary through the exercise of thought to reconstruct the rich data of sense perception, discarding the dross and selecting the essential, eliminating the false and retaining the true, proceeding from the one to the other and from the outside to the inside, in order to form a system of concepts and theories – it is necessary to make a leap from perceptual to rational knowledge.”²²

Therefore, while engaged in revolutionary practice, we must most conscientiously study the theory and method of Marxism-Leninism.

The theory of Marxism-Leninism is the summing-up of the experience of the international working-class movement; it is a theory formulated in revolutionary

22 On Practice, *Selected works of Mao Zedong*, Eng. ed., FLP, Beijing, 1975. Vol. I, p. 303.

practice and in turn serving revolutionary practice. If only we study this theory, apply it and master it in close conjunction with revolutionary practice, we shall be able to understand the inner connections of the changes taking place all around us and to know how and in what direction the various classes are now moving and will soon move, and we shall be able to determine our line of action and shall have confidence in the future of the revolutionary movement.

It is precisely because the theory of Marxism-Leninism plays such a great role that Lenin said, "The role of vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by the most advanced theory."²³ Members of the Communist Party must closely link their study of the theory and method of Marxism-Leninism with their own ideological self-cultivation and self-tempering; they must never divorce one from the other.

Time and again Comrade Mao Zedong has emphasized the tremendous importance of cultivating oneself in the theory of Marxism-Leninism. He has said:

“From the Marxist viewpoint, theory is important, and its importance is fully expressed in Lenin's

23 V. I. Lenin, *What Is To Be Done?*

statement, "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement." But Marxism emphasizes the importance of theory precisely and only because it can guide action."²⁴

Comrade Mao Zedong has constantly urged all Party members who have some capacity for study to study Marxist-Leninist theory, study the actual conditions of the movement, study Chinese and world history and learn to guide their actions by Marxist-Leninist theory and also help to educate comrades with a lower cultural and theoretical level. The whole Party should at times bear in mind this injunction of Comrade Mao Zedong.

24 On Practice, *Selected works of Mao Zedong*

V. The Cause of Communism is the Greatest and Most Arduous Undertaking in Human History

Now let us continue with our discussion of ideological self-cultivation by Communist Party members.

What does ideological self-cultivation mean?

Fundamentally, in my opinion, it means that every Party member should use proletarian ideology to combat whatever non-proletarian ideas he has, use the communist world outlook he has and use the principle of the supremacy of the interests of the proletariat, the people and the Party to combat his individualism.

This struggle is one of conflicting ideologies, and it reflects the class struggle in society. For a Party member, the result of this struggle should be that the proletarian ideology overcomes and ultimately eliminates any non-communist world outlook and that ideas based on the general interests and aims of the Party, of the revolution and of the emancipation of the proletariat and all mankind overcome and ultimately

eliminate all individualism. If the opposite happens, that is, if the latter prevails over the former, the comrade concerned will retrogress and may even lose his qualifications as a member of the Communist Party. For a Communist that would be a terrible and dangerous thing to happen.

We Communist Party members temper ourselves ideologically in struggles of all kinds inside and outside the Party, constantly sum up and learn from experience gained in revolutionary practice, and examine our own ideas to see whether they fully conform to Marxism-Leninism and the interests of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat. It is through such study, reflection and self-examination that we eliminate all remnants of incorrect ideas and nip in the bud any ideas inconsistent with the interests of communism.

As you know, a man's words and actions are guided by his ideology. And a man's ideology is inseparable from his world outlook. The only world outlook for members of the Communist Party is the communist world outlook. This world outlook is the philosophical system of the proletariat and also our communist methodology. All this has been abundantly discussed in Marxist-

Leninist literature, and especially in the philosophical works of the founders. As you have studied it, I shall not go into it today. Here I shall only talk briefly of our communist cause, of what it is and how Party members should advance it.

What is our most fundamental duty as Party members? It is to achieve communism. As far as the Communist Parties of different countries are concerned, in each country it is for the Communist Party and the people there to transform it by their own efforts, and in that way the whole world will be transformed step by step into a communist world. Will the communist world be good? We all know it will be. In that world there will be no exploiters of oppressors, no landlords and capitalists, no imperialists and fascists, nor will there be any oppressed and exploited people, or any of the darkness, ignorance and backwardness resulting from the system of exploitation. In such a society the production of both material and moral values will develop and flourish mightily and will meet the varied needs of all its members. By then all humanity will consist of unselfish, intelligent, highly cultured and skilled communist workers; mutual assistance and affection will prevail

among men and there will be no such irrationalities as mutual suspicion and deception, mutual injury, mutual slaughter and war. It will of course be the best, the most beautiful and the most advanced society in human history. Who can deny that such a society is good? But can this good communist society be built? We say that it can and will be. Marxist-Leninist theory has explained this scientifically and beyond all doubt. A factual testimony has been provided by the victory of the Great October revolution and the successes in socialist construction in the Soviet Union. Our duty is constantly to advance the cause socialism and communism in accordance with the laws of development of human society, so as to make socialist and communist society a reality as soon as possible. This is our ideal.

However, the cause of socialism and communism still faces powerful enemies who must be thoroughly and finally defeated in every field; only then will the socialist and communist society be brought into being. Victory for the communist cause can only be won through long and arduous struggle. Without it there can be no victory. This struggle, of course, is not an "accidental" social phenomenon or an invention of

certain Communists as some people assert. It is inevitable in the development of class society; it is unavoidable class struggle. The birth of the Communist Party and the fact that Communists participate, organize and guide this struggle are also inevitable phenomena conforming with the laws of social development. The imperialists, fascists and landlords – in short, all exploiters and oppressors – are oppressing and exploiting the overwhelming majority of the people of the world to such an extent that the people are hardly able to survive and have to unite and fight against this exploitation and oppression, because they cannot exist, much less make progress in any other way. This struggle, therefore, is natural and unavoidable.

On the one hand, we must understand that communism is the greatest cause in human history, which will eliminate exploitation and classes once and for all, emancipate mankind and bring humanity into a world of happiness, radiating with beauty, such as it has never known before. But on the other hand, we must also understand that the cause of communism is the most arduous undertaking in all history; that only through protracted, bitter and torturous struggle will we be able

to defeat all the exploiting classes; and that for a long time after our victory we shall patiently have to carry out social and economic, ideological and cultural transformation, for only thus will all the influences, conventions and habits of the exploiting classes be eliminated from among the people, and only thus will a new social and economic system, a new communist culture and code of social morality be built up.

The Communist Party will defiantly win final victory by relying on the proletariat and the masses of the exploited and oppressed people and by using Marxism-Leninism to guide the revolutionary struggle of the masses and propel society towards the great goal of communism. The reason is that the historical laws of social development make the progress of human society towards communism inevitable; that latent in the proletariat and the other exploited and oppressed masses of the world lie extremely powerful revolutionary energies which, once mobilized, united and organized, can triumph over all the reactionary forces of the exploiting classes and imperialism; and that the Communist Party and the proletariat are the new and rising forces and whatever is new and rising is

invincible. This has been fully demonstrated by the history of the world communist movement and the Chinese Communist Party. The present situation is as follows. Socialism has already won a great victory in the Soviet Union, or on one sixth of the earth's surface; militant Communist Parties armed with the theory of Marxism-Leninism have been organized in many countries; the world communist movement is rapidly growing and developing; and the forces of the proletariat and the other exploited and oppressed masses of the world are being rapidly mobilized and united in the course of incessant struggles. The communist movement is already organized as a mighty and invincible world force. Beyond all doubt the communist cause will continue to develop and advance, and will win final and complete victory. However, we should also realize that the international reaction and the exploiting classes are yet stronger than we are, that they are temporarily superior in many fields and that only by protracted, torturous and bitter struggles can we defeat them.

In a society in which private ownership of the means of production has existed for thousands of years, the

exploiting classes through their rule have built up great power in all fields and have grabbed everything under the sun. Their long rule has given rise to backwardness, ignorance, selfishness, mutual suspicion and deception, mutual injury and slaughter in human society, which have persisted down the ages. It has exerted a most pernicious influence on the exploited masses and on other members of society. This is the inevitable result of the efforts of the exploiting classes to preserve their class interests and rule. For they cannot maintain their ruling position unless they keep the exploited masses and the colonial peoples backward, unorganized and divided. Hence, in order to achieve victory we must not only conduct a stern struggle against the exploiting classes but also carry on a struggle against their long-standing influence among the masses and the backward ideas and other backward phenomena found among the masses, for only thus can we enhance their political consciousness and unite them to defeat the exploiting classes. Here is the difficulty in the course of achieving communism. Comrades! If the masses were all politically conscious, united, free from the influence of the exploiting classes and free from backwardness, as

some people imagine them to be, what would be so difficult about the revolution?

Not only does this influence of the exploiting classes exist before the victory of the revolution, but it survives for a very long time after when the exploiting classes have been ejected from their ruling position. Think how torturous is the process and how arduous are the work and struggle that are needed to vanquish the exploiting classes and their influence among the people once and for all, to emancipate and change all mankind, to transform myriads of small commodity producers, finally to abolish all classes and gradually to transform mankind that has lived in class society for thousands of years and been influenced by all kinds of old customs and conventions until it becomes communist mankind, intelligent and unselfish, and with a high level of culture and skill!

Lenin said:

“The abolition of classes means not only driving out landlords and capitalists – that we accomplished with comparative ease – it also means abolishing the small commodity producers, and they cannot be

driven out, or crushed; we must live in harmony with them; they can (and must) be remolded and re-educated only by very prolonged, slow, cautious organizational work. They encircle the proletariat on every side with a petty-bourgeois atmosphere, which permeates and corrupts the proletariat and causes constant relapses among the proletariat into petty-bourgeois spinelessness, disunity, individualism, alternate moods of exaltation and dejection. The strictest centralization and discipline are required within the political party of the proletariat in order to counteract this, in order that the organizational role of the proletariat (and that is its principle role) may be exercised correctly, successfully, victoriously....The force of habit of millions and tens of millions is a most terrible force....It is a thousand times easier to vanquish the centralized big bourgeoisie than to "vanquish" the millions and millions of small owners; yet they, by their ordinary, everyday, imperceptible, elusive, demoralizing activity, achieve the very results

which the bourgeoisie need and which tend to restore the bourgeoisie.”²⁵

He also said:

“The bourgeoisie, whose resistance is increased tenfold by its overthrow (even if only in one country), and whose power lies not only in the strength of international capital, in the strength and durability of the international connections of the bourgeoisie, but also in the force of habit, in the strength of small production. For all these reasons the dictatorship of the proletariat is essential, and victory over the bourgeoisie is impossible without a long, stubborn and war of life and death, a war demanding perseverance, discipline, firmness, indomitableness and unity of will.”²⁶

Hence the proletariat has a very difficult task to perform even after the victory of the revolution. The proletarian revolution differs from all other revolutions in history. Bourgeois revolutions, for example, are largely completed with the seizure of state power. But for the proletariat, victory and political emancipation are only

25 V. I. Lenin, “*Left-Wing*” *Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, Eng. ed., FLP, Beijing, 1975, pp. 32-33.

