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# The Causes of the Victory of the Chinese Communist Party over Chiang Kai-Shek, and the CCP's Perspectives

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*The report below on the 1949 Chinese Revolution was delivered by the Chinese Trotskyist Peng Shuzhi to the Third Congress of the Fourth International in 1951. The context of the report and its political significance is explained in a detailed introduction that can be found [here](#).*

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The victory of the Chinese Communist Party over the reactionary power of Chiang Kai-shek, its occupation of the entire Chinese mainland, and the establishment of the "People's Republic" (or the "People's Democratic Dictatorship") has marked a great and even a monumental change in modern Chinese history, and has also caused profound changes in the Far East and in international relations. This event and this change were unexpected both among bourgeois ruling circles and the petty-bourgeois politicians, the former being stunned and panic-stricken; the latter, perplexed or dazzled. But this event was likewise far from being anticipated by us Trotskyists (including Trotsky himself) owing to the fact that the CCP arrived at this current victory by its extremely reactionary Menshevik program of "revolution by stages," coupled with the fact that the peasant armed forces were completely isolated from the urban working class.

As a result, a considerable amount of confusion has been raised in our ranks regarding Mao's victory, and serious deviations of opinions have occurred on the causes of the victory, its significance, the nature of the power and its perspectives. A few comrades have even begun to doubt the correctness of the theory of the Permanent Revolution. If these differences should not be clarified and resolved in time, the most serious consequences would ensue in our ranks, especially in our Chinese section. A part of the comrades would proceed from doubting the Permanent Revolution to capitulating to Stalinism (some comrades in Shanghai have already evinced this tendency); others would arrive at ultra-sectarianism and complete demoralization in their revulsion against the opportunist victory of Mao Tse-tung which is the result of a complete violation of the Permanent Revolution (the Chinese Minority [1] has already clearly demonstrated this tendency). We must therefore examine very prudently and seriously Mao's victory and the extraordinary situation emerging from it.

First of all, we should not overlook the reactionary role of Stalinism independently of the victory of the CCP, and reconcile ourselves or even surrender to it. We must still insist on the basic position of the Permanent Revolution, which is the only compass to guide China and all backward

countries to genuine liberation; we must judge any further events from this position. But, in proceeding with the discussion, it is necessary not only to discard all subjective prejudices, desires or mechanical analogies, but to free ourselves from traditional formulae (not of course principles). We must face the concrete living facts, whether desirable or undesirable, particularly the decisive influence of the situation created after the Second World War on the Chinese events. We must also take note of the specific function Stalinism played in these events, the distortion or deformation imposed by their rule over the events and their consequences. In a word, we should seriously and flexibly apply the dialectic method of Marxism to observation of the facts, analyze the facts, and by analysis of the causes and effects of the realities, obtain a correct understanding, and thus form a correct appraisal of possible developments,

In other words, we must adopt on the Chinese problem the same spirit and method as our International has done in the study of the Yugoslav events and the question of Eastern Europe. Only in this way can we extricate ourselves from perplexity and extremely dangerous deviations to reach a decision on what the fundamental attitude and orientation of our party should be in respect to the leadership of the CCP. Thus this report is not aimed at supplying a great deal of data; it intends to provide necessary and essential facts in the course of the logical development of the events and to explain certain opinions which have already caused serious disputes, as references for the International so that it can achieve a correct solution of the Chinese question.

## **The diverse causes of the victory of the CCP over the Kuomintang**

One of the traditional conceptions which was repeatedly pointed out by Trotsky and has been maintained by the Chinese Trotskyists over the past twenty years, and which is also a conception to counterbalance the Stalinist conception of conquering the cities by the peasant armed forces alone, is that the overthrow of the bourgeois regime of the Kuomintang is possible only if the urban working class stands up and leads all the oppressed and exploited in the country, especially the peasant masses, carries forward a persistent struggle and eventually brings about an armed insurrection. It is not possible to overthrow the bourgeois regime by relying exclusively on the peasant armed forces, because, under the present conditions of society, the countryside is subordinated to the cities and the peasants can play a decisive role only under the leadership of the working class. But the fact now confronting us is exactly the contrary: it

was a Stalinist party relying exclusively on the peasant armed forces that destroyed the old regime and seized the power.

This extreme contradiction between the “facts” and the “traditional conception” first of all evoked confusion and disputes among the Chinese comrades. Meanwhile, some comrades in the International, because of their inadequate understanding of Trotsky’s traditional conception of the Chinese question and the specific causes of Mao’s victory, underline the “pressure of the masses” and account for his victory by this factor. So I think that an accurate and detailed explanation of the causes of this victory is necessary not only for eliminating the differences of opinions among the Chinese comrades but also for correcting the deviation of some comrades in the International. Moreover, the most important thing is this. Only from a correct answer to this question shall we be able to go one step further and comprehend the objective significance of Mao’s victory, as well as the twists and turns of all the measures taken by his regime and its possible perspectives. In order to best answer this question, I shall start from several aspects of the facts.

### **A. The complete rottenness and automatic collapse of Chiang’s regime**

It is known to everyone that the regime of Chiang Kai-shek was born amid the bloodshed of the defeat of the Second Chinese Revolution. [2]

Naturally it was extremely afraid of and hostile to the people. It oppressed the people and sustained itself on the exploitation of the masses (especially the peasant masses) by the most barbaric Asiatic methods. At the same time, since by its very nature this regime represented the bourgeoisie of the Orient (characterized in the saying that “the farther East the bourgeoisie goes, the more cowardly and the more incompetent it becomes”), Chiang’s regime could only support itself on imperialism (one of them, at least) and united all reactionary influences, including the feudal survivals, to resist the masses and to suppress them. It was consequently unable to fulfil any of the bourgeois-democratic tasks, and not even such a slight reform as a 25 percent reduction in rent. It was mainly characterized by consummate Asiatic despotism, corruption and inefficiency. These characteristics were completely disclosed during the Resistance War. [3] On one hand, after the failure of its long period of concessions to the Japanese imperialists through its “non-defensive” policy and then when Chiang’s government was forced to defend, it showed its complete incapacity by losing cities one after the other. On the other hand, it clamped an iron grip over any spontaneous activity by the masses, while its bureaucrats and warlords, profiting by this rare opportunity, exploited and plundered the blood and flesh of the people by storing and smuggling goods and other extortions, and thus enriched themselves through the national disaster. These deeds stirred up great dissatisfaction and bitterness among the common people—which was reflected in the student demonstrations and the peasant unrest in certain regions during the closing period of the war.

After the surrender of Japanese imperialism, the tyranny, corruption and inefficiency of Chiang Kai-shek came to a climax. First, in the name of taking over the “properties of the enemy and the traitors,” the militarists and bureaucrats stole almost all the public property to fill their own purses, and indulged themselves in extravagant luxury and dissipation. Meantime, under pretense of proceeding with the civil war, they extracted food from the peasants and imposed conscription upon them, did their best to squeeze and to oppress (as some enlisted peasants could be exempt from duty by subscribing a sum of money, this became another one of the sources of extortion on the part of the bureaucrats). This further inflamed the fury of the masses, and provoked the eruption of several large-scale

protest demonstrations (organized with the students as their center). But the only answer from Chiang Kai-shek to these bitter feelings, protests and demonstrations was suppression, massacres, and even assassinations and kidnappings by gendarmes, police and secret agents.

The financial basis of Chiang’s government had already been exhausted in the course of the war. Besides compulsory extortions, it could only resort to issuing paper-notes to maintain itself. Consequently, the speed of inflation climbed in geometric progression. After peace was announced, the pace of inflation advanced from geometric progression to lightning speed, terminating in the general collapse of the “Golden Yuan” [4] and an unprecedented economic chaos at the end of 1948.

All commerce and industry were halted and disintegrated, and the living conditions of the various layers among the middle and lower classes (including all the middle and lower functionaries in the government institutions) cast them into the pit of despair. Driven by starvation, the workers rose up in a universal surge of strikes (there were two hundred thousand workers on strike in Shanghai alone). Everywhere plundering of rice took place. At that time, the United Press gave a brief description of the situation as follows: “The people below the middle class are not able to go on living; discontent and resentment against the status quo prevail. Everyone craves for a change.” The regime of Chiang Kai-shek was tottering. If the CCP had called upon the workers and all the masses in the big cities to rise in rebellion and overthrow the regime, it would have been as easy as knocking down rotten wood. But Mao’s party merely gave orders to the people to quietly wait for their “liberation” by the “People’s Liberation Army.”

Chiang’s sole reliance was in his military force and so he continued the fight to the end and would never compromise with Mao Tse-tung. He hoped to exterminate the peasant armed forces of the CCP by his “superior military equipment” and rescue his doomed power from death. In fact, the army of Chiang Kai-shek far surpassed that of the CCP not only in numbers but also in equipment, because a considerable part of his army (about six to seven hundred thousand soldiers) was armed with the most modern American weapons. But this army had two fatal defects: first, most of the soldiers were recruited from the countryside by compulsory conscription, some of them even by kidnapping, so they naturally reflected more or less the dissatisfaction and hatred of the peasants; secondly, all the generals and officers of top and high rank were rotten to the core; they ill-treated the soldiers, and steadily reduced rations. These oppressions inflicted much suffering upon the soldiers and deepened their discontent and hatred. Once this “hatred” found a suitable outlet, it would be transformed into a deluge of flight and surrender. The “general counter-offensive” of Mao Tse-tung furnished this outlet.

All the above-stated facts demonstrate that Chiang’s government was not only isolated from the people who were hostile towards it, but was also deserted by the greatest part of the bourgeoisie. Even those who formerly supported it turned bitter against it, and were ready to sacrifice it in exchange for their own life. This situation resulted in the appearance of various kinds of factions and cliques against Chiang Kai-shek within the Kuomintang itself, which was thus involved in complete decomposition. One of these factions crystallized into the so-called “Kuomintang Revolutionary Committee” (Lee Chi-sun being its leader), and in view of the irretrievable fall of Chiang Kai-shek, it anxiously sought for “understanding and reconciliation” with Mao Tse-tung. Another group prepared to “rise to arms in response to the counter-offensive” of the CCP (such as Cheng Chuan the governor of Hunan Province, and Lu Han the governor of Yun-nan, or others were ready to capitulate (as in the case of Fu Cho-I in Peiping and Liu Hsiang in Szechuan). The third group—the Kwei-clique, represented by Lee Chun-jen and Pei Tsung-si, attempted to replace Chiang Kai-shek. The bourgeois elements outside the Kuomintang gathered more and more around the “Democratic League,” trying to find their way out through this organization. In a word, the basis and upper

structure of the Kuomintang regime were entirely corroded and it could no longer hold itself erect.

The only remaining hope for Chiang Kai-shek was imperative aid from Washington. [5]

## **B. Chiang finally deserted by American imperialism**

Prior to the Second World War, the most powerful and most decisive influences in Chinese economy and politics were the Japanese, British, and American imperialists. With the end of the war, the influence of Japanese imperialism vanished. British imperialism, due to its extreme decline, although still maintaining its rule in Hong Kong, has since stepped completely from the political stage in China. The last one which attempted to control the country was American imperialism. It intended at the beginning to uphold Chiang's government with all its might in order to monopolize the Chinese market and use this country as a rampart in defense or aggression toward the Soviet Union. Starting from this motive, it had dispatched a tremendous amount of material and military equipment to Chiang's government at the close of the war. But it soon opened its eyes to the excessive corruption of the administrative and military apparatus of this government and the crisis issuing from this corruption. (For instance, most of the material given by the US was swallowed by the bureaucrats, and American-made arms often came into the hands of the CCP as a result of the lack of combativeness of the Kuomintang officers.) On the one hand, it still endeavored to "prevail upon" Chiang Kai-shek to take some measures of "reform," such as excluding a few of the most corrupt and incapable top-rank officials and generals, inviting into office some more competent "democratic individuals," and restraining certain excessively despotic oppressions and exploitation, etc. On the other hand, it maneuvered between Chiang and Mao for a temporary compromise, in order to gain time to destroy the latter—that was the special mission of Marshall [6] in China.

But Chiang not only refused to practice any "reforms"; he likewise obstinately abstained from concluding any compromise with Mao's party. Eventually, the Marshall mission turned into a complete failure. The only road left for American imperialism was to engage in a direct military offensive against the CCP in Chiang's place (as demanded by one group of Republicans at that time), and to extend its direct control over the administrative and military power of the government. However, it was very clear that the situation emerging from the Second World War would never permit this headstrong action. Had American imperialism done so, the whole of its resources and energy not only would have been drawn into the vast quagmire of China, but this would even have led immediately to a new world war. Under the condition of absolute unpreparedness, American imperialism was not bold enough to run the risk, as her allies would have vehemently opposed it.

Hence the US was finally compelled to give up its aid to Chiang's government, and put on an attitude of "wait and see" towards the CCP, and bide a more favorable opportunity. To the regime of Chiang Kai-shek, this final decision on the part of American imperialism came as a death knell, which was fully expressed in the atmosphere of dejection and despair hovering around Chiang's group when the news of Truman's victory in the 1948 election and his refusal of aid to Chiang arrived in China.

## **C. The subjective force of the CCP**

The basic strength of the CCP lies in its peasant armed forces. These armed forces originated from the successive peasant revolts which exploded in the southern provinces of China after the defeat of the Second Revolution. Although there were no real prospects in these peasant revolts, yet, through the full effort of the CCP in organizing and training the peasants, and also owing to the economic backwardness of the country and other specific geographic conditions (the vastness of the territory and the extreme lack of means of communication), and the utter despair of the peasants and the incompetence of the bourgeois government, the armed forces assembled during the revolts could maintain their existence, continue to develop, and carry on a durable peasant war. Only later when Chiang Kai-shek obtained enormous quantities of military aid from imperialism was the peasant army of the CCP forced for a time to flee from South to North China, and even capitulated to Chiang's government by cancelling its agrarian policy and dissolving the "Red Army" and the Soviets.

