

## STRENGTHEN INSPECTION OF PARTY DISCIPLINE

*May 6, 1950*

Comrades,

Since the promulgation last November of the Central Committee's "Decision on Establishing Commissions for Inspection of Party Discipline at the Central and Other Levels",<sup>285</sup> such organizations have been set up in various localities and in various army units, and they have begun working. Commissions for the inspection of Party discipline have also been set up in the central Party, government, army and mass organizations and in their subordinate units, and they too have begun their activities. In order to improve their work, we are holding this joint meeting today of all these commissions. Let me take this opportunity to discuss the following points:

(1) On the importance of discipline and the inspection of discipline.

Our Party has a 28-year history. Our experience shows that it is vitally important to observe iron discipline within the Party. Everybody knows that under the guidance of Comrade Mao Zedong, we corrected some grave mistakes in this 28-year period and, as a result, surmounted a variety of difficulties and smoothed the implementation of the Party's correct line, policies and resolutions and won a great historic victory in the Chinese revolution, as we recognize today. Without Party discipline or without its strict observance, our Party would have been like a heap of loose sand and would have been unable to lead millions upon millions of the masses in their struggle or to achieve the great victory we enjoy today. Lenin said, ". . . Absolute centralization and the strictest discipline of the proletariat

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A slightly abridged version of a speech at a joint meeting of commissions for inspection of Party discipline in the central Party, government, army and mass organizations and in their subordinate units.

constitute one of the fundamental conditions for victory over the bourgeoisie.”<sup>286</sup> And Comrade Mao Zedong said, “Discipline is the guarantee for the implementation of the line.”<sup>287</sup> These are irrefutable conclusions drawn from protracted revolutionary struggle. Within the Party as a whole, no one at present has any doubts on such major questions as the Party’s line and policies, for we have the strong and correct leadership of Comrade Mao Zedong and the Central Committee. The question before us is how to guarantee the smooth enforcement of the Party’s line and policies and how best to forestall any actions or tendencies — whether deliberate or not — that undermine the Party’s line and policies. Thus in the interest of Party centralization and unity, it’s essential to enforce iron discipline and fortify the sense of discipline within the Party.

The Party is highly regarded by non-Party people because it has led the Chinese people in achieving a decisive victory and in establishing a state of the people’s democratic dictatorship, and now has become the party that leads in the exercise of such state power. The scope of co-operation between the Party and non-Party people is broadening and more and more issues are involved. Because of this, what our Party says and does exerts a great influence on the people throughout the country. If a group, or even a few, of our Party members are indiscreet in word or deed, it weakens the Party’s fighting capacity and lowers its prestige among the masses. Therefore, it is now particularly important to maintain iron discipline and strengthen the sense of discipline in the Party.

Our comrades in charge of inspecting discipline should investigate whether there are any bureaucratic or other actions or tendencies among Party organizations and Party members that run counter to the political line, policies, Constitution, discipline and decisions of the Party as well as to state laws and decrees, and that jeopardize the interests of the masses and divorce our Party from them. We should do our best to stop or prevent all these bad things. If we do so, we will help guarantee the correct implementation of the Party’s line, policies and decisions, and we will play the role of an able assistant to the Party committees in carrying out policies and decisions. All comrades concerned should, therefore, understand the importance of the inspection of discipline, and strive to fulfil the glorious task assigned to them by the Party.

(2) On Party cadres’ violation of Party policies and discipline.

Since the Second Plenary Session of the Seventh Central Committee,<sup>288</sup> the revolutionary cause led by the Party has developed swiftly and extensively. We won a decisive victory in the past year, liberating all of the country except Tibet and Taiwan, and Party membership has increased from 3 million to 4.5 million or more. Generally speaking, our Party cadres work hard and have achieved a lot under the guidance of the correct policies of the Central Committee. That is the only explanation for our present accomplishments. But quite a number of our Party cadres have violated Party policies and discipline on many occasions in carrying out such policies and performing other tasks. This has caused discontent with our Party among the masses and unless we put a stop to it, we shall divorce ourselves from them to a serious degree. The following are the more striking manifestations of the violation of Party policies and discipline:

The first is serious coercion and commandism and a resulting alienation from the masses. In their effort to collect grain and other taxes, to ensure the purchase of government bonds, and to reduce rent and carry out agrarian reform, quite a few Party cadres, especially those at the lower levels, have resorted to arbitrary means, such as arresting and beating people or inciting bad elements to do the same. They were merely concerned with fulfilling the tasks at hand, caring little about the consequences of their acts. This has become a rather common phenomenon. These comrades don't understand that in order to carry the revolutionary war through to the end and stabilize prices and finances, the state has already imposed a heavy burden on the people in the form of grain and other taxes and subscriptions to government bonds. We should conduct effective propaganda and explain these matters to the masses and devise good work methods so that we can work smoothly and fulfil our tasks. Otherwise, the people will complain or even oppose us. The comrades concerned have failed to heed these points or the Party's repeated exhortation that we should keep in close contact with the masses and rely on them, and that we should explain things clearly to the masses and consult them in solving problems. Comrade Mao Zedong has also advised us again and again to be modest and prudent, to guard against conceit and impetuosity, to be good at uniting and co-operating with non-Party people, and to identify ourselves with the masses rather than stand above them. However, the comrades I've referred to who regard themselves as privileged and who are accustomed to over-simplified work methods or coercion and commandism — these comrades are unmindful of the

Party's instructions. They don't study them conscientiously. Instead, they always consider themselves in the right and act wilfully. This explains the recurrent violations of Party policies and discipline, which have caused grave political losses to our Party.

The second manifestation is the increasingly bureaucratic style of work. Some Party cadres pay no attention to state affairs or the well-being of the people. They do not understand that the constant and important task of Party members is to know and change the world. These comrades are slack at work and simply drift along. As a result, they have gradually lost the fine qualities of a Party member. Take for example boosting production to help areas hit by natural disasters. Many Party cadres have neglected this problem, which has a vital bearing on the well-being of tens of millions of people. There have been serious shortcomings and errors in reporting actual conditions to higher levels and organizing related work, thus adding to the people's suffering and losses to the Party and the state. Had our Party cadres paid attention to these problems earlier, had they made more accurate reports and more practical arrangements, we could have done better relief work by promoting production and thus reducing or in part preventing the suffering and losses sustained by the people. This manifestation of bureaucratism deserves our close attention.

Also, some of our Party cadres take an indifferent and irresponsible attitude towards revolutionary work and state property. This has extremely grave consequences. For instance, there have been successive accidents resulting in death on railways and in mines. Factory equipment and materials have been ruined or damaged. Many warehouses have been destroyed and their materials either stolen or left to deteriorate. The losses incurred in such instances are appalling. One can imagine how much more terrible our losses would be if we also counted those resulting from waste. In the country's present financial difficulty, it should be considered a crime to the Party, the state and the people for some of our Party cadres to have such a bureaucratic work style and to take such an indifferent and irresponsible attitude towards revolutionary work and state property. Unless they correct their mistakes sincerely, these comrades will not be forgiven by the Party, by the state or by the people. To effectively help these comrades rectify their erroneous thinking, actions and style of work, we should enhance their sense of Party organization and discipline in addition to constantly strengthening ideological education and making regular criticism and self-criticism. Only by so doing can we further mobilize

the masses and help these Party cadres raise their political consciousness and overcome their cursed bureaucratism by dint of mass supervision.

The third manifestation consists of the glaringly backward ideas of some of our Party cadres who put on the airs of veterans and ask to be rewarded for having rendered “meritorious service” to the people. Regarding themselves as meritorious persons who have won state power for the people, they demand that the Party and the people give them high positions and preferential treatment. They look down upon non-Party people and the masses in general and show contempt for Party organization and discipline, for the government, and for state laws. Regrettably, the backward ideas and acts of these comrades show only that they are losing the qualities befitting Party members.

True, basic victory has been achieved in the Chinese revolution. “Who overthrew the reactionary regime in China and to whom should we attribute this victory?” Comrades, if you ask this question, I would reply that it is the entire membership of the Party and the masses who together overthrew the reactionaries, and that this victory should first be attributed to the people and, as far as our Party is concerned, to Comrade Mao Zedong. Countless martyrs have laid down their lives over nearly 30 years of severe struggle against the reactionaries. Without their heroism and sacrifice our present victory would have been inconceivable. Likewise, without the correct leadership of Comrade Mao Zedong and without our constantly correcting our shortcomings and mistakes under the guidance of Mao Zedong Thought, the rapid expansion and final victory of the revolutionary cause of the Party and the people would have been impossible. No comrade is justified in assuming that his service has been so extraordinary that the Party and the people owe him a high position and preferential treatment. We Communists are duty-bound to change society and the world. Even if you’ve done the best job and made the greatest contribution, that’s no more than what is expected of you. What is there to be proud of? We Communists should be broad-minded, make stricter demands of ourselves than of others, attribute achievements first to the masses and be willing to shoulder responsibility for any mistakes. To quote an ancient classic, “We should give all the credit to others and put all the blame on ourselves.”<sup>289</sup> We behaved in this manner in the past, and we should do so at present. I hope that those comrades who claim undue credit for themselves will learn to be more modest and honest and concentrate their energies on revolutionary work instead of worry-

