

Mao Zedong. *Quotations from Chairman Mao Tsetung*, which work is also known as the “*Little Red Book*.” Translated by _____. Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1972.

Mao Zedong, (1893-1976), ruled China from 1949 to his death. Chairman Mao founded the People’s Republic of China, a single party communist state. On seizing power, Mao purged political enemies and redistributed land from its owners to people’s communes, systematically executing the former landowners. Mao’s agricultural innovations led to famine. Mao interpreted criticism of his failures as subversion, and initiated the Cultural Revolution, killing millions and enslaving tens of millions in forced agricultural labor. Mao’s policies led to the death of forty to seventy million Chinese by famine and executions. However, under Mao’s rule the average Chinese laborer’s life improved, if the worker survived. Women prospered, education and health care expanded, all people were housed, and life expectancy grew. Mao Zedong extinguished more of his citizens than did his contemporaries, Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler, whose victims numbered tens of millions each. Mao tops the twentieth-century’s bumper crop of sociopathic dictators. Mao is history’s preeminent mass murderer.

1. **The Communist Party.** Chinese communism is Marxist-Leninist. The communist party organizes commoners to end imperialism. The party should control the army and unite all revolutionary forces within China. The party and the people control everything. By “rectification” and “self-criticism,” one means ridding China of whatever is wrong. The party exists to implement policies. Policies prove to be right or wrong; we learn by experience.
2. **Classes and Class Struggle.** History consists in one class exterminating another. Thoughts betray the class from which they emerged. Society changes as one class contradicts and supersedes its predecessor. American reactionary ruling elite oppresses blacks. These people do not represent the majority of American whites. Reactionary forces must be actively destroyed; they never vanish of their own accord. Revolution is class violence; dismiss your pettifogged objections to the contrary. Revolutions fail when parties unite to attack enemies that are not the real enemy. Look to the poor for allies. Enemies are warlords, bureaucrats, economic collaborators, landlords, and the intellectual class that supports imperialism. Allies are industrial workers. Those who waffle may become enemies, and so must be watched. Allies take the communist side. Your battle goes well when the enemy attacks you and paints you as beasts. Learn what enemies support; oppose it. After armed enemies are beaten, unarmed ones will remain. The latter pose a grave threat. Long after fighting ends, the war against imperialism will not really be over. Revisionists are faux Marxists who in fact propagate capitalism. They must be rooted out.
3. **Socialism and Communism.** Communism is an ideology and a progressive, rational social system. Socialism inexorably replaces capitalism; it is a law of history. Democracy leads to socialism; socialism to communism. Mao manipulates the social structure of China to increase industrial and agricultural production. Hardest to integrate into the new socialist system are a small number of recalcitrant intellectuals. To consolidate peasant farming into a socialist agriculture requires educating the peasants. This is a serious problem. Peasants and lower middle class, who are more than eighty percent of China’s population, must be united in their opposition to old capitalists. The poor peasants will accomplish this task. Middle class peasants tend toward capitalism; some grow richer, while others sink. The state must crush middle class independence so all the poor face a similar plight. Mao intends to plan the entire Chinese economy. China’s poor are numerous and blank. Write what you will on their minds. Mao aspires to a Marxist abolition of state power, but later, after classes have been abolished. The state apparatus perseveres until no longer needed. The state must root out opponents, seize land and oppress landowners, crush criminals, and oppose foreign enemies forcefully. Mao’s reforms can be undone in only a few decades; one must remain vigilant. Capitalists become new men when forced to do manual labor. The Chinese communist party has ten million members, but they are a small percentage of China’s 600 million people. This fact demands strong bonds between party and people.

