



SELECTED WORKS
OF
ZHU DE

SELECTED WORKS OF ZHU DE

Translated by

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朱德

EDITORIAL NOTE

Comrade Zhu De was a great Marxist, proletarian revolutionary and strategist and an outstanding leader of the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese people's army and the People's Republic of China. In China's democratic and socialist revolutions and in its socialist construction, he applied the universal truth of Marxism to the solution of practical problems China faced in the people's war, the building of the people's army, Party building and economic development. He made brilliant contributions to the formation and development of Mao Zedong Thought, especially of Mao Zedong's military thinking.

To assist our readers in their study of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought, the history of the Chinese revolution and China's national construction and the life and thought of Comrade Zhu De, we have edited for publication the *Selected Works of Zhu De*. In his revolutionary career, Comrade Zhu De gained rich practical experience, and he wrote many works, especially on military issues. This volume contains the most important ones, many of which are published here for the first time.

Writings which were published during Comrade Zhu De's lifetime or whose manuscripts are available are reproduced here in their original form with a minimum of editing for language or to correct factual errors. Transcripts of speeches, however, have been edited.

Editorial Committee for Party
Literature, Central Committee of the
Communist Party of China

May 1983

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HOW TO FORGE AN INVINCIBLE RED ARMY

July 1931

Forging an invincible Red Army is one of the most urgent and vital tasks now facing the Party. Such an army must have the following six basic characteristics:

First, the class identity of the army should be safeguarded.

The Red Army is an army of workers and peasants, and can be considered the army of the entire labouring people. The historical task of the Red Army is to seize political power, establish and consolidate the workers' and peasants' Soviet regime¹ and liberate the proletariat and all other labouring people, both politically and economically. To fulfil this historical task, the class identity of the Red Army must be safeguarded, that is to say, only the labouring masses of workers and peasants are qualified to join.

The Chinese Red Army has grown with the expansion of the agrarian revolution. Most of its soldiers are farm labourers and poor and middle peasants who have benefited from this revolution. Its military cadres, and especially its leading political cadres, should come primarily from among the advanced urban proletarians. Farm labourers' unions and poor peasants' leagues in the countryside, and urban trade union councils in particular, should periodically send members who have a firm political stand to the Red Army in order to strengthen and expand it. This applies all the more to guerrilla and Red Guard activists who are experienced in struggle, as both present and past experience has shown.

Second, there should be unconditional leadership by the Communist Party.

¹This article, slightly abridged here, was first published in instalments in Nos. 2 and 3, July 1931, of the journal *Combat*, the organ of the Soviet Area Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party.

The Communist Party is the vanguard of the proletariat. Only under its correct leadership can the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army fulfil its great historical task. The guerrilla war waged before the emergence of the Red Army was also led by the Communist Party. By adopting the correct tactics of carrying out the agrarian revolution and winning over the masses, the Communist Party has gradually transformed the guerrilla forces into the Red Army, which it is expanding and strengthening step by step. It has begun to organize large-scale revolutionary warfare in order to put an end to the constant fighting among warlords, spread the Soviet movement, establish stable revolutionary base areas and set up a central government. Only under the leadership of the Communist Party can the Red Army determinedly fulfil this great and difficult task by correctly co-ordinating all the revolutionary forces in the country, acquiring a true understanding of the relationship between the world revolution and the Chinese revolution and working out a successful strategy.

The liquidationists² claim that the agrarian revolution owes its development to the peasants' leadership over the proletarians, that is, the leadership of those in the countryside over those in the cities. They even vilify the Red Army as "a gang of bandits and gangsters" that will soon be eliminated. They simply deny that the Red Army was established and has grown under the direct leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, and that it is being further strengthened and expanded with the deepening of the agrarian revolution and the support of the poor rural masses. If the Kuomintang and the imperialists have realized that the Red Army is a great revolutionary armed force born under the direct leadership of the Communist Party, we, from our own class standpoint, should be all the more clear about this. We must ensure that the military command in the Red Army, and particularly political training and the system of political commissars, be under the undivided leadership of the Communist Party.

The vanguard of the proletariat — that is, the Communist Party — exercises its leadership in the Red Army through the Army's political commissars and political departments. The political departments, directed by political commissars, are part of our Soviet political apparatus and implement the Party's political line and discipline in the Red Army. Thus the work of Party organizations in the Red Army should be directed by the political commissars and political departments. It is clearly stipulated in the No. 1 directive issued to the Red Army by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist

Party that political commissars in the Red Army are representatives of the central Soviet regime and of the Party, and that they therefore bear the same responsibilities as military commanders for strengthening discipline, raising political consciousness and increasing combat effectiveness among the troops. The Party and Youth League organizations have as their main tasks the raising of the political consciousness of the Red fighters and of the masses, and the strengthening of the army's combat effectiveness and discipline. Because the political commissars bear overall responsibility for the army, they also bear responsibility for the Party organizations.

We can set up an effective system of political commissars in the Red Army and ensure correct Party leadership only by following the above-mentioned directive. Further, the Party should pay great heed at all levels to the selection of political commissars. They should be the most loyal, brave and firm Communists, with a high level of class consciousness; the best cadres of worker origin should be trained to serve as political commissars. Only by doing these things can we consolidate the correct leadership of the Party in the Red Army and build the Red Army into one of iron strength.

Third, importance should be attached to political training.

