

The Lin Piao Document on Maoist Strategy

In commemorating the 20th anniversary of the defeat of Japan in 1945, the Chinese Communist Party and the government of the Chinese People's Republic undertook a major propaganda effort. The general tone of the proceedings has been interpreted by observers as signifying everything from a sense of confidence on Peking's part to feelings of enraged frustration over Chinese setbacks in world affairs during the last few months.

While much of the propaganda product of this particular occasion was the usual grist, one particular document has emerged as something considerably more than a run-of-the-mill pronouncement. On Sept. 3 an article by China's Defense Minister, Marshal Lin Piao, entitled "Long Live the Victory of People's War!" appeared in all the main Party organs throughout China, as well as in the Peking-controlled foreign language journals. This lengthy article was a basic recapitulation of the theory and practice of revolutionary war as seen by the Chinese Communists. It was probably the strongest and most unequivocal statement to emerge in some years of the basic doctrinal and operational requirements of the type of revolutionary violence espoused by Peking. While it sets no essentially new courses, it pulls together in a most militant manner much that has been said in piecemeal fashion over the years, and as such it does rank as a major document of Chinese communism.

As a whole or in part, Marshal Lin's article is open to varying interpretations, not necessarily mutually exclusive. It appears to be an attempt to formulate a systematic application of Maoist revolutionary war doctrine to the present situation and to the future requirements of revolutionary movements in the emerging nations, while striving to discredit completely the U.S.S.R.'s view of "national liberation" movements.

Some observers see in the document a large measure of advice and admonition to Hanoi and the Viet Cong. It seems to say rather clearly that the Communists in Vietnam should concentrate on fighting the war as a national war of resistance against the United States in the manner of the anti-Japanese war in China, and play down some of the more extreme elements of civil conflict within South Vietnam. In stressing repeatedly that each revolutionary people must rely on its own resources in carrying on its struggle, Lin implies strongly that China has no intention of entering the Vietnam fray with its military forces, but would continue support of Hanoi and the Viet Cong short of this. Furthermore, there are some definite hints that Peking may be unhappy with certain excesses in Viet Cong operational methods which could prove counterproductive, e.g., large-scale terrorism. At the same time, by proclaiming "inevitable" victory for "people's war," the article provides a "pep talk," perhaps designed to bolster Viet Cong morale during a period of military reverses.

The following excerpted quotations from "Long Live the Victory of People's War" are arranged according to the headings in the article itself. They represent approximately one-fifth of the original document; never-

theless, the reader must be prepared to wade through the turgid prose and repetitious phraseology of a Communist pronouncement of this type. The translated text used here was carried in the English-language *Peking Review* # 36 of Sept. 3, 1965.

Introduction

The Chinese people's War of Resistance was an important part of the world war against German, Japanese and Italian fascism. Of the innumerable anti-imperialist wars waged by the Chinese people in the past hundred years, the War of Resistance Against Japan was the first to end in complete victory. It was a war in which a weak semi-colonial and semi-feudal country triumphed over a strong imperialist country.

How was it possible for a weak country finally to defeat a strong country? How was it possible for a seemingly weak army to become the main force in the war? The basic reasons were that the War of Resistance Against Japan was a genuine people's war led by the Communist Party of China and Comrade Mao Tse-tung, a war in which the correct Marxist-Leninist political and military lines were put into effect, and that the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies were genuine people's armies which applied the whole range of strategy and tactics of people's war as formulated by Comrade Mao Tse-tung.

The Chinese people's victory in the War of Resistance paved the way for their seizure of state power throughout the country. The victory of the Chinese people's revolutionary war breached the imperialist front in the East, wrought a great change in the world balance of forces, and accelerated the revolutionary movement among the people of all countries.

Today, the U.S. imperialists are repeating on a world-wide scale the past actions of the Japanese imperialists in China and other parts of Asia. It has become an urgent necessity for the people in many countries to master and use people's war as a weapon against U.S. imperialism and its lackeys.

The Principal Contradiction of the Period of the War of Resistance Against Japan and the Line of the Communist Party of China

The Communist Party of China and Comrade Mao Tse-tung were able to lead the Chinese people to victory in the War of Resistance Against Japan primarily because they formulated and applied a Marxist-Leninist line.

