On Two Problems

(1st Part)

Central Committee Communist Party of Peru

February 1994¹

The need to raise the organic to the level of political leadership, to the level of the conquest of power in the whole country demands a piece because, especially if there is a fight to the death between revolution and counter-revolution where the enemy also draws lessons, it is therefore necessary to make a maximum effort to build superior apparatuses to those of the reaction. Well, *On Two Problems* serves this purpose.

There we concluded that the Party is capable of handling the two-line struggle, and furthermore, we are capable of managing antagonistic struggles with non-antagonistic methods, developing the struggle within concrete situations in order to resolve problems, because it may become antagonic in a specific situation in order to resolve problems. We must apply and handle the two line struggle well. The struggle is not personal, it is objective and not subjective. It aims to strengthen the Party, not to weaken or undermine it, because whoever undermines the Party, is committing a grave error.²

— Chairman Gonzalo, Third Plenum of the Central Committee

I. On Democratic Centralism, Discipline, and the Two-Line Struggle

- Quotations from Chairman Mao on Discipline (page 270)

Within the ranks of the people, democracy is correlative with centralism and freedom with discipline. They are the two opposites of a single entity, contradictory as well as united, and we should not one-sidedly emphasize one to the denial of the other. Within the ranks of the people, we cannot do without freedom, nor can we do without discipline; we cannot do without democracy, nor can we

¹https://vnd-peru.blogspot.com/2025/07/partido-comunista-del-peru-sobre-dos.html

²RedLibrary: Third Plenum: Meeting of the Central Leadership with the Northern Regional Committee, Central Committee of the Communist Party of Peru, March 1992.

do without centralism. This unity of democracy and centralism, of freedom and discipline, constitutes our democratic centralism. Under this system, the people enjoy extensive democracy and freedom, but at the same time they have to keep within the bounds of socialist discipline.

— On the Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People (February 27, 1957), 1st pocket ed., pp. 10-11.

In view of Chang Kuo-tao's serious violations of discipline, we must affirm anew the discipline of the Party, namely:

- (1) the individual is subordinate to the organization;
- (2) the minority is subordinate to the majority;
- (3) the lower level is subordinate to the higher level; and
- (4) the entire membership is subordinate to the central Committee.

Whoever violates these articles of discipline disrupts Party unity. Experience proves that some people violate Party discipline through not knowing what it is, while others, like Chang Kuo-tao, violate it knowingly and take advantage of many Party members' ignorance to achieve their treacherous purposes. Hence it is necessary to educate members in Party discipline so that the rank and file will not only observe discipline themselves, but will exercise supervision over the leaders so that they, too, observe it, thus preventing the recurrence of cases like Chang Kuo-tao's. If we are to ensure the development of inner-Party relations along the right lines, besides the four most important articles of discipline mentioned above we must work out a set of fairly detailed Party rules which will serve to unify the actions of the leading bodies at all levels.

— "The Role of the Chinese Communist Party in the National War" (October 1938), Selected Works, Vol. II, pp. 203-04.*

One requirement of Party discipline is that the minority should submit to the majority. If the view of the minority has been rejected, it must support the decision passed by the majority. If necessary, it can bring up the matter for reconsideration at the next meeting, but apart from that it must not act against the decision in any way.

— "On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party" (December 1929), Selected Works, Vol. I, p. 110.

They [all officers and soldiers of our army] must heighten their sense of discipline and resolutely carry out orders, carry out our policy, carry out the Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention — with army and people united, army and government united, officers and soldiers united, and the whole army united — and permit no breach of discipline.

— "Manifesto of the Chinese People's Liberation Army" (October 1947), Selected Military Writings, 2nd ed., p. 340.

- Quotations from Chairman Mao on Criticism and Self-Criticism

The Communist Party does not fear criticism because we are Marxists, the truth is on our side, and the basic masses, the workers and peasants, are on our side.

— Speech at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference on Propaganda Work (March 12, 1957), 1st pocket ed., p. 14.

