

## POLITICAL REPORT TO THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF WORKERS IN LITERATURE AND ART

*July 6, 1949*

Delegates,

Let me first congratulate you on the success of this National Congress of Workers in Literature and Art,<sup>446</sup> on your coming together today after having been gradually forced apart into two separate regions after the defeat of the Great Revolution. Since the May 4th Movement, our workers in new literature and art have won many victories in battle against the enemy. We have defeated feudal literature and art, and over the past twenty years we have also defeated the fascist literature and art of the Kuomintang reactionary clique as well as the traitorous literature and art of the servants of imperialism. With the new-democratic orientation for literature and art, we have formed a broad literary and art front. In the Liberated Areas, many literary and art workers have visited the army units, the villages and recently also the factories; they have gone among the worker-peasant-soldier masses in order to serve them. We have already witnessed preliminary achievements in this respect. In areas formerly ruled by the Kuomintang, revolutionary literary and art workers stuck to their posts and, despite heavy pressure, upheld the revolutionary traditions in literature and art that date back to the May 4th Movement. Except for a few reactionaries, who have been rejected by the people, almost all the members of the National Association for Literature and Art,<sup>447</sup> which was established in Kuomintang areas during the period of the anti-Japanese war and which is one of the organizations sponsoring the present congress, have united under the banner of New Democracy and nearly all of their major representative figures are participating in this congress.

For the achievement of this great unity in literary and art circles, we must give credit to friends who have stuck to their posts and carried on arduous struggles, to the people throughout the country who have supported the new literary and art movement and especially to the People's Liberation Army, which has won tremendous victories on the military front. Without this victory, this great unity and this great assemblage of more than seven hundred people would be impossible today. Therefore, in the first part of my speech, I'd like to talk about the victories won in the three years of the People's War of Liberation, about their causes and about the lessons that writers and artists should draw from them.

## I. THE VICTORIES OF THE THREE YEARS OF THE PEOPLE'S WAR OF LIBERATION

Counting from July 1946, the People's War of Liberation has been going on a full three years. The battle records of these three years are unprecedented in Chinese history. Three years ago, with the support of U.S. imperialism, the Kuomintang reactionaries mobilized 4,300,000 troops for attack. We had only 1,200,000 men in the People's Liberation Army, or 3,100,000 fewer than the enemy. The reactionaries and their U.S. masters were confident that they could overpower the PLA. Many well-intentioned friends were also worried about us. We thanked these friends, but told them with confidence that victory in the war would certainly be ours. In November 1946 when I left Nanjing, the Kuomintang capital, with the rest of the delegation of the Chinese Communist Party, many reporters asked me, "Will you come back again?" I said, "One of these days we will return." Friends! Today, sure enough, we have returned to Nanjing — except that it is not that old delegation which has entered Nanjing, but the victorious People's Liberation Army!

In the first year of the war, the enemy was on the offensive, but because of our heavy counter-blows, its total offensive very quickly became a partial offensive or an offensive against key sectors only. In the second year, we began to counter-attack. Our field armies in north and east China crossed the Huanghe River and advanced on the north bank of the Changjiang, while the Northeastern People's Liberation Army fought from north to south Manchuria. In the third year of the

war, our offensive was crowned with decisive victories. After the Jinan campaign of September 1948, the Liaoxi-Shenyang campaign of September to November 1948, the Huai-Hai campaign of November 1948 to the beginning of January this year and the Beiping-Tianjin campaign of December 1948 to the end of January,<sup>428</sup> Chiang Kai-shek's military strength was basically destroyed. When the PLA crossed the Changjiang River and advanced south in April this year, Chiang was unable to organize a really significant defence. In the three years from July 1946 to the present, the Kuomintang's military strength has been reduced from its initial 4,300,000 to 1,490,000 men, of whom only about a half are combat troops, the rest being administrative, training and logistics personnel. Our People's Liberation Army, on the other hand, has increased from 1,200,000 to more than four million. By a remarkable coincidence, they have lost 2,800,000 men and we have gained 2,800,000. Of our 4,000,000 troops, more than 2,200,000 field troops are now on the advance, mopping up the remaining 800,000 enemy troops, who have already lost their fighting strength. We have already liberated 279,000,000 people, some 59 per cent of the entire population, 1,061 cities and towns, or 53 per cent of the nation's urban centres, and 21,600 kilometres of railroads, 80 per cent of the nation's total. Aside from the temporary superiority still held by the enemy on the sea and in the air, the people already enjoy superiority in all respects. This situation leads us to believe that the fourth year of the People's War of Liberation will be the year in which we shall win nationwide victory.

