

**Mao Tse-tung**

**REPORT ON  
AN INVESTIGATION OF  
THE PEASANT MOVEMENT  
IN HUNAN**

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## REPORT ON AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PEASANT MOVEMENT IN HUNAN<sup>□</sup>

*March 1927*

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PEASANT PROBLEM

During my recent visit to Hunan<sup>□</sup> I made a first-hand investigation of conditions in the five counties of Hsiangtan, Hsianghsiang, Hengshan, Liling and Changsha. In the thirty-two days from January 4 to February 5, I called together fact-finding conferences in villages and county towns, which were attended by experienced peasants and by comrades working in the peasant movement, and I listened attentively to their reports and collected a great deal of material. Many of the hows and whys of the peasant movement were the exact opposite of what the gentry in Hankow and Changsha are saying. I saw and heard of many strange things of which I had hitherto been unaware. I believe the same is true of many other places, too. All talk directed against the peasant movement must be speedily set right. All the wrong measures taken by the revolutionary authorities concerning the peasant movement must be speedily changed. Only thus can the future of

the revolution be benefited. For the present upsurge of the peasant movement is a colossal event. In a very short time, in China's central, southern and northern provinces, several hundred million peasants will rise like a mighty storm, like a hurricane, a force so swift and violent that no power, however great, will be able to hold it back. They will smash all the trammels that

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\* This article was written as a reply to the carping criticisms both inside and outside the Party then being levelled at the peasants' revolutionary struggle. Comrade Mao Tse-tung spent thirty-two days in Hunan Province making an investigation and wrote this report in order to answer these criticisms. The Right opportunists in the Party, headed by Chen Tu-hsiu, would not accept his views and stuck to their own wrong ideas. Their chief error was that, frightened by the reactionary trend in the Kuomintang, they dared not support the great revolutionary struggles [*cont. onto p. 24. -- DJR*] of the peasants which had erupted or were erupting. To appease the Kuomintang they preferred to desert the peasantry, the chief ally in the revolution, and thus left the working class and the Communist Party isolated and without help. It was mainly because it was able to exploit this weakness within the Communist Party that the Kuomintang dared to betray the revolution, launch its "party purge" and make war on the people in the summer of 1927.

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bind them and rush forward along the road to liberation. They will sweep all the imperialists, warlords, corrupt officials, local tyrants and evil gentry into their graves. Every revolutionary party and every revolutionary comrade will be put to the test, to be accepted or rejected as they decide. There are three alternatives. To march at their head and lead them? To trail behind them, gesticulating and criticizing? Or to stand in their way and oppose them? Every Chinese is free to choose, but events will force you to make the choice quickly.

## **GET ORGANIZED!**

The development of the peasant movement in Hunan may be divided roughly into two periods with respect to the counties in the province's central and southern parts where the movement has already made much headway. The first, from January to September of last year, was one of organization. In this period, January to June was a time of underground activity, and July to September, when the revolutionary army was driving out Chao Heng-ti,<sup>[2]</sup> one of open activity. During this period, the membership of the peasant associations did not exceed 300,000-400,000, the masses directly under their leadership numbered little more than a million, there was as yet hardly any struggle in the rural areas, and consequently there was very little criticism of the associations in other circles. Since its members served as guides, scouts and carriers of the Northern Expeditionary Army, even some of the officers had a good word to say for the peasant associations. The second period, from last October to January of this year, was one of revolutionary action. The membership of the associations jumped to two million and the masses directly under their leadership increased to ten million. Since the peasants generally enter only one

name for the whole family on joining a peasant association, a membership of two million means a mass following of about ten million. Almost half the peasants in Hunan are now organized. In counties like Hsiangtan, Hsianghsiang, Liuyang, Changsha, Liling,

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Ningsiang, Pingkiang, Hsiangyin, Hengshan, Hengyang, Leiyang, Chenhsien and Anhua, nearly all the peasants have combined in the peasant associations or have come under their leadership. It was on the strength of their extensive organization that the peasants went into action and within four months brought about a great revolution in the countryside, a revolution without parallel in history.

**DOWN WITH THE LOCAL TYRANTS AND EVIL GENTRY!  
ALL POWER TO THE PEASANT ASSOCIATIONS!**

The main targets of attack by the peasants are the local tyrants, the evil gentry and the lawless landlords, but in passing they also hit out against patriarchal ideas and institutions, against the corrupt officials in the cities and against bad practices and customs in the rural areas. In force and momentum the attack is tempestuous; those who bow before it survive and those who resist perish. As a result, the privileges which the feudal landlords enjoyed for thousands of years are being shattered to pieces. Every bit of the dignity and prestige built up by the landlords is being swept into the dust. With the collapse of the power of the landlords, the peasant associations have now become the sole organs of authority and the popular slogan "All power to the peasant associations" has become a reality. Even trifles such as a quarrel between husband and wife are brought to the peasant association. Nothing can be settled unless someone from the peasant association is present. The association actually dictates all rural affairs, and, quite literally, "whatever it says, goes". Those who are outside the associations can only speak well of them and cannot say anything against them. The local tyrants, evil gentry and lawless landlords have been deprived of all right to speak, and none of them dares even mutter dissent. In the face of the peasant associations' power and pressure, the top local tyrants and evil gentry have fled to Shanghai, those of the second rank to Hankow, those of the third to Changsha and those of the fourth to the county towns, while the fifth rank and the still lesser fry surrender to the peasant associations in the villages.

"Here's ten yuan. Please let me join the peasant association," one of the smaller of the evil gentry will say.

"Ugh! Who wants your filthy money?" the peasants reply.

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Many middle and small landlords and rich peasants and even some middle peasants, who were all formerly opposed to the peasant associations, are now vainly seeking admission. Visiting various places, I often came across such people who pleaded with me, "Mr. Committeeman from the provincial capital, please be my sponsor!"

In the Ching Dynasty, the household census compiled by the local authorities consisted of a regular register and "the other" register, the former for honest people and the latter for burglars, bandits and similar undesirables. In some places the peasants now use this method to scare those who formerly opposed the associations. They say, "Put their names down in the other register!"

Afraid of being entered in the other register, such people try various devices to gain admission into the peasant associations, on which their minds are so set that they do not feel safe until their names are entered. But more often than not they are turned down flat, and so they are always on tenterhooks; with the doors of the association barred to them, they are like tramps without a home or, in rural parlance, "mere trash". In short, what was looked down upon four months ago as a "gang of peasants" has now become a most honourable institution. Those who formerly prostrated themselves before the power of the gentry now bow before the power of the peasants. No matter what their identity, all admit that the world since last October is a different one.

### **"IT'S TERRIBLE!" OR "IT'S FINE!"**

The peasants' revolt disturbed the gentry's sweet dreams. When the news from the countryside reached the cities, it caused immediate uproar among the gentry. Soon after my arrival in Changsha, I met all sorts of people and picked up a good deal of gossip. From the middle social strata upwards to the Kuomintang right-wingers, there was not a single person who did not sum up the whole business in the phrase, "It's terrible!" Under the impact of the views of the "It's terrible!" school then flooding the city, even quite revolutionary minded people became down-hearted as they pictured the events in the countryside in their mind's eye; and they were unable to deny the word "terrible". Even quite progressive people said, "Though terrible, it is inevitable in a revolution." In short, nobody could

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altogether deny the word "terrible". But, as already mentioned, the fact is that the great peasant masses have risen to fulfil their historic mission and that the forces of rural democracy have risen to overthrow the forces of rural feudalism. The patriarchal-feudal class of local tyrants, evil gentry and lawless landlords has formed the basis of autocratic government for thousands of years and is the cornerstone of imperialism, warlordism and corrupt officialdom. To over-throw these feudal forces is the real objective of the national revolution. In a few months the peasants have accomplished what Dr. Sun Yat-sen

wanted, but failed, to accomplish in the forty years he devoted to the national revolution. This is a marvellous feat never before achieved, not just in forty, but in thousands of years. It's fine. It is not "terrible" at all. It is anything but "terrible". "It's terrible!" is obviously a theory for combating the rise of the peasants in the interests of the landlords; it is obviously a theory of the landlord class for preserving the old order of feudalism and obstructing the establishment of the new order of democracy, it is obviously a counter-revolutionary theory. No revolutionary comrade should echo this nonsense. If your revolutionary viewpoint is firmly established and if you have been to the villages and looked around, you will undoubtedly feel thrilled as never before. Countless thousands of the enslaved -- the peasants -- are striking down the enemies who battered on their flesh. What the peasants are doing is absolutely right; what they are doing is fine! "It's fine!" is the theory of the peasants and of all other revolutionaries. Every revolutionary comrade should know that the national revolution requires a great change in the countryside. The Revolution of 1911<sup>[3]</sup> did not bring about this change, hence its failure. This change is now taking place, and it is an important factor for the completion of the revolution. Every revolutionary comrade must support it, or he will be taking the stand of counter-revolution.

### **THE QUESTION OF "GOING TOO FAR"**

Then there is another section of people who say, "Yes, peasant associations are necessary, but they are going rather too far." This is the opinion of the middle-of-the-roaders. But what is the actual situation? True, the peasants are in a sense "unruly" in the country-

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side. Supreme in authority, the peasant association allows the landlord no say and sweeps away his prestige. This amounts to striking the landlord down to the dust and keeping him there. The peasants threaten, "We will put you in the other register!" They fine the local tyrants and evil gentry, they demand contributions from them, and they smash their sedan-chairs. People swarm into the houses of local tyrants and evil gentry who are against the peasant association, slaughter their pigs and consume their grain. They even loll for a minute or two on the ivory-inlaid beds belonging to the young ladies in the households of the local tyrants and evil gentry. At the slightest provocation they make arrests, crown the arrested with tall paper hats, and parade them through the villages, saying, "You dirty landlords, now you know who we are!" Doing whatever they like and turning everything upside down, they have created a kind of terror in the countryside. This is what some people call "going too far", or "exceeding the proper limits in righting a wrong", or "really too much". Such talk may seem plausible, but in fact it is wrong. First, the local tyrants, evil gentry and lawless landlords have themselves driven the peasants to this. For ages they have used their power to tyrannize over the peasants and trample them underfoot; that is why the peasants have reacted so strongly. The most

violent revolts and the most serious disorders have invariably occurred in places where the local tyrants, evil gentry and lawless landlords perpetrated the worst outrages. The peasants are clear-sighted. Who is bad and who is not, who is the worst and who is not quite so vicious, who deserves severe punishment and who deserves to be let off lightly -- the peasants keep clear accounts, and very seldom has the punishment exceeded the crime. Secondly, a revolution is not a dinner party, or writing an essay, or painting a picture, or doing embroidery; it cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous.<sup>[4]</sup> A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another. A rural revolution is a revolution by which the peasantry overthrows the power of the feudal landlord class. Without using the greatest force, the peasants cannot possibly overthrow the deep-rooted authority of the landlords which has lasted for thousands of years. The rural areas need a mighty revolutionary upsurge, for it alone can rouse the people in their millions to become a powerful force. All the actions mentioned here which have been labelled as "going too far" flow from the power of the peasants, which has been called forth by the mighty revolutionary

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upsurge in the countryside. It was highly necessary for such things to be done in the second period of the peasant movement, the period of revolutionary action. In this period it was necessary to establish the absolute authority of the peasants. It was necessary to forbid malicious criticism of the peasant associations. It was necessary to overthrow the whole authority of the gentry, to strike them to the ground and keep them there. There is revolutionary significance in all the actions which were labelled as "going too far" in this period. To put it bluntly, it is necessary to create terror for a while in every rural area, or otherwise it would be impossible to suppress the activities of the counter-revolutionaries in the countryside or overthrow the authority of the gentry. Proper limits have to be exceeded in order to right a wrong, or else the wrong cannot be righted.<sup>[5]</sup> Those who talk about the peasants "going too far" seem at first sight to be different from those who say "It's terrible!" as mentioned earlier, but in essence they proceed from the same standpoint and likewise voice a landlord theory that upholds the interests of the privileged classes. Since this theory impedes the rise of the peasant movement and so disrupts the revolution, we must firmly oppose it.

### **THE "MOVEMENT OF THE RIFFRAFF"**

The right-wing of the Kuomintang says, "The peasant movement is a movement of the riffraff, of the lazy peasants." This view is current in Changsha. When I was in the countryside, I heard the gentry say, "It is all right to set up peasant associations, but the people now running them are no good. They ought to be replaced!" This opinion comes to the same thing as what the right-wingers are saying; according to both it is all right to have a peasant movement (the movement is already in being and no one dare say otherwise), but they say that the people running it are no good and they particularly hate

those in charge of the associations at the lower levels, calling them "riffraff". In short, all those whom the gentry had despised, those whom they had trodden into the dirt, people with no place in society, people with no right to speak, have now audaciously lifted up their heads. They have not only lifted up their heads but taken power into their hands. They are now running the township peasant associations (at the lowest level), which they have turned into something fierce and

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formidable. They have raised their rough, work-soiled hands and laid them on the gentry. They tether the evil gentry with ropes, crown them with tall paper-hats and parade them through the villages. (In Hsiangtan and Hsianghsiang they call this "parading through the township" and in Liling "parading through the fields".) Not a day passes but they drum some harsh, pitiless words of denunciation into these gentry's ears. They are issuing orders and are running every thing. Those who used to rank lowest now rank above everybody else; and so this is called "turning things upside down".

## VANGUARDS OF THE REVOLUTION

Where there are two opposite approaches to things and people, two opposite views emerge. "It's terrible!" and "It's fine!", "riffraff" and "vanguards of the revolution" -- here are apt examples.

We said above that the peasants have accomplished a revolutionary task which had been left unaccomplished for many years and have done an important job for the national revolution. But has this great revolutionary task, this important revolutionary work, been performed by all the peasants? No. There are three kinds of peasants, the rich, the middle and the poor peasants. The three live in different circumstances and so have different views about the revolution. In the first period, what appealed to the rich peasants was the talk about the Northern Expeditionary Army's sustaining a crushing defeat in Kiangsi, about Chiang Kai-shek's being wounded in the leg<sup>[6]</sup> and flying back to Kwangtung,<sup>[7]</sup> and about Wu Pei-fu's<sup>[8]</sup> recapturing Yuehchow. The peasant associations would certainly not last and the Three People's Principles<sup>[9]</sup> could never prevail, because they had never been heard of before. Thus an official of the township peasant association (generally one of the "riffraff" type) would walk into the house of a rich peasant, register in hand, and say, "Will you please join the peasant association?" How would the rich peasant answer? A tolerably well-behaved one would say, "Peasant association? I have lived here for decades, tilling my land. I never heard of such a thing before, yet I've managed to live all right. I advise you to give it up!" A really vicious rich peasant would say, "Peasant association! Nonsense! Association for getting your head chopped off! Don't get people into trouble!" Yet, surprisingly enough, the peasant associations have now

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been established several months, and have even dared to stand up to the gentry. The gentry of the neighbourhood who refused to surrender their opium pipes were arrested by the associations and paraded through the villages. In the county towns, moreover, some big landlords were put to death, like Yen Jung-chiu of Hsiangtan and Yang Chih-tse of Ninghsiang. On the anniversary of the October Revolution, at the time of the anti-British rally and of the great celebrations of the victory of the Northern Expedition, tens of thousands of peasants in every township, holding high their banners, big and small, along with their carrying-poles and hoes, demonstrated in massive, streaming columns. It was only then that the rich peasants began to get perplexed and alarmed. During the great victory celebrations of the Northern Expedition, they learned that Kiukiang had been taken, that Chiang Kai-shek had not been wounded in the leg and that Wu Pei-fu had been defeated after all. What is more, they saw such slogans as "Long live the Three People's Principles!" "Long live the peasant associations!" and "Long live the peasants!" clearly written on the "red and green proclamations". "What?" wondered the rich peasants, greatly perplexed and alarmed, "'Long live the peasants!' Are these people now to be regarded as emperors<sup>[10]</sup>?" So the peasant associations are putting on grand airs. People from the associations say to the rich peasants, "We'll enter you in the other register," or, "In another month, the admission fee will be ten yuan a head!" Only under the impact of all this are the rich peasants tardily joining the associations,<sup>[11]</sup> some paying fifty cents or a yuan for admission (the regular fee being a mere ten coppers), some securing admission only after asking other people to put in a good word for them. But there are quite a number of die-hards who have not joined to this day. When the rich peasants join the associations, they generally enter the name of some sixty or seventy year-old member of the family, for they are in constant dread of "conscription". After joining, the rich peasants are not keen on doing any work for the associations. They remain inactive throughout.

How about the middle peasants? Theirs is a vacillating attitude. They think that the revolution will not bring them much good. They have rice cooking in their pots and no creditors knocking on their doors at midnight. They, too, judging a thing by whether it ever existed before, knit their brows and think to themselves, "Can the peasant association really last?" "Can the Three People's Principles prevail?" Their conclusion is, "Afraid not!" They imagine it all de-

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pend on the will of Heaven and think, "A peasant association? Who knows if Heaven wills it or not?" In the first period, people from the association would call on a middle peasant, register in hand, and say, "Will you please join the peasant association?" The middle peasant would reply, "There's no hurry!" It was not until the second period, when the peasant associations were already exercising great power, that the middle peasants came in. They show up better in the associations than the rich peasants but are not as yet very enthusiastic; they still want to wait and see. It is essential for the peasant associations to get the middle peasants to join and to do a good deal more explanatory work among them.

The poor peasants have always been the main force in the bitter fight in the countryside. They have fought militantly through the two periods of underground work and of open activity. They are the most responsive to Communist Party leadership. They are deadly enemies of the camp of the local tyrants and evil gentry and attack it without the slightest hesitation. "We joined the peasant association long ago," they say to the rich peasants, "why are you still hesitating?" The rich peasants answer mockingly, "What is there to keep you from joining? You people have neither a tile over your heads nor a speck of land under your feet!" It is true the poor peasants are not afraid of losing anything. Many of them really have "neither a tile over their heads nor a speck of land under their feet". What, indeed, is there to keep them from joining the associations? According to the survey of Changsha County, the poor peasants comprise 70 per cent, the middle peasants 20 per cent, and the landlords and the rich peasants 10 per cent of the population in the rural areas. The 70 per cent, the poor peasants, may be sub-divided into two categories, the utterly destitute and the less destitute. The utterly destitute,<sup>[12]</sup> comprising 20 per cent, are the completely dispossessed, that is, people who have neither land nor money, are without any means of livelihood, and are forced to leave home and become mercenaries or hired labourers or wandering beggars. The less destitute,<sup>[13]</sup> the other 50 per cent, are the partially dispossessed, that is, people with just a little land or a little money who eat up more than they earn and live in toil and distress the year round, such as the handicraftsmen, the tenant-peasants (not including the rich tenant-peasants) and the semi-owner-peasants. This great mass of poor peasants, or altogether 70 per cent of the rural population, are the backbone of the peasant associations, the vanguard in the overthrow of the feudal forces and the heroes who have performed

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the great revolutionary task which for long years was left undone. Without the poor peasant class (the "riffraff", as the gentry call them), it would have been impossible to bring about the present revolutionary situation in the countryside, or to overthrow the local tyrants and evil gentry and complete the democratic revolution. The poor peasants, being the most revolutionary group, have gained the leadership of the peasant associations. In both the first and second periods almost all the chairmen and committee members in the peasant associations at the lowest level were poor peasants (of the officials in the township associations in Hengshan County the utterly destitute comprise 50 per cent, the less destitute 40 per cent, and poverty-stricken intellectuals 10 per cent). Leadership by the poor peasants is absolutely necessary. Without the poor peasants there would be no revolution. To deny their role is to deny the revolution. To attack them is to attack the revolution. They have never been wrong on the general direction of the revolution. They have discredited the local tyrants and evil gentry. They have beaten down the local tyrants and evil gentry, big and small, and kept them underfoot. Many of their deeds in the period of revolutionary action, which were labelled as "going too far", were in fact the very things the revolution required. Some county governments, county headquarters of the Kuomintang and county peasant associations in Hunan have already made a number of mistakes; some have even sent soldiers to arrest officials of the lower level associations at the landlords' request. A good many chairmen and committee members of township associations in Hengshan and Hsianghsiang Counties have been thrown in jail. This mistake is very serious and feeds the arrogance of the reactionaries.

To judge whether or not it is a mistake, you have only to see how joyful the lawless landlords become and how reactionary sentiments grow, wherever the chairmen or committee members of local peasant associations are arrested. We must combat the counter-revolutionary talk of a "movement of riffraff" and a "movement of lazy peasants" and must be especially careful not to commit the error of helping the local tyrants and evil gentry in their attacks on the poor peasant class. Though a few of the poor peasant leaders undoubtedly did have shortcomings, most of them have changed by now. They themselves are energetically prohibiting gambling and suppressing banditry. Where the peasant association is powerful, gambling has stopped altogether and banditry has vanished. In some places it is literally true that people do not take any articles left by the wayside and that

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doors are not bolted at night. According to the Hengshan survey, 85 per cent of the poor peasant leaders have made great progress and have proved themselves capable and hard-working. Only 15 per cent retain some bad habits. The most one can call these is "an unhealthy minority", and we must not echo the local tyrants and evil gentry in indiscriminately condemning them as "riffraff". This problem of the "unhealthy minority" can be tackled only under the peasant associations' own slogan of "strengthen discipline", by carrying on propaganda among the masses, by educating the "unhealthy minority", and by tightening the associations' discipline; in no circumstances should soldiers be arbitrarily sent to make such arrests as would damage the prestige of the poor peasants and feed the arrogance of the local tyrants and evil gentry. This point requires particular attention.

## **FOURTEEN GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS**

Most critics of the peasant associations allege that they have done a great many bad things. I have already pointed out that the peasants' attack on the local tyrants and evil gentry is entirely revolutionary behaviour and in no way blameworthy. The peasants have done a great many things, and in order to answer people's criticism we must closely examine all their activities, one by one, to see what they have actually done. I have classified and summed up their activities of the last few months; in all, the peasants under the leadership of the peasant associations have the following fourteen great achievements to their credit.

### **1. ORGANIZING THE PEASANTS INTO PEASANT ASSOCIATIONS**

This is the first great achievement of the peasants. In counties like Hsiangtan, Hsianghsiang and Hengshan, nearly all the peasants are organized and there is hardly a remote corner where they are not on the move, these are the best places. In some

counties, like Yiyang and Huajung, the bulk of the peasants are organized, with only a small section remaining unorganized; these places are in the second grade. In other counties, like Chengpu and Lingling, while a small section is organized, the bulk of the peasants remain unorganized; these places are in the third grade. Western Hunan, which is under

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the control of Yuan Tsu-ming,<sup>[14]</sup> has not yet been reached by the associations' propaganda, and in many of its counties the peasants are completely unorganized; these form a fourth grade. Roughly speaking, the counties in central Hunan, with Changsha as the centre, are the most advanced, those in southern Hunan come second, and western Hunan is only just beginning to organize. According to the figures compiled by the provincial peasant association last November, organizations with a total membership of 1,367,727 have been set up in thirty-seven of the province's seventy-five counties. Of these members about one million were organized during October and November when the power of the associations rose high, while up to September the membership had only been 300,000-400,000. Then came the two months of December and January, and the peasant movement continued its brisk growth. By the end of January the membership must have reached at least two million. As a family generally enters only one name when joining and has an average of five members, the mass following must be about ten million. This astonishing and accelerating rate of expansion explains why the local tyrants, evil gentry and corrupt officials have been isolated, why the public has been amazed at how completely the world has changed since the peasant movement, and why a great revolution has been wrought in the countryside. This is the first great achievement of the peasants under the leadership of their associations.

## 2. HITTING THE LANDLORDS POLITICALLY

Once the peasants have their organization, the first thing they do is to smash the political prestige and power of the landlord class, and especially of the local tyrants and evil gentry, that is, to pull down landlord authority and build up peasant authority in rural society. This is a most serious and vital struggle. It is the pivotal struggle in the second period, the period of revolutionary action. Without victory in this struggle, no victory is possible in the economic struggle to reduce rent and interest, to secure land and other means of production, and so on. In many places in Hunan like Hsianghsiang, Hengshan and Hsiangtan Counties, this is of course no problem since the authority of the landlords has been overturned and the peasants constitute the sole authority. But in counties like Liling there are still some places (such as Liling's western and southern districts) where the authority of the landlords seems weaker than that of the

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peasants but, because the political struggle has not been sharp, is in fact surreptitiously competing with it. In such places it is still too early to say that the peasants have gained

political victory; they must wage the political struggle more vigorously until the landlords' authority is completely smashed. All in all, the methods used by the peasants to hit the landlords politically are as follows:

*Checking the accounts.* More often than not the local tyrants and evil gentry have helped themselves to public money passing through their hands, and their books are not in order. Now the peasants are using the checking of accounts as an occasion to bring down a great many of the local tyrants and evil gentry. In many places committees for checking accounts have been established for the express purpose of settling financial scores with them, and the first sign of such a committee makes them shudder. Campaigns of this kind have been carried out in all the counties where the peasant movement is active; they are important not so much for recovering money as for publicizing the crimes of the local tyrants and evil gentry and for knocking them down from their political and social positions.

*Imposing fines.* The peasants work out fines for such offences as irregularities revealed by the checking of accounts, past outrages against the peasants, current activities which undermine the peasant associations, violations of the ban on gambling and refusal to surrender opium pipes. This local tyrant must pay so much, that member of the evil gentry so much, the sums ranging from tens to thousands of yuan. Naturally, a man who has been fined by the peasants completely loses face.

*Levying contributions.* The unscrupulous rich landlords are made to contribute for poor relief, for the organization of co-operatives or peasant credit societies, or for other purposes. Though milder than fines, these contributions are also a form of punishment. To avoid trouble, quite a number of landlords make voluntary contributions to the peasant associations.

*Minor protests.* When someone harms a peasant association by word or deed and the offence is a minor one, the peasants collect in a crowd and swarm into the offender's house to remonstrate with him. He is usually let off after writing a pledge to "cease and desist", in which he explicitly undertakes to stop defaming the peasant association in the future.

*Major demonstrations.* A big crowd is rallied to demonstrate against a local tyrant or one of the evil gentry who is an enemy of

the association. The demonstrators eat at the offender's house, slaughtering his pigs and consuming his grain as a matter of course. Quite a few such cases have occurred. There was a case recently at Machiaho, Hsiangtan County, where a crowd of fifteen thousand peasants went to the houses of six of the evil gentry and demonstrated; the whole affair lasted four days during which more than 130 pigs were killed and eaten. After such demonstrations, the peasants usually impose fines.

*"Crowning" the landlords and parading them through the villages.* This sort of thing is very common. A tall paper-hat is stuck on the head of one of the local tyrants or evil gentry, bearing the words "Local tyrant so-and-so" or "So-and-so of the evil gentry". He is led by a rope and escorted with big crowds in front and behind. Sometimes brass gongs are beaten and flags waved to attract people's attention. This form of punishment more than any other makes the local tyrants and evil gentry tremble. Anyone who has once been crowned with a tall paper-hat loses face altogether and can never again hold up his head. Hence many of the rich prefer being fined to wearing the tall hat. But wear it they must, if the peasants insist. One ingenious township peasant association arrested an obnoxious member of the gentry and announced that he was to be crowned that very day. The man turned blue with fear. Then the association decided not to crown him that day. They argued that if he were crowned right away, he would become case-hardened and no longer afraid, and that it would be better to let him go home and crown him some other day. Not knowing when he would be crowned, the man was in daily suspense, unable to sit down or sleep at ease.

*Locking up the landlords in the county jail.* This is a heavier punishment than wearing the tall paper-hat. A local tyrant or one of the evil gentry is arrested and sent to the county jail; he is locked up and the county magistrate has to try him and punish him. Today the people who are locked up are no longer the same. Formerly it was the gentry who sent peasants to be locked up, now it is the other way round.

*"Banishment".* The peasants have no desire to banish the most notorious criminals among the local tyrants and evil gentry, but would rather arrest or execute them. Afraid of being arrested or executed, they run away. In counties where the peasant movement is well developed, almost all the important local tyrants and evil gentry have fled, and this amounts to banishment. Among them, the top

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ones have fled to Shanghai, those of the second rank to Hankow, those of the third to Changsha, and of the fourth to the county towns. Of all the fugitive local tyrants and evil gentry, those who have fled to Shanghai are the safest. Some of those who fled to Hankow, like the three from Huajung, were eventually captured and brought back. Those who fled to Changsha are in still greater danger of being seized at any moment by students in the provincial capital who hail from their counties; I myself saw two captured in Changsha. Those who have taken refuge in the county towns are only of the fourth rank, and the peasantry, having many eyes and ears, can easily track them down. The financial authorities once explained the difficulties encountered by the Hunan Provincial Government in raising money by the fact that the peasants were banishing the well-to-do, which gives some idea of the extent to which the local tyrants and evil gentry are not tolerated in their home villages.

*Execution.* This is confined to the worst local tyrants and evil gentry and is carried out by the peasants jointly with other sections of the people. For instance, Yang Chih-tse of Ninghsiang, Chou Chia-kan of Yuehyang and Fu Tao-nan and Sun Po-chu of Huajung were shot by the government authorities at the insistence of the peasants and other

sections of the people. In the case of Yen Jung-chiu of Hsiangtan, the peasants and other sections of the people compelled the magistrate to agree to hand him over, and the peasants themselves executed him. Liu Chao of Ninghsiang was killed by the peasants. The execution of Peng Chih-fan of Liling and Chou Tien-chueh and Tsao Yun of Yiyang is pending, subject to the decision of the "special tribunal for trying local tyrants and evil gentry". The execution of one such big landlord reverberates through a whole county and is very effective in eradicating the remaining evils of feudalism. Every county has these major tyrants, some as many as several dozen and others at least a few, and the only effective way of suppressing the reactionaries is to execute at least a few in each county who are guilty of the most heinous crimes. When the local tyrants and evil gentry were at the height of their power, they literally slaughtered peasants without batting an eyelid. Ho Mai chuan, for ten years head of the defence corps in the town of Hsin kang, Changsha County, was personally responsible for killing almost a thousand poverty-stricken peasants, which he euphemistically described as "executing bandits". In my native county of Hsiangtan, Tang Chun-yen and Lo Shu-lin who headed the defence corps in the

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town of Yintien have killed more than fifty people and buried four alive in the fourteen years since 1913. Of the more than fifty they murdered, the first two were perfectly innocent beggars. Tang Chun yen said, "Let me make a start by killing a couple of beggars!" and so these two lives were snuffed out. Such was the cruelty of the local tyrants and evil gentry in former days, such was the White terror they created in the countryside, and now that the peasants have risen and shot a few and created just a little terror in suppressing the counter-revolutionaries, is there any reason for saying they should not do so?

### 3. HITTING THE LANDLORDS ECONOMICALLY

*Prohibition on sending grain out of the area, forcing up grain prices, and hoarding and cornering.* This is one of the great events of recent months in the economic struggle of the Hunan peasants. Since last October the poor peasants have prevented the outflow of the grain of the landlords and rich peasants and have banned the forcing up of grain prices and hoarding and cornering. As a result, the poor peasants have fully achieved their objective; the ban on the outflow of grain is watertight, grain prices have fallen considerably, and hoarding and cornering have disappeared.

