



MAO TSE-TUNG

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IMPORTANT PROBLEMS
OF THE PARTY'S
PRESENT POLICY

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暨南大学图书馆藏书



FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS
PEKING 1961

毛 澤 東
关于目前党的政策中的
几个重要問題

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外文出版社出版（北京）
1961年5月第一版
编号：（英）1050—186
（精）00057
（平）00020

First Edition May 1961

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The present English translation of *On Some Important Problems of the Party's Present Policy* has been made from the Chinese text given in the first edition of the *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Volume IV, published by the People's Publishing House, Peking, in September 1960.

Printed in the People's Republic of China

This document was an inner-Party directive drafted by Comrade Mao Tse-tung on January 18, 1948 for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the basis of the discussions at a meeting held by the Central Committee in December 1947.

Committee for the Publication of
the Selected Works of Mao Tse-
tung, Central Committee of the
Communist Party of China

I. THE PROBLEM OF COMBATING ERRONEOUS TENDENCIES WITHIN THE PARTY

Oppose overestimation of the enemy's strength. For example: fear of U.S. imperialism; fear of carrying the battle into the Kuomintang areas; fear of wiping out the comprador-feudal system, of distributing the land of the landlords and of confiscating bureaucrat-capital; fear of a long-drawn-out war; and so on. All these are incorrect. Imperialism throughout the world and the rule of the reactionary Chiang Kai-shek clique in China are already rotten and have no future. We have reason to despise them and we are confident and certain that we shall defeat all the domestic and foreign enemies of the Chinese people. But with regard to each part, each specific struggle (military, political, economic or ideological), we must never take the enemy lightly; on the contrary, we should take the enemy seriously and concentrate all our strength for battle in order to win victory. While we correctly point out that, strategically, with regard to the whole, we should take the enemy lightly, we must never take the enemy lightly in any part, in any specific struggle. If, with regard to the whole, we overestimate the strength of our enemy and hence do not dare to overthrow him and do not dare to win victory, we shall be committing a Right opportunist error. If, with regard to each part, each specific problem, we are not prudent, do not carefully study and perfect the art of struggle, do not concentrate all our strength for battle and do not pay

attention to winning over all the allies that should be won over (middle peasants, small independent craftsmen and traders, the middle bourgeoisie, students, teachers, professors and ordinary intellectuals, ordinary government employees, professionals and enlightened gentry), we shall be committing a "Left" opportunist error.

In combating "Left" and Right deviations within the Party, we must decide on our policy according to specific circumstances. For example, the army must guard against "Left" deviations in times of victory and guard against Right deviations in times of defeat or when we are unable to win many battles. In land reform, Right deviations must be combated where the masses have not yet been aroused in earnest and the struggle has not yet unfolded, and "Left" deviations must be guarded against where the masses have been aroused in earnest and the struggle has already unfolded.

II. SOME CONCRETE PROBLEMS OF POLICY IN THE LAND REFORM AND MASS MOVEMENTS

1. The interests of the poor peasants and farm labourers and the forward role of the poor peasant leagues must be our first concern. Our Party must launch the land reform through the poor peasants and farm labourers and must enable them to play the forward role in the peasant associations and in the government organs of the rural districts. This forward role consists in forging unity with the middle peasants for common action and not in casting aside the middle peasants and monopolizing the work. The position of the middle peasants is especially important in the old Liberated Areas where the

middle peasants are the majority and the poor peasants and farm labourers a minority. The slogan, "the poor peasants and farm labourers conquer the country and should rule the country", is wrong. In the villages, it is the farm labourers, poor peasants, middle peasants and other working people, united together under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, who conquer the country and should rule the country, and it is not the poor peasants and farm labourers alone who conquer the country and should rule the country. In the country as a whole, it is the workers, peasants (including the new rich peasants), small independent craftsmen and traders, middle and small capitalists oppressed and injured by the reactionary forces, the students, teachers, professors and ordinary intellectuals, professionals, enlightened gentry, ordinary government employees, oppressed minority nationalities and overseas Chinese, all united together under the leadership of the working class (through the Communist Party), who conquer the country and should rule the country, and it is not merely some of the people who conquer the country and should rule the country.

2. We must avoid adopting any adventurist policies towards the middle peasants. In the cases of middle peasants and persons of other strata whose class status has been wrongly determined, correction should be made without fail, and any of their belongings that have been distributed should be returned, as far as that is possible. The tendency to exclude middle peasants from the ranks of the peasants' representatives and from the peasants' committees and the tendency to counterpose them to the poor peasants and farm labourers in the land reform struggle must be corrected. Peasants with an income from exploitation should be classified as middle peasants if such income is less than 25 per cent of their total

income, and classified as rich peasants if it is more. The land of well-to-do middle peasants must not be distributed without the owner's consent.

