

the meeting to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China and act in its spirit, conscientiously study and implement the Decisions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Some Questions Concerning the Acceleration of Agricultural Development; keep deepening the criticism of the crimes of the counter-revolutionary conspiratorial cliques of Lin Biao and the gang of four in close combination with present realities, criticize the ultra-Left line they had invented and pushed deliberately and eradicate their poisonous influence, broaden and deepen the study and discussion of the question

of what is the criterion for testing truth, and resolutely unify thinking and action in accordance with the guidelines of the Third Plenary Session of the 11th Central Committee of the Party and the Second Session of the Fifth National People's Congress; rally still more closely around the Party Central Committee and promote the emancipation of thinking, promote stability and unity and the four modernizations; and firmly implement the principle of readjusting, restructuring, consolidating and improving the national economy, and go all out and seize every minute to work for victory in the first battle for the four modernizations!

## Keep the Five-Star Red Flag Flying

by Wei Laiguo



*On the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, "Beijing Review" has asked several well-known persons to write about their impressions. Following is the second of these articles. — Ed.*

ON October 1, 1949 I had the honour of going up to the rostrum of Tian An Men and standing at the side of our great leader Comrade Mao Zedong. I personally heard him announce to the whole world the founding of the People's Republic of China and with my own eyes saw him hoist up the first five-star red flag.

The bright-coloured five-star red flag was the symbol of an independent, free, democratic New China towering in the East and heading towards prosperity and affluence to become a world power. It symbolized that the Chinese people, led by the Chinese Communist Party, had after many life-and-death struggles at long last stood up by toppling imperialism, feudalism

and bureaucrat-capitalism which weighed down on them like three big mountains.

As I raised my head and gazed up at the flag, tears began trickling down my cheeks and I said to myself: "From now on, the people are no longer 'slaves of a foreign nation.'"

I was born in Rongcheng County on the Shandong Peninsula, a beautiful, rich place once under the heel of the imperialists. Wherever these invaders went, they looted, raped and killed. My two uncles fled the place and joined the Eighth Route Army led by the Chinese Communist Party. The invaders, guided by some traitors in our village, searched my home, set it on fire and brutally beat up my grandparents. They threatened to take away their grandchild if they refused to reveal the whereabouts of their sons. I was at that time the only grandchild in the family and grandpa simply doted on me. To escape harassment, grandpa took me and other members of the family out every day to hide from the enemy. But this could not really solve the problem, so I left home secretly and also joined the Eighth Route Army.

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The author is a nationally famous Combat Hero and deputy chief of staff of an army unit of the People's Liberation Army.

That was in 1942 and I was just 16. I joined the Eighth Route Army because I didn't want to be a slave and I wanted to fight the Japanese invaders and punish the traitors who had betrayed my grandparents and parents. Educated by the Party, I came to understand that if we didn't want to be slaves, we must emancipate the whole Chinese nation, and the whole of mankind as well and to found a strong new China free of exploitation. So I fought in the war with might and main, underwent rigid training and was admitted into the Party in the following year.

After victory in the War of Resistance Against Japan, China was faced with a crucial struggle between two entirely different destinies, one of brightness and one of darkness. Whenever my comrades-in-arms and I thought of the people in the areas under Kuomintang control still living in great misery, knowing that we were fighting for a bright new China, our enthusiasm surged like a sea of roaring waves. In June 1946, when the 54th Army of the Kuomintang launched a desperate offensive against the railway station at Nanquan in an attempt to burst open the gateway to the Shandong Liberated Area, the company I belonged to firmly held our position at Langezhuang to the east of the station and repulsed seven enemy attacks between early dawn and dusk. The whole field was littered with enemy corpses. Manoeuvring in a mobile and flexible way during the battle, I took cover behind a small grave-mound and shot at one enemy after another. Firing altogether 120 bullets, I killed 110 enemy soldiers.

In the three-year War of Liberation, while taking command in the fighting, I myself killed 360 enemy soldiers and was awarded the honourable title of Crack Shot and East China People's Hero, First Class. In August 1948, I went to Warsaw to attend the World Congress of Labouring Youth. When the first five-star red flag was hoisted over the soil of the motherland, I told myself that millions upon millions of "slaves to a foreign nation" like me, who were displaced after our home villages fell into enemy hands, were from now on going to be the masters of our own country, that the people the world over would soon see a new China rising like the morning sun over the eastern horizon. You can imagine how excited I was!