*Prohibition on increasing rents and deposits;*<sup>[15]</sup> *agitation for reduced rents and deposits.* Last July and August, when the peasant associations were still weak, the landlords, following their long established practice of maximum exploitation, served notice one after another on their tenants that rents and deposits would be increased. But by October, when the peasant associations had grown considerably in strength and had all come out against the raising of rents and deposits, the landlords dared not breathe another word on the subject. From November onwards, as the peasants have gained ascendancy over the landlords they have taken the further step of agitating for reduced rents and

deposits. What a pity, they say, that the peasant associations were not strong enough when rents were being paid last autumn, or we could have reduced them then. The peasants are doing extensive propaganda for rent reduction in the coming autumn, and the landlords are asking how the reductions are to be carried out. As for the reduction of deposits, this is already under way in Hengshan and other counties.

*Prohibition on cancelling tenancies.* In July and August of last year there were still many instances of landlords cancelling tenancies

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and re-letting the land. But after October nobody dared cancel a tenancy. Today, the cancelling of tenancies and the re-letting of land are quite out of the question; all that remains as something of a problem is whether a tenancy can be cancelled if the landlord wants to cultivate the land himself. In some places even this is not allowed by the peasants. In others the cancelling of a tenancy may be permitted if the landlord wants to cultivate the land himself, but then the problem of unemployment among the tenant-peasants arises. There is as yet no uniform way of solving this problem.

*Reduction of interest.* Interest has been generally reduced in Anhua, and there have been reductions in other counties, too. But wherever the peasant associations are powerful, rural money-lending has virtually disappeared, the landlords having completely "stopped lending" for fear that the money will be "communized". What is currently called reduction of interest is confined to old loans. Not only is the interest on such old loans reduced, but the creditor is actually forbidden to press for the repayment of the principal. The poor peasant replies, "Don't blame me. The year is nearly over. I'll pay you back next year."

#### 4. OVERTHROWING THE FEUDAL RULE OF THE LOCAL TYRANTS AND EVIL GENTRY -- SMASHING THE *TU* AND *TUAN*<sup>[16]</sup>

The old organs of political power in the *tu* and *tuan* (*i.e.*, the district and the township), and especially at the *tu* level, just below the county level, used to be almost exclusively in the hands of the local tyrants and evil gentry. The *tu* had jurisdiction over a population of from ten to fifty or sixty thousand people, and had its own armed forces such as the township defence corps, its own fiscal powers such as the power to levy taxes per *mou*<sup>[17]</sup> of land, and its own judicial powers such as the power to arrest, imprison, try and punish the peasants at will. The evil gentry who ran these organs were virtual monarchs of the countryside. Comparatively speaking, the peasants were not so much concerned with the president of the Republic, the provincial military governor <sup>[18]</sup> or the county magistrate; their real "bosses" were these rural monarchs. A mere snort from these people, and the peasants knew they had to watch their step. As a consequence of the present revolt in the countryside the authority of the landlord class has generally been struck down, and the organs of rural ad-

ministration dominated by the local tyrants and evil gentry have naturally collapsed in its wake. The heads of the *tu* and the *tuan* all steer clear of the people, dare not show their faces and push all local matters on to the peasant associations. They put people off with the remark, "It is none of my business!"

Whenever their conversation turns to the heads of the *tu* and the *tuan*, the peasants say angrily, "That bunch! They are finished!"

Yes, the term "finished" truly describes the state of the old organs of rural administration wherever the storm of revolution has raged.

## 5. OVERTHROWING THE ARMED FORCES OF THE LANDLORDS AND ESTABLISHING THOSE OF THE PEASANTS

The armed forces of the landlord class were smaller in central Hunan than in the western and southern parts of the province. An average of 600 rifles for each county would make a total of 45,000 rifles for all the seventy-five counties; there may, in fact, be more. In the southern and central parts where the peasant movement is well developed, the landlord class cannot hold its own because of the tremendous momentum with which the peasants have risen, and its armed forces have largely capitulated to the peasant associations and taken the side of the peasants; examples of this are to be found in such counties as Ninghsiang, Pingkiang, Liuyang, Changsha, Liling, Hsiangtan, Hsianghsiang, Anhua, Hengshan and Hengyang. In some counties such as Paoching, a small number of the landlords' armed forces are taking a neutral stand, though with a tendency to capitulate. Another small section are opposing the peasant associations, but the peasants are attacking them and may wipe them out before long, as, for example, in such counties as Yichang, Linwu and Chiaho. The armed forces thus taken over from the reactionary landlords are all being reorganized into a "standing household militia"<sup>[19]</sup> and placed under the new organs of rural self-government, which are organs of the political power of the peasantry. Taking over these old armed forces is one way in which the peasants are building up their own armed forces. A new way is through the setting up of spear corps under the peasant associations. The spears have pointed, double edged blades mounted on long shafts, and there are now 100,000 of these weapons in the county of Hsianghsiang alone. Other counties like Hsiangtan, Hengshan, Liling and Changsha have 70,000-80,000, or 50,000-60,000, or 30,000-40,000 each. Every county where there

is a peasant movement has a rapidly growing spear corps. These peasants thus armed form an "irregular household militia". This multitude equipped with spears, which is larger than the old armed forces mentioned above, is a new-born armed power the mere sight of which makes the local tyrants and evil gentry tremble. The revolutionary authorities in Hunan should see to it that it is built up on a really extensive scale among

the more than twenty million peasants in the seventy-five counties of the province, that every peasant, whether young or in his prime, possesses a spear, and that no restrictions are imposed as though a spear were something dreadful. Anyone who is scared at the sight of the spear corps is indeed a weakling! Only the local tyrants and evil gentry are frightened of them, but no revolutionaries should take fright.

## 6. OVERTHROWING THE POLITICAL POWER OF THE COUNTY MAGISTRATE AND HIS BAILIFFS

That county government cannot be clean until the peasants rise up was proved some time ago in Haifeng, Kwangtung Province. Now we have added proof, particularly in Hunan. In a county where power is in the hands of the local tyrants and evil gentry, the magistrate, whoever he may be, is almost invariably a corrupt official. In a county where the peasants have risen there is clean government, whoever the magistrate. In the counties I visited, the magistrates had to consult the peasant associations on everything in advance. In counties where the peasant power was very strong, the word of the peasant association worked miracles. If it demanded the arrest of a local tyrant in the morning, the magistrate dared not delay till noon; if it demanded arrest by noon, he dared not delay till the afternoon. When the power of the peasants was just beginning to make itself felt in the countryside, the magistrate worked in league with the local tyrants and evil gentry against the peasants. When the peasants' power grew till it matched that of the landlords, the magistrate took the position of trying to accommodate both the landlords and the peasants, accepting some of the peasant association's suggestions while rejecting others. The remark that the word of the peasant association "works miracles" applies only when the power of the landlords has been completely beaten down by that of the peasants. At present the political situation in such counties as Hsianghsiang, Hsiangtan, Liling and Hengshan is as follows:

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(1) *All decisions are made by a joint council consisting of the magistrate and the representatives of the revolutionary mass organizations.* The council is convened by the magistrate and meets in his office. In some counties it is called the "joint council of public bodies and the local government", and in others the "council of county affairs". Besides the magistrate himself, the people attending are the representatives of the county peasant association, trade union council, merchant association, women's association, school staff association, student association and Kuomintang headquarters.<sup>[20]</sup> At such council meetings the magistrate is influenced by the views of the public organizations and invariably does their bidding. The adoption of a democratic committee system of county government should not, therefore, present much of a problem in Hunan. The present county governments are already quite democratic both in form and substance. This situation has been brought about only in the last two or three months, that is, since the peasants have risen all over the countryside and overthrown the power of the local tyrants and evil gentry. It has now come about that the magistrates, seeing their old props

collapse and needing other props to retain their posts, have begun to curry favour with the public organizations.

(2) *The judicial assistant has scarcely any cases to handle.* The judicial system in Hunan remains one in which the county magistrate is concurrently in charge of judicial affairs, with an assistant to help him in handling cases. To get rich, the magistrate and his underlings used to rely entirely on collecting taxes and levies, procuring men and provisions for the armed forces, and extorting money in civil and criminal lawsuits by confounding right and wrong, the last being the most regular and reliable source of income. In the last few months, with the downfall of the local tyrants and evil gentry, all the legal pettifoggers have disappeared. What is more, the peasants' problems, big and small, are now all settled in the peasant associations at the various levels. Thus the county judicial assistant simply has nothing to do. The one in Hsianghsiang told me, "When there were no peasant associations, an average of sixty civil or criminal suits were brought to the county government each day; now it receives an average of only four or five a day." So it is that the purses of the magistrates and their underlings perforce remain empty.

(3) *The armed guards, the police and the bailiffs all keep out of the way and dare not go near the villages to practise their extortions.* In the past the villagers were afraid of the townspeople, but now the

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townspeople are afraid of the villagers. In particular the vicious curs kept by the county government -- the police, the armed guards and the bailiffs -- are afraid of going to the villages, or if they do so, they no longer dare to practise their extortions. They tremble at the sight of the peasants' spears.

## 7. OVERTHROWING THE CLAN AUTHORITY OF THE ANCESTRAL TEMPLES AND CLAN ELDERS, THE RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY OF TOWN AND VILLAGE GODS, AND THE MASCULINE AUTHORITY OF HUSBANDS

A man in China is usually subjected to the domination of three systems of authority: (1) the state system (political authority), ranging from the national, provincial and county government down to that of the township; (2) the clan system (clan authority), ranging from the central ancestral temple and its branch temples down to the head of the household; and (3) the supernatural system (religious authority), ranging from the King of Hell down to the town and village gods belonging to the nether world, and from the Emperor of Heaven down to all the various gods and spirits belonging to the celestial world. As for women, in addition to being dominated by these three systems of authority, they are also dominated by the men (the authority of the husband). These four authorities -- political, clan, religious and masculine -- are the embodiment of the whole feudal-patriarchal system and ideology, and are the four thick ropes binding the Chinese people,

particularly the peasants. How the peasants have overthrown the political authority of the landlords in the countryside has been described above. The political authority of the landlords is the backbone of all the other systems of authority. With that overturned, the clan authority, the religious authority and the authority of the husband all begin to totter. Where the peasant association is powerful, the clan elders and administrators of temple funds no longer dare oppress those lower in the clan hierarchy or embezzle clan funds. The worst clan elders and administrators, being local tyrants, have been thrown out. No one any longer dares to practise the cruel corporal and capital punishments that used to be inflicted in the ancestral temples, such as flogging, drowning and burying alive. The old rule barring women and poor people from the banquets in the ancestral temples has also been broken. The women of Paikuo in Hengshan County gathered in force and swarmed into

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their ancestral temple, firmly planted their backsides in the seats and joined in the eating and drinking, while the venerable clan bigwigs had willy-nilly to let them do as they pleased. At another place, where poor peasants had been excluded from temple banquets, a group of them flocked in and ate and drank their fill, while the local tyrants and evil gentry and other long-gowned gentlemen all took to their heels in fright. Everywhere religious authority totters as the peasant movement develops. In many places the peasant associations have taken over the temples of the gods as their offices. Everywhere they advocate the appropriation of temple property in order to start peasant schools and to defray the expenses of the associations, calling it "public revenue from superstition". In Liling County, prohibiting superstitious practices and smashing idols have become quite the vogue. In its northern districts the peasants have prohibited the incense-burning processions to propitiate the god of pestilence. There were many idols in the Taoist temple at Fupoling in Lukou, but when extra room was needed for the district headquarters of the Kuomintang, they were all piled up in a corner, big and small together, and no peasant raised any objection. Since then, sacrifices to the gods, the performance of religious rites and the offering of sacred lamps have rarely been practised when a death occurs in a family. Because the initiative in this matter was taken by the chairman of the peasant association, Sun Hsiao-shan, he is hated by the local Taoist priests. In the Lungfeng Nunnery in the North Third District, the peasants and primary school teachers chopped up the wooden idols and actually used the wood to cook meat. More than thirty idols in the Tungfu Monastery in the Southern District were burned by the students and peasants together, and only two small images of Lord Pao<sup>[21]</sup> were snatched up by an old peasant who said, "Don't commit a sin!" In places where the power of the peasants is predominant, only the older peasants and the women still believe in the gods, the younger peasants no longer doing so. Since the latter control the associations, the overthrow of religious authority and the eradication of superstition are going on everywhere. As to the authority of the husband, this has always been weaker among the poor peasants because, out of economic necessity, their womenfolk have to do more manual labour than the women of the richer classes and therefore have more say and greater power of decision in family matters. With the increasing bankruptcy of the rural economy in recent years, the basis for men's domination over women has already been weak-

ened. With the rise of the peasant movement, the women in many places have now begun to organize rural women's associations; the opportunity has come for them to lift up their heads, and the authority of the husband is getting shakier every day. In a word, the whole feudal-patriarchal system and ideology is tottering with the growth of the peasants' power. At the present time, however, the peasants are concentrating on destroying the landlords' political authority. Wherever it has been wholly destroyed, they are beginning to press their attack in the three other spheres of the clan, the gods and male domination. But such attacks have only just begun, and there can be no thorough overthrow of all three until the peasants have won complete victory in the economic struggle. Therefore, our present task is to lead the peasants to put their greatest efforts into the political struggle, so that the landlords' authority is entirely overthrown. The economic struggle should follow immediately, so that the land problem and the other economic problems of the poor peasants may be fundamentally solved. As for the clan system, superstition, and in equality between men and women, their abolition will follow as a natural consequence of victory in the political and economic struggles. If too much of an effort is made, arbitrarily and prematurely, to abolish these things, the local tyrants and evil gentry will seize the pretext to put about such counter-revolutionary propaganda as "the peasant association has no piety towards ancestors", "the peasant association is blasphemous and is destroying religion" and "the peasant association stands for the communization of wives", all for the purpose of undermining the peasant movement. A case in point is the recent events at Hsianghsiang in Hunan and Yanghsin in Hupeh, where the landlords exploited the opposition of some peasants to smashing idols. It is the peasants who made the idols, and when the time comes they will cast the idols aside with their own hands; there is no need for anyone else to do it for them prematurely. The Communist Party's propaganda policy in such matters should be, "Draw the bow without shooting, just indicate the motions."<sup>[22]</sup> It is for the peasants themselves to cast aside the idols, pull down the temples to the martyred virgins and the arches to the chaste and faithful widows; it is wrong for anybody else to do it for them.

While I was in the countryside, I did some propaganda against superstition among the peasants. I said:

"If you believe in the Eight Characters,<sup>[23]</sup> you hope for good luck; if you believe in geomancy,<sup>[24]</sup> you hope to benefit from the location

of your ancestral graves. This year within the space of a few months the local tyrants, evil gentry and corrupt officials have all toppled from their pedestals. Is it possible that until a few months ago they all had good luck and enjoyed the benefit of well-sited ancestral graves, while suddenly in the last few months their luck has turned and their ancestral graves have ceased to exert a beneficial influence? The local tyrants and evil gentry jeer at your peasant association and say, 'How odd! Today, the world is a world of committeemen. Look, you can't even go to pass water without bumping into a committee man!' Quite true, the towns and the villages, the trade unions and the peasant

associations, the Kuomintang and the Communist Party, all without exception have their executive committee members -- it is indeed a world of committeemen. But is this due to the Eight Characters and the location of the ancestral graves? How strange! The Eight Characters of all the poor wretches in the countryside have suddenly turned auspicious! And their ancestral graves have suddenly started exerting beneficial influences! The gods? Worship them by all means. But if you had only Lord Kuan<sup>[25]</sup> and the Goddess of Mercy and no peasant association, could you have overthrown the local tyrants and evil gentry? The gods and goddesses are indeed miserable objects. You have worshipped them for centuries, and they have not overthrown a single one of the local tyrants or evil gentry for you! Now you want to have your rent reduced. Let me ask, how will you go about it? Will you believe in the gods or in the peasant association?"

My words made the peasants roar with laughter.

## 8. SPREADING POLITICAL PROPAGANDA

Even if ten thousand schools of law and political science had been opened, could they have brought as much political education to the people, men and women, young and old, all the way into the remotest corners of the countryside, as the peasant associations have done in so short a time? I don't think they could. "Down with imperialism!" "Down with the warlords!" "Down with the corrupt officials!" "Down with the local tyrants and evil gentry!" -- these political slogans have grown wings, they have found their way to the young, the middle-aged and the old, to the women and children in countless villages, they have penetrated into their minds and are on their lips. For instance, watch a group of children at play. If one gets angry with another, if he glares,

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stamps his foot and shakes his fist, you will then immediately hear from the other the shrill cry of "Down with imperialism!"

In the Hsiangtan area, when the children who pasture the cattle get into a fight, one will act as Tang Sheng-chih, and the other as Yeh Kai-hsin;<sup>[26]</sup> when one is defeated and runs away, with the other chasing him, it is the pursuer who is Tang Sheng-chih and the pursued Yeh Kai-hsin. As to the song "Down with the Imperialist Powers!" of course almost every child in the towns can sing it, and now many village children can sing it too.

Some of the peasants can also recite Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Testament. They pick out the terms "freedom", "equality", "the Three People's Principles" and "unequal treaties" and apply them, if rather crudely, in their daily life. When somebody who looks like one of the gentry encounters a peasant and stands on his dignity, refusing to make way along a pathway, the peasant will say angrily, "Hey, you local tyrant, don't you know the Three People's Principles?" Formerly when the peasants from the vegetable farms on the outskirts of Changsha entered the city to sell their produce, they used to be pushed around

by the police. Now they have found a weapon, which is none other than the Three People's Principles. When a policeman strikes or swears at a peasant selling vegetables, the peasant immediately answers back by invoking the Three People's Principles and that shuts the policeman up. Once in Hsiangtan when a district peasant association and a township peasant association could not see eye to eye, the chairman of the township association declared, "Down with the district peasant association's unequal treaties!"

The spread of political propaganda throughout the rural areas is entirely an achievement of the Communist Party and the peasant associations. Simple slogans, cartoons and speeches have produced such a widespread and speedy effect among the peasants that every one of them seems to have been through a political school. According to the reports of comrades engaged in rural work, political propaganda was very extensive at the time of the three great mass rallies, the anti-British demonstration, the celebration of the October Revolution and the victory celebration for the Northern Expedition. On these occasions, political propaganda was conducted extensively wherever there were peasant associations, arousing the whole countryside with tremendous effect. From now on care should be taken to use every opportunity gradually to enrich the content and clarify the meaning of those simple slogans.

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## 9. PEASANT BANS AND PROHIBITIONS

When the peasant associations, under Communist Party leadership, establish their authority in the countryside, the peasants begin to prohibit or restrict the things they dislike. Gaming, gambling and opium-smoking are the three things that are most strictly forbidden.

*Gaming.* Where the peasant association is powerful, mahjong, dommoes and card games are completely banned.

The peasant association in the 14th District of Hsianghsiung burned two basketfuls of mahjong sets.

If you go to the countryside, you will find none of these games played; anyone who violates the ban is promptly and strictly punished.

*Gambling.* Former hardened gamblers are now themselves suppressing gambling; this abuse, too, has been swept away in places where the peasant association is powerful.

*Opium-smoking.* The prohibition is extremely strict. When the peasant association orders the surrender of opium pipes, no one dares to raise the least objection. In Liling County one of the evil gentry who did not surrender his pipes was arrested and paraded through the villages.

The peasants' campaign to "disarm the opium-smokers" is no less impressive than the disarming of the troops of Wu Pei-fu and Sun Chuan-fang<sup>[27]</sup> by the Northern Expeditionary Army. Quite a number of venerable fathers of officers in the revolutionary army, old men who were opium-addicts and inseparable from their pipes, have been disarmed by the "emperors" (as the peasants are called derisively by the evil gentry). The "emperors" have banned not only the growing and smoking of opium, but also trafficking in it. A great deal of the opium transported from Kweichow to Kiangsi via the counties of Paoching, Hsianghsiang, Yuhsien and Liling has been intercepted on the way and burned. This has affected government revenues. As a result, out of consideration for the army's need for funds in the Northern Expedition, the provincial peasant association ordered the associations at the lower levels "temporarily to postpone the ban on opium traffic". This, however, has upset and displeased the peasants.

There are many other things besides these three which the peasants have prohibited or restricted, the following being some examples:

*The flower drum.* Vulgar performances are forbidden in many places.

*Sedan-chairs.* In many counties, especially Hsianghsiang, there have been cases of smashing sedan-chairs. The peasants, detesting

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the people who use this conveyance, are always ready to smash the chairs, but the peasant associations forbid them to do so. Association officials tell the peasants, "If you smash the chairs, you only save the rich money and lose the carriers their jobs. Will that not hurt our own people?" Seeing the point, the peasants have worked out a new tactic -- considerably to increase the fares charged by the chair carriers so as to penalize the rich.

*Distilling and sugar-making.* The use of grain for distilling spirits and making sugar is everywhere prohibited, and the distillers and sugar-refiners are constantly complaining. Distilling is not banned in Futienpu, Hengshan County, but prices are fixed very low, and the wine and spirits dealers, seeing no prospect of profit, have had to stop it.

*Pigs.* The number of pigs a family can keep is limited, for pigs consume grain.

*Chickens and ducks.* In Hsianghsiang County the raising of chickens and ducks is prohibited, but the women object. In Hengshan County, each family in Yangtang is allowed to keep only three, and in Futienpu five. In many places the raising of ducks is completely banned, for ducks not only consume grain but also ruin the rice plants and so are worse than chickens.

*Feasts.* Sumptuous feasts are generally forbidden. In Shaoshan, Hsiangtan County, it has been decided that guests are to be served with only three kinds of animal food, namely, chicken, fish and pork. It is also forbidden to serve bamboo shoots, kelp and lentil noodles. In Hengshan County it has been resolved that eight dishes and no more may be served at a banquet<sup>[28]</sup>. Only five dishes are allowed in the East Third District in

Liling County, and only three meat and three vegetable dishes in the North Second District, while in the West Third District New Year feasts are forbidden entirely. In Hsianghsiang County, there is a ban on all "egg-cake feasts", which are by no means sumptuous. When a family in the Second District of Hsianghsiang gave an "egg-cake feast" at a son's wedding, the peasants, seeing the ban violated, swarmed into the house and broke up the celebration. In the town of Chiamo, Hsianghsiang County, the people have refrained from eating expensive foods and use only fruit when offering ancestral sacrifices.

*Oxen.* Oxen are a treasured possession of the peasants. "Slaughter an ox in this life and you will be an ox in the next" has become almost a religious tenet; oxen must never be killed. Before the peasants had power, they could only appeal to religious taboo in opposing the

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slaughter of cattle and had no means of banning it. Since the rise of the peasant associations their jurisdiction has extended even to the cattle, and they have prohibited the slaughter of cattle in the towns. Of the six butcheries in the county town of Hsiangtan, five are now closed and the remaining one slaughters only enfeebled or disabled animals. The slaughter of cattle is totally prohibited throughout the county of Hengshan. A peasant whose ox broke a leg consulted the peasant association before he dared kill it. When the Chamber of Commerce of Chuchow rashly slaughtered a cow, the peasants came into town and demanded an explanation, and the chamber, besides paying a fine, had to let off firecrackers by way of apology.

*Tramps and vagabonds.* A resolution passed in Liling County prohibited the drumming of New Year greetings or the chanting of praises to the local deities or the singing of lotus rhymes. Various other counties have similar prohibitions, or these practices have disappeared of themselves, as no one observes them any more. The "beggar-bullies" or "vagabonds" who used to be extremely aggressive now have no alternative but to submit to the peasant associations. In Shaoshan, Hsiangtan County, the vagabonds used to make the temple of the Rain God their regular haunt and feared nobody, but since the rise of the associations they have stolen away. The peasant association in Huti Township in the same county caught three such tramps and made them carry clay for the brick kilns. Resolutions have been passed prohibiting the wasteful customs associated with New Year calls and gifts.

Besides these, many other minor prohibitions have been introduced in various places, such as the Liling prohibitions on incense-burning processions to propitiate the god of pestilence, on buying preserves and fruit for ritual presents, burning ritual paper garments during the Festival of Spirits and pasting up good-luck posters at the New Year. At Kushui in Hsianghsiang County, there is a prohibition even on smoking water-pipes. In the Second District, letting off fire crackers and ceremonial guns is forbidden, with a fine of 1.20 yuan for the former and 2.40 yuan for the latter. Religious rites for the dead are prohibited in the 7th and 20th Districts. In the 18th District, it is forbidden to make

funeral gifts of money. Things like these, which defy enumeration, may be generally called peasant bans and prohibitions.

They are of great significance in two respects. First, they represent a revolt against bad social customs, such as gaming, gambling and

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opium-smoking. These customs arose out of the rotten political environment of the landlord class and are swept away once its authority is overthrown. Second, the prohibitions are a form of self-defence against exploitation by city merchants; such are the prohibitions on feasts and on buying preserves and fruit for ritual presents. Manufactured goods are extremely dear and agricultural products are extremely cheap, the peasants are impoverished and ruthlessly exploited by the merchants, and they must therefore encourage frugality to protect themselves. As for the ban on sending grain out of the area, it is imposed to prevent the price from rising because the poor peasants have not enough to feed themselves and have to buy grain on the market. The reason for all this is the peasants' poverty and the contradictions between town and country; it is not a matter of their rejecting manufactured goods or trade between town and country in order to uphold the so-called Doctrine of Oriental Culture.<sup>[29]</sup> To protect themselves economically, the peasants must organize consumers' co-operatives for the collective buying of goods. It is also necessary for the government to help the peasant associations establish credit (loan) co-operatives. If these things were done, the peasants would naturally find it unnecessary to ban the outflow of grain as a method of keeping down the price, nor would they have to prohibit the inflow of certain manufactured goods in economic self-defence.

## 10. ELIMINATING BANDITRY

In my opinion, no ruler in any dynasty from Yu, Tang, Wen and Wu down to the Ching emperors and the presidents of the Republic has ever shown as much prowess in eliminating banditry as have the peasant associations today. Wherever the peasant associations are powerful, there is not a trace of banditry. Surprisingly enough, in many places even the pilfering of vegetables has disappeared. In other places there are still some pilferers. But in the counties I visited, even including those that were formerly bandit-ridden, there was no trace of bandits. The reasons are: First, the members of the peasant associations are everywhere spread out over the hills and dales, spear or cudgel in hand, ready to go into action in their hundreds, so that the bandits have nowhere to hide. Second, since the rise of the peasant movement the price of grain has dropped -- it was six yuan a picul last spring but only two yuan last winter -- and the problem of food has become less serious for the people. Third, members of the secret

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societies<sup>[30]</sup> have joined the peasant associations, in which they can openly and legally play the hero and vent their grievances, so that there is no further need for the secret "mountain", "lodge", "shrine" and "river" forms of organization.<sup>[31]</sup> In killing the pigs and sheep of the local tyrants and evil gentry and imposing heavy levies and fines, they have adequate outlets for their feelings against those who oppressed them. Fourth, the armies are recruiting large numbers of soldiers and many of the "unruly" have joined up. Thus the evil of banditry has ended with the rise of the peasant movement. On this point, even the well-to-do approve of the peasant associations. Their comment is, "The peasant associations? Well, to be fair, there is also something to be said for them."

In prohibiting gaming, gambling and opium-smoking, and in eliminating banditry, the peasant associations have won general approval.

## 11. ABOLISHING EXORBITANT LEVIES

As the country is not yet unified and the authority of the imperialists and the warlords has not been overthrown, there is as yet no way of removing the heavy burden of government taxes and levies on the peasants or, more explicitly, of removing the burden of expenditure for the revolutionary army. However, the exorbitant levies imposed on the peasants when the local tyrants and evil gentry dominated rural administration, *e.g.*, the surcharge on each *mou* of land, have been abolished or at least reduced with the rise of the peasant movement and the downfall of the local tyrants and evil gentry. This too should be counted among the achievements of the peasant associations.

## 12. THE MOVEMENT FOR EDUCATION

In China education has always been the exclusive preserve of the landlords, and the peasants have had no access to it. But the landlords' culture is created by the peasants, for its sole source is the peasants' sweat and blood. In China 90 per cent of the people have had no education, and of these the overwhelming majority are peasants. The moment the power of the landlords was overthrown in the rural areas, the peasants' movement for education began. See how the peasants who hitherto detested the schools are today zeal-

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ously setting up evening classes! They always disliked the "foreign-style school". In my student days, when I went back to the village and saw that the peasants were against the "foreign-style school", I, too, used to identify myself with the general run of "foreign-style students and teachers" and stand up for it, feeling that the peasants were somehow wrong. It was not until 1925, when I lived in the countryside for six months and was already a Communist and had acquired the Marxist viewpoint, that I realized I had been wrong and the peasants right. The texts used in the rural primary schools were entirely about urban things and unsuited to rural needs. Besides, the attitude of the primary school

teachers towards the peasants was very bad and, far from being helpful to the peasants, they became objects of dislike. Hence the peasants preferred the old-style schools ("Chinese classes", as they called them) to the modern schools (which they called "foreign classes") and the old-style teachers to the ones in the primary schools. Now the peasants are enthusiastically establishing evening classes, which they call peasant schools. Some have already been opened, others are being organized, and on the average there is one school per township. The peasants are very enthusiastic about these schools, and regard them, and only them, as their own. The funds for the evening schools come from the "public revenue from superstition", from ancestral temple funds, and from other idle public funds or property. The county education boards wanted to use this money to establish primary schools, that is, "foreign-style schools" not suited to the needs of the peasants, while the latter wanted to use it for peasant schools, and the outcome of the dispute was that both got some of the money, though there are places where the peasants got it all. The development of the peasant movement has resulted in a rapid rise in their cultural level. Before long tens of thousands of schools will have sprung up in the villages throughout the province; this is quite different from the empty talk about "universal education", which the intelligentsia and the so-called "educationalists" have been bandying back and forth and which after all this time remains an empty phrase.

### 13. THE CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT

The peasants really need co-operatives, and especially consumers', marketing and credit co-operatives. When they buy goods, the merchants exploit them; when they sell their farm produce, the merchants

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cheat them; when they borrow money or rice, they are fleeced by the usurers; and they are eager to find a solution to these three problems. During the fighting in the Yangtse valley last winter, when trade routes were cut and the price of salt went up in Hunan, many peasants organized co-operatives to purchase salt. When the landlords de liberately stopped lending, there were many attempts by the peasants to organize credit agencies, because they needed to borrow money. A maior problem is the absence of detailed, standard rules of organiza tion. As these spontaneously organized peasant co-operatives often fail to conform to co-operative principles, the comrades working among the peasants are always eagerly enquiring about "rules and regulations". Given proper guidance, the co-operative move ment can spread everywhere along with the growth of the peasant associations.

### 14. BUILDING ROADS AND REPAIRING EMBANKMENTS

This, too, is one of the achievements of the peasant associations. Before there were peasant associations the roads in the countryside were terrible. Roads cannot be repaired

without money, and as the wealthy were unwilling to dip into their purses, the roads were left in a bad state. If there was any road work done at all, it was done as an act of charity; a little money was collected from families "wishing to gain merit in the next world", and a few narrow, skimpily paved roads were built. With the rise of the peasant associations orders have been given specifying the required width -- three, five, seven or ten feet, according to the requirements of the different routes -- and each landlord along a road has been ordered to build a section. Once the order is given, who dares to disobey? In a short time many good roads have appeared. This is no work of charity but the result of compulsion, and a little compulsion of this kind is not at all a bad thing. The same is true of the embankments. The ruthless landlords were always out to take what they could from the tenant-peasants and would never spend even a few coppers on embankment repairs; they would leave the ponds to dry up and the tenant-peasants to starve, caring about nothing but the rent. Now that there are peasant associations, the landlords can be bluntly ordered to repair the embankments. When a landlord refuses, the association will tell him politely, "Very well! If you won't do the repairs, you will contribute grain, a *tou* for each work-day." As this is a bad bargain for the land-

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lord, he hastens to do the repairs. Consequently many defective embankments have been turned into good ones.

