

Introducing *The Communist*

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Here Mao provides an introductory article for understanding the purpose of the Communist Party of China's theoretical journal, "The Communist", along with clarifying some important features of the Chinese Revolution. Most importantly, Mao establishes the six laws of the front during the Chinese Revolution and how the three instruments of the revolution (Party, army, and front/new state) are interrelated. Revolutionaries should study this text carefully as it contains some of Mao's most important universally valid contributions to the ideology of the international proletariat.

Introducing *The Communist*

The Central Committee has long planned to publish an internal Party journal, and now at last the plan has materialized. Such a journal is necessary for building up a Bolshevized Chinese Communist Party, a party which is national in scale and has a broad mass character, a party which is fully consolidated ideologically, politically, and organizationally. This necessity is all the more obvious in the present situation, which has special features: on the one hand, the danger of capitulation, of a split and of retrogression within the Anti-Japanese National United Front is increasing daily, while on the other,

our Party has stepped out of its narrow confines and become a major national party. The duty of the Party is to mobilize the masses to overcome the dangers of capitulation, a split and retrogression, and to prepare against all possible eventualities so that in case they occur, the Party and the revolution will not suffer unexpected losses. An internal Party journal is indeed most necessary at a time like this.

This internal Party journal is called *The Communist*. What is its purpose? What will it deal with? In what way will it differ from other Party publications? Its purpose is to help build a Bolshevized Chinese Communist Party which is national in scale, has a broad mass character, and is fully consolidated ideologically, politically, and organizationally. The building of such a party is imperative for the victory of the Chinese Revolution and on the whole the subjective and objective conditions for it are present; indeed this great undertaking is now in progress.

A special Party periodical is needed to help achieve this great task, which is beyond the capability of an ordinary Party publication, and this is why *The Communist* is now being published. To a certain extent our Party is already national in scale and has a broad mass character: and it is already a Bolshevized party, consolidated ideologically, politically, and

organizationally, so far as its core of leadership, a part of its membership and its general line and revolutionary work are concerned.

That being so, why set a new task? The reason is that we now have many new branches, which have a great many new members but which cannot yet be considered as having a broad mass character, as being ideologically, politically, and organizationally consolidated, or as being Bolshevized. At the same time, there is the problem of raising the political level of the older Party members and of making further progress in Bolshevizing the older branches and consolidating them ideologically, politically, and organizationally. The circumstances in which the Party now finds itself and the responsibilities it is shouldering are quite unlike those in the revolutionary civil war period; the circumstances are much more complex and the responsibilities much heavier.

This is the period of the national united front, and we have formed a united front with the bourgeoisie; this is the period of the War of Resistance Against Japan, and the armed forces of our Party are at the front, fighting a ruthless war against the enemy in coordination with the friendly armies; this is the period when our Party has become a major national party and is therefore no longer what it was

before. If we take all these factors together, we shall understand how glorious and momentous is the task we have set ourselves, the task of “building up a Bolshevized Chinese Communist Party, a party which is national in scale and has a broad mass character, a party fully consolidated ideologically, politically, and organizationally”. It is this kind of party that we now want to build, but how shall we go about it? We cannot answer this question without going into the history of our Party and of its 18 years of struggle.

It is fully 18 years since our First National Congress in 1921. In these 18 years our Party has gone through many great struggles. And the members of the Party, its cadres and organizations, have all tempered themselves in these great struggles. They have had the experience both of splendid victories and grave defeats in the revolution. The Party established a national united front with the bourgeoisie and, with the breakup of this united front, engaged in a bitter armed struggle with the big bourgeoisie and its allies. During the last three years, it has again entered into a period of a national united front with the bourgeoisie. It is through this kind of complex relationship with the Chinese bourgeoisie that the Chinese Revolution and the Communist Party of China have progressed in their development.

