

1953

Speeches/Documents

Title: TWO TALKS ON MUTUAL AID AND CO-OPERATION IN AGRICULTURE

Author: Mao Zedong

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Description: Two talks to the responsible members of the Rural Work Department of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party before and during the Third conference on Mutual Aid and Co-operation in Agriculture, which was convened by the Central Committee and held from October 26 to November 5, 1953

I. THE TALK OF OCTOBER 15

Make a success of the agricultural producers' co-operatives and a big expansion of the mutual-aid teams will follow.

In the new liberated areas every county, whether large, medium-sized or small, should set up one or two successful co-operatives this winter and next spring after full preparations; there should be at least one, on the average one to two and at most three, depending on how well the work has been done. Quotas should be allotted. To make the quota too big would mean rash advance and to make it too small would be a Right deviation. To make the quota optional would be to let things drift. Can there be more than three? So long as the co-operatives meet the requirements, conform to the regulations and resolutions, are set up on a voluntary basis, have strong leading cadres (their two chief qualifications being fair-mindedness and competence) and are well run, then the more the better, as Han Hsin said about the number of troops he could command.^[1] The prefectural and county Party committees should be urged to make vigorous efforts and do a good job. The rural work departments of the Central Committee bureaus and of the provincial and municipal Party committees should keep a firm grasp on this matter and make it the pivot of their work.

There should be control figures and an allotment of quotas. Allotment without compulsion -- this is not commandism. After the October conference, there are four or five months to go, that is, November and December this year, January and February next year, and in the north the month of March as well. We give clear notice now that early next year another meeting will be called to check up on the work. There will definitely be a check-up then to see how it is getting on.

Certain minority nationality areas where the agrarian reform has not been completed can be exempted from setting up co-operatives. The small number of poorly managed counties, for instance, counties where backward townships account for 30 to 40 per cent of the total, where Party secretaries are incompetent and where the work cannot start without leading to trouble, can be exempted for the time being and given no quota. Nevertheless, the provincial and prefectural Party committees should assume responsibility for helping them to straighten

things out and to create the conditions for starting the work next winter after the autumn harvest.

The general pattern is to proceed from the mutual-aid team to the co-operative, but it is also permissible to try and set up the co-operative directly. If you take the direct path and succeed, that will speed up the work. So why can't it be tried? It can.

The rural work departments at all levels should look upon mutual aid and co-operation as a matter of vital importance. Peasants working on their own cannot raise production to any great extent, therefore we must promote mutual aid and co-operation. If socialism does not occupy the rural positions, capitalism inevitably will. Is it possible to take any road other than the capitalist or the socialist road? The capitalist road can also lead to increased production, but the time required would be longer and the course painful. We will not practice capitalism, that's settled. Yet capitalism is bound to spread unchecked unless we go in for socialism.

The general line, the general programme, industrialization and socialist transformation should be discussed at the forthcoming October conference.

Both "sustain private property" and the "four big freedoms"^[2] benefit the rich peasants and the well-to-do middle peasants. Why then are there relevant stipulations in the law? The law stipulates protection of private property, but the word "sustain" is not in it. Some peasants are selling their land now, which is not good; though the law does not prohibit it, we should make efforts to prevent them from doing so. Setting up co-operatives is the solution. Mutual-aid teams by themselves are not enough to stop peasants selling their land, only co-operatives, and big ones at that, can do so. Moreover, big co-operatives can eliminate the need of some peasants to rent out land, for a big co-operative of one or two hundred households can solve the problem by taking in households of widows, orphans and others not provided for. The question of whether small co-operatives can likewise take in a few has to be studied. The mutual-aid teams should also help widows, orphans and others not provided for. If you can't set up a big co-operative, try a medium-sized one; if you can't set up a medium-sized co-operative, try a small one. But go for a medium-sized or big co-operative wherever possible, and don't be upset at the sight of a big one. A co-operative of one or two hundred households can be counted big, but a co-operative of even three or four hundred households is also possible. Setting up several sub-co-operatives under a big co-operative is an innovation, and it is by no means necessary to dissolve it. Running a co-operative well does not mean bringing everything to perfection. Absorb all kinds of experience, and don't impose the same pattern everywhere.

