

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DRAFT COMMON PROGRAMME OF THE PEOPLE'S POLITICAL CONSULTATIVE CONFERENCE

*September 22, 1949*

The draft "Common Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference"<sup>449</sup> was prepared by the Communist Party of China, which has been entrusted with this responsibility by the Third Sub-Committee of the Preparatory Committee of the New Political Consultative Conference.<sup>417</sup> After the first version of the draft was ready, it was discussed and revised seven times, twice in group sessions of the five to six hundred delegates to the CPPCC who had arrived in Beijing, three times by the Third Sub-Committee itself and twice by the Standing Committee of the Preparatory Committee. The revised draft, incorporating suggestions from all quarters, was then presented to the second plenary session of the Preparatory Committee, which basically approved it. The draft is now being submitted to the present plenary session of the CPPCC for discussion. In the course of the consultations, discussions have centred on the following issues, which I shall now explain.

The first is the question of the Chinese people's democratic united front. The united front dates back to the period of the Great Revolution.<sup>461</sup> Thanks to the proposal and efforts of the Chinese Communist Party and with the approval of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the Kuomintang was reorganized, the co-operation of the Kuomintang and the Communist

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The first plenary session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) was held in Beijing from September 21 to September 30, 1949. Comrade Zhou Enlai was delegated by the Central Committee of the Party to take charge of drafting the Common Programme of the CPPCC, and he made a report at the plenary session entitled "On the Preparation of the Draft 'Common Programme of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference' and Its Characteristics". This is an abstract of the report.

Party was facilitated and the Northern Expedition<sup>117</sup> was carried out victoriously. Later, Chiang Kai-shek sabotaged this united front. But the Communist Party continued to strive for a people's anti-imperialist and anti-feudal united front. It was especially thanks to Comrade Mao Zedong that this policy was further developed and successfully applied. But the Kuomintang reactionaries opposed the united front from beginning to end: they launched three anti-Communist onslaughts<sup>450</sup> during the War of Resistance Against Japan and, after the war, they abrogated the "October 10th Agreement"<sup>367</sup> and the resolutions of the Political Consultative Conference,<sup>339</sup> finally unleashing full-scale civil war. The civil war has educated the people, so that gradually they have come to give unanimous support to the People's Liberation Army in waging the War of Liberation, wiping out the reactionaries and carrying the revolution through to the end. Last year, in keeping with its consistent stand for a united front, the Chinese Communist Party called for a New Political Consultative Conference and received a warm response from the democratic parties and from the people of the whole nation. Now this demand is being met. Our goal is very clear: as stated in the draft Common Programme and in the organic law of the CPPCC, we want to realize New Democracy, oppose imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism and establish an independent, democratic, peaceful, united, prosperous and strong new China. To this end, we unite with the democratic classes and nationalities in the country and the overseas Chinese as well and form the great people's democratic united front. It is not only the Communist Party that has been struggling for the last twenty-eight years to achieve this goal; the democratic parties, people's organizations, regions, troops, minority nationalities, overseas Chinese and all patriotic democratic personages likewise favour and support it. In his essay, *On the People's Democratic Dictatorship*, Comrade Mao Zedong clearly pointed out that it is the Communist Party, the People's Liberation Army and the people's democratic united front which have brought about the present victory in the people's democratic revolution. Hence, in the discussions of the Preparatory Committee, it was agreed that this kind of united front should continue throughout the new-democratic period and that it should be given organizational form to promote its development. It was further agreed that the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference is its best organizational form.

Two other opinions emerged from the discussions. The first was that after the convening of the people's congress there would no longer

be any need for such an organization as the CPPCC. The second was that the parties were so closely united that New Democracy would develop rapidly and that consequently the democratic parties would not last very long. Later on in the discussions, these two opinions were generally considered not quite right, because they did not accord with the development of China's revolution and the needs of reconstruction. Undoubtedly, it will take some time to convene a national people's congress elected by universal suffrage, but even after it is convened, the CPPCC will still play a consultative, advisory and promotive role with regard to the work of the central government. Moreover, since classes will still exist during the new-democratic period, so will political parties. The rulers of the old democratic state were bourgeois, and the bourgeois factions inevitably tried to squeeze each other out, scrambling for power and profit. In the new-democratic state, though there are differences in interests and attitudes among the various classes led by the working class, agreement can be reached on common demands and major policies — witness the draft Common Programme adopted by the Preparatory Committee. And in the face of the struggle against the remnants of imperialism and feudalism, the different demands and contradictions within the people's democratic united front can and should be adjusted.

The second question is the general programme of New Democracy. The opinion was expressed that since we recognize that New Democracy is only a transitional stage and must develop towards the higher stages of socialism and communism, this perspective should be clearly defined in the general programme. The Preparatory Committee held that there was not the slightest doubt about the future course of development, but that its validity should be explained, publicized and, especially, proved to the entire people through practice. Only when they come to understand through their own practice that this is the sole — the best — course will they really acknowledge it and wholeheartedly strive for it. So while we are not putting it in writing for the time being, we do not deny it; on the contrary, we are treating it with the utmost care. Moreover, in the economic section of the programme, it is already specified that we will make sure to advance along this course.