However, thanks to the outbreak of war against Japanese imperialism, this armed force secured the opportunity for an unusual development. Especially at the end of and after the war, this army made great progress in numbers as well as in quality which far surpassed those in the Kiangsi Period. [7] This army thus grew into a weighty military force.

Politically, the CCP always oscillated between adventurism and opportunism: it cancelled its agrarian revolution and dissolved the "Red Army" and the Soviets on the eve of the Resistance War; it "collaborated" servilely with the Kuomintang and supported the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek during the war. But despite all these things, it also carried on a long period of resistance against Chiang's government, it made certain criticisms of the political, economic, and military measures of the latter during the war, and had put forward a number of demands for democratic reform. It carried out agrarian reform notably in some regions of North China. Furthermore, it was backed by the prestige of the tradition of the October Revolution in the USSR and the amazing effect the Soviet Union produced in the recent world war, and the powerful position it held since the end of the war.

On the other hand, under the intolerable oppression and exploitation of Chiang's utterly despotic, rotten, and inefficient regime, the common people, desperate and deeply resentful and especially the petty-bourgeois intellectuals and peasant masses, lodged all their hopes in the CCP since there was not a powerful and really revolutionary party to lead them. Therein was the source of the political capital of the CCP. This "political capital," plus the "peasant armed forces," constituted the subjective strength of the party. But without aid from the Soviet Union, this victory would still have been unassured.

## **D. The aid from the Soviet Union**

Notwithstanding the Soviet bureaucracy's fear of a genuinely victorious revolution in China of the working class leading the peasant masses and its foreign policy seeking for compromise with American imperialism, for the sake of its own privileges and to resist the threat of American imperialism, it would not refrain from giving certain help to the CCP within the range of its possible control over the latter. Hence, besides its support in political agitation, it actually gave the CCP decisive aid. Its occupation of Manchuria [8] objectively gave a mortal blow to Chiang's government. Despite the fact that the Soviet Union had recognized Chiang's as the official government, and had handed over to it the greater part of the cities and mines in Manchuria, the Soviet bureaucracy had destroyed almost all the most important factories and mining machinery (it also took away a part of them), and thus brought industry almost to a

complete stoppage. Meantime, through its control over the two ports—Dairen and Port Arthur—it blocked the main lines of sea communication of Chiang's government with Manchuria and barred its trade and commerce, especially its transportation of supplies to the army stationed in Manchuria.

On the other hand, it armed the troops of the CCP with huge amounts of light and heavy weapons taken from the Japanese soldiers [9] and enabled it to occupy the villages, smaller cities and towns and to besiege the great cities and mining districts where Chiang's army was stationed. Thus the cities and mines restored to Chiang Kai-shek did not benefit him, but on the contrary, became a most insupportable burden, and finally turned into a trap. To begin with, Chiang had to send a huge army (around a half-million soldiers) with the best equipment, that is to say, equipped with American weapons to remain on guard. At the same time, it had to provide for the enormous expenditures in the big cities and in the mines. Consequently, this greatly limited and scattered the military force of Chiang Kai-shek and accelerated the financial bankruptcy of his regime.

The weapons taken from the Japanese captives by the Soviet Union served to build up the army of the CCP [10] and produced a decisive effect upon the military apparatus and strategy of Mao Tse-tung. We must understand that the original peasant army of the CCP, despite its preponderant quantity, was not only very backward but also had extremely scanty equipment, especially in heavy weapons. Having obtained this gigantic quantity of light and heavy weapons through the medium of the Soviet Union, (in addition to numerous Soviet and Japanese military technicians), a part of the originally very backward peasant troops was modernized overnight.

The bravery of the peasants and the military adroitness of the Communist generals, together with these modern weapons, then enabled the Communist army to transform guerrilla warfare into positional warfare. This was fully manifested in the battles where the Communist troops gained complete victory in conquering the great cities and mines in Manchuria during the changing season between autumn and winter of 1948 (such as Chan-chun, Mukden, Chin-chao, and the big mining districts, Tieh-lin, Fu-shun, Ben-chi and An-san). This victory won for the Communist army an ample economic basis. Moreover, in the military field, since the best equipped of Chiang's troops (about 80 percent of those with American equipment) was destroyed, that meant that the greatest part of this American equipment was no longer effective. On the other hand, since the Communist army had taken possession of modern weapons and technicians, together with the Japanese arms handed over by the Soviet Union, that made it possible for the CCP to transform the former unfavorable situation in respect to Chiang's troops in the sphere of military equipment and technique into an overwhelming superiority. Henceforth the strategic attitude of the Communist army fundamentally changed (that is, shifted over from guerrilla warfare to positional warfare and an offensive towards the big cities). This change was undoubtedly a decisive factor in the victory of the CCP inasmuch as it depended on the peasant army alone to conquer the cities.

From the facts illustrated above, we are able to make out a clear picture as follows: the bourgeois-landlord regime of Chiang Kai-shek collapsed automatically in toto, both on the economic and political planes and in its military organization. Its only supporter, American imperialism, forsook it at last. The peasant army of the CCP, having won the support of the peasants and the petty-bourgeoisie in general and especially having obtained military aid from the Soviet Union, had become a colossal and more or less modernized army. The combination of all these objective and subjective factors paved the way for this extraordinary victory.

If we give a brief description of the process of this military victory, the truth of these factors as stated above can be made more explicit. Beginning with the "all-out counter-offensive" launched by the Communist army in the autumn of 1948, in the successive battles

occurring in the North East of China (except for a violent fight in Ching-chao) the other big cities, such as Chan-chuan, Mukden, etc., were occupied without battle as a result of the capitulation or disintegration of Chiang's army in their defensive positions. As for the great cities and important military bases north of the Yangtze River, except for an encounter in Chu-chao and Pang-po, the others, such as Tsi-nan, Tientsin, Peiping, Kai-feng, Cheng-chao, Si-an, etc., were handed over either because of the rebellion of the army stationed there (Tsi-nan), or surrender (Peiping), or automatic desertion as in Tientsin, Kaifeng, Chengchao and Si-an. In the Northwest, in the provinces of Kansu and Sinkiang, there was only surrender. In the city of Taiyuan, there was a comparatively longer struggle, yet this had no weight at all in the whole situation. As for the great cities south of the river, except for token resistance in Shanghai, the others were either given up in advance (Nanking, Hangchow, Hangkow, Nanchang, Fu-chow, Kweilin, and Canton), or surrendered upon the arrival of the Communist army (as in the provinces of Hunan, Szechuan, and Yun-nan). Thereupon, after crossing the Yangtze River, the army of Mao Tse-tung marched headlong down to Canton as though through "no man's land," while the remnants of Chiang's troops either surrendered or withdrew and fled away. Hence the peculiar situation whereby the "Liberation Army" did not "conquer" but rather "took over" the cities. From this concrete military process, one can get a clearer view of the amazing extent of the corruption and automatic decomposition attained by the bourgeois regime of Chiang Kai-shek and the exceptional conditions under which the victory of the peasant army of the CCP unfolded.

Now we can comprehend that it was under the specific conditions of a definite historical stage—the combination of various intricate and exceptional conditions emerging from the Second World War—that the CCP which relied on the peasant army isolated from the urban working class could win power from the bourgeois-landlord rule of Chiang Kai-shek. The essential features of these exceptional conditions are as follows: the whole capitalist world wherein China is the weakest link, tended to an unparalleled decline and decay; the automatic disintegration of the bourgeois Chiang Kai-shek regime was only the most consummate manifestation of the deterioration of the whole capitalist system. While on the other hand, resting on the socialized property relations of the October Revolution and exploiting the contradictions among the imperialist powers, the Soviet bureaucracy was able to achieve an unprecedented expansion of its influence during the Second World War, and this expansion greatly attracted the masses who were deprived of hope under the extreme decline and decomposition of the capitalist system, especially the masses of the backward oriental countries. This facilitated the hypertrophy of the Stalinist parties in these countries. The CCP is precisely a perfected model of these Stalinist parties.

Meanwhile, placed in an unfavorable position in the international situation—the situation brought forth by the Second World War—American imperialism was obliged to abandon its aid to Chiang and its interference with Mao. Whilst the Soviet Union, which had secured a superior position in Manchuria at the end of the war, inflicted serious damage upon Chiang's government and provided direct aid to the CCP on this basis, enabling the latter to modernize its backward peasant army. Without the combination of these conditions, the victory of a party like the CCP which relied purely on peasant forces would be inconceivable. For example, if Manchuria had not been occupied by the Soviet Union but had fallen entirely under Chiang's control, Chiang Kai-shek would have utilized the economic resources and the Japanese arms in Manchuria to cut off direct connection between the CCP and the Soviet Union, and block the armed support by the latter to the former. Similarly, if the situation at that time had permitted direct intervention by American imperialism in relation to the military activities of the CCP—under either of these two conditions—the victory of Mao Tse-tung would have been very doubtful. Or on the other hand, if we recall the defeat which the peasant army of the CCP suffered

during the Kiangsi Period of 1930–1935 when the power of the bourgeois Kuomintang was considerably stabilized, owing to the incessant aid from imperialism and the isolation of the CCP from the Soviet Union, we can also derive sufficient reason to justify the conclusion that today's victory of the CCP is entirely the result of the specific conditions created by the Second World War.

Trotsky and the Chinese Trotskyists insisted that the overturn of the Kuomintang regime could not be achieved by relying solely on the peasant armed forces, but could only be accomplished by the urban working class leading the peasant masses in a series of revolts. Even today, this conception is still entirely valid. It is derived from the fundamental Marxist theory that under the modern capitalist system (including that in the backward countries), it is the urban class which leads the rural masses, and this is also the conclusion drawn from numerous experiences, especially that of the October Revolution. This is precisely one of the fundamental conceptions of the Permanent Revolution, which we must hold on to firmly, despite the present victory of the CCP. Let us take India for example where we should insist that the Indian working class lead the peasant masses in the overthrow of the bourgeois power which is headed by the Congress Party. Only this process can guarantee that this backward country take the direction of genuine emancipation and development, i.e., the *permanent* transformation from the democratic revolution to the socialist revolution.

That we could not foresee the current victory of the CCP is the same thing as Trotsky and we Trotskyists having been unable to envisage the unusual expansion of Stalinism after the Second World War. Our mistake is not one of principle. It is rather because we insisted too much on principle that we more or less neglected the specific conditions involved in the development of events, and were not able to modify our tactics in time. Of course, this is a lesson which we should accept and apply to the evaluation of developments hereafter in these Oriental countries where the Stalinist parties maintain great influence (such as Vietnam, Burma, etc.), and help formulate a correct strategy in advance.

At the same time, we must understand that the victory gained by a party like the CCP which detached itself from the working class and leaned entirely on the peasant armed forces is not only abnormal in itself, but has also laid down many obstacles in the path of the future development of the Chinese revolutionary movement. To understand this is, in my view, of great importance in our judgment and estimation of the whole movement led by the CCP as well as in determining our strategy and tactics.

### **Is the seizure of power by the CCP the result of “mass pressure” and the violation of the objectives of the Kremlin?**

Some comrades of the International, not being quite familiar with the concrete process and specific conditions of the events happening in China, have particularly stressed the factor of “mass pressure,” or interpreted the victory of the CCP by an analogous comparison of it with the Yugoslav events. For instance, Comrade Germain [11] says:

Our movement has traditionally conceived the outstripping of Stalinism by the masses as involving profound splits inside the Communist parties. The Yugoslav and Chinese examples have demonstrated that, placed in certain exceptional conditions, entire Communist parties can modify their political line and lead the struggle of the masses up to the conquest of power, while passing beyond the objectives of the Kremlin. Under such conditions, these parties cease being Stalinist parties in the classical sense of the

word. (“What Should Be Modified and What Should Be Maintained in the Theses of the Second World Congress of the Fourth International on the Question of Stalinism?” published in the *International Information Bulletin*, April 1951.)

The ideas contained in this passage are obviously as follows: the CCP succeeded in conquering power, like the YCP [12], under pressure from the masses, and in violation of the objectives of the Kremlin. But, unfortunately, this “traditionally conceived” analogy can hardly be justified by the facts of the Chinese events. Now let us first of all begin with these facts.

Regarding the relation between the CCP and the masses (including its relation to “mass pressure”), I am not going to trace the facts prior to and during the war against Japan, which however fully demonstrate how often the CCP violated the aspirations of the masses and ignored “mass pressure.” I shall start with the period at the end of the war. The first period immediately after the war, from September 1945 to the end of 1946, marked a considerable revival and growth of the mass movement in China. In this period the working masses in all the great cities, Shanghai being the center, first brought forward their demands for a sliding scale increase in wages, for the right to organize trade unions, opposed freezing of wages, etc. They universally and continuously engaged in strikes and demonstrations. Although this struggle in its main features did not pass beyond the economic framework, or reach a nation-wide level, it yet at least proved that after the war the workers had lifted up their heads, and were waging a resolute fight against the bourgeoisie and its reactionary government for the improvement of their living conditions and general position. It actually won considerable success. Doubtless, this was the expression of a new awakening of the Chinese workers' movement.

Meantime, among the peasant masses, under the unbearable weight of compulsory contributions, taxes in kind, conscription, and the threat of starvation, the ferment of resentment was boiling, and some disturbances had already occurred in the regions controlled by Chiang's government. Notably the students, representing in general the petty-bourgeoisie, engaged in large-scale protests, strikes, and manifestations in the big cities, such as Chungking, Kunming, Nanking, Shanghai, Canton, Peiping, etc., under banners and slogans demanding democracy and peace, against the Kuomintang dictatorship, against mobilization for the civil war, and against the persecutions conducted by the Kuomintang agents.

