



Tactica Adversa

(Diary Leaves)

By NICHOLAS ROERICH



HENGHIZ-KHAN frequently resorted to feigned retreat in order to draw the enemy into pursuit, and thus the more easily to smite him in the rear with his reserve forces. Thus is it told. It is likewise said that the tireless conqueror sometimes set fire to the steppe behind his hordes in order thus to speed the movement of his army. Perhaps such tales of the versatile military technique of the great conqueror are true, but in any case they are plausible, because in his great campaigns Chenchiz-Khan undoubtedly made use of the most diverse technique unforeseen by his enemies.

It is also attributed to him, that, wishing to maintain a healthfully austere way of life, he ordered his high officials to tear their expensive silken garments on thorn bushes in order to demonstrate the inapplicability of such clothing. It is said that he simulated indisposition from imported beverages in order to attract people to the local milk products.

In ancient history can be found many examples of the most unexpected counter tactics which produced most conclusive results.

In battle man cannot discriminate precisely when he is exposed to the utmost danger. During the impact itself it was impossible to examine which circumstance was most perilous or most beneficial. What blow saved one from

a still greater blow? A falling horse by its fall protected one from an unexpected overthrow. A casual outcry caused one to turn around and thus avoid a deadly arrow. Therefore right was ancient wisdom which paid attention to the final result, to the effect of all that takes place.

It is impossible to fix the end premeditatedly, but from the end it is possible to see from what was composed much that has preceded. For these observations will-tested attentiveness is needed, but likewise requisite is knowledge of what counter tactics consist of. This latter circumstance, so salutarily effective in many historical events, is not often examined. True, people like to repeat; "No luck, but misfortune helped", — yet in this speech there is assumed as it were an accidentalness of some sort of misfortune; but of course counter tactics do not know bad luck. They know only systematic actions which it is difficult to calculate in close proximity to them.

Each traveller knows how clearly and beautifully is outlined a snow-covered peak at a distance, and how much it loses form during the severe and hazardous approaches to it. Likewise in events it is difficult to make a proper estimate in inordinate proximity to them. But counter tactics say reassuringly, that where there is a pure fiery striving, there also all accompanying manifestations are shown to be systematic. But much refined consciousness must be applied in order to evaluate the unusual actions of counter tactics. True invincibility will always be concomitant with extreme resourcefulness. People cannot recognize the upward leading paths and, for their part, must apply all sensitiveness of resourcefulness and mobility.

Each worker knows the value of mobility. How far must this true mobility be from the petty fidgeting which can only complicate proper movement. When a worker is asked how he walks, he will reply that he does not know precisely how, but whither he knows steadfastly from the hour of setting out. In the same way no sort of "unexpectednesses" of the path confuse the true doer of things. He has already assumed the premise that in everything which happens will be the element of utility.

He likewise knows that certain encountered actions must be brought to the opposite extreme, because only then is their meaning manifested and in the same way panaceas found. Each senseless attack thus acquires greater evidence of absurdity if it is helped to roll along to the limit. Then is unrolled the whole abominable absurdity and even a casual observer will apprehend the degree of hideousness.

So many times an experienced leader, having an opportunity to cut short a stream of absurdity, has held back his followers, saying: "Let it roll on." The wise leader calls up his hidden troops only after necessary measures have been carried out. What sort of a leader would he be if he summoned his secret reserves prematurely? The enemy would not yet be fully disclosed. The hostile forces still would not have attained their utmost intensity, yet his reserve troops would be fully engaged. Therefore counter tactics know, first of all, such practice of economy.

But the inexperienced watcher cries out; "Stop! Why? this is senseless!" But the experienced worker corrects him: "It is not only foolish but also ugly. Wait a minute and you yourself will see this intolerable degree of ugliness and ignorance devour itself."

The history of various peoples does not by accident continually repeat to us about different manifestations of counter tactics. These repetitions allow us to memorize examples of the victorious expedient of the counter blow. You know how people say: "Give a thief rope and he'll hang himself", or "Don't wave, he's coming." Yet the same popular wisdom proposes that the rope must be given, yet the awaiting of the coming also goes on not in carelessness but on the contrary in full attentiveness and tensivity.

So many times the best covenants speak about smiting darkness. This means the overthrow of darkness must come to pass and therefore counter tactics must be only a means of conflict but in no wise a permissible inaction. When people say: "Give a thief rope and he'll

hang himself", in this is foreseen a whole series of actions. The thief must be discovered. The rope must be at hand, there must be enough of it and it must be given. While the thief must carry out an action, for he must hang himself with this rope.

History does not relate how Judas found his rope. It is thought that he found it in some special way, because his unheard-of evil-doing led him to self-destruction. Only observe, and you will see how evil-doing defeats itself. I have already had occasion to write about many observed cases of diverse forms of overthrow of villainy. Actually in this multiformity of automatic retribution is contained the singular refinement of the laws.

Here we speak about justice, yet you know that around this concept cling the counter tactics, and by their often inexpressible reactions they help in the discovery of every step of evil. For a structure a clean place is needed. Each builder is first of all concerned about the ground on which the foundation is to stand. He sees if there are any fissures of dangerous crevices. By all the best measures he avoids corroding moisture, and first of all he fills up any cracks.

After the erection of a structure, no one pictures to himself what deep underground labors have taken place for the solidity of walls and towers! Before beginning his upper structures, the builder directs his attention to all the deep-seated unexpectednesses. If moisture should appear he will not suddenly abandon the sandy ground but will carefully observe what are the ultimate quantities of the moisture and where its source. We know how sometimes even urgent structures have been delayed while unexpected underground conditions were put in order.

"Blessed are the obstacles, by them do we grow." He who said this knew all the dimensions of the obstacles and by his experience could appraise them and apply them beneficially. Construction in goodness is tireless, prudent, attentive. What beauty is contained in this inexhaustible creation!