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Speeches/Documents

**Title:** CRITICISM OF LIANG SHU-MING'S REACTIONARY IDEAS

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**Description:** Essential parts of Comrade Mao Tsetung's criticism of Liang Shu-ming at the Twenty-seventh Session of the Central People's Government Council held in Peking September 16-17, 1953

1. Is Mr. Liang Shu-ming a "man of integrity"? What part did he play during the peace negotiations?

Mr. Liang styles himself a "man of integrity", the reactionary press in Hongkong describes Mr. Liang as "one man of the highest integrity" on the mainland, and Taiwan's broadcasts go all out to puff you up, too. Do you really have "integrity"? If you do, then make a clean breast of your past history--how you opposed the Communist Party and the people, how you assassinated people with your pen, and what sort of relations you had with Han Fu-chu, Chang Tung-sun, Chen Li-fu and Chang Chun. You have had them all as close friends. I just don't leave that many friends. They were so pleased with you, addressing you as Mister while maligning me as a "bandit". I wonder which party, which faction, you are with! I am not alone, many others have the same suspicions.

From the speech Premier Chou has just made, everybody can see that during our two peace negotiations with the Kuomintang Mr. Liang's position was one of backing Chiang Kai-shek to the hilt at critical junctures. Chiang Kai-shek was only shamming when he agreed to hold peace negotiations. With us here today there are representatives who came to Peking for the peace negotiations and they all know whether Chiang Kai-shek was really for peace or not.

To tell the truth, Chiang Kai-shek is an assassin with a gun and Liang Shu-ming an assassin with a pen. There are two ways of killing people: one is to kill with the gun and the other with the pen. The way which is most artfully disguised and draws no blood is to kill with the pen. That is the kind of murderer you are.

Liang Shuming is utterly reactionary, yet he flatly denies it, he says he is a paragon. He is not like Mr. Fu Zuoyi. Mr. Fu openly admits that he was utterly reactionary, yet he did a service to the people in the peaceful liberation of Peking. What service did you do, Liang Shuming? In all your life what service have you ever done to the people? Not the slightest, not the least bit. Nevertheless, you describe yourself as an incomparable beauty, outshining Hsi Shih and Wang Chao Chun and rivalling Yang Kuei Fei.

2. Liang Shu-ming has used the expression "the ninth heaven and the ninth hell", alleging that "the workers are up in the ninth heaven whereas the peasants are down in the ninth hell" and that "the workers have the trade unions to fall back on whereas the peasant associations cannot be counted on, nor can the Party, the Youth League, the Women's Federation, and so on; they are all below standard qualitatively and quantitatively and even inferior to the Federation of Industry and Commerce -- hence no confidence". Can this be called "support for the general line"? No! It is an *out-and-out reactionary conception*, every bit of it, it is a reactionary proposition, not a rational one. Can the People's Government accept this kind of proposition? I don't think it can.

3. Mr. Liang asks "to be given more information about the plans". I am against this too. On the contrary, we shouldn't let a man like Mr. Liang know much about our confidential matters, the less he knows the better.

Liang Shu-ming is not a man to be trusted. We can let others have more confidential information, but not you. When somewhat restricted meetings of the democratic parties are held, Liang Shu-ming, there is no need for you to attend either.

4. Mr. Liang also asks us not to put him in the non-progressive category and says he belongs to the progressive category. What should we do about it? I think we should be cautious and not make any promise offhand. Otherwise, we shall be duped.

5. Mr. Liang paints a very beautiful picture of himself, claiming that several decades ago he already cherished a grand dream for building up our country with a plan which, according to him, came *very close* to New Democracy or socialism.

Is he really so beautiful? Hardly. I know him rather well, and we never met without my having to criticize his erroneous ideas. I once told him to his face, "I never believe in your stuff." To all his talk, such as that "China is without classes", "China's problem is one of cultural maladjustment", it needs "a colourless, transparent government" [1] and "the Chinese revolution has no internal but only external causes", one must now add his brilliant talk about "the ninth heaven and the ninth hell" and about "the Communist Party having abandoned the peasants", "the Communist Party not being as reliable as the Federation of Industry and Commerce", and so on and so forth. Can I believe all this? No! I told him, China's characteristic is that it is a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country. Since you don't admit this, you are helping imperialism and feudalism. Therefore, nobody believes in your stuff. The people believe in the Communist Party. Nobody reads your books or listens to you except reactionaries and some muddleheads. Besides, it seems Mr. Liang is not opposed to Chiang Kai-shek either. Now I can leave it to you to go into

the question of whether he has ever publicly opposed Chiang Kai-shek and his reactionary Kuomintang, since I haven't read all he has written or heard all he has said.