On the other hand, returning to the “recovered areas,” Chiang's government not only revealed extreme corruption and inefficiency in administration, and stirred up strong resentment among the people, it already appeared to be tottering. Its power did not extend into North China for a certain period of time, especially Manchuria. (It was not until the beginning of March, 1946, that the Soviet Union began gradually to transfer such great cities as Mukden and Chanchuan and the important mines to Chiang's government.) During this same period the military strength of the CCP and its political influence among the masses were growing rapidly. These struggles of the workers, the ferment of resentment and rebellion among the peasants, the widespread demonstrations of the students, accompanied by the corruption and insecurity of Chiang's regime, and the strengthening of the CCP, obviously created a pre-revolutionary situation. If the CCP would then have been able to stay in step with the situation, that is, accept the “pressure of the masses,” raise slogans for the overthrow of the Chiang Kai-shek government (i.e., the slogan for the seizure of power), and join this slogan with other demands for democratic reforms, especially with the demand for agrarian revolution, it would have been able to swiftly transform this “pre-revolutionary” situation into a directly revolutionary situation, to carry through the insurrection and thereby arrive at the conquest of power in the most propitious way.

But, unfortunately, the fundamental political line adopted by the CCP in this period was quite different. Contrary to what it should have done—mobilize the masses in the struggle for power under the slogans of overthrowing Chiang’s government and agrarian reform—it kowtowed to Chiang Kai-shek and pleaded for the establishment of a “coalition government” (for this purpose Mao flew to Chungking to negotiate directly with Chiang, and even openly expressed his support to the latter in mass meetings), and tried its best to pull together the politicians of the upper layers of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie in order to proceed with peace parleys under the initiative of American imperialism.

As for the economic struggles of the working class, not only did the CCP not offer any positive lead to transform these struggles into political struggles, which was quite possible at that time, but on the contrary, in order to effect a “united front” with the “national bourgeoisie,” it persuaded the working masses not to go to “extremes” in their conflicts. Moreover, it dealt obsequiously with the leaders of the “yellow trade unions” in order to check the “excessive” demands of the workers. Its activities in the countryside were limited solely to organizing the guerrillas, while it avoided by all means broad mass movements which would have encouraged and unified the peasant masses. The great student movement in the cities was handled as a simple instrument for exerting pressure on the Kuomintang government to accept peace parleys, and were never linked with the strikes of the workers in a common struggle against the rule of Chiang Kai-shek.

However, in May, 1946, as the result of the incessant military offensive of the Kuomintang, the CCP announced that in certain areas under its domination it had begun agrarian reform, which served only to reinforce its military influence. Yet, this kind of land reform was by no means thoroughgoing since it consisted largely in compromise with the landlords and rich peasants by preserving all their “industrial and commercial properties” and allowing them to get the best and most of the land, and it was also quite limited in its scope. (For instance, no land reform was allowed in the areas of the provinces of Shantung, Kiangsu, Hopei, Honan.) Moreover, in its anxious desire to accomplish its reconciliation with Chiang Kai-shek, the CCP dissolved the peasant army in Kwangtung and Chekiang, and removed only a part of it to North China, causing great dissatisfaction among the rank and file members within the party itself. These facts sufficiently prove that the policy of the CCP not only did not accede to the “pressure of the masses,” but proceeded arbitrarily in precise opposition to the will and demands of the masses.

Chiang Kai-shek, on his part, made full use of the time during the peace conference to transport his army with the aid of American planes and warships from the interior to the great cities and the strategic bases in the “recovered areas,” to solidify his position and to prepare for armed attack upon the CCP. Meantime, he suppressed all the newly arising mass movements, especially the student movement. At the end of 1946, when all preparations were completed, Chiang’s government openly barred all the doors to compromise and peace parlays by holding its own “national assembly” and organizing its own “Constituent Government,” which showed its determination to eradicate the establishment of any “coalition government” with the CCP. Following these steps, it mobilized a great military offensive (such as the seizure of Chang-Chia-kow and some small cities and towns in North Kiangsu). Yet up to this moment the CCP had not given up its efforts at conciliation. Its delegates to the peace conference still lingered in Shanghai and Nanking, trying to reopen peace parleys with the Kuomintang through the mediation of the so called “Third Force”—the “Democratic League.” Not until later when Chiang Kai-shek drove away the peace delegation of the CCP (March 1947) and succeeded in occupying its capital and stronghold, Yen-an (April 1947), did it begin to realize the hopelessness of this attempt and only then did it muster its forces to engage in a military defense. But even at that time, it still did not dare to raise the slogan of the overthrow of the Kuomintang

government, nor did it offer a program of agrarian reform to mobilize the masses.

Finally, at the moment that Chiang’s government made public the “warrant” for arresting Mao Tse-tung (June 25, 1947) and proclaimed the “decree of mobilization for suppressing revolts” (July 1), after several months of hesitation (during which it seemed to be waiting for instructions from Moscow), the CCP published its manifesto on October 10 in the name of the “People’s Liberation Army” which openly urged the overthrow of Chiang Kai-shek and the building of a “New China.” Meantime, it once again brought forward its “agrarian law,” declaring the expropriation of the land of the landlords and rich peasants (while maintaining the “industrial and commercial enterprises”), and redistribution of this land to peasants without any or too little land.

However, this was a remarkable change in the policies of the CCP since the time that it vowed support to Chiang’s regime and abandoned land reform in 1937. In view of its relations with Chiang’s government, this change in policy can be considered fundamental.

Was this “change,” then, the result of mass pressure? No, obviously not. At this moment the mass movement had already been brutally trampled down by Chiang’s regime and was actually at a very low ebb; while the Kuomintang agents raged everywhere, thousands of young students were arrested, tormented, and even assassinated, and the active elements among the workers were constantly being arrested or hunted. The undisputable facts indicate that the CCP was compelled to make this change solely because Chiang had pulled down all bridges towards compromise and because it was confronted with the mortal threat of a violent attack designed to annihilate its influence once for all. So, we might rather say that this change was the result of “Chiang’s pressure” than the “pressure of the masses.”

In order to forearm itself for a counter-offensive, the CCP began to make a “left turn” on the political plane. Only then did it begin to make concessions to the demands of the masses (or to incline before “mass pressure”), especially the demands of the peasant masses under its control, with the intention of regaining and reinforcing its military power. Hence, from November 1947 to the next spring, it initiated a universal struggle to “correct the right deviation” in areas where land reform was set into motion. In the course of this struggle, the CCP liquidated all the privileges previously granted to the landlords and kulaks, re-expropriated and distributed the land among the poor peasants. It deprived the landlords and kulaks of the posts they held in the local administration, the party and the army. [13]

“The Poor Peasants’ Committees” were created and accorded a few democratic rights to permit them to fight the landlords and kulaks head on, and they were even allowed to criticize the cadres of the lower layers of the party, some of whom were removed from their posts and punished. All these actions indeed succeeded in gaining considerable support from the huge peasant masses and greatly reinforced its anti-Chiang military forces. But we should not forget that all these “leftward” policies and actions were nothing but the fruits of “Chiang’s pressure.”

In regard to the question of the relationships between the CCP and the Kremlin, I can only offer as illustrations some important historical “turns.” After the disastrous defeat of the Second Chinese Revolution, when the Kremlin switched its policy from ultra-right opportunism to ultra-left adventurism (the so-called “Third Period” in its general international line), the leadership of the CCP followed on the heels of the former without hesitation. Closing their eyes to the most grave injuries it suffered because of this “turn,” and deaf to the unremitting severe criticisms from Trotsky and the Chinese “Left Opposition,” the leading organs executed these adventurist policies and carried on a desperate struggle to “build up Soviets and the Red Army” in the desolate and secluded villages, with complete isolation from the urban workers’ movement, and in the general counter-revolutionary climate of the victory and relative stability of the

bourgeoisie.

As the “Red Army” in China was driven out of the South and fled to Yenan in the North, the Kremlin, threatened by the triumph of Hitler, turned back from the “Third Period” to ultra-right opportunism, and opened the period of building up the so-called “Democratic Front” and the “Peace Front.” Just as before, adjusting itself to this turn of the Kremlin, the CCP likewise advocated unreservedly the “People’s Front” or the “Front of National Defense,” and renewed its demand for “collaboration” to the Kuomintang. Even when Chang Hsueh-liang, Commander-in-chief of the Kuomintang expedition at the time, detained Chiang Kai-shek in Sian under “pressure of the masses,” particularly under pressure from his own soldiers and lower officers, [14] and when this incident aroused delight and hope in the whole country, especially among the members of the CCP, [15] to everyone’s astonishment, the CCP complied without any resistance with the directives of the Kremlin, and urged and compelled Chang Hsueh-liang to release Chiang Kai-shek, the chief butcher of the Second Revolution and Mao’s mortal enemy during eight years of civil war,[16] as a price to buy Chiang’s consent for a “new collaboration” (on condition of cancelling agrarian reform, dissolving the “Soviets” and the “Red Army”) in order to “fight together against Japan!” This amazing servile obedience of the Communist leadership towards the Kremlin not only stirred up discontent among the people in general, but also caused great disappointment and disturbances among its own members and masses.

After the end of the war, the desperate effort of the CCP in submissively following the policy of compromise and peace with Chiang Kai-shek in complete disregard of the aspirations of the masses was the freshest fact to show that it was entirely under the direction of the Kremlin and that its policy was completely subordinated to the foreign policy of the latter, which was one of seeking compromise with American imperialism.

Thereafter, the “big turn” in the policy of the CCP from a compromise attitude to overthrowing Chiang’s regime was also in line with the “turn” in the foreign policy of the Kremlin which, having failed in its attempt to achieve compromise with American imperialism, turned to a defensive policy as a result of the “cold war.” The timing of the “big turn” of the CCP in October 1947 with the formation of the “Cominform” under directives from the Kremlin in September of the same year was not merely a coincidence and should suffice to prove that this “turn” of the CCP, far from violating the “objectives” of the Kremlin, was completed precisely under the direction of the latter. [17]

In view of the above-mentioned facts, it is perfectly clear that to place the CCP and the YCP on the same plane and consider the former’s conquest of power as the result of similar “pressure of the masses” and “passing beyond the objectives of the Kremlin” is mechanical and misleading as well. If we make a comparison of the policies and measures adopted by the YCP and those of the CCP in the process of the events, the distance between them would be even more apparent.

In the course of the anti-imperialist national liberation movement during 1941–45, the YCP already destroyed step by step the bourgeois-landlord regime, and consummated its proletarian dictatorship in the first period after the war (October 1945), despite its somewhat abnormal character. Simultaneous with or a little later than the consummation of the proletarian dictatorship (1945–46), it succeeded in carrying out agrarian reform and the statization of industry and banking, and expropriated private property by enactment of law. Meanwhile, on many important problems, the YCP had already formulated its own views which were different from and independent of the Kremlin, and pursued its course according to its own “experiences,” that is, submitted empirically to the mass pressure against the “Objectives of the Kremlin.” [18]

But the CCP not only closely followed the foreign policy of the Kremlin during the national liberation movement against Japanese imperialism, and devoted itself to seeking a compromise with the bourgeois-landlord

regime regardless of pressure from the masses; but even after it conquered full power, it persisted in forming a “coalition government” with the national bourgeoisie and guaranteed them protection of their properties. It even tried to postpone carrying out the land reform to the latest possible date. Here we must note: the differences in attitude expressed by the YCP and the CCP in the course of the events are not quantitative, but qualitative. To assume therefore that the CCP has completed the same process of development as the YCP and ceased to be a Stalinist party in the classical sense of the word is to go entirely beyond the facts.

But what explanation should be given for these “differences”? First, since the CCP withdrew from the cities to the countryside in 1928, it established a considerably solid power and army (the peasant army). For these twenty years, it used this army and power constantly to rule over the peasant masses (as we know, the backward and scattered peasants are the easiest to control), and hence a stubborn and self-willed bureaucracy took shape (especially in its manner of treating the masses). Even toward the workers and students in the Kuomintang areas, it employed either ultimatum or deceitful methods instead of persuasion.

Secondly, in ideology, the CCP has further fortified and deepened the theory of Stalinism through its treatment of a series of important events—the defeat of the Second Revolution, the peasant wars and the Resistance War against Japan, etc.—especially through its resistance to the criticism of Trotsky and the Chinese Trotskyists in regard to its concepts and policies. [19]

The “systematic” and dogmatic “New Democracy” of Mao Tse-tung is nothing else but an ideologically and politically deepened and crystallized expression of Stalinism, that is to say, it is the expression of obstinately holding onto the “revolution by stages” in direct challenge to the Permanent Revolution.

Thirdly, over these two decades, the CCP has been an organization receiving special attention from the Kremlin, and it follows that its relations with the latter are particularly intimate. After the Soviet Union occupied Manchuria and armed the CCP with weapons taken from the Japanese captives, the Kremlin’s control over the CCP became more rigorous than ever. [20]

On account of these three characteristics, the CCP has neither been able to yield to “the pressure of the masses” and modify its own political line, nor has it been easy for this party to “pass beyond the objectives of the Kremlin” and go its own way. The YCP on the other hand has traversed an entirely different course. This party was almost completely lifted up from the national anti-imperialist movement of the masses, and within a comparatively short span of time, it was not able to form a bureaucracy and Stalinist ideology as tenacious as that of the CCP. Since it was actually quite isolated from the Kremlin during its Resistance warfare, it was more disposed to empirically incline before the pressure of the masses, and in accord with the development of events to gradually modify its own political line until it finally arrived at violating the objectives of the Kremlin. Therefore, we must say that the conquest of power in these two cases has only an apparent resemblance. In respect to the motivating causes (in terms of “pressure”), the manner adopted in taking power, and in the content of the power, the differences are quite great.