All the fourteen deeds enumerated above have been accomplished by the peasants under the leadership of the peasant associations. Would the reader please think it over and say whether any of them is bad in its fundamental spirit and revolutionary significance? Only the local tyrants and evil gentry, I think, will call them bad. Curiously enough, it is reported from Nanchang<sup>[32]</sup> that Chiang Kai-shek, Chang Ching-chiang<sup>[33]</sup> and other such gentlemen do not altogether approve of the activities of the Hunan peasants. This opinion is shared by Liu Yueh-chih <sup>[34]</sup> and other right-wing leaders in Hunan, all of whom say, "They have simply gone Red." But where would the national revolution be without this bit of Red? To talk about "arousing the masses of the people" day in and day out and then to be scared to death when the masses do rise -- what difference is there between this and Lord Sheh's love of dragons?<sup>[35]</sup>

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<a href="#">From Marx to Mao</a>	<a href="#">Mao Collection</a>	<a href="#">Reading Guide</a>	Notes on the Text Below
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## NOTES

[1] Hunan Province was then the centre of the peasant movement in China.

[2] Chao Heng-ti, the ruler of Hunan at the time, was the agent of the Northern warlords. He was overthrown by the Northern Expeditionary Army in 1926.

[3] The Revolution of 1911 overthrew the autocratic regime of the Ching Dynasty. On October 10 of that year, a section of the Ching Dynasty's New Army staged an uprising in Wuchang, Hupeh Province, at the urging of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois revolutionary societies. It was followed by uprisings in other provinces, and very soon the rule of the Ching Dynasty crumbled. On January 1, 1912, the Provisional Government of the Republic of China was set up in Nanking, and Sun Yat-sen was elected Provisional President. The revolution achieved victory through the alliance of the bourgeoisie with the peasants, workers and urban petty bourgeoisie. But state power fell into the hands of the Northern warlord Yuan Shih-kai, and the revolution failed, because the group which led it was conciliationist in nature, failed to give real benefits to the peasants and yielded to imperialist and feudal pressure.

[4] These were the virtues of Confucius, as described by one of his disciples.

[5] The old Chinese phrase, "exceeding the proper limits in righting a wrong", was often quoted for the purpose of restricting people's activities; reforms that remained within the framework of the established order were to be permitted, but activities aiming at the complete destruction of the old order were to be forbidden. Actions within this framework were regarded as "proper", but those that aimed at completely destroying the old order were described as "exceeding the proper limits". It is a convenient doctrine for reformists and opportunists in the revolutionary ranks. Comrade Mao Tse-tung refuted this kind of reformist doctrine.

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His remark in the text that "Proper limits have to be exceeded in order to right a wrong, or else the wrong cannot be righted" meant that the mass revolutionary method, and not the revisionist-reformist method, had to be taken to end the old feudal order.

[6] Chiang Kai-shek had not yet been fully exposed as a counter-revolutionary in the winter of 1926 and the spring of 1927 when the Northern Expeditionary Army was marching into the Yangtse valley, and the peasant masses still thought that he was for the revolution. The landlords and rich peasants disliked him and spread the rumour that the Northern Expeditionary Army had suffered defeats and that he had been wounded in the leg. Chiang Kai-shek came to be fully revealed as a counter-revolutionary on April 12, 1927, when he staged his counter-revolutionary coup d'etat in Shanghai and elsewhere, massacring the workers, suppressing the peasants and attacking the Communist Party. The landlords and rich peasants then changed their attitude and began to support him.

[7] Kwangtung was the first revolutionary base in the period of the First Revolutionary Civil War (1924-27).

[8] Wu Pei-fu was one of the best-known of the Northern warlords. Together with Tsao Kun, who was notorious for his rigging of the presidential election in 1923 by bribing members of parliament, he belonged to the Chihli (Hopei) clique. He supported Tsao as the leader and the two were generally referred to as "Tsao-Wu". In 1920 after defeating Tuan Chi-jui, warlord of the Anhwei clique, Wu Pei-fu gained control of the Northern warlord government in Peking as an agent of the Anglo-American imperialists; it was he who gave the orders for the massacre, on February 7, 1923, of the workers on strike along the Peking-Hankow Railway. In 1924 he was defeated in the war with Chang Tso-lin (commonly known as the "war

between the Chihli and Fengtien cliques"), and he was thereupon ousted from the Peking regime. In 1926 he joined forces with Chang Tso-lin at the instigation of the Japanese and British imperialists, and thus returned to power. When the Northern Expeditionary Army drove northward from Kwangtung in 1926, he was the first foe to be overthrown.

<sup>[9]</sup> The Three People's Principles were Sun Yat-sen's principles and programme for the bourgeois-democratic revolution in China on the questions of nationalism, democracy and people's livelihood. In 1924, in the Manifesto of the First National Congress of the Kuomintang, Sun Yat-sen restated the Three People's Principles, interpreting nationalism as opposition to imperialism and expressing active support for the movements of the workers and peasants. The old Three People's Principles thus developed into the new, consisting of the Three Great Policies, that is, alliance with Russia, co-operation with the Communist Party, and assistance to the peasants and workers. The new Three People's Principles provided the political basis for co-operation between the Communist Party of China and the Kuomintang during the First Revolutionary Civil War period.

<sup>[10]</sup> The Chinese term for "long live" is *wannsui*, literally "ten thousand years", and was the traditional salute to the emperor; it had become a synonym for "emperor".

<sup>[11]</sup> Rich peasants should not have been allowed to join the peasant associations, a point which the peasant masses did not yet understand in 1927.

<sup>[12]</sup> Here the "utterly destitute" means the farm labourers (the rural proletariat) and the rural *lumpen*-proletariat.

<sup>[13]</sup> The "less destitute" means the rural semi-proletariat.

<sup>[14]</sup> Yuan Tsu-ming was a warlord of Kweichow Province who controlled the western part of Hunan.

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<sup>[15]</sup> A tenant generally gave his landlord, as a condition of tenancy, a deposit in cash or kind, often amounting to a considerable part of the value of the land. Though this was supposed to be a guarantee for payment of rent, it actually represented a form of extra exploitation.

<sup>[16]</sup> In Hunan, the *tu* corresponded to the district and the *tuan* to the township. The old administrations of the *tu* and the *tuan* type were instruments of landlord rule.

<sup>[17]</sup> The tax per *mou* was a surcharge on top of the regular land tax, ruthlessly imposed on the peasants by the landlord regime.

<sup>[18]</sup> Under the regime of the Northern warlords, the military head of a province was called "military governor". But he was the virtual dictator of the province, with administrative as well as military power gathered in his hands. In league with the imperialists, he maintained a separatist feudal-militarist regime in his locality.

<sup>[19]</sup> The "standing household militia" was one of the various kinds of armed forces in the countryside. The term "household" is used because some member of almost every household had to join it. After the defeat of the revolution in 1927, the landlords in many places seized control of the militia and turned them into armed counter-revolutionary bands.

<sup>[20]</sup> At the time, many of the county headquarters of the Kuomintang, under the leadership of the Kuomintang's Central Executive Committee in Wuhan, pursued Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Three Great Policies of alliance with Russia, co-operation with the Communist Party and assistance to the peasants and workers.

They constituted the revolutionary alliance of the Communists, the left-wingers of the Kuomintang, and other revolutionaries.

<sup>[21]</sup> Lord Pao (Pao Cheng) was prefect of Kaifeng, capital of the Northern Sung Dynasty (A.D. 960-1127). He was famous in popular legend as an upright official and a fearless, impartial judge with a knack of passing true verdicts in all the cases he tried.

<sup>[22]</sup> This reference to archery is taken from *Mencius*. It describes how the expert teacher of archery draws his bow with a histrionic gesture but does not release the arrow. The point is that while Communists should guide the peasants in attaining a full measure of political consciousness, they should leave it to the peasants' own initiative to abolish superstitious and other bad practices, and should not give them orders or do it for them.

<sup>[23]</sup> The Eight Characters were a method of fortune-telling in China based on the examination of the two cyclic characters each for the year, month, day and hour of a person's birth respectively.

<sup>[24]</sup> Geomancy refers to the superstition that the location of one's ancestors' grave influences one's fortune. The geomancers claim to be able to tell whether a particular site and its surroundings are auspicious.

<sup>[25]</sup> Lord Kuan (Kuan Yu, A.D. 160-219), a warrior in the epoch of the Three Kingdoms, was widely worshipped by the Chinese as the God of Loyalty and War.

<sup>[26]</sup> Tang Sheng-chih was a general who sided with the revolution in the Northern expedition. Yeh Kai-hsin was a general on the side of the Northern warlords who fought against the revolution.

<sup>[27]</sup> Sun Chuan-fang was a warlord whose rule extended over the five provinces of Kiangsu, Chekiang, Pukien, Kiangi and Anhwei. He was responsible for the bloody suppression of the insurrections of the Shanghai workers. His main army

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was aushed in the winter of 1926 by the Northern Expeditionary Army in Nanchang and Kiukiang, Kiangsi Province.

<sup>[28]</sup> In China a dish is served in a bowl or a plate for the whole table, and not individually.

<sup>[29]</sup> "Oriental Culture" was a reactionary doctrine which rejected modern scientific civilization and favoured the preservation of the backward mode of agricultural production and the feudal culture of the Orient.

<sup>[30]</sup> For the secret societies, see "[Analysis of the Classes in Chinese Society](#)", [Note 18](#), p. 21 of this volume.

<sup>[31]</sup> "Mountain", "lodge", "shrine" and "river" were names used by primitive secret societies to denote some of their sects.

<sup>[32]</sup> When Nanchang was captured by the Northern Expeditionary Army in November 1926, Chiang Kai-shek seized the opportunity to establish his general headquarters there. He gathered around himself the right-wing members of the Kuomintang and a number of Northern warlord politicians and, in collusion with the imperialists, hatched his counter-revolutionary plot against Wuhan, the then revolutionary centre. Eventually, on April 12, 1927, he staged his counter-revolutionary coup d'etat which was marked by tremendous massacres in Shanghai.

<sup>[33]</sup> Chang Ching-chiang, a right-wing Kuomintang leader, was a member of Chiang Kai-shek's brain trust.

<sup>[34]</sup> Liu Yueh-chih was head of the "Left Society", an important anti-Communist group in Hunan.

<sup>[35]</sup> As told by Liu Hsiang (77-6 B.C.) in his Hsin Hsu, Lord Sheh was so fond of dragons that he adorned his whole palace with drawings and carvings of them. But when a real dragon heard of his infatuation and paid him a visit, he was frightened out of his wits. Here Comrade Mao Tse-tung uses this metaphor to show that though Chiang Kai-shek and his like talked about revolution, they were afraid of revolution and against it.

# Mao Tse-tung

# ON CONTRADICTION

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## C O N T E N T S

### ON CONTRADICTION

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- VII. Conclusion

### NOTES

- page 311 **ON CONTRADICTION**<sup>[\*]</sup> August 1937
- 
- The law of contradiction in things, that is, the law of the unity of opposites, is the basic law of materialist dialectics. Lenin said, "Dialectics in the proper sense is the study of contradiction *in the*

very essence of objects."<sup>[1]</sup> Lenin often called this law the essence of dialectics; he also called it the kernel of dialectics.<sup>[2]</sup> In studying this law, therefore, we cannot but touch upon a variety of questions, upon a number of philosophical problems. If we can become clear on all these problems, we shall arrive at a fundamental understanding of materialist dialectics. The problems are: the two world outlooks, the universality of contradiction, the particularity of contradiction, the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction, the identity and struggle of the aspects of a contradiction, and the place of antagonism in contradiction. The criticism to which the idealism of the Deborin school has been subjected in Soviet philosophical circles in recent years has aroused great interest among us. Deborin's idealism has exerted a very bad influence in the Chinese Communist Party, and it cannot be said that the dogmatist thinking in our Party is unrelated to the approach of that school. Our present study of philosophy should therefore have the eradication of dogmatist thinking as its main objective.

## I. THE TWO WORLD OUTLOOKS

- 
- Throughout the history of human knowledge, there have been two conceptions concerning the law of development of the universe, the
  - \* This essay on philosophy was written by Comrade Mao Tse-tung after his essay "[On Practice](#)" and with the same object of overcoming the serious error of dogmatist thinking to be found in the Party at the time. Originally delivered as lectures at the Anti-Japanese Military and Political College in Yen-an, it was revised by the author on its inclusion in his *Selected Works*. page 312
 metaphysical conception and the dialectical conception, which form two opposing world outlooks. Lenin said:
  - The two basic (or two possible? or two historically observable?) conceptions of development (evolution) are: development as decrease and increase, as repetition, *and* development as a unity of opposites (the division of a unity into mutually exclusive opposites and their reciprocal relation).<sup>[3]</sup>

- Here Lenin was referring to these two different world outlooks. In China another name for metaphysics is *hsuan-hsueh*. For a long period in history whether in China or in Europe, this way of thinking, which is part and parcel of the idealist world outlook, occupied a dominant position in human thought. In Europe, the materialism of the bourgeoisie in its early days was also metaphysical. As the social economy of many European countries advanced to the stage of highly developed capitalism, as the forces of production, the class struggle and the sciences developed to a level unprecedented in history, and as the industrial proletariat became the greatest motive force in historical development, there arose the Marxist world outlook of materialist dialectics. Then, in addition to open and barefaced reactionary idealism, vulgar evolutionism emerged among the bourgeoisie to oppose materialist dialectics. The metaphysical or vulgar evolutionist world outlook sees things as isolated, static and one-sided. It regards all things in the universe, their forms and their species, as eternally isolated from one another and immutable. Such change as there is can only be an increase or decrease in quantity or a change of place. Moreover, the cause of such an increase or decrease or change of place is not inside things but outside them, that is, the motive force is external. Metaphysicians hold that all the different kinds of things in the universe and all their characteristics have been the same ever since they first came into being. All subsequent changes have simply been increases or decreases in quantity. They contend that a thing can only keep on repeating itself as the same kind of thing and cannot change into anything different. In their opinion, capitalist exploitation, capitalist competition, the individualist ideology of capitalist society, and so on, can all be found in ancient slave society, or even in primitive society, and will exist for ever unchanged. They ascribe the causes of social development to factors aternal to society, such as geography and climate. They search in an over-simplified way outside a thing for the causes of its page 313 development, and they deny the theory of

materialist dialectics which holds that development arises from the contradictions inside a thing. Consequently they can explain neither the qualitative diversity of things, nor the phenomenon of one quality changing into another. In Europe, this mode of thinking existed as mechanical materialism in the 17th and 18th centuries and as vulgar evolutionism at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. In China, there was the metaphysical thinking exemplified in the saying "Heaven changeth not, likewise the Tao changeth not",<sup>[4]</sup> and it was supported by the decadent feudal ruling classes for a long time. Mechanical materialism and vulgar evolutionism, which were imported from Europe in the last hundred years, are supported by the bourgeoisie. As opposed to the metaphysical world outlook, the world outlook of materialist dialectics holds that in order to understand the development of a thing we should study it internally and in its relations with other things; in other words, the development of things should be seen as their internal and necessary self-movement, while each thing in its movement is interrelated with and interacts on the things around it. The fundamental cause of the development of a thing is not external but internal; it lies in the contradictoriness within the thing. There is internal contradiction in every single thing, hence its motion and development. Contradictoriness within a thing is the fundamental cause of its development, while its interrelations and interactions with other things are secondary causes. Thus materialist dialectics effectively combats the theory of external causes, or of an external motive force, advanced by metaphysical mechanical materialism and vulgar evolutionism. It is evident that purely external causes can only give rise to mechanical motion, that is, to changes in scale or quantity, but cannot explain why things differ qualitatively in thousands of ways and why one thing changes into another. As a matter of fact, even mechanical motion under external force occurs through the internal contradictoriness of things. Simple growth in plants and animals, their quantitative development, is likewise chiefly the result of their internal

contradictions. Similarly, social development is due chiefly not to external but to internal causes. Countries with almost the same geographical and climatic conditions display great diversity and unevenness in their development. Moreover, great social changes may take place in one and the same country although its geography and climate remain unchanged. Imperialist Russia changed into the socialist Soviet Union, and feudal Japan, which had locked its doors against page 314 the world, changed into imperialist Japan, although no change occurred in the geography and climate of either country. Long dominated by feudalism, China has undergone great changes in the last hundred years and is now changing in the direction of a new China, liberated and free, and yet no change has occurred in her geography and climate. Changes do take place in the geography and climate of the earth as a whole and in every part of it, but they are insignificant when compared with changes in society; geographical and climatic changes manifest themselves in terms of tens of thousands of years, while social changes manifest themselves in thousands, hundreds or tens of years, and even in a few years or months in times of revolution. According to materialist dialectics, changes in nature are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in nature. Changes in society are due chiefly to the development of the internal contradictions in society, that is, the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the contradiction between classes and the contradiction between the old and the new; it is the development of these contradictions that pushes society forward and gives the impetus for the supersession of the old society by the new. Does materialist dialectics exclude external causes? Not at all. It holds that external causes are the condition of change and internal causes are the basis of change, and that external causes become operative through internal causes. In a suitable temperature an egg changes into a chicken, but no temperature can change a stone into a chicken, because each has a different basis. There is constant interaction between the peoples of

different countries. In the era of capitalism, and especially in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, the interaction and mutual impact of different countries in the political, economic and cultural spheres are extremely great. The October Socialist Revolution ushered in a new epoch in world history as well as in Russian history. It exerted influence on internal changes in the other countries in the world and, similarly and in a particularly profound way, on internal changes in China. These changes, however, were effected through the inner laws of development of these countries, China included. In battle, one army is victorious and the other is defeated; both the victory and the defeat are determined by internal causes. The one is victorious either because it is strong or because of its competent generalship, the other is vanquished either because it is weak or because of its incompetent generalship; it is through internal causes that external causes become operative. In China in 1927, the defeat of the page  
315 proletariat by the big bourgeoisie came about through the opportunism then to be found within the Chinese proletariat itself (inside the Chinese Communist Party). When we liquidated this opportunism, the Chinese revolution resumed its advance. Later, the Chinese revolution again suffered severe setbacks at the hands of the enemy, because adventurism had risen within our Party. When we liquidated this adventurism, our cause advanced once again. Thus it can be seen that to lead the revolution to victory, a political party must depend on the correctness of its own political line and the solidity of its own organization. The dialectical world outlook emerged in ancient times both in China and in Europe. Ancient dialectics, however, had a somewhat spontaneous and naive character; in the social and historical conditions then prevailing, it was not yet able to form a theoretical system, hence it could not fully explain the world and was supplanted by metaphysics. The famous German philosopher Hegel, who lived in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, made most important contributions to dialectics, but his dialectics was idealist. It was not

until Marx and Engels, the great protagonists of the proletarian movement, had synthesized the positive achievements in the history of human knowledge and, in particular, critically absorbed the rational elements of Hegelian dialectics and created the great theory of dialectical and historical materialism that an unprecedented revolution occurred in the history of human knowledge. This theory was further developed by Lenin and Stalin. As soon as it spread to China, it wrought tremendous changes in the world of Chinese thought. This dialectical world outlook teaches us primarily how to observe and analyse the movement of opposites in different things and, on the basis of such analysis, to indicate the methods for resolving contradictions. It is therefore most important for us to understand the law of contradiction in things in a concrete way.

## **II. THE UNIVERSALITY OF CONTRADICTION**

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- For convenience of exposition, I shall deal first with the universality of contradiction and then proceed to the particularity of contradiction. The reason is that the universality of contradiction can be explained more briefly, for it has been widely recognized ever since page 316 the materialist-dialectical world outlook was discovered and materialist dialectics applied with outstanding success to analysing many aspects of human history and natural history and to changing many aspects of society and nature (as in the Soviet Union) by the great creators and continuers of Marxism -- Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin; whereas the particularity of contradiction is still not clearly understood by many comrades, and especially by the dogmatists. They do not understand that it is precisely in the particularity of contradiction that the universality of contradiction resides. Nor do they understand how important is the study of the particularity of contradiction in the concrete things confronting us for guiding the course of revolutionary practice. Therefore, it is necessary to stress the study of the particularity of contradiction and to explain it at adequate length. For this reason,

in our analysis of the law of contradiction in things, we shall first analyse the universality of contradiction, then place special stress on analysing the particularity of contradiction, and finally return to the universality of contradiction. The universality or absoluteness of contradiction has a twofold meaning. One is that contradiction exists in the process of development of all things, and the other is that in the process of development of each thing a movement of opposites exists from beginning to end. Engels said, "Motion itself is a contradiction."<sup>[5]</sup> Lenin defined the law of the unit of opposites as "the recognition (discovery) of the contradictory, mutually exclusive, opposite tendencies in all phenomena and processes of nature (including mind and society)".<sup>[6]</sup> Are these ideas correct? Yes, they are. The interdependence of the contradictory aspects present in all things and the struggle between these aspects determine the life of all things and push their development forward. There is nothing that does not contain contradiction; without contradiction nothing would exist. Contradiction is the basis of the simple forms of motion (for instance, mechanical motion) and still more so of the complex forms of motion. Engels explained the universality of contradiction as follows:

- If simple mechanical change of place contains a contradiction, this is even more true of the higher forms of motion of matter, and especially of organic life and its development. . . . life consists precisely and primarily in this -- that a being is at each moment itself and yet something else. Life is therefore also a contradiction
- page 317
- which is present in things and processes themselves, and which constantly originates and resolves itself; and as soon as the contradiction ceases, life, too, comes to an end, and death steps in. We likewise saw that also in the sphere of thought we could not escape contradictions, and that for example the contradiction between man's inherently unlimited capacity for knowledge and its

actual presence only in men who are externally limited and possess limited cognition finds its solution in what is -- at least practically, for us -- an endless succession of generations, in infinite progress. . . one of the basic principles of higher mathematics is the contradiction that in certain circumstances straight lines and curves may be the same. . . . But even lower mathematics teems with contradictions.[7]

- Lenin illustrated the universality of contradiction as follows:
  - In mathematics: + and - . Differential and integral.
  - In mechanics: action and reaction.
  - In physics: positive and negative electricity.
  - In chemistry: the combination and dissociation of atoms.
  - In social science: the class struggle.[8]
- In war, offence and defence, advance and retreat, victory and defeat are all mutually contradictory phenomena. One cannot exist without the other. The two aspects are at once in conflict and in interdependence, and this constitutes the totality of a war, pushes its development forward and solves its problems. Every difference in men's concepts should be regarded as reflecting an objective contradiction. Objective contradictions are reflected in subjective thinking, and this process constitutes the contradictory movement of concepts, pushes forward the development of thought, and ceaselessly solves problems in man's thinking.

Opposition and struggle between ideas of different kinds constantly occur within the Party; this is a reflection within the Party of contradictions between classes and between the new and the old in society. If there were no contradictions in the Party and no ideological struggles to resolve them, the Party's life would come to an end. Thus it is already clear that contradiction exists universally and in all processes, whether in the simple or in the complex forms of motion, whether in objective phenomena or ideological phenomena. But does contradiction also exist at the initial stage of each process? page 318 Is there a movement of opposites from beginning to end in the process of development of

every single thing? As can be seen from the articles written by Soviet philosophers criticizing it, the Deborin school maintains that contradiction appears not at the inception of a process but only when it has developed to a certain stage. If this were the case, then the cause of the development of the process before that stage would be external and not internal. Deborin thus reverts to the metaphysical theories of external causality and of mechanism. Applying this view in the analysis of concrete problems, the Deborin school sees only differences but not contradictions between the kulaks and the peasants in general under existing conditions in the Soviet Union, thus entirely agreeing with Bukharin. In analysing the French Revolution, it holds that before the Revolution there were likewise only differences but not contradictions within the Third Estate, which was composed of the workers, the peasants and the bourgeoisie. These views of the Deborin school are anti-Marxist. This school does not understand that each and every difference already contains contradiction and that difference itself is contradiction. Labour and capital have been in contradiction ever since the two classes came into being, only at first the contradiction had not yet become intense. Even under the social conditions existing in the Soviet Union, there is a difference between workers and peasants and this very difference is a contradiction, although, unlike the contradiction between labour and capital, it will not become intensified into antagonism or assume the form of class struggle; the workers and the peasants have established a firm alliance in the course of socialist construction and are gradually resolving this contradiction in the course of the advance from socialism to communism. The question is one of different kinds of contradiction, not of the presence or absence of contradiction. Contradiction is universal and absolute, it is present in the process of development of all things and permeates every process from beginning to end. What is meant by the emergence of a new process? The old unity with its constituent opposites yields to a new unity with its constituent

opposites, whereupon a new process emerges to replace the old. The old process ends and the new one begins. The new process contains new contradictions and begins its own history of the development of contradictions. As Lenin pointed out, Marx in his *Capital* gave a model analysis of this movement of opposites which runs through the process of page 319 development of things from beginning to end. This is the method that must be employed in studying the development of all things. Lenin, too, employed this method correctly and adhered to it in all his writings.

- In his *Capital*, Marx first analyses the simplest, most ordinary and fundamental, most common and everyday *relation* of bourgeois (commodity) society, a relation encountered billions of times, viz. the exchange of commodities. In this very simple phenomenon (in this "cell" of bourgeois society) analysis reveals *all* the contradictions (or the germs of *all* the contradictions) of modern society. The subsequent exposition shows us the development (*both growth and* movement) of these contradictions and of this society in the  $\Sigma$  [summation] of its individual parts, from its beginning to its end.
- Lenin added, "Such must also be the method of exposition (or study) of dialectics in general."<sup>[9]</sup> Chinese Communists must learn this method; only then will they be able correctly to analyse the history and the present state of the Chinese revolution and infer its future.

### **III. THE PARTICULARITY OF CONTRADICTION**

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- Contradiction is present in the process of development of all things; it permeates the process of development of each thing from beginning to end. This is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction which we have discussed above. Now let us discuss the particularity and relativity of contradiction. This problem should be studied on several levels. First, the contradiction in each form of motion of matter has its particularity. Man's knowledge of matter is knowledge of its forms of motion, because there is nothing in this world except matter in motion and this

motion must assume certain forms. In considering each form of motion of matter, we must observe the points which it has in common with other forms of motion. But what is especially important and necessary, constituting as it does the foundation of our knowledge of a thing, is to observe what is particular to this form of motion of matter, namely, to observe the qualitative difference page 320 between this form of motion and other forms. Only when we have done so can we distinguish between things. Every form of motion contains within itself its own particular contradiction. This particular contradiction constitutes the particular essence which distinguishes one thing from another. It is the internal cause or, as it may be called, the basis for the immense variety of things in the world. There are many forms of motion in nature, mechanical motion, sound, light, heat, electricity, dissociation, combination, and so on. All these forms are interdependent, but in its essence each is different from the others. The particular essence of each form of motion is determined by its own particular contradiction. This holds true not only for nature but also for social and ideological phenomena. Every form of society, every form of ideology, has its own particular contradiction and particular essence. The sciences are differentiated precisely on the basis of the particular contradictions inherent in their respective objects of study. Thus the contradiction peculiar to a certain field of phenomena constitutes the object of study for a specific branch of science. For example, positive and negative numbers in mathematics; action and reaction in mechanics; positive and negative electricity in physics; dissociation and combination in chemistry; forces of production and relations of production, classes and class struggle, in social science; offence and defence in military science; idealism and materialism, the metaphysical outlook and the dialectical outlook, in philosophy; and so on -- all these are the objects of study of different branches of science precisely because each branch has its own particular contradiction and particular essence. Of course,

unless we understand the universality of contradiction, we have no way of discovering the universal cause or universal basis for the movement or development of things; however, unless we study the particularity of contradiction, we have no way of determining the particular essence of a thing which differentiates it from other things, no way of discovering the particular cause or particular basis for the movement or development of a thing, and no way of distinguishing one thing from another or of demarcating the fields of science. As regards the sequence in the movement of man's knowledge, there is always a gradual growth from the knowledge of individual and particular things to the knowledge of things in general. Only after man knows the particular essence of many different things can he proceed to generalization and know the common essence of things. page 321 When man attains the knowledge of this common essence, he uses it as a guide and proceeds to study various concrete things which have not yet been studied, or studied thoroughly, and to discover the particular essence of each; only thus is he able to supplement, enrich and develop his knowledge of their common essence and prevent such knowledge from withering or petrifying. These are the two processes of cognition: one, from the particular to the general, and the other, from the general to the particular. Thus cognition always moves in cycles and (so long as scientific method is strictly adhered to) each cycle advances human knowledge a step higher and so makes it more and more profound. Where our dogmatists err on this question is that, on the one hand, they do not understand that we have to study the particularity of contradiction and know the particular essence of individual things before we can adequately know the universality of contradiction and the common essence of things, and that, on the other hand, they do not understand that after knowing the common essence of things, we must go further and study the concrete things that have not yet been thoroughly studied or have only just emerged. Our dogmatists are lazy-bones. They refuse to undertake any painstaking study of

concrete things, they regard general truths as emerging out of the void, they turn them into purely abstract unfathomable formulas, and thereby completely deny and reverse the normal sequence by which man comes to know truth. Nor do they understand the interconnection of the two processes in cognition -- from the particular to the general and then from the general to the particular. They understand nothing of the Marxist theory of knowledge.

It is necessary not only to study the particular contradiction and the essence determined thereby of every great system of the forms of motion of matter, but also to study the particular contradiction and the essence of each process in the long course of development of each form of motion of matter. In every form of motion, each process of development which is real (and not imaginary) is qualitatively different. Our study must emphasize and start from this point. Qualitatively different contradictions can only be resolved by qualitatively different methods. For instance, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie is resolved by the method of socialist revolution; the contradiction between the great masses of the people and the feudal system is resolved by the method of democratic revolution; the contradiction between the colonies and imperialism page 322 is resolved by the method of national revolutionary war; the contradiction between the working class and the peasant class in socialist society is resolved by the method of collectivization and mechanization in agriculture; contradiction within the Communist Party is resolved by the method of criticism and self-criticism; the contradiction between society and nature is resolved by the method of developing the productive forces. Processes change, old processes and old contradictions disappear, new processes and new contradictions emerge, and the methods of resolving contradictions differ accordingly. In Russia, there was a fundamental difference between the contradiction resolved by the February Revolution and the contradiction resolved by the October Revolution, as well as between the methods used to resolve them. The principle of using

different methods to resolve different contradictions is one which Marxist-Leninists must strictly observe. The dogmatists do not observe this principle; they do not understand that conditions differ in different kinds of revolution and so do not understand that different methods should be used to resolve different contradictions; on the contrary, they invariably adopt what they imagine to be an unalterable formula and arbitrarily apply it everywhere, which only causes setbacks to the revolution or makes a sorry mess of what was originally well done. In order to reveal the particularity of the contradictions in any process in the development of a thing, in their totality or interconnections, that is, in order to reveal the essence of the process, it is necessary to reveal the particularity of the two aspects of each of the contradictions in that process; otherwise it will be impossible to discover the essence of the process. This likewise requires the utmost attention in our study. There are many contradictions in the course of development of any major thing. For instance, in the course of China's bourgeois-democratic revolution, where the conditions are exceedingly complex, there exist the contradiction between all the oppressed classes in Chinese society and imperialism, the contradiction between the great masses of the people and feudalism, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the contradiction between the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie on the one hand and the bourgeoisie on the other, the contradiction between the various reactionary ruling groups, and so on. These contradictions cannot be treated in the same way since each has its own particularity; moreover, the two aspects of each contradiction cannot be treated in the same way since page 323 each aspect has its own characteristics. We who are engaged in the Chinese revolution should not only understand the particularity of these contradictions in their totality, that is, in their interconnections, but should also study the two aspects of each contradiction as the only means of understanding the totality. When we speak of understanding each aspect of a contradiction,

we mean understanding what specific position each aspect occupies, what concrete forms it assumes in its interdependence and in its contradiction with its opposite, and what concrete methods are employed in the struggle with its opposite, when the two are both interdependent and in contradiction, and also after the interdependence breaks down. It is of great importance to study these problems. Lenin meant just this when he said that the most essential thing in Marxism, the living soul of Marxism, is the concrete analysis of concrete conditions.<sup>[10]</sup> Our dogmatists have violated Lenin's teachings; they never use their brains to analyse anything concretely, and in their writings and speeches they always use stereotypes devoid of content, thereby creating a very bad style of work in our Party.