More co-operatives should be established in the old liberated areas. But some new liberated areas may set up co-operatives at a faster tempo than some old ones. For instance, the central Shensi plain may develop faster than northern Shensi, the Chengtu plain faster than

Fuping and other such places. We must dispel the idea that the new liberated areas are destined to go slow. In fact the Northeast is not an old liberated area, its southern part not differing much from the new liberated areas south of the Great Wall. Kiangsu and the Hangchow-Chiahsing-Huchow region will probably overtake the mountainous old liberated areas in Shantung and North China, and so they should. Generally speaking, the new liberated areas may be allowed more time for their work, but in those places where the cadres are strong, the population is dense and the terrain level, co-operatives are likely to grow fairly quickly once a few models are set up.

There are now six thousand co-operatives in North China. If the figure is to be doubled, quotas can be allotted straight away. If the figure is to be tripled, those concerned should be consulted. We should allot quotas reasonably and have control figures, otherwise we shall be working without clear aims. The Northeast should increase its co-operatives by 100, 150 or 200 per cent, and so should North China. The control figures should not be too high, so that the localities may surpass them. Overfulfilment will greatly enhance people's enthusiasm.

In developing co-operatives, we should strive for quantity, quality and economy. By economy we mean no failures; failures are a waste of the peasants' energy, with the bad end-result of losses both politically and in the production of grain. Our final objective is to produce more grain, cotton, sugar-cane, vegetables, and so on. There will be no way out unless grain production is increased, otherwise neither the state nor the people will benefit.

Nor will there be a way out unless more vegetables are produced in the suburbs, otherwise neither the state nor the people will benefit. Since the outlying districts of the cities have rich soil and flat farmlands which moreover are publicly owned, big co-operatives may be set up there first. Of course, the work needs to be quite painstaking, and there is even less room for sloppiness, because growing vegetables is different from growing grain. We must set up pilot co-operatives and guard against rash advance.

To meet the urban demand for vegetables, we cannot rely on peasants working on their own to bring their produce to the market. Ways must be worked out at the production end as well as by the supply and marketing co-operatives. As regards vegetables for the large cities, there is a big contradiction between supply and demand at present.

There are also big contradictions between supply and demand in the cases of grain and cotton, and others will soon emerge in the cases of meat, fats and edible oils. Demand is growing fast and cannot be met.

To resolve the contradiction between supply and demand, it is necessary to resolve the contradiction between ownership and the productive forces. Should ownership be individual or collective? Capitalist ownership or socialist ownership? Abundant supplies and the relations of production under individual ownership are utterly incompatible with each other. There must be

a transition from individual ownership to collective ownership, to socialism. There are elementary co-operatives where land is pooled as shares, and there are advanced co-operatives in which land is owned in common, that is, by the co-operative.

In a sense the purpose of the general line is the solution of the problem of ownership. State ownership is to be expanded by building new state enterprises and renovating and enlarging old ones. The two kinds of private ownership, that of the working people and that of the bourgeoisie, are to be changed respectively into collective ownership and state ownership (integration into socialism through joint state-private management). Only thus can the productive forces be expanded and China's industrialization accomplished. Only when the productive forces have developed can the contradiction between supply and demand be resolved.