From this judgment and explanation, should we deduce a further inference that the CCP will resist pressure from the masses at all times and under any conditions and never come into conflict with the Kremlin? No. What we have demonstrated above is that the most important turns the CCP experienced in the past were entirely the result of pressure from the Kremlin, and in violation of the will of the masses. Even the present “turn” toward the seizure of power was not a product of its yielding to mass pressure and its violation of the objectives of the Kremlin, but on the contrary resulted from the mortal pressure of Chiang Kai-shek, in complete agreement with the Kremlin. However, in ordinary circumstances, in order to maintain its own existence and continue its

development, the CCP is obliged to seek support from certain layers of the masses and to establish a base among them. Accordingly, it would more or less concede to demands of the masses within certain limits and within the possibilities permitted by its own control, that is, in other words, to incline before pressure from the masses. In the past, its policy passed through not a few “leftward” oscillations, such as the limited agrarian reform policy offered in May 1947, the “liquidation of the right deviation in the land reform” in the period from the end of 1947 to the spring of 1948, and some comparatively leftward measures taken after its conquest of power. These are the solid facts of its condescension to the pressure of the masses. It is possible that this kind of leftward turn will appear more often and to a greater extent in the future. Also because of the same reasons, we can believe that in the past certain differences of conflicts must have occurred between the CCP and the Kremlin, but these conflicts have not yet burst up to the surface. For instance, the dispute between Mao and Lee illustrated above may serve as a conspicuous reflection of this existing conflict, which is not only unavoidable in the coming days but will also be further intensified. So I must say that the error made by Comrade Germain (as already indicated above) is not one of principle, but of fact.

Yet I must also point out that the mistake committed on such an important question may not only give rise to a series of other mistakes (such as underestimation of the bureaucratism of the CCP, its Stalinist ideology and methods; overestimation of its conflict with the Kremlin and the pressure of the masses—the role played by the masses in the events; and over-optimism on perspectives concerning the CCP, etc.), but may also lead to errors in principle. For example, some comrades in our International have already asserted that the regime of the CCP is a “proletarian dictatorship,” because they consider that events in China are in the same category as the Yugoslav events, and since the YCP regime has already become a proletarian dictatorship. Proceeding by abstract deduction according to formal logic, the regime of the CCP is doubtlessly also a “proletariat dictatorship.” (There will be further explanations on this question later in this report.)

Just because this way of transposing facts to suit certain formulas may bring about the danger of committing mistakes in principle, we should be very cautious in applying “principles,” especially “formulas” deduced from principles. We cannot bring events which are quite similar in appearance under the same principle or the same formula, or force events into accommodation with a given principle or formula. First of all, we must examine and analyze the concrete facts of the events themselves, particularly taking account of whatever exceptional circumstances have played a decisive role in the events and judge whether this event conforms to a certain principle or formula, whether it actually is the unerring expression of this principle or formula. As Lenin said: the facts are forever alive, while formulas often tend to become rigid.

Our movement has assumed and insisted that it is possible for the masses to pass beyond the boundaries of Stalinism, and that there exists hidden profound contradictions between various Communist parties and the Kremlin, so that under certain specific conditions, the entire Communist Party may modify its political line, outstrip the objectives of the Kremlin, lead the masses to the seizure of power. This principle and this formula is correct in its basic theoretical premise, and has already been justified by the Yugoslav events (or to be more exact, it is rather derived from the latter). But here we must particularly note one thing, and that is precisely the “certain specific conditions.” Although under “certain specific conditions” the Communist Party could be pushed by the pressure of the masses to seize power in violation of the aims of the Kremlin (as in the case of the YCP), yet, under certain other “specific conditions,” a Communist party could come to power not necessarily through the pressure of the masses, meanwhile receiving instructions from the Kremlin (or at least not violating its objectives). This is exactly what has

happened in China.

We believe that similar events may possibly be repeated in other Oriental countries (Vietnam, Burma, etc.). What the Kremlin fears is the victory of a genuine revolutionary movement of the workers, especially in the advanced countries, simply because it will not be able to control this victorious revolution which will in turn threaten its very existence. So long as there is no “threat” of this kind, and no terrible interference will be directly incurred from imperialism, whereas it can still extend its sphere of influence, the Kremlin would not let such an opportunity slip from its hand, and would naturally allow a Communist Party under its control to take power. This is the lesson which can be drawn from the Chinese events and which we must accept. Even though it may not be considered as a different pattern of the conquest of power performed by a Communist Party, at least it must be taken as a supplement to the lesson of the Yugoslav events. Only in this manner can we avoid falling into the mistake of transforming a principle into a rigid formula, of imposing this formula on every apparently similar event, and thereby producing a series of erroneous conclusions.

We Marxists react toward events by analyzing the concrete facts in the course of events with our methods and principles, testing our principles through this analysis and thus enriching our principles, or if necessary, modifying our principles and formulas, for the truth is always concrete.

### **Is the victory of the CCP the beginning of the Third Chinese Revolution?**

The resolution on the Chinese question of the Seventh Plenum of IEC stated that: “the victory of Mao Tse-tung over Chiang Kai-shek is the beginning of the Third Chinese Revolution.” When this resolution first arrived in China (autumn 1949), the leading organ of our party—the Political Bureau—agreed with it in general, but because of its urgent need to move it was not able to discuss it in detail and express its opinions in written form. Then doubts arose among some comrades regarding the resolution of the International (the first appearing in writing was “The Significance and the Nature of the Victory of the Chinese Stalinist Movement,” an article written by both Comrades Chao and Ma, published in the Chinese edition of *Fourth International*, No. 2, Vol. 1, April 1950), and the most acute controversy of this recent year commenced. Part of the responsible comrades are in complete agreement with the views of the International (Comrades Chao and Ma who formerly expressed their disagreement are now becoming the major supporters of the views of the International), while another part of the responsible comrades are in strong opposition. We have selected four of the most representative articles in this controversy of ideas and translated them into English for reference. So in this report, it is not necessary to recount in detail the points of divergence in their discussion. I am simply going to give my personal criticism and explanation of the essential arguments, particularly those of the comrades with oppositional views.

### **On the question of “the revolutionary situation”**

The major argument of the comrades in opposition is that the ascent to power of the CCP is not based upon the revolutionary actions of the masses, especially the working masses (i.e., from general strikes to armed insurrection), but has relied entirely on the peasant armed forces and purely military actions. On the basis of our traditional conception of

“revolution” and the experiences of revolutions in modern times (notably that of the Russian October Revolution), they conceive of the revolution only in the sense when the huge masses, especially the working class, are mobilized from bottom to top, go beyond the domain of the general democratic struggle to armed rebellion, directly destroy the state apparatus of the ruling class, and proceed to build up a new regime. That we can call the beginning of the victory of a real revolution. Now, this movement, under leadership of the CCP, not only did not at all mobilize the working masses, but even refrained from appealing to the peasant masses to organize, to rise for action and engage in a revolutionary struggle (ousting the landlords, distributing the land, etc.). As the facts stand, the CCP relied solely on the military action of the peasant army instead of the revolutionary action of the worker and peasant masses, and therefore these comrades asserted that this victory is only the victory of a peasant war, and not the beginning of the Third Chinese Revolution.

We must admit that the traditional conception of revolution held by these comrades is completely correct, and the facts enumerated by them are irrefutable. But they have forgotten “a small matter.” That is that the epoch wherein we live is not that of the victory of the October Revolution, the time of Lenin and Trotsky; it is the epoch in which the heritage of the October Revolution—the Soviet Socialist Workers’ State—has been usurped by the bureaucracy of Stalin and has reached the point of extreme degeneration. These are the main features of this epoch: on one hand, the capitalist world, having experienced two world wars, is in utter decay, while the objective revolutionary conditions have become transformed from a ripened to an over-ripened stage: on the other hand, the Stalin bureaucracy, by dint of the prestige inherited from the October Revolution and the material basis of the Soviet Union, has made utmost efforts to hold the Communist parties of all the countries in its bridle, and through these Communist parties, it attempts to place the revolutionary movement of different countries in subordination to its own diplomatic interests. Under these exceptional circumstances and as a result of them, the revolutionary movements of several countries have not only suffered frustrations and defeats, but in some other countries, the revolutionary movements have been deformed. The victory of the movement led by the CCP is a prominent example of this deformation of its revolution.

As we have said, viewed from the aspect of the CCP’s attempt to avoid the mobilization of the masses, particularly the worker masses, and its conquering of power on the basis of peasant armed forces, this event is indeed far from conforming with a classic or normal revolution. But considered from the standpoint of its overthrow of the bourgeois-landlord regime of Chiang Kai-shek, its widespread practice of land reform, and its political resistance against imperialism and its struggle for national independence, it is undeniably not only “progressive,” but revolutionary. Further, it marks a great dividing line in modern Chinese history. The destruction of the bloody twenty-year rule of Chiang Kai-shek and the blow dealt to the imperialist powers who have trodden on the Chinese people for centuries are quite sufficient to prove that this event can stack up with the First Chinese Revolution (1911). In as much as a sizeable general land reform has been carried out (no matter how incomplete it is), the feudal remnants left behind through thousands of years are: being for the first time shoveled away on a wide scale, and since this work is still being carried on—ought we still insist that it is not an epoch-making revolutionary movement? Well, the comrades in opposition contend that they have completely acknowledged the progressive aspects of this movement, but, nevertheless, they are by no means identical with the initial triumph of a real revolution, or the beginning of the Third Revolution, since they have been achieved by military and bureaucratic methods. Though we admit this fact, our conclusion cannot simply be a condemnation of the process and its outcome as “not revolutionary.” The only correct view is to say that this is not a typical or normal revolution, but a distorted, damaged, and hence a deformed revolutionary movement.

In order to obtain a more precise understanding of this question of deformed revolution, let us recall the discussions on the nature of the states in the buffer countries of East Europe.

In these buffer countries the dispossession of the bourgeoisie from power, the land reform procedures, and the nationalizations of industry, banks, means of transportation and exchange were either not at all or only to a small degree effected through the revolutionary action of the worker and peasant masses. The statized properties and enterprises of the new regime have never been placed under the supervision and control of the masses, but are, under occupation by the Soviet Army, operated and monopolized by the Communist bureaucrats of the Kremlin order. Concentrating on this fact, various “minorities” among the sections of the International (which are in fact elements already outside of or on the way to quitting our movement if they insist on their own views) dogmatize about the nature of these states as “state-capitalist” or “bureaucratic centralist.” However, the IS of our International, with the traditional method employed by Trotsky in studying and characterizing the nature of the Soviet state under the rule of the Stalin bureaucracy as a degenerated workers’ state, has affirmed that these buffer states have already become “deformed workers’ states” assimilated into the Soviet Union. As the property relations in these countries have been fundamentally changed, i.e., statized, and since this statization is an indispensable material premise for the transformation from capitalism to socialism, on the basis of this fundamental change in property relations we can then affirm the change in the nature of the state. But while maintaining this assertion, the International has not overlooked the detestable facts of the way in which the bureaucrats of the Soviet Union and the Communist parties of these countries are monopolizing all economic and administrative power and the police and the GPU are strangling the freedom and initiative of the masses. It is precisely in view of these *facts* that our International calls these states *deformed* or *abnormal* workers’ states. This is the only correct way to dialectically comprehend the events, the only way “to call things by their right names.”

If our Chinese comrades in opposition could adopt the method used by the International in deciding the nature of the state in the buffer countries—the traditional method of Trotskyism—to evaluate the victory of the CCP, it would be very plain that no matter in what manner the CCP succeeded in seizing the power, whether by purely military or bureaucratic means, the conquests it has attained (the overthrow of Chiang’s regime, the land reform, and relative political independence) are nevertheless the realizations of what must be realized in the *permanent* process from the democratic revolution to the socialist revolution, and they are therefore revolutionary. But inasmuch as the CCP has not mobilized the worker masses and has not thoroughly advanced this revolution with the help of the working class leading the peasant masses, in other words, just because it substituted the military bureaucratic methods of Stalinism for the Bolshevik revolutionary methods of mobilizing the masses, this revolution has been gravely distorted and injured, and its features are misshaped to such an extent that they are hardly to be recognized.

Yet, we Marxists judge all things and events not from their appearance, but by the essence concealed under the appearance. So, no matter how ugly and abhorrent the appearance of the Soviet Union is under the rule of Stalin’s bureaucracy, since it preserves the nationalized property created by the October Revolution, we still recognize it as a “workers’ state”—a *degenerated* workers’ state. And although from their very birth, the buffer states in Eastern Europe have already been seriously disfigured by Stalin’s bureaucratism, and have revealed such monstrous deformity, we must nevertheless call them “workers’ states,” although *deformed* workers’ states. In the same way, no matter how the movement led by the CCP is distorted and damaged by its bureaucratic methods, since it has overthrown Chiang’s regime, has secured considerable independence and carried out a certain degree of land reform, we must recognize it as a

revolution, although an abnormal revolution.

We must understand that our epoch is a transitional epoch lying between capitalism and socialism, the most comprehensive and intricate epoch in the history of mankind. Hence, many of the events and movements under the complex influences of diverse factors, often happen to develop out of accord with the normal procedures of our logical thinking which have been derived from historical experience or principles. Moreover, the extraordinary expansion and interference of Stalinism following the degeneration of the first workers' state (which is in the last analysis also one of the products of this intricate and convulsive epoch) have further pulled these events and movements out of the normal orbit and served to distort them. In this epoch, anyone who demands that all events and movements conform to one's own ideal or norm, and would only recognize and participate in those which are considered normal and conforming with one's ideals, is a perfect Utopian, who either hurls meaningless curses (or "criticisms" so they claim) on events and movements, or wages a desperate fight against History. These people have nothing in common with Marxists.

We Trotskyists, being wholly responsible for the coming revolution, should not only maintain "our own ideal" and understand the "normal development of the movement," but should particularly understand the abnormal events and imperfect movements produced under exceptional and combined conditions over a given period or under certain circumstance. In other words, we must recognize the reality already coming into existence, accept this reality, even though it may be inconsistent with our "norm" or disgusting; and we must carry on an indefatigable struggle in face of this reality in order to alter it in the course of the struggle and turn it toward the direction of our goal.

Now the entire Chinese mainland has fallen into the hands of the CCP; the whole movement has been placed under its control or leadership. This is an absolute "reality," although distorted and contrary to our ideals. But unless we accept the reality of this movement, penetrate into this movement, actively join in all mass struggles, influence the masses with our Trotskyist revolutionary program, try patiently to convince and to win the confidence of the masses in the course of the struggle, help them to disentangle themselves step by step through their own experiences from the illusions and control of Mao Tse-tung's opportunism and bureaucratism, and eventually divert the orientation of this movement, all our "criticisms" will be futile as well as harmful. This task is, of course, extremely difficult, and it will not necessarily proceed in tune with our efforts. But at least by participating in this movement, we can lay down a basis for future work, and then when we are faced with a more favorable situation shall be able to intervene and even to lead the movement.