This is a special historical feature, a feature peculiar to the revolution in colonial and semi-colonial countries and not to be found in the revolutionary history of any capitalist country. Moreover, since China is a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country, since her political, economic, and cultural development is uneven, since her economy is predominantly semi-feudal and since her territory is vast, it follows that the character of the Chinese Revolution in its present stage is bourgeois-democratic, that its principal targets are imperialism and feudalism and that its basic motive forces are the proletariat, the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie, with the national bourgeoisie taking part at certain times and to a certain extent; it also follows that the principal form of struggle in the Chinese Revolution is armed struggle.

Indeed, the history of our Party may be called a history of armed struggle. Comrade Stalin has said, "In China the armed revolution is fighting the armed counter-revolution. That is one of the specific features and one of the advantages of the Chinese revolution."¹ This is perfectly true. The specific feature peculiar to semi-colonial China is not present, or is not present in the same way, in the history of the

¹J. V. Stalin, *The Prospects of the Revolution in China*, Works, English ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954, Vol. VIII, pg. 379.

revolutions led by Communist Parties in the capitalist countries. Thus, there are two basic specific features in the Chinese bourgeois-democratic revolution: (1) the proletariat either establishes a revolutionary national united front with the bourgeoisie, or is forced to break it up; and (2) armed struggle is the principal form of the revolution. Here we do not describe the Party's relations with the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie as a basic specific feature, first, because these relations are in principle the same as those which confront Communist Parties all over the world, and secondly, because armed struggle in China is, in essence, peasant war and the Party's relations with the peasantry and its close relations with the peasant war are one and the same thing.

It is because of these two basic specific features, in fact precisely because of them, that the building up and Bolshevization of our Party are proceeding in special circumstances. The Party's failures or successes, its retreats or advances, its contraction or expansion, its development and consolidation are inevitably linked up with its relations with the bourgeoisie and with armed struggle.

When the Party takes a correct political line on the question of forming a united front with the bourgeoisie or of breaking it up when forced to do so, our Party moves a step forward in its development,

consolidation and Bolshevization; but when it takes an incorrect line on its relations with the bourgeoisie, then our Party moves a step backward. Similarly, when our Party handles the question of revolutionary armed struggle correctly, it moves a step forward in its development, consolidation and Bolshevization; but when it handles the question incorrectly, it moves a step backward.

Thus, for 18 years, the building and Bolshevization of the Party have been closely linked with its political line, with the correct or incorrect handling of the questions of the united front and armed struggle. This conclusion is clearly confirmed by the 18 years of our Party's history. Or conversely, the more Bolshevized the Party, the more correctly can it decide upon its political line and handle the questions of the united front and armed struggle. This conclusion, too, is clearly confirmed by the 18 years of our Party's history.

Therefore the united front, armed struggle, and Party building are the three fundamental questions for our Party in the Chinese Revolution. Having a correct grasp of these three questions and their interrelations is tantamount to giving correct leadership to the whole Chinese Revolution. We are now able to draw correct conclusions concerning these three questions by virtue of our abundant

experience in the 18 years of our Party's history, our rich and profound experience of failures and successes, retreats and advances, contraction and expansion.

This means that we are now able to handle the questions of the united front, of armed struggle, and of Party building in a correct way. It also means that our 18 years of experience have taught us that the united front, armed struggle, and Party building are the Chinese Communist Party's three "magic weapons", its three principal magic weapons for defeating the enemy in the Chinese Revolution. This is a great achievement of the Chinese Communist Party and of the Chinese Revolution.

Here let us briefly discuss each of the three magic weapons, each of the three questions. In the last 18 years, the united front of the Chinese proletariat with the bourgeoisie and other classes has developed under three different sets of circumstances, or through three different stages: the First Great Revolution from 1924 to 1927, the War of Agrarian Revolution from 1927 to 1937, and the present War of Resistance Against Japan. The history of the three stages has confirmed the following laws:

1. The Chinese national bourgeoisie will take part in the struggle against imperialism and the feudal warlords at certain times and to a certain

extent, because foreign oppression is the greatest oppression to which China is subjected. Therefore, at such times, the proletariat should form a united front with the national bourgeoisie and maintain it as far as possible.

