MAO TSE-TUNG

MIND
THE LIVING CONDITIONS
OF THE MASSES
AND ATTEND TO
THE METHODS OF WORK
MAO TSE-TUNG

MIND
THE LIVING CONDITIONS
OF THE MASSES
AND ATTEND TO
THE METHODS OF WORK

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS
PEKING 1953
PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This English translation of Mao Tse-tung's *Mind the Living Conditions of the Masses and Attend to the Methods of Work*, together with the editor's note, has been made from the Chinese text given in the second edition of the *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Volume I, published by the People's Publishing House, Peking, in July 1952.

Printed in the People's Republic of China
EDITOR'S NOTE

This is part of the concluding statement made at the Second National Congress of the Soviet Republic of China, held in January 1934 in Juichin, Kiangsi Province.

Commission on the Publication of the Selected Works of Mao Tsetung, Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party
THERE are two problems which comrades have failed to stress during the discussions and which, I feel, should be brought up for some explanation.

The first problem concerns the living conditions of the masses.

Our central task at present is to mobilize the broad masses to take part in the revolutionary war, thereby overthrowing imperialism and the Kuomintang, spreading the revolution throughout the country, and driving imperialism out of China. Whoever takes this central task lightly is not a good revolutionary worker. If our comrades really grasp this central task and understand that the revolution must at all events be spread throughout the country, then they cannot in the least neglect or take lightly the problem of the immediate interests of the broad masses, the problem of their living conditions. As the revolutionary war is a war of the masses, we can carry out the war only by mobilizing the masses and relying on them.
If we do no other work than simply mobilizing the people to carry out the war, can we achieve the aim of defeating the enemy? Of course not. If we want to win, we still have to do a great deal of work. Leading the peasants in agrarian struggles and distributing land to them; arousing their labour enthusiasm so as to increase agricultural production; safeguarding the interests of the workers; establishing co-operatives; developing trade with outside areas; solving the problems that face the masses, problems of clothing, food, and shelter, of fuel, rice, cooking oil, and salt, of health and hygiene, and of marriage. In short, all problems facing the masses in their actual life should claim our attention. If we have these problems at heart and solve them to the satisfaction of the masses, we shall really become the organizers of the life of the masses and they will really rally round us and warmly support us. Comrades, can we then call upon the masses to take part in the revolutionary war? We can, absolutely.

We have found the following state of affairs among our personnel. They talk only about expanding the Red Army, enlarging the transport teams, collecting land taxes, and promoting subscription to the bonds; as to all other matters, these people neither talk about nor attend to them, and even ignore them altogether. For instance, there was a
time when the Tingchow City Government, bent on
the expansion of the Red Army and the mobilization
for the transport teams, paid not the least attention
to the problems of the living conditions of the masses.
The problems facing the masses of Tingchow City
were that they had no firewood; that salt was not
available on the market because the capitalists had
hoarded it; that some people had no houses to live
in; and that there was a shortage of rice and its
price was high. These were the practical problems
facing the masses of the people of Tingchow City,
who eagerly expected us to help them to find a
solution. But the Tingchow City Government dis­

cussed none of these matters. Thus after several
meetings at which only the expansion of the Red
Army and the mobilization for the transport teams
were discussed while the living conditions of the
masses were completely ignored, the newly-elected
one-hundred-odd delegates of the workers' and
peasants' congress of Tingchow City showed no
interest in attending the congress any longer or in
holding further sessions. As a result, very little
was achieved in the expansion of the Red Army
and the mobilization for the transport teams. This
is one kind of situation.