In studying a problem, we must shun subjectivity, one-sidedness and superficiality. To be subjective means not to look at problems objectively, that is, not to use the materialist viewpoint in looking at problems. I have discussed this in my essay "[On Practice](#)". To be one-sided means not to look at problems all-sidedly, for example, to understand only China but not Japan, only the Communist Party but not the Kuomintang, only the proletariat but not the bourgeoisie, only the peasants but not the landlords, only the favourable conditions but not the difficult ones, only the past but not the future, only individual parts but not the whole, only the defects but not the achievements, only the plaintiff's case but not the defendant's, only underground revolutionary work but not open revolutionary work, and so on. In a word, it means not to understand the characteristics of both aspects of a contradiction. This is what we mean by looking at a problem one-sidedly. Or it may be called seeing the part but not the whole, seeing the trees but not the forest. That way it is impossible to find the method for resolving a contradiction, it is impossible to accomplish the tasks of the revolution, to carry out assignments well or to develop inner-Party ideological struggle correctly. When Sun Wu Tzu said in discussing military science, "Know the enemy and know yourself, and you can fight a hundred

battles with no danger of defeat",<sup>[11]</sup> he was referring to the two sides in a battle. Wei Cheng<sup>[12]</sup> page 324 of the Tang Dynasty also understood the error of one-sidedness when he said, "Listen to both sides and you will be enlightened, heed only one side and you will be benighted." But our comrades often look at problems one-sidedly, and so they often run into snags. In the novel *Shui Hu Chuan*, Sung Chiang thrice attacked Chu Village.<sup>[13]</sup> Twice he was defeated because he was ignorant of the local conditions and used the wrong method. Later he changed his method; first he investigated the situation, and he familiarized himself with the maze of roads, then he broke up the alliance between the Li, Hu and Chu Villages and sent his men in disguise into the enemy camp to lie in wait, using a stratagem similar to that of the Trojan Horse in the foreign story. And on the third occasion he won. There are many examples of materialist dialectics in *Shui Hu Chuan*, of which the episode of the three attacks on Chu Village is one of the best. Lenin said:

- . . . in order really to know an object we must embrace, study, all its sides, all connections and "mediations". We shall never achieve this completely, but the demand for all-sidedness is a safeguard against mistakes and rigidity.<sup>[14]</sup>
- We should remember his words. To be superficial means to consider neither the characteristics of a contradiction in its totality nor the characteristics of each of its aspects; it means to deny the necessity for probing deeply into a thing and minutely studying the characteristics of its contradiction, but instead merely to look from afar and, after glimpsing the rough outline, immediately to try to resolve the contradiction (to answer a question, settle a dispute, handle work, or direct a military operation). This way of doing things is bound to lead to trouble. The reason the dogmatist and empiricist comrades in China have made mistakes lies precisely in their subjectivist, one-sided and superficial way of looking at things. To be one-sided and superficial is at the same time to be subjective. For all objective things are actually interconnected and

are governed by inner laws, but instead of undertaking the task of reflecting things as they really are some people only look at things one-sidedly or superficially and who know neither their interconnections nor their inner laws, and so their method is subjectivist. Not only does the whole process of the movement of opposites in the development of a thing, both in their interconnections and in page 325 each of the aspects, have particular features to which we must give attention, but each stage in the process has its particular features to which we must give attention too. The fundamental contradiction in the process of development of a thing and the essence of the process determined by this fundamental contradiction will not disappear until the process is completed; but in a lengthy process the conditions usually differ at each stage. The reason is that, although the nature of the fundamental contradiction in the process of development of a thing and the essence of the process remain unchanged, the fundamental contradiction becomes more and more intensified as it passes from one stage to another in the lengthy process. In addition, among the numerous major and minor contradictions which are determined or influenced by the fundamental contradiction, some become intensified, some are temporarily or partially resolved or mitigated, and some new ones emerge; hence the process is marked by stages. If people do not pay attention to the stages in the process of development of a thing, they cannot deal with its contradictions properly. For instance, when the capitalism of the era of free competition developed into imperialism, there was no change in the class nature of the two classes in fundamental contradiction, namely, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, or in the capitalist essence of society; however, the contradiction between these two classes became intensified, the contradiction between monopoly and non-monopoly capital emerged, the contradiction between the colonial powers and the colonies became intensified, the contradiction among the capitalist countries resulting from their uneven development manifested

itself with particular sharpness, and thus there arose the special stage of capitalism, the stage of imperialism. Leninism is the Marxism of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution precisely because Lenin and Stalin have correctly explained these contradictions and correctly formulated the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution for their resolution. Take the process of China's bourgeois-democratic revolution, which began with the Revolution of 1911; it, too, has several distinct stages. In particular, the revolution in its period of bourgeois leadership and the revolution in its period of proletarian leadership represent two vastly different historical stages. In other words, proletarian leadership has fundamentally changed the whole face of the revolution, has brought about a new alignment of classes, given rise to a tremendous upsurge in the peasant revolution, imparted thoroughness to the revolution against imperialism and feudalism, created the possibility of the transition from the democratic revolution to the socialist revolution, and so on. None of these was possible in the period when the revolution was under bourgeois leadership. Although no change has taken place in the nature of the fundamental contradiction in the process as a whole, *i.e.*, in the anti-imperialist, anti-feudal, democratic-revolutionary nature of the process (the opposite of which is its semi-colonial and semi-feudal nature), nonetheless this process has passed through several stages of development in the course of more than twenty years; during this time many great events have taken place - the failure of the Revolution of 1911 and the establishment of the regime of the Northern warlords, the formation of the first national united front and the revolution of 1924-27, the break-up of the united front and the desertion of the bourgeoisie to the side of the counter revolution, the wars among the new warlords, the Agrarian Revolutionary War, the establishment of the second national united front and the War of Resistance Against Japan. These stages are marked by particular features such as the intensification of certain contradictions (*e.g.*, the Agrarian Revolutionary War and the

Japanese invasion of the four northeastern provinces), the partial or temporary resolution of other contradictions (*e.g.*, the destruction of the Northern warlords and our confiscation of the land of the landlords), and the emergence of yet other contradictions (*e.g.*, the conflicts among the new warlords, and the landlords' recapture of the land after the loss of our revolutionary base areas in the south).

In studying the particularities of the contradictions at each stage in the process of development of a thing, we must not only observe them in their interconnections or their totality, we must also examine the two aspects of each contradiction. For instance, consider the Kuomintang and the Communist Party. Take one aspect, the Kuomintang. In the period of the first united front, the Kuomintang carried out Sun Yat-sen's Three Great Policies of alliance with Russia, co-operation with the Communist Party, and assistance to the peasants and workers; hence it was revolutionary and vigorous, it was an alliance of various classes for the democratic revolution. After 1927, however, the Kuomintang changed into its opposite and became a reactionary bloc of the landlords and big page 327 bourgeoisie. After the Sian Incident in December 1936, it began an other change in the direction of ending the civil war and co-operating with the Communist Party for joint opposition to Japanese imperialism. Such have been the particular features of the Kuomintang in the three stages. Of course, these features have arisen from a variety of causes. Now take the other aspect, the Chinese Communist Party. In the period of the first united front, the Chinese Communist Party was in its infancy; it courageously led the revolution of 1924-27 but revealed its immaturity in its understanding of the character, the tasks and the methods of the revolution, and consequently it became possible for Chen Tu-hsiuism, which appeared during the latter part of this revolution, to assert itself and bring about the defeat of the revolution. After 1927, the Communist Party courageously led the Agrarian Revolutionary War and created the revolutionary army and revolutionary base areas; however, it committed adventurist

errors which brought about very great losses both to the army and to the base areas. Since 1935 the Party has corrected these errors and has been leading the new united front for resistance to Japan; this great struggle is now developing. At the present stage, the Communist Party is a Party that has gone through the test of two revolutions and acquired a wealth of experience. Such have been the particular features of the Chinese Communist Party in the three stages. These features, too, have arisen from a variety of causes. Without studying both these sets of features we cannot understand the particular relations between the two parties during the various stages of their development, namely, the establishment of a united front, the break-up of the united front, and the establishment of another united front. What is even more fundamental for the study of the particular features of the two parties is the examination of the class basis of the two parties and the resultant contradictions which have arisen between each party and other forces at different periods. For instance, in the period of its first co-operation with the Communist Party, the Kuomintang stood in contradiction to foreign imperialism and was therefore anti-imperialist; on the other hand, it stood in contradiction to the great masses of the people within the country -- although in words it promised many benefits to the working people, in fact it gave them little or nothing. In the period when it carried on the anti-Communist war, the Kuomintang collaborated with imperialism and feudalism against the great masses of the people and wiped out all the gains they had won page  
328 in the revolution, and thereby intensified its contradictions with them. In the present period of the anti-Japanese war, the Kuomintang stands in contradiction to Japanese imperialism and wants co-operation with the Communist Party, without however relaxing its struggle against the Communist Party and the people or its oppression of them. As for the Communist Party, it has always, in every period, stood with the great masses of the people against imperialism and feudalism, but in the present period of the anti-Japanese war, it has adopted a moderate policy towards the

Kuomintang and the domestic feudal forces because the Kuomintang has expressed itself in favour of resisting Japan. The above circumstances have resulted now in alliance between the two parties and now in struggle between them, and even during the periods of alliance there has been a complicated state of simultaneous alliance and struggle. If we do not study the particular features of both aspects of the contradiction, we shall fail to understand not only the relations of each party with the other forces, but also the relations between the two parties. It can thus be seen that in studying the particularity of any kind of contradiction -- the contradiction in each form of motion of matter, the contradiction in each of its processes of development, the two aspects of the contradiction in each process, the contradiction at each stage of a process, and the two aspects of the contradiction at each stage -- in studying the particularity of all these contradictions, we must not be subjective and arbitrary but must analyse it concretely. Without concrete analysis there can be no knowledge of the particularity of any contradiction. We must always remember Lenin's words, the concrete analysis of concrete conditions. Marx and Engels were the first to provide us with excellent models of such concrete analysis. When Marx and Engels applied the law of contradiction in things to the study of the socio-historical process, they discovered the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, they discovered the contradiction between the exploiting and exploited classes and also the resultant contradiction between the economic base and its superstructure (politics, ideology, etc.), and they discovered how these contradictions inevitably lead to different kinds of social revolution in different kinds of class society.

When Marx applied this law to the study of the economic structure of capitalist society, he discovered that the basic contradiction of page 329 this society is the contradiction between the social character of production and the private character of ownership. This contradiction manifests itself in the contradiction

between the organized character of production in individual enterprises and the anarchic character of production in society as a whole. In terms of class relations, it manifests itself in the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.

Because the range of things is vast and there is no limit to their development, what is universal in one context becomes particular in another. Conversely, what is particular in one context becomes universal in another. The contradiction in the capitalist system between the social character of production and the private ownership of the means of production is common to all countries where capitalism exists and develops; as far as capitalism is concerned, this constitutes the universality of contradiction. But this contradiction of capitalism belongs only to a certain historical stage in the general development of class society; as far as the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production in class society as a whole is concerned, it constitutes the particularity of contradiction. However, in the course of dissecting the particularity of all these contradictions in capitalist society, Marx gave a still more profound, more adequate and more complete elucidation of the universality of the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production in class society in general. Since the particular is united with the universal and since the universality as well as the particularity of contradiction is inherent in everything, universality residing in particularity, we should, when studying an object, try to discover both the particular and the universal and their interconnection, to discover both particularity and universality and also their interconnection within the object itself, and to discover the interconnections of this object with the many objects outside it. When Stalin explained the historical roots of Leninism in his famous work, *The Foundations of Leninism*, he analysed the international situation in which Leninism arose, analysed those contradictions of capitalism which reached their culmination under imperialism, and showed how these contradictions made

proletarian revolution a matter for immediate action and created favourable conditions for a direct onslaught on capitalism. What is more, he analysed the reasons why Russia became the cradle of Leninism, why page 330 tsarist Russia became the focus of all the contradictions of imperialism, and why it was possible for the Russian proletariat to become the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat. Thus, Stalin analysed the universality of contradiction in imperialism, showing why Leninism is the Marxism of the era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, and at the same time analysed the particularity of tsarist Russian imperialism within this general contradiction, showing why Russia became the birthplace of the theory and tactics of proletarian revolution and how the universality of contradiction is contained in this particularity. Stalin's analysis provides us with a model for understanding the particularity and the universality of contradiction and their interconnection. On the question of using dialectics in the study of objective phenomena, Marx and Engels, and likewise Lenin and Stalin, always enjoin people not to be in any way subjective and arbitrary but, from the concrete conditions in the actual objective movement of these phenomena, to discover their concrete contradictions, the concrete position of each aspect of every contradiction and the concrete interrelations of the contradictions. Our dogmatists do not have this attitude in study and therefore can never get anything right. We must take warning from their failure and learn to acquire this attitude which is the only correct one in study. The relationship between the universality and the particularity of contradiction is the relationship between the general character and the individual character of contradiction. By the former we mean that contradiction exists in and runs through all processes from beginning to end; motion, things, processes, thinking -- all are contradictions. To deny contradiction is to deny everything. This is a universal truth for all times and all countries, which admits of no exception. Hence the general character, the absoluteness of contradiction. But this

general character is contained in every individual character; without individual character there can be no general character. If all individual character were removed, what general character would remain? It is because each contradiction is particular that individual character arises. All individual character exists conditionally and temporarily, and hence is relative. This truth concerning general and individual character, concerning absoluteness and relativity, is the quintessence of the problem of contradiction in things; failure to understand it is tantamount to abandoning dialectics. page 331

#### **IV. THE PRINCIPAL CONTRADICTION AND THE**

##### **• PRINCIPAL ASPECT OF A CONTRADICTION**

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- There are still two points in the problem of the particularity of contradiction which must be singled out for analysis, namely, the principal contradiction and the principal aspect of a contradiction.

There are many contradictions in the process of development of a complex thing, and one of them is necessarily the principal contradiction whose existence and development determine or influence the existence and development of the other contradictions. For instance, in capitalist society the two forces in contradiction, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, form the principal contradiction. The other contradictions, such as those between the remnant feudal class and the bourgeoisie, between the peasant petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie, between the proletariat and the peasant petty bourgeoisie, between the non-monopoly capitalists and the monopoly capitalists, between bourgeois democracy and bourgeois fascism, among the capitalist countries and between imperialism and the colonies, are all determined or influenced by this principal contradiction. In a semi-colonial country such as China, the relationship between the principal contradiction and the non-principal contradictions presents a complicated picture. When imperialism launches a war of aggression against such a country, all its various classes,

except for some traitors, can temporarily unite in a national war against imperialism. At such a time, the contradiction between imperialism and the country concerned becomes the principal contradiction, while all the contradictions among the various classes within the country (including what was the principal contradiction, between the feudal system and the great masses of the people) are temporarily relegated to a secondary and subordinate position. So it was in China in the Opium War of 1840, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 and the Yi Ho Tuan War of 1900, and so it is now in the present Sino-Japanese War. But in another situation, the contradictions change position. When imperialism carries on its oppression not by war, but by milder means -- political, economic and cultural -- the ruling classes in semi-colonial countries capitulate to imperialism, and the two form an alliance for the joint oppression of the masses of the people. At such page 332 a time, the masses often resort to civil war against the alliance of imperialism and the feudal classes, while imperialism often employs indirect methods rather than direct action in helping the reactionaries in the semi-colonial countries to oppress the people, and thus the internal contradictions become particularly sharp. This is what happened in China in the Revolutionary War of 1911, the Revolutionary War of 1924-27, and the ten years of Agrarian Revolutionary War after 1927. Wars among the various reactionary ruling groups in the semi-colonial countries, *e.g.*, the wars among the warlords in China, fall into the same category.

When a revolutionary civil war develops to the point of threatening the very existence of imperialism and its running dogs, the domestic reactionaries, imperialism often adopts other methods in order to maintain its rule; it either tries to split the revolutionary front from within or sends armed forces to help the domestic reactionaries directly. At such a time, foreign imperialism and domestic reaction stand quite openly at one pole while the masses of the people stand at the other pole, thus forming the principal contradiction which determines or influences the development of

the other contradictions. The assistance given by various capitalist countries to the Russian reactionaries after the October Revolution is an example of armed intervention. Chiang Kai-shek's betrayal in 1927 is an example of splitting the revolutionary front. But whatever happens, there is no doubt at all that at every stage in the development of a process, there is only one principal contradiction which plays the leading role. Hence, if in any process there are a number of contradictions, one of them must be the principal contradiction playing the leading and decisive role, while the rest occupy a secondary and subordinate position. Therefore, in studying any complex process in which there are two or more contradictions, we must devote every effort to finding its principal contradiction. Once this principal contradiction is grasped, all problems can be readily solved. This is the method Marx taught us in his study of capitalist society. Likewise Lenin and Stalin taught us this method when they studied imperialism and the general crisis of capitalism and when they studied the Soviet economy. There are thousands of scholars and men of action who do not understand it, and the result is that, lost in a fog, they are unable to get to the heart of a problem and naturally cannot find a way to resolve its contradictions. page 333 As we have said, one must not treat all the contradictions in a process as being equal but must distinguish between the principal and the secondary contradictions, and pay special attention to grasping the principal one. But, in any given contradiction, whether principal or secondary, should the two contradictory aspects be treated as equal? Again, no. In any contradiction the development of the contradictory aspects is uneven. Sometimes they seem to be in equilibrium, which is however only temporary and relative, while unevenness is basic. Of the two contradictory aspects, one must be principal and the other secondary. The principal aspect is the one playing the leading role in the contradiction. The nature of a thing is determined mainly by the principal aspect of a contradiction, the aspect which has gained the dominant position. But this situation is not

static; the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction transform themselves into each other and the nature of the thing changes accordingly. In a given process or at a given stage in the development of a contradiction, A is the principal aspect and B is the non-principal aspect; at another stage or in another process the roles are reversed -- a change determined by the extent of the increase or decrease in the force of each aspect in its struggle against the other in the course of the development of a thing.

We often speak of "the new superseding the old". The supersession of the old by the new is a general, eternal and inviolable law of the universe. The transformation of one thing into another, through leaps of different forms in accordance with its essence and external conditions -- this is the process of the new superseding the old. In each thing there is contradiction between its new and its old aspects, and this gives rise to a series of struggles with many twists and turns. As a result of these struggles, the new aspect changes from being minor to being major and rises to predominance, while the old aspect changes from being major to being minor and gradually dies out. And the moment the new aspect gains dominance over the old, the old thing changes qualitatively into a new thing. It can thus be seen that the nature of a thing is mainly determined by the principal aspect of the contradiction, the aspect which has gained predominance. When the principal aspect which has gained predominance changes, the nature of a thing changes accordingly. In capitalist society, capitalism has changed its position from being a subordinate force in the old feudal era to being the dominant force, and the nature of society has accordingly changed from feudal page 334 to capitalist. In the new, capitalist era, the feudal forces changed from their former dominant position to a subordinate one, gradually dying out. Such was the case, for example, in Britain and France. With the development of the productive forces, the bourgeoisie changes from being a new class playing a progressive role to being an old class playing a reactionary role, until it is finally overthrown by the

proletariat and becomes a class deprived of privately owned means of production and stripped of power, when it, too, gradually dies out. The proletariat, which is much more numerous than the bourgeoisie and grows simultaneously with it but under its rule, is a new force which, initially subordinate to the bourgeoisie, gradually gains strength, becomes an independent class playing the leading role in history, and finally seizes political power and becomes the ruling class. Thereupon the nature of society changes and the old capitalist society becomes the new socialist society. This is the path already taken by the Soviet Union, a path that all other countries will inevitably take. Look at China, for instance. Imperialism occupies the principal position in the contradiction in which China has been reduced to a semi-colony, it oppresses the Chinese people, and China has been changed from an independent country into a semi-colonial one. But this state of affairs will inevitably change; in the struggle between the two sides, the power of the Chinese people which is growing under the leadership of the proletariat will inevitably change China from a semi-colony into an independent country, whereas imperialism will be overthrown and old China will inevitably change into New China. The change of old China into New China also involves a change in the relation between the old feudal forces and the new popular forces within the country. The old feudal landlord class will be overthrown, and from being the ruler it will change into being the ruled; and this class, too, will gradually die out. From being the ruled the people, led by the proletariat, will become the rulers. Thereupon, the nature of Chinese society will change and the old, semi-colonial and semi-feudal society will change into a new democratic society. Instances of such reciprocal transformation are found in our past experience. The Ching Dynasty which ruled China for nearly three hundred years was overthrown in the Revolution of 1911, and the revolutionary Tung Meng Hui under Sun Yat-sen's leadership was victorious for a time. In the Revolutionary War of 1924-27, the revolutionary

forces of the Communist-Kuomintang alliance in the south page  
335 changed from being weak to being strong and won victory in the Northern Expedition, while the Northern warlords who once ruled the roost were overthrown. In 1927, the people's forces led by the Communist Party were greatly reduced numerically under the attacks of Kuomintang reaction, but with the elimination of opportunism within their ranks they gradually grew again. In the revolutionary base areas under Communist leadership, the peasants have been transformed from being the ruled to being the rulers, while the landlords have undergone a reverse transformation. It is always so in the world, the new displacing the old, the old being superseded by the new, the old being eliminated to make way for the new, and the new emerging out of the old. At certain times in the revolutionary struggle, the difficulties outweigh the favourable conditions and so constitute the principal aspect of the contradiction and the favourable conditions constitute the secondary aspect. But through their efforts the revolutionaries can overcome the difficulties step by step and open up a favourable new situation; thus a difficult situation yields place to a favourable one. This is what happened after the failure of the revolution in China in 1927 and during the Long March of the Chinese Red Army. In the present Sino-Japanese War, China is again in a difficult position, but we can change this and fundamentally transform the situation as between China and Japan. Conversely, favourable conditions can be transformed into difficulty if the revolutionaries make mistakes. Thus the victory of the revolution of 1924-27 turned into defeat. The revolutionary base areas which grew up in the southern provinces after 1927 had all suffered defeat by 1934. When we engage in study, the same holds good for the contradiction in the passage from ignorance to knowledge. At the very beginning of our study of Marxism, our ignorance or scanty acquaintance with Marxism stands in contradiction to knowledge of Marxism. But by assiduous study, ignorance can be transformed into knowledge, scanty knowledge into substantial

knowledge, and blindness in the application of Marxism into mastery of its application. Some people think that this is not true of certain contradictions. For instance, in the contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, the productive forces are the principal aspect; in the contradiction between theory and practice, practice is the principal aspect; in the contradiction between the economic base and the superstructure, the economic base is the principal aspect; page 336 and there is no change in their respective positions. This is the mechanical materialist conception, not the dialectical materialist conception. True, the productive forces, practice and the economic base generally play the principal and decisive role; whoever denies this is not a materialist. But it must also be admitted that in certain conditions, such aspects as the relations of production, theory and the superstructure in turn manifest themselves in the principal and decisive role. When it is impossible for the productive forces to develop without a change in the relations of production, then the change in the relations of production plays the principal and decisive role. The creation and advocacy of revolutionary theory plays the principal and decisive role in those times of which Lenin said, "Without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement."<sup>[15]</sup> When a task, no matter which, has to be performed, but there is as yet no guiding line, method, plan or policy, the principal and decisive thing is to decide on a guiding line, method, plan or policy. When the superstructure (politics, culture, etc.) obstructs the development of the economic base, political and cultural changes become principal and decisive. Are we going against materialism when we say this? No. The reason is that while we recognize that in the general development of history the material determines the mental and social being determines social consciousness, we also -- and indeed must -- recognize the reaction of mental on material things, of social consciousness on social being and of the superstructure on the economic base. This does not go against materialism; on the contrary, it avoids mechanical

materialism and firmly upholds dialectical materialism. In studying the particularity of contradiction, unless we examine these two facets -- the principal and the non-principal contradictions in a process, and the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction -- that is, unless we examine the distinctive character of these two facets of contradiction, we shall get bogged down in abstractions, be unable to understand contradiction concretely and consequently be unable to find the correct method of resolving it. The distinctive character or particularity of these two facets of contradiction represents the unevenness of the forces that are in contradiction. Nothing in this world develops absolutely evenly; we must oppose the theory of even development or the theory of equilibrium. Moreover, it is these concrete features of a contradiction and the changes in the principal and non-principal aspects of a contradiction in the course of its development that manifest the force of the new page 337 superseding the old. The study of the various states of unevenness in contradictions, of the principal and non-principal contradictions and of the principal and the non-principal aspects of a contradiction constitutes an essential method by which a revolutionary political party correctly determines its strategic and tactical policies both in political and in military affairs. All Communists must give it attention.

## **V. THE IDENTITY AND STRUGGLE OF THE**

### **• ASPECTS OF A CONTRADICTION**

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- When we understand the universality and the particularity of contradiction, we must proceed to study the problem of the identity and struggle of the aspects of a contradiction. Identity, unity, coincidence, interpenetration, interpermeation, interdependence (or mutual dependence for existence), interconnection or mutual cooperation -- all these different terms mean the same thing and refer to the following two points: first, the existence of each of the two aspects of a contradiction in the process of the development of a

thing presupposes the existence of the other aspect, and both aspects coexist in a single entity; second, in given conditions, each of the two contradictory aspects transforms itself into its opposite. This is the meaning of identity. Lenin said:

- *Dialectics* is the teaching which shows how *opposites* can be and how they happen to be (how they become) *identical* -- under what conditions they are identical, transforming themselves into one another, -- why the human mind should take these opposites not as dead, rigid, but as living, conditional, mobile, transforming themselves into one another.<sup>[16]</sup>
- What does this passage mean? The contradictory aspects in every process exclude each other, struggle with each other and are in opposition to each other. Without exception, they are contained in the process of development of all things and in all human thought. A simple process contains only a single pair of opposites, while a complex process contains more. And in turn, the pairs of opposites are in contradiction to one another page 338 That is how all things in the objective world and all human thought are constituted and how they are set in motion. This being so, there is an utter lack of identity or unity. How then can one speak of identity or unity? The fact is that no contradictory aspect can exist in isolation. Without its opposite aspect, each loses the condition for its existence. Just think, can any one contradictory aspect of a thing or of a concept in the human mind exist independently? Without life, there would be no death; without death, there would be no life. Without "above", there would be no "below"; without "below", there would be no "above". Without misfortune, there would be no good fortune; without good fortune, there would be no misfortune. Without facility, there would be no difficulty; without difficulty, there would be no facility. Without landlords, there would be no tenant-peasants; without tenant-peasants, there would be no landlords. Without the bourgeoisie, there would be no proletariat; without the proletariat, there would

be no bourgeoisie. Without imperialist oppression of nations, there would be no colonies or semi-colonies; without colonies or semi-colonies, there would be no imperialist oppression of nations. It is so with all opposites; in given conditions, on the one hand they are opposed to each other, and on the other they are interconnected, interpenetrating, interpermeating and interdependent, and this character is described as identity. In given conditions, all contradictory aspects possess the character of non-identity and hence are described as being in contradiction. But they also possess the character of identity and hence are interconnected. This is what Lenin means when he says that dialectics studies "how *opposites* can be . . . *identical*". How then can they be identical? Because each is the condition for the other's existence. This is the first meaning of identity. But is it enough to say merely that each of the contradictory aspects is the condition for the other's existence, that there is identity between them and that consequently they can coexist in a single entity? No, it is not. The matter does not end with their dependence on each other for their existence; what is more important is their transformation into each other. That is to say, in given conditions, each of the contradictory aspects within a thing transforms itself into its opposite, changes its position to that of its opposite. This is the second meaning of the identity of contradiction. Why is there identity here, too? You see, by means of revolution the proletariat, at one time the ruled, is transformed into the ruler, page 339 while the bourgeoisie, the erstwhile ruler, is transformed into the ruled and changes its position to that originally occupied by its opposite. This has already taken place in the Soviet Union, as it will take place throughout the world. If there were no interconnection and identity of opposites in given conditions, how could such a change take place? The Kuomintang, which played a certain positive role at a certain stage in modern Chinese history, became a counter-revolutionary party after 1927 because of its inherent class nature and because of imperialist blandishments (these being the

conditions); but it has been compelled to agree to resist Japan because of the sharpening of the contradiction between China and Japan and because of the Communist Party's policy of the united front (these being the conditions). Things in contradiction change into one another, and herein lies a definite identity. Our agrarian revolution has been a process in which the landlord class owning the land is transformed into a class that has lost its land, while the peasants who once lost their land are transformed into small holders who have acquired land, and it will be such a process once again. In given conditions having and not having, acquiring and losing, are interconnected; there is identity of the two sides. Under socialism, private peasant ownership is transformed into the public ownership of socialist agriculture; this has already taken place in the Soviet Union, as it will take place everywhere else. There is a bridge leading from private property to public property, which in philosophy is called identity, or transformation into each other, or interpenetration. To consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat or the dictatorship of the people is in fact to prepare the conditions for abolishing this dictatorship and advancing to the higher stage when all state systems are eliminated. To establish and build the Communist Party is in fact to prepare the conditions for the elimination of the Communist Party and all political parties. To build a revolutionary army under the leadership of the Communist Party and to carry on revolutionary war is in fact to prepare the conditions for the permanent elimination of war. These opposites are at the same time complementary. War and peace, as everybody knows, transform themselves into each other. War is transformed into peace; for instance, the First World War was transformed into the post-war peace, and the civil war in China has now stopped, giving place to internal peace. Peace page 340 is transformed into war; for instance, the Kuomintang-Communist co-operation was transformed into war in 1927, and today's situation of world peace may be transformed into a second world war. Why is this so? Because in class society such contradictory

things as war and peace have an identity in given conditions.

