

1950

Speeches/Documents

Title: BE A TRUE REVOLUTIONARY

Author: Mao

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Description:. Closing address at the Second Session of the First National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference

The present session has summed up our experience in the past period and laid down various guiding principles.

We have done this work jointly at this gathering of representatives of all the nationalities, democratic classes, democratic parties, people's organizations and democratic personages from every walk of life. Not only have the members of the National Committee of the People's Political Consultative Conference taken part in the discussions, many cadres of the Central People's Government and of the people's governments (or military and administrative commissions) of the greater administrative areas, [1] provinces and municipalities as well as representatives from the consultative committees of the provincial and municipal conferences of people from all circles [2] and many specially invited patriotic personages have also sat in and joined the discussions. Thus we have been able to draw together opinions from all quarters, review our past work and set forth guiding principles for the future. I hope that we will continue to use this method and that the people's governments (or military and administrative commissions) of the greater administrative areas, provinces and municipalities will adopt it too. So far our committee sessions have been advisory in nature. But in practice the Central People's Government will as a matter of course adopt and put into effect the decisions made at our sessions, as it should.

We have unanimously approved the report on the work of the National Committee and the various reports on the work of the Central People's Government. These are the reports on agrarian reform, on political, military, economic and financial work, on taxation, culture and education, and on the work of the judiciary. All of them are good. In these reports the experience of our work in the past has been properly summed up and the guiding principles for our work in the future have been laid down. There were many items on the agenda of our session, because work has started or expanded in every field since the founding of our new state. Throughout the country the people are vigorously unfolding a great and genuine people's revolutionary struggle on all fronts, a struggle that is as great as it is unprecedented on the military, economic, ideological and agrarian reform fronts, and the work in every field awaits summing up and needs guiding principles. That is why we had so many items on the agenda. We shall hold two sessions yearly as required by law, one with a full and the other

with a less full agenda. This is what we are called on to do, for China is a large country with a population actually exceeding 475 million and, what is more, it finds itself in a historic period of people's revolution. And this is what we have been doing, and I think we have done right.

Our present session had many subjects for discussion, the central one being the question of transforming the old land system. We have endorsed the Draft Agrarian Reform Law **[3]** proposed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China to which we have made a number of useful amendments and supplements. This is fine. I am glad and wish to congratulate the hundreds of millions of new China's rural population on winning the opportunity for emancipation and the nation on winning the basic condition for industrialization. The peasants form the bulk of China's population. It was with their help that victory was won in the revolution, and it is again their help that will make the industrialization of the country possible. Therefore, the working class should actively help the peasants carry out the agrarian reform; the urban petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie should also give their support, and still more so should all the democratic parties and people's organizations. War and agrarian reform are two tests everyone and every political party in China must go through in the historical period of New Democracy. Whoever sides with the revolutionary people is a revolutionary. Whoever sides with imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism is a counter-revolutionary. Whoever sides with the revolutionary people in word only but not in deed is a revolutionary in word. Whoever sides with the revolutionary people in deed as well as in word is a true revolutionary. The test of war is basically over, and we have all come through well, to the satisfaction of the people of the whole country. Now it is the test of agrarian reform that we have to pass, and I hope we shall acquit ourselves just as well as we did in the test of war. Let us give this matter more thought, have more consultation, straighten out our thinking, march in step and form a great anti-feudal united front, and then we shall be able to lead the people and help them pass this test successfully. When the tests of war and agrarian reform are passed, the remaining test will be easy to pass, that is, the test of socialism, of country-wide socialist transformation. As for those who have made contributions in the revolutionary war and in the revolutionary transformation of the land system and who continue to do so in the coming years of economic and cultural construction, the people will not forget them when the time comes for nationalizing private industry and socializing agriculture (which is still quite far off), and they will have a bright future. This is how our country steadily advances; it has passed through the war and is undergoing new-democratic reforms, and in the future it will enter the new era of socialism unhurriedly and with proper arrangements when our economy and culture are flourishing, when conditions are ripe and when the transition has been fully considered and endorsed by the whole nation. I think it is necessary to make this point clear so that people will have confidence and stop worrying: "Don't know when I'll no longer be wanted and be given the chance to serve the people even if I wish to." No, that won't happen. The people and their government have no reason to reject anyone or deny him the opportunity of making a living and rendering service to the country, provided he is really willing to serve the people and provided he really helped and did a good

turn when the people were faced with difficulties and keeps on doing good without giving up halfway.