Thoroughgoing materialists are fearless; we hope that all our fellow fighters will courageously shoulder their responsibilities and overcome all difficulties, fearing no setbacks or gibes, nor hesitating to criticize us Communists and give us their suggestions. "He who is not afraid of death by a thousand cuts dares to unhorse the emperor" — this is the dauntless spirit needed in our struggle to build socialism and communism. On our part, we Communists should create conditions helpful to those who co-operate with us, establish good comradely relations with them in our common work and unite with them in our joint struggle.

— Speech at the Chinese Communist Party's National Conference on Propaganda Work (March 12, 1957), 1st pocket ed., p. 16.

We have the Marxist-Leninist weapon of criticism and self-criticism. We can get rid of a bad style and keep the good.

— "Report to the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China" (March 5, 1949), Selected Works, Vol. IV, p. 374.

Conscientious practice of self-criticism is still another hallmark distinguishing our Party from all other political parties. As we say, dust will accumulate if a room is not cleaned regularly, our faces will get dirty if they are not washed regularly. Our comrades' minds and our Party's work may also collect dust, and also need sweeping and washing. The proverb "Running water is never stale and a door-hinge is never worm-eaten" means that constant motion prevents the inroads of germs and other organisms. To check up regularly on our work and in the process develop a democratic style of work, to fear neither criticism nor self-criticism,

and to apply such good popular Chinese maxims as "Say all you know and say it without reserve", "Blame not the speaker but be warned by his words" and "Correct mistakes if you have committed them and guard against them if you have not" — this is the only effective way to prevent all kinds of political dust and germs from contaminating the minds of our comrades and the body of our Party.

— "On Coalition Government" (April 24, 1945), Selected Works, Vol. III, pp. 316-17.

Opposition and struggle between ideas of different kinds constantly occur within the Party; this is a reflection within the Party of contradictions between classes and between the new and the old in society. If there were no contradictions in the Party and no ideological struggles to resolve them, the Party's life would come to an end.

— "On Contradiction" (August 1937), Selected Works, Vol. I, p. 317.3

We stand for active ideological struggle because it is the weapon for ensuring unity within the Party and the revolutionary organizations in the interest of our fight. Every Communist and revolutionary should take up this weapon.

But liberalism rejects ideological struggle and stands for unprincipled peace, thus giving rise to a decadent, philistine attitude and bringing about political degeneration in certain units and individuals in the Party and the revolutionary organizations.

— "Combat Liberalism" (September 7, 1937), Selected Works, Vol. II, p. 31.

In opposing subjectivism, sectarianism and stereotyped Party writing we must have in mind two purposes: first, "learn from past mistakes to avoid future ones", and second, "cure the sickness to save the patient". The mistakes of the past must be exposed without sparing anyone's sensibilities; it is necessary to analyse and criticize what was bad in the past with a scientific attitude so that work in the future will be done more carefully and done better. This is what is meant by "learn from past mistakes to avoid future ones". But our aim in exposing errors and criticizing shortcomings, like that of a doctor curing a sickness, is solely to save the patient and not to doctor him to death. A person with appendicitis is saved when the surgeon removes his appendix. So long as a person who has made mistakes does not hide his sickness for fear of treatment or persist in his mistakes until he is beyond cure, so long as he honestly and sincerely wishes to be cured and to mend his ways, we should welcome him and cure his sickness so that he can become a good comrade. We can never succeed if we just let ourselves go and

³RedLibrary: See On Practice & On Contradiction, Mao Zedong, Prairie Fire Publishing, page 54.

lash out at him. In treating an ideological or a political malady, one must never be rough and rash but must adopt the approach of "curing the sickness to save the patient", which is the only correct and effective method.

— "Rectify the Party's Style of Work" (February 1, 1942), Selected Works, Vol. III, p. 50.*

Another point that should be mentioned in connection with inner-Party criticism is that some comrades ignore the major issues and confine their attention to minor points when they make their criticism. They do not understand that the main task of criticism is to point out political and organizational mistakes. As to personal shortcomings, unless they are related to political and organizational mistakes, there is no need to be overcritical or the comrades concerned will be at a loss as to what to do. Moreover, once such criticism develops, there is the great danger that within the Party attention will be concentrated exclusively on minor faults, and everyone will become timid and overcautious and forget the Party's political tasks.

— "On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party" (December 1929), Selected Works, Vol. I, pp. 111-12.*

In inner-Party criticism, guard against subjectivism, arbitrariness and the vulgarization of criticism; statements should be based on facts and criticism should stress the political side.