If we refuse to recognize the victory of the CCP as the beginning of a deformed revolution, if we do not participate in the movement positively in order to deliver it from deformation, or if we only express some passive criticisms on the CCP, we shall surely fall into the bog of sectarianism (as our Chinese minority has done), quit the movement and the masses, and finally inevitably withdraw from all practical political struggles and be swept away by the historical current.

Besides, I must also point out that our oppositional comrades in underlining the movement led by the CCP as a purely peasant war and therefore denying the significance of its mass character, have committed another mechanical error. Because the peasant army led by the CCP is not only a tremendous peasant mass in itself (the peasant mass in uniform), the most active among the peasant masses, but it is supported by a greater peasant bulk at its back. The experiences of history have shown us that once the peasant movement heaves up, it is often involved in armed struggle. In the Second Chinese Revolution, when the peasant masses in Kwangtung and Hunan were organized into "Peasants' Associations," their armed forces appeared almost simultaneously since it was quite impossible for them to fight the landlords and the country gentry without

any substantial force. This has almost become a natural law in the peasant movement. And we must also note that the present army differs greatly from any former peasant army in the sense that it has been systematically organized and trained by the Stalinist party which is more or less equipped with modern knowledge and techniques and has been endowed with a nation-wide and up-to-date program of democratic reform as the general direction of struggle, no matter how opportunist this program has been. It is just for this reason that we cannot call this movement simply a peasant war, but an abnormal revolutionary movement, and this designation alone is true to the facts and to dialectic logic.

The Chinese comrades who support the resolution of the International, on the other hand, in their attempt to demonstrate that the victory of the CCP is the beginning of the Third Chinese Revolution, the movement led by the CCP is a mass movement, and the change of its policy is the result of pressure from the masses, have gone to another extreme of exaggeration or even misinterpretation of the facts. This is equally harmful. For instance, Comrade Chao and Comrade Ma interpret the turn in the CP's policy as the result of mass pressure and representing a mass movement by misdating the "beginning of the Third Chinese Revolution" from October 1947 when the CCP formally declared the overthrow of Chiang's regime. This is not only mechanical, but is entirely contradictory to the actual fact as I have already indicated above. Moreover, Comrade Ma says, "From the point of view of the number of masses mobilized, the present revolution is even more normal than the Second Revolution, because the masses organized in the latter numbered only about ten millions, while even before the 'Liberation Army' crossed the Yangtze River, there were already more than one hundred million farmers rising to distribute the land." This kind of exposition is over-exaggerated and also fundamentally wrong in its conception of the mass movement.

Comrade Chun Yuan has refuted and criticized it fully in his article entitled "On the Question of the So-Called 'Revolutionary Situation.'" I think that his refutation is correct and consistent with the historical facts. Here I would like to mark only one point. In the Second Chinese Revolution, the greatest part of the working class was not only organized as in the "Kwangtung-Hongkong Committee" and the "General Federation of Trade Unions of Shanghai" (which were then practically functioning as soviets), mobilized and occupying the leading positions in the nation-wide movement, and launched a number of general strikes and grand demonstrations, but, furthermore, they had engaged in several victorious armed revolts, as in the case of the worker masses in Hangkow and Chekiang who seized the British settlements, and in Shanghai where they occupied all parts of the city except the foreign concessions.

Now in this movement of the CCP, from its beginning to the conquest of power, there has neither been the rising of the working masses in any city to the point of general strikes or insurrections, nor even a small-scale strike or demonstration. Most of the workers were passive and inert, or at most showed a certain hopeful attitude towards this movement in their dispositions. This is an indisputable fact. How can we compare this present movement with the revolutionary movement of the Second Chinese Revolution? The resolution of the International has clearly asserted, "The victory of Mao Tse-tung over Chiang Kai-shek is the military victory of a peasant revolt over a thoroughly collapsed regime." That is to say, this victory of the CCP is not the political victory of a real revolutionary movement of the worker and peasant masses over the bourgeois power. So, this only helps to prove that Comrade Ma who ardently supports the resolution of the International has gone too far, has over-idealized the Communist-led movement. This idealization of events will not only foster illusions, but objectively lead to wrong judgments. Both will be dangerous, because illusions are always the origin of disappointment or discouragement, while wrong judgments will inevitably become the root of erroneous policies.

We should never overlook all the extremely serious dangers hidden in the “deformation” of the “Third Chinese Revolution” created by the CCP: the tenacious opportunism, the imperious bureaucracy, the severe control over the masses, the hostility towards revolutionary ideas, and the brutal persecution of the revolutionary elements, especially the Trotskyists. (Our organization has been ransacked in many places in the mainland, many comrades have been arrested, imprisoned, forced to “repent,” and a few of our most responsible comrades have already been executed. All these dangerous factors combined do not allow any over-optimism in regard to the development and perspectives of this already commenced “Third Chinese Revolution,” and will make it immeasurably difficult for us Trotskyists to work in this movement. Yet, despite all of these circumstances, we should never adopt a sectarian or pessimistic attitude, give up our efforts and our revolutionary responsibility for pushing forward or transforming this movement. At the same time we must reject all naive ultra-optimism, which always tends to disregard the difficulties in the movement and the hardships in our work. At the beginning, they might throw themselves into the movement with great zeal but when they encounter the severe difficulties in the course of their work, they will become disheartened and shrink back. Though, with the entire perspective of our movement in sight, we Trotskyists always hold firm to our unbending faith and revolutionary optimism, in other words, we profoundly believe that the victory of the proletarian revolution in the whole world and the reconstruction of the human society can be accomplished only under the banner and the program of Trotskyism, the most enriched and deepened Marxist-Leninism of modern times; yet we should not overlook the formidable obstructions on the way from the present period to the eventual victory, particularly the obstacles laid down by Stalinism. We must first of all bring to light these obstacles, then overcome them with the most precise program, correct methods, and supreme patience and perseverance.

The sectarians find their excuses in the fact that the movement does not conform to their preconceived norms and attempt to flee away from it in advance. The naive optimists idealize the movement, but, as soon as they discover later on that the movement does not follow the track of their idealization, they leave it. Revolutionary optimists have nothing in common with these two sorts of people. Since they have the strongest faith in the victory of the revolution, since they apprehend the enormous difficulties lying on the road to this victory, they will cut their path through the thorniest thickets only with revolutionary methods and unparalleled persistence to reach the ultimate end.

Confronted with Mao’s victory, serious controversies raised in the Chinese organization through the discussion of the party’s policy in the past which have produced certain unhealthy effects on the party itself. Though it is not possible for me to dwell in detail on a description and criticism regarding these controversial opinions, yet I should express my fundamental attitude toward this discussion (especially since many Chinese comrades have asked me to do so). It is absolutely reasonable that a political organization, on the morrow of a great event, in order to readjust its political line, should examine and discuss carefully, its past policy. Therefore, I do not agree with some comrades who object to this discussion. But I should also insist that we must proceed with the discussion on a basis which is fully responsible both for the revolutionary tasks and for our party, and in a very circumspect, exact, and precise manner. It is absolutely unbecoming to criticize at will the party’s past policy with giddy and bombastic gestures which create confusion and centrifugal tendencies in the party. The experience of history has already taught us that under pressure of a great event, especially in face of growing difficulties in conditions of work, a political party is most susceptible to centrifugal tendencies. If, at this moment, criticism of the party’s policy in the past assumes an indiscreet, exaggerated or unjust attitude, it will be most apt to affect the rank and file of the party to falter

in their faith, encourage the development of centrifugal tendencies, and finally lead to a terrible rupture.

But unfortunately, some of our comrades are not prudent enough in their criticisms on the policy we adopted in the past period. The article written by Comrade Chao, “Thesis on the Ideological Rearmament,” is a notable example. Though this article is aimed at correcting the “sectarian tendency,” its criticism of the past policy of the party is not only over-exaggerated but misleading. In his view, or at least according to his way of talking, it seems that the whole political line of the party in the past was fundamentally wrong and therefore, following the example of Lenin in posing the “April Theses,” “the party must be ideologically rearmed.” However, as a result, this attitude only stimulated strong protests and criticisms from another group of comrades, which found their first expression in “Rearmament or Revisionism?” written by Comrade Ming.

In reality, our party has maintained and struggled over long years in the past for the traditional line of Trotskyism, the line of the Permanent Revolution. The great events—the Sino-Japanese War, China’s involvement in the Second World War, and in the struggles against the right opportunism of Chen Tu-hsiu and the ultra-left sectarianism of the Minority group led by Cheng Chao-lin during the critical periods of these two events, have justified the political line we persisted in over the past. During the Civil War between the Kuomintang and the CCP, our basic line and our position towards the CCP have also been correct and coincide with the fundamental attitude of the resolution of the International on the Chinese Civil War. [21]

After the CCP started upon the seizure of power, the program offered by our party (contained in “An Open Letter to the Members of the CCP” adopted by the Plenum of the Central Executive Committee of our party) almost completely corresponded to the program adopted by the Seventh Plenum of the International. Comrade Chao’s appeal for an “ideological rearmament of our party” is tantamount to saying that our party in the past, or at least in the course of the CP’s conquest of power, “deserted Trotskyist ideology” and needs to be “rearmed” once more by the same Trotskyist ideology. This presentation is not only exaggerated and distorts the historical facts, but is actually an insult to the party. Hence it naturally has stirred up vehement indignation, rage and protestations, and even to a certain extent, confusions and vacillations among the comrades. It is with the presentiment of just such consequences that I forewarned our comrades to be not too hasty in making a diametrically opposite turn.

Nevertheless, I do not mean that our party has never committed any mistakes in the past, especially in the recent events of the CP’s conquest of power. I have already pointed out that our party did not envisage the victorious conquest of power by the CCP. From this major error in estimating the whole event derives a series of mistakes on the evaluation of events in the course of their development, and certain tactical errors in our propaganda to the outside world, and these errors in estimation have affected our attitude to the entire event which more or less tended to passive criticism and an underestimation of its objective revolutionary significance. This is what we seriously admit and must correct. But, as I have said above, these are rather mistakes in estimating the events than in principle, and therefore can be easily redressed.

As we know, the best Marxists (Marx, Lenin, Engel, Trotsky, etc.) could maintain correctness in principle and in method, but could not guarantee accuracy in every estimate of the development of events. Marxism is the most effective scientific method of predicting social phenomena. But it has not yet reached such exactness as meteorology in foretelling the weather or astronomy in astral phenomena, since social phenomena are far more complicated than those of nature. So, Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky have also made mistakes in their evaluation of events. For instance, the optimistic estimation of Marx and Engels on the development of the situation after the failure of the 1848 Revolution; the optimistic anticipation of Lenin and Trotsky on the revolutionary

evolution in Europe after the October Revolution; and Trotsky's appraisal of the perspectives of Stalinism during the Second World War. What distinguished them was not infallibility in estimating any and all events but their constant, cautious and exact observation of the objective process of events, and once they realized that the development of events did not conform to their original estimates or that their estimates were wrong, in immediately re-adjusting or re-estimating them. This is the attitude of a real Marxist, and is the example we should strive to follow.

### **The class nature of the CCP and the new regime**

Though there has not been much discussion among the Chinese comrades on this question, some opinions which tend to deviate from the Marxist line exist among the comrades of the International. I therefore consider it necessary to raise this question for serious discussion and to make a definite appraisal which can serve as the premise in determining our position in relation to the CCP and its new regime.

About the nature of the CCP, almost all the Chinese comrades have unanimously declared it to be a petty-bourgeois party based on the peasantry. This has been a traditional conception of the Chinese Trotskyists for the past twenty years, and is one defined by Trotsky himself.

Beginning with 1930, Trotsky continuously pointed out: the CCP had gradually degenerated from a workers' party into a peasant party. Once he even said in a letter to the Chinese comrades that the CCP was following the same path as the Social Revolutionary Party in Russia. The main reason for this judgment was as follows: After the defeat of the Second Revolution, the CCP gave up the urban workers' movement, left the urban proletariat, and turned entirely toward the countryside. It plunged its whole strength into village guerrilla fighting and therefore absorbed a great quantity of peasant masses into the party. As a result, the basis of the party's composition became purely peasant. Despite the participation of some worker elements which retreated from the cities, the tiny number of these workers was not enough to determine the composition of the party. Furthermore, during the prolonged period of living in the countryside, they also assimilated little by little the peasant outlook in their ideology. [22]

As we know, this judgment formed by Trotsky on the nature of the CCP was never revised up to his death. The composition of the CCP and its nature described in the last part of Isaacs' *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* clearly reflected this conception, because his book was read and corrected by Trotsky himself before publication.

Has there been any alteration in the composition of the CCP in the direction of the working class since Trotsky's death? Not only has there been no fundamental change, but the petty-bourgeois composition of peasants and intellectuals has on the contrary been strengthened, while the unprecedented swelling of the CCP during and after the Resistance War was almost completely the contribution of the peasants and the petty-bourgeois intellectuals. Before its conquest of power, the party declared it had about three and a half million members. Of this total number, the worker element was very weak and at most did not surpass 5 percent (including the manual laborers). We can therefore confirm that up to the time the CCP came to power, the nature of the party still remained petty-bourgeois.