4. **The Correct Handling of Contradictions Among the People.** Dissent from enemies differs from dissent of the people. The people's dissent emerges from their varied interests, which can be reconciled. The discordant voices of enemies aim to injure. Right actions unite nationalities, benefit the people, consolidate dictatorship, centralize power, and strengthen the Chinese communist party, while helping international communism. One must stay balanced on questions of who are enemies. All are not friends, nor are the people enemies, even when they voice discontent. To create communist collectives, the party relies on revolution, democracy, collectivization, self-criticism, and developing productivity. One meets disputes among the people by discussion and education, not repression. One can trust this educative process because communist revolution has placed all in the same basic circumstances. The middle capitalists can be won over, though if badly handled can become enemies (as happened in Hungary). Only the imperialists and landlords and their bureaucrats lie beyond redemption.
5. **War and Peace.** All is politics. War is bloody politics. Just wars promote progressive ideals. Communist revolutionary war destroys the enemy without and within. All political power relies on lethal coercion. Peasants throw off their landlords by guns. Mao opposes war. He uses guns to get rid of guns, once and for all, initiating a perpetual peace. Mao wants to peacefully co-exist with western capitalists, but remains wary of them. Mao opposes, but does not shrink from, a third world war. One must remain vigilant, especially the army.
6. **Imperialism and All Reactionaries Are Paper Tigers.** Everything contains both itself and its opposite (unity of opposites). Capitalists are both real and paper tigers, as are the people. The people's real tiger is rising, while the capitalists' paper tiger is coming to the fore. The people know, strategically, that they will prevail. Tactically, however, they need to know that the capitalists still have teeth. Hitler, the Tsar, the Chinese emperor and Japan's as well: all were paper tigers, now overthrown. So too will the United States fall. Its far flung military bases alienate the Chinese and Arab peoples. The world's people should oppose U.S. imperialism and their allies as well.
7. **Dare to Struggle and Dare to Win.** The world's people should unite to defeat the U.S. Kill monsters! Chinese people love peace, but when attacked, are not cowed, and respond with overwhelming force and ferocity. Stay prepared to fight, but fight only when the clash is unavoidable.
8. **People's War.** The Chinese revolution is a mass movement. In people, in their millions, lies its strength. We need a regular army, and also guerilla militias, each of which is an essential arm of the state. Generals do what is possible, given the circumstances, to destroy the enemy without destroying one's own army. These are our principles for battle: a) cherry-pick weak or isolated forces, b) take small and rural targets first, c) weaken the enemy, and do not waste resources holding ground, d) fight only when certain of prevailing by outnumbering the opponent and surrounding him; avoid battles of attrition, e) prepare and be certain you will win before engaging, f) fight only in our own style, g) attack when the enemy moves, h) prey on weakly defended positions of the enemy, i) get replacement men and material from the enemy at the front, j) press the battle with the enemy. Rest briefly, then resume fighting.
9. **The People's Army.** The people's army fights not for itself, but for all the Chinese people. The Red Army has political as well as military tasks: propaganda, organizing the party, arming party members, organizing them, and building revolutionary fervor. The people's army will endure after defeating its external enemies. It will thereafter fight classist thought within China, and protect against imperialists abroad.
10. **Leadership of Party Committees.** There is a danger in the committee system that one person comes to rule, and disputes are buried, not resolved. Committees need to debate

problems, and leaders have import in that process. Leaders decide in emergencies; otherwise, the committee process works best. The secretary of a committee acts as squad leader. He smoothes the social relations and work load of the members. Everyone on a committee should bring problems to the table. Avoid gossip and irresolution. Within the party, all must preserve good relations with other committee and party members. Genuine unity among members matters. Committee work fashions a common language. Listen to members lower in the party; evaluate their views. Adopt or criticize those views, as appropriate. Committee work is like playing the piano. Play a note where there is a problem; neglect no problem. Make a melody of your work. Work with concentrated effort to solve problems; some will not yield to easy measures. Concentrate on the numbers; without quantitative analysis, one cannot avoid erring. Give notice of meetings, and be prepared for the tasks at hand during meetings. Keep meetings short and reports concise. Find a way to work with those with whom you disagree. Avoid arrogance; it sows dissent. Accuracy matters in evaluating people and problems. Avoid hyperbole and error. In organizing, the central committees find solutions after learning which problems exist. Lower committees study the central committee's decisions, and then decide how to implement them.