ing about position and material benefits. Otherwise, the Party and the people will forsake you and you'll fall behind in the revolutionary ranks, unable to advance shoulder to shoulder with other comrades.

Another extremely naive, backward and erroneous way of thinking is to belittle non-Party people and others. The comrades in question don't understand what an influence non-Party people can have among the broad masses, nor do they understand that it is the people, and the people alone, who are the heroes in the making of history. We must understand that no state power can be won through the efforts of a small number of people, and that there is no individual in history who, alienating himself from the masses, can bring about the collapse of a reactionary regime all by himself. If you think you are superior and so extraordinarily capable that you can overthrow the reactionary regime without the effort of the masses, try it and see what happens. I think there will be only one possibility: You will be spurned by the masses. We must, therefore, do our best to unite with non-Party people, maintain close contact with and rely on the masses and have faith in them. Only thus can we do our work and build our country well. Any other way will get us nowhere and, moreover, we'll commit mistakes and inflict grave losses on the Party and the state.

It is equally wrong to despise Party organization and discipline, or to despise the government and the law. If you have anything to say, say it to the Party organization, which will accept your proposals if they are right. Some comrades don't believe in the Party organization, saying, "So-and-so is no good", or "So-and-so means nothing to me at all". To them, there's no distinction between an individual and the Party organization. Others fail to understand the importance of discipline, believing that it is for ordinary Party members to observe while they themselves are exceptions. Still others belittle the government and the law. To them the government means nothing and can't interfere with their business because they are veteran Party members. They think that state laws apply only to ordinary people, not to them. All these are manifestations of the ideas and behaviour of the exploiting classes, and are a shame to us Communists. To be a good Party member, one should subordinate oneself to the organization, observe discipline, respect and cherish the government and abide by the laws and decrees of the state.

In short, our only purpose in repeatedly admonishing those comrades who put on the airs of a veteran is to help them turn back from the wrong path so that they will not drop out of the revolutionary

ranks but will be able to continue advancing with us towards a more ideal society, a society of a higher order.

The fourth manifestation is increased corruption. According to a report from the Beijing Municipal Party Committee, 182 Party cadres violated policies and state laws in the past year. In Jinan city in Shandong Province, between January 1948 and January 1949, 58 Party cadres were punished for violating Party discipline, three-fourths of them for Right-deviationist errors, pleasure-seeking and corruption. What happened in these two cities indicates that, since entering the big cities, quite a number of our Party members have become more interested in a life of pleasure, which has led to increased corruption. This must arouse our high vigilance. To stem this trend, we'll propose to the government that it work out and promulgate regulations for the punishment of corrupt elements. Our aim is to make it impossible for any person guilty of embezzlement to escape the punishment he deserves.

The above is the main situation concerning violation of policies and discipline by Party cadres.

Why is it that there are more cases of policy and discipline violations now? Why is it that this problem has grown particularly serious today? There are both objective and subjective causes.

Objectively, it is because, with the victory of the revolution, many bad things are liable to emerge among us, such as lowering political vigilance, becoming slack ideologically and growing complacent. Also, we have to reckon with the influence of our surroundings, such as the other classes with which we co-operate, the old personnel who have been kept in their jobs since Liberation, and urban life with its myriad temptations. Although the powerful enemies of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism have largely been overthrown or are soon to be overthrown by us for good, their lingering and degenerate ideologies, ways of life and habits can be eliminated only gradually and through arduous, protracted and tenacious struggle. It is to be expected that these deep-rooted evils will continue to influence, invade or corrupt us through various channels now and for a long time to come. This is, then, the objective environment in which we find ourselves after victory. Unless we rid ourselves of its influence, we will be hindered by it. For instance, some comrades, now that they are working in the cities, have succumbed to the temptations of urban life and begun to seek pleasure in food, clothing, living quarters and transportation. Some comrades have been complaining that their

houses are too small and too poor. When we were working in the mountain gullies, hundreds of people lived in a hamlet and nobody felt crowded. But now that they've become residents of major cities such as Beijing, they complain about a lack of living space. This seems a mere trifle, but it reflects a serious ideological problem to which we should give close attention. If not, there is a danger that the comrades concerned will become corrupt.