In these three years, our casualties have totalled 1,430,000, while we have eliminated 5,690,000 of the enemy — which is to say that for every one of our casualties we put four of their men out of action. Of the 5,690,000 troops lost by the enemy, 70 per cent, or 4,150,000, have been captured by us, and 2,800,000 have become liberated soldiers. In the three years, we eliminated 495 divisions of regular enemy troops; if irregular troops are included, we annihilated 2,150 regiments. Captured officers of the rank of general, plus division commanders of the rank of colonel, number 927. Weaponry captured in the three years includes over 44,000 cannon, over 250,000 light and heavy machine-guns, over 2,000,000 rifles and pistols, 134 aeroplanes, 123 naval vessels, 582 tanks, 361 armoured vehicles, 130,000 horses, more than 370,000,000 rounds of rifle and machine-gun ammunition, and 3,110,000 shells. With these liberated soldiers and captured arms and ammunition, we have struck back at the enemy and defeated him.

Why is it that the People's Liberation Army has been able to achieve such great victories? The first reason, of course, is that the war it is fighting is a just, patriotic, people's revolutionary war, because the PLA represents the interests of the whole people and has fought the war in their interest. But here we ought to point out the fine qualities of the People's Liberation Army itself. Having undergone twenty-two years of tempering, it has a high level of political consciousness, strict discipline, great combat effectiveness and mature strategy and tactics. During the last three years in particular, the PLA has undergone remoulding. Why do I use this word "remoulding"? Because a majority of the soldiers were prisoners of war a short while ago, and without undergoing remoulding they wouldn't be able to abide by Liberation Army discipline. The most effective means of remoulding is to arouse class consciousness. We do this by the "pouring out of grievances", by the "three check-ups" (on class origin, performance of duty and will to fight) and by the "three evaluations" (of cadres, Party members and battle performance). Through these campaigns, the captured enemy soldiers come to realize that they are all of working people's origin and have been oppressed and exploited by the reactionaries, that the PLA is the working people's own army and that they should unite as one to fight in their own interests against those who have oppressed and exploited them. The PLA is an army with strict discipline, but this discipline is based on political consciousness. Within the PLA units military, political and economic democracy is practised, while externally work is done to demoralize the enemy forces, to support the government and cherish the people, and to educate and organize the local people. The officers and men of the PLA are thus able to maintain close ties with the masses, to steadily heighten their own political consciousness and to acquire an invincible strength in battle.

Comrades and friends from literary and art circles! If you wish to write, you should not forget to portray the great people's army of this great epoch. I suggest to the Political Department of our People's Revolutionary Military Commission, to the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and to all the delegates from the Liberation Army that you should take advantage of this time while the war is still going on to welcome those writers and artists who have not seen the People's Liberation Army, to let them visit the units and give them facilities to investigate and write.

The People's Liberation Army is not fighting this war alone. In the high tide of the three years of people's war, 200 million peasants

have been a great supporting force. More than 100 million peasants have carried on a struggle for agrarian reform and have gained land, while another 100 million are now preparing to solve the land problem. In the near future another 200 million peasants will plunge into the tempests of agrarian reform. For agrarian China, this is a matter of earth-shaking significance. What does the great Chinese peasantry contribute to the war after agrarian reform? They send their sons and husbands to join the People's War of Liberation, they supply our front and rear areas with the grain they produce and save, and they serve as militiamen and labourers. Not only do they maintain order in the rear, but large numbers also follow the troops out to the front lines to do various kinds of work in support of the war effort. And as soon as the war has passed beyond a given area, there is a surge in production there. Comrades and friends, it is by relying on the great, industrious and courageous Chinese peasantry that we have won victory today. We should be grateful to the great Chinese peasantry, and particularly to those in the old Liberated Areas. Even though the peasants are backward in some respects and need remoulding through patient work, their bravery, industriousness, thrift and simplicity deserve to be praised, recorded and publicized. Thus we hope that writers and artists who are already accustomed to rural life will continue to work in the villages and serve them. At the same time, we also urge those who have not been to the countryside and are not accustomed to rural life to go and learn from the peasants and make friends with them, so as to be able to record their heroic struggles and the achievements they have scored in the face of extreme hardships and immense difficulties.