26 V. I. Lenin, “*Left-Wing*” *Communism, an Infantile Disorder*, Eng. ed., FLP, Beijing, 1975, pp. 5-6

the beginning of the revolution, and a tremendous amount of work remains to be done after the victory, after the seizure of state power.

The cause of communism is needed a "hundred years' task", as the saying goes, and it defiantly cannot be accomplished at one stroke. In different countries this undertaking has to go through different stages, and different enemies must be defeated, before a communist society can gradually be established. Take the case of our own country. China is still in the stage of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, and our enemies are imperialism, which perpetuates aggression against China, and the feudal and comprador forces, which are in collusion with imperialism. Only when we have defeated these enemies can we complete the bourgeois-democratic revolution in our country. Then, after the victory of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, it will still be necessary to make the socialist revolution and to carry on socialist transformation and socialist construction for a long period, and only so will the gradual transition to communist society be possible.

Since the ultimate goal of our struggle is the achievement of communism, it is naturally our duty as

Communists to overcome all the difficulties arising in the process.

Since the communist cause is so great and arduous an undertaking, some people who seek social progress are still skeptical and not convinced that communism can be realized. They do not believe that under the leadership of the proletariat and its party the human race can develop and transform itself into a communist mankind of the highest quality and that all the difficulties in the process of revolution and construction can be overcome. Either they do not foresee the difficulties or they become pessimistic and disappointed when confronted with them, and there are even Party members who waver and desert the communist ranks.

We communists should have the boldest vision and revolutionary determination. Every Party member should gladly and solemnly shoulder the task of realizing communism, a task greater and more arduous than any in human history. We clearly see the difficulties in the process of realizing communism, but at the same time we clearly understand that they can undoubtedly be overcome by arousing millions of people to the revolutionary action, and no difficulties

will ever daunt us. We have the masses of the people to rely on, and we have full confidence that a substantial part of the work of building communism will be accomplished in our town time and that the whole of this magnificent undertaking will be triumphantly completed by the coming generations. The heroes of no other class in history could possibly have had this great communist ideal and boldness of vision. In this respect we have every reason for pride.

I recall the instance of the western European bourgeois biographer²⁷ who interviewed Comrade Stalin during a visit to the Soviet Union and brought up the comparisons between historical personalities. Comrade Stalin told him that Lenin was like the ocean while Czar Peter the Great was only a drop in the ocean. Such is the place in history a proletarian leader of the communist cause occupies, compared with that of a leader in the cause of the landlord and the rising mercantile classes. From this comparison we can see how truly great is a leader who fights for the triumph of communism and the cause of the emancipation of mankind and how

²⁷ Emil Ludwig (1881-1948), a German writer, met Stalin while visiting the Soviet Union in December 1931. See J.V. Stalin, "Talk with the German Author Emil Ludwig", *Works*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1955, Vol. XIII, p. 107.

paltry is one who fights for the cause of the exploiting classes.

We Communist Party members must have the highest goals in our struggle and the highest ideals, while at the same time we must have a practical spirit and do real practical work. Such are the characteristics distinguishing us as Communists. If all a person has is great and lofty ideas without having a practical spirit or doing real practical work, he is not a good Party member but only a dreamer, a prattler or a pedant. On the other hand, whoever is interested only in practical work but lacks great and lofty communist ideals is not a good Communist either, but just a routine plodder. Only by combining the great and lofty ideals of communism with real practical work and practical spirit can one be a good Communist. This standard for a good Communist has often been stressed by Comrade Mao Zedong, the leader of our Party.

The communist ideal is beautiful, while the reality of the existing capitalist world is ugly. This is precisely why the overwhelming majority of the people demand the changing of that reality and why it must be changed. In order to change the world we must not divorce

ourselves from reality, disregard it or escape from it, nor must we surrender to ugly reality. We must face reality squarely, study and understand it, live and grow in it, fight against the ugly reality and transform it, so that we can gradually realize our ideal. Hence we members of the communist Party must initiate and press ahead with our great communist task of changing the world, beginning with our immediate surroundings, with the people immediately around us and such work as we can immediately undertake. Here we should criticize those young comrades who frequently make the mistake of wanting to escape from or disregarding reality. It is good that they have lofty ideals, but they often complain about their place of work and the kind of work they are given. They are always looking for some "ideal" place or job so that they can "change the world" with ease. But no such place and no such job exist, except in their dreams.

The cause of communism is our life work. Throughout our lives, our every activity is exclusively devoted to it and to nothing else.

VI. A Party Member's Personal Interests Must be Unconditionally Subordinated to the Interests of the Party

Personal interests must be subordinated to the Party's interests, the interests of the local Party organization to those of the entire Party, the interests of the part to those of the whole, and temporary to long-term interests. This is a Marxist-Leninist principle which must be followed by every Communist.

A Communist must be clear about the correct relationship between personal and Party interests.

The Communist Party is the political party of the proletariat and has no interests of its own other than those of the emancipation of the proletariat. The final emancipation of the proletariat will also inevitably be the final emancipation of all mankind. Unless the proletariat emancipates all working people and all nations – unless it emancipates mankind as a whole – it

cannot fully emancipate itself. The cause of the emancipation of the proletariat is identical with and inseparable from the cause of the emancipation of all working people, all oppressed nations and all mankind. Therefore, the interests of the Communist Party are the emancipation of the proletariat and all mankind, are communism and social progress. When a Party member's personal interests are subordinated to those of the Party, they are subordinated to the interests of the emancipation of the class and the nation, and those of communism and social progress.

Comrade Mao Zedong has said:

“At no time and in no circumstances should a Communist place his personal interests first; he should subordinate to the interests of the nation and of the masses. Hence selfishness, slacking, corruption, seeking the limelight are most contemptible, while selflessness, working with all one's energy, wholehearted devotion to public duty, and quiet hard work will command respect.”²⁸

28 The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Eng. ed., FLP, Beijing, 1975, Vol. II p. 198

The test of a Party member's loyalty to the Party, the revolution, the cause of communism is whether or not he can subordinate his personal interests absolutely and unconditionally to the interests of the Party whatever the circumstances.

At all times and all questions a party member should give first consideration to the interests of the Party as a whole and put them in the foremost and place personal matters and interests second. The supremacy of the Party's interests is the highest principle that must govern the thinking and actions of the members of our Party. In accordance with this principle, every Party member must completely identify his personal interests with those of the Party both in his thinking and in his actions of the members of our Party both in his thinking and in his actions. He must be able to yield to the interests of the Party without any hesitations or reluctance and sacrifice his personal interests whatever of the two are at variance. Unhesitating readiness to sacrifice personal interests and even one's life, for the Party and for the proletariat and for the emancipation of the nation and of all mankind – this is one expression of what we usually describe as "Party spirit", "Party sense" or "sense of

organization'. It is the highest expression of communist morality, of the principled nature of the party of the proletariat and of the purest proletarian class consciousness.

Members of our Party should not have personal aims which are independent of the Party interests. Their personal aims must harmonize with the Party's interests. If the aim they set for themselves is to study Marxist-Leninist theory, to develop their ability in work, to establish revolutionary organizations and to lead the masses in successful revolutionary struggles – if their aim is more is to do more for the Party – then this personal aim harmonizes with the interests of the Party. The Party needs many such members and cadres. Apart from this aim, Party members should have no independent personal motives such as attaining position of fame, or playing the individual hero; otherwise they will depart from the interests of the Party and may even become careerists within the Party.

If a Party member thinks only of the communist interests and aims of the Party, is really selfless and has no personal aims and considerations divorced from those of the Party, and he ceaselessly raises the level of

his political consciousness through revolutionary practice and through the study of Marxism-Leninism, then the following ensues.

First, he has a high communist morality. Taking a clear-cut, firm proletarian stand, he is able to show loyalty to and love for all comrades, all revolutionaries and working people, help them unreservedly and act towards them as equals, and he will never allow himself to hurt a single one of them for his own interests. He is able to feel for others, place himself in their position and be considerate of them. On the other hand, he is able to wage resolute struggle against the pernicious enemies of mankind and persevere in the fight for the interests of the Party, the proletariat and the emancipation of the nation and all mankind. "He is the first to worry and the last to enjoy himself".²⁹ Whether in the Party or among the people, he is the first to suffer hardship and the last to enjoy comfort; he compares himself with others not with respect to the material enjoyment but to the amount of work done for the revolution and the spirit of hard endurance in the struggle. In times of adversity he steps forward boldly, and in times of difficulty he does his

29 See *Yue Yang Lou Ji*, by Fan Zhongyan (989-1052) of the Song Dynasty

duty to the full. He has such revolutionary firmness and integrity that "neither riches nor honors can corrupt him, neither poverty nor lowly condition can make him swerve from principle, neither threats nor force can bend him".³⁰

Second, he has the greatest revolutionary courage. Having no selfish motives, he has nothing to fear. Having done nothing to give himself a guilty conscience, he can lay bare and courageously correct his mistakes and short comings, which are like "an eclipse of the sun or the moon".³¹ Because he has the courage of righteous conviction, he never fears the truth, courageously upholds it, spreads it and fights for it. Even if it is temporarily to his disadvantage and if, in upholding the truth, he suffers blows of all kinds, is censured by most other people and so finds himself in temporary (and honorable) isolation, even to the point where he may give up his life, he will still breast the waves to uphold the truth and will never drift with the tide.