Comrades, you have probably read the pam­
phlets given you on the two model hsiang. There the
situation is the reverse. How greatly has the
Red Army been expanded in Changkang hsiang¹ in Kiangsi and Tsaiki hsiang² in Fukien! In Changkang hsiang eighty out of every hundred young and middle-aged men and women have joined the Red Army; in Tsaiki hsiang eighty-eight out of every hundred have joined the Red Army. Subscriptions to the bonds are also remarkable: Changkang hsiang with a population of only 1,500 has subscribed to the value of 4,500 silver dollars. Great achievements have likewise been made in other spheres of work. What is the reason? A few examples will make this clear. In Changkang hsiang a fire burnt down one room and about a half of another in a poor peasant's house, and the hsiang government appealed to the masses to contribute money to help him. Three persons were starving, and the hsiang government and the mutual-aid society immediately started collecting rice for their relief. In the famine of last summer, the hsiang government obtained rice from Kunglueh County³ more than two hundred li away for the relief of the masses. In Tsaiki hsiang very good work was also done along these lines. Such hsiang

¹ A hsiang in Hsingkuo County, Kiangsi Province.
² A hsiang in Shanghang County, Fukien Province.
³ Then a county in the Red area in Kiangsi, centring round the town of Tungku, southeast of Chian County. It was named after Comrade Huang Kung-lueh, commander of the Red Third Army, who sacrificed his life there in October 1931.
governments are really models of their kind. They are absolutely different from the Tingchow City Government with its bureaucratic method of leadership. We should learn from Changkang and Tsaiki hsiang and oppose bureaucratic leaders like those in Tingchow City.

I solemnly propose to this congress that we take deep interest in problems of the living conditions of the masses, from their land and labour to their fuel, rice, cooking oil, and salt. The masses of women want to learn ploughing and hoeing. Whom can we get to teach them? Children want to go to school. Has any primary school been set up? The wooden bridge over there is too narrow and pedestrians may slip. Should not repairs be made? Many people have boils or are otherwise ill. What measures can we take? All such problems concerning the living conditions of the masses should be placed on our agenda. Discussions should be made, decisions reached, actions taken, and results checked up. We should make the broad masses realize that we represent their interests, that our life and theirs are intimately interwoven. We should make them understand on the basis of these matters the tasks of a higher order which we propose, namely, the tasks of the revolutionary war, so that they will support the revolution and spread it throughout the country, and respond to our political appeals and struggle to the last for the victory of the revolution.
The masses in Changkang hsiang say: "The Communist Party is really good—it has thought of everything for us!" Exemplary personnel in Changkang hsiang! Estimable personnel in Changkang hsiang! They have won the genuine affection of the broad masses; their call for war mobilization has won the support of the broad masses. Do we want to win the support of the masses? Do we want the masses to devote all their efforts to the war front? If we do, we must go among the masses; arouse them to activity; concern ourselves with their weal and woe; and work earnestly and sincerely in their interests and solve their problems of production and of living conditions, their problems of salt, rice, shelter, clothing, and childbirth, in short, all their problems. If we do so, the broad masses will certainly give us support and regard the revolution as their very life and their most glorious banner. Should the Kuomintang launch attacks on the Red areas, the broad masses will stake their lives to fight. There can be no doubt about this, for haven’t we actually smashed the enemy’s first, second, third, and fourth campaigns of “encirclement and annihilation”?

The Kuomintang is now carrying out its policy of building blockhouses,\(^1\) erecting any number of

\(^1\) As a new tactic for his fifth campaign of “encirclement and annihilation,” Chiang Kai-shek decided at a military conference held at the mountain resort of Kuling, Kiangsi, in
tortoise-shells¹ as if they were walls of bronze and iron. Comrades, are they really walls of bronze and iron? Not in the least! Just think: for thousands of years, didn’t the feudal emperors’ fortresses and palaces stand firm enough? But they crumbled one after another the moment the masses rose. The tsar of Russia was one of the fiercest rulers in the world, but was he any more when the revolution of the proletariat and the peasantry broke out? He was no more. His walls of bronze and iron? All crumbled. Comrades, what are really walls of bronze and iron? The masses, the millions upon millions of masses who sincerely and earnestly support the revolution. They really form walls of bronze and iron which no force can break down, absolutely none. The counter-revolutionary forces can never break us, but we shall break them. By rallying millions upon millions of the masses round the revolutionary government and by expand-

July 1933, to build blockhouses round the Red areas. It was estimated that 2,900 blockhouses had already been built in Kiangsi by the end of January 1934. The Japanese aggressors later resorted to the same tactic when fighting the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies. Experience fully proved that this tactic of the counter-revolution could be outmanoeuvred and defeated by adhering to Comrade Mao Tse-tung’s strategic principles for a people’s war.