The victory in the People's War of Liberation must also be attributed to the efforts of the working class. Although we have spent most of the last twenty-two years in the villages, among the peasants or in the army, the struggle we have been carrying on is inseparable from the working class. Politically, it has been waged under the leadership of the working class, through its vanguard, the Communist Party. Actually, even when we were in the countryside, the workers were indispensable to us. First of all, it would have been impossible to conduct large-scale warfare without munitions. The weapons were obtained mainly from the enemy, but we still had to supply the ammunition ourselves. We relied on workers; we had several thousand men carry big boilers from mines and factories up to the Taihang Mountains, to Mount Wutai and to the Yi-Meng mountain area and set up factories there. Tens

of millions of hand-grenades, several million mortar shells and several hundred thousand cannon shells were produced this way. By the second half of last year, we were already producing more grenades, mortar shells, cannon shells and explosives than the Kuomintang reactionaries. Aside from the munitions industry, we also developed small-scale light industry in the rural areas to meet the needs of the troops and the people. Now that we've entered the cities, it becomes still clearer that workers are indispensable. Only by relying on the working class will we be able to restore and develop industry. Day by day, the working class is becoming the major force in building China, and day by day it is becoming an important theme for our literary and art work.

Writers and artists engage in mental labour; in a broad sense, they too are members of the working class. Mental workers should learn from manual workers. A characteristic of mental workers in general is that they work alone (of course, many of the activities of choral groups, drama troupes and film studios are collective), and this can easily give rise to non-collectivist tendencies. Writers and artists should make a special effort to learn the working-class spirit of collectivism.

To achieve victory in the People's War of Liberation we relied on the PLA and on the people's democratic united front comprising peasants, workers, revolutionary intellectuals and all patriotic democrats. But basically, the most decisive factor has been the correct leadership of the Communist Party, which organized the Chinese people's revolution, and the correct leadership of the Chinese people's leader, Comrade Mao Zedong. From birth to maturity, the Chinese Communist Party has made many mistakes and met with many failures, but Comrade Mao has always been on the correct side. As you all know, the enemies of the Chinese revolution are not the ordinary run of enemies. The reactionary regime of Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang is the concentrated expression of thousands of years of feudal rule and of more than a century of foreign capitalist and imperialist aggression. We should be grateful to Comrade Mao Zedong for correctly applying the universal truths of Marxism-Leninism to China's revolutionary practice, thereby creating a tremendous force with which to vanquish the powerful enemies of the Chinese revolution. We call on everyone to learn from Comrade Mao Zedong and to combine revolutionary theory with revolutionary practice. At the same time, we call on all progressive writers and artists to try to understand the Communist Party, because it has already formed unbreakable bonds with

the Chinese people in their life and struggles. If you do not understand the Communist Party, you cannot correctly understand and portray the main aspect of the Chinese people's life and struggles today. Comrade Liu Shaoqi often says that members of Party committees at every level should all make some friends in literary and art circles, in order to help them and to learn from them. We hope that everyone will join in the common effort to this end.

Finally, we must call attention to the support and assistance which popular forces all over the world have rendered to the Chinese people in their struggle for liberation. It was not only in their victorious war against Japan that the Chinese people received tremendous aid from the world anti-fascist front, with the Soviet Union at its head. In the War of Liberation too they have received enormous assistance from the world camp of peace and democracy headed by the Soviet Union. The imperialist camp committed the major part of its forces to the West and only a secondary part to the East, and from the point of view of the Chinese revolution, this was a favourable condition of the first importance. The existence of the Soviet Union and of the People's Democracies, the anti-imperialist struggles of the oppressed nations of Asia and other regions and, in the capitalist countries, the revolutionary movements of the proletariat and the anti-war movements of peace-loving people — all these forces make a sum total larger than the sum total of the forces of imperialism and reaction. This has prevented the outbreak of a new world war, and it has prevented U.S. imperialism from expanding its armed intervention in China.

