support their underestimation. Literature and art are subordinate to politics, and yet in turn exert enormous influence on it. Revolutionary literature and art are a part of the whole work of revolution; they are a screw, which of course doesn't compare with other parts in importance, urgency, or priority, but which is nevertheless indispensable in the whole machinery, an indispensable part of revolutionary work as a whole. If literature and art did not exist in even the broadest and most general sense, the revolution could not advance or win victory; it would be incorrect not to acknowledge this. Furthermore, when we speak of literature and art obeying politics, politics refers to class and mass politics and not to the small number of people known as politicians. Politics, both revolutionary and counterrevolutionary alike, concerns the struggle between classes and not the behavior of a small number of people. Ideological warfare and literary and artistic warfare, especially if these wars are revolutionary, are necessarily subservient to political warfare, because class and mass needs can only be expressed in a concentrated form through politics.

4

Resolution of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party on Methods of Leadership

June 1, 1943

This resolution of the CCP's politburo of the Central Committee was passed in Yan'an on June 1, 1943. It is attributed to Mao Zedong and is included in volume 3 of his Selected Works as "Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership." We have every reason to believe that he did write it or that it captures what he was telling his comrades. The resolution sums up the organizational lessons of the 1942–44 Rectification Movement in Yan'an and outlines in some detail how the party should organize mass mobilization. It is a blueprint of how to run the revolution at the local level, thus answering the challenge Mao set forth in his 1927 "Zhonggong zhongyang guanyu lingdao fangfa jueding," in Zhengfeng wenxian (Rectification Documents) (Yan'an, 1944). Translation from Boyd Compton, ed., Mao's China: Party Reform Documents, 1942–44 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1952), 176–83.
“Report on the Peasant Movement in Hunan” (see Document 1). It was extremely effective in the 1940s as the CCP extended its sway into new regions of China.

The lessons of coordinated but flexible organizing outlined in the resolution have been applied to social movements elsewhere, from the Vietcong in Vietnam to Che Guevara in Latin America to Marxist insurgents in Nepal. The key points are (1) a version of “think globally, act locally,” but with a strong Leninist chain of command; (2) a hard-headed assessment of the “masses” one wants to mobilize (usually, 10 percent activists, 80 percent average, 10 percent backward); (3) a focus on nurturing that activist 10 percent to get the movement going; and (4) the importance of coordinated propaganda to guide leadership and motivate the rank and file. The philosophical method of this approach to changing society requires “theory-practice-theory,” in which an ideology (Marxism) is tested by actual efforts to do something and then modified on the basis of the practical results of one’s efforts. (Nick Knight provides a helpful chart of this process in Document 13.)

The most famous phrase from this resolution is the populist credo of Maoism: “Correct leadership must come from the masses and go to the masses.” When the CCP followed this heartfelt populist method by taking the time to research local conditions and talk in advance to local people, it was extremely successful. When the increasingly powerful CCP apparatus bypassed the laborious “people’s democratic methods” outlined in the resolution, it made mistakes, culminating in Mao’s colossal errors in the Great Leap Forward (see Documents 8 and 14).

(Passed by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee, June 1, 1943)

1. Two methods must be adopted in accomplishing any task: the first is to combine the general and the particular, and the second is to unite leadership with the masses.

2. If any work or mission lacks a general, universal slogan, the broad masses cannot be moved to action, but if there is nothing more than a general slogan and the leaders do not make a concrete, direct, and thorough application of it with those from a particular unit who have been rallied around the slogan, [if the leaders] fail to break through at some point and gain experience, or fail to use acquired experience in later guiding other units, there is then no way for the leaders to test the correctness of the general slogan and there is no