As I gazed on the five-star red flag, its bright colour reminded me of my numerous comrades-in-arms who had laid down their lives



**The author with a tank crew.**

and the difficulties the pioneers had gone through. In the course of creating a new China, our troops and the revolutionary people had endured one ordeal after another and the sacrifices they had made were too great to be represented by figures. Everyone who took part in the War of Resistance Against Japan and the subsequent War of Liberation knows how hard it was to win victory for the revolution. When I first joined the Eighth Route Army, the Japanese invaders were enforcing a blockade and launching a mopping-up operation against the anti-Japanese base areas; the Kuomintang, too, was trying to encircle us. We had no grain and had to live on sweet potato vines and corn-cobs; we had no medicines and could only look on as the sick and the wounded suffered; we had no extra clothing to change into, only the same uniform to wear all four seasons; arms and ammunition were even scarcer. But this army of ours served the people wholeheartedly and the fighters were highly optimistic even in times of great adversity. Every one of them was ready to sacrifice his all for the liberation of the people. The army men, together with the people, made great sacrifices, advanced wave upon wave and fought bravely in these bloody wars.

In both the War of Resistance Against Japan and the War of Liberation, we went through countless battles and in every battle many comrades died. So this five-star red flag of ours is

embroidered with the most difficult struggles and dyed in the blood of the martyrs. Now that it is flying over the soil of the motherland, our martyrs, if they could have seen it from their graves as it went up, would have cheered together with us.

It is difficult to build up a cause; it is harder still to carry on the cause. The founding of New China does not mean the end of our militant task. What our martyrs had dreamt of in their lifetime was not just to found a new China but to build a modern, powerful socialist country. Facing the five-star red flag I took a silent pledge: Our motherland so dear, your sons and daughters will for ever be loyal to you and stand on guard; the fruit of the people's victory thus gained must not be lost, and for this I am always ready as a soldier to fight on, stand sentry and win battles in your defence.

Over the last 30 years, happy memories of my participation in the ceremony of the founding of the People's Republic often come back to my mind. In success, this memory warns me to guard against getting swell-headed; in adversity, it encourages me to brace up and persevere.

Soon after the founding of New China, the Party sent me to study at the First Tank School affiliated to the Chinese People's Liberation Army. Later I was enrolled in a tank institute for further studies. I had served in a tank unit for 12 years. When I joined the army, I had only six months' schooling behind me and had not really learnt how to read and write. Throughout the war years, I managed to study whenever there was time but advanced no further than primary school. With such a shaky foundation, it was indeed not easy for me to handle sophisticated arms and equipment, which need a fairly good knowledge of geometry and trigonometry, or to deal with all those circuits and oil channels. But I knew that without a modern people's army, New China could never grow strong, so I was determined to help build a modern army to better defend the five-star red flag. To make my work still more effective, I was prepared to surmount any difficulty, however great. After a period of hard study, I graduated from the tank institute with honours.

But it never occurred to me that dark clouds would gather over the bright sky of socialism. When Lin Biao and the gang of four wreaked havoc, anyone who was keen on mastering new equipment and the latest techniques was invariably vilified as a proponent of "the theory

that weapons decide everything," as holding a "purely technical viewpoint." At that time there was a strange logic, saying that the red flag would fall to the ground if a man-made satellite was launched into orbit. I asked myself, did it follow that the five-star red flag would not fall if no efforts were made to modernize the country? Why was it that the imperialists were able to overrun the land without trouble and do what they liked on Chinese territory in the last hundred years and more? Hadn't we had enough of this bitterness of being pushed around because we were backward? No, I couldn't believe what they said. I kept on studying with other officers and men, using the knowledge I had acquired in school to enhance our skill and military tactics in tank warfare. With great enthusiasm I passed on what I knew to the younger generation in the army to help them master military skills. At the same time I also studied other weapons and equipment of the armed services, such as those of the artillery units, the sappers, and the anti-chemical warfare units, in an effort to increase my ability to take command over an army with all kinds of arms.

After the gang of four was toppled, and especially after the 3rd Plenary Session of the 11th Party Central Committee and the Second Session of the Fifth National People's Congress, I set forth on the new Long March in even higher spirits. In the recent past, I was assigned by the Party committee to lead the tank detachments of various divisions to a pre-arranged "war" zone for manoeuvres. Taking into account the experience gained in our self-defensive counterattack against Viet Nam and the special features of a future war against aggression, I made bold reforms and underwent drastic training together with other cadres and fighters.

Since that grand ceremony of the founding of the People's Republic, there have been tremendous changes in our motherland. There has been great development in our arms and equipment and considerable improvement in our tactical and technological level. My study in the use of the latest equipment and technology, however, has just begun. I am determined to continue my study and work hard to help speed up the modernization of our national defence. I want to make contributions in the nation's struggle for an early return of Taiwan to the embrace of the motherland and win victory in the event of a war against aggression.