With this great aim in mind, in the international sphere we must firmly unite with the Soviet Union, the People's Democracies and the forces of peace and democracy everywhere, and there should not be the slightest hesitation or wavering on this question. At home, we must unite all the nationalities, democratic classes, democratic parties, people's organizations and patriotic democrats and consolidate the great, prestigious revolutionary united front already in existence. Whoever contributes to the consolidation of this revolutionary united front is doing right, and we welcome him; whoever harms this consolidation is doing wrong, and we oppose him. To consolidate the revolutionary united front, we must use the method of criticism and self-criticism. The main criterion in the application of this method is our present fundamental law -- the Common Programme. We have carried out criticism and self-criticism at this session, basing ourselves on the Common Programme. This is an excellent method, which impels everyone of us to uphold truth and rectify error, and it is the only correct method for all revolutionary people to educate and remould themselves in a people's state. The people's democratic dictatorship uses two methods. Towards the enemy, it uses the method of dictatorship, that is, for as long a period of time as is necessary it does not permit them to take part in political activity and compels them to obey the law of the People's Government, to engage in labour and, through such labour, be transformed into new men. Towards the people, on the contrary, it uses the method of democracy and not of compulsion, that is, it must necessarily let them take part in political activity and does not compel them to do this or that but uses the method of democracy to educate and persuade. Such education is self-education for the people, and its basic method is criticism and self-criticism. I hope that this method will be used by all the nationalities, democratic classes, democratic parties, people's organizations and patriotic democrats in the country.

NOTES

1. At that time, the country was divided into six greater administrative areas, namely, the Northeast, North China, East China, the Central South, the Southwest and the Northwest, with a bureau in each representing the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. Each of the five areas except North China had its administrative organ. That of the Northeast was called the people's government, while in the other four it was known as the military and administrative commission. In November 1952 these were all renamed administrative councils, and one such council was also established in North China. In 1954 all the administrative councils were abolished.

2. The consultative committees of conferences of people from all circles at the provincial and municipal level were elected by conferences of people from all circles at the same level. When

the latter were not in session, the former were charged with the function of assisting the people's governments in carrying out the conferences' resolutions.

3. This refers to the "Draft Agrarian Reform Law of the People's Republic of China". The Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party presented the draft to the Second Session of the First National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference on June 14, 1950 for discussion. After it had been discussed and endorsed by the session, the Central People's Government Council approved the draft. On June 30 of the same year, Mao Tsetung, Chairman of the Central People's Government, promulgated the "Agrarian Reform Law of the People's Republic of China".

Closing Speech at the Second Session of the National Committee of the CPPCC (June 23, 1950)

Source: *RMRB* (June 24, 1950), 1. Other Chinese Text: *Zhengxie er ci*, pp. 91-95. Available English Translations: NCNA, *Supplement*, 55 (June 26, 1950), 1-2; *PC*, II:1 (July 1, 1950), 24-25; *CDSP*, II:26 (Aug 12, 1950), 28; K. Fan (1972), pp. 93-95; *SW*, V, pp. 37-40.

While the *RMRB* and the *Zhengxie er ci* versions are similar, the later Xuanji version of this text contains some variations. Where these variations are significant, they have been noted.

This meeting has summed up the experience of the preceding period and has laid down various guiding principles.

This work of summing up experience and laying down guidelines was done by all of us together; it was done by the representatives of all the nationalities, all the democratic classes, all the democratic parties, all the people's organizations, ¹ and the democratic personages from all walks of life gathered together. Here, we not only have the members of the National Committee of the People's Political Consultative Conference, but we also have many personnel of the Central People's Government, of the people's governments, (the military and administrative commissions) ² of the various greater administrative regions, and of the people's government of the various provinces and municipalities; [we also have] representatives from the consultative committees of the provincial and municipal conferences of people from all walks of life, ³ as well as many specially invited patriotic personages, all sitting in on the meeting and taking part in the discussions. In this way, we have been able to concentrate diverse opinions, review [our] past work, and decide on principles for the future. I hope that in the future we will continue to utilize this method, and further hope that this method will also be adopted by the people's governments (the military and administrative commissions) of the various greater administrative regions, and the people's governments of the various provinces and municipalities. For the time being, the nature of our meeting is still that of making proposals, but actually the decisions that we make in meetings of this sort will certainly be adopted by the Central People's Government and be put into practice, as indeed they ought to be.

