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THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Founded in 1921 at a meeting of fourteen delegates from six cells, the Chinese Communist Party grew to 300,000 members by 1933, 1.2 million members by 1945, and 4.5 million members by 1949. To achieve its goal of overthrowing the existing government and establishing a socialist state, the party had to build a command structure capable of decisive leadership, a body of cadres to carry out their decisions, and an army able to fight the better-equipped Nationalists. From 1934 until his death in 1976, Mao Zedong occupied the highest leadership role in the party. Much of the credit for building the party into an effective revolutionary organization should, however, go to Liu Shaoqi (1898–1969), like Mao from Hu'nan and a member of the party since the 1920s.

The selection below is from a speech Liu gave in 1937 to representatives of party organizations then operating underground in "white" areas. In his address he stressed the importance of party members' accepting discipline and preserving secrecy. Even after the Chinese Communist Party defeated the Nationalists and shifted its central tasks to managing the state and economy, the organizational practices developed during wartime remained important.

Through the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, Liu Shaoqi was one of the handful of top leaders, and he served as president of the People's Republic of China from 1959 to 1968. During the Cultural Revolution, however, he was branded the chief "capitalist roader" and "China's Khrushchev" and he died from mistreatment in 1969.

While providing more favorable conditions for the party to develop and carry out its work, the establishment of Guomindang-Communist cooperation will considerably increase the possibilities for the bourgeoisie to exert its influence upon the party and undermine it from within. In order to maintain the party's independence, purity, and unity, we should (1) raise the requirements for

those who wish to join the party and place them on probation for a period of time (workers may be excepted); (2) provide for intensive education of party members in political theory; (3) tighten party discipline while extending democracy within the party; (4) select party cadres carefully; and (5) pay closer attention to the right deviation of tailism. The requirements for party member-

ship mentioned here may be less strict in party organizations working underground.

In the restoration and expansion of party organizations in some places we must depend on backbone members and cadres who are trustworthy and absolutely true to the party. On no account should these people be transferred wilfully. A clear distinction should be drawn between inner-party work and open mass work. Stricter secrecy should be enforced regarding all inner-party work and organizational matters, which should not be made known to all our comrades, particularly those working in the open. Party organs should be very small, and unnecessary organizations and official titles should be abolished. Their contacts with other quarters, especially with comrades working openly, should be established with finesse. Although this is a very difficult task, it is a most important aspect of underground work. These small, underground leading organs must be preserved even when the situation permits overt action. In cases when greater overt action becomes possible, it will suffice for the mass organizations and comrades who work in the open to take part in public activities.

With regard to the party's underground work, we should have foresight, persistence, and patience and we must not allow the slightest impetuosity or negligence because, with the situation changing, what seems unimportant today may become very important tomorrow. So, what we do today should be subordinate to what we do tomorrow. In the past, many of our comrades simply did not have a long-range perspective or patience. They were afflicted with an intolerable impetuosity and were much too negligent. Even today, they do not take into account the present circumstances and still less the future situation when assigning tasks and carrying them out. They recruit party members in public, launch revolutionary emulation drives, initiate shock campaigns, and transfer cadres and reshuffle party organizations at will. From now on, we must cease to criticize our comrades arbitrarily as "fearing death" or "vacillating," for this encourages adventurist sentiments. The hurry-scurry dis-

order in the underground organs should also be stopped.

If something goes wrong in our underground organizations, they should suspend operation. When a situation grows tense, the staff should leave the place for a while if possible. Without considerable assurance of security, no work should be embarked upon. It doesn't matter if the work is not well done. What really matters is that the organizations must under no circumstances be destroyed. We must be particularly careful to establish solid underground leading organs which will not vacillate under any storm and stress. We must take firm disciplinary measures against those comrades who violate the principles of underground work.

We shall be in a position to deal with enemy agents provided we properly coordinate our open and underground work and provided the underground organizations carry out their work in an orderly way without negligence or recklessness. Enemy agents can still sneak into our party. So in addition to carefully selecting our members, we should try to prevent these agents from doing very serious harm to us, chiefly by properly coordinating our open and underground work.