Notes

1 For an English text of this document, see NCNA, Daily Bulletin (Jan. 8, 1954).

2 The agricultural producers' cooperatives (APC) are the basic units of the socialist transformation of agriculture and of the collective economy in China's countryside. As we see in these volumes, the first step toward socializing the agricultural economy was accomplished by the land reform, which meant taking the land from the landlords and dividing it among the peasants. (See text Feb. 18, 1951, note 2.) When this was done, however, it left China with myriads of peasants with various sizes of landholdings and control over various amounts of means of production. (Thus the various classifications of peasants.) For the poor peasants, who constitute the majority, production on an individual economy basis was not particularly successful. Productivity could be raised and the livelihood of poor peasants could be improved only by the recombination of their means of production, and in a new way, i.e., a socialist method. Accordingly, some peasants pooled their resources voluntarily to form collective units. The resources pooled first were time and labor, while other material means of production remained completely privately owned. This became a form of mutual aid and was encouraged by some local authorities before it was promoted by the central government. (For instance, see text Dec. 15, 1951, source note.) The mutual aid teams thus formed were either seasonal or year-round, with the year-round ones operating with a more permanent and sophisticated system of division of labor, and in some cases, accumulating a small amount of communal property that was not immediately divided and was reinvested in future production.

When the Resolution of the Central Committee on Agricultural Cooperativization and Mutual Aid was promulgated in December 1951, the idea was still to promote the more sophisticated forms of mutual aid, and at this time "mutual aid" and cooperativization were considered under one rubric. By 1952 and 1953, however, on the basis of the mutual aid teams, the collectivization of the agricultural economy had moved further forward. In many instances, the peasants had joined together in another form, APC's, which represented a higher stage of socialization than the mutual aid teams. In this form, the peasant economy was still based on private ownership of the means of production, but the peasants pooled their land, the large livestock--such as draft oxen--and the major farming equipment together under joint labor and joint management. This became the fundamental format of the formation of APC's at this time, and was what Mao was referring to here.

The CPC at this time generally accepted that the APC's were a more productive form of agricultural organization than for the peasants, particularly the poor peasants, to "go it on their own." Not all the people in the Rural Work Department, however, shared Mao's obvious and unmitigated enthusiasm. The forming of APC's in some cases did represent temporary disruption of the economic pattern, and the question was raised as to the suitability of local circumstances for cooperativization. This also led to the question of the pace of setting up cooperatives. Mao believed that given their superiority and higher level of socialization, cooperatives, even of this "primary-stage" nature, should be set up in large numbers, and rapidly--i.e., "as soon as possible wherever it is possible." Others preferred a more deliberate pace and more attention given to appeasing the richer peasants for whom the marginal returns in setting up cooperatives were obviously smaller than for the poorer peasants, whose land

sometimes surrounded that of the richer peasants and whose cooperativization sometimes disrupted and affected the productive pattern of the richer peasants.

It should be noted that at this time the agricultural economy was still very diverse. There were APC's, there were rich peasants and middle peasants holding out against cooperativization, there were mutual aid teams, and there were places where there were not even mutual aid teams. Thus Mao believed that if cooperatives were set up and their productive superiority proven, it would have a positive leading influence on areas that were, so to speak, backward, and there facilitate the setting up of at least mutual aid teams. Note also that at this time the idea of cooperativization was still largely an idea of "semi socialism," i.e., of the pooling and joint usage of land, labor, and the major equipment, and based on a system of private ownership. (See text Aug. 12, 1953, note 9.) Although at the end of this speech Mao talks about "higher-stage" cooperatives being set up, his main concern at the moment was the "primary-stage" cooperative, which had to be set up on a wide scale first, and it was later that the problem of further making the transition to a yet higher level of socialization (or to what was known as the higher-stage APC's) became imminent. The latter (promoted in 1955), would mean complete socialism, with all means of production pooled and absorbed into a system of collective, and not private, ownership, and for the system of "from each according to ability, to each according to need" to be implemented, paving the way to the forming of the even larger and more intensely collectivized people's communes in 1958. 3. See text Aug. 12, 1953(1), note 22.