30 From *Mencius*, Book III, Teng Wen Gong, Part II.

31 See the *Confucian Analects*, Book XIX, Zi Zhang, Chapter 21. "The faults of superior men are like the eclipses of the sun and the moon. When they appear, all men see them; when he corrects them, all men look up to him"

Third, he learns how best to grasp the theory of Marxism-Leninism. He is able to apply them in keenly observing problems and in knowing and changing reality. Because he takes a clear-cut, firm proletarian stand and is tempered in Marxism-Leninism, he is free from personal apprehensions and self-interest, so that there is no impediment to his observation of things or distortion of his understanding of the truth. He seeks the truth from the facts, and he tests all theories and distinguishes what is true from what is false in revolutionary practice.

Fourth, he is the most sincere, most candid and happiest of men. Because he has no private axe to grind, nothing to conceal from the Party and nothing he cannot tell others, he has no problems of personal gain or loss and no personal anxieties other than for the interests of the Party and the revolution. Even when he is working on his own without supervision and therefore has the opportunity to do something bad, he is just as "watchful over himself when he is alone"³² and does not do anything harmful. His work bears examination and he is

32 See the Confucian "Doctrine of the Mean" in the *Book of Rites*: "There is nothing more visible than what is secret, and nothing more manifest than that which is minute. Therefore the superior man is watchful over himself when he is alone."

not afraid having it checked. He does not fear criticism and at the same time is able to criticize others with courage and sincerity.

Fifth, he has the greatest self-respect and self-esteem. For the sake of the Party and the revolution he can be most forbearing and tolerant towards comrades and can suffer wrong in the general interest, even enduring misunderstanding and humiliation without bitterness if the occasion so demands. No personal aims lead him to flatter anyone or to desire flattery from others. When it comes to personal matters, he knows how to conduct himself and has no need to humble himself in order to get help from others. He knows how to take good care of himself in the interests of the Party and the revolution and how to strengthen both his grasp of theory and his practical effectiveness. But when it is necessary to swallow humiliations and bear a heavy load for some important purpose in the cause of the Party and the revolution, he can take on the most difficult and vital tasks without the slightest reluctance, never passing the difficulties to others.

A member of the Communist Party should possess the finest and highest human virtues and take a clear-cut

and firm Party and proletarian stand (that is, possess Party spirit and class spirit). Ours is a fine morality precisely because it is proletarian and communist. It is founded not on the protection of the interests of individuals or of the exploiting few, but on those of the great proletariat and the great mass of working people, of the cause of the final emancipation of all mankind, and the liberation of the whole world from the calamities of capitalism, and the building of a happy and beautiful communist world – it is a morality founded on the Marxist-Leninist theory of scientific communism. As we Communists see it, nothing can be more worthless or indefensible than to sacrifice oneself in the interests of an individual or a small minority. But it is the worthiest and most just thing in the world to sacrifice oneself for the Party, for the proletariat, for the emancipation of the nation and all mankind, for social progress and for the highest interests of the overwhelming majority of the people. Indeed, countless members of the Communist Party have looked death calmly in the face and made the ultimate sacrifice without the slightest hesitation. Most Communists consider it a matter of course to die for the sake of the

cause, to lay down their lives for justice, when that is necessary. This does not stem from any revolutionary fanaticism or hunger for fame but from their scientific understanding of social development and their deep political consciousness. There is no morality in class society to compare with this high communist morality. The universal morality which supposedly transcends class is sheer deceptive nonsense and in fact a morality designed to protect the interests of the exploiting few. Such a concept of morality is always idealist. It is only we communists who build our morality on the scientific basis of historical materialism and proclaim its purpose to be the protection of the interests of the proletariat in the struggle for the emancipation of itself and all mankind.

The Communist Party represents the general and long-range interests of the proletariat and all mankind in their struggle for emancipation; the Party's interests are the concentrated expression of this cause. One must never regard the communist Party as a narrow clique, like the guild perusing the interests of its members. Anyone who does so is no Communist.

A Party member has interests of his own, which may be inconsistent with or even run counter to the interests of the Party in certain circumstances. Should this happen, it is incumbent on him to sacrifice his personal interests and unconditionally subordinate them to the interests of the Party; under no pretense or excuse may he sacrifice the Party's interests by clinging to his own. At all times and in all circumstances, he should fight heart and soul for the Party's interests and for the Party's development, regarding every success and victory won by the Party and the proletariat as his very own. Every Party member should strive to increase his effectiveness and ability in the service of the people. But this must be done in the fight for the advancement, success and victory of the Party's cause, and there must be no striving for individual development divorced from the fight to advance the Party's cause. The facts prove that only by complete devotion in the fight for the advancement, success and victory of the Party's cause can a Party member heighten his effectiveness and ability and that he cannot possibly make progress or heighten his ability in any other way. Hence a Party member can and must

completely merge his personal interests with those of the Party.

Members of our Party are no ordinary people but the awakened vanguard fighters of the proletariat. They must conscientiously represent the class interests and class ideology of the proletariat. Therefore, their personal interests must never project beyond those of the party and the proletariat. It is all the more necessary for each cadre and leader of the Party to be a living embodiment of the general interests of the Party and the proletariat and to merge his personal interests completely in their general interests and aims. In present-day China, it is the proletariat that best represents the interests of national liberation, and therefore our Party members must be worthy champions of the interests of the nation as a whole.

Members of our Party must subordinate personal to Party interests and are required to sacrifice them to party interests if necessary. But this by no means implies that our Party does not recognize, or brushes aside, the personal interest of its members or that it wants to wipe out their individuality. Party members do have their personal problems to attend to, and,

moreover, they should develop themselves according to their individual inclinations and aptitudes. Therefore, so long as the interests of the Party are not violated, a Party member can have his private and family life and develop his individual inclinations and aptitudes. At the same time, the Party will use every possibility to help members develop their individual inclinations and aptitudes in conformity with its interests, furnish them with suitable work and working conditions and commend and reward them. As far as possible, the Party will attend to and safeguard its members' essential interests; for example, it will give them the opportunity to study and to acquire an education, it will help them cope with health and family problems and, when necessary, it will even give up some of its work in order to preserve comrades working under the rule of reaction. But all this has no other purpose than the overall interests of the Party. For the fulfillment of its tasks the Party must ensure that members have the conditions necessary for life, work and education so that they can perform their tasks with enthusiasm and without worry. Comrades in responsible Party positions

must bear all this in mind when they deal with Party members' problems.

To sum up, on his side, each Party member should completely submit himself to the interests of the Party and self-sacrificingly devote himself to the public duty. He should forego all personal aims and private considerations which conflict with the Party's interests. He should not think of himself all the time, make endless personal demands on the Party or blame the Party for not promoting or rewarding him. Whatever the circumstances, he should study hard, try to make progress, be courageous in struggle and make ceaseless efforts to raise the level of his political consciousness and his understanding of Marxism-Leninism, so as to be able to contribute more to the Party and the revolution. On their side all Party organizations and comrades in responsible positions, in dealing with the problems of Party members, should see how they work, live and study. and enable them to work better for the Party, ceaselessly develop themselves and raise their level in the course of the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat. In particular, attention should be paid to comrades who are really selfless and who serve the

people well. Only so, through combined attention and effort by both sides can the interests of the Party be well served.

VII. Examples of Wrong Ideology in the Party

In the light of what has been said, we can see that if an understanding of communism and a correct correlation between personal and Party interests are taken as the standard for evaluating Party members and cadres, many measure up to it and can serve as models, but some do not yet measure up to this standard and still have various wrong ideas to some degree or other. It may not be amiss if I outline these wrong ideas for our comrades' attention.

What are fundamentally the wrong ideas to be found among comrades in our Party?

First. The people joining our Party not only differ in in class origin and personal class status but also carry with them aims and motives of every description. Many, of course, join the Party in order to bring about communism and attain the great goal of the emancipation of the proletariat and all mankind, but some do so for other reasons and with other aims. For

example, some comrades of peasant background used to think that communism meant "expropriation of local tyrants and distribution of the land". When they first joined, they had no understanding of the real meaning of communism. Today, quite a number of people join the Party chiefly because it is resolute in resisting Japan and advocates the Anti-Japanese National United Front. Others join our ranks because they admire the communist Party for its good reputation or because they realize in a vague way that it can save China. Still others are seeking a future for themselves, chiefly because they have no other way out – they have no fixed occupation, are out of work, lack the means of study, or want to escape from family bondage or forced marriage, etc. A few even join because they count on the Party to get their taxes reduced, or because they hope to "make their mark" some day, or because their relatives or friends have brought them in, etc. Naturally, such comrades do not have a clear-cut and stable communist world outlook, do not understand the greatness of the communist cause and the difficulties besetting it, and lack a firm proletarian stand point. Naturally too, some of them will waver or change somewhat in certain

circumstances at certain critical turning points. Since they bring all sorts of ideas with them into the Party, it is most important that they should be educated and should train and temper themselves. Otherwise they cannot become revolutionary fighters of the proletariat. Nevertheless, there is no terrible problem here. After all, it is not a bad thing that people turn to the Communist Party, enter it seeking a way out of their predicament and approve of its policy. They are not mistaken in coming to us. We welcome them – everyone except for enemy agents, traitors, careerists and ambitious climbers. Provided they accept and are ready to abide by the Party's Programme and Constitution, work in one of the Party's organizations and pay membership dues, they may be admitted into the Communist Party. As for deepening their study and understanding of communism and the Party's Programme and Constitution, they can do so after joining the Party and can temper and train themselves in revolutionary struggle on the basis of what they learn; in this way they have every possibility of becoming very good Communists. Indeed, for most people it is impossible to have a profound understanding of communism and the Party's Programme and

Constitution before joining the Party. That is why we can only prescribe acceptance, and not a thorough understanding of the Party's Programme and Constitution as a condition for admission. Although many people do not have a thorough understanding of communism before joining, it is possible for them to become active fighters in the communist and revolutionary movements of the time. They can become politically conscious Communists provided they study hard after joining the Party. Furthermore, our Party Constitution stipulates that members are free to withdraw from the Party (there is no freedom of admission). Any member is free to notify the Party that he is withdrawing from it if he lacks a profound belief in communism, or cannot live a strict Party life, or for any other reason, and the Party gives him the freedom to withdraw. It will do nothing against him unless he gives away Party secrets or engages in wrecking activities against the Party after he leaves. As for careerists and spies who have wormed their way into the Party, of course they have to be expelled. Only thus can we preserve the purity of our Party.