— *Ibid.*, p. 112.*

Inner-Party criticism is a weapon for strengthening the Party organization and increasing its fighting capacity. In the Party organization of the Red Army, however, criticism is not always of this character, and sometimes turns into personal attack. As a result, it damages the Party organization as well as individuals. This is a manifestation of petty-bourgeois individualism. The method of correction is to help Party members understand that the purpose of criticism is to increase the Party's fighting capacity in order to achieve victory in the class struggle and that it should not be used as a means of personal attack.

— *Ibid.*, p. 110.

If we have shortcomings, we are not afraid to have them pointed out and criticized, because we serve the people. Anyone, no matter who, may point out our shortcomings. If he is right, we will correct them. If what he proposes will benefit the people, we will act upon it.

— "Serve the People" (September 8, 1944), Selected Works, Vol. III, p. 227.

- The Necessity of Elevating the Struggle to the Level of Line. Chairman Mao

Volume V, page 561, A Dialectical Approach to Inner-Party Unity (November 18, 1957)

With regard to the question of unity I'd like to say something about the approach. I think our attitude should be one of unity towards every comrade, no matter who, provided he is not a hostile element or a saboteur. We should adopt a dialectical, not a metaphysical, approach towards him. What is meant by a dialectical approach? It means being analytical about everything, acknowledging that human beings all make mistakes and not negating a person completely just because he has made mistakes. Lenin once said that there is not a single person in the world who does not make mistakes. Everyone needs support. An able fellow needs the help of three other people, a fence needs the support of three stakes. With all its beauty the lotus needs the green of its leaves to set it off. These are Chinese proverbs. Still another Chinese proverb says three cobblers with their wits combined equal Chukeh Liang the master mind. Chukeh Liang by himself can never be perfect, he has his limitations. Look at this declaration of our twelve countries We have gone through a first, second, third and fourth draft and have not yet finished polishing it. I think it would be presumptuous for anyone to claim God-like omniscience and omnipotence. So what attitude should we adopt towards a comrade who has made mistakes? We should be analytical and adopt a dialectical, rather than a metaphysical, approach. Our Party once got bogged down in metaphysics, in dogmatism, which totally destroyed anyone not to its liking. Later, we repudiated dogmatism and came to learn a little more dialectics. The unity of opposites is the fundamental concept of dialectics. In accordance with this concept, what should we do with a comrade who has made mistakes? We should first wage a struggle to rid him of his wrong ideas. Second, we should also help him. Point one, struggle, and point two, help. We should proceed from good intentions to help him correct his mistakes so that he will have a way out.

However, dealing with persons of another type is different. Towards persons like Trotsky and like Chen Tu-hsiu, Chang Kuo-tao and Kao Kang in China, it was impossible to adopt a helpful attitude, for they were incorrigible. And there were individuals like Hitler, Chiang Kaishek and the tsar, who were likewise incorrigible and had to be overthrown because we and they were absolutely exclusive of each other. In this sense, there is only one aspect to their nature, not two. In the final analysis, this is also true of the imperialist and capitalist systems, which are bound to be replaced in the end by the socialist system. The same applies to ideology,

⁴RedLibrary: In the English edition of Volume V of Chairman Mao's *Selected Works*, it is on page 514.

idealism will be replaced by materialism and theism by atheism. Here we are speaking of the strategic objective. But the case is different with tactical stages, where compromises may be made. Didn't we compromise with the Americans on the 38th Parallel in Korea? Wasn't there a compromise with the French in Viet Nam?

