

**THE DUTY OF THE ASSISTANT COMPANY COMMANDER IN CHARGE
OF POLITICAL AFFAIRS**

A Talk to an Assistant Company Commander of the 109th Unit of the
Korean People's Army
March 13, 1968

In meeting with you today, I wish to take the opportunity to mention a few elements of the work of the assistant company commander in charge of political affairs.

The company is the basic battle unit of the People's Army. Strengthening the company is the starting point for consolidating the entire People's Army. The position of a political assistant commander of a company, the basic combat unit of the people's Army, is therefore very important.

Whether the work of the company is carried out well or not depends largely on its assistant commander in charge of political affairs. If these individuals bring the great leader's instructions and Party policies home to the soldiers quickly and effectively, manage the Party organizations of the companies adroitly and carry out the political work efficiently, they can train all the soldiers to be revolutionary fighters who are unfailingly faithful to the leader, and perform the military tasks assigned to companies successfully. Effective political management ensures that our People's Army will be further strengthened as the invincible revolutionary armed force which can defeat any aggressor.

Assistant company commanders in charge of political affairs are career revolutionaries and political officials, who train the men in the companies to be the leader's revolutionary soldiers and fight politically to ensure the fulfilment of military tasks assigned to the companies. Political assistant company commanders must be constantly thinking of political affairs while they are sitting, standing, walking, or even when they are eating their meals. They must engage in political work at all places and at all times.

Political affairs are work with those possessed of ideological consciousness. Political work, in essence, is the effort to enlist the people's minds and thoughts. Figuratively speaking, just as electricity is the driving force of modern industry, political activity may be called the power that inspires the revolutionary enthusiasm of the people. Without political activity the people cannot be inspired to take part in the revolutionary struggle. Assistant company commanders in charge of political affairs must give priority to political work in everything and continually perform this work everywhere and at all times.

However, some assistant company commanders in charge of political affairs are unaware of the position they should adopt. Some of them give orders to 'charge forward' at the head of ranks, along with the company commanders or platoon leaders, while others stride

around their offices day and night holding papers. They cannot really be regarded as assistant company commanders in charge of political affairs, but only as ‘°auxiliary company commanders’± or ‘°auxiliary platoon leaders’±.

Then, what attitude should they take to their work? If a company receives orders to engage in offensive action from its superior, then its commander must organize for battle, whereas its assistant commander in charge of political affairs must mix with the soldiers to do political work. In other words, the former must understand the task of battle, judge the conditions, make a decision and then give the order to join combat, whereas the latter must bring home to the soldiers the purpose and significance of the offensive action and agitate for them to perform great feats of unparalleled bravery and boldness for the Party and the leader, for the country and the people. Wherever the sound of commands from commanding officers rings out to the soldiers, the sound of assistant company commanders in charge of political affairs explaining the leader’s instructions and Party policy should also be clearly heard.

If political assistant company commanders are to do their political work in an efficient manner, they must constantly mix with their men. Becoming intimate with the soldiers is in fact the first step in the work of political assistant company commanders. Only by mixing with the soldiers can they know their feelings and carry out their political work in accordance with their particular character.

Mixing with the soldiers means understanding them fully, eating at the same table with them and leading the same life, while carrying on energetic political work using various forms and methods adapted to their understanding.

Some political officials, however, come back after having trained all day long with the soldiers when they were told to mix with them. In other words they come back after having merely existed beside the soldiers; it cannot be said that they have truly mixed with them. The instructions urging them to mix with the soldiers do not mean they must go training together with them.

Political officials in the army must learn from the work methods of the political instructors of the Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Army. Those political instructors marched and fought together with the men and shared their meals and rest with them, while performing political work, as taught by the leader. When there was a need to educate men collectively, the political instructors held meetings, study sessions, short training courses and collective discussions, but when it was necessary to give individual education, they talked while on the march with the men. They taught men how to deliver speeches, explained the contents of study programmes, and admonished each man individually for his faults at bedside. In the course of doing this they got to know everything, from the men’s native places, ages, records of life, characters and habits to their levels of ideological consciousness and their degree of knowledge of their own weapons. Each of the political instructors of the guerrilla army knew the army men in his charge like the back of his own hand and therefore could

carry on political work positively designed to match their characters. These political instructors carried out political work in forms suited to the level of preparedness and specific characters of the individuals they were working with and were therefore able to attain a high level of success in their work.