Second. Fairly strong individualism and selfishness are still to be found in some members of our Party.

The individualism expresses itself as follows. Some people habitually place their personal interests above those of the Party when it comes to practical matters; they are preoccupied with personal gain and loss and always calculate in terms of personal interests; they abuse the public trust, turning their Party work to private advantage of one kind or another; or they attack comrades they dislike and wreak private vengeance, on high-sounding pretexts of principle or Party interests. When it comes to status, material benefits and other questions affecting everyday life, they invariably try to get more than others, compare themselves with those at the top, diligently strive after greater personal benefits and crow when they get them. But when it comes to work, they like to compare themselves with those who are less capable. When there hard hardships to beat they make themselves scarce. In times of danger they want to run away. When it comes to orderlies they always want more. Their living quarters must be of the best, and they want to show off and bask in the Party's glory. They want to grab all the good things of life, but when it

comes to the "unpleasant things", they think these are for others. The heads of such people are stuffed with the ideology of the exploiting classes. They believe that "every man is for himself or that Heaven and Earth will destroy him", man is a "selfish animal", and "no one in the world is genuinely unselfish, unless he is a simpleton or an idiot". They even use such exploiting class rubbish to justify their own selfishness and individualism. There are such people in our Party.

This type of self-seeking individualism often manifests itself inside the Party in unprincipled quarreling, factional struggle, sectarianism and departmentalism; it manifests itself in disrespect for and willful violation of Party discipline. Most unprincipled struggles originate in personal interests. Those who go in for factional struggle and are given to sectarianism usually place their own individual interests or the interests of a small minority, above those of the Party. Often, in their unprincipled factional struggles they deliberately undermine Party organization and discipline, making unprincipled and sometimes calculated attacks on certain people, while contracting unprincipled

friendships to avoid giving offense, to cover up for one another, to sing each other's praises, etc.

Departmentalism within the Party arises chiefly because some comrades only see the interest of the part, i.e., the work of their own department or locality, and fail to see the interests of the whole, i.e., the interests of the entire Party and the work of other departments and localities. Politically and ideologically, this resembles the guild outlook. Not all comrades who make the mistake of departmentalism are necessarily prompted by individualism, but people with an individualist ideology usually make the mistake of departmentalism.

Third. Conceit, the idea of individualistic heroism, ostentatiousness, etc., are still to be found, to a greater or lesser extent, in the minds of quite a few Party comrades.

The first consideration of people with such notions is their position in the Party. They like to show off and to have people sing their praises and flatter them. They are ambitious, they like to cut a dash, to claim credit for themselves and to get the limelight, and they like to keep everything in their own hands and lack a

democratic style of work. They are extremely vain and unwilling to immerse themselves in hard work or do routine or technical jobs. They are arrogant, and whenever they accomplish something they throw their weight about, become overbearing and try to domineer, and they do not treat others as equals in a modest and friendly way. They are complacent, talk down to and lecture people and order others about, and they are always trying to tread on people's necks; they do not learn modestly from others, particularly from the masses, and do not accept even well-grounded opinions and criticisms. They can bear promotion but not demotion, they can bear fair weather but not foul, and they cannot bear being misunderstood or wronged. As their baleful yearning for fame has not yet been uprooted they try to dress themselves up as "great men" and "heroes" in the communist movement and stop at nothing to gratify their desire. When they fail to achieve this object, or when they are misunderstood or wronged there is a danger that they will vacillate. Quite a number of people have vacillated and left our Party for such reasons in the course of its history. Exploiting class ideas still linger in the minds of such people, who fail to

understand the greatness of the cause of communism and who lack the communist breadth of vision.

Communists must not be in the least complacent or arrogant. Granted that some comrades are very capable, have done some good work and have to their credit considerable achievements which may be reckoned "great" and on which they might well preen themselves (for example, our army comrades who have led thousands and tens of thousands of men in battle and won victories, or the leaders of our Party and mass work in various places who have brought about fairly significant changes in the situation). Yet after all, how great are these achievements compared with the communist cause as a whole?

And for persons with a communist world outlook, what is there worth preening oneself about in these achievements?

For a Communist to do his work properly and well is no more than his duty. He should guard against complacency and arrogance and do his best to make no mistakes, or as few as possible.

What is there in personal position for a Communist to bother about? No one's position is higher than an emperor's, and yet what is an emperor compared with a fighter in the cause of communism? Is he not just "a drop in the ocean" as Comrade Stalin put it? So what is there in personal position worth bothering or bragging about?

Yes, we need countless communist heroes and many mass leaders of great prestige in our Party and in the communist movement. At present we really have too few of them and have yet to train and temper large numbers of good communist revolutionary leaders and heroes in all fields. This is indeed very important for our cause and must not be neglected. Whoever takes it lightly is ignorant of how to advance the cause of communism. Its advancement requires that we should greatly enhance the revolutionary spirit of enterprise among our Party members and bring their vitality into full play. We have to admit that so far we have not done enough in this respect. This is shown, for instance, by the fact that some Party members do not study hard and have little interest in politics and theory. Therefore, while we are opposed to individualistic heroism and

ostentatiousness, we are certainly not opposed to a spirit of enterprise in the Party members. The desire to make progress in the interests of the people is the most precious quality in a Communist. But the communist, proletarian spirit of enterprise is entirely different from the individualist "spirit of enterprise". The former means seeking truth, upholding it and fighting for it with the greatest effectiveness. It is progressive and opens up unlimited prospects of development, while the latter offers no prospects even for the individual, for people with an individualist ideology are usually driven by their personal interest into deliberately brushing aside, covering up or distorting the truth.

Our comrades must understand that genuine leaders and heroes in the communist movement are never individualistic, nor are they ever self-styled or self-appointed. Anyone who styles himself a leader or reaches after leadership can never become a leader of the Party. The rank and file of our Party will not make leaders of people who are prone to conceit, individualistic heroism, ostentatiousness, personal ambition and vanity. No member of our Party has any right to demand that the rank and file should support or

keep him as a leader. Only those who are entirely selfless and devoted to the Party, only those with an excellent communist morality and fine communist qualities, who have grasped the theory and method of Marxism-Leninism, who have considerable practical ability, who can direct Party work correctly and who study hard and make constant progress can win the trust of the Party and the confidence and support of the rank and file, and so become leaders and heroes in the communist movement.

Our comrades must also understand that a member, or a leader and hero, whoever he may be, can only do part of the work, can only carry part of the responsibility, in the communist movement. The communist cause is an undertaking which requires the collective efforts of tens of millions of people over a long period of time and which cannot be encompassed by any one individual alone. Even such great men as Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin could only perform part of the work needed by the communist cause. The cause for which they worked requires the joint effort and sustained labor of tens of millions of us. We ordinary Communists are also doing part of the work of the communist cause and carrying

part of the responsibility. Of course, our part is much smaller than that of Marx, Engels, Lenin or Stalin. Nevertheless, we have a small part. Big or small, it is all part of the great cause. Therefore, if only we do our part of the work well, we can consider that we have done our duty. Naturally we should try our best to do more, but if we cannot and can only do a little, that is also useful and just as honorable. In any case, we should at least not hamper the progress of the communist cause, but should do our part, whether big or small, and perform our work well, be it heavy or light; that is the correct attitude for every member of our Party. Comrades who are unwilling to undertake technical work think that it stifles their talents, that it prevents them from becoming famous (actually it does not, as witness the technical worker Stakhanov³³ and from giving full play to their abilities and that it kills some of the enterprising spirit which all Communists should have. This view is wrong. Technical work occupies a very important place in our Party work, and comrades engaged in it are doing their share in the communist cause no less than comrades

³³ A.G. Stakhanov (1906-1977), a coal miner in Donbas in the Soviet Union, was a well-known innovator in the coal industry. He adopted new techniques and improved the organization of labor, thus setting a record pace for the mining of coal with an air pick. He was able to mine 102 tons of coal in five and three quarters hours, fourteen times the standard output. His deed was quickly given wide publicity and led to a mass movement of socialist emulation, known as the Stakhanov Movement.

engaged in other jobs. The proper attitude for a Communist is to do whatever work the Party requires of him and do it happily and well, whether it suits his inclinations or not.

Naturally, in assigning work to members, the Party organization and the responsible Party comrades should, as far as possible, take their individual inclinations and aptitudes into consideration, develop their strong points and stimulate their zeal to go forward. However, no Communist must refuse a Party assignment on the grounds of personal preference.

Fourth, A small number of comrades are deeply imbued with the ideology of the exploiting classes. They are usually unscrupulous in dealing with comrades and in handling problems inside the Party, and are utterly devoid of the great and sincere proletarian communist spirit of mutual help and solidarity.

People with this ideology always want to climb over the heads of others in the Party and, to this end, resort to attacking others and doing them harm. They are jealous of those more capable than themselves. They always try to pull down those who are moving ahead of them. They

cannot bear playing second fiddle and think only of themselves and never of others. When other comrades are suffering difficulties or setbacks, they gloat or secretly rejoice and have no comradely sympathy at all. They even scheme to injure comrades "drop on one who has fallen into a well", and take advantage of comrades' weaknesses and difficulties to attack and harm them. They "crawl through any crack" and exploit and exacerbate any weakness in Party organization and work for their personal advantage. They love to stir up trouble in the Party, speak ill of others behind their backs and engage in intrigues in order to sow dissension between comrades. They love to join in any unprincipled dispute that may occur in the Party and take great interest in unprincipled quarrels. They are especially active in stirring up and aggravating such quarrels when the Party is in difficulties. In short, they are thoroughly crooked and lack all integrity. Would it not be absurd to describe such people as being able to grasp the Marxist-Leninist theory and method and give expression to proletarian ideology? It is only too clear that all they express is the ideology of the declining exploiting classes.