All contradictory things are interconnected; not only do they coexist in a single entity in given conditions, but in other given conditions, they also transform themselves into each other. This is the full meaning of the identity of opposites. This is what Lenin meant when he discussed "how they happen to be (how they become) *identical* -- under what conditions they are identical, transforming themselves into one another". Why is it that "the human mind should take these opposites not as dead, rigid, but as living, conditional, mobile, transforming themselves into one another"? Because that is just how things are in objective reality. The fact is that the unity or identity of opposites in objective things is not dead or rigid, but is living, conditional, mobile, temporary and relative; in given conditions, every contradictory aspect transforms itself into its opposite. Reflected in man's thinking, this becomes the Marxist world outlook of materialist dialectics. It is only the reactionary ruling classes of the past and present and the metaphysicians in their service who regard opposites not as living, conditional, mobile and transforming themselves into one another, but as dead and rigid, and they propagate this fallacy everywhere to delude the masses of the people, thus seeking to perpetuate their rule. The task of Communists is to expose the fallacies of the reactionaries and metaphysicians, to propagate the dialectics inherent in things, and so accelerate the transformation of things and achieve the goal of revolution. In speaking of the identity of opposites in given conditions, what we are referring to is real and concrete opposites and the real and concrete transformations of opposites into one another. There are innumerable transformations in mythology, for instance, Kua Fu's race with the sun in *Shan Hai Ching*,<sup>[17]</sup> Yi's shooting down of nine suns in *Huai Nan Tzu*,<sup>[18]</sup> the Monkey King's seventy-two metamorphoses in *Hsi Yu Chi*,<sup>[19]</sup> the numerous episodes of ghosts and foxes metamorphosed into human beings in the *Strange Tales of Liao Chai*,<sup>[20]</sup> etc. But these legendary transformations of opposites are not concrete changes

reflecting concrete contradictions. They are naive, imaginary, subjectively conceived transformations conjured up in men's minds

page 341 by innumerable real and complex transformations of opposites into one another. Marx said, "All mythology masters and dominates and shapes the forces of nature in and through the imagination; hence it disappears as soon as man gains mastery over the forces of nature."<sup>[21]</sup> The myriads of changes in mythology (and also in nursery tales) delight people because they imaginatively picture man's conquest of the forces of nature, and the best myths possess "eternal charm", as Marx put it; but myths are not built out of the concrete contradictions existing in given conditions and therefore are not a scientific reflection of reality. That is to say, in myths or nursery tales the aspects constituting a contradiction have only an imaginary identity, not a concrete identity. The scientific reflection of the identity in real transformations is Marxist dialectics.

Why can an egg but not a stone be transformed into a chicken? Why is there identity between war and peace and none between war and a stone? Why can human beings give birth only to human beings and not to anything else? The sole reason is that the identity of opposites exists only in necessary given conditions. Without these necessary given conditions there can be no identity whatsoever.

Why is it that in Russia in 1917 the bourgeois-democratic February Revolution was directly linked with the proletarian socialist October Revolution, while in France the bourgeois revolution was not directly linked with a socialist revolution and the Paris Commune of 1871 ended in failure? Why is it, on the other hand, that the nomadic system of Mongolia and Central Asia has been directly linked with socialism? Why is it that the Chinese revolution can avoid a capitalist future and be directly linked with socialism without taking the old historical road of the Western countries, without passing through a period of bourgeois dictatorship? The sole reason is the concrete conditions of the time. When certain necessary conditions are present, certain contradictions arise in the process of development of things and,

moreover, the opposites contained in them are interdependent and become transformed into one another; otherwise none of this would be possible. Such is the problem of identity. What then is struggle? And what is the relation between identity and struggle?

Lenin said:

- The unity (coincidence, identity, equal action) of opposites is conditional, temporary, transitory, relative. The struggle of
- page 342
- mutually exclusive opposites is absolute, just as development and motion are absolute.[\[22\]](#)
- What does this passage mean? All processes have a beginning and an end, all processes transform themselves into their opposites. The constancy of all processes is relative, but the mutability manifested in the transformation of one process into another is absolute. There are two states of motion in all things, that of relative rest and that of conspicuous change. Both are caused by the struggle between the two contradictory elements contained in a thing. When the thing is in the first state of motion, it is undergoing only quantitative and not qualitative change and consequently presents the outward appearance of being at rest. When the thing is in the second state of motion, the quantitative change of the first state has already reached a culminating point and gives rise to the dissolution of the thing as an entity and thereupon a qualitative change ensues, hence the appearance of a conspicuous change. Such unity, solidarity, combination, harmony, balance, stalemate, deadlock, rest, constancy, equilibrium, solidity, attraction, etc., as we see in daily life, are all the appearances of things in the state of quantitative change. On the other hand, the dissolution of unity, that is, the destruction of this solidarity, combination, harmony, balance, stalemate, deadlock, rest, constancy, equilibrium, solidity and attraction, and the change of each into its opposite are all the appearances of things in the state of qualitative change, the transformation of one process into another. Things are constantly transforming themselves from the

first into the second state of motion; the struggle of opposites goes on in both states but the contradiction is resolved through the second state. That is why we say that the unity of opposites is conditional, temporary and relative, while the struggle of mutually exclusive opposites is absolute. When we said above that two opposite things can coexist in a single entity and can transform themselves into each other because there is identity between them, we were speaking of conditionality, that is to say, in given conditions two contradictory things can be united and can transform themselves into each other, but in the absence of these conditions, they cannot constitute a contradiction, cannot coexist in the same entity and cannot transform themselves into one another. It is because the identity of opposites obtains only in given page 343 conditions that we have said identity is conditional and relative. We may add that the struggle between opposites permeates a process from beginning to end and makes one process transform itself into another, that it is ubiquitous, and that struggle is therefore unconditional and absolute. The combination of conditional, relative identity and unconditional, absolute struggle constitutes the movement of opposites in all things. We Chinese often say, "Things that oppose each other also complement each other." [23] That is, things opposed to each other have identity. This saying is dialectical and contrary to metaphysics. "Oppose each other" refers to the mutual exclusion or the struggle of two contradictory aspects. "Complement each other" means that in given conditions the two contradictory aspects unite and achieve identity. Yet struggle is inherent in identity and without struggle there can be no identity. In identity there is struggle, in particularity there is universality, and in individuality there is generality. To quote Lenin, ". . . there *is* an absolute *in* the relative." [24]

## **VI. THE PLACE OF ANTAGONISM IN CONTRADICTION**

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- The question of the struggle of opposites includes the question of

what is antagonism. Our answer is that antagonism is one form, but not the only form, of the struggle of opposites. In human history, antagonism between classes exists as a particular manifestation of the struggle of opposites. Consider the contradiction between the exploiting and the exploited classes. Such contradictory classes coexist for a long time in the same society, be it slave society, feudal society or capitalist society, and they struggle with each other; but it is not until the contradiction between the two classes develops to a certain stage that it assumes the form of open antagonism and develops into revolution. The same holds for the transformation of peace into war in class society. Before it explodes, a bomb is a single entity in which opposites coexist in given conditions. The explosion takes place only when a new condition, ignition, is present. An analogous situation arises in all those natural phenomena which finally assume the form of open conflict to resolve old contradictions and produce new things. page 344 It is highly important to grasp this fact. It enables us to understand that revolutions and revolutionary wars are inevitable in class society and that without them, it is impossible to accomplish any leap in social development and to overthrow the reactionary ruling classes and therefore impossible for the people to win political power. Communists must expose the deceitful propaganda of the reactionaries, such as the assertion that social revolution is unnecessary and impossible. They must firmly uphold the Marxist-Leninist theory of social revolution and enable the people to understand that social revolution is not only entirely necessary but also entirely practicable, and that the whole history of mankind and the triumph of the Soviet Union have confirmed this scientific truth. However, we must make a concrete study of the circumstances of each specific struggle of opposites and should not arbitrarily apply the formula discussed above to everything. Contradiction and struggle are universal and absolute, but the methods of resolving contradictions, that is, the forms of struggle, differ according to the differences in the nature of the

contradictions. Some contradictions are characterized by open antagonism, others are not. In accordance with the concrete development of things, some contradictions which were originally non-antagonistic develop into antagonistic ones, while others which were originally antagonistic develop into non antagonistic ones. As already mentioned, so long as classes exist, contradictions between correct and incorrect ideas in the Communist Party are reflections within the Party of class contradictions. At first, with regard to certain issues, such contradictions may not manifest themselves as antagonistic. But with the development of the class struggle, they may grow and become antagonistic. The history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union shows us that the contradictions between the correct thinking of Lenin and Stalin and the fallacious thinking of Trotsky, Bukharin and others did not at first manifest themselves in an antagonistic form, but that later they did develop into antagonism. There are similar cases in the history of the Chinese Communist Party. At first the contradictions between the correct thinking of many of our Party comrades and the fallacious thinking of Chen Tu-hsiu, Chang Kuo-tao and others also did not manifest themselves in an antagonistic form, but later they did develop into antagonism. At present the contradiction between correct and incorrect thinking in our Party does not manifest itself in an antago- page 345 nistic form, and if comrades who have committed mistakes can correct them, it will not develop into antagonism. Therefore, the Party must on the one hand wage a serious struggle against erroneous thinking, and on the other give the comrades who have committed errors ample opportunity to wake up. This being the case, excessive struggle is obviously inappropriate. But if the people who have committed errors persist in them and aggravate them, there is the possibility that this contradiction will develop into antagonism. Economically, the contradiction between town and country is an extremely antagonistic one both in capitalist society, where under the rule of the bourgeoisie the

towns ruthlessly plunder the countryside, and in the Kuomintang areas in China, where under the rule of foreign imperialism and the Chinese big comprador bourgeoisie the towns most rapaciously plunder the countryside. But in a socialist country and in our revolutionary base areas, this antagonistic contradiction has changed into one that is non-antagonistic; and when communist society is reached it will be abolished. Lenin said, "Antagonism and contradiction are not at all one and the same. Under socialism, the first will disappear, the second will remain."<sup>[25]</sup> That is to say, antagonism is one form, but not the only form, of the struggle of opposites; the formula of antagonism cannot be arbitrarily applied everywhere.

## VII. CONCLUSION

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- We may now say a few words to sum up. The law of contradiction in things, that is, the law of the unity of opposites, is the fundamental law of nature and of society and therefore also the fundamental law of thought. It stands opposed to the metaphysical world outlook. It represents a great revolution in the history of human knowledge. According to dialectical materialism, contradiction is present in all processes of objectively existing things and of subjective thought and permeates all these processes from beginning to end; this is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction. Each contradiction and each of its aspects have their respective characteristics; this is the particularity and relativity of contradiction. In given conditions, opposites possess identity, and consequently can coexist in a single entity and can transform themselves into each other; this page 346 again is the particularity and relativity of contradiction. But the struggle of opposites is ceaseless, it goes on both when the opposites are coexisting and when they are transforming themselves into each other, and becomes especially conspicuous when they are transforming themselves into one another; this again is the universality and absoluteness of contradiction. In studying the particularity and relativity of contradiction, we must give attention to the distinction

between the principal contradiction and the non-principal contradictions and to the distinction between the principal aspect and the non-principal aspect of a contradiction; in studying the universality of contradiction and the struggle of opposites in contradiction, we must give attention to the distinction between the different forms of struggle. Otherwise we shall make mistakes. If, through study, we achieve a real understanding of the essentials explained above, we shall be able to demolish dogmatist ideas which are contrary to the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism and detrimental to our revolutionary cause, and our comrades with practical experience will be able to organize their experience into principles and avoid repeating empiricist errors. These are a few simple conclusions from our study of the law of contradiction.

<a href="#">From Marx to Mao</a>	
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- page 346     **NOTES**

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- <sup>[1]</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy", *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 249.     <sup>[2]</sup> In his essay "[On the Question of Dialectics](#)", Lenin said, "The splitting in two of a single whole and the cognition of its contradictory parts (see the quotation from Philo on Heraclitus at the beginning of Section 3 'On Cognition' in Lassalle's book on Heraclitus) is the *essence* (one of the 'essentials', one of the principal, if not the principal, characteristics or features) of dialectics." (*Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 357.) In his "Conspectus of Hegel's The Science of Logic", he said, "In brief, dialectics can be defined as the doctrine of the unity of opposites. This grasps the kernel of dialectics, but it requires explanations and development." (*Ibid.*, p. 215.)     <sup>[3]</sup> V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics",

*Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 358. <sup>[4]</sup> A saying of Tung Chung-shu (179-104 B.C.), a well-known exponent of Confucianism in the Han Dynasty. <sup>[5]</sup> Frederick Engels, "Dialectics. Quantity and Quality", *Anti-Duhring*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1959, p. 166. <sup>[6]</sup> V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 357-58. page 347 <sup>[7]</sup> Frederick Engels, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-67. <sup>[8]</sup> V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 357. <sup>[9]</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 358-59. <sup>[10]</sup> See "[Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War](#)", Note [10](#), p. 251 of this volume. <sup>[11]</sup> See *ibid.*, Note [2](#), p. 249 of this volume. <sup>[12]</sup> Wei Cheng (A.D. 580-643) was a statesman and historian of the Tang Dynasty. <sup>[13]</sup> *Shui Hu Chuan (Heroes of the Marshes)*, a famous 14th century Chinese novel, describes a peasant war towards the end of the Northern Sung Dynasty. Chu Village was in the vicinity of Liangshanpo, where Sung Chiang, leader of the peasant uprising and hero of the novel, established his base. Chu Chao-feng, the head of this village, was a despotic landlord. <sup>[14]</sup> V. I. Lenin, "[Once Again on the Trade Unions, the Present Situation and the Mistakes of Trotsky and Bukharin](#)", *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., International Publishers, New York, 1943, Vol. IX, p. 66. <sup>[15]</sup> V. I. Lenin, "[What Is to Be Done?](#)", *Collected Works*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1961, Vol. V, p. 369. <sup>[16]</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Conspectus of Hegel's The Science of Logic", *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, pp. 97-98. <sup>[17]</sup> *Shan Hai Ching (Book of Mountains and Seas)* was written in the era of the Warring States (403-221 B.C.). In one of its fables Kua Fu, a superman, pursued and overtook the sun. But he died of thirst, whereupon his staff was transformed into the forest of Teng. <sup>[18]</sup> Yi is one of the legendary heroes of ancient China, famous for his archery. According to a legend in *Huai Nan Tzu*, compiled in the 2nd century B.C., there were ten suns in the sky in the days of Emperor Yao. To put an end to the damage to vegetation caused by these scorching suns, Emperor Yao ordered Yi to shoot them down. In another legend recorded by Wang Yi (2nd century A.D.), the archer is said to have shot down nine of the ten suns. <sup>[19]</sup> *Hsi Yu Chi (Pilgrimage to the West)* is a 16th century novel, the hero of which is the monkey god Sun Wu-kung. He could miraculously change at will into seventy-two different shapes, such as a bird, a tree and a stone. <sup>[20]</sup> *The Strange Tales of Liao Chai*, written by Pu Sung-ling in the 17th century, is a well-known collection of 431 tales, mostly about ghosts and fox spirits. <sup>[21]</sup> Karl Marx, "[Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy](#)", *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Eng. ed.,

Chicago, 1904, pp. 310-11. <sup>[22]</sup> V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 358. <sup>[23]</sup> The saying "Things that oppose each other also complement each other" first appeared in the *History of the Earlier Han Dynasty* by Pan Ku, a celebrated historian in the 1st century A.D. It has long been a popular saying. <sup>[24]</sup> V. I. Lenin, "On the Question of Dialectics", *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow, 1958, Vol. XXXVIII, p. 358. <sup>[25]</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Remarks on N. I. Bukharin's Economics of the Transitional Period", *Selected Works*, Russ. ed., Moscow-Leningrad, 1931, Vol. XI, p. 357.

# Mao Tse-tung

## ON THE CORRECT HANDLING OF CONTRADICTIONS AMONG THE PEOPLE

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### NOTES

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# ON THE CORRECT HANDLING OF CONTRADICTIONS AMONG THE PEOPLE<sup>[\*]</sup>

*February 27, 1957*

Our general subject is the correct handling of contradictions among the people. For convenience, let us discuss it under twelve sub-headings. Although reference will be made to contradictions between ourselves and the enemy, this discussion will centre on contradictions among the people.

## I. TWO TYPES OF CONTRADICTIONS DIFFERING IN NATURE

Never before has our country been as united as it is today. The victories of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and of the socialist revolution and our achievements in socialist construction have rapidly changed the face of the old China. A still brighter future lies ahead for our motherland. The days of national disunity and chaos which the people detested are gone, never to return. Led by the working class and the Communist Party, our 600 million people, united as one, are engaged in the great task of building socialism. The unification of our country, the unity of our people and the unity of our various nationalities -- these are the basic guarantees for the sure triumph of our cause. However, this does not mean that contradictions no longer exist in our society. To imagine that none exist is a naive idea which is at variance with objective reality. We are confronted with two types of social contradictions -- those between ourselves and the enemy and those among the people. The two are totally different in nature.

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\* Speech at the Eleventh Session (Enlarged) of the Supreme State Conference Comrade Mao Tsetung went over the verbatim record and made certain additions before its publication in the *People's Daily* on June 19, 1957.

To understand these two different types of contradictions correctly, we must first be clear on what is meant by "the people" and what is meant by "the enemy". The concept of

"the people" varies in content in different countries and in different periods of history in a given country. Take our own country for example. During the War of Resistance Against Japan, all those classes, strata and social groups opposing Japanese aggression came within the category of the people, while the Japanese imperialists, their Chinese collaborators and the pro-Japanese elements were all enemies of the people. During the War of Liberation, the U.S. imperialists and their running dogs -- the bureaucrat-capitalists, the landlords and the Kuomintang reactionaries who represented these two classes -- were the enemies of the people, while the other classes, strata and social groups, which opposed them, all came within the category of the people. At the present stage, the period of building socialism, the classes, strata and social groups which favour, support and work for the cause of socialist construction all come within the category of the people, while the social forces and groups which resist the socialist revolution and are hostile to or sabotage socialist construction are all enemies of the people.

The contradictions between ourselves and the enemy are antagonistic contradictions. Within the ranks of the people, the contradictions among the working people are non-antagonistic, while those between the exploited and the exploiting classes have a non-antagonistic as well as an antagonistic aspect. There have always been contradictions among the people, but they are different in content in each period of the revolution and in the period of building socialism. In the conditions prevailing in China today, the contradictions among the people comprise the contradictions within the working class, the contradictions within the peasantry, the contradictions within the intelligentsia, the contradictions between the working class and the peasantry, the contradictions between the workers and peasants on the one hand and the intellectuals on the other, the contradictions between the working class and other sections of the working people on the one hand and the national bourgeoisie on the other, the contradictions within the national bourgeoisie, and so on. Our People's Government is one that genuinely represents the people's interests, it is a government that serves the people. Nevertheless, there are still certain contradictions between this government and the people. These include the contradictions between the interests of the state and the interests of the collective on the one hand and the interests of the individual on the

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other, between democracy and centralism, between the leadership and the led, and the contradictions arising from the bureaucratic style of work of some of the state personnel in their relations with the masses. All these are also contradictions among the people. Generally speaking, the fundamental identity of the people's interests underlies the contradictions among the people.

In our country, the contradiction between the working class and the national bourgeoisie comes under the category of contradictions among the people. By and large, the class struggle between the two is a class struggle within the ranks of the people, because the Chinese national bourgeoisie has a dual character. In the period of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, it had both a revolutionary and a conciliationist side to its character. In the period of the socialist revolution, exploitation of the working class for profit constitutes one side of the character of the national bourgeoisie, while its support of

the Constitution and its willingness to accept socialist transformation constitute the other. The national bourgeoisie differs from the imperialists, the landlords and the bureaucrat-capitalists. The contradiction between the national bourgeoisie and the working class is one between exploiter and exploited, and is by nature antagonistic. But in the concrete conditions of China, this antagonistic contradiction between the two classes, if properly handled, can be transformed into a non-antagonistic one and be resolved by peaceful methods. However, the contradiction between the working class and the national bourgeoisie will change into a contradiction between ourselves and the enemy if we do not handle it properly and do not follow the policy of uniting with, criticizing and educating the national bourgeoisie, or if the national bourgeoisie does not accept this policy of ours.

Since they are different in nature, the contradictions between ourselves and the enemy and the contradictions among the people must be resolved by different methods. To put it briefly, the former entail drawing a clear distinction between ourselves and the enemy, and the latter entail drawing a clear distinction between right and wrong. It is of course true that the distinction between ourselves and the enemy is also one of right and wrong. For example, the question of who is in the right, we or the domestic and foreign reactionaries, the imperialists, the feudalists and bureaucrat-capitalists, is also one of right and wrong, but it is in a different category from questions of right and wrong among the people.

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Our state is a people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the worker-peasant alliance. What is this dictatorship for? Its first function is internal, namely, to suppress the reactionary classes and elements and those exploiters who resist the socialist revolution, to suppress those who try to wreck our socialist construction, or in other words, to resolve the contradictions between ourselves and the internal enemy. For instance, to arrest, try and sentence certain counter-revolutionaries, and to deprive landlords and bureaucrat-capitalists of their right to vote and their freedom of speech for a certain period of time -- all this comes within the scope of our dictatorship. To maintain public order and safeguard the interests of the people, it is necessary to exercise dictatorship as well over thieves, swindlers, murderers, arsonists, criminal gangs and other scoundrels who seriously disrupt public order. The second function of this dictatorship is to protect our country from subversion and possible aggression by external enemies. In such contingencies, it is the task of this dictatorship to resolve the contradiction between ourselves and the external enemy. The aim of this dictatorship is to protect all our people so that they can devote themselves to peaceful labour and make China a socialist country with modern industry, modern agriculture, and modern science and culture. Who is to exercise this dictatorship? Naturally, the working class and the entire people under its leadership. Dictatorship does not apply within the ranks of the people. The people cannot exercise dictatorship over themselves, nor must one section of the people oppress another. Law-breakers among the people will be punished according to law, but this is different in principle from the exercise of dictatorship to suppress enemies of the people. What applies among the people is democratic centralism. Our Constitution lays it down that citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of

speech, the press, assembly, association, procession, demonstration, religious belief, and so on. Our Constitution also provides that the organs of state must practise democratic centralism, that they must rely on the masses and that their personnel must serve the people. Our socialist democracy is the broadest kind of democracy, such as is not to be found in any bourgeois state. Our dictatorship is the people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on the worker-peasant alliance. That is to say, democracy operates within the ranks of the people, while the working class, uniting with all others enjoying civil rights, and in the first place with the peasantry,

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enforces dictatorship over the reactionary classes and elements and all those who resist socialist transformation and oppose socialist construction. By civil rights, we mean, politically, the rights of freedom and democracy.

But this freedom is freedom with leadership and this democracy is democracy under centralized guidance, not anarchy. Anarchy does not accord with the interests or wishes of the people.

Certain people in our country were delighted by the Hungarian incident. They hoped that something similar would happen in China, that thousands upon thousands of people would take to the streets to demonstrate against the People's Government. Their hopes ran counter to the interests of the masses and therefore could not possibly win their support. Deceived by domestic and foreign counter-revolutionaries, a section of the people in Hungary made the mistake of resorting to violence against the people's government, with the result that both the state and the people suffered. The damage done to the country's economy in a few weeks of rioting will take a long time to repair. In our country there were some others who wavered on the question of the Hungarian incident because they were ignorant of the real state of affairs in the world. They think that there is too little freedom under our people's democracy and that there is more freedom under Western parliamentary democracy. They ask for a two-party system as in the West, with one party in office and the other in opposition. But this so-called two-party system is nothing but a device for maintaining the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie; it can never guarantee freedoms to the working people. As a matter of fact, freedom and democracy exist not in the abstract, but only in the concrete. In a society where class struggle exists, if there is freedom for the exploiting classes to exploit the working people, there is no freedom for the working people not to be exploited. If there is democracy for the bourgeoisie, there is no democracy for the proletariat and other working people. The legal existence of the Communist Party is tolerated in some capitalist countries, but only to the extent that it does not endanger the fundamental interests of the bourgeoisie; it is not tolerated beyond that. Those who demand freedom and democracy in the abstract regard democracy as an end and not as a means. Democracy as such sometimes seems to be an end, but it is in fact only a means. Marxism teaches us that democracy is part of the superstructure and belongs to the realm of politics. That is to say, in the last analysis, it serves the economic base. The same is true

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of freedom. Both democracy and freedom are relative, not absolute, and they come into being and develop in specific historical conditions. Within the ranks of the people, democracy is correlative with centralism and freedom with discipline. They are the two opposites of a single entity, contradictory as well as united, and we should not one-sidedly emphasize one to the exclusion of the other. Within the ranks of the people, we cannot do without freedom, nor can we do without discipline; we cannot do without democracy, nor can we do without centralism. This unity of democracy and centralism, of freedom and discipline, constitutes our democratic centralism. Under this system, the people enjoy broad democracy and freedom, but at the same time they have to keep within the bounds of socialist discipline. All this is well understood by the masses.

In advocating freedom with leadership and democracy under centralized guidance, we in no way mean that coercive measures should be taken to settle ideological questions or questions involving the distinction between right and wrong among the people. All attempts to use administrative orders or coercive measures to settle ideological questions or questions of right and wrong are not only ineffective but harmful. We cannot abolish religion by administrative order or force people not to believe in it. We cannot compel people to give up idealism, any more than we can force them to embrace Marxism. The only way to settle questions of an ideological nature or controversial issues among the people is by the democratic method, the method of discussion, criticism, persuasion and education, and not by the method of coercion or repression. To be able to carry on their production and studies effectively and to lead their lives in peace and order, the people want their government and those in charge of production and of cultural and educational organizations to issue appropriate administrative regulations of an obligatory nature. It is common sense that without them the maintenance of public order would be impossible. Administrative regulations and the method of persuasion and education complement each other in resolving contradictions among the people. In fact, administrative regulations for the maintenance of public order must be accompanied by persuasion and education, for in many cases regulations alone will not work.

This democratic method of resolving contradictions among the people was epitomized in 1942 in the formula "unity -- criticism -- unity". To elaborate, that means starting from the desire for unity, resolving contradictions through criticism or struggle, and arriving at

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a new unity on a new basis. In our experience this is the correct method of resolving contradictions among the people. In 1942 we used it to resolve contradictions inside the Communist Party, namely, the contradictions between the dogmatists and the great majority of the membership, and between dogmatism and Marxism. The "Left" dogmatists had resorted to the method of "ruthless struggle and merciless blows" in inner-Party struggle. It was the wrong method. In criticizing "Left" dogmatism, we did not use this old method but adopted a new one, that is, one of starting from the desire for unity, distinguishing between right and wrong through criticism or struggle, and arriving at a new unity on a new basis. This was the method used in the rectification movement of 1942. Within a few years, by the time the Chinese Communist Party held its Seventh National Congress in 1945, unity was achieved throughout the Party as anticipated, and

consequently the people's revolution triumphed. Here, the essential thing is to start from the desire for unity. For without this desire for unity, the struggle, once begun, is certain to throw things into confusion and get out of hand. Wouldn't this be the same as "ruthless struggle and merciless blows"? And what Party unity would there be left? It was precisely this experience that led us to the formula "unity -- criticism -- unity". Or, in other words, "learn from past mistakes to avoid future ones and cure the sickness to save the patient". We extended this method beyond our Party. We applied it with great success in the anti-Japanese base areas in dealing with the relations between the leadership and the masses, between the army and the people, between officers and men, between the different units of the army, and between the different groups of cadres. The use of this method can be traced back to still earlier times in our Party's history. Ever since 1927 when we built our revolutionary armed forces and base areas in the south, this method had been used to deal with the relations between the Party and the masses, between the army and the people, between officers and men, and with other relations among the people. The only difference was that during the anti-Japanese war we employed this method much more consciously. And since the liberation of the whole country, we have employed this same method of "unity -- criticism -- unity" in our relations with the democratic parties and with industrial and commercial circles. Our task now is to continue to extend and make still better use of this method throughout the ranks of the people; we want all our factories, co-operatives, shops,

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schools, offices and people's organizations, in a word, all our 600 million people, to use it in resolving contradictions among themselves.

In ordinary circumstances, contradictions among the people are not antagonistic. But if they are not handled properly, or if we relax our vigilance and lower our guard, antagonism may arise. In a socialist country, a development of this kind is usually only a localized and temporary phenomenon. The reason is that the system of exploitation of man by man has been abolished and the interests of the people are fundamentally identical. The antagonistic actions which took place on a fairly wide scale during the Hungarian incident were the result of the operations of both domestic and foreign counter-revolutionary elements. This was a particular as well as a temporary phenomenon. It was a case of the reactionaries inside a socialist country, in league with the imperialists, attempting to achieve their conspiratorial aims by taking advantage of contradictions among the people to foment dissension and stir up disorder. The lesson of the Hungarian incident merits attention.

Many people seem to think that the use of the democratic method to resolve contradictions among the people is something new. Actually it is not. Marxists have always held that the cause of the proletariat must depend on the masses of the people and that Communists must use the democratic method of persuasion and education when working among the labouring people and must on no account resort to commandism or coercion. The Chinese Communist Party faithfully adheres to this Marxist-Leninist principle. It has been our consistent view that under the people's democratic dictatorship two different methods, one dictatorial and the other democratic, should be used to resolve

the two types of contradictions which differ in nature -- those between ourselves and the enemy and those among the people. This idea has been explained again and again in many Party documents and in speeches by many leading comrades of our Party. In my article "On the People's Democratic Dictatorship", written in 1949, I said, "The combination of these two aspects, democracy for the people and dictatorship over the reactionaries, is the people's democratic dictatorship." I also pointed out that in order to settle problems within the ranks of the people "the method we employ is democratic, the method of persuasion, not of compulsion". Again, in addressing the Second Session of the First National Committee of the Political Consultative Conference in June 1950, I said:

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The people's democratic dictatorship uses two methods. Towards the enemy, it uses the method of dictatorship, that is, for as long a period of time as is necessary it does not permit them to take part in political activity and compels them to obey the law of the People's Government, to engage in labour and, through such labour, be transformed into new men. Towards the people, on the contrary, it uses the method of democracy and not of compulsion, that is, it must necessarily let them take part in political activity and does not compel them to do this or that but uses the method of democracy to educate and persuade. Such education is self-education for the people, and its basic method is criticism and self-criticism.

Thus, on many occasions we have discussed the use of the democratic method for resolving contradictions among the people; furthermore, we have in the main applied it in our work, and many cadres and many other people are familiar with it in practice. Why then do some people now feel that it is a new issue? Because, in the past, the struggle between ourselves and the enemy, both internal and external, was most acute, and contradictions among the people therefore did not attract as much attention as they do today.

Quite a few people fail to make a clear distinction between these two different types of contradictions -- those between ourselves and the enemy and those among the people -- and are prone to confuse the two. It must be admitted that it is sometimes quite easy to do so. We have had instances of such confusion in our work in the past. In the course of cleaning out counter-revolutionaries good people were sometimes mistaken for bad, and such things still happen today. We are able to keep mistakes within bounds because it has been our policy to draw a sharp line between ourselves and the enemy and to rectify mistakes whenever discovered.

Marxist philosophy holds that the law of the unity of opposites is the fundamental law of the universe. This law operates universally, whether in the natural world, in human society, or in man's thinking. Between the opposites in a contradiction there is at once unity and struggle, and it is this that impels things to move and change. Contradictions exist everywhere, but their nature differs in accordance with the different nature of different things. In any given thing, the unity of opposites is conditional, temporary and transitory, and hence relative, whereas the struggle of opposites is absolute. Lenin gave a

very clear exposition of this law. It has come to be understood by a growing number of people in our country. But for many people it is one thing to accept this law and quite another to apply it in examining and dealing with problems. Many dare not openly admit that contradictions still exist among the people of our country, while it is precisely these contradictions that are pushing our society forward. Many do not admit that contradictions still exist in socialist society, with the result that they become irresolute and passive when confronted with social contradictions; they do not understand that socialist society grows more united and consolidated through the ceaseless process of correctly handling and resolving contradictions. For this reason, we need to explain things to our people, and to our cadres in the first place, in order to help them understand the contradictions in socialist society and learn to use correct methods for handling them.

Contradictions in socialist society are fundamentally different from those in the old societies, such as capitalist society. In capitalist society contradictions find expression in acute antagonisms and conflicts, in sharp class struggle; they cannot be resolved by the capitalist system itself and can only be resolved by socialist revolution. The case is quite different with contradictions in socialist society; on the contrary, they are not antagonistic and can be ceaselessly resolved by the socialist system itself.