We have unanimously approved the report on the work of the National Committee and the various reports on the work of the Central People's Government. These included the reports on land reform work, on political work, on military work, on economic and financial work, on taxation work, on cultural and educational work, and on the work of the courts of law. These were all good reports. In these reports [we] have appropriately summed up the experience of the work of the preceding period and have formulated the principles for work of the future. The reason that we have had so many topics for discussion at this meeting is that since the founding of our new state work is being initiated and developed in all areas, and the people throughout the country are in the midst of vigorously launching a great and genuine people's revolutionary struggle on all fronts. This is a tremendous struggle on the military front, on the economic front, on the ideological front, and on the land reform front, the likes of which has never been seen before. Every area of work has to be summed up and given direction and guiding principles; that is why we have had so many topics for discussion. According to the law, our meeting will be held twice a year. Of these [two meetings,] one will be a meeting with many topics for

discussion and the other will have fewer topics. China is a big country; our actual population is more than 475 million. Besides, we are in a great historical epoch of the people's revolution. Such circumstances demand that we: do things in this particular manner, and we have been doing so. I believe that we are doing things correctly.

'We have had many topics for discussion at this meeting. The central theme of our discussion has been the problem of transforming the old system of land [ownership]. We have all agreed with Vice-chairman Liu Shaoqi's report ⁴ and the draft land reform bill proposed by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. ⁵ We have also made certain useful amendments and supplements to the draft land reform bill. This is very good. I am filled with joy by the fact that hundreds of millions of New China's rural people have gained the opportunity to overturn their old lives and that the country has secured the basic conditions for industrialization, and I celebrate this fact. The Chinese populace consists primarily of peasants, and the revolution achieved victory only by relying on the aid of the peasants. The industrialization of the country also must rely on the help of the peasants in order to succeed. Therefore the working class should actively help the peasants carry out land reform. The urban ⁶ petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie ⁷ should also support this reform, and still more so should the democratic parties and the various people's organizations adopt this attitude. War and land reform are the two "gates" ⁸ that test the mettle of all people and parties in China in the historical epoch of New Democracy. Whoever stands on the side of the revolutionary people is a revolutionary; whoever stands on the side of imperialism, feudalism, and bureaucratic capitalism is a counterrevolutionary. Whoever stands on the side of the revolutionary people only in words but acts differently is a revolutionary in words only; if one not only stands on the side of the revolutionary people in words, but also in deeds, then one is a complete revolutionary. The "gate" of war has basically been passed. We have all passed this "gate" with flying colors, and the people of the whole country are satisfied with this. Now we must pass the "gate" of land reform, and I hope that we will pass it with the same flying colors as we did the "gate" of war. Let us study harder, have more discussion, clarify our thought, and march together in step to form a great antifeudal united front; then we can lead the people and help the people to pass this "gate" smoothly. When the "gates" of war and land reform have both been passed, the only remaining "gate" will be passed easily. This will be the "gate" of socialism, of carrying out socialist transformation throughout the entire country. As for those who have contributed to the revolutionary war and to the revolutionary reform of the landownership system and who in the many years to come will contribute to economic and cultural construction, they will not be forgotten by the people when the time comes in the future to implement the nationalization of [private] ⁹ enterprises and the socialization of agriculture (this time is still in the distant future); their prospects are bright. It is in such a way that our country takes steady steps in progress; having gone through war and through the reforms of New Democracy, in the future, after the economic and cultural undertakings of the country have prospered greatly, after all sorts of conditions have been secured, and after the whole people have thoroughly considered and agreed [on the matter of the transition], we can then step into the new era of socialism in an unhurried and orderly [manner]. I believe that it is essential to make this point clear so that people can have confidence and not worry that one day they will no longer be wanted and will not be given the opportunity to serve the people even though they may want to. No, it will not be like that at all. As long as somebody is truly willing to work for the people and has indeed helped the people at the time when they were still having difficulties, has performed good deeds, and has consistently continued to do so without giving up halfway, then there will be no reason for the people or the People's Government not to want such a person, and there will be no reason not to give such a person a chance to make a living and serve [the people].

