

## UNITE WITH THE BROAD MASSES TO ADVANCE TOGETHER

*April 22, 1949*

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For the Party, the question of uniting with the broad masses to advance together is one of co-operation between Party members and non-Party people; for the Youth League, it is one of co-operation between League members and non-League people. In other words, it is a question of achieving co-operation among the broad masses. This is a very important question in carrying on revolutionary work. Today, when we are combating imperialism and domestic reaction, we cannot rely on the Communists, Youth League members and cadres alone. There are only 200,000 League members, and even with the Party members added in, the number doesn't exceed three million all told. Compared with the national population of 475 million, this figure is very small, less than one per cent of the total. We want to lead the entire people forward with us, and if we don't work together with large numbers of people outside the Party and the League, how will we be able to do so? At the Seventh National Congress of the Party, Comrade Mao Zedong said that we should guard against arrogance and impetuosity and be modest and prudent and that we must unite the large numbers of non-Party people and co-operate with those outside the Party. This is more easily said than done. Both in the Party and in the League, we used to have a bad habit: as soon as we heard that such-and-such a person was a Party or Youth League member, we relaxed and trusted that person completely, but as soon as we heard that so-and-so was not a Party or League member, we immediately looked askance at him or her. To draw such a line is extremely dangerous. For whether among the workers, peasants, or students,

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An excerpt from the fourth part of a report made at the First National Congress of the New Democratic Youth League of China.

Party and League members are usually the minority. And if a minority draw a circle around themselves and cut themselves off from everybody outside, they are, as the saying goes, “drawing a circle on the ground to make a prison for themselves.”

Some comrades think that comrades within the Party are fine in all respects, but actually this is not the way things are. When a comrade joins the Party, that only means he has joined it organizationally — it doesn't necessarily mean that he has fully joined the Party ideologically. Take me for instance. I was once a Youth League member too; later I became a Party member. Although I've been in the Party for twenty-seven or twenty-eight years, I have also made a good many mistakes, and each time the matter comes up, I always feel that I am in debt to the revolution, that I haven't done my work well enough, and I am dissatisfied with myself. Each person in the Party has his or her strong points, and we should all learn from one another. Persons outside the Party also have many strong points, and we ought to learn from them too. Every Party member must undergo a long period of tempering, just as steel is not created in an instant but is made in an extended process of heating and hammering. Above all else we must submit to a long period of trials in regard to our life, ideology and style of work. So after we join the Party or the League, we must study diligently and conduct criticism and self-criticism — only thus can we forge ahead. This is the minimum requirement for Party and League members. As for people outside, because they haven't joined the Party or the League, naturally there are some things they don't know, and they lag behind us a little, but it doesn't mean that they don't have strong points. In the countryside, for example, many peasants are more hard-working and courageous than we are, and more resourceful too. In the factories, the masses of workers are more capable in production, more creative than we are. And among the working intellectuals and students, some are better than we in many respects. Although some of these people have been somewhat slower in raising their political consciousness or are temporarily unwilling to join the Party or the League, we should help them, enlighten them and treat them as friends, and we should all learn from each other. We should not discriminate against them because they are not Party or League members — and then trust them completely the moment they join the Party or the League. This kind of attitude is childish; it's a defect common among young people.