Mao pointed out that the Japanese imperialist attempt to reduce China to a Japanese colony heightened the contradiction between China and Japan and made it the principal contradiction; that China's internal class contradictions—such as those between the masses of the people and feudalism, between the peasantry and the landlord class, between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and between the peasantry and urban petty bourgeoisie on the one hand and the bourgeoisie on the

other—still remained, but that they had all been relegated to a secondary or subordinate position as a result of the war of aggression unleashed by Japan.

The Communist Party of China and Comrade Mao Tse-tung formulated the line of the Anti-Japanese National United Front on the basis of their analysis of the new situation. Holding aloft the banner of national liberation, our Party issued the call for national unity and united resistance to Japanese imperialism, a call which won fervent support from the people of the whole country.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung formulated the strategy for a protracted war. China's War of Resistance would be protracted, and prolonged efforts would be needed gradually to weaken the enemy's forces and expand our own, so that the enemy would change from being strong to being weak and we would change from being weak to being strong and accumulate sufficient strength finally to defeat him. Comrade Mao Tse-tung pointed out that with the change in the balance of forces between the enemy and ourselves the War of Resistance would pass through three stages, namely, the strategic defensive, the strategic stalemate and the strategic offensive. The protracted war was also a process of mobilizing, organizing and arming the people. It was only by mobilizing the entire people to fight a people's war that the War of Resistance could be persevered in and the Japanese aggressors defeated.

Correctly Apply the Line and Policy of the United Front

In order to win a people's war, it is imperative to build the broadest possible united front and formulate a series of policies which will ensure the fullest mobilization of the basic masses as well as the unity of all the forces that can be united.

The Anti-Japanese National United Front embraced all the anti-Japanese classes and strata. Our Party made a series of adjustments in its policies in order to unite all the anti-Japanese parties and groups, including the Kuomintang, and all the anti-Japanese strata in a joint fight against the foe. Our land policy, the policy of confiscating the land of the landlords, was changed to one of reducing rent and interest. In accordance with the principles of the Anti-Japanese National United Front, we also made necessary and appropriate changes in our policies relating to the economy, taxation, labor and wages, anti-espionage, people's rights, culture and education, etc. While making these policy adjustments, we maintained the independence of the Communist Party, the people's army and the base areas.

History shows that when confronted by ruthless imperialist aggression, a Communist Party must hold aloft the national banner and, using the weapon of the united front, rally around itself the masses and the patriotic and anti-imperialist people who form more than 90 per cent of a country's population, so as to mobilize all positive factors, unite with all the forces that can be united and isolate to the maximum the common enemy of the whole nation. If we abandon the national banner, adopt the line of "closed-doorism" and thus isolate ourselves, it is out of the question to exercise leadership and develop the people's revolution-

ary cause, and this in reality amounts to helping the enemy and bringing defeat on ourselves.

As far back as the period of the First Revolutionary Civil War, Comrade Mao Tse-tung had pointed out that the peasant question occupied an extremely important position in the Chinese revolution, that the bourgeois-democratic revolution against imperialism and feudalism was in essence a peasant revolution and that the basic task of the Chinese proletariat in the bourgeois-democratic revolution was to give leadership to the peasants' struggle.

The War of Resistance Against Japan was in essence a peasant revolutionary war led by our Party. By arousing and organizing the peasant masses and integrating them with the proletariat, our Party created a powerful force capable of defeating the strongest enemy. To rely on the peasants, build rural base areas and use the countryside to encircle and finally capture the cities—such was the way to victory in the Chinese revolution.

The revolutionary base areas established in the War of Resistance later became the springboards for the People's War of Liberation, in which the Chinese people defeated the Kuomintang reactionaries. In the War of Liberation we continued the policy of first encircling the cities from the countryside and then capturing the cities, and thus won nation-wide victory.

Why were the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies able to grow big and strong from being small and weak and to score such great victories in the War of Resistance Against Japan? The fundamental reason was that the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies were founded on Comrade Mao Tse-tung's theory of army building. They were armies of a new type, a people's army which wholeheartedly serves the interests of the people.