The fundamental difference between the Red Army's political training and that of the bourgeois army lies in the fact that the Red Army opposes the bourgeois practice of turning political training into a means of blurring class consciousness or into fine-sounding but empty phrases that transcend class. In the Red Army, political training is aimed at awakening and raising the proletarian consciousness of commanders and fighters so that they will be aware of their own interests, apply themselves to the political tasks of their own class and fight resolutely against the enemy, thus achieving the goal of destroying the enemy and liberating their own class. If we are to forge an invincible Red Army, we should first of all make the commanders and fighters fully believe in the leadership of the Communist Party; they should be made to understand that the Communist Party is duty-bound to guide the alliance of the workers and peasants, that the proletariat has to play the leading role in the revolution, that the class nature of the revolutionary war is the liberation of the workers, peasants and other labouring people throughout the country, and that their active fulfilment of the tasks in the war is for the purpose of achieving overall victory; they should be made to understand that the masses possess great strength and that the Red Army must keep close ties

with them; they should also be made to understand that complete victory in the present stage of the Chinese revolution depends on the co-ordination of the revolutionary efforts in four respects: expansion of the Red Army, and insurrections by the workers, by the peasants and by the soldiers. Above all, they should keep abreast of current developments in the Chinese revolution and be clear about its prospects and the current upswing in the Chinese and world revolutions. They should realize that political and economic tension and panic in the enemy camp as a whole are favourable to the Chinese revolution, and they should be fully convinced that the Red Army under the leadership of the Communist Party can defeat the counter-revolutionary Kuomintang and imperialism, which are now on the decline.

To acquire such a firm political belief is to grasp an invisible and invincible weapon and to lay the spiritual foundation for forging an invincible Red Army. When we have done this, we can overcome any difficulty in the course of the revolution, survive any fierce struggle and grow more courageous with each battle until we achieve final victory.

Fourth, there must be advanced military techniques.

Technology advances day by day, assuming an increasingly important role in warfare and requiring more sophisticated training. Moreover, developments in technology require changes in general tactics.

China, although it is technologically backward, began employing advanced military techniques more than half a century ago. Tactics learned from the Japanese and Germans have been applied for almost as long. It is true that for now the tactics and techniques employed by the Chinese warlords lag far behind those of the imperialists, but with the latter constantly giving military supplies and assistance to the former, the war in China has gradually been modernized. New weapons are being introduced from different countries and are becoming more and more sophisticated. It is, therefore, imperative for the Red Army to develop tactics superior to the enemy's and to learn to use new weapons so that we can wield them as soon as they are captured from the enemy.

In the course of protracted guerrilla warfare, the Chinese Red Army has gained a lot of tactical experience. It particularly learned a good deal in mountain combat in south China, and it developed a vigorous offensive spirit. But as the scale of the modern revolutionary war grows, it is no longer enough to charge forward bravely, and the

current level of our fighting experience is inadequate to meet objective needs. We must, therefore, make a special effort to speed up the development of tactics. We must prepare to fight on a nationwide scale and to fight directly against the imperialists. Actually, the Red Army has exchanged fire with the imperialists' cannons and planes on many occasions at Longzhou and Changsha and along the middle reaches of the Changjiang River.³

The decision of the Revolutionary Military Commission of the Party Central Committee to change the organizational structure of the Red Army has strengthened its combat effectiveness. In the new edition of the Red Army manual, all formalistic contents have been removed and emphasis has been put on attacks on field fortifications. This has been done to meet the needs arising from the expansion of the revolution and to herald the development of tactics and techniques for an invincible Red Army.

Fifth, there must be voluntary observance of strict discipline.

The Red Army's code of discipline accords with the class interests, the interests of the revolution and the overall needs of the revolutionary struggle. Discipline in the Red Army applies equally to both commanders and soldiers. This is entirely different from discipline in the White army, which is meant solely to oppress the soldiers. In the Red Army, discipline is definitely not maintained by beating and swearing. It is established on the basis of proletarian unity and is voluntarily observed through mutual supervision and encouragement in the spirit of self-criticism and education. In struggles against the enemy, the Red Army men not only act in unison but also share the same determination; they do not jeopardize the interests of their class and the revolution, but struggle for them and even are prepared to lay down their lives for them.

By fostering and heightening the spirit of conscientiously observing discipline, we turn the loyalty, courage and sense of discipline of individual commanders and fighters into universal qualities throughout the army. The Red Army will be iron-strong if its discipline is conscientiously observed.

Sixth, there must be centralized command and unified training.

The Red Army is a special organization of the Soviet political power. It must not only fulfil the tasks of the workers' and peasants' democratic revolution but also serve as the mainstay in the building and safeguarding of socialism. It must fight not only the troops of the domestic warlords but also those of the imperialists, which are

armed with the most modern weapons and are better organized. The Red Army must, therefore, greatly improve its own organizational structure so as to adapt itself to the new circumstances under which it has to fight. We must institute unified training and centralized command. All actions taken by the Red Army should be as concentrated as possible in order to wipe out the armed forces of its class enemy. But here I would like to re-emphasize that the Red Army's combat effectiveness hinges not only on military techniques but mainly on its class consciousness and its political influence — on mobilizing the broad masses of workers and peasants to destroy the enemy troops.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that the forging of an invincible Red Army involves a process of struggle. It is now more necessary than ever for us to review and systematize the experience gained in the past period of the Red Army's struggle and, in accordance with the needs outlined above, build and expand an iron-strong Red Army and accomplish its great historical task.