One task of our writers and artists is to spread this truth among the people of the whole country. We must clearly distinguish between ourselves and the enemy, lay bare the crimes of imperialism, strike hard at the propaganda of the warmongers and expose their threats and their attempts at incitement and deception. This is a serious task necessitated by both the interests of the Chinese nation and by those of the people the world over. To undertake it signifies at once patriotism and internationalism.

## II. SOME PROBLEMS CONCERNING LITERATURE AND ART

In the second part of my speech, I want to discuss some problems concerning literature and art.

First, the question of unity. This present congress of ours is one of unity among literary and art circles. It should be said that the 753 delegates attending this congress are highly representative. If propaganda teams and choral groups are included, there are 25,000 to 30,000 people engaged in literary and art work in the four field armies of the PLA as well as in the armies directly under the General Headquarters of the PLA and in the five military areas.<sup>448</sup> Estimates place the number of local writers and artists in the Liberated Areas at upwards of twenty thousand. Taken together, the two groups amount to around 60,000 people. These are the literary and art workers represented by the more than 400 delegates from the Liberated Areas. The number of people engaged in new literature and art in regions formerly under Kuomintang rule is more difficult to calculate, but the total is probably more than ten thousand. In other words, the 753 delegates here represent a total force of around 70,000 engaged in new literature and art — each of you represents about a hundred people. In addition, there are large numbers of popular artists of the old type. I hope that after you go back, you will be able to lead writers and artists in every field in propagating the spirit of unity that characterizes this congress. Moreover, I hope that you will maintain constant and close ties with this army of literary and art workers so that you will truly be their worthy representatives.

Second, the question of serving the people. Everybody agrees with this slogan, so the problem now is how to implement it. First we should ask ourselves what we are familiar with and what we are not. Writers and artists in the army are familiar with their units and to some extent with the countryside, but they are unacquainted with workers and conditions in the cities. The local writers and artists in the Liberated Areas are familiar with the peasantry but are not completely familiar with the army units, and they also know little about the cities. Owing to circumstances, our friends from the new Liberated Areas were not able to go among the masses in the past, but today the situation has changed and they have the opportunity to do so. In short, the first thing we should do is to become familiar with workers, peasants and soldiers, because they are the main body of the people and, besides, they are people about whom most of you present here know little or nothing. When it comes to the life, thinking and feelings of the petty bourgeoisie, most of you are already well acquainted with them.

We must get to know the workers first. At present, writers and artists are generally unfamiliar with workers, so there are very few works reflecting their life. We hope it will be possible for a number of writers and artists to go to the factories. Those who are unable to go themselves should spread the slogan and start a movement to urge tens of thousands of writers and artists to go there.

In recent years, some comrades have already begun to become familiar with peasants and soldiers, and our soldiers are in the main peasants carrying guns. You should try to know them better and to help those who don't know them at all. It takes a long time to understand the life of the workers, peasants and soldiers and to think and feel the way they do. So I hope that those who have already been to the countryside will not be complacent. The peasants make up the vast majority of the Chinese population. For a long long time, Chinese history has been mainly a history of peasant wars, and in the last twenty-odd years it has been a history of peasant war under the leadership of the working class. So all workers in literature and art should get to know the peasants and understand the war.

In saying that literature and art should serve the workers, peasants and soldiers, we do not mean, of course, that literary and art works must only portray workers, peasants and soldiers. For example, we cannot portray the condition of workers before liberation without writing about oppression by bureaucrat-capital; we cannot write about present-day production without touching on the policy of benefiting both labour and capital; we cannot write about peasants in the feudal countryside without dealing with landlord brutality; and we cannot write about the People's War of Liberation without describing the senseless sacrifice of the soldiers in the Kuomintang armies and describing their reactionary officers. So I'm not saying that we shouldn't be familiar with the other classes in society, or that we shouldn't write about persons from other classes, but that we must be clear about what to emphasize. Otherwise, we won't be able to portray this great era or its creators, the great working people.