Is such a man entitled to request a people's state to allow him access to more of its plans and confidential matters? I think he is not. Ought we to grant him the request? I think not.

6. Mr. Liang has another request, that we place him in the category of progressives or revolutionaries and not in the category of non-progressives or reactionaries. This is a question of "defining status", what should we do about it? In view of the above circumstances, can we put him in the progressive or the revolutionary category? What progressiveness is there in him? When, if ever, did he take part in the revolution? So we should not readily grant this request either. We'll have to wait and see.

7. In the last few years I have received a number of letters from the people asking why the Communist Party co-operates with reactionaries and have also heard some talk to the same effect. The reactionaries referred to are those who have never been willing to commit themselves, whether in the press or on public occasions, to opposing imperialism, feudalism, Chiang Kai-shek and his reactionary Kuomintang, and whose stand falls short of the minimum requirements of a government worker. Since these persons are particularly unwilling to oppose Chiang Kai-shek, Taiwan broadcasts and Hongkong newspapers have gone out of their way to express their appreciation, never abusing them but describing them as "men of the highest integrity" on the mainland. Liang Shu-ming is one of this bunch. On the other hand, these broadcasts and newspapers pull out all the stops in slandering and vilifying some of our friends. The individuals extolled or never abused by Taiwan are of course *few in number but deserve close attention*.

There are certain persons who to this day would rather die than say a word against Chiang Kai-shek, though they don't mind saying a few words against imperialism. Whether in the press or in public statements, they dare not bring up the past, for they are still tender-hearted about it. I guess there are quite a few of them.

There are three kinds of patriotism, genuine patriotism, sham patriotism, and half-genuine and half-sham, vacillating, patriotism. Everybody knows which kind he comes under and so does Liang Shu-ming. We welcome all those who have truly broken their ties with imperialism and the Taiwan gang, no matter how backward they may be. They are genuine patriots. Sham patriots put on a fine mask, but underneath they are quite different. Vacillating elements are the third kind, they are half-genuine and half-sham in their patriotism, and shift and switch as the trend changes. If a third world war doesn't break out and Chiang Kai-shek doesn't come back, then they will go along with the Communist Party. If a third world war does break out, they will reconsider their course of

action. Which of the three kinds makes up the majority? The genuine patriots. The genuine patriots have been on the increase in the last few years, the half-genuine and half-sham ones are small in number, and the sham patriots are only a handful but they do exist. It's up to you to look into the accuracy of this estimate.

8. There is a job I think Liang Shu-ming should do. It's a job not of "representing the peasants" and "appealing for their liberation" to the People's Government but of giving a clear account of the development over the years of his reactionary ideas against the people. He should make clear how he opposed the Communist Party and the people on behalf of the landlords in the past, and how he has now changed his stand from one of representing the landlords to one of "representing the peasants" -- only when he is able to explain how this change has occurred, and make it convincing into the bargain, can we determine which category to put him in. He gives me the impression that he has never contemplated changing his reactionary stand. Nevertheless, to cure the sickness and save the patient, I suggest that he be given time for self-examination and that we refer the matter to the National Committee of the Political Consultative Conference instead of passing judgment on him now.

9. "All men have a sense of shame," [2] and if a man has no sense of shame, it's hopeless. Mr. Liang says that he is wiser than the Communist Party on the peasant question -- will anybody believe that? This is like showing off one's proficiency with the axe before Lu Pan the master carpenter. If, for instance, it should be said that "Mao Tsetung excels Mr. Mei Lan-fang in acting, or the Volunteers in digging tunnels, or the air force hero Chao Pao-tung in flying", wouldn't that be the acme of shamelessness? So the question posed by Mr. Liang is both serious and not serious and smacks of the ridiculous. He asserts that he is better qualified than the Communist Party to represent the peasants, isn't that ridiculous?

Now there are so many "representatives of the peasants", and who in the world do they represent? Do they represent the peasants? I don't think they look the part, nor do the peasants think so. They represent the landlord class and render it service. And the most prominent of them all is Liang Shu-ming, who with sweet words on his lips is actually helping the enemy. Some others among them are muddle-headed and have said stupid things, yet they are patriots and have China in their hearts. This is one type. Liang Shu-ming is another type. And there are others like him who pose as "representatives of the peasants". Fakes do exist, and now we are coming across them. Each of these persons has a tail like a fox, that's plain to all. The Monkey Sun Wu-kung is able to make seventy-two metamorphoses, but there is always one difficulty, changing his tail. He changes himself into a temple and turns his tail into a flagstaff, but the warrior god Yang Erh-lang

spots the trick. And how? By spotting his tail. There is in fact a type of person who cannot hide his tail no matter how he disguises himself.