How can we solve this problem? We should treat all people outside the Party who can be won over and can co-operate with us in the same way as we do Party cadres. We should first draw a huge circle and unite with the masses in their hundreds of millions in a joint struggle to isolate, oppose and overthrow the most reactionary landlord and bureaucrat-capitalist classes. Of course, within the ranks of the people there are also different classes and strata; those closest to us are the workers, peasants, students and working intellectuals. Next comes the petty bourgeoisie, and then the national bourgeoisie, the enlightened gentry and other patriots. We should be discriminating in our treatment of them, win them over and educate them. This is the broad-minded spirit that should animate the Communist Party and the Youth League. We are masters of the new China. And we must not indulge in mere talk about the people's democratic state or about the political power of the masses led by the proletariat, at the same time acting not like leaders but like a small coterie of isolationists, so that our deeds do not match our words. Young people must be modest and not arrogant; they should be conscious of their own inadequacies and of the insignificance of their accomplishments. At the same time, we should unite with all those who can be won over. That is to say, we should exert ourselves and should be stricter with ourselves and more lenient with other people. So the saying goes, "be strict with yourself and be lenient to others". Of course, this lenience should not be unprincipled. We must first distinguish between revolution and counter-revolution, and we must have no illusions about counter-revolutionaries. The tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, or millions of the most reactionary among the 475 million must be excluded from this huge circle of ours. But we must also recognize that among them there are many people who can still be transformed. For example, after the agrarian reform, landlords and rich peasants can be gradually changed through three to five years of education and remoulding. Of course it can't be done overnight, but their future is still hopeful. We should do it step by step and have them participate in production and gradually be transformed into new people. We can't just take them all in immediately and indiscriminately. But we should be broad-minded and try to transform them all, to lead them all.

Lately, we've been holding talks with the Kuomintang delegation.<sup>434</sup> Some comrades say that the Kuomintang delegation consists of only a few people, and why should we bother ourselves so much about them? But although they are few, they have a multitude behind them. The

people under their influence in the army, government and Kuomintang as well as among public functionaries and teaching personnel come to several million all told, and when you add in their spouses and children, there are some ten million. With these people, the delegation's word carries more weight than ours. They do have a representative character, and if we can win over a few leaders, that will influence a batch behind them. This will help us to cross the Changjiang River and it will also play a role after the crossing. Thus, those who can be split off from the enemy camp should be won over, educated and helped.

As soon as we begin thinking this way, we can take a broader view instead of isolating ourselves inside a small circle. Only when we do things in this spirit can we persuade more and more people to go along with us. What is more, we have to learn from them. We should understand that only when people with different opinions discuss and argue with us can the truth become further clarified. "Dialectics" comes from a Greek word meaning "debate". Isn't this point already made clear in the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*?<sup>441</sup> Many philosophers and statesmen have enjoyed debate in the past. The sages of old all enjoyed arguing, and why shouldn't we late-comers do the same? In searching for truth we must have debate, we must not be arbitrary. What does being arbitrary mean? It means that whatever I say must be correct, and whatever others say must be incorrect. If that's the way it is, what is there left to debate? If your opinion is inviolable, what's the use of arguing with you? Even if you do have a good many correct opinions, you should still listen to the opinions of others, heeding the good ones — only then can your thinking make further progress. Dialectics deals with the unity of opposites. Only through debate is it possible to discover more truths. Therefore, if young people want to learn, they should listen to all kinds of opinions, distilling them afterwards. There are people who, listening first to one side, then the other, are in a constant quandary. They start out with definite ideas, but as soon as they begin listening this way, they lose their certainty. We should listen to opinions from all sides, but we must also use our brains. Everyone has two ears with which to hear, two eyes with which to see and two nostrils with which to smell. When listening, we can hear incorrect as well as correct opinions, when viewing colours, we can see black as well as white, and when sniffing, we can smell the foul as well as the fragrant. So the human senses accord with dialectical laws. We must listen to opinions from all sides, distinguishing right from wrong,

and starting in our youth we must develop the ability to think. There are also comrades who are not afraid as long as they are meeting Party and League people but who are as timid as a shy girl in the presence of strangers. Why should we be afraid of strangers? We ought to unite with them, educate them and transform them. Only with this approach can we unite with ever more people in our society to go forward together. Only when we keep in constant touch with the broad masses are we able to be brave. It's no good for us to shut ourselves up in a room, remaining ignorant and uninformed. We must dare to have contact with people in the hubbub of real life, to persuade and educate people, to learn from them, to unite with the vast majority in common struggle. This is courage — and people doing so are men of great courage. This is precisely the style of work our young need very much to cultivate.