Third, popularization and the raising of standards. Doesn't popularization still take first place at present? Yes it does. In the Liberated Areas some work has been done by way of popularization, but it's still far from meeting our needs. It is true that the literary and art works of a popular nature currently being produced are still very rough, requiring improvement and refinement, but that is no cause for worry. And it would be a serious mistake to look down on popularization for

that reason. All newborn things are crude and childish. We shouldn't criticize them too much, but rather cherish them and help them, just as we would our own children. We should criticize and educate our children, but we must not beat and curse them or we'll stunt their growth. The newborn things are always shouting at the top of their lungs, for they want to transform the old world; this is a revolutionary spirit. The old literature and art, separated as it is from the people, is already moribund. No matter how fine it appears on the surface, inside it is already rotten. Hope lies in the new. Although our works of popular literature and art still aren't of very high quality, they are what the broad masses enjoy hearing and seeing. So we must stress the growth and successes, however small, of the new literature and art.

Fourth, the transformation of the old literature and art. I feel that we have not paid adequate attention to this matter. We ought to stress the transformation of whatever in the old literature and art appeals to the masses. First and foremost, this means a transformation of content. But at the same time there must also be suitable, step-by-step transformation of the old forms. Only then will it be possible to achieve harmony and unity of form and content. We are happy that many friends well-established in the old literary and art world are willing to participate in this work of transformation and that they even hope to join with the cadres of the new literary and art circles to carry it out. We ought to welcome them very warmly. The old society was fond of the old content and the old forms of literature and art, but it looked down on the traditional artists and held them in contempt. Now there is a new society, a new era, and we ought to respect all artists loved by the masses. Only when we respect them will it be possible to remould them. We have done something in this regard, but our accomplishments are still very small. From now on, we must unite with all the traditional artists in the country who are willing to remould themselves; we must organize them, lead them and transform the old literature and art completely. If, instead of uniting with them, we reject them and attempt to suddenly replace them, we will never succeed. We should mobilize the enormous strength of the old literary and art world — the hundreds of thousands of writers and artists who influence an audience of tens of millions — mobilize them to take an active part in the movement for transformation. To be frank, this work has only just started. Some people feel that the old literature and art have no future and will die out anyway, and so they just ignore

them, leaving them to their fate. But in actual fact, the masses still enjoy watching and listening to them. Writers and artists who are responsible to the people cannot treat this fact lightly. Will the old literature and art die out? I think that question should be answered this way: they will die out, but they also have a future. Parts of the old literature and art that are bad and out of keeping with the people's interests and demands will certainly die out. For example, things that propagate feudal and other counter-revolutionary ideologies will be eliminated, while those that are desirable and fit to develop will improve and advance and gradually become part of the new literature and art. They have a future and will not perish. This approach will help solve the problem correctly. If we maintain that everything in the old literature and art is good and must be preserved, we will be moving towards the doctrine of "back to the ancients". If, on the other hand, we hold that everything in them is bad and must be rejected or ignored, we will be taking a mistaken attitude towards the national tradition and mass sentiment, contradicting our principle of popularization first and, at the same time, going against our theory of placing everything in its proper historical context. Like the new popular literature and art we create, the old literature and art will be crude at the beginning of its transformation. But we must not look down on it just because it is unrefined, for as long as we look down on it, it will have very little chance to grow and become strong. Without doubt, the transformation will be an enormous job, taking a long time. It cannot possibly be done to perfection at one stroke. But neither should we relax our efforts because the work will be long and arduous.

Fifth, the need for our literary and art circles to take the over-all situation into account. Our writer and artist friends come from many quarters. Take those from the Liberated Areas. Some are from army units and have worked there for a long time. Others are from local organizations in the Liberated Areas. Their work bears a local stamp because of historical circumstances. Now we are all gathered under one roof to discuss future work in literature and art for the whole nation. This means that of necessity everyone must take the over-all situation into account. We should consider not only our own branch of work or the circumstances in which we as individuals work, but also the whole struggle for liberation and literary and art work throughout the country. Only thus can our work be properly organized. Today, as the nation approaches complete liberation, the most important task in the rear areas is to increase production. Our writers and artists must

understand that the initial period in the building of a new-democratic China will be an extremely difficult period of reconstruction in which, insofar as possible, each department, each individual and each project will have to grow very quickly. At the same time, these developments will have to be planned in accordance with the demands and possibilities of the over-all situation. Arrangements for the division of labour in the various departments must be decided according to priority.