All exploiters must do harm to other people in order to expand. To increase their wealth, or to avoid bankruptcy in an economic crisis, bigger capitalists must squeeze many smaller capitalists out of existence and drive countless workers to starvation. To enrich themselves, landlords must exploit peasants and deprive many of them of their land. In order to expand, fascist Germany, Italy and Japan must devastate other countries; they have subjugated Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Ethiopia and are committing aggression against China. Exploiters always harm and ruin other people as a necessary precondition for their own expansion; their happiness is founded on the suffering of others. Among the exploiters, therefore, genuine firm unity, genuine mutual help, and genuine human sympathy are impossible; they inevitably engage in intrigues and underhand activities in order to ruin others. Yet they have to lie and pose as saints and pillars of justice before the people. Such are the distinguishing characteristics of all declining exploiting classes. These may be models of "fine" ethical conduct for the exploiters, but they are most criminal from the point of view of the proletariat and the masses.

The proletariat is the complete antithesis of the exploiting classes. It does not exploit others but is itself exploited. There is no conflict of basic interests within its ranks or between it and the other oppressed and exploited working people. Far from needing to harm other working people or impede their development for the sake of its own development and emancipation, the proletariat must forge the closest unity with them in the common struggle. If the proletariat is to emancipate itself, it must at the same time emancipate all other working people and emancipate all mankind. There can be no such thing as the separate emancipation of a single worker or section of workers. The proletariat must carry the cause of the emancipation of humanity through to the end, fighting step by step for the liberation of all mankind, and there can be no giving up or compromising half-way.

As a result of this objective position occupied by the proletariat, the ideology of the politically conscious workers is the diametrical opposite of that of the exploiters. Communists are vanguard fighters of the proletariat, who arm themselves with Marxism-Leninism and are ruthless towards the people's enemies

but never towards the toilers, their class brothers and comrades. They differentiate clearly and sharply between the attitudes and methods to be adopted against the enemy and those to be adopted towards their comrades and friends. They cherish great and sincere friendship, warmth and sympathy for other members of their own class and for all oppressed and exploited working people, towards whom they show a fine spirit of mutual help, firm unity and genuine equality. They are absolutely opposed to privileges of any kind for anyone, consider it impermissible to think in terms of privilege for themselves, and would deem it unthinkable and even a disgrace, to occupy a privileged position among the people. If they themselves are to develop and improve status, they must develop others and improve the status of all the working people at the same time. They are anxious not to fall behind, whether ideologically or politically or in their work, and they have a sturdy spirit of enterprise, but at the same time they esteem, cherish and support those who are ahead of them in these respects and, without any jealousy, do their best to learn from them. They are deeply concerned with the sufferings and privations of their

own class and of all working people, they are concerned with all the struggles of the working people for emancipation anywhere in the world, regarding every victory or defeat for the working people anywhere as their own victory or defeat, and therefore displaying the greatest solidarity. They consider it wrong to be indifferent to the struggle of the working and oppressed people for liberation and criminal to gloat over their setbacks. They cherish their own comrades and brothers, whose weaknesses and mistakes they criticize frankly and sincerely (and this shows genuine affection); in matters of principle they never gloss over and accommodate, let alone encourage mistakes (to accommodate or even to encourage others' mistakes does not betoken genuine affection for one's comrades). They do everything possible to help comrades overcome weaknesses and correct mistakes and never exploit or aggravate these weaknesses and mistakes to get comrades into trouble, let alone cause the mistakes to develop beyond correction. Not harboring any desire to settle old scores, they can return good for evil to their own comrades and brothers and help them straighten themselves out. They can be strict with themselves and

lenient with others. The stand they take is firm, strict and principled, their attitude is frank, upright and responsible, they do not give way on matters of principle, they do not tolerate anyone who harms the Party, they do not permit anyone to insult them and are particularly contemptuous of adulation and flattery as contrary to all principle. They oppose all unprincipled struggles; they do not let themselves become involved in such struggles and are not swayed or affected by irresponsible or casual criticism made behind their backs as to depart from principle, become incapable of thinking calmly or lose their composure. Such are the proletarian qualities in the most concentrated, exemplary and concrete form. These qualities represent everything of integrity in present-day society. Indeed it is the Communist Party that represents human integrity. We must foster and enhance such proletarian integrity and overcome all that is crooked and evil.

Fifth. Pettiness, fussing over trifles and ignoring the general interest are faults still prevalent among some Party members. These comrades lack the nature and breadth of vision of Communists and are blind to the bigger things; they relish only the immediate and petty.

They do not take much interest in the great problems and events in the Party and the revolution, but are always fussing over the merest trifles about which they enter into ponderous and endless arguments and become highly disturbed. Such people are also easily led by the nose when they receive some small favor or kindness. They have the petty-mindedness characteristic of small rural producers.

There are other people who do not seem to have a clear-cut and definite attitude in their Party life, people who shift and hedge. They are actually of two kinds; for one kind the question is one of understanding and for the other, of moral character. The latter are always opportunistic in their personal behavior, curry favor with all sides and try to please everybody. They tailor their words to the person and the circumstances, tack with the wind and show no principle whatsoever. Such are their characteristics. Sometimes, they wait and see what will suit the occasion, like the bat in Aesop's Fables,³⁴ and then move over to the winning side. Such double faced creatures, who are neither fish nor fowl,

³⁴ See "The Bat and the Weasels", *Aesop's Fables*. A bat once fell down and was caught by a weasel. He begged the weasel to spare his life. The weasel said, "I hate birds. I will not let you go." The bat said, "I am not a bird but a mouse," and was set free. Sometime later, the bat again fell to the ground and was caught by another weasel. He begged the weasel not to kill him. The weasel said he hated mice. The bat argued that he was not a mouse but a bat and so he was set free a second time. The bat thus saved his life twice by changing his name.

are not altogether unknown in our ranks. They have the traits of the old-fashioned merchant. In addition, there are some individuals who, unable to resist the lure of the old society's exploiting classes, with their glittering world, their money and their women, begin to waver, go wrong and eventually to betray the Party and the revolution.

Finally, the ideology of some of our Party comrades often reflects the impetuosity and vacillation of the petty-bourgeoisie and the destructiveness of the lumpen-proletariat and certain bankrupt peasants, but I shall not go into this question here.

To sum up, our Party represents the great and powerful proletarian communist ideology, but it must be noted that all kinds of non-proletarian ideology - including even the ideology of the declining exploiting classes - are still reflected to a greater or lesser degree in the minds of certain comrades. At times such ideology is dormant in the Party, revealing itself only in insignificant matters of everyday life; but at other times it becomes active, systematically revealing itself in a whole variety of questions of Party principle, in major political questions and in problems of inner Party

struggle. Certain sections of links in the Party organization may come to be dominated and corroded by such erroneous ideology, and in extreme cases in may even temporarily dominate key links in the Party leadership, as in the periods when people like Chen Duxiu³⁵ and Zhang Guotao³⁶ were in control. In normal periods, however, it is held in check by the correct proletarian ideology. These are all manifestations within the Party of the struggle between the proletarian and non-proletarian ideology. Similarly with some individual Party members. At times what is wrong in their ideology lies dormant and under control, but at other times it may grow and even dominate their

35 Chen Duxiu (1880-1942), a native of the city of Anqing, Anhui Province (originally Huaining County), began editing the magazine *Youth* or *New Youth* as it was later called, in September 1915. In 1918, together with Li Dazhao, he founded the *Weekly Review*, and he was an advocate of the new culture and one of the chief leaders of the May 4th new cultural movement. After the May 4th Movement, he accepted and propagated Marxism. He was one of the main founders of the Communist Party of China and served as its chief leader for the first six years after its founding. In the last period of the First Revolutionary Civil War, he committed a serious error of Right capitulationism. Later, he lost his faith in the future of the revolution and denied that it was necessary for the proletariat to continue to carry out the tasks of the democratic revolution in China. He formed a faction inside the Party, engaged in anti-Party activities and was consequently expelled in November 1929. He later linked up with the Trotskyites, and in May 1931 he was made general secretary of a Trotskyite organization. In September 1932, he was arrested and imprisoned by the Kuomintang. He was released in August 1937.

36 Zhang Guotao (1897-1979), a native of Pingxiang, Jiangxi Province, attended the First National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 1921 and was elected a member of the Central Committee at its Second, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth National Congresses. At the First Plenary Session of the Sixth National Congress, he was elected a member of the Political Bureau. In 1931 he served as secretary of the Hubei-Henan-Anhui Sub bureau of the Central Committee and vice-chairman of the Provisional Central Government of the Chinese Soviet Republic. In June 1935, when the First Front Army of the Red Army joined forces with the Fourth Front Army in western Sichuan, he became general political commissar of the Red Army. He opposed the Central Committee's decision to have the Red Army continue its northward march. As a result, he carried out criminal activities to split the Party and the Red Army and set up a separate "party central committee". In June 1936, forced to abolish the "second party central committee", he continued the northward march with the Second and Fourth Front Armies, reaching the northern part of Shaanxi Province in December. He became the vice-chairman of the Government of Shaanxi-Gansu-Ningxia Border Region in 1937. In April 1938, while allegedly attending a ceremony to sweep the grave of the Yellow Emperor, Huangdi, he fled the region, went to Wuhan via Xi'an and joined the Kuomintang secret police. He thus became a renegade from the Chinese Revolution, and he was subsequently expelled from the Party.

actions. This is a manifestation among individual Party members of the contradiction and struggle between proletarian and non-proletarian ideology. For our Party members, ideological self-cultivation means that they must conscientiously use the proletarian ideology and the communist world outlook to overcome and eliminate all the various kinds of incorrect, non-proletarian ideology.

VIII. The Source of Wrong Ideology in Our Party

The Communist Party, representing the brightest and most progressive aspects of contemporary human society, is the bearer and disseminator of Marxism-Leninism, the acme of human thought. The most politically conscious, progressive and developed people in the world, people with the highest sense of morality and justice, are gathered in the communist Parties, fighting unswervingly against all the forces of darkness and for the bright future and final emancipation of mankind. The Communist Party of China is one of the best Communist Parties in the world. Guided by our leader Comrade Mao Zedong, our Party is armed with the powerful weapon of Marxist-Leninist theory and, at the same time, is carrying forward the fine traditions of progressive thinkers and revolutionaries in Chinese history. It represents the most progressive and brightest aspects of Chinese society, and the finest sons and daughters of the Chinese nation are gathered within its

organized ranks. It has been fighting the forces of darkness in Chinese society for a long time, has gone through an arduous process of tempering and has accumulate rich experience in revolutionary struggle. In all this we Communists can justly take pride. There is every ground for absolute confidence that we shall finally be successful and victorious. However, we cannot say yet that everything in our organization is perfect, or that there are no shortcomings and faults. Nor can we say that our ranks are free from unsound and even bad elements, who might be quite capable of any sort of nastiness. In other words, our glorious Party contains some undesirable phenomena, some dark spots which I have already enumerated.