4. Han Xin was a military genius of the late and early second century B.C. who aided Liu Bang (first emperor of the Han dynasty) in the struggle for the throne. Han Xin was later given the title hou (often translated as marquis) of Huaiyin. The aphorism to which Mao refers here is drawn from a passage in "*Huaiyin hou zhuan* (The Biography of the Marquis of Huaiyin)" in *Shi ji (Historical Records)* in which Han was asked how large an army he was capable of controlling. His reply has become a common Chinese phrase that is the rough equivalent of the Western phrase, "the more, the merrier."

5. See text Aug. 12, 1953(1), note 21.

6. By control figures Mao meant, in this case, targeted numbers of cooperatives to be established.

7. See text June 6, 1950(1), note 11.

8. See text Feb. 18, 1951, note 2.

9. The "Four Freedoms" (*si da ziyou*) are the freedoms of usury, of selling land, of hiring labor, and of private enterprise. During the Cultural Revolution, Liu Shaoqi was accused of promoting these freedoms, which were considered to serve the interests of the rich and well-to-do middle peasants. For a more detailed description and indictment of these "freedoms," see text Oct. 11, 1955, section 3.

10. Significantly, the provision for the livelihood of these four groups of people is also a condition of the ideal state, or the "age of great harmony," as described in the classical Confucian canon. See the letter "*Li yun*" in *Li ji (Book of Rites)*. In modern China, the same ideal had been expressed by, among others, Kang Youwei and Sun Yat-sen. Preferential treatment for these four types of people is stipulated in Article 5 of the Land Reform Law.

11. See text June 6, 1950(1), note 7.

12. The term *guanzhong*, literally "region between the passes," refers primarily to the Wei River valley, home of China's dynastic capitals until the end of the Tang dynasty (618 to 906 A.D.). The fertility of this region stands in sharp contrast to the more and loess soil farther north of the Wei. Chengdu is in Sichuan, while Fuping is in eastern Hebei.

13. See text Apr. 6, 1952, note 4.

14. Jiangsu is the province of China that occupies the delta region of the Yangtze River, Shanghai, now an autonomous municipality, juts into the ocean at the tip of the delta. Hangzhou and Jiaxing are districts in Zhejiang which border Jiangsu on the south. Huzhou is in the province of Anhui to the west of Zhejiang. This region as a whole has been an economic and political nerve center of East China because it is strategically located to control communications and trade throughout the entire stretch of the lower Yangtze. Furthermore, it is where much of China's premodern industry and commerce (handicraft industries and textile industries in the early stage of mechanization) became concentrated throughout the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). This region therefore possesses an advantage over other regions in terms of potential for rapid economic development. Since it is also an area where capitalism has already had greater development, it is possible that Mao might have had this factor in mind when he proclaimed here his belief that this area might develop faster (perhaps in terms of socialism as well as economically) even though it was newly liberated.

15. Supply and marketing cooperatives were originally economic units set up among the peasants, in most cases voluntarily, to streamline the processes of purchasing necessary means of production and to sell their products. In many places, these cooperatives were set up even before the APC's. In the process of promoting mutual aid teams and early cooperativization, the CPC seized the initiative in this area as well and formularized the setting up of supply and marketing cooperatives, establishing general offices for such cooperatives, known as *gongxiao hezuo zongshe*, at the *xian* levels. These began to set more or less uniform prices for products and for the exchange of equipment, and even to draw up contracts for supplies, which took the place of the uneven and individualized vending that had prevailed earlier in the countryside. Peasants were encouraged to join by the fact that members were given preferential prices. In July 1950 the National General Office of Supply and Marketing Cooperatives was established. See also text Mar. 19, 1953, section 5, and text Oct. 11, 1955, note 25.