The present congress of unity among writers and artists has gone really well. But if we believe that everything is satisfactory, or that from now on the work will proceed smoothly, we are bound to be disappointed in many aspects of our work as soon as we come into contact with reality. If all the writers and artists in our various departments have the over-all situation in mind and are able to think in terms of the present task of construction and our political movements, our work will progress more rapidly. For example, our troops will continue their advance in the South, the Northwest and the Southwest to liberate the as yet unliberated 200 million people. The many writers and artists in army units will move into new areas along with them and popularize our literature and art — this will be the main task for our literary and art workers in the armed forces. For this reason, even though our writers and artists in army units may ask for a chance to study and raise their professional level, and though some of them may be sent back for training, the number is bound to be small. And in the beginning it may not be possible to release any at all. At times like these, individual demands must be subordinated to the interests of the whole. The same is true of local writers and artists in the old Liberated Areas, who may be transferred to the new areas to organize the local writers and artists and promote literary and art work there. This is also a kind of co-ordination of literature and art with politics.

At present, we should be prepared to meet more difficulties than expected, so that we can carry on under any conditions, however difficult. If conditions turn out less difficult than expected, so much the better. I say this so that we may all be mentally prepared.

Finally, the question of organization. As the delegates to this congress all feel that we should establish an organization, we must settle the matter. Not only must we establish an all-China federation of literary and art circles. We should also set up separate associations for literature, drama, the cinema, music, painting, dance, etc. following the pattern of the Federation of Trade Unions, under which there are various industrial unions. Only in this way will we be able to carry

on our work better, train new talent, extend activities and institute reforms. Everybody agrees on this point, so now we must get started, because we can't convene this kind of congress often. I hope that during or after this meeting, you will establish the different associations. So much for the mass organizations.

At the same time, the New Political Consultative Conference<sup>417</sup> will establish a nationwide democratic coalition government, which will include a department of literature and art. This department will rely on the support of the mass organizations we just spoke of, because its purpose will be to serve the broad masses and their organizations as well as the large numbers of writers and artists. Our state is a people's state and the government is a people's government, a people's regime in which democratic centralism is practised from the bottom to the top and vice versa. It is a people's democratic dictatorship led by the proletariat. Therefore, our literary and art circles should also pay attention to this aspect and should send representatives to participate in the New Political Consultative Conference. The department of literature and art under our new-democratic regime will need to have all our writers and artists actively participate in its affairs.

In the past, some field armies had as many as 8,000 literary and art workers each, while others had very few. Naturally this was because the different armies had developed separately under different circumstances. It's the same in the localities: some counties have a performing arts troupe while others do not. This uneven development will persist for some time, but there will be gradual adjustment among the various army units and localities and between the cities and countryside. In particular, we must send large groups of people to the new liberated areas. In the past, our friends in the Kuomintang areas fought alone, with no contact with others. They worked their way into any openings available under the reactionaries' rule, strengthened their foothold and went into hiding when faced with suppression. Things are different now: it's a people's country and we can organize things ourselves. So all work in literature and art, whether it is sponsored by the government or by the mass organizations, should be organized in a planned way. The leading bodies you elect will have to ensure that this is done.

Those are the things I wanted to say about literature and art. I hope you will consider them during your deliberations.

Comrades and friends! This congress is one of unity. It signifies the coming together of the two armies of writers and artists, one from

the old Liberated Areas and the other from the new. It is a gathering of representatives of the new literature and art and of representatives of the old literature and art who favour transformation, a gathering of writers and artists from the countryside, the cities and the army units. This congress demonstrates the breadth of our unity, a great, triumphant unity under the banner of New Democracy and with Comrade Mao Zedong's orientation for a new literature and art.

With the approach of final nationwide victory, it is at last possible for the more than 700 representatives to manifest this great unity, to hold this great gathering. We have Comrade Mao Zedong to thank for this. It is he who has led the Chinese revolution to victory. And it is he whom we must thank for the new orientation in literature and art, which has made it possible for us to achieve victory in this field.