Guided by Comrade Mao Tse-tung's theory on building a people's army, our army was under the absolute leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and most loyally carried out the Party's Marxist-Leninist line and policies. It had a high degree of conscious discipline and was heroically inspired to destroy all enemies and conquer all difficulties. Everywhere it went, it did propaganda work among the masses, organized and armed them and helped them set up revolutionary political power. Our armymen strictly observed the Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention, carried out campaigns to "support the government and cherish the people," and did good deeds for the people everywhere. They also made use of every possibility to engage in production themselves so as to overcome economic difficulties, better their own livelihood and lighten the people's burden. By their exemplary conduct they won the wholehearted support of the masses, who affectionately called them "our own boys."

The essence of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's theory of army building is that in building a people's army prominence must be given to politics, i.e., the army must first and foremost be built on a political basis. Politics is the commander, politics is the soul of everything. Political work is the life-line of our army. True, a people's army must pay attention to the constant im-

provement of its weapons and equipment and its military technique, but in its fighting it does not rely purely on weapons and technique, it relies mainly on politics, on the proletarian revolutionary consciousness and courage of the commanders and fighters, on the support and backing of the masses.

During the War of Resistance Against Japan, on the basis of his comprehensive analysis of the enemy and ourselves, Comrade Mao Tse-tung laid down the following strategic principle for the Communist-led Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies: "Guerrilla warfare is basic, but lose no chance for mobile warfare under favorable conditions." He raised guerrilla warfare to the level of strategy, because, if they are to defeat a formidable enemy, revolutionary armed forces should not fight with a reckless disregard for the consequences when there is a great disparity between their own strength and the enemy's. If they do, they will suffer serious losses and bring heavy setbacks to the revolution. Guerrilla warfare is the only way to mobilize and apply the whole strength of the people against the enemy, the only way to expand our forces in the course of the war, deplete and weaken the enemy, gradually change the balance of forces between the enemy and ourselves, switch from guerrilla to mobile warfare, and finally defeat the enemy.

War of annihilation is the fundamental guiding principle of our military operations. This guiding principle should be put into effect regardless of whether mobile or guerrilla warfare is the primary form of fighting. It is true that in guerrilla warfare much should be done to disrupt and harass the enemy, but it is still necessary actively to advocate and fight battles of annihilation whenever conditions are favorable. In mobile warfare superior forces must be concentrated in every battle so that the enemy forces can be wiped out one by one.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung has provided a masterly summary of the strategy and tactics of people's war: You fight in your way and we fight in ours; we fight when we can win and move away when we can't. In other words, you rely on modern weapons and we rely on highly conscious revolutionary people; you give full play to your superiority and we give full play to ours; you have your way of fighting and we have ours.

Adhere to the Policy of Self-Reliance

The victory of the Anti-Fascist War as a whole was the result of the common struggle of the people of the world. The common victory was won by all the peoples, who gave one another support and encouragement. Yet each country was, above all, liberated as a result of its own people's efforts. The Chinese people enjoyed the support of other peoples in winning both The War of Resistance Against Japan and the People's Liberation War, and yet victory was mainly the result of the Chinese people's own efforts.

The liberation of the masses is accomplished by the masses themselves—this is a basic principle of Marxism-Leninism. Revolution or people's war in any country is the business of the masses in that country and should be carried out primarily by their own efforts; there is no other way.

Difficulties are not invincible monsters. If everyone cooperates and fights them, they will be overcome.

The peoples of the world invariably support each other in their struggles against imperialism and its lackeys. Those countries which have won victory are duty-bound to support and aid the peoples who have not yet done so. Nevertheless, foreign aid can only play a supplementary role.

In order to make a revolution and to fight a people's war and be victorious, it is imperative to adhere to the policy of self-reliance, rely on the strength of the masses in one's own country and prepare to carry on the fight independently even when all material aid from outside is cut off. If one does not operate by one's own efforts, does not independently ponder and solve the problems of the revolution in one's own country and does not rely on the strength of the masses, but leans wholly on foreign aid—even though this be aid from socialist countries which persist in revolution—no victory can be won, or be consolidated even if it is won.