In addition to these objective causes of the current, acutely serious policy and discipline violations by some Party cadres, there are subjective causes. I include among these many serious shortcomings in intra-Party education, intra-Party political life and work systems, and especially in the enforcement of Party discipline. More specifically, I mean the following: Intra-Party education is not conducted regularly, earnestly or very realistically. Intra-Party political life is not as regular or satisfactory as it ought to be, either, especially in the various government departments and the lower-level organizations. Some units do not implement intra-Party work systems strictly enough, as witness their failure to conscientiously carry out the system of asking for instructions beforehand and submitting timely reports afterwards; and there is the serious phenomenon of a few units not applying this system at all. What's worse, enforcement of Party discipline is, in general, far from strict, and this has made violations of Party discipline and state laws by Party cadres a rather common occurrence. We must overcome these shortcomings in order to advance the cause of the Party and people one more step.

(3) On how to rectify the Party cadres' error of violating Party policies and discipline.

The Central Committee has taken measures to rectify the practice by some Party cadres of seriously violating Party policies and discipline. It recently proposed Party consolidation and issued an instruction on it.<sup>290</sup> The purpose of Party consolidation is to help the Party cadres concerned eradicate from their work style coercion, commandism and alienation from the masses and get rid of their pleasure-seeking or degenerate ideas and actions. Party committees at all levels are required to train Party cadres and help them improve themselves, all in the spirit of the Central Committee's recent instruction on Party consolidation. This involves arduous, long-term education, during which we should monitor the work of the Party cadres and help them analyse their experience so that they can constantly enhance their understanding of policies, raise their ideological level and overcome



their shortcomings and correct their mistakes. To this end, we should draw on our experience in previous rectification movements and in the Party consolidation campaign during the agrarian reform. Our past rectification movements were conducted mainly through education, the chief aim being to remould people's thinking. Guided by Comrade Mao Zedong's correct principle, "Learn from past mistakes to avoid future ones and cure the sickness to save the patient", such movements yielded significant results in changing the thinking of Party cadres, especially those who had been petty-bourgeois intellectuals. The achievements of these movements were unprecedented and their influence was profound. Their common shortcoming was that Party organizations in many places had a one-sided understanding of ideological remoulding. Consequently, discipline was not observed as it should be and some comrades with undesirable thinking always tried to justify their violations of the decisions of Party organizations and Party discipline, their pretext being that they had yet to straighten out their thinking. This is a lesson to remember. We also achieved notable results in Party consolidation during the agrarian reform. Specifically, coercion and commandism on the part of some Party cadres were seriously criticized, Party organizations in the rural areas were purified and consolidated and Party members, cadres and the masses received a good education. However, in the course of such Party consolidation, some localities tried to solve problems in an overly simple way and put undue stress on disciplinary measures, so that too many Party cadres were punished, including some whose mistakes were not serious and so did not deserve the punishments they received. This is another lesson to be learned. Thus, to repeat: we should draw on the successful experiences of past rectification movements and the Party consolidation campaign in the agrarian reform and avoid their shortcomings and mistakes. We should make ideological education primary and disciplinary sanction secondary. Necessary disciplinary measures must be taken against those Party cadres who still violate policies and discipline regardless of prior admonitions by the Party and against those who refuse to mend their ways after violating discipline.

It is true that in the central Party, government, army and mass organizations, there are few such serious cases of coercion, commandism and alienation from the masses as described above. But can we say that there are no policy and discipline violations there? No, we cannot. There are still many instances of bureaucratism, liberalism, re-

luctance to unite and co-operate with non-Party people, irresponsibility towards revolutionary work and state property, as well as individualism characterized by flaunting seniority, haggling for position and pursuing pleasure. Therefore, in accordance with the Central Committee's instruction on Party consolidation, the central organizations should also examine carefully whether their Party cadres have unhealthy ideas and bad work styles, and whether they have violated Party policies and discipline. Each comrade should voluntarily make a self-examination. All the negative things cited above must be overcome wherever they are discovered. This is a very arduous task. All comrades present here should take it up in earnest and, with a great sense of responsibility, do their utmost to help their Party committees fulfil it.