Despite all this, some of our International comrades consider that the CCP has already become a workers' party. Comrade Germain, for example, is of this opinion. When we referred to the judgment maintained by Trotsky that the CCP was a petty-bourgeois peasant party, he replied: "I know, I admit that was true before. But since the CCP seized the power

and came into the cities, it has become transformed into a workers' party." This assertion is based on the argument that the nature of a party is not determined simply by the criterion of composition, but also by the role it plays. From the fact that the CCP has overthrown the Kuomintang bourgeois regime and set up its own power, it is quite evident that the nature of the party has changed. Unfortunately, this kind of reasoning is only a simulacrum of the truth, because the CCP overthrew the regime of Chiang Kai-shek not through the revolutionary action of the working class leading the peasant masses, but by relying exclusively on the peasant armed forces; and therefore the newly established regime still remains in the bourgeois category. (The character of this regime will be treated in subsequent passages.) So how can this fact be used as a criterion to judge the change in the nature of the party? We could say on the contrary: the very fact that the CCP did not mobilize the working masses and depended solely on the peasant armed forces to conquer the power reveals the petty-bourgeois nature of this party.

Then has the nature of the party been changed after it came into the cities? The answer must again be in the negative. The composition of a political party can never be accomplished in twenty-four hours, especially in the case of the CCP which has an unusually weighty base of peasants. We can be assured that up to now, the CCP is still a party in which peasant members are predominant, and so to speak, is still largely petty-bourgeois in nature. But this does not mean that the peasant character of the party is now fixed and invariable. In fact, since this party has seized the power and occupied the great cities, in its eagerness to seek support among the working class, it has empirically stressed recruiting its members from the workers, while, on the other side, it has temporarily ceased to recruit farmers into the party. Following this bent, it is possible in the future for the CCP to gradually change its composition from petty-bourgeois peasant into a more or less workers' party. However, this is what might happen in the future, and it cannot be substituted for the reality of today.

The resolution of the Seventh Plenum of the IS has pointed out: "From the social point of view, the CCP is a bi-partite party, up to now this party has had a very weak foundation in the urban proletariat." This is really a very cautious judgment on the nature of the party. If this appraisal is considered as a summary formula for this transitional period in which the CCP is attempting to transform itself from a peasant party into a workers' party (purely from the viewpoint of social composition), it is quite acceptable. But we must not forget the serious lesson disclosed in Trotsky's criticism of the "worker-peasant party" that: any attempt to organize a worker-peasant party under the conditions of present-day society (including the backward countries) is reactionary, petty-bourgeois, and extremely dangerous to the proletarian revolution. Because in a "worker-peasant party" it is not the proletarian elements who assimilate the peasant but quite the reverse, it is the peasant members who overwhelm the former. Therefore, from the revolutionary point of view, it is never possible for two classes to establish an equal weight in a common party. Accordingly, a so-called two-class "worker-peasant party" is always a reactionary tool of petty-bourgeois politicians to deceive the working class. [23]

The International has not yet given specific clarification in the documents on China on the class nature of the new regime (the so-called "People's Democratic Dictatorship"). Despite some differences in interpretation among the Chinese comrades (the "Chinese Minority" is an exception, since they have already asserted that the regime of the CCP represents "state capitalism" or "bureaucratic centralism"), the general opinion is that this regime rests on the social basis of the petty-bourgeoisie, depends on the peasantry as its trunk, and is a Bonapartist military dictatorship. In the last analysis therefore, in view of its fundamental role towards property relationships it is a bourgeois regime. Yet some of our comrades here entertain a completely opposite view. I

was told by a comrade once that the regime of the CCP is a proletarian dictatorship. Though he did not present any reasons, I surmise he very likely deduced this conclusion from the formula given for the YCP regime in Yugoslavia. We can find another view in the formal document which regards the regime of the CCP as having the character of “dual power.” [24]

Since such diverse ideas prevail among our International comrades, especially among responsible comrades, it is necessary, in my opinion, to undertake a thorough clarification. First of all, let us start with the notion of “proletarian dictatorship.”

To determine the nature of any regime, we Marxists must check on two essential conditions: the class relations and the property relations, and the latter is an even more decisive factor. We call the regime established by the Bolsheviks after the October Revolution in Russia a proletarian dictatorship, because the power was completely in the hands of the proletariat supported by the peasant masses even though there was not yet a fundamental change in the property relations at that time. The change in the class relations sufficed for us to call it a proletarian dictatorship. We can also call the regime of the YCP after 1947 a proletarian dictatorship, mainly because the property relationships have been basically altered, that is, from private ownership to statization of the properties. Despite the fact that the power of the YCP is not entirely controlled by the proletariat, and is still marked by certain bureaucratic deformations, the fundamental change in property ownership suffices to qualify this regime as a deformed proletarian dictatorship.

But what is the real situation with the regime established by the CCP? In class relations, this regime claims to be a “coalition government” of “four classes” (workers, peasants, the petty-bourgeoisie, and the native bourgeoisie). It is therefore very clear that this regime is not controlled or “dictated” by the proletariat. In fact, the social basis of this regime is constituted by the petty bourgeoisie of which the peasants form the major part. Though the bourgeoisie does not have a decisive role in the government, yet in comparison with the proletariat, it still holds prominence (at least in appearance). In property relations, this regime not only has not abolished the private property system, but on the contrary, is deliberately enacting laws and constitutions to protect private ownership, to develop the economy of so-called “New Democracy,” i.e., non-socialist economy. I must, therefore, ask: on what ground can we assert this regime to be a “proletarian dictatorship”?

The argument brought forth by Comrade Germain on the “dual character” of this new regime is in the following passage:

Whether it wished to or not, the government found itself compelled to institute a genuine *dual power* in Southern China. On the provincial and district level, the majority of the old cadres remain in place; on the local level, their class enemies, the poor peasants of the Peasants’ Associations bid fair to seize all of the actual power in carrying out the agrarian reform. [25]

Despite the obscurity in this passage, it seems to mean that the power in the provinces and counties is of bourgeois character, whereas in the countryside, the power is in the hands of the poor peasants. Let us take for granted that this is the fact. Yet we cannot thereby conclude that the CCP regime in the South is of a dual character, for the power of the poor peasants is not identical with the proletarian power, at most, it can only be considered as the most thorough-going petty-bourgeois peasant power. The change in the petty-bourgeois character of a poor peasant power is possible only when it is under the leadership of the urban proletariat. Now this is the condition which is precisely lacking in the present regime, so this idea of a dual character is too inadequate to stand criticism.

To enable our comrades to recognize more concretely and more precisely the nature of this new regime, I will point out several of its important characteristics:

A. The major support of this regime is the enormous peasant army, which is entirely under the control of the already Stalinized (or bureaucratized) CCP. Hence the CCP has absolute power of determination and control over the regime.

B. Representatives of the bourgeoisie and the top layers of the petty bourgeoisie occupy eminent positions in this regime, but they have no direct decisive function. They can only indirectly affect the regime through their economic and social influence.

C. Though a handful of individuals among the workers have been appointed to participate in the government (very few are in important posts), the working class as a whole still remains in a subordinate position. The working masses are deprived of the fundamental rights of freely electing their own representatives (such as Soviets, or other similar workers’ representative committees, etc.) to participate in and to supervise this regime; general political rights (freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and association, publication, beliefs, etc.) are considerably limited, and even completely forbidden (such as strikes). Consequently, though the workers are hailed as the “master” by this regime, in reality they only have the right to “petition” within the “bounds of law” for the improvement of their living conditions.

D. On the social and economic plane, the regime has practiced land reform on a considerable scale, and is prepared to complete it and wipe out the feudal remains “step by step”—in line with the bureaucratic methods of the CCP. This is indeed an unprecedented and great reform. But it is confined within the framework of preserving the “industrial and commercial properties” of the landlords and kulaks, and “free purchase of land,” i.e., the non-violation of capitalist property relations.

E. In its relation with the capitalist properties, except that the regime has taken over the originally nationalized properties (the so-called “bureaucratic capital”) and transformed them into nationalized properties of the new regime, all other kinds of private property are being left untouched, and are further offered protection by new laws. Despite this, it imposes by regulations comparatively strict limitations on the interests of private capital. As a result, the workers under this regime, though, still remaining in the position of hired laborers, can at the same time avoid too severe exploitation.

From these characteristics, we can clearly see that the nature of this regime is by no means very simple and normal. Since this regime is a product of the combination of exceptional historical conditions, its nature and the forms it takes are equally complex and abnormal. It is scarcely possible to find another regime in modern history analogous to it. If we make a comparison of this regime with that of the Jacobins during the French Revolution, perhaps its features may be made more distinct.

The social basis of the Jacobin Party was the then urban toiling masses in general—the “Sans-culottes.” It thoroughly completed land reform, eliminated feudal influences. The regime of the CCP is founded on the petty-bourgeois social basis of the rural people, and it is also carrying out the land reform and eliminating the feudal remnants. Both of them are consummate dictatorships. From these essential aspects, these two regimes bear great resemblances to one another. But the time of the Jacobins was a period when capitalism was still in its embryonic stage. Its thorough completion of land reform and elimination of feudal influences

fulfilled a great historical task for the bourgeoisie, and opened the broad highway for later capitalist development. This regime was thus absolutely revolutionary, and only the regime established by the Russian Bolsheviks has been able to match it in significance. The epoch in which the CCP exists is entirely different: it is the period of the utter decline and approaching fall of capitalism. In this epoch a genuine revolutionary power must be founded on the social basis of the proletariat (the modern "Sans-culottes"), even in backward countries. The realization of land reform should not and cannot clear the way for capitalist development, but must immediately open the prospects for socialism. Hence it must proceed in line with the expropriation of the landlords and the private properties of the bourgeoisie. This is just what was realized in the regime of the Russian Bolshevik Party under the leadership of Lenin and Trotsky. Since the regime of the CCP is proceeding in the opposite way, in the last analysis it will eventually be a stumbling block in the course of historical development, and is in essence reactionary.

In conclusion. In class relations, this new regime bases itself on the petty-bourgeois peasants and attempts to "arbitrate" between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie; in property relations, it has abolished feudal land ownership, built up the capitalist land system, and nationalized the greater part of the enterprises. On the other hand, it is conferring protection on capitalist private property, and seeks to "co-ordinate" the relationship between nationalized property and private property in order to construct a "New Democratic" economy in the long run. Therefore, the regime is in itself fully charged with incompatible contradictions and high explosives. From the historical point of view, it can only be very short-lived and transitional. In the development of future events, it will be obliged to choose its social basis between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, to decide its destiny between socialism and capitalism. Otherwise, it will either be overthrown by one of these two classes, or be crushed by both, and become only an episode in history.

### **The evolution of the measures taken by the new regime**

To give an adequate account and criticism of the measures taken by the new regime on all economic, social and political planes over the past two years (beginning with October, 1949 when this government was formally announced) would necessitate the writing of a special document for this purpose. This report, being limited in space, and with lack of sufficient data on hand, can only offer a brief description of some essential features of these measures and the most important changes which have taken place in the orientation of the regime. In this respect, we are prepared to supply materials continuously for supplementary reference.

In respect to the evolution of the measures adopted by this regime, seen in the light of the traits exhibited by its policies and the subsequent modifications, we can take the outbreak of the Korean War as the line of demarcation, and divide the whole into two periods.

During the initial months of the first period (October, 1949 to June, 1950), under the slogan of "Military Matters First!" (i.e., clearing away the remaining military influences of the Kuomintang on the mainland), the CCP threw its whole effort on the economic plane into extorting money and food from the people to support the front and to cover the expenses of the administration. The noteworthy aspects of these measures are as follows: they levied severe taxes on all of industry and commerce, forced the buying of bonds, such as "Victory Bonds," "Front-support Bonds," "Patriotic Bonds," etc., and appropriated foodstuffs from the countryside (the so-called "voluntary contributions"); while the deficit in the budget was made up by issuing enormous quantity of paper-notes; the open suspension of land reform, and the lowering of wages, etc. On the political

plane, it assiduously conciliated the bourgeoisie, landlords and kulaks, pulled toward itself all kinds of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois politicians and military men, including some of Kuomintang bureaucrats and agents, in an attempt to disintegrate the enemy and strengthen its own power. But it does its best to suppress the activities of the workers and peasants. Cases of workers being arrested or even killed on account of protests and strikes were often heard.

All these measures resulted in inflation, lowering of the level of living, pauperization of the whole society, and precipitated the collapse of industry and commerce. Most factories and shops were utterly unable to sustain themselves and asked for official permission to close down, or shut down automatically, and even those which were not closed could not pay salaries and wages to their employees. Consequently, great anxiety and resentment were aroused among the bourgeoisie. With the lowering of wages (compared with the level during Kuomintang rule) and the compulsory reduction of wages through buying bonds, the living conditions of the worker masses became more and more miserable. Yet they had no way to express their own opinions or to demand improvements, and were universally discontented with the new regime, and even complained openly against it. However, the most serious consequences occurred in the countryside. Due to the interruption of land reform, the broad peasant masses were not in the least benefited but on the contrary were forced to contribute endless taxes and food. Meanwhile the landlords and kulaks transferred the greater part of their own burdens onto the shoulders of the peasant masses and even "contributed" the last handfuls of grain used for sowing seeds, required for their livelihood. Robbed of their means of living, filled with fury, and further provoked by the landlords, kulaks, and Kuomintang agents, a part of the peasants came to acts of open rebellion, such as refusing "to contribute," gathering in groups to plunder "public foodstuffs," and even rallied to the anti-communist guerrilla bands. This reaction objectively revived the influence of the Kuomintang anti-communist guerrillas.

In the spring of 1950 this situation attained the breaking point of a crisis. At that time the leading organ of the CCP was compelled to admit:

At present the feudal system of the vast countryside has still not been eliminated, the wounds of wars are not yet healed, and in addition to the unbalanced and unfair appropriation of state foodstuffs last year, the lawless landlords exploit this opportunity to transfer their own burdens, and as a result the peasants in many regions are destitute of food and seeds, and can hardly proceed with the spring season of farming. In the regions ravaged by droughts and floods, conditions are much more grave. Meantime there are a few special agents of the enemy, the bandits, who use threats to make people organize revolts, plunder the state food, attack revolutionary groups and individuals, create social confusion, and sabotage the orders of production...to throw productive relations and the social order into a chaotic and dangerous situation. [26]

The *Chiankiang Daily*, the official paper published in Hangkow, summarized this critical situation in the following conclusion, "The essence of the immediate crisis lies in this: whether the peasants follow the Communist Party and the Peoples' Government, or the country autocrats and the Kuomintang agents?"