16 See text July 9, 1953. See also texts, Dec. 8, 1956, Mar. 5, 1956, and Feb. 21, 1959.

II. THE TALK OF NOVEMBER 4

Whatever we do must accord with reality, otherwise it is wrong. In order to do what accords with reality we must consider what is imperative and what is possible, and what is possible depends on political and economic conditions and the cadre situation. At present, it is at once imperative and possible to develop agricultural producers' co-operatives, for which there is a great potential. Failure to tap this potential means to mark time and make no advance. Our legs are for walking, and it is wrong to stand still all the time. It is not right to force the dissolution of co-operatives which meet the requirements, this is wrong no matter what the circumstances. The campaign to "check impetuosity and rash advance" was a gust of wind, wasn't it? As it blew from above, it brought down a number of agricultural producers' co-operatives that should have survived. An investigation should be made about such co-operatives, the findings made known and the mistake admitted, otherwise the township cadres and activists in those places will have pent-up grievances.

We must work for socialism. "Sustain private property" is a bourgeois concept. "To be together all day long and never talk about fundamentals but take pleasure only in giving small favours -- indeed it's a hopeless case!" "Never talk about fundamentals" means never talking about socialism, never working for socialism. Agricultural credits, relief grain, taxation according to fixed rates, tax reduction and exemption according to law, small-scale water conservancy projects, wells and canals, deep ploughing and close planting, proper application of fertilizer, popularization of new-type walking ploughs, water-wheels, sprayers, insecticides, etc. -- all these things are fine. But to do all this on the basis of the small peasant economy instead of by relying on socialism is to give the peasants small favours. Once these fine things are linked to the general line and to socialism, the case will be different, and they will no longer be small favours. We must work for socialism and link these fine things with it. As for "sustain private property" and the "four big freedoms", there is all the more reason to call them small favours, and besides, they are favours to the rich and well-to-do middle peasants. To lay one's hopes for greatly increased grain production and for a solution of the food problem and of the all-important problem of the nation's economy and the people's livelihood not on socialism but on making much of the small peasant economy and on giving small favours on the basis of the individual economy -- "indeed it's a hopeless case"!

As an old saying goes, "Once the headrope of a fishing net is pulled up, all its meshes open." It is only by taking hold of the key link the everything else will fall into its proper place. The key link means the main theme. The contradiction between socialism and capitalism an the gradual resolution of this contradiction -- that is the main theme, the key link. Grasp this key link, and all kinds of political and economic work to help the peasants will fall under it.

There are contradictions both inside and outside the agricultural producers' co-operatives. The present co-operatives are semi-socialist whereas peasants working on their own outside the co-operatives are entirely under the system of private ownership. Hence there is a contradiction between the two. The mutual-aid teams are different from the agricultural

producers' co-operatives in that the former engage only in collective labour and do not affect ownership. The present-day co-operatives are built on the basis of private ownership, with privately owned land, draught animals and large farm implements pooled as shares. Hence there is also a contradiction inside the co-operative between the socialist factors and private ownership, a contradiction which must gradually be resolved. In the future, when our present-day semi-public, semi-private ownership advances to collective ownership this contradiction will be resolved. We are taking steady steps, moving first from mutual-aid teams which contain rudiments of socialism to semi-socialist and later to fully socialist co-operatives (which we still call agricultural producers' co-operatives, not collective farms). Generally speaking, the mutual-aid teams remain the foundation of the agriculture producers' co-operatives.

At one time, no mention was made of mutual aid and co-operation in several of our documents, and to all of them I added words to the effect that mutual aid and co-operation were to be developed or the necessary and feasible political and economic work was to be done. Some people wanted to make much of the small peasant economy, and this was why they concentrated on opposing excessive meddling with the peasants. True, there was some excessive meddling at that time. The "five excesses" from higher up were rammed through various channels down to the lower levels, causing a lot of trouble. The "five excesses" should never be tolerated, whether in the villages, factories or army units. The Central Committee has issued several documents to combat excessive meddling, and this has done some good. What is meant by excessive meddling? Drawing up subjective plans at variance with reality and regardless of what is imperative and possible, or carrying out plans, even realistic ones, by means of commandism. Subjectivism and commandism are always bad and will be so even ten thousand years hence. They are bad for the scattered small peasant economy and no less so for the co-operatives. But to do what is both imperative and possible and moreover do it by means other than commandism -- this cannot be called excessive meddling. The above ought to be the yardstick when reviewing our work. Whatever is subjectivist and unrealistic is wrong. Whatever is done through commandism is likewise wrong. To mark time and make no advance is a deviation to the Right; to go beyond what is practicable is a deviation to the "Left". Both are manifestations of subjectivism. Rash advance is wrong, failure to set up co-operatives when they can be set up is also wrong, and forcible dissolution of co-operatives even worse.