2. In other historical circumstances, the Chinese national bourgeoisie will vacillate and defect because of its economic and political flabbiness. Therefore the composition of China's revolutionary united front will not remain constant at all times, but is liable to change. At one time the national bourgeoisie may take part in it, at another it may not.
3. The Chinese big bourgeoisie, which is comprador in character, is a class which directly serves imperialism and is fostered by it. Hence the comprador Chinese big bourgeoisie has always been a target of the revolution. However, different groups within this big bourgeoisie are backed by different imperialist powers, so that when contradictions among these powers become sharper and when the edge of the revolution is mainly directed against a particular power, the big bourgeois groups dependent upon the other powers may join the struggle against that particular imperialist power to a certain extent and for a certain time. At such times, in order to

weaken the enemy and add to its own reserves, the Chinese proletariat may form a united front with these groups and should maintain it as far as possible, provided it is advantageous to the revolution.

4. The comprador big bourgeoisie continues to be most reactionary even when it joins the united front alongside the proletariat in struggling against the common enemy. It stubbornly opposes any ideological, political, and organizational development of the proletariat and the proletarian party, tries to impose restrictions on them and employs disruptive tactics such as deception, blandishments, "corrosion", and savage attacks against them; moreover, it does all this to prepare for capitulating to the enemy and splitting the united front.
5. The peasantry is the firm ally of the proletariat.
6. The urban petty bourgeoisie is a reliable ally.

The validity of these laws was confirmed during the First Great Revolution and the Agrarian Revolution, and it is being confirmed again in the present War of Resistance. Therefore, in forming a united front with the bourgeoisie (and especially with the big bourgeoisie), the party of the proletariat must carry on a stern and resolute struggle on two fronts.

On the one hand, it is necessary to combat the error of neglecting the possibility that the bourgeoisie may join in the revolutionary struggle at certain times and to a certain extent. It is an error of "Left" closed-doorism to regard the bourgeoisie in China as being the same as in the capitalist countries, and consequently to neglect the policy of forming a united front with the bourgeoisie and maintaining it for as long as possible.

On the other hand, it is also necessary to combat the error of identifying the program, policy, ideology, practice, etc. of the proletariat with those of the bourgeoisie, and neglecting the differences in principle between them. The error here consists in neglecting the fact that the bourgeoisie (and especially the big bourgeoisie) not only exerts an influence on the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry, but does its utmost to influence the proletariat and the Communist Party in a strenuous effort to destroy their ideological, political, and organizational independence, turn them into an appendage of the bourgeoisie and its political party, and ensure that it will reap the fruits of the revolution for itself or its political party alone; this error also consists in neglecting the fact that the bourgeoisie (and especially the big bourgeoisie) betrays the revolution whenever the revolution conflicts with its own selfish interests or with those of its own political

party. To neglect all this is right-opportunism. The characteristic feature of Chen Tu-hsiu's right-opportunism was that it led the proletariat to accommodate itself to the selfish interests of the bourgeoisie and its political party, and this was the subjective cause of the failure of the First Great Revolution.

The dual character of the Chinese bourgeoisie in the bourgeois-democratic revolution exerts a great effect on our political line and our Party building, and without grasping this dual character we cannot have a good grasp of our political line or of Party building. One important component of the political line of the Chinese Communist Party is the policy both of unity with the bourgeoisie and of struggle against it. In fact, the development and tempering of the Party through its unity and struggle with the bourgeoisie are an important component of Party building. Unity here means the united front with the bourgeoisie. Struggle here means the "peaceful" and "bloodless" struggle, ideological, political and organizational, which goes on when we are united with the bourgeoisie and which turns into armed struggle when we are forced to break with it.