11. **The Mass Line.** Only peasants make world history. Their heroic acts create their own well-being. Peasants are rising, to exterminate their class opponents and create a socialist society. Their errors will be easily righted. Some resist the peasantry; they will have to be shoved along. Leaders who fail to understand the vitality of the peasantry disrupt the mass line. The mass line educates in ideology and work methods. The mass line sets policy. The party must stay in touch with the masses, and attitudes that deviate from the mass line alienate the masses. All communist change requires the conscious and willing participation of the masses. Leaders listen to and then follow the masses. Leaders must not leap ahead of or lag behind public sentiment. One leads from the peasantry to the peasantry. The party hears the masses, refines their views, propagates their view, translates them into action, and then begins again. Leaders find active peasants, and let them win those who do not understand and even those who oppose. The masses rely on party leadership for continuity and perseverance; no initiative, however, will succeed without the masses' willing participation. Leaders concern themselves with the price of fuel and food because these are peasant concerns. By sharing these concerns, we induce the peasants to trust us.
12. **Political Work.** The party and army are linked. The People's Army keeps unity between officers and soldiers, and between the army and the people. It uses that unity to disintegrate opponent armies, while treating prisoners of war well. The army serves the party and the people. Mao's policy is to release captured soldiers with their possessions, unless they are hated by the masses, in which case the prisoner is to be executed. War concerns more than weaponry; its needs morale and popular support. The atom bomb is not decisive; the masses are decisive. Armies are one means to political ends; others exist. The army must serve the party and the people, not lead it. Communist re-education unites the party in its tasks. Some think that we can afford to think about things other than politics and ideology. If one errs politically, that is as bad as dying. The army has been well-educated, abandoned its old ways, grown pure and united. They are invincible. We encourage our soldiers to be united, interested, loyal, and involved. The party is conscientious; that is what ultimately counts.
13. **Relations Between Officers and Men.** The army is ruthless to enemies and kind to one another. Cherish one another, and correct your mistakes. The rudiment of the army is respect for its soldiers and the people, and dignity for prisoners of war. Never coerce peasants. Persuade and educate them. Avoid all ridicule and insult.
14. **Relations Between the Army and the People.** Military power rests in the support of the people. Every soldier must be trained in the importance of the people. Where there are shortcomings in this affection, the army must practice public self-criticism.

15. **Democracy in the Three Main Fields.** Officers and soldiers should share the hardships of war, and punishments should not be humiliating. Three goals motivate army policy: political unity, improved living conditions, and improved military capabilities. Party leadership must show initiative. They must lead with creativity, assume duties willingly, question and improve procedures, and show brotherly affection. This is concrete democracy. Encourage all to speak up about problems. Do not blame them for speaking out, even if their criticisms do not survive scrutiny. Leaders should just listen, and encourage people to speak. Leaders must explain democratic centralism to the people. We must avoid ultra-democracy and laissez-faire, which are bad for discipline and undermine fighting ability.
16. **Education and the Training of Troops.** Education teaches practical solutions to problems in Chinese socialism. Marx and Lenin guide thought, and prompt action. We teach military arts, led by the best and brightest teachers and students. Officers and students teach one another.
17. **Serving the People.** The party must serve the Chinese people wholeheartedly. Norman Bethune [Canadian surgeon, a communist, who joined Mao's army in 1938 during the expulsion of Japanese invaders] lived as we should be, in total self-sacrifice. When cadres err, they must correct their errors and ill habits. To die for the Chinese people lends death gravity. To die for the capitalists makes one's death meaningless.
18. **Patriotism and Internationalism.** Though communism is international in perspective, a Chinese communist must fight to liberate China with intense patriotism. Chinese communists link to the workers of every country, but fight in China. When China is communist, then the Chinese will help other revolutionaries. All workers should unite to oppose American aggression. China will become a great industrial power. Given the size and population of China, our country should have made a larger contribution. China's communists should be humble, avoiding the arrogance typical of powerful nation-states.
19. **Revolutionary Heroism.** China will fight to the last man. We will stick to what works for us: constant fighting without fear. Avoid arrogance. Work hard. Follow your cadre's lead.
20. **Building Our Country Through Diligence and Frugality.** China is a big, poor, socialist country. A few decades of hard work will remedy our poverty. We must be diligent and frugal, and follow a series of five-year plans. Expand rural production. Live simply. Government waste and corruption will be punished. When cadres grow self-indulgent, we send them back to productive work. Our army supports itself, making for better relations among soldiers, better work-ethic, greater discipline, better feelings from the people, and encouraging the people's own production.
21. **Self-Reliance and Arduous Struggle.** China must make China strong. Do not look for help from outside. When we communists prevail, then the hard work begins. The road will be full of unexpected surprises. Work hard; expect nothing to be easy. Wealth derives from the efforts of workers, farmers, and thinkers who themselves work. Seek out places where difficulties obstruct us. Overcome them. A tale reports an old man and his son moved two improvidently situated mountains with hoes. They were ridiculed, but God sent angels who moved them. China has two mountains to move: feudalism and capitalism. Our god is the Chinese people.
22. **Methods of Thinking and Methods of Work.** Humans develop from constraints to freedoms. Science frees man. Marxism: 1) serves workers, and 2) proceeds pragmatically, relying more heavily on practical experience than theory. Social existence shapes human thinking. Epistemologically, sensations of sufficient number generate concepts, which a person then tests practically, confirming or disconfirming his perceptions. This is how one tests truths: practice to knowledge and back to practice. Reliable knowledge proceeds from practical experience. One learns by attempting to apply supposed knowledge to the world and