Where conditions permit, inner-party democracy should be extended. For instance, the leading organs should frequently communicate with the rank and file, ask them for criticisms of their leaders and offer guidance through discussion with them. We should not only formally adopt some democratic procedures but, much more importantly, we should advocate a democratic spirit in our work. The leading organs should carefully consider the opinions of all comrades and respect the rights they are entitled to. Leading members do not have any privileges inside the party and so must not take pride in their leading status and become conceited. They should submit to the majority, subject themselves to discipline, accept criticisms from their subordinates, listen attentively to the reports from below and make detailed explanations to the comrades concerned. They should regard themselves as ordinary people, treat other comrades as equals and brothers, and han-

problems impartially. This is the democratic spirit which all our cadres should possess, the spirit in which to remold themselves and with which to educate other comrades. This is the democracy that is needed inside the party.

Instances of commandism and punitiveness still abound in the party. Our comrades, failing to solve problems thoroughly from a political angle and according to principles, have instead resorted to organizational and disciplinary measures. (Some of them are unable to solve any problem without resorting to the latter.) Moreover, they are too mechanical and absolute in their methods of leadership. This is a kind of extremely undemocratic practice. All problems should be solved from a political angle and according to principles, and only then will organizational and disciplinary measures be warranted. Discipline is necessary in the party and should be tightened, but it should not be used except as a last resort.

To tighten discipline means to heighten our comrades' sense of the need to subordinate themselves to the majority and to the party organization; it does not mean that the leading organs should make frequent use of disciplinary measures to punish our comrades. On the contrary, the more the leading organs resort to such punishment, the more obvious the poor state of our discipline is. By party discipline we do not mean that within the party comrades are forbidden to express opinions differing from those of the leading organs but that they submit themselves to the majority in action and carry out the leading organs' decisions despite differences of opinion. Such ironclad discipline in our party makes it extremely difficult for the enemy agents to undermine us. But punitiveness and commandism are aids to them.

The party's collective leadership can be established only on the basis of democracy. And it can be considered truly collective only when it incorporates the experience and the useful ideas of all the comrades. Democratic centralism and the system of individual responsibility should go hand in hand. Decisions on major issues should be made democratically, although individuals must hold

the responsibility for executing these decisions. Executive organs should carry out their work in an orderly way and should be governed by discipline, while leaders should supervise and check up on this work.

The true democratic spirit is inseparable from the communist morality of selflessness; its opposite is selfishness. Conceit, ostentation, and individualistic heroism are manifestations of selfish thinking. People who think this way seek to lord it over others and are unwilling to play second fiddle; they want the right to order others about but do not want to take orders; they criticize, attack, and abuse others at will but do not allow others to criticize them; they want others to submit to their "decisions" but they themselves refuse to obey the decisions of the party organization; they consider others' violations of the principle of centralism to be breaches of discipline but deny that their own violations of the democratic principle are likewise disciplinary breaches; and they seek only their own promotion and even do so at the expense of others. These are remnants in the party of the ideology characteristic of the old society and are contrary to the spirit of democracy.

The extension of democracy in the party requires, in the first place, that our cadres should have a keen understanding of it and set an example by their own actions before they can train our comrades and the masses to practice democracy. In the past, party members and cadres were afraid to speak lest they should make mistakes and be held responsible for them. This stemmed from a lack of democracy in the party. Instead of employing persuasion and education to encourage our comrades in their work at the lower levels, we often struggle with and attack them in order to get the work done. This is not a democratic approach. It has made our comrades afraid to speak and to act for fear of setting off a struggle. Struggle is only necessary in dealing with those who persist in their mistakes and refuse to study and mend their ways. Even then, the purpose is to educate.

It was wrong to wilfully attack our comrades during ideological struggles, label them as opportunists, and dismiss them from their work because

they expressed differing views. The result of this practice has been that a lot of comrades who held different views dared not express them. This only served to conceal differences on political issues and on issues of principle so that the differences could not be thrashed out. And it only led to superficial unity in the party and impaired real political and ideological unity established on principles. Instead of lessening opposition between our comrades and the leading organs, it intensified such opposition. Therefore, rather than helping the leaders, the comrades were always finding fault with them, thus giving rise to further unprincipled struggle. The seeming absence of differences of opinion is not always a good thing.