If our Party does not understand that it must unite with the bourgeoisie in certain periods, it cannot advance and the revolution cannot develop;

if our Party does not understand that it must wage a stern and resolute “peaceful” struggle against the bourgeoisie while uniting with it, then our Party will disintegrate ideologically, politically, and organizationally and the revolution will fail; and if our Party does not wage a stern and resolute armed struggle against the bourgeoisie when forced to break with it, our Party will likewise disintegrate and the revolution will likewise fail. The truth of all this has been confirmed by the events of the past 18 years.

Armed struggle by the Chinese Communist Party takes the form of peasant war under proletarian leadership. The history of this armed struggle, too, falls into three stages. The first was the stage in which we took part in the Northern Expedition. Our Party had already begun to realize the importance of armed struggle, but did not understand it fully, it did not understand that armed struggle was the principal form of struggle in the Chinese Revolution.

The second stage was the War of the Agrarian Revolution. By that time our Party had already built up its own independent armed forces, learned the art of fighting independently, and established people’s political power and base areas. Our Party was already able to achieve direct or indirect coordination of armed struggle, the principal form of struggle, with many other necessary forms, that is, to coordinate

it on a national scale with the workers' struggle, the peasants' struggle (which was the main thing), the struggle of the youth, the women and all other sections of the people, the struggle for political power, the struggles on the economic, the anti-espionage and the ideological fronts, and other forms of struggle. And this armed struggle was the peasant agrarian revolution under the leadership of the proletariat.

The third stage is the present stage, the War of Resistance. In this stage we are able to turn to good account our experience of armed struggle in the first and especially the second stage, and our experience of coordinating armed struggle with all other necessary forms of struggle. In general, armed struggle at the present time means guerrilla warfare.²

²In saying that in general, armed struggle in the Chinese Revolution means guerrilla warfare, Comrade Mao Zedong is summing up China's experience of revolutionary war from the Second Revolutionary Civil War to the early days of the War of Resistance Against Japan. During the long period of the Second Revolutionary Civil War, all the armed struggles led by the Chinese Communist Party took the form of guerrilla warfare. In the latter phase of that period, as the strength of the Red Army grew, guerrilla warfare changed into mobile warfare of a guerrilla character which, as Comrade Mao Zedong defines it, is guerrilla warfare on a higher level. But in the War of Resistance Against Japan, with a different enemy and in different circumstances, there was a shift back to guerrilla warfare. In the early days of the anti-Japanese War, those Party comrades who committed the error of right-opportunism belittled the guerrilla warfare led by the Party and pinned their

What is guerrilla warfare? It is the indispensable, and therefore the best, form of struggle for the people's armed forces to employ over a long period in a backward country, a large semi-colonial country, in order to inflict defeats on the armed enemy and build up their own bases. So far both our political line and our Party building have been closely linked with this form of struggle. It is impossible to have a good understanding of our political line and, consequently, of our Party building in isolation from armed struggle, from guerrilla warfare. Armed struggle is an important component of our political line. For 18 years our Party has gradually learned to wage armed struggle and has persisted in it.

hopes on the operations of the Kuomintang army. Comrade Mao Zedong refuted their views in his *Problems of Strategy in Guerrilla War Against Japan*, *On Protracted War*, and *Problems of War and Strategy*, and in the present article he gave a theoretical summing-up of the experience gained in waging the prolonged armed struggle of the Chinese Revolution which took the form of guerrilla warfare. In the latter stage of the anti-Japanese war, and more particularly in the period of the Third Revolutionary Civil War (1945-49), guerrilla warfare changed into regular warfare as the main form of armed struggle under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, and this was due to the further growth of the revolutionary forces and the changes in the enemy's circumstances. The latter stage of the Third Revolutionary Civil War witnessed a further development, when operations were conducted by huge formations, which, equipped with heavy arms, were able to storm strongly fortified enemy positions.