failing. Marxists start from objective facts, not axioms. All metaphysics is non-verifiable; this makes for a great deal of wandering chatter. Inner irresolution drives all development. Marxism teaches the “unity of opposites.” Inner contradictions drive change; resolutions are temporary. The struggle is basal. Recognizing the inner contradictions of things is the dialectical method. Lenin urged solid analysis of actual conditions, not speculations. Those who do otherwise, mistake small things for important ones. Quick judgments portend failure; look at a thing from several aspects. Learn its history. Then decide. Events are more complex than “good” and “bad” expose. One can find the well and ill in everything. Pessimism hinders the people’s progress. If nay-sayers worked harder, things would become possible. In complex problems, the greatest contradiction holds the key to solution. To mobilize masses, one must do hands-on work and make a breakthrough. Then people will follow. Generalizations motivate no one. Only one matter can be central in leading the people. Address one issue at a time, in order of priority. Correct mistakes as soon as they are discovered; do not allow them to linger and do yet more damage. Work with ardor, but stay organized.

23. **Investigation and Study.** One must know the work being done before one has a right to criticize it. Theory and practice are two sides of one coin. Rely on investigation guided by Marxism, not books or subjectivity. Investigation consists in calling a meeting at which one personally questions those with knowledge, becoming their pupil.
24. **Correcting Mistaken Ideas.** Prefer modesty when success comes. New dangers lie in prevailing: inertia, flattery, longing for a softer life. Avoid the baggage life offers: dysphoria about errors, conceit about successes, arrogance toward others, disparagement of those different from you. The best communist comrades take up hard tasks, leaving easy ones to others. No true communist shirks hard tasks, brags, is self-centered, or is cold toward comrades. Honesty is critical to accomplishing things. Soldiers who want to play in town need to learn to work in the rural farms. A true communist has concern for the whole; he takes care of more than his own department. Liberal anti-communism shows itself variously: letting error slide by in friends, gossiping, not caring when error does not affect oneself, to care more for one’s own opinions than orders, seeking revenge, seeing error and doing nothing to correct it, to be indifferent about the communist process, working without enthusiasm, being slipshod and resting on one’s laurels, and to see one’s errors and do nothing to correct them. Avoid liberalism. Liberals decline to embrace Marxism. The best persevere in hard communist work to the end.
25. **Unity.** Unity, both within China, and with international communist peoples, assures victory. No other paths lie open. When there are problems or disputes, we criticize, change, and find new unity.
26. **Discipline.** Democracy and central control, as well as freedom and discipline, are poles united in Chinese democratic centralism. [Reminiscent of Orwellian double-think in Newspeak.] Unity emerges from party discipline: all are subservient to hierarchical order, and the Central Committee sits in the supreme position. Minorities must submit to the decision of the majority. Discipline requires obeying orders, taking nothing for oneself but rather submitting all to government control. Also, personally, one should be polite, pay a fair price for purchases, return borrowed items, buy what you break, assault no one or their things, behave well sexually (men), and treat prisoners well.
27. **Criticism and Self-Criticism.** Marxism is true and popular; face all criticism fearlessly. Criticism improves one, clinging to the good and shedding the bad. One needs to wash the mind as the body. Criticism is the soap and water of the mind. The party exists to resolve class contradictions. Liberalism creates peace without principles; its adherents languish in a morally rotten parochialism. Where a comrade errs, but seeks improvement, we should always welcome and cure them. Criticism heals political mistakes and errors of structure, not personal foibles. These latter should be tolerated as negligible matters. Communist criticism

