

THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT IN THE ARMY

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[This inner-Party directive was drafted by Comrade Mao Zedong for the Revolutionary Military Commission of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.]

The policy for political work in our army units is fully to arouse the masses of soldiers, the commanders and all working personnel in order to achieve, through a democratic movement under centralized leadership, three major objectives, namely, a high degree of political unity, an improvement in living conditions and a higher level of military technique and tactics. The Three Check-ups and Three Improvements [1] now being enthusiastically carried out in our army units are intended to attain the first two of these objectives through the methods of political and economic democracy.

With regard to economic democracy, the representatives elected by the soldiers must be ensured the right to assist (but not to bypass) the company leadership in managing the company's supplies and mess.

With regard to military democracy, in periods of training there must be mutual instruction as between officers and soldiers and among the soldiers themselves; and in periods of fighting the companies at the front must hold big and small meetings of various kinds. Under the direction of the company leadership, the masses of soldiers should be roused to discuss how to attack and capture enemy positions and how to fulfil other combat tasks. When the fighting lasts several days, several such meetings should be held. This kind of military democracy was practiced with great success in the battle of Panlung [2] in northern Shensi and in the battle of Shihchiachuang [3] in the Shansi-Chahar-Hopei area. It has been proved that the practice can only do good and can do no harm whatsoever.

The masses of soldiers should have the right to expose the errors and misdeeds of bad elements among the cadres. We should be confident that the soldiers will cherish all the good and comparatively good cadres. Moreover, the soldiers should have the right, when necessary, to nominate those whom they trust from their own ranks for lower-level cadre posts, subject to appointment by the higher level. When there is an acute shortage of lower-level cadres, this kind of nomination is very useful. It is not to be the rule, however, but is to be done only when necessary.

NOTES

1. The "Three Check-ups" and "Three Improvements" constituted an important movement for Party consolidation and for ideological education in the army which was carried out by our Party in conjunction with the land reform during the People's War of Liberation. In the localities, the "Three Check-ups" meant checking on class origin, ideology and style of work; in the armed units, the check-ups were on class origin, performance of duty and will to fight. The "Three Improvements" meant organizational consolidation, ideological education and rectification of style of work.
2. Panlung, northeast of Yen-an, was a town where the Northwest People's Liberation Army surrounded and wiped out over 6,700 Kuomintang troops under the command of Hu Tsung-nan in May 1947.
3. Shihchiachuang was liberated by units of the People's Liberation Army of the Shansi-Chahar-Hopei Border Region on November 12, 1947. Its enemy garrison of more than 24,000 men was totally destroyed. It was the first important city liberated by the People's Liberation Army in northern China.