We have learned that without armed struggle neither the proletariat, nor the people, nor the Communist Party would have any standing at all in China and that it would be impossible for the revolution to triumph. In these years the development, consolidation, and Bolshevization of our Party have proceeded in the midst of revolutionary wars; without armed struggle the Communist Party would assuredly not be what it is today. Comrades throughout the Party must never forget this experience for which we have paid in blood. Similarly, there have been three distinct stages in the building up of the Party, its development, consolidation, and Bolshevization.

The first stage was the Party's infancy. In the early and middle phases of this stage the Party's line was correct and the revolutionary zeal, both of the rank and file and of the cadres, was exceedingly high; hence the victories in the First Great Revolution. But after all, ours was then still an infant Party, it lacked experience concerning the three basic problems of the united front, armed struggle, and Party building, it did not have much knowledge of Chinese history and Chinese society or of the specific features and laws of the Chinese Revolution, and it lacked a comprehensive understanding of the unity between the theory of Marxism-Leninism and the practice of the Chinese Revolution. Hence in the last phase of

this stage, or at the critical juncture of this stage, those occupying a dominant position in the Party's leading body failed to lead the Party in consolidating the victories of the revolution and, as a result, they were deceived by the bourgeoisie and brought the revolution to defeat.

The Party organizations expanded in this stage but they were not consolidated, and they failed to help Party members and cadres become firm and stable ideologically and politically. There were plenty of new members but they were not given the necessary Marxist-Leninist education. There was also abundant experience in work, but it was not summed up properly. Many careerists sneaked into the Party, but they were not combed out. The Party was caught in a maze of schemes and intrigues both of enemies and of allies, but it lacked vigilance. Within the Party, activists came forward in great numbers, but they were not turned into the mainstay of the Party in good time. The Party had some revolutionary armed units under its command, but it was unable to keep a tight grip on them. The reasons for all this were inexperience, insufficient depth of revolutionary understanding, and ineptitude in integrating the theory of Marxism-Leninism with the practice of the Chinese Revolution. Such was the first stage of Party building.

The second stage was the War of the Agrarian Revolution. Our Party was able to wage a successful agrarian revolutionary struggle for 10 years because of the experience it had gained in the first stage, because of its better understanding of Chinese history and society and of the specific features and laws of the Chinese Revolution, and because its cadres had a better grasp of the theory of Marxism-Leninism and were better able to integrate it with the practice of the Chinese Revolution.

Although the bourgeoisie had turned traitor, our Party was able to rely firmly on the peasantry. The Party organization not only grew afresh but also became consolidated. Day in and day out the enemy tried to sabotage our Party, but the Party drove out the saboteurs. Once again large numbers of cadres came forward in the Party, and this time they became its mainstay. The Party blazed the trail of people's political power and thus learned the art of government. The Party created strong armed forces and thus learned the art of war. These were momentous advances and achievements.

Nevertheless, in the course of these great struggles some of our comrades sank into the quagmire of opportunism, or did so at least for a time, and again the reasons were that they did not learn modestly from the experience of the past, did not acquire an

understanding of Chinese history and society and of the specific features and laws of the Chinese Revolution, and did not have an understanding of the unity between the theory of Marxism-Leninism and the practice of the Chinese Revolution. Hence throughout this stage certain people who held leading positions in the Party failed to adhere to correct political and organizational lines.

At one time the Party and the revolution were damaged by Comrade Li Li-san's "left"-opportunism, at another by "left"-opportunism in the revolutionary war and in the work in the White areas. Not until the Tsunyi Meeting (the meeting of the Political Bureau at Tsunyi, Kweichow, in January 1935) did the Party definitively take the road of Bolshevization and lay the foundations for its subsequent victory over Chang Kuo-tao's right-opportunism and for the establishment of an anti-Japanese national united front. This was the second stage in the Party's development.