What methods should we employ to accomplish this task? In my opinion, we should mainly employ the following three: The first is to combine constant inspection of discipline by the leadership from top to bottom with extended democracy inside and outside the Party and with criticism and self-criticism. With efforts from these two directions, wrong ideas and acts will be exposed and comrades who have made mistakes will be given the necessary help. The second is to combine intra-Party education with enforcement of discipline. Intra-Party education, which is primary, should aim to constantly heighten the political and ideological level of all Party cadres so as to help them avoid and correct mistakes. At the same time, disciplinary measures must be taken against those comrades who refuse to mend their ways. That's what I mean by combining intra-Party education with enforcement of discipline. Of course, the former should be primary and the latter supplementary, and we should be clear about this and never punish Party cadres at will. The third is to solve problems immediately when they are discovered, to analyse experience in good time and publicize it through Party or other newspapers and journals to educate the entire Party and the people at large. This third method is very important. We must make a point of solving problems and correcting mistakes as soon as they are discovered instead of letting them accumulate for package settlement. If we don't, the Party cadres concerned will make ever more serious mistakes until their problems start threatening their political career. We should regularly review our experience in dealing with such cases and publish it in the Party press or other newspapers and periodicals. This would be very useful as it would enable us to educate the entire Party and

the people in general as well as effectively help the erring Party cadres themselves. Some people do not care the least about their mistakes until they are made public, and so it is hard for them to mend their ways. Once their mistakes are published in the newspapers, everybody knows about them and they can no longer cover them up. We must, however, see to it that only cases of major educational significance are published, and we should not overdo it. Otherwise, we'll hurt the feelings of Party cadres and bring about the opposite of what we want.

In the interests of our work, we ask every comrade engaged in discipline inspection to do the following: First of all, they should understand the importance of their task and go about their regular work in accordance with the duties, functions and powers of the discipline-inspection commissions as stipulated by the Central Committee, with reference to the detailed rules for work of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection, and in the light of the specific conditions of each unit. Second, comrades doing discipline-inspection work should be honest and upright, public-spirited and law-abiding, and exemplary in observing discipline, subordinating themselves to the Party organization and uniting with the masses. Otherwise, what they say will carry no weight and they will find it difficult to do their work well. Third, they should distinguish between right and wrong and adhere to principles. By the former we mean that they should judge correctly whether policies and discipline are really violated and, if so, what specific policies and discipline are involved, what the nature of the problem is and how serious. By adhering to principles we mean not being afraid of offending people and not committing the error of liberalism. They should expose and take measures to rectify all acts that violate policies and discipline, no matter which organizations or individuals are involved. But not being afraid of offending people does not mean that charges can be brought against people rashly or their cases dealt with carelessly. Instead, all cases should be handled, from start to finish, with justification and great care. Comrades engaged in inspecting discipline should bear in mind Comrade Mao Zedong's principle, "Learn from past mistakes to avoid future ones and cure the sickness to save the patient", and should oppose exclusive stress on punishment. They should be politically-minded and pay close attention to matters of policy and principle rather than pick on others for their faults or describe trifles as involving principles. Fourth, led by the committees, general branches or

branches of the Party, they should work more effectively by relying on Party activists and winning mass support.

Of course, we have difficulties in our work of inspecting discipline because it is new to us. Since we lack experience, we have to learn on the job and discover our own path. Moreover, we are not adequately equipped either organizationally or with regard to personnel. Most of the comrades engaged in inspecting discipline do it part-time in addition to their regular heavy load. Also, some leading bodies haven't paid due attention to this work. Because of all this, our work has not progressed fast enough. We've got to take all these difficulties into account. After this meeting, we should have further discussions in order to acquire an adequate understanding of the importance of discipline inspection and do it more satisfactorily. Now that the Party and the people have entrusted us with this task, we should not shirk our responsibility. Otherwise, we will ourselves commit the mistake of flouting Party organization and discipline. Where necessary and possible, we'll gradually expand the discipline-inspection organizations and enlist more and more personnel. I hope that, instead of relaxing their efforts in face of temporary difficulties, all comrades charged with inspecting discipline will advance courageously and indomitably, surmount whatever difficulties they find in their path and do their work well. They will thus be able to accomplish the significant task the Party and the people have assigned them.