In socialist society the basic contradictions are still those between the relations of production and the productive forces and between the superstructure and the economic base. However, they are fundamentally different in character and have different features from the contradictions between the relations of production and the productive forces and between the superstructure and the economic base in the old societies. The present social system of our country is far superior to that of the old days. If it were not so, the old system would not have been overthrown and the new system could not have been established. In saying that the socialist relations of production correspond better to the character of the productive forces than did the old relations of production, we mean that they allow the productive forces to develop at a speed unattainable in the old society, so that production can expand steadily and increasingly meet the constantly growing needs of the people. Under the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, the productive forces of the old China grew very slowly. For more than fifty years before liberation, China produced only a few tens of thousands of tons of steel a year, not counting the

output of the northeastern provinces. If these provinces are included the peak annual steel output only amounted to a little over 900,000 tons. In 1949, the national steel output was a little over 100,000 tons. Yet now, a mere seven years after the liberation of our country, steel output already exceeds 4,000,000 tons. In the old China, there was hardly any machine-building industry, to say nothing of the automobile and aircraft industries; now we have all three. When the people overthrew the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, many were not clear as to which way China should head -- towards capitalism or towards socialism. Facts have now provided the answer: Only

socialism can save China. The socialist system has promoted the rapid development of the productive forces of our country, a fact even our enemies abroad have had to acknowledge.

But our socialist system has only just been set up; it is not yet fully established or fully consolidated. In joint state-private industrial and commercial enterprises, capitalists still get a fixed rate of interest on their capital, that is to say, exploitation still exists. So far as ownership is concerned, these enterprises are not yet completely socialist in nature. A number of our agricultural and handicraft producers' co-operatives are still semi-socialist, while even in the fully socialist co-operatives certain specific problems of ownership remain to be solved. Relations between production and exchange in accordance with socialist principles are being gradually established within and between all branches of our economy, and more and more appropriate forms are being sought. The problem of the proper relation of accumulation to consumption within each of the two sectors of the socialist economy -- the one where the means of production are owned by the whole people and the other where the means of production are owned by the collective -- and the problem of the proper relation of accumulation to consumption between the two sectors themselves are complicated problems for which it is not easy to work out a perfectly rational solution all at once. To sum up, socialist relations of production have been established and are in correspondence with the growth of the productive forces, but these relations are still far from perfect, and this imperfection stands in contradiction to the growth of the productive forces. Apart from correspondence as well as contradiction between the relations of production and the growth of the productive forces, there is correspondence as well as contradiction between the superstructure and the economic base. The superstructure, comprising the state system and laws of the people's

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democratic dictatorship and the socialist ideology guided by Marxism-Leninism, plays a positive role in facilitating the victory of socialist transformation and the socialist way of organizing labour; it is in correspondence with the socialist economic base, that is, with socialist relations of production. But the existence of bourgeois ideology, a certain bureaucratic style of work in our state organs and defects in some of the links in our state institutions are in contradiction with the socialist economic base. We must continue to resolve all such contradictions in the light of our specific conditions. Of course, new problems will emerge as these contradictions are resolved. And further efforts will be required to resolve the new contradictions. For instance, a constant process of readjustment through state planning is needed to deal with the contradiction between production and the needs of society, which will long remain an objective reality. Every year our country draws up an economic plan in order to establish a proper ratio between accumulation and consumption and achieve an equilibrium between production and needs. Equilibrium is nothing but a temporary, relative, unity of opposites. By the end of each year, this equilibrium, taken as a whole, is upset by the struggle of opposites; the unity undergoes a change, equilibrium becomes disequilibrium, unity becomes disunity, and once again it is necessary to work out an equilibrium and unity for the next year. Herein lies the superiority of our planned economy. As a matter of fact, this equilibrium, this unity, is partially upset every month or every quarter, and partial readjustments are

called for. Sometimes, contradictions arise and the equilibrium is upset because our subjective arrangements do not conform to objective reality; this is what we call making a mistake. The ceaseless emergence and ceaseless resolution of contradictions constitute the dialectical law of the development of things.

Today, matters stand as follows. The large-scale, turbulent class struggles of the masses characteristic of times of revolution have in the main come to an end, but class struggle is by no means entirely over. While welcoming the new system, the masses are not yet quite accustomed to it. Government personnel are not sufficiently experienced and have to undertake further study and investigation of specific policies. In other words, time is needed for our socialist system to become established and consolidated, for the masses to become accustomed to the new system, and for government personnel to learn and acquire experience. It is therefore imperative for us at this juncture to raise the question of distinguishing contradictions among the people

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from those between ourselves and the enemy, as well as the question of the correct handling of contradictions among the people, in order to unite the people of all nationalities in our country for the new battle, the battle against nature, develop our economy and culture, help the whole nation to traverse this period of transition relatively smoothly, consolidate our new system and build up our new state.

## **II. THE QUESTION OF ELIMINATING COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARIES**

The elimination of counter-revolutionaries is a struggle of oppo sites as between ourselves and the enemy. Among the people, there are some who see this question in a somewhat different light. Two kinds of people hold views differing from ours. Those with a Right deviation in their thinking make no distinction between ourselves and the enemy and take the enemy for our own people. They regard as friends the very persons whom the masses regard as enemies. Those with a "Left" deviation in their thinking magnify contradictions between ourselves and the enemy to such an extent that they take certain contradictions among the people for contradictions with the enemy and regard as counter-revolutionaries persons who are actually not. Both these views are wrong. Neither makes possible the correct handling of the problem of eliminating counter-revolutionaries or a correct assessment of this work.

To form a correct evaluation of our work in eliminating counter revolutionaries, let us see what repercussions the Hungarian incident has had in China. After its occurrence there was some unrest among a section of our intellectuals, but there were no squalls. Why? One reason, it must be said, was our success in eliminating counter-revolutionaries fairly thoroughly.

Of course, the consolidation of our state is not due primarily to the elimination of counter-revolutionaries. It is due primarily to the fact that we have a Communist Party and a Liberation Army both tempered in decades of revolutionary struggle, and a working people likewise so tempered. Our Party and our armed forces are rooted in the masses, have been tempered in the flames of a protracted revolution and have the capacity to fight. Our People's Republic was not built overnight, but developed step by step out of the revolutionary base areas. A number

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of democratic personages have also been tempered in the struggle in varying degrees, and they have gone through troubled times together with us. Some intellectuals were tempered in the struggles against imperialism and reaction; since liberation many have gone through a process of ideological remoulding aimed at enabling them to distinguish clearly between ourselves and the enemy. In addition, the consolidation of our state is due to the fact that our economic measures are basically sound, that the people's life is secure and steadily improving, that our policies towards the national bourgeoisie and other classes are correct, and so on. Nevertheless, our success in eliminating counter-revolutionaries is undoubtedly an important reason for the consolidation of our state. For all these reasons, with few exceptions our college students are patriotic and support socialism and did not give way to unrest during the Hungarian incident, even though many of them come from families of non-working people. The same was true of the national bourgeoisie, to say nothing of the basic masses -- the workers and peasants.

After liberation, we rooted out a number of counter-revolutionaries. Some were sentenced to death for major crimes. This was absolutely necessary, it was the demand of the masses, and it was done to free them from long years of oppression by the counter-revolutionaries and all kinds of local tyrants, in other words, to liberate the productive forces. If we had not done so, the masses would not have been able to lift their heads. Since 1956, however, there has been a radical change in the situation. In the country as a whole, the bulk of the counter-revolutionaries have been cleared out. Our basic task has changed from unfettering the productive forces to protecting and expanding them in the context of the new relations of production. Because of failure to understand that our present policy fits the present situation and our past policy fitted the past situation, some people want to make use of the present policy to reverse past decisions and to negate the tremendous success we achieved in eliminating counter-revolutionaries. This is completely wrong, and the masses will not permit it.

In our work of eliminating counter-revolutionaries successes were the main thing, but there were also mistakes. In some cases there were excesses and in others counter-revolutionaries slipped through our net. Our policy is: "Counter-revolutionaries must be eliminated wherever found, mistakes must be corrected whenever discovered." Our line in the work of eliminating counter-revolutionaries is the

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mass line. Of course, even with the mass line mistakes may still occur, but they will be fewer and easier to correct. The masses gain experience through struggle. From the things done correctly they gain the experience of how things are done correctly. From the mistakes made they gain the experience of how mistakes are made.

Wherever mistakes have been discovered in the work of eliminating counter-revolutionaries, steps have been or are being taken to correct them. Those not yet discovered will be corrected as soon as they come to light. Exoneration or rehabilitation should be made known as widely as were the original wrong decisions. I propose that a comprehensive review of the work of eliminating counter-revolutionaries be made this year or next to sum up experience, promote justice and counter unjust attacks. Nationally, this review should be in the charge of the Standing Committees of the National People's Congress and of the National Committee of the Political Consultative Conference and, locally, in the charge of the people's councils and the committees of the Political Consultative Conference in the provinces and municipalities. In this review, we must help the large numbers of cadres and activists involved in the work, and not pour cold water on them. It would not be right to dampen their spirits. Nonetheless, wrongs must be righted when discovered. This must be the attitude of all the public security organs, the procurators' offices and the judicial departments, prisons and agencies charged with the reform of criminals through labour. We hope that wherever possible members of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, members of the National Committee of the Political Consultative Conference and people's deputies will take part in this review. This will be of help in perfecting our legal system and in dealing correctly with counter-revolutionaries and other criminals.

The present situation with regard to counter-revolutionaries can be described in these words: There still are counter-revolutionaries, but not many. In the first place, there still are counter-revolutionaries. Some people say that there aren't any more left and all is well and that we can therefore lay our heads on our pillows and just drop off to sleep. But this is not the way things are. The fact is, there still are counter-revolutionaries (of course, that is not to say you'll find them everywhere and in every organization), and we must continue to fight them. It must be understood that the hidden counter-revolutionaries still at large will not take things lying down, but will certainly seize every opportunity to make trouble. The U.S. imperialists and the Chiang

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Kai-shek clique are constantly sending in secret agents to carry on disruptive activities. Even after all the existing counter-revolutionaries have been combed out, new ones are likely to emerge. If we drop our guard, we shall be badly fooled and shall suffer severely. Counter-revolutionaries must be rooted out with a firm hand wherever they are found making trouble. But, taking the country as a whole, there are certainly not many counter-revolutionaries. It would be wrong to say that there are still large numbers of counter-revolutionaries in China. Acceptance of that view would likewise result in a mess.

### III. THE QUESTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE TRANSFORMATION OF AGRICULTURE

We have a rural population of over 500 million, so how our peasants fare has a most important bearing on the development of our economy and the consolidation of our state power. In my view, the situation is basically sound. The co-operative transformation of agriculture has been successfully accomplished, and this has resolved the great contradiction in our country between socialist industrialization and the individual peasant economy. As the co-operative transformation of agriculture was completed so rapidly, some people were worried and wondered whether something untoward might occur. There are indeed some faults, but fortunately they are not serious and on the whole the movement is healthy. The peasants are working with a will, and last year there was an increase in the country's grain output despite the worst floods, droughts and gales in years. Now there are people who are stirring up a miniature typhoon, they are saying that co-operation is no good, that there is nothing superior about it. Is co-operation superior or not? Among the documents distributed at today's meeting there is one about the Wang Kuo-fan Co-operative in Tsunhua County, Hopei Province, which I suggest you read. This co-operative is situated in a hilly region which was very poor in the past and which for a number of years depended on relief grain from the People's Government. When the co-operative was first set up in 1953, people called it the "paupers' co-op". But it has become better off year by year, and now, after four years of hard struggle, most of its households have reserves of grain. What was possible for this co-operative should also be possible for others to achieve under normal conditions in the same length of time or

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a little longer. Clearly there are no grounds for saying that something has gone wrong with agricultural co-operation.

It is also clear that it takes hard struggle to build co-operatives. New things always have to experience difficulties and setbacks as they grow. It is sheer fantasy to imagine that the cause of socialism is all plain sailing and easy success, with no difficulties and setbacks, or without the exertion of tremendous efforts.

Who are the active supporters of the co-operatives? The overwhelming majority of the poor and lower-middle peasants who constitute more than 70 per cent of the rural population. Most of the other peasants are also placing their hopes on the co-operatives. Only a very small minority are really dissatisfied. Quite a number of persons have failed to analyse this situation and to make an over-all examination of the achievements and shortcomings of the co-operatives and the causes of these shortcomings; instead they have taken part of the picture or one side of the matter for the whole, and consequently a miniature typhoon has been stirred up among some people, who are saying that the co-operatives are not superior.

How long will it take to consolidate the co-operatives and for this talk about their not being superior to wind up? Judging from the experience of the growth of many co-

operatives, it will probably take five years or a little longer. As most of our co-operatives are only a little over a year old, it would be unreasonable to ask too much of them. In my view, we will be doing well enough if the co-operatives can be consolidated during the Second Five-Year Plan after being established in the First.

The co-operatives are now in the process of gradual consolidation. There are certain contradictions that remain to be resolved, such as those between the state and the co-operatives and those in and between the co-operatives themselves.

To resolve these contradictions we must pay constant attention to the problems of production and distribution. On the question of production, the co-operative economy must be subject to the unified economic planning of the state, while retaining a certain flexibility and independence that do not run counter to the state's unified plan or its policies, laws and regulations. At the same time, every household in a co-operative must comply with the over-all plan of the co-operative or production team to which it belongs, though it may make its own appropriate plans in regard to land allotted for personal needs and to other individually operated economic undertakings. On the question

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of distribution, we must take the interests of the state, the collective and the individual into account. We must properly handle the three-way relationship between the state agricultural tax, the co-operative's accumulation fund and the peasants' personal income, and take constant care to make readjustments so as to resolve contradictions between them. Accumulation is essential for both the state and the co-operative but in neither case should it be excessive. We should do everything possible to enable the peasants in normal years to raise their personal incomes annually through increased production.

Many people say that the peasants lead a hard life. Is this true? In one sense it is. That is to say, because the imperialists and their agents oppressed and exploited us for over a century, ours is an impoverished country and the standard of living not only of our peasants but of our workers and intellectuals is still low. We will need several decades of strenuous effort gradually to raise the standard of living of our people as a whole. In this context, it is right to say that the peasants lead a "hard life". But in another sense it is not true. We refer to the allegation that in the seven years since liberation it is only the life of the workers that has been improved and not that of the peasants. As a matter of fact, with very few exceptions, there has been some improvement in the life of both the peasants and the workers. Since liberation, the peasants have been free from landlord exploitation and their production has increased annually. Take grain crops. In 1949, the country's output was only something over 210,000 million catties. By 1956, it had risen to more than 360,000 million catties, an increase of nearly 150,000 million catties. The state agricultural tax is not heavy, only amounting to something over 30,000 million catties a year. State purchases of grain from the peasants at standard prices only amount to a little over 50,000 million catties a year. These two items together total over 80,000 million catties. Furthermore, more than half this grain is sold back to the villages and nearby towns. Obviously, no one can say that there has been no improvement in the life of the peasants. In order to help agriculture to develop and the co-operatives to become

consolidated, we are planning to stabilize the total annual amount of the grain tax plus the grain purchased by the state at somewhat more than 80,000 million catties within a few years. In this way, the small number of grain-deficient households still found in the countryside will stop being short, all peasant households, except some raising industrial crops, will either have grain reserves or at least become self-sufficient, there will no longer be poor peasants in the countryside, and the

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standard of living of the entire peasantry will reach or surpass the middle peasants' level. It is not right simply to compare a peasant's average annual income with a worker's and jump to the conclusion that one is too low and the other too high. Since the labour productivity of the workers is much higher than that of the peasants and the latter's cost of living is much lower than that of workers in the cities, the workers cannot be said to have received special favours from the state. The wages of a small number of workers and some state personnel are in fact a little too high, the peasants have reason to be dissatisfied with this, and it is necessary to make certain appropriate adjustments according to specific circumstances.

#### **IV. THE QUESTION OF THE INDUSTRIALISTS AND BUSINESSMEN**

With regard to the transformation of our social system, the year 1956 saw the conversion of privately owned industrial and commercial enterprises into joint state-private enterprises as well as the co-operative transformation of agriculture and handicrafts. The speed and smoothness of this conversion were closely bound up with our treating the contradiction between the working class and the national bourgeoisie as a contradiction among the people. Has this class contradiction been completely resolved? No, not yet. That will take a considerable period of time. However, some people say the capitalists have been so remoulded that they are now not very different from the workers and that further remoulding is unnecessary. Others go so far as to say that the capitalists are even better than the workers. Still others ask, if remoulding is necessary, why isn't it necessary for the working class? Are these opinions correct? Of course not.

In the building of a socialist society, everybody needs remoulding -- the exploiters and also the working people. Who says it isn't necessary for the working class? Of course, the remoulding of the exploiters is essentially different from that of the working people, and the two must not be confused. The working class remoulds the whole of society in class struggle and in the struggle against nature, and in the process it remoulds itself. It must ceaselessly learn in the course of work, gradually overcome its shortcomings and never stop doing so. Take for example those of us present here. Many of us make some

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progress each year, that is to say, we are remoulding ourselves each year. For myself, I used to have all sorts of non-Marxist ideas, and it was only later that I embraced Marxism. I learned a little Marxism from books and took the first steps in remoulding my ideology, but it was mainly through taking part in class struggle over the years that I came to be remoulded. And if I am to make further progress, I must continue to learn, otherwise I shall lag behind. Can the capitalists be so good that they need no more remoulding?

Some people contend that the Chinese bourgeoisie no longer has two sides to its character, but only one side. Is this true? No. While members of the bourgeoisie have become administrative personnel in joint state-private enterprises and are being transformed from exploiters into working people living by their own labour, they still get a fixed rate of interest on their capital in the joint enterprises, that is, they have not yet cut themselves loose from the roots of exploitation. Between them and the working class there is still a considerable gap in ideology, sentiments and habits of life. How can it be said that they no longer have two sides to their character? Even when they stop receiving their fixed interest payments and the "bourgeois" label is removed, they will still need ideological remoulding for quite some time. If, as is alleged, the bourgeoisie no longer has a dual character, then the capitalists will no longer have the task of studying and of remoulding themselves.

It must be said that this view does not tally either with the actual situation of our industrialists and businessmen or with what most of them want. During the past few years, most of them have been willing to study and have made marked progress. As their thorough remoulding can be achieved only in the course of work, they should engage in labour together with the staff and workers in the enterprises and regard these enterprises as the chief places in which to remould themselves. But it is also important for them to change some of their old views through study. Such study should be on a voluntary basis. When they return to the enterprises after being in study groups for some weeks, many industrialists and businessmen find that they have more of a common language with the workers and the representatives of state ownership, and so there are better possibilities for working together. They know from personal experience that it is good for them to keep on studying and remoulding themselves. The idea mentioned above that study and remoulding are not necessary reflects the views

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not of the majority of industrialists and businessmen but of only a small number.

## **V. THE QUESTION OF THE INTELLECTUALS**

The contradictions within the ranks of the people in our country also find expression among the intellectuals. The several million intellectuals who worked for the old society have come to serve the new society, and the question that now arises is how they can fit

in with the needs of the new society and how we can help them to do so. This, too, is a contradiction among the people.

Most of our intellectuals have made marked progress during the last seven years. They have shown they are in favour of the socialist system. Many are diligently studying Marxism, and some have become communists. The latter, though at present small in number, are steadily increasing. Of course, there are still some intellectuals who are sceptical about socialism or do not approve of it, but they are a minority.

China needs the services of as many intellectuals as possible for the colossal task of building socialism. We should trust those who are really willing to serve the cause of socialism and should radically improve our relations with them and help them solve the problems requiring solution, so that they can give full play to their talents. Many of our comrades are not good at uniting with intellectuals. They are stiff in their attitude towards them, lack respect for their work and interfere in certain scientific and cultural matters where interference is unwarranted. We must do away with all such shortcomings.

Although large numbers of intellectuals have made progress, they should not be complacent. They must continue to remould themselves, gradually shed their bourgeois world outlook and acquire the proletarian, communist world outlook so that they can fully fit in with the needs of the new society and unite with the workers and peasants. The change in world outlook is fundamental, and up to now most of our intellectuals cannot be said to have accomplished it. We hope that they will continue to make progress and that in the course of work and study they will gradually acquire the communist world outlook, grasp Marxism-Leninism and become integrated with the workers and peasants. We hope they will not stop halfway, or, what is worse, slide back, for there will be no future for them in going backwards. Since

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our country's social system has changed and the economic base of bourgeois ideology has in the main been destroyed, not only is it imperative for large numbers of our intellectuals to change their world outlook, but it is also possible for them to do so. But a thorough change in world outlook takes a very long time, and we should spare no pains in helping them and must not be impatient. Actually, there are bound to be some who ideologically will always be reluctant to accept Marxism-Leninism and communism. We should not be too exacting in what we demand of them; as long as they comply with the requirements laid down by the state and engage in legitimate pursuits, we should let them have opportunities for suitable work.

Among students and intellectuals there has recently been a falling off in ideological and political work, and some unhealthy tendencies have appeared. Some people seem to think that there is no longer any need to concern themselves with politics or with the future of the motherland and the ideals of mankind. It seems as if Marxism, once all the rage, is currently not so much in fashion. To counter these tendencies, we must strengthen our ideological and political work. Both students and intellectuals should study hard. In addition to the study of their specialized subjects, they must make progress

ideologically and politically, which means they should study Marxism, current events and politics. Not to have a correct political orientation is like not having a soul. The ideological remoulding in the past was necessary and has yielded positive results. But it was carried on in a somewhat rough-and-ready fashion and the feelings of some people were hurt -- this was not good. We must avoid such shortcomings in future. All departments and organizations should shoulder their responsibilities for ideological and political work. This applies to the Communist Party, the Youth League, government departments in charge of this work, and especially to heads of educational institutions and teachers. Our educational policy must enable everyone who receives an education to develop morally, intellectually and physically and become a worker with both socialist consciousness and culture. We must spread the idea of building our country through diligence and thrift. We must help all our young people to understand that ours is still a very poor country, that we cannot change this situation radically in a short time, and that only through decades of united effort by our younger generation and all our people, working with their own hands, can China be made prosperous and strong. The establishment of our socialist system has opened the road leading to the ideal society of the future, but to

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translate this ideal into reality needs hard work. Some of our young people think that everything ought to be perfect once a socialist society is established and that they should be able to enjoy a happy life ready-made, without working for it. This is unrealistic.

## **VI. THE QUESTION OF THE MINORITY NATIONALITIES**

The minority nationalities in our country number more than thirty million. Although they constitute only 6 per cent of the total population, they inhabit extensive regions which comprise 50 to 60 per cent of China's total area. It is thus imperative to foster good relations between the Han people and the minority nationalities. The key to this question lies in overcoming Han chauvinism. At the same time, efforts should also be made to overcome local-nationality chauvinism, wherever it exists among the minority nationalities. Both Han chauvinism and local-nationality chauvinism are harmful to the unity of the nationalities; they represent one kind of contradiction among the people which should be resolved. We have already done some work to this end. In most of the areas inhabited by minority nationalities, there has been considerable improvement in the relations between the nationalities, but a number of problems remain to be solved. In some areas, both Han chauvinism and local-nationality chauvinism still exist to a serious degree, and this demands full attention. As a result of the efforts of the people of all nationalities over the last few years, democratic reforms and socialist transformation have in the main been completed in most of the minority nationality areas. Democratic reforms have not yet been carried out in Tibet because conditions are not ripe. According to the seventeen-article agreement reached between the Central People's Government and the

local government of Tibet, the reform of the social system must be carried out, but the timing can only be decided when the great majority of the people of Tibet and the local leading public figures consider it opportune, and one should not be impatient. It has now been decided not to proceed with democratic reforms in Tibet during the period of the Second Five-Year Plan. Whether to proceed with them in the period of the Third Five-Year Plan can only be decided in the light of the situation at the time.

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## VII. OVER-ALL CONSIDERATION AND PROPER ARRANGEMENT

By over-all consideration we mean consideration that embraces the 600 million people of our country. In drawing up plans, handling affairs or thinking over problems, we must proceed from the fact that China has a population of 600 million, and we must never forget this fact. Why do we make a point of this? Is it possible that there are people who are still unaware that we have a population of 600 million? Of course, everyone knows this, but when it comes to actual practice, some people forget all about it and act as though the fewer the people, the smaller the circle, the better. Those who have this "small circle" mentality abhor the idea of bringing every positive factor into play, of uniting with everyone who can be united with, and of doing everything possible to turn negative factors into positive ones so as to serve the great cause of building a socialist society. I hope these people will take a wider view and fully recognize that we have a population of 600 million, that this is an objective fact, and that it is an asset for us. Our large population is a good thing, but of course it also involves certain difficulties. Construction is going ahead vigorously on all fronts and very successfully too, but in the present transition period of tremendous social change there are still many difficult problems. Progress and at the same time difficulties -- this is a contradiction. However, not only should all such contradictions be resolved, but they definitely can be. Our guiding principle is over-all consideration and proper arrangement. Whatever the problem -- whether it concerns food, natural calamities, employment, education, the intellectuals, the united front of all patriotic forces, the minority nationalities, or anything else -- we must always proceed from the standpoint of over-all consideration, which embraces the whole people, and must make the proper arrangement, after consultation with all the circles concerned, in the light of what is feasible at a particular time and place. On no account should we complain that there are too many people, that others are backward, that things are troublesome and hard to handle, and close the door on them. Do I mean to say that the government alone must take care of everyone and everything? Of course not. In many cases, they can be left to the direct care of the public organizations or the masses -- both are quite capable of devising many good ways of handling them. This also comes

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within the scope of the principle of over-all consideration and proper arrangement. We should give guidance on this to the public organizations and the people everywhere.

**VIII. ON "LET A HUNDRED FLOWERS BLOSSOM  
LET A HUNDRED SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT CONTEND"  
AND "LONG-TERM COEXISTENCE  
AND MUTUAL SUPERVISION"**

"Let a hundred flowers blossom, let a hundred schools of thought contend" and "long-term coexistence and mutual supervision" -- how did these slogans come to be put forward? They were put forward in the light of China's specific conditions, in recognition of the continued existence of various kinds of contradictions in socialist society and in response to the country's urgent need to speed up its economic and cultural development. Letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend is the policy for promoting progress in the arts and sciences and a flourishing socialist culture in our land. Different forms and styles in art should develop freely and different schools in science should contend freely. We think that it is harmful to the growth of art and science if administrative measures are used to impose one particular style of art or school of thought and to ban another. Questions of right and wrong in the arts and sciences should be settled through free discussion in artistic and scientific circles and through practical work in these fields. They should not be settled in an over-simple manner. A period of trial is often needed to determine whether something is right or wrong. Throughout history, at the outset new and correct things often failed to win recognition from the majority of people and had to develop by twists and turns through struggle. Often, correct and good things were first regarded not as fragrant flowers but as poisonous weeds. Copernicus' theory of the solar system and Darwin's theory of evolution were once dismissed as erroneous and had to win out over bitter opposition. Chinese history offers many similar examples. In a socialist society, the conditions for the growth of the new are radically different from and far superior to those in the old society. Nevertheless, it often happens that new, rising forces are held back and sound ideas stifled. Besides, even in the absence of their deliberate suppression, the growth of new

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things may be hindered simply through lack of discernment. It is therefore necessary to be careful about questions of right and wrong in the arts and sciences, to encourage free discussion and avoid hasty conclusions. We believe that such an attitude will help ensure a relatively smooth development of the arts and sciences.

Marxism, too, has developed through struggle. At the beginning, Marxism was subjected to all kinds of attack and regarded as a poisonous weed. This is still the case in many parts of the world. In the socialist countries, it enjoys a different position. But non-Marxist and, what is more, anti-Marxist ideologies exist even in these countries. In

China, although socialist transformation has in the main been completed as regards the system of ownership, and although the large-scale, turbulent class struggles of the masses characteristic of times of revolution have in the main come to an end, there are still remnants of the overthrown landlord and comprador classes, there is still a bourgeoisie, and the remoulding of the petty bourgeoisie has only just started. Class struggle is by no means over. The class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the class struggle between the various political forces, and the class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie in the ideological field will still be protracted and tortuous and at times even very sharp. The proletariat seeks to transform the world according to its own world outlook, and so does the bourgeoisie. In this respect, the question of which will win out, socialism or capitalism, is not really settled yet. Marxists remain a minority among the entire population as well as among the intellectuals. Therefore, Marxism must continue to develop through struggle. Marxism can develop only through struggle, and this is not only true of the past and the present, it is necessarily true of the future as well. What is correct invariably develops in the course of struggle with what is wrong. The true, the good and the beautiful always exist by contrast with the false, the evil and the ugly, and grow in struggle with them. As soon as something erroneous is rejected and a particular truth accepted by mankind, new truths begin to struggle with new errors. Such struggles will never end. This is the law of development of truth and, naturally, of Marxism.

It will take a fairly long period of time to decide the issue in the ideological struggle between socialism and capitalism in our country. The reason is that the influence of the bourgeoisie and of the intellectuals who come from the old society, the very influence which constitutes their class ideology, will persist in our country for a

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long time. If this is not understood at all or is insufficiently understood, the gravest of mistakes will be made and the necessity of waging struggle in the ideological field will be ignored. Ideological struggle differs from other forms of struggle, since the only method used is painstaking reasoning, and not crude coercion. Today, socialism is in an advantageous position in the ideological struggle. The basic power of the state is in the hands of the working people led by the proletariat. The Communist Party is strong and its prestige high. Although there are defects and mistakes in our work, every fair-minded person can see that we are loyal to the people, that we are both determined and able to build up our motherland together with them, and that we have already achieved great successes and will achieve still greater ones. The vast majority of the bourgeoisie and the intellectuals who come from the old society are patriotic and are willing to serve their flourishing socialist motherland; they know they will have nothing to fall back on and their future cannot possibly be bright if they turn away from the socialist cause and from the working people led by the Communist Party.

People may ask, since Marxism is accepted as the guiding ideology by the majority of the people in our country, can it be criticized? Certainly it can. Marxism is scientific truth and fears no criticism. If it did, and if it could be overthrown by criticism, it would be worthless. In fact, aren't the idealists criticizing Marxism every day and in every way?

And those who harbour bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideas and do not wish to change -- aren't they also criticizing Marxism in every way? Marxists should not be afraid of criticism from any quarter. Quite the contrary, they need to temper and develop themselves and win new positions in the teeth of criticism and in the storm and stress of struggle. Fighting against wrong ideas is like being vaccinated -- a man develops greater immunity from disease as a result of vaccination. Plants raised in hothouses are unlikely to be hardy. Carrying out the policy of letting a hundred flowers blossom and a hundred schools of thought contend will not weaken, but strengthen, the leading position of Marxism in the ideological field.

What should our policy be towards non-Marxist ideas? As far as unmistakable counter-revolutionaries and saboteurs of the socialist cause are concerned, the matter is easy, we simply deprive them of their freedom of speech. But incorrect ideas among the people are quite a different matter. Will it do to ban such ideas and deny them any opportunity for expression? Certainly not. It is not only futile but

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very harmful to use crude methods in dealing with ideological questions among the people, with questions about man's mental world. You may ban the expression of wrong ideas, but the ideas will still be there. On the other hand, if correct ideas are pampered in hothouses and never exposed to the elements and immunized against disease, they will not win out against erroneous ones. Therefore, it is only by employing the method of discussion, criticism and reasoning that we can really foster correct ideas and overcome wrong ones, and that we can really settle issues.