Under this serious crisis and the pressure from all sides, especially from the peasant masses, the industrialists and the merchants, the regime was obliged to make a "turn" in its policy. This turn first appeared with the announcement of the carrying out of land reform (at the beginning of March, 1950), the so-called "execution of land reform by steps," that is, it

was proposed to start with the redistribution of land north of Yangtse, while in the South (not including North-west and South-west) to proceed first of all with the struggle "against the vicious autocrats" and with "the reduction of rents and interest." The regime also revised the "Act of Food Appropriation." These measures served as antidotes to appease the resistance of the peasants. Almost at the same time, it proclaimed the "Act of Financial Coordination," which has more or less alleviated the weight of taxes, unified and standardized taxation in the whole country. This has to a certain extent pacified the resentment of the tax-contributors and comparatively stabilized finances, while inflation has also slackened. The imperative measure taken to maintain industry and commerce was the universal organizing of "Labor and Capital Consultative Conferences." Under the supervision and arbitration of the government, the outcome of these "consultations" was always unfavorable to the workers. In order to maintain the factories and shops, the workers and employees were obliged to lower their wages or even to forfeit their wages, or else to resign "voluntarily" in order to join "the farming work in their native countries," or to prolong their work-time "voluntarily" with the aim of reducing costs of production. Of course, the industrialists and merchants were quite pleased with these results, while the workers became more and more resentful.

All these imperative measures were then discussed, amended at the meeting of the "Political Consultative Conference" in May, 1950, and concretized into various laws and Acts (such as "Land Reform Law," "Trade Union Act," etc.) which were ratified by the government and became decrees. Besides, there was a "Report on Financial and Economic Co-ordination" also adopted by the Conference, ratified by the government, and put into execution. The point which merits our notice in these new acts are the following: First, the new "Land Reform Law" is generally in the same vein as the former "Land Law," except that it emphasizes the "necessity of preserving the industrial and commercial properties" (according to the report of Liu Sao-chin), and "strictly forbids all violence: beatings, killings, arrests, and the parading of criminals in high hats" (contained in the Directives of the Ministry of Public Affairs). This is obviously designed to prohibit severely the spontaneous organization of the masses, to punish the landlords, the country gentry and autocrats with their own revolutionary methods and submit all kinds of struggle to the procedure of law and appeal to law, this being termed by the regime "rational struggles."

Secondly, in the economic field, it supported the industrialists by means of low-interest loans, or by allotting what is called "extra-works" whereby the administrators of the state enterprises offer raw materials, consign extra labor and allocate a certain amount of profits to the private enterprises, or by buying the commodities of the private enterprises, or by giving extra facilities in buying raw materials, fuel, and transportation. With this aim, it also reduced state commerce to oblige private business. In the "Trade Union Act," it recognizes the right of the workers to demand improvement of their living conditions within the limits of law. So the workers remain helpless if the "law does not consent." In addition, the compulsory buying of "bonds" was stopped.

We can say in brief that this "turn" in the policy of the CCP originated from the fact that it deeply felt the danger to itself from the "pressure of the peasant masses and the bourgeoisie, who have thereby become the main beneficiaries of this "turn" and gained certain "concessions" from the regime. The working class, especially the workers in the private enterprises, have not only scarcely benefited but in many respects have been its victims.

In the second period, beginning with the outbreak of the Korean War up to the present, the measures of the regime have generally proceeded according to the orientation fixed in May by the "Political Consultative Conference." However, under the call of "Aid to Korea against American imperialism," particularly under compulsion to undertake a broad

mobilization of the masses for participation in the war, the CCP has once again been compelled to modify its policy, or make another "turn."

On the economic plane, following the blockade by American imperialism, the supply of certain industrial raw materials and machines has diminished day by day. And since its own finances are more and more plunged into difficulty, aid to the private enterprises has also been decreased and limited. Consequently, the comparatively revived private enterprises have again relapsed into stagnation and decline. The government attempts to concentrate its energy on the development of the state sector of industry and stresses the building up of a "self-sufficient heavy industry," but owing to the extreme lack of capital and equipment, has made very little progress. In the field of commerce, particularly in foreign trade, it has more or less resumed control over private business, and hence causes a stagnation of commerce.

Since the regime has won support from the huge peasant masses for its campaign of "aid to the Korean War," it has indeed accelerated the pace of agrarian reform, and enlarged its scope. To a certain extent, it has even relaxed its control over the peasant masses, and strengthened its foundation among the poor peasants. The obvious examples in recent months have been its emphasis on the role of the peasants, especially the importance of the movement of the poor peasants; its attempt to correct right opportunist deviations in the land reform movement, and the penalties inflicted on some cadres who are directly responsible for the execution of land reform, when they violate the will of the masses," employ "bureaucratic methods," or are corrupted. But this does not signify that the CCP has full confidence in the peasant masses, and will allow unhampered sway to their revolutionary initiative, to organize spontaneously the distribution of the land and conduct the revolutionary struggle against the landlords and rich peasants. In fact, the fundamental line of "protecting the industrial and commercial properties of the landlords and rich peasants," of "the gradual execution of land reform," and of "rational struggle" still holds sway. It is only in practical execution of these policies that the control is less strict than before.

In its relation with the working class, owing to its need of support for the Korean War, the regime has made certain improvements in the living conditions of the workers. Recently it has gradually raised the wages of the workers in the state enterprises, and is more inclined than before to listen to the opinions of workers concerning the technical aspects of production. But the executive power of production is still in the hands of the manager or the committee appointed by the upper structure. While under the slogan of competing for "increase of production," on the one hand, the already over-burdened labor of the average worker is further intensified; and on the other hand, a group of labor aristocrats (the Stakhanovists) is brought into being and weighs upon the general working masses, and thus creates differentiation in the ranks of the workers.

In its attitude towards the struggles of the workers in the private enterprises, it is much more tolerant than before, that is to say, it permits the trade unions, "on condition of not fundamentally hampering production," to engage in a "legal struggle" with capital for improving living conditions. Henceforth, the lowering of wages and the free dismissal of workers as in former times is more strictly guarded. Though the recently adopted "Labor Assurance Law" is still a half-measure, yet, generally speaking, it has indeed effected a considerable improvement in the position and life of the working masses. But the essential rights of the working class in politics and in production (namely, the rights of participation and control in government administration and production) are still denied.

Since the outbreak of the Korean War, the activities of all the reactionary elements have revived, and this has obliged the CCP to more or less modify its former political line of conciliation. This new turn is manifested in the tempestuous drive of "suppressing the counter-revolutionaries." In this campaign, not only thousands of reactionary

landlords and kulaks (“the vicious local autocrats” according to their popular designation), labor traitors, and Kuomintang bureaucrats and agents have been imprisoned, exiled, and executed, but likewise a great number of “affiliated” elements and followers of Li Chi-sun and the “Democratic League” have suffered the same fate. This, however, marks a considerable progress within certain limits. Yet this drive has not even touched a single hair of the real spokesmen of the bourgeoisie, such as the “Kuomintang Revolutionary Committee” represented by Li Chi-sun and the leaders of the “Democratic League.” While on the other hand, under the same pretext of suppressing “counter-revolutionaries, the more advanced and discontented elements among the workers and peasants, especially the Trotskyists, are repressed, imprisoned and killed. This only demonstrates that, even while executing certain limited progressive measures, this regime still drags behind it the reactionary specter of Stalinism.

In its international relations, the regime has really made important progress. After its establishment, it won considerable political independence from imperialism (such as taking back the custom houses and cancelling the stationing of foreign armies in China). We must say that this has opened a new phase in modern Chinese diplomatic history. But in the economic sphere, it still assures “protection to the properties of all foreigners in China,” and attempts to engage in conciliation with imperialism by its implicit consent to the preservation of the concessions of Hongkong, Kowloon, and Macao. With the outbreak of the Korean War the foreign policy of the CCP has evinced certain further developments. In order to take revenge for the economic blockade and freezing of Chinese property in the United States, the CCP regime has taken “control” over American banks and enterprises, seized all the schools, hospitals and similar institutions formerly operated by foreigners. Moreover, as a counter-measure against the appropriation of a “rebellious” oil ship by the Hongkong government, the Peoples’ Government declared its appropriation of all the capital of the Asia Oil Company in China. Although these progressive measures have not altered the fundamental line of “protecting all foreign properties in China,” they have at least driven the regime to entrench more or less on the inviolable foreign properties. Also due to its direct intervention in the Korean War and the subsequent measures taken, the possibility of compromising with American Imperialism—the chieftain of the capitalist world—is not only greatly diminished but Mao’s regime has even become the most hated by the American imperialists in the Orient.

In its relations with the Soviet Union, because of the historical origins of its birth and its geographical and economic ties, this regime has tended to dependence and submission from the very beginning. This attitude was clearly reflected in the “Sino-Soviet Mutual Aid Agreement” signed in February, 1950. This agreement was first of all aimed at pacifying the indignation of the Chinese people towards the Soviet Union (here we must note that ever since the Soviet Union seized Port Arthur and Dairen in accord with the “Yalta Agreement,” and acquired many other privileges such as the joint control of the Chun-tung and Chan-chuan Railways, especially after it destroyed and moved away the greater part of the industrial and mining installations in Manchuria, very strong reactions have inflamed broad layers of the Chinese people, especially among the working masses in Manchuria). Also, made wiser by the bitter lessons of the Yugoslav events, the Soviet bureaucracy has learned to pay its “respects to the Sovereignty and independence of the Chinese People’s Government,” and has promised to restore the two ports and control over the railways in Manchuria no later than 1952. (But whether his promise will be kept and realized in time is still an open question.)

On the economic plane the agreements on trade and the so-called “Sino-Soviet Partnership” mostly favor the Soviet Union and are in nature quite similar to the treaties signed with the East European countries. Especially after the outbreak of the Korean War, the dependence of the new regime

on the Soviet Union has become more and more close and inextricable. That is to say, the actual control of the Soviet Union over the Chinese government has become more solid and irremovable. Viewed simply from this angle, the Korean War is really like a set of chains, fastening the regime of the CCP to the hind wheels of the Soviet Union’s war chariot, and dragging it along, despite its will.

It is true that the intervention of the regime in the Korean War has greatly increased its weight on the international arena, raised its esteem, and heightened its prestige among the people in the country. But the grievous damage (in both men and material resources) incurred in this war has heaped more difficulties in the way of social and economic construction in China (even according to the norms of the CCP), which has already been overwhelmed by difficulties. Meanwhile, these sacrifices have also stirred up discontent and complaints among the masses. If the war should continue, future evils can scarcely be measured. Simply viewed from this aspect, the war would probably have to cease or be slackened. But if the Kremlin should persist in the strong intention to hold back the CCP through this war, there might be a further prolongation of the war.

In the past two years, under pressure and restraint from all the powerful and complex influences at home and abroad, both the internal and exterior measures taken by this new regime have been constantly and empirically changing. In its general trends, the whole rotates in a “leftward” direction. But inasmuch as its fundamental opportunist orientation and bureaucratic administrative methods—the line of “revolution by stages,” of “New Democracy” and “class collaboration”—and the systematic and well-planned control over all mass activities from above, are still completely preserved, the basic contradictions and explosiveness contained in the regime (indicated in the previous section) are far from attenuated or diminished by the measures taken, but have even become still more acute with the logical development of events.

## **The perspectives of China**

With the victory of the CCP, a brand-new situation has unfolded in China—the beginning of a deformed Third Chinese Revolution. But having absorbed into itself all the profound and sharp contradictions in social and economic relations, class relations and international relations, this situation is destined to be no more than transitory. It will be channeled into one or the other of the following perspectives:

### **A. Relapse into the reactionary rule of the bourgeoisie**

With the combination of all the objective factors and conditions: the protection of all the capitalist property relations within the cities and countryside, the bourgeoisie still maintaining a certain political power and influence, the proletariat being frustrated and repressed in political and economic life, and the despotic state apparatus built on a petty-bourgeois social basis, inclining to corruption—we cannot exclude the possibility of retrogression to the reactionary rule of the bourgeoisie. But only through a most brutal counter-revolutionary blood-bath could this possibility be realized. But, under another basic present condition, that is, so long as the CCP has full authority over a potent peasant armed force, this perspective is out of the question.

Yet in the event of a most unfavorable conjuncture in the development of both internal and international events, the possible disintegration of the

organism of the CCP regime would favor restoration of bourgeois rule. Especially in the case of future world war, if the proletarian revolution in other countries would not be able to rise in time, to intervene energetically in Chinese events, American imperialism, after striking a military death-blow to the Soviet Union, could turn back and lead the armies of Japan and Formosa to attack the Chinese mainland, and bring about inevitable ruin or rupture in the regime of the CCP (a part of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois elements would surrender to American Imperialism). Then a reactionary bourgeois reign would reappear on the political stage of China.

Of course, this is the worst perspective and it is merely a possibility. But it is not wise to absolutely exclude this worst variant. Only by recognizing and comprehending this worst of perspectives, by our precaution and alertness, and through our subjective revolutionary efforts can we prevent its appearance and development.

## **B. To the road of revolutionary proletarian dictatorship**

Taking account of the gradual execution of land reform, the widespread purge of feudal remnants, the nationalization of a great part of the enterprises and properties (such as the main industries and mines, means of transportation, big banks, etc.), the liquidation of the reactionary forces represented by Chiang's group, the considerable rise of broad peasant masses, regrouping of the urban working class (in the all-national trade union organization), and a gradual lifting of the general cultural level and political consciousness of the worker and peasant masses (indicated by the universal literacy campaign and legalization of reading the works of Marx, Lenin and Engels), all these progressive measures have objectively laid down a favorable basis for revolutionary development. The chief obstacle on the revolutionary path is the tenacious opportunism and tyrannical bureaucratism of the CCP. But in the favorable unfolding of future events at home and abroad, the worker and peasant masses would be able by their own strength to push the CCP onward, to deliver blows to the reactionary influences of the bourgeoisie, and by securing certain pre-requisites for revolutionary development (such as certain democratic rights) to proceed step by step on the road of revolution.