The third stage is that of the Anti-Japanese National United Front. We have been in this stage for three years now and these years of struggle are extremely important. Drawing on its experience in the two preceding revolutionary stages, on its organizational strength and the strength of its armed forces, on its high political prestige among the people

of the whole country, and on its deeper understanding of the unity between the theory of Marxism-Leninism and the practice of the Chinese Revolution, our Party has not only established the Anti-Japanese National United Front but has also been conducting the great War of Resistance Against Japan.

Organizationally, it has stepped out of its narrow confines and become a major national party. Its armed forces are again growing and are becoming still stronger in the struggle against the Japanese aggressors. Its influence among the whole people is becoming more extensive. These are all great achievements. However, many of our new Party members have not yet been given education, many of the new organizations have not yet been consolidated, and there is still a vast difference between them and the older members and organizations.

Many of the new Party members and cadres have not yet had sufficient revolutionary experience. They still know little or nothing about Chinese history and society or about the specific features and laws of the Chinese Revolution. Their understanding of the unity between the theory of Marxism-Leninism and the practice of the Chinese Revolution is far from being comprehensive. During the expansion of the Party's organizations, a good many careerists and

enemy saboteurs did succeed in sneaking in despite the fact that the Central Committee stressed the slogan "Expand the Party boldly, but do not let a single undesirable in". Although the united front was formed and has been maintained for three years now, the bourgeoisie, and especially the big bourgeoisie, has constantly been trying to destroy our Party, the big bourgeois capitulators and die-hards have been instigating serious friction throughout the country, and the anti-Communist clamor is incessant.

All this is being used by the big bourgeois capitulators and die-hards to prepare the way for capitulating to Japanese imperialism, breaking up the united front and dragging China backwards. Ideologically, the big bourgeoisie is trying to "corrode" communism, whilst politically and organizationally it is trying to liquidate the Communist Party, the Border Region, and the Party's armed forces. In these circumstances it is undoubtedly our task to overcome the dangers of capitulation, a split and retrogression, to maintain the national united front and Kuomintang-Communist cooperation as far as possible, to work for continued resistance to Japan and continued unity and progress, and at the same time to prepare against all possible eventualities so that in case they occur, the Party and the revolution will not suffer unexpected losses.

To this end, we must strengthen the Party's organization and its armed forces, and mobilize the whole people for resolute struggle against capitulation, a split, and retrogression. The accomplishment of this task depends upon the efforts of the whole Party, upon the unrelenting and persistent struggle of all Party members, cadres, and organizations everywhere and at every level.

We are confident that the Chinese Communist Party with its 18 years of experience will be able to achieve these objectives by the joint efforts of its experienced older members and cadres and its vigorous and youthful newer members and cadres, by the joint efforts of its well-tried Bolshevized Central Committee and its local organizations, and by the joint efforts of its powerful armed forces and the progressive masses.

We have set out the principal experiences and principal problems of our Party in its 18 years of history. Our 18 years of experience shows that the united front and armed struggle are the two basic weapons for defeating the enemy. The united front is a united front for carrying on armed struggle. And the Party is the heroic warrior wielding the two weapons, the united front and the armed struggle, to storm and shatter the enemy's positions. That is how the three are related to each other.

How are we to build up our Party today? How can we build up “a Bolshevized Chinese Communist Party, a party which is national in scale and has a broad mass character, a party which is fully consolidated ideologically, politically, and organizationally?”

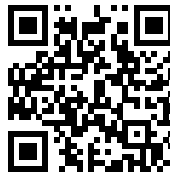
The answer can be found by studying the Party’s history, by studying Party building in connection with the united front and armed struggle, in connection with the problem of both uniting and struggling with the bourgeoisie, and with that of persistence in guerrilla warfare against Japan by the Eighth Route and the New Fourth Armies, and the establishment of anti-Japanese base areas. To sum up our 18 years of experience and our current new, experience on the basis of our understanding of the unity between the theory of Marxism-Leninism and the practice of the Chinese Revolution, and to spread this experience throughout the Party, so that our Party becomes as solid as steel and avoids repeating past mistakes — such is our task.



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