Liang Shu-ming is an ambitious schemer, a hypocrite. He lies when he says he takes no interest in politics and seeks no office. He used to engage in what he called "rural construction", and what sort of "rural construction" was it? Construction for the landlords, rural destruction and national ruin!

10. If you have dealings with that man you can't take him seriously. You can never thrash out any problem with him, for he follows no logic and only talks drivel. So I suggest that his problem be referred to the National Committee of the Political Consultative Conference for discussion at its bi-weekly forum. At the same time I should like to warn you not to entertain any hope of finding a real solution. That is absolutely impossible. The outcome can only be, "No decision after deliberation, no action even with a decision, and no fruitful result on adjournment." Even so, I advise you to try it out at the bi-weekly forum, for that is better than "sending a couple of people" to listen to his rigmarole.

11. Are we going to take this opportunity to break with him and have nothing more to do with him? No, we are not. So long as he wishes to have relations with us, we are ready to reciprocate. I still hope that he will be re-elected to the National Committee of the Political Consultative Conference at its Second Plenary Session. That's because there are still people who are prone to be deceived by him and do not know him well, and he still has a role to play as live teaching material; he is therefore qualified for re-election, unless he himself has lost the desire to use the platform of the Political Consultative Conference to spread his reactionary ideas.

As I have said earlier, Liang Shu-ming has performed no service whatsoever and is good for nothing. Is he any good for providing us with products and paying income tax like the industrialists and businessmen? No, he is not. Is he any good for developing production and making the economy prosperous? No, he is not. Did he ever rebel? No, he did not. When, if ever, did he oppose Chiang Kai-shek or imperialism? Never. When, if ever, did he do anything to co-operate with the Chinese Communist Party in overthrowing imperialism and feudalism? Never. Therefore, he has performed no service. The man refused to nod his head in favour but shook it in disapproval of such a great struggle as the movement to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea. Then, why is it that he is on the National Committee of the Political Consultative Conference? Why is it that the Chinese Communist Party has nominated him for membership of this committee? Precisely because he can still deceive a number of people and has a certain deceptiveness. His credentials are deception, that's exactly what he has.

For Liang Shu-ming, whoever nods in recognition of his being correct is "magnanimous" and whoever fails to do so isn't. I am afraid we don't have such "magnanimity". But we have at least this much, that is, Liang Shu-ming, you can continue as a member of the National Committee of the Political Consultative Conference.

12. Confucius, I hold, had the faults of not being democratic and of lacking a self-critical spirit, in a way rather like Mr. Liang. Confucius said, "Since I took Tzu Lu as a disciple, I have never heard ill of myself";<sup>[3]</sup> his school "thrice filled up and thrice emptied",<sup>[4]</sup> and he "executed Shaocheng Mao within three months of taking office"<sup>[5]</sup> -- he came close to being a despot and reeked of fascism. I hope my friends, and you Mr. Liang in particular, won't follow Confucius' example, and if you don't it will be most gratifying.

13. If Mr. Liang's lofty programme were followed, not only would socialism be impossible in China, but our parties (the other parties as well as the Communist Party) and our country would all be ruined. His line is the bourgeois line. Po I-po's mistake is a reflection of bourgeois ideas inside our Party. But Po I-po is better than Liang Shu-ming.

Liang Shu-ming says that the workers are "up in the ninth heaven" and the peasants are "down in the ninth hell". What are the facts? There is indeed a gap, with the workers earning more than the peasants, but after the agrarian reform the peasants now have land and houses and their life is improving every day. Some peasants fare even better than workers. Some workers are still in difficulty. What can be done to help the peasants earn more? Have you any suggestion, Liang Shu-ming? In your view, "the trouble lies not in scarcity but in uneven distribution".<sup>[6]</sup> Your idea is not to have the peasants increase their income through their own efforts in production but to equalize the earnings of the workers and peasants by taking away part of the former's earnings to distribute among the latter. If your idea were adopted, wouldn't that spell the destruction of China's industry? Such a diversion of the workers' earnings would mean the ruin of our country and our parties. Don't think that ruin would befall the Communist Party alone, the democratic parties would be in it too.

You say the workers are "up in the ninth heaven", then in which heaven are you, Liang Shu-ming? You are up in the tenth heaven, the eleventh, the twelfth, nay, the thirteenth heaven, because you get a salary far bigger than a worker's wage! Yet what you propose to cut first is not your own salary but the workers' wages. I take this to be unfair. If you want to be fair, cut your own salary first because you are far above "the ninth heaven"!

Our Party has stood for the worker-peasant alliance for more than three decades.

