

Chinese president's speech to mark CCP centenary: A litany of lies

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Last week's speech by Chinese President Xi Jinping to mark the official centenary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was a self-serving litany of lies and propaganda aimed at shoring up the CCP regime and his position as its "core" in particular.

The central focus of the speech was Xi's "Dream" of the "rejuvenation of the Chinese nation" and his roadmap to transform China into a major power on the international stage. He declared that his "goal of building a moderately prosperous society" by the CCP's centenary had been achieved and boasted the regime had eliminated "absolute poverty" in China.

Although China's economic expansion, boosted by the influx of foreign investment over the past three decades, has lifted living standards, it has also greatly widened the gulf between the super-rich and the majority of working people. The claim that China has abolished "absolute poverty" is based on a very austere poverty line and dubious statistics. Significantly, Premier Li Keqiang stated last year that China still had 600 million people whose monthly income was barely 1,000 yuan (\$US54)—not enough to rent a room in a city.

Xi's second centenary goal is to build China into "a great modern socialist country in all respects" by 2049—that is, 100 years since the 1949 revolution put the CCP in power. The claim that China today is socialist in any respect is an absurdity that is belied by the dominance of the capitalist market in every area of the economy and society following the CCP's turn to capitalist restoration in 1978.

That Xi is compelled to repeat the bald-faced lies that he presides over "socialism with Chinese characteristics" and that the CCP remains a Marxist and socialist party is testimony to the continuing identification of the Chinese masses with the gains of the 1949 revolution. That revolutionary upheaval throughout China overturned the reactionary Kuomintang regime of Chiang Kai-shek,

ended the imperialist domination of China, and abolished much that was socially and culturally backward.

However, the 1949 revolution—which was part of the international post-World War II revolutionary upsurge that was betrayed and defeated in country after country by Stalinism—is a highly contradictory phenomenon. The Stalinist CCP under Mao Zedong based itself on peasant armies and deliberately constrained the widespread struggles of the working class. It sought to construct a New China that maintained capitalist property relations but was compelled to go further than it intended—by 1955 nationalising the means of production and implementing bureaucratic state planning. The working class, however, had no political voice.

Significantly, Xi devoted very little time in his speech to the history of the party, presenting it as one glorious, uninterrupted advance for the "Chinese nation." He made no mention of the devastating defeat of the Second Chinese Revolution (1925–27) at the hands of Stalin, nor the bitter internal struggles in the 1950s and 1960s fuelled by the colossal failure of Mao's Great Leap Forward and his disastrous Cultural Revolution that brought the country to the brink of collapse.

Xi declared: "All the struggle, sacrifice, and creation through which the Party has united and led the Chinese people over the past hundred years has been tied together by one ultimate theme—bringing about the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation." In reality, the CCP's abandonment of the perspective of socialist internationalism and its embrace of the reactionary Stalinist conception of "Socialism in One Country" led China into an economic and strategic dead-end by the 1970s and resulted in the CCP's turn to capitalist restoration.

At the start of the 20th century, the Chinese nationalism that underpinned the struggles against imperialism and to unify the nation had a certain progressive content. The

CCP, however, was not founded on nationalism but rather, in response to the October 1917 Russian Revolution, the understanding that national democratic tasks could be realised only as part of the struggle by the international working class for socialism.

Today, the whipping up of Chinese nationalism by Xi and the CCP is utterly reactionary. It is not only devoid of any anti-imperialist content but rather represents the ambitions of the wealthy elites, which have profited from decades of capitalist restoration at the expense of the working class, for a prominent place within the world capitalist order.

Xi's "Dream" has come into collision with the determination of US imperialism to prevent China from becoming a challenge to the "international rules-based system" that the US dominates. President Biden, following on from Trump and Obama, is accelerating the aggressive US confrontation and military build-up throughout Asia and internationally to block China's further rise through all means, including war.

The CCP has no progressive answer to these mounting threats. While not referring in his speech to the US, Xi praised the Chinese military and blustered that China was "not intimidated by threats of force... we will never allow any foreign force to bully, oppress, or subjugate us. Anyone who would attempt to do so will find themselves on a collision course with a great wall of steel forged by over 1.4 billion Chinese people."

At the same time as warning of a catastrophic war between nuclear-armed powers, Xi pleaded for peaceful coexistence, declaring: "On the journey ahead, we will remain committed to promoting peace, development, cooperation, and mutual benefit, to an independent foreign policy of peace, and to the path of peaceful development." The CCP regime has repeatedly sought to cut a deal with US imperialism, offering a further opening up of the Chinese economy and exploitation of the working class.

Commenting on Xi's speech, the state-run *China Daily* noted the positive response of corporate leaders, both in China and internationally. It declared that Xi's "emphasis on China pursuing peaceful development, as well as its resolve to promote high-quality growth and to further deepen reform and opening-up has further boosted confidence in the world's second-largest economy."

The turn to capitalist restoration has only deepened the contradictions confronting the Chinese leadership, externally and internally. Rival sections of the capitalist class find their expression inside the CCP in the jockeying

of factions for power, privileges and influence. More fundamentally, the deepening social divide is generating extreme class tensions, for which the CCP has only one answer—police-state measures against any, even limited, form of opposition.

In the midst of this worsening historic crisis, Xi has been pushed to the fore as a Bonapartist figure attempting to mediate and balance between competing interests. He has ended the customary limit of two five-year terms on the position of CCP general secretary, possibly allowing him to remain as president indefinitely. In his speech, he repeated what has become mandatory for all officials that "we must uphold the core position of the General Secretary [namely Xi] on the Party Central Committee and in the Party as a whole."

Xi threateningly declared: "Any attempt to divide the Party from the Chinese people or to set the people against the Party is bound to fail." The carefully-cultivated appearance of strength that surrounds Xi and the papering over of inner-party divisions is in reality a reflection of the weakness of the CCP rule. Broad layers of the population regard the CCP's claims to represent socialism as ridiculous and are disgusted by the rampant corruption of party officials, who cash in on their powerful positions to foster their business interests.

The extraordinary efforts of the CCP to mark the centenary of its founding are an attempt to bury the real history of the party under a deluge of historical falsification and lies. Xi and the CCP leadership recognise that any questioning of the party's role over the past 100 years will only further fuel political opposition.

Workers and youth wanting to fight for genuine socialism have to develop an understanding of the lessons of strategic experiences of the working class in China and internationally over the past century. Those political lessons are to be found in the protracted struggle of the world Trotskyist movement—today led by the International Committee of the Fourth International—against Stalinism and Maoism. We urge young people, intellectuals and workers in China to contact us.



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