"Life is hard in the villages, all is not well and the measures adopted do not suit the small peasant economy." Such complaints exist inside as well as outside the Party. True, life is a bit hard in the villages, but we ought to make a proper analysis. In fact, life is not all that hard, the grain-deficient households account for only 10 per cent or so, and half of them are those of widows, orphans and other people without a provider, who are in great difficulty for lack of labour-power, but the mutual-aid teams and the co-operatives can give them some help. After all, things are much better for them than in Kuomintang days, and land has been distributed to them. Life is indeed hard for people in areas stricken by natural calamities, but they have

received relief grain. The life of the peasants in general is good and is getting better; that is why 80 to 90 per cent of them feel happy and support the government. About 7 per cent of the rural population, the landlords and rich peasants, are dissatisfied with the government. "Life is hard in the villages, and things are terrible there" -- certainly this has not been my view. Some people speak of the scattered nature as well as the hardships of the villages, that is, the scattered nature of the small peasant economy; but in doing so, they fail to mention forming co-operatives. To carry out the socialist transformation of the individual economy, to promote mutual aid and co-operation and to set up co-operatives -- this is not merely the direction to take but the immediate task before us.

But for the Conference on Financial and Economic Work held in July and August, the question of the general line would have remained unsettled for many comrades. The aim of that conference was mainly to settle this question. We criticized Po I-po precisely for his mistake in departing from the general line. In short, the general line means the gradual accomplishment of the socialist industrialization of our country and of the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts and capitalist industry and commerce. The planned purchase and supply of grain recently put into effect has given a big impetus to socialism. The present Conference on Mutual Aid and Co-operation, coming shortly after as it does, will give it another big impetus. In view of the fact that the campaign for mutual aid and co-operation has been held back for the better part of this year, the present conference should be more active in this respect. But our policies must be made clear. It is very important to make our policies known.

"Active leadership and steady development" -- this is well put. The campaign has been held back for the better part of this year and has marked time without making any advance. This is not quite right. However, there is a positive side to it. It is like fighting battles. After each battle there should be time for rest and consolidation before starting the next. The trouble is that in some places too many of our positions have been given up, while in others it has not been a matter of giving up too many positions but failure to develop where development was possible and failure to allow any development or give it approval so that it became illegal. In this world it often happens that many new-born things which are correct are considered illegal. We ourselves were "illegal" in the past while the Kuomintang was "legal". But these illegal co-operatives have held on to this day and are doing quite well. Can you still withhold recognition? You have to admit that they are legal, after all they have won out.

The conference has discussed active leadership and steady development, but you should anticipate some troubles. You may talk about being active and steady, and yet in practice you may fail to give active leadership or achieve steady development. Being active and steady entails setting control figures, assigning tasks and then checking whether they are fulfilled. Failure to fulfil what can be fulfilled is impermissible, it shows a lack of enthusiasm for socialism. According to the findings of our check-up, 5 to 10 per cent of the co-operatives have shown a drop in output and are not doing so well. This is due to lack of active

leadership. Of course, it is inevitable that a few co-operatives should show a fall in production because of poor management. However, if 20 per cent of the co-operatives, or even more, were to show a fall in production, that would be quite a problem.

The general line means a gradual change in the relations of production. According to Stalin, the system of ownership is the basis of the relations of production.^[3] Comrades must have a clear understanding of this point. At present, both private ownership and socialist public ownership are legal, but private ownership will gradually become illegal. To "sustain private ownership" of three *mou* of land and practice the "four big freedoms" is to facilitate the growth of a small number of rich peasants and follow the capitalist road.