It is inevitable that the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie will give expression to their own ideologies. It is inevitable that they will stubbornly assert themselves on political and ideological questions by every possible means. You cannot expect them to do otherwise. We should not use the method of suppression and prevent them from expressing themselves, but should allow them to do so and at the same time argue with them and direct appropriate criticism at them. Undoubtedly, we must criticize wrong ideas of every description. It certainly would not be right to refrain from criticism, look on while wrong ideas spread unchecked and allow them to dominate the field. Mistakes must be criticized and poisonous weeds fought wherever they crop up. However, such criticism should not be dogmatic, and the metaphysical method should not be used, but instead the effort should be made to apply the dialectical method. What is needed is scientific analysis and convincing argument. Dogmatic criticism settles nothing. We are against poisonous weeds of whatever kind, but we must carefully distinguish between what is really a poisonous weed and what is really a fragrant flower. Together with the masses of the people, we must learn to differentiate carefully between the two and use correct methods to fight the poisonous weeds.

At the same time as we criticize dogmatism, we must direct our attention to criticizing revisionism. Revisionism, or Right opportunism, is a bourgeois trend of thought that is even more dangerous than dogmatism. The revisionists, the Right opportunists, pay lip-service to Marxism; they too attack "dogmatism". But what they are really attacking is

the quintessence of Marxism. They oppose or distort materialism and dialectics, oppose or try to weaken the people's democratic dictatorship and the leading role of the Communist Party, and oppose or try to weaken socialist transformation and socialist construction. Even after the basic victory of our socialist revolution, there will still be a number of people in our society who vainly hope

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to restore the capitalist system and are sure to fight the working class on every front, including the ideological one. And their right-hand men in this struggle are the revisionists.

Literally the two slogans -- let a hundred flowers blossom and let a hundred schools of thought contend -- have no class character; the proletariat can turn them to account, and so can the bourgeoisie or others. Different classes, strata and social groups each have their own views on what are fragrant flowers and what are poisonous weeds. Then, from the point of view of the masses, what should be the criteria today for distinguishing fragrant flowers from poisonous weeds? In their political activities, how should our people judge whether a person's words and deeds are right or wrong? On the basis of the principles of our Constitution, the will of the overwhelming majority of our people and the common political positions which have been proclaimed on various occasions by our political parties, we consider that, broadly speaking, the criteria should be as follows:

- (1) Words and deeds should help to unite, and not divide, the people of all our nationalities.
- (2) They should be beneficial, and not harmful, to socialist transformation and socialist construction.
- (3) They should help to consolidate, and not undermine or weaken, the people's democratic dictatorship.
- (4) They should help to consolidate, and not undermine or weaken, democratic centralism.
- (5) They should help to strengthen, and not shake off or weaken, the leadership of the Communist Party.
- (6) They should be beneficial, and not harmful, to international socialist unity and the unity of the peace-loving people of the world.

Of these six criteria, the most important are the two about the socialist path and the leadership of the Party. These criteria are put forward not to hinder but to foster the free discussion of questions among the people. Those who disapprove these criteria can still state their own views and argue their case. However, so long as the majority of the people have clear-cut criteria to go by, criticism and self-criticism can be conducted along proper lines, and these criteria can be applied to people's words and deeds to determine whether they are right or wrong, whether they are fragrant flowers or poisonous weeds. These are political criteria. Naturally, to judge the validity of scientific

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theories or assess the aesthetic value of works of art, other relevant criteria are needed. But these six political criteria are applicable to all activities in the arts and sciences. In a socialist country like ours, can there possibly be any useful scientific or artistic activity which runs counter to these political criteria?

The views set out above are based on China's specific historical conditions. Conditions vary in different socialist countries and with different Communist Parties. Therefore, we do not maintain that they should or must adopt the Chinese way.

The slogan "long-term coexistence and mutual supervision" is also a product of China's specific historical conditions. It was not put forward all of a sudden, but had been in the making for several years. The idea of long-term coexistence had been there for a long time. When the socialist system was in the main established last year, the slogan was formulated in explicit terms. Why should the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois democratic parties be allowed to exist side by side with the party of the working class over a long period of time? Because we have no reason for not adopting the policy of long-term coexistence with all those political parties which are truly devoted to the task of uniting the people for the cause of socialism and which enjoy the trust of the people. As early as June 1950, at the Second Session of the First National Committee of the Political Consultative Conference, I put the matter in this way:

The people and their government have no reason to reject anyone or deny him the opportunity of making a living and rendering service to the country, provided he is really willing to serve the people and provided he really helped and did a good turn when the people were faced with difficulties and keeps on doing good without giving up halfway.

What I was discussing here was the political basis for the long-term coexistence of the various parties. It is the desire as well as the policy of the Communist Party to exist side by side with the democratic parties for a long time to come. But whether the democratic parties can long remain in existence depends not merely on the desire of the Communist Party but on how well they acquit themselves and on whether they enjoy the trust of the people. Mutual supervision among the various parties is also a long-established fact, in the sense that they have long been advising and criticizing each other. Mutual supervision is obviously not a one-sided matter; it means that the

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Communist Party can exercise supervision over the democratic parties, and vice versa. Why should the democratic parties be allowed to exercise supervision over the Communist Party? Because a party as much as an individual has great need to hear opinions different from its own. We all know that supervision over the Communist Party is mainly exercised by the working people and the Party membership. But it augments the benefit to us to have supervision by the democratic parties too. Of course, the advice and criticism exchanged by the Communist Party and the democratic parties will play a positive supervisory role only when they conform to the six political criteria given above. Thus, we hope that in order to fit in with the needs of the new society, all the democratic

parties will pay attention to ideological remoulding and strive for long-term coexistence with the Communist Party and mutual supervision.

## **IX. ON THE QUESTION OF DISTURBANCES CREATED BY SMALL NUMBERS OF PEOPLE**

In 1956, small numbers of workers or students in certain places went on strike. The immediate cause of these disturbances was the failure to satisfy some of their demands for material benefits, of which some should and could have been met, while others were out of place or excessive and therefore could not be met for the time being. But a more important cause was bureaucracy on the part of the leadership. In some cases, the responsibility for such bureaucratic mistakes fell on the higher authorities, and those at the lower levels were not to blame. Another cause of these disturbances was lack of ideological and political education among the workers and students. The same year, in some agricultural co-operatives there were also disturbances created by a few of their members, and here too the main causes were bureaucracy on the part of the leadership and lack of educational work among the masses.

It should be admitted that among the masses some are prone to pay attention to immediate, partial and personal interests and do not understand, or do not sufficiently understand, long-range, national and collective interests. Because of lack of political and social experience, quite a number of young people cannot readily see the

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contrast between the old China and the new, and it is not easy for them thoroughly to comprehend the hardships our people went through in the struggle to free themselves from the oppression of the imperialists and Kuomintang reactionaries, or the long years of hard work needed before a hne socialist society can be established. That is why we must constantly carry on lively and effective political education among the masses and should always tell them the truth about the difficulties that crop up and discuss with them how to surmount these difficulties.

We do not approve of disturbances, because contradictions among the people can be resolved through the method of "unity -- criticism -- unity", while disturbances are bound to cause some losses and are not conducive to the advance of socialism. We believe that the masses of the people support socialism, conscientiously observe discipline and are reasonable, and will certainly not take part in disturbances without cause. But this does not mean that the possibility of disturbances by the masses no longer exists in our country. On this question, we should pay attention to the following. (1) In order to root out the causes of disturbances, we must resolutely overcome bureaucracy, greatly improve ideological and political education, and deal with all contradictions properly. If this is done, generally speaking there will be no disturbances. (2) When disturbances do occur as a result of poor work on our part, then we should guide those involved onto the

correct path, use the disturbances as a special means for improving our work and educating the cadres and the masses, and find solutions to those problems which were previously left unsolved. In handling any disturbance, we should take pains and not use over-simple methods, or hastily declare the matter closed. The ringleaders in disturbances should not be summarily expelled, except for those who have committed criminal offences or are active counter-revolutionaries and have to be punished by law. In a large country like ours, there is nothing to get alarmed about if small numbers of people create disturbances; on the contrary, such disturbances will help us get rid of bureaucracy.

There are also a small number of individuals in our society who, flouting the public interest, wilfully break the law and commit crimes. They are apt to take advantage of our policies and distort them, and deliberately put forward unreasonable demands in order to incite the masses, or deliberately spread rumours to create trouble and disrupt public order. We do not propose to let these individuals have their way. On the contrary, proper legal action must be taken

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against them. Punishing them is the demand of the masses, and it would run counter to the popular will if they were not punished.

## **X. CAN BAD THINGS BE TURNED INTO GOOD THINGS?**

In our society, as I have said, disturbances by the masses are bad, and we do not approve of them. But when disturbances do occur, they enable us to learn lessons, to overcome bureaucracy and to educate the cadres and the masses. In this sense, bad things can be turned into good things. Disturbances thus have a dual character. Every disturbance can be regarded in this way.

Everybody knows that the Hungarian incident was not a good thing. But it too had a dual character. Because our Hungarian comrades took proper action in the course of the incident, what was a bad thing has eventually turned into a good one. Hungary is now more consolidated than ever, and all other countries in the socialist camp have also learned a lesson.

Similarly, the world-wide campaign against communism and the people which took place in the latter half of 1956 was of course a bad thing. But it served to educate and temper the Communist Parties and the working class in all countries, and thus it has turned into a good thing. In the storm and stress of this period, a number of people in many countries withdrew from the Communist Party. Withdrawal from the Party reduces its membership and is, of course, a bad thing. But there is a good side to it, too. Vacillating elements who are unwilling to carry on have withdrawn, and the vast majority

who are staunch Party members can be the better united for struggle. Why isn't this a good thing?

To sum up, we must learn to look at problems from all sides, seeing the reverse as well as the obverse side of things. In given conditions, a bad thing can lead to good results and a good thing to bad results. More than two thousand years ago Lao Tzu said: "Good fortune lieth within bad, bad fortune lurketh within good."<sup>[1]</sup> When the Japanese shot their way into China, they called this a victory. Huge parts of China's territory were seized, and the Chinese called this a defeat. But victory was conceived in China's defeat, while defeat was conceived in Japan's victory. Hasn't history proved this true?

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People all over the world are now discussing whether or not a third world war will break out. On this question, too, we must be mentally prepared and do some analysis. We stand firmly for peace and against war. But if the imperialists insist on unleashing another war, we should not be afraid of it. Our attitude on this question is the same as our attitude towards any disturbance: first, we are against it; second, we are not afraid of it. The First World War was followed by the birth of the Soviet Union with a population of 200 million. The Second World War was followed by the emergence of the socialist camp with a combined population of 900 million. If the imperialists insist on launching a third world war, it is certain that several hundred million more will turn to socialism, and then there will not be much room left on earth for the imperialists; it is also likely that the whole structure of imperialism will completely collapse.

In given conditions, each of the two opposing aspects of a contradiction invariably transforms itself into its opposite as a result of the struggle between them. Here, it is the conditions which are essential. Without the given conditions, neither of the two contradictory aspects can transform itself into its opposite. Of all the classes in the world the proletariat is the one which is most eager to change its position, and next comes the semi-proletariat, for the former possesses nothing at all while the latter is hardly any better off. The United States now controls a majority in the United Nations and dominates many parts of the world -- this state of affairs is temporary and will be changed one of these days. China's position as a poor country denied its rights in international affairs will also be changed -- the poor country will change into a rich one, the country denied its rights into one enjoying them -- a transformation of things into their opposites. Here, the decisive conditions are the socialist system and the concerted efforts of a united people.

## **XI. ON PRACTISING ECONOMY**

Here I wish to speak briefly on practising economy. We want to carry on large-scale construction, but our country is still very poor -- herein lies a contradiction. One way of resolving it is to make a sustained effort to practise strict economy in every field.

During the movement against the "three evils" in 1952, we fought against corruption, waste and bureaucracy, with the emphasis on combating corruption. In 1955 we advocated the practice of economy with great success, our emphasis then being on combating the unduly high standards for non-productive projects in capital construction and economizing on raw materials in industrial production. But at that time economy was not yet applied in earnest as a guiding principle in all branches of the national economy, or in government offices, army units, schools and people's organizations in general. This year we are calling for economy and the elimination of waste in every sphere throughout the country. We still lack experience in the work of construction. During the last few years, great successes have been achieved, but there has also been waste. We must build up a number of large-scale modern enterprises step by step to form the mainstay of our industry, without which we shall not be able to turn China into a powerful modern industrial country within the coming decades. But the majority of our enterprises should not be built on such a scale we should set up more small and medium enterprises and make full use of the industrial base inherited from the old society, so as to effect the greatest economy and do more with less money. Good results have begun to appear in the few months since the principle of practising strict economy and combating waste was put forward, in more emphatic terms than before, by the Second Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in November 1956. The present campaign for economy must be conducted in a thorough and sustained way. Like the criticism of any other fault or mistake, the fight against waste may be compared to washing one's face. Don't people wash their faces every day? The Chinese Communist Party, the democratic parties, the democrats with no party affiliation, the intellectuals, industrialists and businessmen, workers, peasants and handicraftsmen -- in short, all our 600 million people -- must strive for increased production and economy, and against extravagance and waste. This is of prime importance not only economically, but politically as well. A dangerous tendency has shown itself of late among many of our personnel -- an unwillingness to share weal and woe with the masses, a concern for personal fame and gain. This is very bad. One way of overcoming it is to streamline our organizations in the course of our campaign to increase production and practise economy, and to transfer cadres to lower levels so that a considerable number will return to productive work. We must see to it

that all our cadres and all our people constantly bear in mind that ours is a large socialist country but an economically backward and poor one, and that this is a very big contradiction. To make China prosperous and strong needs several decades of hard struggle, which means, among other things, pursuing the policy of building up our country through diligence and thrift, that is, practising strict economy and fighting waste.

## **XII. CHINA'S PATH TO INDUSTRIALIZATION**

In discussing our path to industrialization, we are here concerned principally with the relationship between the growth of heavy industry, light industry and agriculture. It must be affirmed that heavy industry is the core of China's economic construction. At the same time, full attention must be paid to the development of agriculture and light industry.

As China is a large agricultural country, with over 80 per cent of its population in the rural areas, agriculture must develop along with industry, for only thus can industry secure raw materials and a market, and only thus is it possible to accumulate more funds for building a powerful heavy industry. Everyone knows that light industry is closely tied up with agriculture. Without agriculture there can be no light industry. But it is not yet so clearly understood that agriculture provides heavy industry with an important market. This fact, however, will be more readily appreciated as gradual progress in the technical transformation and modernization of agriculture calls for more and more machinery, fertilizer, water conservancy and electric power projects and transport facilities for the farms, as well as fuel and building materials for the rural consumers. During the period of the Second and Third Five-Year Plans, the entire national economy will benefit if we can achieve an even greater growth in our agriculture and thus induce a correspondingly greater development of light industry. As agriculture and light industry develop, heavy industry, assured of its market and funds, will grow faster. Hence what may seem to be a slower pace of industrialization will actually not be so slow, and indeed may even be faster. In three five-year plans or perhaps a little longer, China's annual steel output can be raised to 20,000,000 tons or more, as compared with the peak pre-liberation output of something over

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900,000 tons in 1943. This will gladden the people in both town and country.

I do not propose to dwell on economic questions today. With barely seven years of economic construction behind us, we still lack experience and need to accumulate it. Neither had we any experience in revolution when we first started, and it was only after we had taken a number of tumbles and acquired experience that we won nation-wide victory. What we must now demand of ourselves is to gain experience in economic construction in a shorter period of time than it took us to gain experience in revolution, and not to pay as high a price for it. Some price we will have to pay, but we hope it will not be as high as that paid during the period of revolution. We must realize that there is a contradiction here -- the contradiction between the objective laws of economic development of a socialist society and our subjective cognition of them -- which needs to be resolved in the course of practice. This contradiction also manifests itself as a contradiction between different people, that is, a contradiction between those in whom the reflection of these objective laws is relatively accurate and those in whom the reflection is relatively inaccurate; this, too, is a contradiction among the people. Every contradiction is an objective reality, and it is our task to reflect it and resolve it in as nearly correct a fashion as we can.

In order to turn China into an industrial country, we must learn conscientiously from the advanced experience of the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union has been building

socialism for forty years, and its experience is very valuable to us. Let us ask: Who designed and equipped so many important factories for us? Was it the United States? Or Britain? No, neither the one nor the other. Only the Soviet Union was willing to do so, because it is a socialist country and our ally. In addition to the Soviet Union, the fraternal countries in East Europe have also given us some assistance. It is perfectly true that we should learn from the good experience of all countries, socialist or capitalist, about this there is no argument. But the main thing is still to learn from the Soviet Union. Now there are two different attitudes towards learning from others. One is the dogmatic attitude of transplanting everything, whether or not it is suited to our conditions. This is no good. The other attitude is to use our heads and learn those things which suit our conditions, that is, to absorb whatever experience is useful to us. That is the attitude we should adopt.

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To strengthen our solidarity with the Soviet Union, to strengthen our solidarity with all the socialist countries -- this is our fundamental policy, this is where our basic interests lie. Then there are the Asian and African countries and all the peace-loving countries and peoples -- we must strengthen and develop our solidarity with them. United with these two forces, we shall not stand alone. As for the imperialist countries, we should unite with their people and strive to coexist peacefully with those countries, do business with them and prevent a possible war, but under no circumstances should we harbour any unrealistic notions about them.

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## NOTES

[1] *Lao Tzu*, Chapter LVIII. [p.416]

Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung

# Talk On Questions Of Philosophy

**August 18, 1964**

[SOURCE: *Mao chu-hsi tui P'eng, Hua-ng, Chang, Chou fan-tang chi-t'uan ti p'i-p'an*]

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It is only when there is class struggle that there can be philosophy. It is a waste of time to discuss epistemology apart from practice. The comrades who study philosophy should go down to the countryside. They should go down this winter or next spring to participate in the class struggle. Those whose health is not good should go too. Going down won't kill people. All they'll do is catch a cold, and if they just put on a few extra suits of clothes it'll be all right.

The way they go about it in the universities at present is no good, going from book to book, from concept to concept. How can philosophy come from books? The three basic constituents of Marxism are scientific socialism, philosophy, and political economy.<sup>[1]</sup> The foundation is social science, class struggle. There is a struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Marx and the others saw this. Utopian socialists are always trying to persuade the bourgeoisie to be charitable. This won't work, it is necessary to rely on the class struggle of the proletariat. At that time, there had already been many strikes. The English parliamentary

inquiry recognized that the twelve-hour day was less favourable than the eight-hour day to the interests of the capitalists. It is only starting from this viewpoint that Marxism appeared. The foundation is class struggle. The study of philosophy can only come afterwards. Whose philosophy? Bourgeois philosophy, or proletarian philosophy? Proletarian philosophy is Marxist philosophy. There is also proletarian economics, which has transformed classical economics. Those who engage in philosophy believe that philosophy comes first. The oppressors oppress the oppressed, while the oppressed need to fight back and seek a way out before they start looking for philosophy. It is only when people took this as their starting-point that there was Marxism-Leninism, and that they discovered philosophy. We have all been through this. Others wanted to kill me; Chiang Kai-shek wanted to kill me. Thus we came to engage in class struggle, to engage in philosophizing.

University students should start going down this winter — I am referring to the humanities. Students of natural science should not be moved now, though we can move them for a spell or two. All those studying the humanities — history, political economy, literature, law — must every one of them go. Professors, assistant professors, administrative workers, and student should all of them go down, for a limited period of five months. If they go to the countryside for five months, or to the factories for five months, they will acquire some perceptual knowledge. Horses, cows, sheep, chickens, dogs, pigs, rice, sorghum, beans, wheat, varieties of millet they can have a look at all these things. If they go in the winter, they will not see the harvest, but at least they can still see the land and the people. To get some experience of class struggle — that's what I call a university. They argue about which university is better,

Peking University or People's University.<sup>[2]</sup> For my part I am a graduate of the university of the greenwoods, I learned a bit there. In the past I studied Confucius, and spent six years on the Four Books and the Five Classics.<sup>[3]</sup> I learned to recite them from memory, but I did not understand them. At that time, I believed deeply in Confucius, and even wrote essays [expounding his ideas]. Later I went to a bourgeois school for seven years. Seven plus six makes thirteen years. I studied all the usual bourgeois stuff — natural science and social science. They also taught some pedagogy. This includes five years of normal school, two years of middle school, and also the time I spent in the library.<sup>[4]</sup> At that time I believed in Kant's dualism, especially in his idealism. Originally I was a feudalist and an advocate of bourgeois democracy. Society impelled me to participate in the revolution. I spent a few years as a primary-school teacher and principal of a four-year school. I also taught history and Chinese language in a six-year school. I also taught for a short period in a middle school, but I did not understand a thing. When I joined the Communist Party I knew that we must make revolution, but against what? And how would we go about it? Of course we had to make revolution against imperialism and the old society. I did not quite understand what sort of a thing imperialism was, still less did I understand how we could make revolution against it. None of the stuff I had learned in thirteen years was any good for making revolution. I used only the instrument — language. Writing essays is an instrument. As for the content of my studies, I didn't use it at all. Confucius said: 'Benevolence is the characteristic element of humanity.' 'The benevolent man loves others.'<sup>[5]</sup> Whom did he love? All men? Nothing of the kind. Did he love the exploiters? It wasn't exactly that, either. He loved only a part of the exploiters. Otherwise, why wasn't Confucius

able to be a high official? People didn't want him. He loved them, and wanted them to unite. But when it came to starving, and to [the precept] 'The superior man can endure poverty,' he almost lost his life, the people of K'uang wanted to kill him.<sup>[6]</sup> There were those who criticized him for not visiting Ch'in in his journey to the West. In reality, the poem 'In the Seventh Month the Fire Star Passes the Meridian' in the *Book of Odes* refers to events in Shensi. There is also 'The Yellow Bird', which talks about the affair in which three high officials of Duke Mu of Ch'in were killed and buried with him on his death.<sup>[7]</sup> Ssu-ma Ch'ien<sup>[8]</sup> had a very high opinion of the *Book of Odes*. He said the 300 poems it contains were all written by sages and worthies of ancient times when they were aroused. A large part of the poems in the *Book of Odes* are in the manner of the various states, they are the folk songs of the common people, the sages and worthies are none other than the common people. 'Written when they were aroused' means that when a man's heart was filled with anger, he wrote a poem!

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The expression ‘to neglect the duties of an office while taking the pay’ comes from here. This is a poem which accuses heaven and opposes the rulers. Confucius, too, was rather democratic, he included [in the *Book of Odes*] poems about the love between man and woman. In his commentaries, Chu Hsi characterized them as poems about clandestine love affairs.<sup>[10]</sup> In reality, some of them are and some of them aren’t; the latter borrow the imagery of man and woman to write about the relations between prince and subject. In Shu [present-day Szechwan] at the time of the Five Dynasties and Ten Countries, there was a poem entitled ‘The Wife of Ch’in Laments the Winter’, by Wei Chuang.<sup>[11]</sup> He wrote it in his youth, and it is about his longing for his prince.

To return to this matter of going down, people should go beginning this winter and spring, in groups and in rotation, to participate in the class struggle. Only in this way can they learn something, learn about revolution. You intellectuals sit every day in your government offices, eating well, dressing well, and not even doing any walking. That’s why you fall ill. Clothing, food, housing and exercise are the four great factors causing disease. If, from enjoying good living conditions, you change to somewhat worse conditions, if you go down to participate in the class struggle, if you go into the midst of the ‘four clean-ups’ and the ‘five antis’,<sup>[12]</sup> and

undergo a spell of toughening, then you intellectuals will have a new look about you.

If you don't engage in class struggle, then what is this philosophy you're engaged in?

Why not go down and try it? If your illness gets too severe you should come back — you have to draw the line at dying. When you are so ill that you are on the verge of dying, then you should come back. As soon as you go down, you will have some spirit. (K'ang Sheng interjects: 'The research institutes in the Departments of Philosophy and Social Science of the Academy of Science should all go down too. At present, they are on the verge of turning into institutes for the study of antiquities, of turning into a fairyland nourishing itself by inhaling offerings of incense. None of the people in the Institute of Philosophy read the *Kuang-ming jih-pao*.') I read only the *Kuang-ming jih-pao* and the *Wen-hui pao*, [13], I don't read *People's Daily*, because the *People's Daily* doesn't publish theoretical articles; after we adopt a resolution, then they publish it. The *Liberation Army Daily* is lively, it's readable. (Comrade K'ang Sheng: 'The Institute of Literature pays no attention to Chou Kuch'eng, [14] and the Economics Institute pays no attention to Sun Yeh-fang [15] and to his going in for Libermanism, going in for capitalism.')

Let them go in for capitalism. Society is very complex. If one only goes in for socialism and not for capitalism, isn't that too simple? Wouldn't we then lack the unity of opposites, and be merely one-sided? Let them do it. Let them attack us madly, demonstrate in the streets, take up arms to rebel — I approve all of these things. Society is very complex, there is not a single commune, a single *hsien*, a single department of the Central

Committee, in which one cannot divide into two. Just look, hasn't the Department of Rural Work been disbanded?[16] It devoted itself exclusively to accounting on the basis of the individual household, and to propagating the 'four great freedoms' — freedom to lend money, to engage in commerce, to hire labour, and to buy and sell land. In the past, they put out a proclamation [to this effect]. Teng Tzu-hui had a dispute with me. At a meeting of the Central Committee, he put forward the idea of implementing the four great freedoms.[17]

To consolidate New Democracy, and to go on consolidating it for ever, is to engage in capitalism.[18] New Democracy is a bourgeois-democratic revolution under the leadership of the proletariat. It touches only the landlords and the comprador bourgeoisie, it does not touch the national bourgeoisie at all. To divide up the land and give it to the peasants is to transform the property of the feudal landlords into the individual property of the peasants, and this still remains within the limits of the bourgeois revolution. To divide up the land is nothing remarkable — MacArthur did it in Japan. Napoleon divided up the land too. Land reform cannot abolish capitalism, nor can it lead to socialism.

In our state at present approximately one third of the power is in the hands of the enemy or of the enemy's sympathizers. We have been going for fifteen years and we now control two thirds of the realm. At present, you can buy a [Party] branch secretary for a few packs of cigarettes, not to mention marrying a daughter to him. There are some localities where land reform was carried out peacefully, and the land reform teams were very

weak; now you can see that there are a lot of problems there.

I have received the materials on philosophy. [*This refers to the materials on the problem of contradictions — note by stenographer.*] I have had a look at the outline, [*This refers to the outline of an article criticizing 'two combine into one'***[19]** — *note by stenographer.*] I have not been able to read the rest. I have also looked at the materials on analysis and synthesis.

It is a good thing to collect materials like this on the law of the unity of opposites, what the bourgeoisie says about it, what Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin say about it, what the revisionists say about it. As for the bourgeoisie, Yang Hsien-chen talks about it, and Hegel of old talked about it. Such people existed in the olden days. Now they are even worse. There were also Bogdanov and Lunacharsky, who used to talk about deism. I have read Bogdanov's economics. Lenin read it, and it seems he approved of the part on primitive accumulation. (K'ang Sheng: 'Bogdanov's economic doctrines were perhaps somewhat more enlightened than those of modern revisionism. Kautsky's economic doctrines were somewhat more enlightened than those of Khrushchev, and Yugoslavia is also somewhat more enlightened than the Soviet Union. After all, Djilas said a few good things about Stalin, he said that on Chinese problems Stalin made a self-criticism.'))

Stalin felt that he had made mistakes in dealing with Chinese problems, and they were no small mistakes. We are a great country of several hundred millions, and he opposed our revolution, and our seizure of power. We prepared for many years in order to seize power in the

whole country, the whole of the Anti-Japanese War constituted a preparation. This is quite clear if you look at the documents of the Central Committee for that period, including *On New Democracy*. That is to say that you cannot set up a bourgeois dictatorship, you can only establish New Democracy under the leadership of the proletariat, you can only set up a people's democratic dictatorship led by the proletariat. In our country, for eighty years, all the democratic revolutions led by the bourgeoisie failed. The democratic revolution led by us will certainly be victorious. There is only this way out, there is no other way out. This is the first step. The second step will be to build socialism. Thus, *On New Democracy* was a complete programme. It discussed politics, economics, and culture as well; it failed to discuss only military affairs. (*K'ang Sheng: 'On New Democracy is of great significance for the world communist movement. I asked Spanish comrades, and they said the problem for them was to establish bourgeois democracy, not to establish New Democracy. In their country, they did not concern themselves with the three points: army, countryside, political power. They wholly subordinated themselves to the exigencies of Soviet foreign policy, and achieved nothing at all.'*) These are the policies of Ch'en Tu-hsiu! (*Comrade K'ang Sheng: 'They say the Communist Party organized an army, and then turned it over to others.'*) This is useless.

*(Comrade K'ang Sheng: 'They also did not want political power, nor did they mobilize the peasantry. At that time, the Soviet Union said to them that if they imposed proletarian leadership, England and France might oppose it, and this would not be in the interests of the Soviet Union.'*)

How about Cuba? In Cuba they concerned themselves precisely to set up political power and an army, and also mobilized the peasants, as [we did] in the past; therefore they succeeded.

*(Comrade K'ang Sheng: 'Also, when they [the Spanish] fought, they waged regular war, in the manner of the bourgeoisie, they defended Madrid to the last.[20] In all things, they subordinated themselves to Soviet foreign policy.')*

Even before the dissolution of the Third International, we did not obey the orders of the Third International. At the Tsunyi Conference we didn't obey, and afterwards, for a period of ten years, including the Rectification Campaign and down to the Seventh Congress, when we finally adopted a resolution ('Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of our Party'),[21] and corrected [the errors of] 'leftism', we didn't obey them at all. Those dogmatists utterly failed to study China's peculiarities; ten-odd years after they had betaken themselves to the countryside, they utterly failed to study the land, property, and class relationships in the countryside. You can't understand the countryside just by going there, you must study the relations between all the classes and strata in the countryside. I devoted more than ten years to these problems before I finally clarified them for myself. You must make contact with all kinds of people, in tea houses and gambling dens, and investigate them. In 1925 I was active at the Peasant Movement Training Institute,[22] and carried out rural surveys. In my native village, I sought out poor peasants to investigate them. Their life was pitiable, they had nothing to eat. There was one peasant whom I sought out to play dominoes (the kind with heaven, earth, man, harmony, Mei Ch'ien, Ch'ang Sang, and the bench),

afterwards inviting him to have a meal. Before, after, and during the meal, I talked to him, and came to understand why the class struggle in the countryside was so acute. The reasons he was willing to talk to me were: first, that I looked on him as a human being; second, that I invited him to have a meal; and third, that he could make a bit of money. I kept losing; I lost one or two silver dollars, and as a result he was very well satisfied. There is a friend who still came to see me twice! , after Liberation. Once, in those days, he was really in a bad way, and he came looking for me to borrow a dollar. I gave him three, as non-refundable assistance. In those days, such nonrefundable assistance was hard to come by. My father took the view that if a man did not look after himself, heaven and earth would punish him. My mother opposed him. When my father died, very few people followed the funeral procession. When my mother died, a great many followed the procession. One time the Ko Lao Hui robbed our family. I said they were right to do so, for people had nothing. Even my mother could not accept this at all.

Once there broke out in Changsha rice riots in which the provincial governor was beaten up. There were some hawkers from Hsiang Hsiang who had sold their broad beans and were straggling back home. I stopped them and asked them about the situation. The Red and Green Gangs in the countryside also held meetings, and ate up big families. This was reported in the Shanghai newspapers, and the troubles were only stamped out when troops were sent from Changsha. They did not maintain good discipline, they took the rice of the middle peasants, and so isolated themselves. One of their leaders fled hither and thither, finally taking refuge in the mountains, but he was caught there and executed. Afterwards, the village gentry held a meeting, and killed

a few more poor peasants. At that time, there was as yet no Communist Party; these were spontaneous class struggles.