With this great aim in mind, in the international [sphere], we must firmly unite with the Soviet Union, with all the People's Democracies, ¹⁰ and with all the forces for peace and democracy throughout the world. We cannot have the slightest hesitation or wavering on this matter. Domestically, we must unite all nationalities, all democratic classes, all democratic parties, all people's organizations, and all patriotic democratic personages; we must consolidate the great and prestigious revolutionary United Front that has already been established. Whoever contributes to the work of consolidating this revolutionary United Front will be welcomed by us and will be correct; whoever harms the work of consolidating this revolutionary United Front will be opposed and will be wrong. To achieve the goal of consolidating the revolutionary united front, we must adopt the method of criticism and self-criticism. Of the standards that we must adopt in applying this method, the most important presently is our organic law, the Common Program. ¹¹ At this meeting we have adopted the method of criticism and self-criticism based on the Common Program. This is a very good method, an excellent method that pushes all of us to uphold the truth and correct mistakes; it is the only correct method by which all the

revolutionary people in a people's state can carry out self-education and self-reform. The people's dictatorship has two methods. One, which applies to the enemy, is the dictatorial method, which means that when necessary they can be forbidden to participate in political activities, forced to obey the laws of the People's Government, and forced to take part in labor and to reform themselves through labor in order to become new people. For the people it is exactly the opposite. It is not the coercive method that is applied to them, but rather the democratic method, which is to say that they must be permitted to participate in political activities. We will not force them to do this or that but will use democratic methods to carry out the work of education and persuasion among them. This type of educational work is the work of self-education among the people. The method of criticism and self-criticism is the basic method of self-education. I hope that all the nationalities, all the democratic classes, all the democratic parties, all the people's organizations, and all the patriotic democratic personages throughout the country will adopt this method.

Notes

1. See text Sept. 21, 1949, note 1, and text Oct. 1, 1949, note 3, respectively
2. Prior to November 1952, China was divided into six "greater administrative regions," corresponding to the Northeast, North, East, Central-South, Southwest, and Northwest areas of the country. With the exception of the North, each area was overseen by a regional administrative agency; in the Northeast that was called the "people's government"; the other four were designated "military and administrative commissions." Afterward, administrative councils were established in all six regions. With the promulgation of the Constitution in 1954 the administrative councils were abolished. Also see note in SW, V, p. 40
3. The RMRB version here has *xieyi weiyuanhui* (agreement committees), while Xuanji has *xieshang weiyuanhui* (consultative committees); undoubtedly the correct term is the latter. See text June 6, 1950 (1), note 9.
4. The phrase " Vice-chairman Liu Shaoqi's report and" is in the RMRB version but has been omitted from the Xuanji version of the text. On Liu's report, see K. Lieberthal (1976), p. 52. A text of Liu's report is reprinted in RMSC (1951), pp. 32-43, and translated in CB, 43 (Dec. 22, 1950).
5. See text March 12, 1950, note 5. This draft was presented to the Second Session of the First National Committee of the CPPCC on June 14, 1950; for more on this meeting see K. Lieberthal (1976), pp. 52-53. The bill was ratified and became law on June 30; thus the term *fa* (law) in the Chinese text is translated here as "bill."
6. The word "urban" occurs only in the RMRB text
7. See text Mar. 12, 1950, note 3.
8. The word *guan* is commonly used as a geographic term, referring to a fortified mountain pass. Its usage has been extended to refer to a point, or grade, that one attempts to pass or a target to be achieved. In such usage it is often translated as "gate." The term *guoguan* (passing the gate) therefore has the connotation of "making the grade," or "passing the test." Here it specifically refers to critical points in the development of revolutionary consciousness and the proving of one's rectitude. For an extended illustration of the term's usage see W. Hinton (1966), especially Parts IV and V.
9. The word "private" occurs only in the Xuanji version
10. The RMRB version has "New Democracies" here. For the definition of the terms see text Sept. 21, 1949, note 4.
11. See text Sept. 21, 1949, note 3.