Now when a family acquires an ugly son-in-law or daughter-in-law, it can not always keep him or her away from the guests. Even if we wanted to do so by taking the attitude of trying to "conceal the family shame", it would be impossible to hide such unpleasantness. The masses of the people are in constant contact with our Party, sympathizers come here to visit us and people who look up to us including many young men and women, come here to study or to join our Party. When

they arrive, besides the progressive, fine and attractive things and "members of the family", they will naturally see the ugly sons- or daughters-in-law who might publicly say or do something unpleasant or make a spectacle of themselves, to the perplexity of our guests and new Party members. The newcomers may ask, "Does not the Communist Party stand for all that is just? Are Communists not the finest people? Why are there still such bad people and ugly things in the Communist Party? How strange!" Before joining the Party, some young comrades were bitterly dissatisfied with existing society, saw no way out and turned to the Communist Party as to a beacon of light. They thought that everything would be satisfactory and would work out well once they joined. Yet after doing so, or after arriving in our revolutionary base area, they find there are shortcomings and mistakes in the Party, too, and in real life not everything is satisfactory (much that would satisfy them would not be in the interests of the revolution and the Party), and so they feel reality is not entirely as they pictured it, and some begin to have doubts and feel puzzled. They ask, "Why are such things to be found in the Communist Party as well?"

Before coming to Yan'an or before enrolling in the Anti-Japanese Military and Political College, some people imagined Yan'an and the College would live up to their dreams, but after their arrival and enrollment they do not find everything to their satisfaction and are perplexed. They ask, "How can such things happen even in Yan'an and the Anti-Japanese College?" And failing to find answers, some even become pessimistic and disheartened.

Their questions should alert our Party members and cadres and be a lesson to them so that they will give serious attention to guiding and taking care of all new Party members and all who are moving in our direction and to ensuring they are not adversely affected. But, quite apart from this, we should explain things clearly to comrades inside and outside the Party.

Why are there still such undesirable things in our splendid Party? The reason, I think, is rather simple. Our Party has not fallen from the skies, but has grown out of Chinese society. In general, our Party consists of the finest sons and daughters of our country, the vanguard of the Chinese proletariat, but they come from all strata of the old society, and in China today there still

exists exploiting classes and the influence of these classes – selfishness, intrigue, bureaucracy and various types of filth. We have many excellent Party members who are not easily affected by such influences. But it is so strange that certain members bring some of the filth of the old society with them into our Party or reflect it there? Is it so strange that a person that has just crawled out of the mud is covered with slime? Of course not. It is only to be expected. It would be strange and indeed incredible, if the ranks of the Communist Party were absolutely free from such filth. It may be said that so long as such filth exists in society, so long as classes and exploiting class influences exist in society, there is bound to be some filth in the Communist Party. It is precisely because there is such filth in society, and in the Party, that it is the duty of the communist Party to change existing society, and it is necessary for Communists to remould, cultivate and temper themselves. In addition to carrying on a struggle in society at large against everything evil and backward, it is imperative for us to carry on a struggle inside the Party against every social evil and backward influence as mirrored in the Party by vacillating and unsteady

elements. This is the source of inner-Party contradiction and struggle. Through struggle, both inside and outside the Party, we seek to change society and gradually rid it of its evils and backwardness, and at the same time seek to perfect our Party and remould our Party members, and to resolve our inner-Party contradictions, so that our Party and its membership will become healthier and stronger.

Stalin said:

“The source of the contradiction within the proletarian parties lies in two circumstances.

What are these circumstances?

They are firstly the pressure exerted by the bourgeoisie and bourgeois ideology on the proletariat and its party in the conditions of the class struggle – a pressure to which the least stable strata of the proletariat, and hence the least stable strata of the proletarian party, not infrequently succumb. It must not be thought that the proletariat is completely isolated from society, that it stands outside society. The proletariat is a part of society, connected with its diverse strata by numerous

threads. But the party is a part of the proletariat Hence the Party cannot be exempt from connections with, and from the influence of, the diverse sections of the bourgeois society The pressure of the bourgeoisie and its ideology on the proletariat and its party finds expression in the fact that bourgeois ideas, manners, customs and sentiments not infrequently penetrate the proletariat and its party through definite strata of the proletariat that are in one way or another connected with bourgeois society.

They are, secondly, the heterogeneity of the working class, the existence of a different strata within the working class.

One stratum is the main mass of the proletariat, its core, its permanent part, the mass of "pure blooded" proletarians, who have long broken off connection with the capitalist class. This stratum of the proletariat is the most reliable bulwark of Marxism.

The second stratum consists of new comers from non-proletarian classes – from the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie or the intelligentsia. These are

former members of other classes who have only recently merged with the proletariat and brought with them into the working class their customs, their habits, their waverings and their vacillations. This stratum constitutes the most favorable soil for all sorts of anarchist, semi-anarchist and "ultra-Left" groups.

The third stratum, lastly, consists of the labor aristocracy, the upper stratum of the working class, the most well-to-do portion of the proletariat, with its propensity for compromise with the bourgeoisie, its predominant inclination to adapt itself to the powers that be, and its anxiety to "get on in life". This stratum constitutes the most favorable soil for outright reformists and opportunists.”³⁷

Here we see the source of the various kinds of non-proletarian ideology and the various errors, shortcomings and undesirable phenomena that exist in our proletarian party. Here, indeed, is the source of the various contradictions that are present in our Party.

³⁷ J. V. Stalin, "Once More on the Social-Democratic Deviation in Our Party", *Works*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954, Vol. IX, pp. 9-11.

IX. Attitudes Towards Wrong Ideology in the Party and Towards Inner-Party Struggle

The influences exerted by the exploiting classes and the petty bourgeoisie, the existence of different strata within the working class and the differences in the class background of our Party members give rise to different ideas among them, to certain differences in viewpoints, habits and sentiments, in world outlook and moral values, and differences in the way they look at and think about things in general and the problems of the revolution in particular.

Some people in our Party are able to view issues as developing and interrelated, but others habitually view them statistically and in isolation. The former are able to grasp matters comprehensively and objectively and hence to draw correct conclusions that can serve us as correct guide lines to action. As for the latter, some of them only see or over emphasize this side of a thing, while others only see and over emphasize the other side;

both fail to view problems comprehensively and objectively in accordance with the laws of the development and interrelationship of objective phenomena, and both take a one-sided, subjective view of problems. Hence, they are unable to arrive at correct conclusions or chart the right course for our actions.

The differences among Party members in their approach to problems lead to different ways of handling problems, to divergences and controversies are bound to become especially acute at turning points in the revolution, or when the struggle grows in intensity and hardship mount.

Therefore, the crux of the matter is not whether there are differences of thought and opinion within the Party, since such differences always exist. The crux of the matter is how to resolve contradictions, settle differences and overcome all kinds of incorrect, non-proletarian thinking. Obviously, it is only through inner-Party struggle that such contradictions can be resolved, differences settled and incorrect thinking overcome. As

Engels put it, “In the long run the contradictions are never slurred over, but always fought out.”³⁸

Different people hold different views and take different attitudes with regard to shortcomings, mistakes and other undesirable phenomena in our Party.

People of one kind do not or will not see shortcomings, mistakes and other undesirable phenomena in our Party, but blindly believe that there is scarcely anything wrong in it; hence they relax their vigilance and slacken their struggle their struggle against these phenomena. People of another kind see nothing, or hardly anything, except these undesirable phenomena and fail to see how correct and glorious our Party is; hence they become pessimistic and loose confidence, or they become alarmed and bewildered in the face of such phenomena. The views of both are wrong and one-sided. Our view is different. On the one hand, we know we know that our Party is the political party of the proletariat, the most progressive and revolutionary party in China. On the other, we know clearly that there are still shortcomings, mistakes and other undesirable phenomena, major and

³⁸ See *Marx-Engels Archives*, Book I, p. 371, quoted in J. V. Stalin, *Works*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954, Vol. IX, pp. 9-11.

minor in our Party. Moreover, we clearly understand their source and how to correct and gradually eliminate them, and we are making constant efforts to temper ourselves, improve our work and wage the necessary struggles in order to promote the progress of the Party and the revolution.

Since people differ in their class stand and their views, they take different attitudes towards what is undesirable in our Party. One attitude is that of alien class and hostile elements who have wormed their way into our Party. A second attitude is that of Party members who lack a firm proletarian stand and have a wrong way of thinking. A third is that of Party members who firmly uphold the principles of Marxism-Leninism.

The alien class and hostile elements who have worked their way into the Party are glad of its shortcomings, mistakes and other undesirable phenomena. Gleefully seeking their opportunity, they use every possible means to exploit and magnify some of these undesirable phenomena for the purpose of wrecking our Party. Sometimes they even make a pretense of opposing certain mistakes and supporting the Party line in order to cause an opposite kind of mistake to be committed.

People with the second type of attitude fall into the following distinct categories:

1. Some Party members sympathize with and accept certain erroneous ideas, or follow the bad example of certain people in the Party, so as to further their personal ends and desires. They consider the existence of certain short comings and mistakes in the Party to be to their advantage and therefore, whether intentionally or unintentionally, aggravate these failings and exploit them. This is the attitude of careerists of bad characters in the Party.

2. Some Party members do nothing about the shortcomings, mistakes and other undesirable phenomena in the Party and allow them to grow. They just muddle along and are unwilling to fight these evils. They fear inner-Party struggle and self-criticism, considering them harmful to the Party, or they are insensitive or shut their eyes to the undesirable things, or they are perfunctory and compromising in the struggle against them. This is the attitude taken by Communists who have a weak sense of duty towards the Party, are extremely liberalistic, or are guilty of bureaucracy.

