

1949

Speeches/Documents

Title: Speech at the Trade Union Conference in Peking (excerpt)

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Source: New China News Agency, Liu Shaoqi, "The Opening Address on the Union Meeting of Asia and Australia" (November 16, 1949), Liu Shaoqi's Writings since the PRC's Founding, vol. 1, pp. 160–161.

Description:

. . . The war of national liberation in Viet Nam has liberated 90 percent of her territory. . . . The national liberation movement and the people's democratic movement in the colonies and semi-colonies will never stop short of complete victory. Their struggles are entirely righteous. They should, and will, win victory. The great victory of the Chinese people has set them the best example. . . . The path taken by the Chinese people in defeating imperialism and its lackeys and in founding the People's Republic of China is the path that should be taken by the peoples of the various colonial and semi colonial countries in their fight for national independence and peoples democracy. The path which led the Chinese people to victory is expressed in the following formula:

The working class must unite with all other classes, political parties, and . . . organizations and individuals who are willing to oppose the oppression of imperialism and its lackeys, form a broad and Nationwide united front and wage a resolute fight against imperialism and its lackeys.

This Nation-wide united front must be led by and built around the working class, which opposes imperialism most resolutely, most courageously, and most unselfishly, and its party, the Communist Party, with the latter as its center, it must not be led by the wavering and compromising national bourgeoisie and their parties.

In order to enable the working class and its party, the Communist Party, to become the center for uniting all the forces throughout the country against imperialism and competently to lead the national united front to victory, it is necessary to build up through long struggles a Communist Party which is armed with the theory of Marxism-Leninism, which understands strategy and tactics, practices self-criticism and strict discipline, and is closely linked with the masses.

It is necessary to set up wherever and whenever possible a national army which is led by the Communist Party, and is powerful and skillful in fighting the enemies. It is necessary to set up the bases on which the liberation army relies for its activities, and to make the mass struggles in the enemy-controlled areas and the armed struggles to coordinate with each other. Armed struggle is the main form of struggle for the national liberation of many colonies and semicolonies.

Imperialist Forces

This is the basic way followed and practiced in China by the Chinese people in winning their victory. This way is the way of Mao Tse-tung, which may also be the basic way for winning emancipation by the peoples of other colonial and semi-colonial countries where similar conditions prevail.

The question is very clear. The imperialists in the colonies and semi-colonies are bandits armed to the teeth; they still have their strong forces to dominate the people in all the areas which are under their rule. We must not underestimate these forces. In these areas, it is impossible for the revolutionary working class and oppressed people to overthrow the oppression of imperialism and its lackeys and establish a people's democratic state by taking any other easier way than that specified above.

If anybody attempts to do so, it would be a mistake. . . . In this connection, the first thing for the working class to do is to unite with the peasantry and establish a strong alliance between workers and peasants. . . .

In a colony or a semi-colony, if the people have no arms to defend themselves, they have nothing. The existence and development of proletarian organizations and the existence and development of a national united front is intimately linked to the existence and development of such an armed struggle. This is the sole path for many colonial and semi colonial peoples in their struggle for independence and liberation.

The experience of the victorious national liberation struggle of the Chinese people teaches that the working class must unite with all classes, parties and group and organisations willing to fight the imperialists and their hirelings and to form a broad, nation-wide front, headed by the Working class and its vanguard, the Communist Party.

"if the people of the colonies and semi-colonies have no armed forces to defend themselves, they will lose everything," that the existence and development of the working class' organization and the united front depends **on** armed struggle , and that armed struggle is the "inevitable" course for colonial peoples. He emphasized that "the fighters of the national- liberation **wars** of Vietnam, Burma, Indonesia, Malaya, and the Philippines have acted entirely correctly"*--as if someone had questioned this. He declared that it is "impossible" to overthrow imperialism and establish a people's democracy "by taking any other easier way" than that of armed struggle, and warned that if anybody attempts to do **so**, it would be a mistake. **

* Earlier , in his speech, he had also hailed India as one of the countries where armed struggles were taking place; the _ Manifesto issued **by** the Peiping **WFTU** Conference did not do so, suggesting-as does subsequent evidence--that the question of the suitability of India for armed struggle may have been one of the points at issue .

****Liu** here added unusually vigorous and lengthy warnings about the untrustworthiness and vacillations even of those sections of the bourgeoisie which participated in the anti - imperialist alliance (the national bourgeoisie), and their incapacity to lead the national liberation movement or accomplish the democratic revolution. This danger of the Communists losing control of t h e alliance to the national bourgeoisie would naturally come to the fore with the abandonment of Communist-led armed struggle against a clearly-defined imperialist and reactionary enemy; in such cases, there would be an increased possibility that some Communists would classify native governments such as Nehru's as national bourgeois, and hence worthy of being supported against a common imperialist enemy rather than fought . Something like this , in fact , eventually happened in India in response to changes in Soviet policy which Peiping at first accepted' but finally again came to denounce.

In other colonial and semi-colonial countries, like India, Burma, Siam, the Philippines, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Southern Korea and others, it is likewise necessary for the Communists in order to defend the interests of their own nation to adopt firm policies against the national betrayal of that section of the bourgeois reactionaries (mainly the big bourgeois reactionaries) which has already capitulated to imperialism. ... On the other hand, Communists should establish anti-imperialist cooperation with the national bourgeoisie who still oppose imperialism and do not oppose the rising of the masses of people for anti-imperialist struggles.62

Remark

Liu Shao Chi's remarks in this connection are rather significant. When speaking of armed struggles he also mentioned these countries only, excluding India specifically and said that-"the fighters of national liberation wars in Viet Nam, Burma, Indonesia, Malaya and Philippines are acting entirely correctly." But he kept absolutely mum about "armed liberation struggles" and "uprisings" organised by the CPI He also emphasised the imperative necessity of forming People's Liberation Armies "whenever and wherever possible." It is evident that armed struggle must not have, in his view, seemed possible in India at the present stage of the movement. The implications are clear : any attempt that might have been made in India to give the movement the character of armed uprising and seizure-of-power struggles must have been entirely incorrect. *Tridib Chaudhuri, The Swing Back A critical survey of the devious zig-zags of CPI political line (1947-1950)*