Society pushed us on to the political stage. Who ever thought of indulging in Marxism previously? I hadn't even heard of it. What I had heard of, and also read of, was Confucius, Napoleon, Washington, Peter the Great, the Meiji Restoration, the three distinguished Italian [patriots] — in other words, all those [heroes] of capitalism. I had also read a biography of Franklin. He came from a poor family; afterwards, he became a writer, and also conducted experiments on electricity. (Ch'en Po-ta: 'Franklin was the first to put forward the proposition that man is a tool-making animal.')

He talked about man being a tool-making animal. Formerly, they used to say that man was a thinking animal, 'the organ of the heart can think' [23]; they said that man was the soul of all creation. Who called a meeting and elected him [to that position]? He conferred this dignity on himself. This proposition existed in the feudal era. Afterwards, Marx put forward the view that man is a tool-maker, and that man is a social animal. In reality it is only after undergoing a million years [of evolution] that man developed a large brain and a pair of hands. In the future, animals will continue to develop. I don't believe that men alone are capable of having two hands. Can't horses, cows, sheep evolve? Can only monkeys evolve? And can it be, moreover, that of all the monkeys only one species can evolve, and all the others are incapable of evolving? In a million years, ten million years, will horses, cows and sheep still be the same as those today? I think they will continue to change. Horses, cows, sheep, and insects will all change. Animals have evolved from plants, they have evolved

from seaweed. Chang T'ai-yen knew all this. In the book in which he argued about revolution with K'ang Yu-wei, he expounded these principles.[24] The earth was originally dead, there were no plants, no water, no air. Only after I don't know how many tens of millions of years was water formed; hydrogen and oxygen aren't just transformed immediately in any old way into water. Water has its history too. Earlier still, even hydrogen and oxygen did not exist. Only after hydrogen and oxygen were produced was there the possibility that these two elements could combine to give water.

We must study the history of the natural sciences, it won't do to neglect this subject. We must read a few books. There is a great difference between reading because of the necessities of our present struggles, and reading aimlessly. Fu Ying[25] says that hydrogen and oxygen form water only after coming together hundreds and thousands of times; it is not at all a simple case of two combining into one. He was right about this, too; I want to look him up and have a talk. (Speaking to Lu P'ing:[26]) You people should not oppose absolutely everything by Fu Ying.

Hitherto, analysis and synthesis have not been clearly defined. Analysis is clearer, but there hasn't been much said about synthesis. I had a talk with Ai Ssu-ch'i.[27] He said that nowadays they only talk about conceptual synthesis and analysis, and do not talk about objective practical synthesis and analysis. How do we analyse and synthesize the Communist Party and the Kuomintang, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the landlords and the peasants, the Chinese and the imperialists? How do we do this, for example, in the case of the Communist Party and the Kuomintang? The analysis is simply a question of how strong we are, how

much territory we have, how many members we have, how many troops, how many bases such as Yen-an, what are our weaknesses? We do not hold any big cities, our army numbers only 1,200,000, we have no foreign aid, whereas the Kuomintang has a great amount of foreign aid. If you compare Yen-an to Shanghai, Yen-an has a population of only 7,000; adding to this the persons from the [Party and government] organs and from the troops [stationed in Yen-an], the total comes to 20,000. There is only handicrafts and agriculture. How can this be compared with a big city? Our strong points are that we have the support of the people whereas the Kuomintang is divorced from the people. You have more territory, more troops, and more arms, but your soldiers have been obtained by impressment, and there is opposition between officers and soldiers. Naturally there is also a fairly large portion of their armies which has considerable fighting capacity, it is not at all the case that they will all just collapse at one blow. Their weak point lies here, the key is their divorce from the people. We unite with the popular masses; they are divorced from the popular masses.

They say in their propaganda that the Communist Party establishes community of property and community of wives, and they propagate these ideas right down to the primary schools. They composed a song: 'When Chu Te and Mao Tse-tung appear, killing and burning and doing all kinds of things, what will you do?' They taught the primary-school pupils to sing it, and as soon as they had sung it, the pupils went and asked their fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, thus producing the opposite effect of propaganda for us. There was a little child who heard [the song] and asked his daddy. His daddy replied: 'You mustn't ask; after you have grown up, you will see for yourself and then you'll understand.'

He was a middle-of-the-roader. Then the child also asked his uncle. The uncle scolded him, and replied: ‘What is this about killing and burning? If you ask me again, I’ll beat you.’ Formerly, his uncle was a member of the Communist Youth League. All the newspapers and radio stations attacked us. There were a lot of newspapers, several dozen in each city, every faction ran one, and all of them without exception were anti-communist. Did the common people all listen to them? Nothing of the kind! We have some experience of Chinese affairs, China is a ‘sparrow’.<sup>[28]</sup> In foreign countries, too, it’s nothing else but the rich and the poor, counter revolution and revolution, Marxism-Leninism and revisionism. You mustn’t believe at all that everybody will take in anticommunist propaganda, and join in opposing communism. Didn’t we read newspapers at the time? Yet we were not influenced by them.

I have read the *Dream of the Red Chamber* five times, and have not been influenced by it. I read it as history. First I read it as a story, and then as history. When people read the *Dream of the Red Chamber*, they don’t read the fourth chapter carefully, but in fact this chapter contains the gist of the book. There is also Leng Tzu-hsing who describes the Jung-kuo mansion, and composes songs and notes. The fourth chapter ‘The Bottle-Gourd Monk decides the affair of the bottle gourd, talks about the ‘Talisman for Officials’, it introduces the four big families:

Shout      hip      hurrah  
For the Nanking Chia!  
They weigh their gold out  
By            the            jar.  
The      Ah-pang      Palace

Scrapes the sky,  
But it could not house  
The Nanking Shih.  
The King of the Ocean  
Goes along,  
When he's short of gold  
beds,  
To the Nanking Wang.  
The Nanking Hsueh  
So rich are they,  
To count their money  
Would take all day. . . [29]

The *Dream of the Red Chamber* describes each of the four big families. It concerns a fierce class struggle, involving the fate of many dozens of people, though only twenty or thirty of these people are in the ruling class. (It has been calculated that there are thirty-three [in this category].) The others are all slaves, over three hundred of them, such as Yueh Yang, Ssu-ch'i, Second Sister Yu, Third Sister Yu, etc. In studying history, unless you take a class-struggle view as the starting-point, you will get confused. Things can only be analysed clearly by the use of class analysis. More than 200 years have elapsed since the *Dream of the Red Chamber* was written, and research on the book has not clarified the issues, even down to the present day; from this we can see the difficulty of the problem. There are Yu P'ing-po and Wang K'un-lun, who are both of them specialists. [30] Ho Ch'ifang [31] also wrote a preface. A fellow called Wu Shih-ch'ang [32] has also appeared on the scene. All this refers to recent research on the *Dream of the Red Chamber*, I won't even enumerate the older studies. Ts'ai Yuan-p'ei's view of the *Dream of the Red Chamber* was incorrect; Hu Shih's was somewhat more correct. [33]

What is synthesis? You have all witnessed how the two opposites, the Kuomintang and the Communist Party, were synthesized on the mainland. The synthesis took place like this: their armies came, and we devoured them, we ate them bite by bite. It was not a case of two combining into one as expounded by Yang Hsien-chen, it was not the synthesis of two peacefully coexisting opposites. They didn't want to coexist peacefully, they wanted to devour you. Otherwise, why would they have attacked Yen-an? Their army penetrated everywhere in North Shensi, except in three *hsien* on the three borders. You have your freedom, and we have our freedom. There are 250,000 of you, and 25,000 of us. [34] A few brigades, something over 20,000 men. Having analysed, how do we synthesize? If you want to go somewhere, you go right ahead; we still swallow your army mouthful by mouthful. If we could fight victoriously, we fought; if we could not win, we retreated. From March 1947 to March 1948, one whole army [of the enemy] disappeared into the landscape, for we annihilated several tens of thousands of their troops. When we surrounded I-ch'uan, and Liu K'an came to relieve the city, the commander-in-chief Liu K'an was killed, two of his three divisional commanders were killed and the other taken prisoner, and the whole army ceased to exist. This was synthesis. All of their guns and artillery were synthesized over to our side, and the soldiers were synthesized too. Those who wanted to stay with us could stay, and to those who didn't want to stay we gave money for their travelling expenses. After we had annihilated Liu K'an, the brigade stationed in I-ch'uan surrendered without fighting. In the three great campaigns Liao-Shen, Huai-Hai, and Peking-Tientsin — what was our method of synthesis? Fu Tso-i was synthesized over to our side with his army of 400,000 men, without fighting, and they handed over all

their ! rifles. [35] One thing eating another, big fish eating little fish, this is synthesis. It has never been put like this in books. I have never put it this way in my books either. For his part, Yang Hsien-chen believes that two combine into one, and that synthesis is the indissoluble tie between two opposites. What indissoluble ties are there in this world? Things may be tied, but in the end they must be severed. There is nothing which cannot be severed. In the twenty-odd years of our struggle, many of us have also been devoured by the enemy. When the 300,000-strong Red Army reached the Shen-Kan-Ning area, there were only 25,000 left. Of the others, some had been devoured, some scattered, some killed or wounded.

We must take life as our starting-point in discussing the unity of opposites. (*Comrade K'ang Sheng: 'It won't do merely to talk about concepts.'*)

While analysis is going on, there is also synthesis, and while synthesis is going on, there is also analysis.

When people eat animals and plants, they also begin with analysis. Why don't we eat sand? When there's sand in rice, it's not good to eat. Why don't we eat grass, as do horses, cows and sheep, but only things like cabbage? We must analyse everything. Shen Nung tasted the hundred herbs, [36] and originated their use for medicine. After many tens of thousands of years, analysis finally revealed clearly what could be eaten, and what could not. Grasshoppers, snakes, and turtles can be eaten. Crabs, dogs, and aquatic creatures can be eaten. There are some foreigners who don't eat them. In North Shensi they don't eat aquatic creatures, they don't eat fish. They don't eat cat there either. One year there was a big flood of the Yellow River, which cast up on shore

several tens of thousands of pounds of fish, and they used it all for fertilizer.

I am a native philosopher, you are foreign philosophers.

*(Comrade Sheng: 'Could the Chairman say something about the problem of the three categories?')*

Engels talked about the three categories, but as for me I don't believe in two of those categories. (The unity of opposites is the most basic law, the transformation of quality and quantity into one another is the unity of the opposites quality and quantity, and the negation of the negation does not exist at all.) The juxtaposition, on the same level, of the transformation of quality and quantity into one another, the negation of the negation, and the law of the unity of opposites is 'triplism', not monism. The most basic thing is the unity of opposites. The transformation of quality and quantity into one another is the unity of the opposites quality and quantity. There is no such thing as the negation of the negation. Affirmation, negation, affirmation, negation . . . in the development of things, every link in the chain of events is both affirmation and negation. Slave-holding society negated primitive society, but with reference to feudal society it constituted, in turn, the affirmation. Feudal society constituted the negation in relation to slave-holding society but it was in turn the affirmation with reference to capitalist society. Capitalist society was the negation in relation to feudal society, but it is, in turn, the affirmation in relation to socialist society.

What is the method of synthesis? Is it possible that primitive society can exist side-by-side with slave-holding society? They do exist side-by-side, but this is

only a small part of the whole. The overall picture is that primitive society is going to be eliminated. The development of society, moreover, takes place by stages; primitive society, too, is divided into a great many stages. At that time, there was not yet the practice of burying women with their dead husbands, but they were obliged to subject themselves to men. First men were subject to women, and then things moved towards their opposite, and women were subject to men. This stage in history has not yet been clarified, although it has been going on for a million years and more. Class society has not yet lasted 5,000 years, cultures such as that of Lung Shan and Yang Shao<sup>[37]</sup> at the end of the primitive era had coloured pottery. In a word, one devours another, one overthrows another, one class is eliminated, another class rises, one society is eliminated, another society rises. Naturally, in the process of development, everything is not all that pure. When it gets to feudal society, there still remains something of the slaveholding system, though the greater part of the social edifice is characterized by the feudal system. There are still some serfs, and also some bond-workers, such as handicraftsmen. Capitalist society isn't all that pure either, and even in more advanced capitalist societies there is also a backward part. For example, there was the slave system in the Southern United States. Lincoln abolished the slave system, but there are still black slaves today, their struggle is very fierce. More than 20 million people are participating in it, and that's quite a few.

One thing destroys another, things emerge, develop, and are destroyed, everywhere is like this. If things are not destroyed by others, then they destroy themselves. Why should people die? Does the aristocracy die too? This is a natural law. Forests live longer than human beings, yet even they last only a few thousand years. If

there were no such thing as death, that would be unbearable. If we could still see Confucius alive today, the earth wouldn't be able to hold so many people. I approve of Chuang-tzu's approach.<sup>[38]</sup> When his wife died, he banged on a basin and sang. When people die there should be parties to celebrate the victory of dialectics, to celebrate the destruction of the old. Socialism, too, will be eliminated, it wouldn't do if it were not eliminated, for then there would be no communism. Communism will last for thousands and thousands of years. I don't believe that there will be no qualitative changes under communism, that it will not be divided into stages by qualitative changes! I don't believe it! Quantity changes into quality, and quality changes into quantity. I don't believe that it can remain qualitatively exactly the same, unchanging for millions of years! This is unthinkable in the light of dialectics. Then there is the principle, 'From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs'. Do you believe they can carry on for a million years with the same economics? Have you thought about it? If that were so, we wouldn't need economists, or in any case we could get along with just one textbook, and dialectics would be dead.

The life of dialectics is the continuous movement toward opposites. Mankind will also finally meet its doom. When the theologians talk about doomsday, they are pessimistic and terrify people. We say the end of mankind is something which will produce something more advanced than mankind. Mankind is still in its infancy. Engels spoke of moving from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom, and said that freedom is the understanding of necessity. This sentence is not complete, it only says one half and leaves the rest unsaid. Does merely understanding it make you free? Freedom

is the understanding of necessity *and* the transformation of necessity — one has some work to do too. If you merely eat without having any work to do, if you merely understand, is that sufficient? When you discover a law, you must be able to apply it, you must create the world anew, you must break the ground and edify buildings, you must dig mines, industrialize. In the future there will be more people, and there won't be enough grain, so men will have to get food from minerals. Thus it is that only by transformation can freedom be obtained. Will it be possible in the future to be all that free? Lenin said that in the future, aeroplanes would be as numerous in the skies as flies, rushing hither and thither. Everywhere they will collide, and what will we do about it? How will we manoeuvre them? And if we do, will things be all that free? In Peking at present there are 10,000 buses; in Tokyo there are 100,000 [vehicles] (or is it 800,000?), so there are more automobile accidents. We have fewer cars, and we also educate the drivers and the people, so there are few accidents. What will they do in Peking 10,000 years hence? Will there still be 10,000 buses? They may invent something new, so that they can dispense with these means of transport, so that men can fly, using some simple mechanical device, and fly right to any place, and land wherever they like. It won't do just to understand necessity, we must also transform things.

I don't believe that communism will not be divided into stages, and that there will be no qualitative changes. Lenin said that all things can be divided. He gave the atom as an example, and said that not only can the atom be divided, but the electron, too, can be divided. Formerly, however, it was held that it could not be divided; the branch of science devoted to splitting the atomic nucleus is still very young, only twenty or thirty

years old. In recent decades, the scientists have resolved the atomic nucleus into its constituents, such as protons, anti-protons, neutrons, anti-neutrons, mesons and anti-mesons. These are the heavy ones; there are also the light ones. For the most part, these discoveries only got under way during and after the Second World War. As for the fact that one could separate the electrons from the atomic nucleus, that was discovered some time ago. An electric wire makes use of dissociated electrons from the outside of copper or aluminium. In the 300 *li* of the earth's atmosphere, it has also been discovered that there are layers of dissociated electrons. There, too, the electrons and the atomic nucleus are separated. As yet, the electron has not been split, but some day they will certainly be able to split it. Chuang-tzu said, 'A length of one foot, which is divided in half each day, will never be reduced to zero.' (*Chuang-tzu*, Chapter [33 G] 'On the various schools', quoting Kung-sun Lung.) This is the truth. If you don't believe it, just consider. If it could be reduced to zero, then there would be no such thing as science. The myriad things develop continuously and limitlessly, and they are infinite. Time and space are infinite. As regards space, looking at it both macroscopically and microscopically, it is infinite, it can be divided endlessly. So even after a million years scientists will still have work to do. I very much appreciate the article on basic particles in the *Bulletin of Natural Science* by Sakata.<sup>[39]</sup> I have never seen this kind of article before. This is dialectical materialism. He quotes Lenin.

The weakness of philosophy is that it hasn't produced practical philosophy, but only bookish philosophy.

We should always be bringing forward new things. Otherwise what are we here for? What do we want descendants for? New things are to be found in reality,

we must grasp reality. In the last analysis, is Jen Chi-yu [40] Marxist or not? I greatly appreciate those articles of his on Buddhism. There is some research [behind them], he is a student of T'ang Yung-t'ung. [41] He discusses only the Buddhism of the T'ang dynasty, and does not touch directly on the Buddhism of later times. Sung and Ming metaphysics developed from the Ch'an School of the T'ang dynasty, and it was a movement from subjective idealism to objective idealism. [42] There is both Buddhism and Taoism, and it is wrong not to distinguish between them. How can it be proper not to pay attention to them? Han Yu didn't talk sense. His slogan was, 'Learn from their ideas, but not from their mode of expression.' His ideas were entirely copied from others, he changed the form, the mode of composition of the essays. He didn't talk sense, and the little bit he did talk was basically taken from the ancients. There is a little something new in writings like the *Discourse on Teachers*. Liu Tzu-hou was different, he knew the ins and outs of Buddhist and Taoist materialism. [43] And yet, his *Heaven Answers* is too short, just that little bit. His *Heaven Answers* is a product of Ch'u Yuan's *Heaven Asks*. [44] For several thousand years, only this one man has written a piece such as *Heaven Answers*. What are *Heaven Asks* and *Heaven Answers* all about? If there are no annotations, to explain it clearly, you can't understand it if you read it, you'll only get the general idea. *Heaven Asks* is really fantastic, thousands of years ago it raised all kinds of questions, relating to the universe, to nature, and to history.

(Regarding the discussion on the problem of two combining into one:) Let Hung Ch'i reprint a few good items, and write a report.

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## Notes

[1.] i.e. 1) Marxist philosophy, that is, dialectical materialism and historical materialism, which deals with the general law of development of the contradictions existing in nature, human society and man's thought; 2) Marxist political economy which elucidates the law governing the development of society's economy and exposes how the capitalist class exploits the working class (the theory of surplus value); and 3) scientific socialism which shows that the capitalist society is bound to develop to a higher stage of society and that the proletariat is the grave-digger of the capitalist system. (For details see Lenin's *The Three Sources and the Three Component Parts of Marxism*.)

[2.] Peking University, jointly descended from the old Peking University which launched the May Fourth Movement in 1919, and from the American-endowed Yenching University, has continued since 1949 to enjoy the highest prestige in China for general intellectual excellence. People's University (*Jen-min ta-hsüeh*), also located in Peking, was specially set up to provide courses more accessible to students from worker and peasant backgrounds.

[3.] Among the Confucian classics, the Four Books represent the core studied by beginners, the Five Classics a somewhat larger corpus.

[4.] Among his varied educational experiences, Mao Tse-tung has long singled out the six months he spent reading in the Hunan Provincial Library, in the winter of 1912-13, as one of the most valuable.

[5.] The first sentence is from the *Doctrine of the Mean*, the second is from *Mencius*, Book IV.

[6.] The quotation is from the Confucian *Analects*. The incident in which the people of K'uang detained Confucius and wanted to kill him is referred to in the *Analects*.

[7.] Mao's reasoning is apparently that, whether or not he went there, Confucius had nothing against Ch'in (a state which existed in the first millennium B.C. in present-day Shensi, whose ruler ultimately conquered the whole of China and founded the Ch'in dynasty in 221 B.C.), since he included in the *Book of Odes*, which he is supposed to have edited, a number of poems from that area, including the two mentioned by Mao.

[8.] Ssu-ma Chien (145-90 B.C.) was China's first great historian, who compiled *shih-chi* (Historical Records) relating history of China from the origins to his own day.

[9.] The translation of the above poem, and of the titles of the two mentioned previously, are taken from Legge's version of the *Book of Odes*.

[10.] Love poems have traditionally been interpreted by Chinese critics as an allegory for the relations between an official and his prince; Chu Hsi (see below, note 42) held that they should be taken at face value. Mao puts the commonsense view that they should sometimes be taken literally, and sometimes not.

[11.] Wei Chuang (c. 858-910) was an eminent poet of the late T'ang and early Five Dynasties (began 907) period. Mao is arguing that the same principles of interpretation should be applied to the *Book of Odes* and to all classical poetry.

[12.] For “Four Clean ups” and “Five antis” see note 5 on p. 9 of this volume.

[13.] *Kuang-ming jih-pao* organ of the China Democratic League, took the lead in criticisms of the party in April 1957, when the ‘blooming and contending’ was in full flood. The *Wen-hui pao*, published in Shanghai, was a non-Party organ which had been criticized by Mao for its bourgeois tendencies in 1957. In November 1965, it was to serve as the channel for the opening shot in the Cultural Revolution.

[14.] Chou Ku-ch’eng was the author of numerous works on Chinese and world history. Since 1950 he had been a professor at Fudan University in Shanghai. In 1962 he published an article on history and art, in which he expressed ideas on the ‘*Zeitgeist*’ which were said to be an expression in the realm of esthetics of Yang Hsien-chen’s philosophical theories (see below, note 19 to this text).

[15.] Sun Yeh-fang was at this time Director of the Institute of Economics of the Academy of Science; he was dismissed in 1966. As K’ang Sheng’s remark indicates, he had adopted the ideas of some Soviet and Eastern European economists with whom he had been in professional contact about the role of the profit motive in a socialist economy.

[16.] In the summer of 1955, just before Mao’s speech of 31 July gave a new impetus to the formation of agricultural producers’ cooperatives, the Party’s Rural Work Department (at the instigation, of Liu Shao-ch’i) had disbanded a number of cooperatives which were said to have been hastily and prematurely formed.

[17.] Teng Tzu-hui (1895-1972) had been head of the Rural Work Department since 1952, though his influence had declined since the late 1950s, because of his share of responsibility for the ‘disbanding’ or ‘weeding out’ of cooperatives in 1955. It would appear, however that he still possessed sufficient status to put his views energetically in opposition to those of Mao when, in the early 1960s, the policies enumerated here by Mao were a subject of dispute within the Party. Both the Rural Work Department and Teng zu-hui were severely criticised by comrade Mao during debate on cooperative transformation. [For more details refer pp. 224-225 of *S.W.* Vol. V.]

As a symbol to cover this whole spectrum of policies, emphasizing the role of material stimulants, the private plot, etc., the expression ‘four great freedoms’ is less common, in documents published since the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, than ‘*Sanzi yibao*’ (‘three freedoms and one fix, or guarantee’). On this concept, which is supposed to sum up the reactionary line of Liu Shao-ch’i and his sympathizers in the countryside, see the article ‘Struggle between Two Roads in China’s Countryside’, *Peking Review*, No. 49 (1967), pp. 11-19.

[18.] A right opportunist view advocated by Liu Shao-chi and others. In this connection see comrade Mao’s speech at the PB meeting of the CC of the CPC “Refute the Right Deviationist Views that Depart from General Line”, *S.W.* Vol. V pp. 93-94.

[19.] The view that ‘two combine into one’ was put forward in the early 1960s by Yang Hsien-chen (c. 1899-), who had been, since 1955, President of the Higher Party School. Beginning in July 1964 this formulation was violently attacked in the press on the grounds that it

minimized the importance of struggle and contradiction, and contrasted with Mao's view that 'one divides into two', i.e. that struggle, and in particular class struggle, constantly re-emerges, even when particular contradictions have been resolved. The 'outline of an article' referred to in the stenographer's note was presumably a summary of one of the forthcoming attacks on Yang, submitted to the Chairman in advance for his approval.

[20.] The defense of Madrid, starting in October 1936, lasted for two years and five months. In 1936, fascist Germany and Italy made use of the Spanish fascist warlord Franco to launch a war of aggression against Spain. The Spanish people, led by the Popular Front Government, heroically defended democracy against aggression. The battle of Madrid, the Capital of Spain, was the bitterest in the whole war. Madrid fell in March 1939 because Britain, France and other imperialist countries assisted the aggressors by their hypocritical policy of "non-intervention" and because divisions arose within the Popular Front. The point of this criticism is obviously not that the Spanish republicans fought to the end, but that they failed to grasp the axiom that territorial strong points are not in themselves decisive.

[21.] Please see "Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of our Party" adopted on April 20, 1945, *S.W.* Vol. III, pp 177-225 (1965 edition).

[22.] Mao began his activity at this institute in 1925, but it was in 1926 that he actually served as principal and made his main contribution.

[23.] The quotation is from *Mencius*, Book VI, Part A, Ch. 15.

[24.] This is presumably a reference to Chang Ping-lin's celebrated article, published in 1903, entitled 'A Refutation of K'ang Yu-wei's Letter on Revolution'. In this article, Chang sharply attacked K'ang not only on the issue of revolution versus gradual reform, but on the importance of racial differences between the Chinese and the Manchus, which K'ang tended to minimize. The Manchus, Chang argued, were an alien and decadent race, totally unfit to rule China. It was in this context that he discussed evolution, indicating that the existing racial differences were the product of history.

[25.] Fu Ying is apparently a Chinese scientist who was alive in 1964, since Mao says he wants to look him up.

[26.] Lu P'ing (c. 1910- ) was President of Peking University at this time; he was removed and 'struggled against' in June 1966.

[27.] Ai Ssu-chti (c. 1910-66) was, at the time of his death, Vice President of the Higher Party School. He was one of the Party's leading philosophical spokesmen, who had translated works on dialectical materialism from the Russian, and written many books and articles which aimed to make Marxism accessible to the masses. On 1 November 1964 he published an article in *People's Daily* attacking Yang Hsien-chen, the 'bourgeois' philosopher Mao refers to earlier in this talk in connection with the principle of 'two combining into one'.

[28.] The metaphor of 'dissecting a sparrow' is an applied theory and a work method to acquire knowledge and sum up experiences. Instead of attempting to generalize about a vast number of repetitions of a phenomenon, this work method advocates the in-depth

analysis, thorough study and investigation of a prototype, and a summing-up experience through such analysis. The slogan is derived from the common saying “while a sparrow is small, it contains all the vital organs” Here, Mao makes the point that, in the broader international context, China as a whole is a microcosm of the problems of revolution in the world today.

[29.] Leng Tzu-hsing discourses on the mansion of the Duke of Jung-kuo in Chapter 2 of the book (*The Story of the Stone*). The ‘Talisman for Officials’ was a list of the rich and influential families in the area which the former novice from the Bottle-Gourd Temple said every official should carry in order to avoid offending them and thereby wrecking his career (*The Story of the Stone*).

[30.] For comrade Mao’s criticisms on this matter see “*Letter Concerning the Dream of the Red Chamber*” (*S.W.* Vol. V pp. 150-151), “On Criticising Longlougeng yuanjia” (*S.W.* Vol. V pp. 293-294.)

For Mao’s criticism of Yü P’ing-po see above, Text 8, note 8. Wang K’un-lun was Vice-Mayor of Peking in the 1950s.

[31.] Ho Ch’i-fang (1911- ), a lyric poet and powerful figure in the literary world, had defended Yü P’ing-po up to a point at the time of the campaign against him in 1954, saying that Yü was wrong in his interpretation of the *Dream of the Red Chamber*, but politically loyal. He himself came under attack at the time of the Great Leap Forward.

[32.] Wu Shih-ch’ang’s work on this subject has been translated into English: *On ‘The Red Chamber Dream’* (Clarendon Press, 1961.)

[33.] Mao's statement here concords with the views of Lu Hsün.

[34.] The figures Mao gives here, as he shifts to the historical present and calls to mind the final showdown with the Kuomintang, are rather those at the beginning of the Anti-Japanese War than those at the beginning of the renewed civil war in 1946, when the People's Liberation Army had grown to at least half a million men.

[35.] In January 1949, General Fu Tso-i, commanding the nationalist garrison in Peiping (as it was then called), surrendered the city without a fight to avoid useless destruction. He subsequently became Minister of Water Conservancy in the Peking government.

[36.] The legendary Emperor Shen Nung is said to have taught the art of agriculture in the third millennium B.C., and in particular to have discovered the medicinal properties of plants.

[37.] The Lung Shan and Yang Shao cultures, located respectively in north-eastern and north-western China, were the two most remarkable cultures of the neolithic period. As Mao indicates, they are particularly noted for their pottery.

[38.] The book called the *Chuang-tzu*, which was probably composed only in part by the man of the same name who lived in the second half of the fourth century B.C., is not only one of the classic texts of Taoism (with the *Lao-tzu* and the *Book of Changes*), but one of the greatest literary masterpieces in the history of China.

[39.] Sakata Shiyouchi, a Japanese physicist from the University of Nagoya, holds that 'elementary particles

are a single, material, differentiated, and limitless category which make up the natural order'. An article by him expounding these views was published in *Red Flag* in June 1965. (See also the succeeding articles in this volume.)

[40.] Mao is apparently referring to a collection of essays published by Jen Chi-yü in 1963, and reprinted in 1973: *Han T'ang fo-chiao ssu-hsiang lun chi (Collected Essays on Buddhist Thought in the Han and T'ang Dynasties)* (Peking: Jen-min ch'u-pan-she, 348 pp.) In these studies, he quotes from Lenin at considerable length regarding dialectics.

[41.] T'ang Yung-t'ung (1892-1964), whom Jen Chi-yü acknowledges as his teacher, was the leading historian of Buddhism, who had written on Chinese Buddhism under the Han, Wei, Chin, and Northern and Southern dynasties, on the history of Indian thought, etc. He was Dean of the Humanities at Peking University from 1948 until he fell ill in 1954.

[42.] Under the influence of Ch'an Buddhism (better known under its Japanese name of Zen), Chinese philosophers of the Sung and Ming dynasties, of whom Chu Hsi (1130-1200) is the most famous, developed a synthesis between Confucianism and Buddhism in which a central role is played by the concept li (principle or reason), commonly known as Neo-Confucianism. For a Chinese view of the relations between these schools basically similar to Mao's, see Hou Wai-lu, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy* (Peking: Foreign Languages Press, 1959), pp. 33-51. For an interpretation by a Western specialist, see H. G. Creel, *Chinese Thought from Confucius to Mao Tse-tung* (Chicago:

University of Chicago Press; and London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1953), Ch. 10.

[43.] Han Yü and Liu Tsung-yüan. Han Yü sought to recreate the simplicity of the classical period, while avoiding excessive archaism. The slogan about ‘learning from their ideas’ quoted by Mao refers to this aim of seeking inspiration from the ancient Confucian sages, while avoiding outmoded forms of expression. He adopted a critical attitude towards Buddhism, but none the less borrowed some ideas from it. Liu Tsung-yüan, whom Mao calls here by his literary name of Liu Tzu-hou, was a close friend of Han Yü.

[44.] Liu Tsung-yüan’s essay *T’ien Tui* (*Heaven Answers*) undertook to answer the questions about the origin and nature of the universe raised by Ch’ü Yüan in his poem *T’ien Wen* (*Heaven Asks*). The latter is translated under the title ‘The Riddles’ in *Li Sao and Other Poems of Chu Yuan*, pp. 79-97. It is, as Mao says, suggestive but extremely obscure.

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