3. The attitude of some Party members towards these shortcomings and mistakes and towards those comrades who have incorrect ideas is one of “bitter hatred and gall”. They lightly sever all relations with comrades who have committed some mistake and whom they attempt to expel from the Party outright. If they fail in this and need rebuffs, they give up and become pessimistic and down-hearted, or they keep aloof, “preserve their purity” and even put a great distance between themselves and the Party. This extreme attitude is also shown in some comrades’ mechanical conception of inner-Party struggle and self-criticism. People with this attitude believe that inner-Party struggle must be launched under any and all circumstances – the more frequently and bitterly, the better. They magnify every trifle into a matter of “principle” and brand every tiny fault with such labels as political opportunism. They do not carry on inner-Party struggle properly and specifically in accordance with the objective needs and objective laws of development, but instead “struggle” mechanically,

subjectively and violently, regardless of the consequences. This is the attitude taken by Party members who do not understand the source of inner-Party contradictions, who lack skill in dealing with inner-Party differences and who have a mechanical conception of inner-Party struggle. For a time, this extreme attitude towards inner-Party struggle was exploited by the “Left” opportunists in the Party. They intensified mechanical and excessive struggles to the point of deliberately hunting for “targets of struggle” within the Party, deliberately creating inner-Party struggles, punishing comrades by abusing Party disciplinary measures and even employing against them measures applicable to struggles outside the Party; and it was by such “struggles” and “disciplinary measures” that they tried to push the work ahead.

The attitude we should adopt is the proletarian Marxist-Leninist one. Contrary to the erroneous attitudes described above, we advocate the following.

1. First of all, get to know the various phenomena, ideas, views and opinions in the Party and distinguish those which are correct and beneficial to

the interests of the Party and the revolution from those which are not, or, in the case of a dispute in which both sides are wrong, perceive this and be able to point out the correct view or opinion. After sober analysis and consideration, decide on a clear-cut attitude and take a correct stand. Do not follow blindly or drift with the tide.

2. Profit by every good example, promote and spread a spirit of integrity in the Party and vigorously support all correct views and opinions. Do not follow any bad examples or be influenced by any wrong ideas.

3. Do not take a liberalistic attitude or flinch from any necessary inner-Party struggle. Carry on an irreconcilable struggle in the Party against ideas and views which are wrong in principle and against all other undesirable phenomena, so that we can constantly move to overcome them; they should never be allowed to develop unchecked to the detriment of the Party and the revolution.

4. Do not take a mechanical and extreme attitude. Properly combine irreconcilability and clarity in

matters of principle with flexibility and patient persuasion in methods of struggle; in the course of prolonged struggles, educate, criticize, temper and remould comrades who have committed errors but who are not incorrigible. Such inner-Party ideological struggles on matters of principle as are necessary at different periods should be waged in a concrete and proper way; inner-Party struggles should not be waged indiscriminately, subjectively, mechanically or on shadowy pretexts. Do not become “struggle addicts”.

5. Strengthen the unity and discipline of the Party and enhance its prestige through inner-Party struggle. Organizational penalties, ranging all the way to expulsion, should be applied to the incorrigible elements of the Party. We should regard it as our supreme duty to safeguard the Party’s unity, preserve the purity of its ideology and consolidate its organization.

Such is the attitude of all good Communists in the Party and indeed the only correct Marxist-Leninist attitude.

It is not strange that our enemies should seek to make use of our every shortcoming and mistake to undermine our Party. Besides constantly sharpening our vigilance, we should do everything possible to give the enemy as little opportunity as possible to exploit shortcomings and mistakes in the Party whenever they occur; this is the duty of every comrade who cherishes the Party. If a Party member ignores this consideration in inner-Party struggle, if he only seeks to vent his feelings, or goes to the length of joining up with bad elements instead of rejecting their assistance, or even makes use of outside forces to help him attain some private ends within the Party, he will be making an unpardonable breach of discipline.

Members of our Party should be the embodiment of correct ideology and should follow good examples in the Party; they should not follow but oppose wrong ideas and bad examples. But what actually happens is that some comrades that are generally correct in their ideology and follow good examples, sometimes reflect certain wrong ideas and follow certain bad examples. Other comrades seem to find it easy to learn from bad but hard to learn from good, and this merits our serious

attention. When mistakes occur in the Party, they are apt to encourage or aggravate them, intentionally or unintentionally. In inner-Party struggles they are apt to take the wrong side or to go along with whichever side is currently in vogue, irrespective of right and wrong. These comrades will hardly make progress unless they receive strict criticism and rigorous tempering.

Of course comrades who adopt a liberalistic or bureaucratic attitude towards shortcomings, mistakes and other undesirable phenomenon inside the Party are also wrong. This, I think should be quite clear to you as students of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism. For in the Party building course which you have studied, the necessity of self-criticism and ideological struggle within the Party is clearly and thoroughly discussed; you can go into it again, and I need not dwell on the matter further. However, I do want to point out that quite a few comrades have this liberalistic attitude. We often do not have enough really responsible and sincere criticism and self-criticism conducted in keeping with the Party's organizational principles, for the purpose of exposing, correcting and eliminating the undesirable phenomena in the Party, and more particularly we do

not have enough criticism from below and self-criticism, both of which would be greatly encouraged. On the other hand, there is quite a lot of criticism that is irresponsible and not in keeping with the Party's organizational principles, of talking behind people's backs and gossip about this or that person or thing. Both are manifestations of liberalism in the Party. They show that some of the comrades are insufficiently mature politically and are not courageous enough in revolutionary struggle; they also indicate that inner-Party democracy has not been properly developed. Some comrades dare not dispense with face-saving, and fear to offend others lest they themselves incur complaints and counter-criticism. They would rather leave the shortcomings and mistakes alone, taking the attitude of "getting by" and "the less trouble the better", but at the same time they talk about comrades behind their backs. All this harms the Party and does it no good. Irresponsible criticism and talk are not likely to overcome the shortcomings and mistakes in the party but will lead to unprincipled disputes and disunity. We stand for inner-Party criticism and self-criticism which

is responsible and beneficial to the Party and is in keeping with its organizational principles.

Shortcomings and mistakes exist in the Party and so do incorrect non-proletarian ideas. Any of these may at certain times develop into a trend, giving rise to differences of principle and impairing the Party's unity of action. Hence it is impossible to educate the Party, the proletariat and the masses correctly if we do not unfold criticism and self-criticism, constantly expose and correct short comings and mistakes, overcome wrong ideas and conduct inner-Party struggle to resolve inner-Party differences, but instead take a compromising attitude and follow a “middle” line, or try to muddle through in inner-Party struggle.

Liberalism in inner-Party struggle is manifested in yet another way. Thus when a dispute breaks out in the Party, many comrades put aside their work and indulge in aimless debate for days and months on end or let themselves go without restraint; as a result, the unity of the Party becomes the loser, Party discipline is weakened, the Party's prestige is impaired and our militant Party organizations turn into debating societies. Such things have occurred more than once in certain

Party organizations. They have absolutely nothing in common with the kind of criticism and self-criticism we advocate. We need criticism and self-criticism, not in order to impair the Party's prestige, undermine its discipline and weaken its leadership, but in order to promote the Party's prestige, consolidate its discipline and strengthen its leadership.

Hence, it is wrong to adopt a liberalistic or bureaucratic attitude towards the various shortcomings and mistakes in the Party. In order to fight against all undesirable phenomena and resolve differences, we must promote criticism and self-criticism and conduct inner-Party struggle correctly. Only then can the party be strengthened, grow and advance.

Comrades who take an extreme attitude in inner-Party struggle are also wrong.

The extreme attitude is the exact antithesis of the liberalistic attitude. It arises because these comrades fail to understand that wrong ideas in the Party have deep social roots and cannot possibly be eliminated at one stroke. At various times and in varying degrees, many of our Party comrades may reflect certain incorrect ideas

existing in society and may commit some mistakes in their work under the influence of non-proletarian ideologies; no comrade can entirely avoid this. If the Party were to refuse to retain or tolerate all comrades who reflect non-proletarian ideologies in some degree, or who have committed some mistakes and yet are not incorrigible, and were to reject them categorically and even expel them, then the tasks of educating the comrades and consolidating the Party's organization would be nonexistent. Were our Party to follow such an extreme policy, the comrades promoting such actions would eventually have to be expelled themselves. In particular, these comrades fail to understand that the achievement of communism involves the tremendous and difficult task of transforming all mankind into the selfless citizenry of a communist society, the task of converting men with their many weaknesses into communists with a high level of culture through a long process of tempering and education in the course of struggle. If they did understand this, then they would understand that our Party has the important and constant duty of educating and remoulding people who are

already members but whose ideology is not wholly proletarian.

Naturally, the education and remoulding of such Party members is a most arduous task requiring prolonged and patient effort. Yet if we are unwilling to tackle this difficult task and shrink from it, how can we talk about changing the world and all mankind? Since we are determined to undertake, and not to shrink from, the unprecedentedly arduous task of changing the world and all mankind, what other task in the world today can daunt us? Party members who have the communist world outlook are dauntless, fear no difficulty or hardship, and understand that the process of development is torturous. Comrades who take an extreme attitude do not understand that the achievement of communism is an arduous and torturous task, they fear difficulties and crave a straight road, they want to eliminate everything unpleasant at one stroke and leap immediately into the world of their ideals. Thinking and acting in this way, they inevitably run their heads against a brick wall. And after banging and bruising their heads, they quite often become disheartened and lose their confidence in the future of communism.

Thus they swing between extremes, from “Left” to “Right”, thereby revealing the essence of their non-proletarian ideology. It is regrettable that this erroneous, extreme attitude towards inner-Party shortcomings and mistakes should still be found to a greater or lesser extent among quite a few comrades, although it is harmful to the Party, to other comrades and to themselves.

Inner-Party struggle is necessary not because we are subjectively addicted to struggle or partial to dispute, but because inner-Party differences of principle do arise in the growth of the Party and in the proletarian struggle. When they occur, “contradictions can be overcome only by means of a struggle for definite principles, for definite aims of the struggle, for definite methods of waging the struggle leading to the desired aim.”³⁹ Compromise is of no avail here. This means that when a dispute has developed into one of principle which can only be resolved through struggle, we should unflinchingly wage inner-Party struggle in order to resolve it. It does not mean that we should make a big fuss over small matters, conduct inner-Party struggle

39 J. V. Stalin, *“Once More on the Social-Democratic Deviation in Our Party”*, *Works*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954, Vol. IX, p. 4.

with stony faces and never compromise even on routine and on questions of a purely practical nature. “One can, and one should agree to any compromise with dissenters in the party on questions of current policy, on questions of a purely practical nature.”⁴⁰

When opportunist ideas and differences of principle arise in the Party, we must, of course, wage struggles to overcome those ideas and errors of principle. This defiantly does not mean that when there are no differences of principles and no opportunist ideas in the Party, we should deliberately magnify into “differences of principle” divergences of opinion among comrades on questions of a purely practical nature.