At each tactical stage, it is necessary to be good at making compromises as well as at waging struggles. Now let us return to the relations between comrades. I would suggest that talks be held by comrades where there has been some misunderstanding between them. Some seem to think that, once in the Communist Party, people all become saints with no differences or misunderstandings, and that the Party is not subject to analysis, that is to say, it is monolithic and uniform, hence there is no need for talks. It seems as if people have to be 100 per cent Marxists once they are in the Party. Actually there are Marxists of all degrees, those who are 100 per cent, 90, 80, 70, 60 or 50 per cent Marxist, and some who are only 10 or 20 per cent Marxist. Can't two or more of us have talks together in a small room? Can't we proceed from the desire for unity and hold talks in the spirit of helping each other? Of course I'm referring to talks within the Communist ranks, and not to talks with the imperialists (though we do hold talks with them as well). Let me give an example. Aren't our twelve countries holding talks on the present occasion? Aren't the more than sixty Parties holding talks too? As a matter of fact they are. In other words, provided that no damage is done to the principles of Marxism-Leninism, we accept from others certain views that are acceptable and give up certain of our own views that can be given up. Thus we have two hands to deal with a comrade who has made mistakes, one hand to struggle with him and the other to unite with him. The aim of struggle is to uphold the principles of Marxism, which means being principled; that is one hand. The other hand is to unite with him. The aim of unity is to provide him with a way out, to compromise with him, which means being flexible. The integration of principle with flexibility is a Marxist-Leninist principle, and it is a unity of opposites.

Any kind of world, and of course class society in particular, teems with contradictions. Some say that there are contradictions to be "found" in socialist society, but I think this is a wrong way of putting it. The point is not that there are contradictions to be found, but that it teems with contradictions. There is no place where contradictions do not exist, nor is there any person who cannot be analysed. To think that he cannot is being metaphysical. You see, an atom is a complex of unities of opposites. There is a unity of the two opposites, the nucleus and the electrons. In a nucleus there is again a unity of opposites, the protons and the neutrons. Speaking of the proton, there are protons and antiprotons, and as for the neutron, there are neutrons and antineutrons. In short, the unity of opposites is present everywhere. The concept of the unity of opposites, dialectics, must be widely propagated. I say dialectics should move from the small circle of philoso-

phers to the broad masses of the people. I suggest that this question be discussed at meetings of the political bureaus and at the plenary sessions of the central committees of the various Parties and also at meetings of their Party committees at all levels. As a matter of fact, the secretaries of our Party branches understand dialectics, for when they prepare reports to branch meetings, they usually write down two items in their notebooks, first, the achievements and, second, the shortcomings. One divides into two — this is a universal phenomenon, and this is dialectics.

- On Self-Evaluation. Page 553⁵

The bourgeoisie and the bourgeois intellectuals ought to recognize the necessity of remoulding themselves. The Rightists refuse to do so, and because of their influence some others are also reluctant to accept remoulding, claiming they have already been remoulded. Chang Nai-chi says remoulding is horrible, as bad as having one's tendons pulled out and one's skin torn off. We say one should cast off one's old self and he says that means having your tendons pulled out and your skin torn off. Now, who is going to pull out that gentleman's tendons and tear off his skin? Many have forgotten what our aim is, why we want to do all this and what is good about socialism. Why is ideological remoulding necessary? Because we want the bourgeois intellectuals to acquire the proletarian world outlook and transform themselves into proletarian intellectuals. The old intellectuals will be obliged to make the change because new intellectuals are coming on the scene. In terms of knowledge you can say that the new intellectuals haven't made the grade yet, but eventually they will. The emergence of these new forces will pose a challenge to the old scientists, engineers, professors and teachers and spur them on. We reckon that most can make progress and some can remould themselves into proletarian intellectuals.

The proletariat must build up its own army of intellectuals, just as the bourgeoisie does. The regime of a given class cannot do without its own intellectuals. How could bourgeois dictatorship be possible in the United States without its intellectuals? Ours is a dictatorship of the proletariat, and the proletariat must build its own army of intellectuals, including all those intellectuals from the old society who truly take a firm working-class stand after being remoulded. Probably Chang Nai-chi can be counted among those Rightists who refuse to change. When urged to make the change into a proletarian intellectual, he refuses, saying he made the change long ago and is now a "red bourgeois". Well, let's follow the method of self-assessment and public discussion; you can make the assessment yourself, but

⁵RedLibrary: In English edition: Page 498 of Volume V, corresponding to *Have Firm Faith in the Majority of the People*.

it has to be put to the public for discussion. We say you are not up to the mark, Chang Nai-chi, you are a white bourgeois. Some people argue for becoming expert first and red later. To be expert first and red later means to be white first and red later. Not red now but red in the future – if they are not red now, then what is their present colour? White of course. Intellectuals should be at once red and expert. To be red, they must make up their minds thoroughly to transform their bourgeois world outlook. They don't have to read a lot of books, what they must do is to get a true understanding of the following questions. What is the proletariat? What is the dictatorship of the proletariat? Why is it that the proletariat alone has great promise while the other classes are all classes in transition? Why must our country take the socialist road and not the capitalist road? Why is the leadership of the Communist Party indispensable?