When we say that we should not attack our comrades wilfully in ideological struggles, we do not mean that we should deny the existence of divergent views on political issues and on issues of principle among our comrades. On the contrary, it is really to resolve such differences that we want our comrades to express their views fully. Most of the differences can be eliminated through persuasion and discussion. In the future, we must be particularly careful about expelling comrades because of their different views on political issues and on issues of principle. We should do so only when they violate organizational discipline and do not make amends.

All work and change depend on our cadres. Therefore, the question of the cadres is a crucial one in the party. The party's central task is to train large numbers of cadres and assign them to the various fronts. The local organizations should pay special attention to the selection of cadres for training. In his conclusion, Comrade Mao Zedong put forward the criteria for the kind of cadres we require at present. He said they must be versed in Marxism-Leninism, politically farsighted, competent in work, full of the spirit of self-sacrifice, capable of tackling problems on their own, steadfast in the midst of difficulties, loyal and devoted in serving the nation, the class, and the party, and free from selfishness and individualistic heroism. Every one of our cadres should aspire to measure up to these criteria.

To bring our present and future cadres up to these criteria will entail arduous efforts both by the party and the cadres themselves. We should not use these criteria to test them and to dismiss those who are not yet up to the criteria. It is obvious that our cadres have various shortcomings, political as well as in competence, thinking, and ideology, and some are even tainted with the bad habits of the old society. But our purpose is to remold them and raise them to the required standard, not to destroy them. This is extremely hard work, but it can be done because we are going to remold the whole of mankind. We should regularly examine our cadres, assign them appropriate jobs and tasks to which they are equal, and help them in their work. The leading organs in many places have made mistakes in this respect and should correct them.

The promotion of new cadres is an important matter at present, but they can be promoted only by stages. We should not casually boost them into very high positions, as we did in the past, for it only serves to overwhelm them. In North China, breaches in harmony and cooperation between veteran and new cadres have already cropped up. This merits our attention. Both veteran and new cadres have their own strong points as well as their shortcomings. They should learn from and respect each other, so that each can adopt the other's strong points, offset his own weaknesses, and help to improve collective leadership.

Party members who join mass organizations should set up leading party groups. But these party groups must be skillful in carrying out their work. A leading party group should absolutely accept the leadership of the party headquarters at the corresponding level and the leadership of the party groups at higher levels. The party headquarters should be prudent and considerate when giving leadership to party groups. They should discuss all matters with the comrades of the groups and should refrain from mechanically making decisions on all minor issues. This does not mean that they should not give them leadership on specific matters; rather, it means that their leadership should be dynamic.

The disorderly and unsystematic style of work of our comrades should change. They should attend to the central tasks and work in an orderly way according to the priorities at different stages. All our comrades have an ardent revolutionary spirit which, however, should be combined with a truly down-to-earth spirit, so that they can effectively push forward their work and the revolution. Once they have a clear understanding of a specific task, they should have the determination to buckle down and carry it to completion. Only with the integration of the revolutionary and the practical spirit can the addiction to empty talk be eliminated and bureaucratism be overcome.

There should be a complete change in our propaganda work, even though we have achieved a lot of successes in this respect lately. In the past, some of our comrades often failed to distinguish propaganda slogans from action slogans, inner-party education from public-oriented propaganda, slogans for the party from those for the masses, and party propaganda from the appeals of the masses. They often used such slogans as

"Get armed to support the Soviet Union" and "Get armed to wage the national revolutionary war" when mobilizing the masses for action. They added to strike demands the call to "Drive the Japanese aggressors out of China." It often happened that they published articles on inner-party problems in publications distributed in general circulation, in which they declared that such and such organizations or actions were led by the party. Moreover, our propaganda has been persistently formalistic, mechanical, trivial, or exaggerated, and without due regard to facts or to its audience. Our documents, too, have always been stereotyped. All these things must be eradicated. From now on, the party's theoretical study and propaganda will take on even greater importance and should be conducted systematically through all possible public channels, such as seminars and publishing institutions. . . .

By arming our minds with Marxism-Leninism, we can overcome all our past mistakes and lead the millions of the masses to defeat Japanese imperialism and liberate China.