Comrade Mao Zedong has said:

“The Party must on the one hand wage a serious struggle against erroneous thinking, and on the other give the comrades who have committed errors ample opportunity to wake up. This being the case, excessive struggle is obviously inappropriate.”⁴¹

It is necessary to make severe criticism of, or even to apply organizational penalties to, those comrades who,

40 J. V. Stalin, *“Once More on the Social-Democratic Deviation in Our Party”*, *Works*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954, Vol. IX, p. 4.

41 “On Contradiction”, *Selected Works of Mao Zedong*, Eng. ed., FLP, Beijing, 1975, Vol. I, p. 345.

after committing opportunist mistakes or other mistakes of principle, turn a deaf ear to persuasion and Party criticism, willfully and obstinately cling to their errors and resist Party policy, or double-faced in their attitude. But if these comrades do not cling to their mistakes but are willing to correct them and give up their previous point of view after sober discussion, persuasion and criticism, or if they coolly ponder over their mistakes or soberly discuss them with other comrades, we should welcome every small sign of progress on their part and not subject them to penalties indiscriminately. In criticism and inner-Party struggle, it is not true that the more stony-faced we are the better, or that the more comrades we punish the better; our highest aim is to educate the erring comrades to the best effect, help them to correct their mistakes, educate the entire membership and consolidate the Party.

The “Left” opportunists are clearly wrong in their attitude towards inner-Party struggle. According to these almost hysterical people, any peace in the Party was intolerable – even peace based on complete unanimity on matters of principle and on the Party line. Even in the absence of any differences of principle in the Party, they

deliberately hunted out targets, dubbed some comrades “opportunist” and set them up as “straw men” to shoot at in inner-Party struggle. They thought that such erroneous struggle and such shooting at “straw men” were the magic formula for developing the Party and achieving victory in the revolutionary fight of the proletariat. They considered that to stir up trouble out of nothing or to deliberately concoct inner-Party struggle was the only “Bolshevik” way. Of course, this is not serious and earnest inner-Party struggle; rather it is a mockery of the Party and the perverting of inner-Party struggle, which is a most serious matter, into a frivolous game. The advocates of such action are not Bolsheviks at all but are either people who are well-nigh incorrigible or careerists exploiting the name “Bolshevik”.

We have been discussing the attitude to be adopted towards shortcomings, mistakes and other undesirable phenomena in the Party. It is by combating all that is bad inside and outside the Party that we change the world and mankind and at the same time perfect the Party and remould ourselves. Inner-Party struggle is a reflection within the Party of existing contradictions in

society between classes and between old and new. The Party tempers, develops and consolidates itself in the class struggle outside the Party (i.e., in the revolutionary struggles of the masses of the people) and simultaneously becomes consolidated and united through struggle inside the Party, and is therefore able to give more systematic, correct and effective leadership to the revolutionary struggle of the masses. Hence it would be utterly wrong, advantageous to the enemy, contrary to the laws of development of the class struggle and incompatible with our basic thesis of transformation of the world and mankind through struggle, if we were to adopt a liberal attitude towards shortcomings, mistakes and other undesirable phenomena in the Party by glossing over internal differences of principle, covering up inner-Party contradictions, evading inner-Party struggle and just muddling along. Similarly, it would be wrong to isolate the struggle inside the Party from the class struggle outside the Party or the revolutionary movement of the masses and thus turn inner-Party struggle into empty talk. In fact, it is impossible to temper, develop and consolidate the party in isolation from the revolutionary struggle of the masses. However,

it would be equally wrong and contrary to the laws of development of the Party, if we were to carry matters to the other extreme and adopt an extreme attitude towards all comrades who have shortcomings or have committed errors but who are not irredeemable, or if we were to fail to distinguish between them and the enemy, conducting mechanical and excessive inner-Party struggles against them and willfully fabricating such struggles. We should not break with comrades who have committed errors but who are nevertheless loyal. Rather, we should show concern and sympathy for them, persuade and educate them and help them temper and reform themselves in struggle. We should not castigate or expel them unless they persist in their mistakes and prove incorrigible.

Although there are still some shortcomings and mistakes, some isolated minor evils in our Party, we are fully confident that with the advance of the working-class movement we can and will get rid of them through the great revolutionary struggles of the masses. The history of nearly two decades of struggle and glorious progress by the Chinese Communist Party and the

worldwide development of the working-class movement, thoroughly convince us of this.

Inner-Party struggle is an indispensable component of the revolutionary struggle as a whole. Our comrades should therefore temper and cultivate themselves both in struggles outside the Party and in the struggle on two fronts inside the Party. Among many Party comrades, however, there is still no genuinely profound appreciation of such inner-Party struggle, and there is insufficient tempering and self-cultivation. This is manifested not only in the frequent unprincipled struggles carried on by some comrades but also in the fact that certain comrades, including even some with a fairly long history of militant struggle, cannot stand being criticized or misjudged. When fighting the counter-revolution, they never waver, complain or feel dejected, however ruthless the struggle, however bitter the conditions and however vicious the enemy's blows. Yet in inner-Party struggle they cannot stand being criticized, attacked, misjudged or wronged, or tolerate even a single unpleasant word. Or they suspect people of making pointed allusions to them, and so they

complain and feel very dejected. We must really give this kind of thing our attention.

It must be stated that on the whole these comrades are very good because they wage resolute struggle against the counter-revolutionaries and look upon the Party as a most affectionate mother. After going out to fight hard battles against the counter-revolutionaries they should receive encouragement, consolation and caresses, and not blows and wrongs, when they return to their great mother's embrace. It is only natural for them to expect such treatment. However, they fail to take one point into account, or fully into account – that our Party still has shortcomings and faults and that there are inner-Party struggles which every comrade must take part in. Our Party criticizes and combats shortcomings and faults not because it is unfeeling but because such action is unavoidable in the course of revolutionary struggle. It is necessary for comrades in the course of inner-Party struggle to receive well founded criticism, for it is helpful to them, to the other comrades and to the whole Party. On the other hand, it is also unavoidable that at times some comrades will receive unfounded criticisms or be attacked on certain matters, or will even be

wrongly judged and disciplined. Failing to allow for this, they become shocked and feel most miserable and dejected when it occurs.

In this connection, it is my opinion that every Party member should pay attention to uniting with his comrades, be sincere and open, refrain from hurting others by thoughtless or sarcastic remarks and, in particular, refrain from irresponsibly criticizing comrades behind their backs. The proper attitude to any comrade's mistakes is sincerely to remonstrate with him and criticize him to his face, out of concern for the comrade and a desire to be of help. All of us, and especially those in more responsible positions, must bear this in mind.

On the other hand, it is my opinion that comrades should be mentally prepared for inner-Party struggle, should open-mindedly accept all well-grounded criticism and be able to endure misunderstandings or attacks, or even unfairness and injustice; in particular, they should not get upset or excited over irresponsible and unjustified criticism or rumors. As far as irresponsible misjudgment and criticism are concerned – that is, excluding properly conducted criticism among

comrades or through the Party organization - one can try and clear the matter up or offer some explanation when necessary, but if that does not help, one might just as well let others say what they please, provided there is nothing wrong in one's thinking and behavior. Let us remember the Chinese sayings: "Who never gossips about others behind their backs or is never the subject of gossip?" and "Never mind the storm, just sit tight in the fishing boat." No one in this world can entirely avoid being misunderstood, but misunderstandings can always be cleared up sooner or later. We should be able to endure misunderstandings and should never allow ourselves to be dragged into unprincipled struggle; at the same time, we should be always vigilant and keep watch over our own thoughts and actions.

That is to say, we should take care not to use words that wound other comrades and should be able to stand injurious language from others.

We are radically opposed to unprincipled disputes in the Party. Since they are unprincipled, they are useless and harmful to the Party, and there is generally little of right or wrong, or good or bad, about them. In such unprincipled struggles, therefore, there is no point in

passing judgment as to who is right and who is wrong, or estimating who is better and who is worse, because that is impossible. All we can do is radically to oppose struggles of that kind and ask the comrades involved unconditionally to stop them and get back to principles. This is the policy we should adopt towards unprincipled disputes and struggles. But what is to be done if unprincipled disputes do arise and if many of them get tangled up with struggles over principle? What should be done if such disputes knock at our door and we get dragged into them? All we can do in that case is, again, to put the stress on the questions of principle and avoid stressing those not involving any principle. Basing ourselves on the policy outlined here, we should handle such unprincipled disputes strictly and ourselves stand firm on the principle from beginning to end, refusing to be dragged into the unprincipled disputes. When something does go wrong to you, do not throw back something wrong at him. Always stand by the right to oppose the wrong. Some of our comrades find it very difficult to act in this way, which shows why special attention to self-tempering and self-cultivation is necessary.

Let me briefly sum up the points discussed.

The aim of ideological self-cultivation by members of the Communist party is to temper themselves to become staunch and utterly devoted members and cadres of the Party who make constant progress and serve as examples for others. What is required of us is the following:

1. To build up our communist world outlook and a firm Party and proletarian class standpoint through the study of Marxism-Leninism and participation in the revolutionary struggle.
2. To examine our own thinking and behavior, to correct all erroneous ideas and at the same time to judge questions and judge other comrades on the basis of our communist world outlook and our firm Party and proletarian class standpoint.
3. Always to adopt a correct attitude and appropriate methods in the struggle against erroneous ideology in the Party, and especially against the erroneous ideology which affects the current revolutionary struggle.

4. To keep a firm control over ourselves in thought, speech and action, especially to take a firm standpoint and adhere to correct principles with regard to political ideas, statements and activities which are related to the current revolutionary struggle. In addition, it is as well to be careful even over “trifles” (in one's personal life, attitude, etc.). But as for making demands on other comrades, apart from matters of principle and major political questions, we should not be too severe or fault finding over “trifles”.

In my opinion, the above is what we mean, fundamentally, when we talk about ideological self-cultivation by members of the Communist Party.

The End