Only when every assistant company commander in charge of political affairs follows the examples of the political instructors of the Anti-Japanese Guerrilla Army, will he fully understand the soldiers and carry on active political work appropriate to their level of preparedness and specific characters.

Working with people is difficult and complex. Machinery can simply be operated as required by the standard operating instructions, but work with people who possess ideological consciousness cannot be carried out in such a fashion.

Political workers should be able to see beyond the surface appearance of all events to their intrinsic anatomy, and conduct realistic political work free from established forms and patterns. If during fire power training on a cold winter's day a soldier handles the gun barehanded, without his gloves, the political assistant company commander should see the inward feelings of the soldier instead of thinking only about his hands being very cold. The soldier might be training without gloves and bearing the cold on his hands in order to perform his actions correctly and quickly. The assistant company commander for political affairs might hold a natural conversation with the soldier during a break, and ask why he is training barehanded on such a cold winter's day, and if he does not feel his hands getting cold. The assistant commander should tell the soldiers sitting around that it is not a good thing that the comrade took off his gloves during training, but commend the enthusiasm and sincerity he displayed during training, bearing the cold on his hands in order to attain good results. Then the other soldiers will think of themselves and those who have trained perfunctorily, will feel reproach of their conscience. The political assistant company commander should not miss any opportunity to explain things to all the soldiers in a way which touches their hearts. This will encourage every soldier to take his training in earnest. Political work must be done sensitively and appropriately, relying on specific facts. Political work which is conducted effectively without rigid formality and pattern will prove incomparably more powerful than stressing the general line ten times or a hundred times or making speeches.

The political assistant company commanders should possess the correct style of work. Work style is as important for officials as work method. At present, however, some of them are failing to develop the noble style of work befitting political workers. Regarding themselves as special beings, some comrades act perversely and pay no heed to the opinions of soldiers while others, under the excuse of their own character, treat the soldiers coldly and fastidiously. These political workers cannot earn the respect of the masses of the soldiers.

Assistant company commanders in charge of political affairs must always be informal and magnanimous. They must always be simple

and modest in speech and behaviour, ready to sing songs and dance with the soldiers. Only then will the soldiers visit them at any time to tell them frankly what they are thinking and what difficulties they are encountering.

Assistant company commanders in charge of political affairs must treat the soldiers sincerely. They should listen carefully to everything the soldiers say, even the trivial things, and understand them with a true heart, settling the matters which must be settled. As to the question to which no answer can be given immediately, they should say that they have to think it over a little and give an answer some time later without fail. Otherwise, soldiers will not believe in and follow the political assistant company commanders with all their hearts.

Assistant company commanders in charge of political affairs must demonstrate a high degree of revolutionary comradeship. I was once told about an assistant company commander in charge of political affairs who went to the training ground and only returned to the company to go to the mess hall when it was quite late at night. Picking up his spoon and chopsticks he saw the uncurdled bean curd, and asked the soldier on mess duty to put it into a mess tin and warm it. He wrapped the mess tin to keep it warm and carried it to a dispensary beyond a hill. The assistant company commander knew that a soldier who had entered the dispensary a few days before was exceptionally fond of uncurdled bean curd, so though he had returned late at night from the training ground, in spite of his own tiredness, he set off through the snowy stormy night in order to give the soldier the uncurdled bean curd. I was told that he returned from the dispensary only after seeing that the soldier ate up the uncurdled bean curd completely. In this way, the assistant company commanders in charge of political affairs should become loving mothers to their soldiers. Only then will soldiers believe in the political assistant company commanders and follow them with all their hearts.

Political officials should be familiar well with the details of military affairs, too. Unless they have acquainted themselves with military affairs, they cannot conduct political work efficiently. Political assistant company commanders must try harder than platoon leaders or company commanders to master military knowledge.

Political officials must lead a sound life in their Party organizations, study tirelessly, train themselves and acquire extensive work experience.

We must carry forward the revolution from generation to generation. You must lead the van in the struggle to reunify the country by succeeding your father.

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