- On Criticisms and Uniting with Those Who Criticize You, Page 3456

As for the fight against sectarianism, one thing in particular should be pointed out, that is, you should unite with those who have waged struggles against you. They came to blows with you, knocked you down, made you suffer and lose face and conferred the "official honour" of opportunist on you, although you were not that bad. If the blow was justified, then it served you right. If you were an opportunist, why shouldn't the blow have been aimed at you? What I am talking about here is the unjustified blows and struggles. Once those who dealt such blows change their attitude and admit that they did wrong in attacking you and that it was not right to proclaim you "king" of the realm of opportunism, then let the matter end there. If a few don't admit they were wrong, can't you wait? You can, I suppose. By unity we mean uniting with those who have differences with you, who look down on you or show little respect for you, who have had a bone to pick with you or waged struggles against you and at whose hands you have suffered. As for those who see eye to eye with you, you are already united with them, so the question of unity doesn't arise. The trouble here is with those who have yet to be united. We mean those who have opinions differing from yours or who have serious shortcomings. For instance, within our Party at present there are many who have joined the Party only organizationally and not ideologically. They may not have come to blows or crossed swords with you, but as they have not joined the Party ideologically, what they do is inevitably not so satisfactory or is marred by faults, and they may even do some bad things. With regard to such people, we must unite with them and educate and help them. I said before

⁶RedLibrary: In English edition: Page 317 of Volume V, corresponding to *Strengthen Party Unity and Carry Forward Party Traditions*.

that in dealing with all those who have shortcomings or have made mistakes, we must not only observe whether they are going to mend their ways but should help them correct their mistakes. In other words, we must first observe, and second give help. Merely to observe means to stand by and see how they behave. If they do well, that's fine, and if they don't, let them suffer. This is a passive attitude, not a positive one. Marxists should adopt a positive attitude, that is, help as well as observe.

- On Plain Living and Hard Struggle (March 1957)

I am in favour of the idea that in peace-time the wage gap between cadres in the army and those outside it should be gradually narrowed, but this does not mean absolute egalitarianism. I have always been of the opinion that the army should live plainly and work hard and be a model. At a meeting held here in 1949, one of our generals proposed that the pay in the army should be raised, and many comrades were for his proposal, but I was against it. The illustration he used was that a capitalist ate a meal of five courses whereas a PLA soldier had only salt water plus some pickled cabbage at a meal, and this, he said, wouldn't do. I said, on the contrary, this was just fine. They had five courses while we ate pickles. There was politics in these pickles, out of which models would emerge. The PLA won people's hearts precisely because of these pickles, but, of course, there were other factors too. Now the army meals have improved and are already rather different from having only pickles to eat. But what is most essential is that we must advocate plain living and hard work, which is our intrinsic political quality. Chinchow is an apple-growing area. At the time of the Liaohsi campaign, it was autumn, and there were plenty of apples in the villagers' homes, but our fighters did not take a single apple. I was deeply moved when I read about this. Here the fighters themselves were conscious that not to eat the apples was noble, whereas to eat them would have been ignoble, for the apples belonged to the people. Our discipline rests on such consciousness. It is the result of leadership and education by our Party. Man must have some spirit, and the revolutionary spirit of the proletariat stems from this consciousness. Did anyone starve to death from not eating an apple? No, for there was millet plus pickles. In times of necessity, you comrades present here will have to live in sheds. When we crossed the marshlands, we had no sheds to sleep in and yet we managed without. Why can't we live in sheds now that we have them? The army people have been in session these few days, and they have expressed with deep feelings and enthusiasm their readiness to exercise selfdenial and practice economy. Now that the army is doing this, there is all the more reason for other people to live plainly and work hard. Otherwise they would be challenged by the army people. There are both civilians and army people present

here, so we'll let the army people challenge the civilians. The PLA is a good army, and I like it very much.