Marxism-Leninism stands precisely for alliance and co-operation between workers and peasants. There are two alliances in China: one is the alliance of the working class with

the peasantry, and the other is the alliance of the working class with the capitalists, professors, senior technical personnel, Kuomintang generals who have come over to our side, religious leaders, democratic parties and democrats without party affiliation. Both alliances are necessary and must continue. Which of the two is the base, which of the two is of primary importance? The alliance of the working class with the peasantry. Liang Shu-ming asserts that the worker-peasant alliance is in ruins and there is no hope for national construction. In other words, unless his ideas are adopted, the worker-peasant alliance has no hope of success, national construction cannot make headway, and there will be no hope for socialism! Indeed, there is no hope for the sort of "worker-peasant alliance" Liang Shu-ming has in mind. Yours is the bourgeois line. If your line were followed, the result would be the ruin of our country, China would be back on the old road of semi-colonialism and semi-feudalism, and there would be a rally in Peking to welcome Chiang Kai-shek and Eisenhower. Let me repeat, we'll never adopt your line!

Since we moved into the cities, Liang Shu-ming asserts, we have "forgotten" the countryside and it has become a "void". That's an attempt to foment discord. In the last three years we have devoted our main effort to rural work. It was only this year that we started diverting large numbers of leading cadres to urban work, but the bulk of our cadres are still working in the counties, districts and townships. How can it be asserted that we have forgotten the countryside!

Liang Shu-ming also accuses our rural work of being "backward" and our grass-roots cadres of "violating the law and discipline". What are known as backward townships do exist in the rural areas. But how many are there? Only 10 per cent. Why are they backward? Chiefly because reactionary elements, enemy gendarmes and agents, heads of reactionary secret societies, hooligans and ruffians, landlords and rich peasants have wormed their way in, become cadres and usurped the power of village governments, and some have even sneaked into the Communist Party. These types account for 80 to 90 per cent of the cadres guilty of serious violations of the law and of discipline, and degenerate cadres make up the rest. Therefore, the main problem in the backward townships is to strike at the counter-revolutionaries, but the degenerate cadres must be weeded out too. What is the proportion of the good and fairly good townships in the country as a whole? Ninety per cent. We must have a clear idea about this situation and not be fooled by Liang Shu-ming.

14. Do we reject representations and gloss over errors? If the sort of idea advanced by Mr. Liang can be called a "representation", I declare that we do "reject representations". But we do not gloss over errors. We firmly stand for the leadership of the proletariat over all and sundry (workers, peasants, industrialists and businessmen, the nationalities,

democratic parties and people's organizations, industry, agriculture, political and military affairs, in short, everything) and for both unity and struggle. If you want to sound us out, then this is one thing you will learn, a thing which is fundamental in nature. This is no trifling matter, is it?

15. Liang Shu-ming's problem has significance for the whole country and, like the case of Po I-po, should be taken up and discussed by the whole Party and the whole nation. Look for typical examples and unfold criticism and self-criticism. Let the whole nation discuss the general line.

There are two ways of making criticism: one is by self-criticism and the other by criticism. How shall we have it in your case, Liang Shu-ming? Will it be self-criticism? No, it will be criticism.

Our criticism of Liang Shu-ming is not directed against him alone, it is through him that we expose the reactionary ideas he represents. Reactionary as Liang Shu-ming is, we nevertheless treat his case as falling within the scope of ideological remoulding. Whether or not he can be remoulded is another question. Most likely he cannot be remoulded. It doesn't matter if he is beyond remoulding, for he is just one individual. However, a debate with him is useful. Don't think that we are making a mountain out of a molehill and that it is not worth the effort. Our debate with him will help clarify the question. If he is at all useful, this is where his usefulness lies. What's the question now under debate? Isn't it that of the general line? To clarify this question will be good for all of us.

## **NOTES**

1. By advocating "a colourless, transparent government" Liang Shu-ming was preaching that the government should be free of any party or faction coloration and should be a "colourless, transparent entity" transcending classes.

2. *Mencius*, "Kao Tzu", Part I.

3. This quotation is from the *Historical Records*, an ancient Chinese historical work. Tzu Lu was Confucius' disciple and attendant. After Tzu Lu became his attendant, no adverse opinions ever reached Confucius.

4. "Confucius' school thrice filled up and thrice emptied" is a quotation from "On Happy Omens" in the *Critical Essays* by Wang Chung of the Han Dynasty, Confucius ran a school in the state of Lu to glorify the reactionary slave system. Shaocheng Mao also ran

a school, and Confucius' disciples frequently flocked to bat him. As a result, Shaocheng Mao's school was packed while Confucius' school was often empty.

5. According to the *Historical Records*, Confucius served as Minister of Justice and then as acting Prime Minister of the state of Lu. He put his rival Shaocheng Mao to death within three months of assuming the latter post.

6. *Confucian Analects*, Book XVI, "Chi Shih".