County and district cadres must gradually switch their work to mutual aid and co-operation in agricultural production, to the promotion of socialism. If they are not working for socialism, what are they working for? For the individual economy? Secretaries of county and district Party committees must look upon working for socialism as a matter of major importance. Party secretaries must take charge, and I am the secretary of the Central Committee. Secretaries of the Central Committee bureaus, secretaries of the provincial, prefectural, county and district Party committees and secretaries at all levels must take charge and attend to the job in person. At present, the Central Committee is devoting 70 to 80 per cent of its efforts to the socialist transformation of agriculture. Similarly, to transform capitalist industry and commerce is also to work for socialism. Comrades of the rural work departments at all levels and all those present at this conference must become experts in the socialist transformation of agriculture and well versed in theory, line, policy and method.

To provide the cities with vegetables depends chiefly on planned supply. There are dense populations in the large and rising cities, and how can they possibly manage without vegetables? This problem must be solved. If it is not possible to ensure the production and supply of vegetables by setting up mutual-aid teams in the suburban areas, you can bypass that stage and set up semi-socialist or even fully socialist co-operatives. This question needs going into.

A plan for the development of the producers' co-operatives has been put forward. Over 32,000 co-operatives are to be set up this winter and next spring and right up to the time of the autumn harvest. By 1957, the number will have reached 700,000. But a sudden increase at one time or another should be expected, and the number of co-operatives may rise to a million, or perhaps more. In short, set up co-operatives in large numbers and manage them well, give active leadership and achieve steady development.

This conference has been fruitful. If we had not held it and waited till next January, it would have been too late, and this winter would have slipped by. We shall hold another conference on March 26 next year and check up on how our plan has been carried out. It is a good idea

for this conference to fix the date of the next meeting and to decide that it will review the implementation of the resolution adopted here. Next autumn we shall hold still another conference to discuss and decide on the tasks for the following winter.

NOTES

1. Han Hsin was a leading general under Liu Pang, first emperor of the Han Dynasty. According to the *Historical Records*, Liu Pang once asked Han Hsin how many troops he could command. "The more the better," he answered.

2. See p. 224 below.

3. J. V. Stalin, "Dialectical and Historical Materialism".

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The two talks presented here represent part of the continuing struggle over agricultural policy and collectivization in the early 1950s. In contrast to the unity the leaders shared on the issue of dealing with the rich peasants during land reform (see text Mar. 12, 1950), Mao here was clearly struggling against others in the Party over the pace of collectivization and the line to be taken toward the rich peasants. His dismissal of the argument that "life is hard in the countryside" as the ruminations of the landlords and the rich peasants for whom life actually was harder than prior to Liberation would be repeated in his more famous speech "*On the Cooperativization of Agriculture*" (text July 31, 1955) some eighteen months later, reflecting the continuity of this struggle throughout this period.

The key issue in these documents is Mao's stress on class struggle and the class nature of production itself. Mao insisted that the struggle to transform social relations, to collectivize ownership in the rural areas, was the key link in determining all agricultural policies and their eventual results-- a position others in the Party rejected.

At the time of this document, however, Mao's forces carried the day. After the conference he called for an increase in the number of cooperatives in the December 16, 1953, "The Central Committee's Decision on the Development of Agricultural Producers' Cooperatives." ¹ As would also be the case with Mao's push for more rapid collectivization in 1955, the call for increasing the number of cooperatives led to a greater increase than was called for. By May 1954 some 76,000 new cooperatives had been established, bringing the total number to 91,000, or about four times as many as had been called for in the December directive. By February 1955, the goal of establishing some 600,000 cooperatives throughout the country had already been accomplished. Here Mao speaks also of the establishment of the cooperatives as a manifestation of the implementation of the general line of the CPC during the period of transition. This speech therefore should be studied in conjunction with text June 15, 1953.