Even in the event of the Third World War, if there should be an upsurge of world revolutionary movements, the Chinese worker and peasant masses, stimulated by the strong impetus of revolutions abroad, could possibly assail the opportunism and bureaucratism of the CCP, bring about a split and create a revolutionary left wing in this party, thus freeing themselves from the yoke of Stalinism, and then joining the current of the Trotskyist movement. This would lead the revolution straight on to proletarian dictatorship which would complete the Third Chinese Revolution and open a future of socialist construction.

Yet I must point out that this perspective will not be a reproduction of the Yugoslav events, but a more advanced and heightened revolutionary development. There is very little possibility for such a repetition simply because China is a country greatly different from Yugoslavia both in its internal and external conditions, particularly after the outbreak of the Korean War. (On this point, I could offer further explanations, if need be.)

## **C. Assimilation into the Soviet Union**

The two perspectives set forth above deal with only the most fundamental outcomes of the possible eventual developments in the

Chinese situation. But, in view of the opportunist bureaucratic deformations of the CCP leadership and its present intimate relations with the Kremlin, these two perspectives will meet frantic resistance since either one of them would be fatal for this leadership. Consequently, it will consciously or unconsciously choose a third road—the road of gradual assimilation into the Soviet Union. That is to say, under the ever-increasing menace from bourgeois reactionary forces allied with imperialism and the ever-growing dissatisfaction and pressure of the masses, on the one hand, the CCP would empirically exclude by gradual steps the bourgeois parties and cliques from the political field. Through operations of “purge” and “fusion,” it would annihilate these factions and the “Coalition Government,” and form a “one-party dictatorship” in name and in content, which would conform to the so-called “transformation from peoples’ democratic dictatorship to proletarian dictatorship.”

On the economic plane, it would carry out a gradual process of expropriation of bourgeois private properties, the expansion of nationalized properties, in keeping with the so-called “ascension from the economy of New Democracy towards the socialist economy.” On the other hand, while executing these political and economic measures, the CCP would make certain concessions to the pressure of the masses in order to utilize that as a weapon to suppress reactionary influences. But it would never basically loosen its rigorous bureaucratic grip upon the revolutionary activities of the masses, especially of workers and poor peasants, lest they pass over the permitted boundaries or interfere with its basic line.

This line may be called “the line of East-Europeanization.” But there exists an essential difference between the two processes: the “assimilation” of the buffer states was accomplished entirely under military control of the Kremlin, and through its directly designated Stalinist bureaucrats in these countries. In China, due to the vastness of territory, the numerousness of the population, and the powerful influence of the CCP itself, in the absence of the Soviet Army, and especially taking into account the experience of the Yugoslav events, the Kremlin can rely only on its general superiority in economic and military force and its control over Manchuria and Sinkiang to threaten and exert pressure upon the CCP. However, in appearance, it would still pay certain respects to the “independence and sovereignty” of the regime of the CCP and allow it to proceed on its own “initiative.”

Although in the main, this “assimilation” depends solely on the subjective inclination of the CCP itself, we should not overlook what an important role this subjective tendency of a party already in power, which holds in its hands immense material forces (including a powerful peasant army) can play under certain circumstances and during a certain period of time. (The role played by Stalin and his group in the Soviet Union is a most conspicuous example.) Before the intervention of a new world war, and in the absence of other revolutionary upheavals in the world, this line of the CCP's assimilation into the Soviet Union is most probable and realistic. To repudiate it would be unwise as well as harmful in the field of practical politics. But as soon as the Third World War breaks out or a new revolutionary movement arises in other countries, this process of assimilation of the CCP will immediately be interrupted, and the whole situation in China will be forced to head in either one of the two directions indicated above.

We should also point out that this process of assimilation will by no means have a smooth and even course. Parallel with the development of the situation, the profound and acute contradictions inherent in the new regime and the conflicts between the interests of Chinese revolution and the diplomatic interests of the Kremlin would inevitably erupt and gather into fierce billowing disturbances or tragedies.

In general, the development of the Chinese situation will be slow paced and drawn-out, and will hardly undergo decisive change before the explosion of the coming Great War. Therefore, we may say that the

destiny of China will only be ultimately solved in the event of the Third World War and a gigantic surge of world revolution. There is therefore still time enough for us to prepare before the advent of such a solution.

### **Our fundamental attitude and orientation**

Following the above analyses and appraisals, we must openly admit that a new revolutionary situation has not only begun, but has already attained certain achievements, and will possibly go forward. Hence we reject all sectarian and passive criticisms. We must integrate our organization in the main current of this movement, join in the mass struggles, and make the utmost effort to push this movement on to a really victorious road. At the same time, we must realize that, as the bureaucratic and opportunist leadership of the CCP is distorting this revolution, continuously imposing injuries and obstacles on its course, and leading it to the edge of a precipice, we must reject all naive and over-optimistic illusions. Our fundamental attitude is that, confronted with this living reality, with all the perils and hardships, we must point out to the masses the tremendous contradictions and crises imposed on this movement by the bureaucratic and opportunist line of the CCP with patience and persistence, we shall convince the masses, encourage them and help them to overcome these contradictions and crises by their own efforts and to arrive at a victorious outcome.

Our fundamental orientation in pushing this abnormal revolution on to a genuine victory are as follows:

A. Carry out thoroughly the land reform, exterminate all the feudal remains, and realize nationalization of the land. Meanwhile, expropriate all the private properties of the bourgeoisie, complete the statization of their properties as a basis for socialist construction.

B. Do away with the “Coalition Government” of class collaboration, end the bonapartist military dictatorship, establish a dictatorship of the proletariat leading the poor peasants, and thus achieve genuine national unity under democratic centralization.

C. Declare the abolition of all unequal treaties, take back all settlements and concessions (such as Hongkong, Kowloon, Macao, etc.), confiscate all imperialist properties in China, and cancel all privileges held in China by the Soviet bureaucracy—in order to attain complete and genuine national independence.

To struggle for carrying out these fundamental points of orientation, our party should formulate a concrete and inclusive program of action, in which we must emphasize that we support every progressive measure of the CCP, but criticize any reactionary measure. At any time and in any place, we must fight as much as possible to give workers and peasants the realization of basic democratic rights (such as freedom of speech, publication, assembly, association, belief, strikes, etc.), fight for the workers’ right of participation, supervision and control in administration and production, and establish representative committees (Soviets) of workers, peasants and soldiers,

As our organization is at present still very weak and suffering the most brutal persecutions from the new regime, it is far from able to intervene directly in this movement and sway events. But since we know that our Trotskyist line of the Permanent Revolution is the line most suited to the objective logic of revolutionary development in China, if we stand resolutely and courageously within this movement, within the struggles of

the masses, cautiously and patiently explaining to them in order to convince them, the evolution of events will help us win step by step the confidence of the masses. With a new conjuncture, in a new rising of the revolutionary tide, we will be lifted to the leading position and direct the masses on the road of victory.

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Finally, I should add that, not only because of the vastness of territory and the enormous population, the events in China have wrought important effects in the Far East and even in the whole international situation which deserve our special attention. But we should further understand that of all the backward countries, China is the most typical in its manifestation of the law of uneven and combined development. In the past half century a series of great events have broken out in this country—two revolutions, several prolonged civil wars, and foreign wars, and the third revolution still at its beginning, and during these twenty-five years, Trotsky and the Chinese Trotskyists under his leadership, have directly participated in the greater part of these events and have therefore accumulated rich experience. Therefore, a correct solution of the Chinese question will not only have decisive significance for the future of the Chinese Trotskyist movement, but will be a precious guide for our International in orienting and directing the movements in the Orient and in all other backward countries, and even in advanced countries. That is why I repeat once more: I hope that our International comrades in discussing the Chinese question, will not be constrained by any formalistic analogies and abstract concepts, but will seriously employ the Marxist method in analyzing the objective reality in order to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion.

November 8, 1951

Notes:

1. The Chinese minority refers to a tendency led by Wang Fanxi and Zheng Chaolin, which split from the Chinese section of the Fourth International in 1942. Contrary to Leon Trotsky who insisted that it was necessary to support the war by China against Japanese occupation, the minority asserted after World War II in the Pacific began that the struggle in China against Japan had been subsumed within the imperialist war and neither side could be supported. Editor

2. The Second Chinese Revolution refers to the revolutionary upheavals between 1925 and 1927 in China that were betrayed by Stalin who subordinated the CCP to the bourgeois Kuomintang headed by Chiang Kai-shek. Editor

3. The Resistance War was the struggle against the Japanese occupation from 1937 to 1945. Editor

4. The “Golden Yuan” was a currency reform instituted by Kuomintang regime in 1948 to end rampant inflation. The old currency was withdrawn and replaced a supposedly gold-backed alternative, but the change rapidly collapsed. Editor

5. He had sent Soong Ching-lin on this special mission to beg for a last favor.

6. The Marshall Mission from December 1945 to January 1947 was a failed mission undertaken by US Army General George Marshall to Chin to try to negotiate the formation of a coalition government between the CCP and the Kuomintang. Editor

7. The Kiangsi Period refers to the formation of a “soviet” in 1931 by the CCP in southern China after it retreated from the cities following the disasters of the Second Chinese Revolution and the crushing of the working class. It ended in 1934 when facing an overwhelming Kuomintang offensive, the CCP armies marched north on what became known as the Long March. Editor

8. One of the greatest centers of heavy industry in China which was built up during several decades under Japanese operation. Also the richest part of the country in rural production; the population is about thirty millions.

9. It was estimated that these weapons could be used to rearm a million soldiers.

10. For instance, the well-known and the most powerful 4th Division of Lin Piao was armed entirely with these weapons.

11. A pseudonym of Ernest Mandel, a leader in the Fourth International, who, with Michel Pablo, led an opportunist tendency that revised the fundamentals of Trotskyism. See introduction. Editor

12. Yugoslav Communist Party

13. Due to the compromise policy of the past, a great number of landlords and kulaks joined the party and its army, and even occupied certain important positions.

14. These were all Manchurians, who nourished a bitter hatred against Chiang Kai-shek because his “non-defensism” during the Japanese attack on Manchuria had rendered them homeless.

15. As the news spread the whole nation was at the peak of excitement and rapture, thinking that this counter-revolutionary butcher was doomed at last, and a new era was dawning.

16. Chou En-lai was the fully authorized representative sent then by the CCP to Sian to confer with Chang Hsueh-liang about freeing Chiang Kai-shek, and to negotiate directly with Chiang on the terms of “collaboration between the Kuomintang and the CCP.”

17. Some comrades of the International have cited certain facts regarding the isolation of the CCP from Moscow during the Resistance War, in order to justify the theory that the latest turn in the policy of the CCP was the consequence of violating the “objectives” of the Kremlin. But these “facts” are just the inverse of the real facts. Before the war, the agents of the Kremlin stayed constantly at Yen-an (not openly), and there were regular communications by wireless between Yen-an and Moscow. After the war, the Soviet Union sent its ambassador to Chungking, accompanied by its secret agents, so that it could openly and legally obtain constant contacts with the Chinese Communist delegation and its special agents in Chungking, to dispatch news and instructions. Therefore we have sufficient reason to say: during the war, the relations between the CCP and the Kremlin not only were not cut off, but on the contrary became closer than ever. This fact has been clearly revealed in all newspapers and documents of that period which mirrored with full speed all the propaganda and strategic positions of Moscow. As for the post-war period, since the Soviets’ occupation of Manchuria, and with so many of the Soviet delegates working in the CCP and the army, the intimacy between Moscow and the CCP has been too evident to need further clarification.

18. Read “The Resolution on the Yugoslav Revolution” adopted by the Ninth Plenum of IEC, and “On the Class Nature of Yugoslavia” by Comrade Pablo.

19. Here I should call attention of the comrades to the fact that on the Chinese question the criticisms made by Trotsky himself and the Chinese Trotskyists against Stalinism far surpassed those made on any other country except the Soviet Union.

20. In fact, this “control” was effected through internal strife. When the Soviet Union started to arm the troops of Lin Piao and other generals, it expressed skepticism regarding Mao Tse-tung and backed Lee Li-san, Mao’s old adversary, to be the political leader of the Communist army in Manchuria and the spokesman of the party, thus calculating to take Mao Tse-tung into tow and to tame him. However, this at once aroused resistance on Mao’s part. On one hand, he ordered Liu Sao-chi to make a public statement, declaring that Lee Li-san was not authorized to speak on behalf of the Central Committee of the CCP (about the end of 1945); at the same time, he mobilized a big “ideological campaign” within the party against “Lee Li-sanism” (or “sectarianism”). In view of this situation, and apprehensive of untoward consequences, the Kremlin sent a special mission to negotiate with Mao Tse-tung, which consented to place its “full confidence in him” and “help,” provided he would be “loyal in executing the international line.” Of course, Mao Tse-tung agreed to these terms, and in turn won the trust of the Kremlin. Then Lee Li-san was deprived of

his post and replaced by someone else sent there by Mao Tse-tung. Only after the feud between Mao and Lee was finally settled, did Mao Tse-tung become more and more cautious and assiduous in showing his obedience and support to the Soviet Union and in carrying out its directives.

21. Read “Resolution on the Chinese Civil War” adopted by our party in January 1947, and “Resolution on Colonial Questions of the International adopted by the Second World Congress.

22. All these ideas can be found in several articles written by Trotsky on the Chinese question and in his letters to the Chinese comrades.

23. I have no documents on hand on Trotsky’s thesis about the “worker peasant party” so what I have said above is completely taken from memory. If any mistakes have been made, the comrades may correct them according to the texts.

24. “The Third Chinese Revolution,” by Comrade Germain published in the January and February 1951 issue of *Fourth International*.

25. “Third Chinese Revolution”

26. See the announcement of the “Military and Political Committee of the Central-South Area,” published in the *Wan-Wei Pao*, March 6, 1950.



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