relies on facts and emphasizes politics. Personal attacks, under the guise of party criticism, are just hangovers from liberalism. Offer criticism promptly; it is less helpful after the fact.

28. **Communists.** True communists are self-less agitators for party power in service of the masses. One who does so without puffing, laziness, or money interests deserves our respect. Communists consider the needs of the whole in all they do. Communists offer practical wisdom and foresightful leadership. Communists learn from the masses, then teach them. Prefer the role of teacher to that of boss. Communists are seeds in the fertile soil of the masses. Party members must brave the world in which the masses live. No neatly potted Communists. Never brag or preen.
29. **Cadres.** Older party members must train successor cadres. Lacking that, China will suffer under leadership like Khrushchev, who sounds communist but is in fact revising communism. Beware the dilution of revolutionary fervor by time. Fervent cadres will determine the future course of Chinese communism. They must seek close bonds with the masses. One chooses cadres based on their life's work, not isolated incidents. Party leaders must guide cadres while leaving them latitude to act, improve their theoretical understanding of communism, supervise them and persuade them to correct their errors, and support them in their personal struggles. Even the leading group should evolve, with less able or degenerate members being replaced by superior persons. There are cadres outside the party who deserve attention as well.
30. **Youth.** China's future belongs to the young. The young may have difficulty comprehending the sacrifices that shrugged off imperialism and commenced socialist China. When a youth links himself to the masses, he is a revolutionary. Intellectuals are indecisive, and even once committed to the party, are inclined to recant. The needs of the young differ from those of their elders. Care for the needs of the young.
31. **Women.** Women, before communism, were subjected to political, clan, religious, and male authorities. Under communism, women, who have always been stronger by virtue of their hard physical labors, have been freed in the party, even as to their husbands' authority, which wanes daily. Improving the labor and political power of women is a communist goal. Women should do farm work, and get paid for what they produce equally with men.
32. **Culture and Art.** Within limits, art is politics. We need proletarian art. Art must serve as a tie to bind revolutionary peoples, and a sword to fight opponents. Useful art must be politically correct and beautiful as well. Artistic expression may take a hundred different voices within socialism ("a hundred flowers blossom"). There can be dissenting schools, with which more revolutionary groups contend. The administration should stay out of these disputes. [From 1957, the year in which the Hundred Flowers campaign, only a year old, was quashed in the Anti-Rightist Movement.]
33. **Study.** The economic challenge of China requires an education emphasis. Things change; we must learn. Learn only what is necessary to actual conditions; neglect dogmatic and antiquated knowledge. One should rely on Marx, Lenin, Engels, and Stalin for guidance. To be worthwhile, study must issue in action. Practice is more important than theoretical learning. One learns warfare by fighting. Learn from those who know without discrimination. Never fake knowing things. One cannot be complacent and an avid learner. Book learning, without practice, makes weak comrades. Intellectuals need to do some farm work to learn the language of mass communism. Things will work better then.