The International Significance of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's Theory of People's War

The Chinese revolution is a continuation of the Great October Revolution. The road of the October Revolution is the common road for all people's revolutions. Naturally, the Chinese revolution had its own peculiar characteristics. Comrade Mao Tse-tung's great merit lies in the fact that he has succeeded in integrating the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the Chinese revolution and has enriched and developed Marxism-Leninism by his masterly generalization and summation of the experience gained during the Chinese people's protracted revolutionary struggle.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung's theory of people's war has been proved by the long practice of the Chinese revolution to be in accord with the objective laws of such wars and to be invincible. It has not only been valid for China, it is a great contribution to the revolutionary struggles of the oppressed nations and peoples throughout the world.

It was on the basis of the lessons derived from the people's wars in China that Comrade Mao Tse-tung, using the simplest and the most vivid language, advanced the famous thesis that "political power grows out of the barrel of a gun." He clearly pointed out:

The seizure of power by armed force, the settlement of the issue by war, is the central task and the highest form of revolution. This Marxist-Leninist principle of revolution holds good universally, for China and for all other countries.

In the last analysis, whether one dares to wage a tit-for-tat struggle against armed aggression and suppression by the imperialists and their lackeys, whether one dares to fight a people's war against them, is tantamount to whether one dares to embark on revolution. This is the most effective touchstone for distinguishing genuine from fake revolutionaries and Marxist-Leninists.

The history of people's war in China and other countries provides conclusive evidence that the growth of

the people's revolutionary forces from weak and small beginnings into strong and large forces is a universal law of development of people's war. A people's war inevitably meets with many difficulties, with ups and downs and setbacks in the course of its development, but no force can alter its general trend towards inevitable triumph.

It must be emphasized that Comrade Mao Tse-tung's theory of the establishment of rural revolutionary base areas and the encirclement of the cities from the countryside is of outstanding and universal practical importance for the present revolutionary struggles of all the oppressed nations and peoples, and particularly for the revolutionary struggles of the oppressed nations and peoples in Asia, Africa and Latin America against imperialism and its lackeys.

The countryside alone can provide the revolutionary bases from which the revolutionaries can go forward to final victory. Precisely for this reason, Comrade Mao Tse-tung's theory of establishing revolutionary base areas in the rural districts and encircling the cities from the countryside is attracting more and more attention among the people in these regions. Taking the entire globe, if North America and Western Europe can be called "the cities of the world," then Asia, Africa and Latin America constitute "the rural areas of the world." In a sense, the contemporary world revolution also presents a picture of the encirclement of cities by the rural areas. In the final analysis, the whole cause of world revolution hinges on the revolutionary struggles of the Asian, African and Latin American peoples who make up the overwhelming majority of the world's population.

Defeat U.S. Imperialism and Its Lackeys by People's War

Since World War II, U.S. imperialism has stepped into the shoes of German, Japanese and Italian fascism and has been trying to build a great American empire by dominating and enslaving the whole world. It is the most rabid aggressor in human history and the most ferocious common enemy of the people of the world. Every people or country in the world that wants revolution, independence and peace cannot but direct the spearhead of its struggle against U.S. imperialism.

At present, the main battlefield of the fierce struggle between the people of the world on the one side and U.S. imperialism and its lackeys on the other is the vast area of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Since World War II, revolutionary storms have been rising in this area, and today they have become the most important force directly pounding U.S. imperialism.

U.S. imperialism is stronger, but also more vulnerable, than any imperialism of the past. Its human, military, material and financial resources are far from sufficient for the realization of its ambition of dominating the whole world. Everything is divisible. And so is this colossus of U.S. imperialism. It can be split up and defeated. The peoples of Asia, Africa, Latin America and other regions can destroy it piece by piece, some striking at its head and others at its feet. That is why the greatest fear of U.S. imperialism is that people's wars will be launched in different parts of the world,

and particularly in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and why it regards people's war as a mortal danger.