Political work must be strengthened. It must be greatly strengthened in every sphere, whether among civilians or army people, whether in factories, villages, shops, schools or army units, whether in Party and government organs or people's organizations, so as to raise the political level of the cadres and the masses.

— Volume V, page 379.7

Our comrades should take note: Don't live on the power of your office, your high position or seniority. Speaking of seniority, we have been making revolution for many years, and while this record of ours does count, still we must not live on it. True, you are a veteran who has worked for several decades. For all that, when you do something foolish and talk nonsense, the people won't excuse you. No matter how many your good deeds in the past and no matter how high your post, if today you are not doing a good job, not solving problems correctly and thus harming the people's interests, they won't forgive you. Therefore our comrades should rely not on seniority but on being correct in solving problems. What counts here is correctness, not seniority. Since you cannot rely on your seniority, you might as well forget about it, as if you had never been an official at all, that is, you must stop putting on the airs of an overlord, of a bureaucrat, you must put aside your airs and go among the people and among your subordinates. This is a point our cadres, and particularly our old cadres, must keep in mind. Generally speaking, new cadres are not so burdened are less encumbered. Old cadres should treat new cadres on an equal footing. In many ways old cadres are not as good as new cadres and should learn from them.

— Volume V, page 477.8

- The Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention

⁷RedLibrary: In English edition: Page 348 of Volume V, corresponding to *Speech at the Second Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China*.

⁸RedLibrary: In English edition, page 439 of Volume V, corresponding to *Always Keep to the Style of Plain Living and Hard Struggle*.

⁹Foreign Languages Press, Peking: The Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention were the rules of discipline laid down by Comrade Mao Tse-tung for the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army during the Second Revolutionary Civil War. They formed an important part of the political work of the Red Army and played a great role in building the people's armed forces, handling relations within the army correctly, forging unity with the masses of the people and laying down the correct policy of the people's army towards captives. From the earliest days of the Red Army, Comrade Mao Tse-tung required the soldiers to speak politely to the

- 1. Our Army's Three Main Rules of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention⁹ have been practiced for many years, but their contents vary slightly in army units in different areas. They have now been unified and are hereby reissued. It is expected that you will take this version as the standard one for thorough education and strict enforcement. As to other matters needing attention, the high command of the armed forces in different areas may lay down additional points in accordance with specific conditions and order their enforcement.
- 2. The Three Main Rules of Discipline are as follows:
- (1) Obey orders in all your actions.
- (2) Don't take a single needle or piece of thread from the masses.
- (3) Turn in everything captured.
- 3. The Eight Points for Attention are as follows:
- (1) Speak politely.
- (2) Pay fairly for what you buy.
- (3) Return everything you borrow.
- (4) Pay for anything you damage.
- (5) Don't hit or swear at people.
- (6) Don't damage crops.
- (7) Don't take liberties with women.
- (8) Don't ill-treat captives.
- "On the Reissue of the Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention Instruction of the General Headquarters of the Chinese People's Liberation Army" (October 10, 1947), *Selected Military Writings*, 2nd ed., p. 343.

(The 2nd Part Will Release Shortly)

masses, pay fairly for all purchases and never impress people into forced labour or hit or swear at people. In the spring of 1928, when the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army was in the Chingkang Mountains, Comrade Mao Tse-tung set down Three Rules of Discipline: (1) Obey orders in your actions; (2) Do not take anything from the workers and peasants; and (3) Turn in all things taken from local bullies. In the summer of 1928 he set forth Six Points for Attention: (1) Put back the doors you have taken down for bed-boards; (2) Put back the straw you have used for bedding; (3) Speak politely; (4) Pay fairly for what you buy; (5) Return everything you borrow; and (6) Pay for anything you damage. After 1929 Comrade Mao Tse-tung made the following changes: Rule 2 became "Do not take a single needle or piece of thread from the masses", and Rule 3 was changed first to "Turn in all money raised" and then to "Turn in everything captured". To the Six Points for Attention he added two more: "Do not bathe within sight of women" and "Do not search the pockets of captives". This was the origin of the Three Main Rules of Discipline and the Eight Points for Attention.