¹This was a popular jibe at the blockhouses into which the Kuomintang soldiers withdrew when attacked, very much as a tortoise withdraws into its carapace.
ing our revolutionary war, we shall be able to wipe out any counter-revolution and take over the whole of China.

The second problem concerns methods of work.

We are the leaders and organizers of the revolutionary war as well as the leaders and organizers of the life of the masses. To organize a revolutionary war and to improve the living conditions of the masses are our two major tasks. Here we are confronted with the serious problem of methods of work. We should not only propose tasks, but also solve the problem of the methods of accomplishing them. Our task may be the crossing of a river, but we cannot cross it without a bridge or a boat. Without solving the problem of bridge or boat, any talk about crossing the river would be idle. Without solving the problem of methods, it is sheer blether to talk about tasks. Without paying attention to leadership in expanding the Red Army, or attaching importance to the methods of expanding it, we can achieve no success in the end even though we repeat a thousand times the phrase “expanding the Red Army.” Besides, in land investigation, economic construction, culture and education, and the work in the newly-liberated areas and the outlying districts of our areas, in fact, in all sorts of

---

1 A measure taken after the agrarian reform to ascertain whether land had been properly redistributed.
work, we cannot accomplish any of the tasks if we only propose them but do not attend to methods for carrying them out, if we do not oppose bureaucratic methods of work and adopt instead practical and specific methods of work, and if we do not discard the authoritarian method of work and adopt instead the method of patient persuasion.

Comrades in Hsingkuo have done first-rate work and deserve our praise as model workers. Likewise, comrades in northeastern Kiangsi have done excellent work and are also model workers. As comrades in Hsingkuo and in northeastern Kiangsi have linked the life of the masses with the revolutionary war, they have solved the problem of revolutionary methods of work together with the problem of revolutionary tasks. They are working conscientiously and solving problems with minute care; they have taken up their responsibilities in earnest in face of the revolution; they are good organizers and leaders of the revolutionary war as well as good organizers and leaders of the life of the masses. Besides, in some places in the counties of Shanghang, Changting, and Yungting in Fukien; in Hsikiang and other places in southern Kiangsi; in some places in the counties of Chaling, Yunghsin, and Chian in the Hunan-Kiangsi Border Area; in some places in Yanghsin County in the Hunan-Hupeh-Kiangsi Border Area; in districts and hsiang in many other counties of Kiangsi; and in
Juichin, the county directly administered by the Central Government—in these places comrades have made progress in their work and likewise deserve our praise.

In all the places under our leadership, no doubt many active cadres, comrades who can do excellent work, have sprung from the masses. These comrades carry upon their shoulders a responsibility, i.e., to help to improve the work in those places where it is not well done and to help those comrades who are not yet competent. We are face to face with a great revolutionary war; we must break through the enemy's large-scale "encirclement and annihilation," and we must spread the revolution throughout the country. All revolutionary workers carry on their shoulders a tremendous responsibility. After this congress we must introduce practical measures to improve our work; the advanced areas should advance even further, and the backward areas should catch up with the advanced. We must bring into being thousands of Changkang hsiang and scores of Hsingkuo counties. These shall be our firm bases. Once we possess them, we shall be able to proceed therefrom to shatter the enemy's campaign of "encirclement and annihilation" and overthrow the rule of imperialism and the Kuomintang in the whole country.

January 27, 1934
Auch in der Gesamtheit des Arbeitslebens der Kommunisten haben viele Parteimitglieder ihre Aufgaben in ihrem Beruf und ihrer Gewerkschaft verrichtet.

In all the places under our leadership, no one is more active and more committed to the cause of the people than those who are actively working in the factories, and those who are actively working in the mines. They are the backbone of the revolution, and they are the vanguard of the workers and the peasants. They are the vanguard of the revolution, and they are the vanguard of the workers and the peasants.

January 27, 1984...