The general programme has very clear provisions concerning the rights of the people and their duties to the state. One definition requires explanation, that is, the distinction between "people" and "nationals". "People" refers to the working class, the peasantry, the petty bour-

geoisie, the national bourgeoisie and those patriotic democratic elements who are politically conscious and have come over from the reactionary classes. As for the bureaucrat-capitalist class after its property has been confiscated and the landlord class after its land has been redistributed, we must severely suppress their reactionary activities. But that constitutes the negative side. From a positive point of view, we must pay more attention to compelling them to engage in labour, so that they can be reformed and become new people. Until such time as they are changed, they do not fall under the category of the people, although they are Chinese nationals. Temporarily they are not allowed to enjoy the same rights as the people, but they must discharge the duties of nationals. This is the people's democratic dictatorship. It will be beneficial to unity and production in the People's Republic of China.

The key reactionary elements among these reactionary classes are by no means reconciled to the loss of their past privileges and will certainly engage in conspiracy and sabotage. The recent murder of General Yang Jie is a case in point.<sup>451</sup> The people's armed forces and police will intensify their work to prevent conspiracy and sabotage. We for our part must strengthen unity, sharpen vigilance and foil the plots of the reactionaries.

The third question is the political system of New Democracy. It is a democratic centralist system with people's congresses. It is completely different from the old democratic parliamentary system and belongs to the same category as the congress system adopted in the socialist Soviet Union. But it is not exactly the same as the Soviet system either, because the Soviet Union has already abolished classes,<sup>452</sup> while we have an alliance of revolutionary classes. This characteristic is reflected in the organizational form of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. It will likewise be reflected in the departments of the government, the present local people's conferences and the future people's congresses. The entire process — from the election of delegates, the holding of people's congresses and the election of people's governments to the exercise of state power by people's governments in the interim between congresses — will be a democratic centralist process of exercising state power. And the organs which exercise state power will be the people's congresses and people's governments at all levels.

The fourth question is the military system. It is certainly not fortuitous that the People's Liberation Army has achieved victory today

and won the support of the entire people. Not only is it courageous and resourceful in battle, but it is able to implement policy correctly and to assist the people in their productive labour. Such are its characteristics. The soul of the army is its system of political work. Not only is this military system different from that of the feudal warlords, it is also different from that of the bourgeoisie. The Common Programme provides that the troops of the whole country will be unified under this new-democratic military system, including all troops that rose against the Kuomintang's reactionary regime and came over to our side. This provision is in sharp contrast to the practice of the warlords, who gobbled up others or excluded them. It treats former enemies without discrimination and helps them to transform themselves into people's troops.

The fifth question is the economic policy of New Democracy. The basic spirit is to take all sectors into account, that is, to take into consideration both the public and the private interest, benefit both labour and capital, encourage mutual assistance between town and country and promote domestic and foreign trade, in order to increase production and promote economic prosperity. Of the five economic sectors under New Democracy,<sup>453</sup> the state-owned economy is the leading one. It is a formidable task, but one that must be accomplished, to fit everything in our society into its proper place while gradually establishing a planned economy so as to reap the fruits of the division of labour and co-operation. In the preparatory period most of the discussions have focused on economic questions, and good ideas from every quarter have been incorporated into the articles of the draft. There are a thousand things to be done in economic construction, but we must have a scheme of priorities. The specific articles have been worked out according to an analysis of what ought or ought not to be done, what can or cannot be done at present and what is already or not yet underway.

The sixth question is the cultural policy of New Democracy. There was not much discussion about cultural policy, but in a nutshell, it is a policy promoting national form, scientific content and mass orientation. The draft specifically mentions several items we must emphasize; but that doesn't mean that things not mentioned will not be done, as they have already been covered in general in the fifth section of the draft.

The seventh question is the nationalities policy of New Democracy. Its essence is to make the People's Republic of China a big, fraternal, co-operative family of all nationalities, which will combat imperialists

externally and common enemies of the nationalities internally. But within this great family of nationalities, we must also constantly oppose any tendencies towards big-nation chauvinism and narrow nationalism. The autonomy of the minority nationality regions, the right of their people to bear arms and respect for their religious beliefs have all been clearly stipulated in the text.

The eighth question is the foreign policy of New Democracy. The seventh section of the draft explicitly states what is to be guaranteed, what will be supported and what will be opposed. We must guarantee national independence, freedom, sovereignty and territorial integrity, support long-term international peace and friendly co-operation between the peoples of all countries and oppose the imperialist policies of aggression and war. The programme explicitly endorses Comrade Mao Zedong's policy, set forth in *On the People's Democratic Dictatorship*, concerning the matter of siding with the Soviet Union and the New Democracies. This is our basic stand on the question of foreign policy.