U.S. imperialism relies solely on its nuclear weapons to intimidate people. But these weapons cannot save U.S. imperialism from its doom. Even if U.S. imperialism brazenly uses nuclear weapons, it cannot conquer the people, who are indomitable. However highly developed modern weapons and technical equipment may be and however complicated the methods of modern warfare, in the final analysis the outcome of a war will be decided by the sustained fighting of the ground forces, by the fighting at close quarters on battlefields, by the political consciousness of the men, by their courage and spirit of sacrifice. Here the weak points of U.S. imperialism will be completely laid bare, while the superiority of the revolutionary people will be brought into full play. The reactionary troops of U.S. imperialism cannot possibly be endowed with the courage and the spirit of sacrifice possessed by the revolutionary people. The spiritual atom bomb which the revolutionary people possess is a far more powerful and useful weapon than the physical atom bomb.

Vietnam is the most convincing current example of a victim of aggression defeating U.S. imperialism by a people's war. The United States has made south Vietnam a testing ground for the suppression of people's war. It has carried on this experiment for many years, and everybody can now see that the U.S. aggressors are unable to find a way of coping with people's war.

History has proved and will go on proving that people's war is the most effective weapon against U.S. imperialism and its lackeys. U.S. imperialism, like a mad bull dashing from place to place, will finally be burned to ashes in the blazing fire of the people's wars it has provoked by its own actions.

The Khrushchëv Revisionists Are Betrayers of People's War

The Khrushchëv revisionists have come to the rescue of U.S. imperialism just when it is most panic-stricken and helpless in its efforts to cope with people's war. Working hand in glove with the U.S. imperialists, they are doing their utmost to spread all kinds of arguments against people's war and wherever they can, they are scheming to undermine it by overt or covert means.

The fundamental reason why the Khrushchëv revisionists are opposed to people's war is that they have no faith in the masses and are afraid of U.S. imperialism, of war and of revolution. They submit to the nuclear blackmail of the U.S. imperialists and are afraid that, if the oppressed peoples and nations rise up to fight people's wars or the people of socialist countries repulse U.S. imperialist aggression, U.S. imperialism will be incensed, they themselves will become involved and their fond dream of Soviet-U.S. cooperation to dominate the world will be spoiled.

We know that war brings destruction, sacrifice and suffering on the people. The sacrifice of a small number of people in revolutionary wars is repaid by security for whole nations, whole countries and even the whole of mankind; temporary suffering is repaid by lasting or even perpetual peace and happiness. War can temper the people and push history forward. In this sense, war is a great school.

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In diametrical opposition to the Khrushchëv revisionists, the Marxist-Leninists and revolutionary people never take a gloomy view of war. Our attitude towards imperialist wars of aggression has always been clear-cut. First, we are against them, and secondly, we are not afraid of them. We will destroy whoever attacks us. As for revolutionary wars waged by the oppressed nations and peoples, so far from opposing them, we invariably give them firm support and active aid. It is sheer day-dreaming for anyone to think that, since our revolution has been victorious, our national construction is forging ahead, our national wealth is increasing and our living conditions are improving, we too will lose our revolutionary fighting will, abandon the cause of world revolution and discard Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. Of course, every revolution in a country stems from the demands of its own people. The people's role cannot be replaced or taken over by any people from outside. In this sense, revolution cannot be imported. But this does not exclude mutual sympathy and support on the part of revolutionary peoples in their struggles against the imperialists and their lackeys. Our support and aid to other revolutionary peoples serves precisely to help their self-reliant struggle.

Wherever there is armed aggression and suppression by imperialism and its lackeys, there are bound to be people's wars against aggression and oppression. It is certain that such wars will develop vigorously. This is an objective law independent of the will of either the U.S. imperialists or the Khrushchëv revisionists. The revolutionary people of the world will sweep away everything that stands in the way of their advance. Khrushchëv is finished. And the successors to Khrushchëv revisionism will fare no better. The imperialists, the reactionaries and the Khrushchëv revisionists who have all set themselves against people's war, will be swept like dust from the stage of history by the mighty broom of the revolutionary people.

Provided each people studies these lessons of people's war well and creatively integrates them with the concrete practice of revolution in their own country, there is no doubt that the revolutionary peoples of the world will stage still more powerful and splendid dramas in the theatre of people's war in their countries and that they will wipe off the earth once and for all the common enemy of all the peoples, U.S. imperialism, and its lackeys.

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