Notes

1 See text Oct. 15, 1953, note 2.

2 Here Mao plays on the slogan wen bu er qianjin, which means "advance with firm steps." (See text Sept. 7, 1953, note 4.) The phrase wen bu has a double meaning: it can mean "to take steady steps" as in the slogan, or it can mean "to come to a halt and take a firm stance."

3 Here Mao refers to the drastic reduction of the number of cooperatives in North China, from 9,000 to 6,000, in July 1953. For "adventurist advance," see text Aug. 12, 1953(1), note 22. The term "gust of wind" (yi gu feng) is commonly used to describe an upsurge of certain attitudes or practices. (See, for instance, Mao's usage of the term "communist wind," text Feb. 27, 1959[[]],

note 41.)

4. This sentence, *qunju zhongri, yan bu ji yi, hao xing xiao hui, nan yi zai*, is found in *Lun yu* (Analects of Confucius), section 16, letter "Wei Ling gong" (see J. Legge (1933), pp. 226-227). The original meaning of the sentence is that nothing can be made of people who congregate all day long and gossip but never touch on the subject of moral righteousness (*yi*) and who delight in the exercise of petty shrewdness (*xiao hut*). Mao here modifies the meaning of the sentence by transferring the meaning of the character *yi* from "moral righteousness" to "socialism" (*shehui zhuyi*), and by substituting the original character *hui*, meaning "shrewdness," with a homophone meaning "favor." This comment is intended as a criticism of the Right opportunists who opposed the (socialist) cooperativization of agriculture and who instead advocated piecemeal reforms and construction on the basis of the small-scale peasant economy (by small favors). Mao is also clearly alluding to the criticisms leveled at the CPC by certain people such as Liang Shuming, who accuse the CPC of not pursuing "benevolent policies." Mao's rejoinder is that such programs as Liang suggests are nothing but "small favors." See text Sept. 16-18, 1953, and text Sept. 12, 1953, note 11.

5. See text Oct. 15, 1953, note 9.

6. This metaphor, *gang ju mu zhang*, for the relationship between principles and details, is taken from *Shi pu xu* (A Preface to the Compendium of Poetry) written by Zheng Xuan in the late second century A.D. Other *loci classicus* of this saying are Cai Cen's *Za zhuan*, and Wang Tong's *Zhong Shuo*, the later written circa 600 A.D. The allusion is to a fishnet, the individual meshes of which are hardly discernible when the net is lying in a heap. When the net is raised by its headrope (*gang*), the individual meshes become clearly perceived. This metaphor has been commonly used in Chinese political slogans, and the character (*gang*) is often translated as "key link." It may also be noted that this metaphor was prominent after the Cultural Revolution in the debate over whether the principle and defining issue (*gang*) was class struggle (as Mao and his supporters contended) or the development of the forces of production (as Deng Xiaoping and others argued). Since 1976 and the arrest of the "Gang of Four" the metaphor has slipped from prominence.

7. See text Aug. 12, 1953, note 9.

8. See text Oct. 15, 1953, note 2.

9. See text Oct. 15, 1953, note 1.

10. See text Oct. 15, 1953, last paragraph.

11. See text March 19, 1953.

12. See text June 6, 1950(1), note 11.

13. See text Oct. 15, 1953, note 10.

14. See texts July 9, 1953, and Aug. 12, 1953. Also, K. Lieberthal (1976), pp. 59-60.

15. See text Aug. 12, 1953, note 5.

16. Mao is referring to a process in effect at that time and that would be formularized in the decree of the Government Administration Council in Nov. 1953, "On the Planned Purchasing and Supplying of Grain." This policy of *tong gou tong xiao* was later based on the APC's as units, and resulted in the decree, promulgated by the State Council in Oct. 1956, on nationwide planned purchasing and marketing of grain and other foodstuffs.

17. See text Oct. 15, 1953, note 6.

18. "See Stalin, "Dialectical and Historical Materialism." (*Xuanji*, V, p. 124.)