3. We must avoid adopting any adventurist policies towards middle and small industrialists and merchants. The policy, adopted in the past in the Liberated Areas, of protecting and encouraging the development of all private industry and commerce beneficial to the national economy was correct and should be continued in the future. The policy of encouraging landlords and rich peasants to switch to industry and commerce, adopted during the period of rent and interest reduction, was also correct; it is wrong to regard such switching as a "disguise" and therefore to oppose it and confiscate and distribute the property so switched. The industrial and commercial holdings of landlords and rich peasants should in general be protected; the only industrial and commercial holdings that may be confiscated are those of bureaucrat-capitalists and of real counter-revolutionary local tyrants. Among the industrial and commercial enterprises which should be confiscated, those beneficial to the national economy must continue to operate after they have been taken over by the state and the people and must not be allowed to break up or close down. The transactions tax on the industry and commerce which are beneficial to the national economy should be levied only to the extent that it does not hamper their development. In each public enterprise, the administration and the trade union must set up a joint management committee to strengthen the work of management in order to reduce costs, increase output and see that both public and individual interests are benefited. Private capitalist enterprises should also try out this method in order to reduce costs, increase output and benefit both labour and capital. The workers'

livelihood must be appropriately improved, but unduly high wages and benefits must be avoided.

4. We must avoid adopting any adventurist policies towards students, teachers, professors, scientific workers, art workers and ordinary intellectuals. The experience of China's student movements and revolutionary struggles has proved that the overwhelming majority of these people can take part in the revolution or remain neutral; the die-hard counter-revolutionaries are a tiny minority. Our Party should, therefore, adopt a careful attitude towards students, teachers, professors, scientific workers, art workers and ordinary intellectuals. We should unite with them, educate them and give them posts according to the merits of each case, and only a tiny number of die-hard counter-revolutionaries among them will have to be appropriately dealt with through the mass line.

5. On the question of the enlightened gentry. Our Party's co-operation with the enlightened gentry in government bodies (consultative councils and governments) in the Liberated Areas during the War of Resistance Against Japan was entirely necessary and also successful. Those enlightened gentry who went through hardships and tribulations together with our Party and actually made some contribution should be given consideration according to the merits of each case, provided that this does not interfere with land reform. Those who are fairly good politically and are competent should remain in the higher government bodies and be given appropriate work. Those who are fairly good politically but are not competent should have their livelihood assured. As for those who are of landlord or rich peasant origin but who have not incurred the people's deep resentment, their feudal landholdings and feudal property should be distributed according to the Land Law, but it should be seen to that they do not become targets of mass

struggles. Those who have sneaked into our government bodies, who have in reality always been evil, who can be of no use to the people and who have incurred the extreme hatred of the broad masses, are to be handed over to the people's courts to be tried and punished like local tyrants.

6. We must distinguish between the new rich peasants and the old rich peasants.¹ The encouragement given to new rich peasants and well-to-do middle peasants during the period of rent and interest reduction proved effective in reassuring the middle peasants and in developing agricultural production in the Liberated Areas. After the equal distribution of land, we must call on the peasants to develop production so that they will be well-fed and well-clothed, and advise them to set up organizations for mutual aid and co-operation in agriculture, such as labour-exchange teams, mutual-aid teams and work-exchange groups.² In the equal distribution of land the new rich peasants in the old Liberated Areas should be treated like well-to-do middle peasants, and their land should not be distributed without the owner's consent.

7. Among those landlords and rich peasants in the old Liberated Areas who changed their mode of living during the period of rent and interest reduction, the landlords who have engaged in physical labour for five years or more and the rich peasants whose condition has been reduced to that of middle or poor peasants for three years or more may now have their class status changed in accordance with their present condition, provided their behaviour has been good. Those who still possess a large amount of surplus property (not a small amount) should hand over the surplus in accordance with the peasants' demands.

8. The heart of land reform is the equal distribution of the land of the feudal classes and of their property in grain,

animals and farm implements (rich peasants hand over only their surplus property); we should not overemphasize the struggle to unearth hidden wealth³ and in particular should not spend too much time on this matter lest it should interfere with the main work.

9. In dealing with landlords and rich peasants we should distinguish between them in accordance with the Outline Land Law.

10. Within the framework of the principle of equal distribution of land, we should also distinguish among the big, middle and small landlords, as well as between those landlords and rich peasants who are local tyrants and those who are not.

11. After the people's courts have given the handful of arch-criminals who are really guilty of the most heinous crimes a serious trial and sentenced them and the sentences have been approved by appropriate government organizations (committees organized by local governments at county or sub-regional level), it is entirely necessary for the sake of revolutionary order to shoot them and announce their execution. That is one side of the matter. The other side is that we must insist on killing less and must strictly forbid killing without discrimination. To advocate killing more or killing without discrimination is entirely wrong; this would only cause our Party to forfeit sympathy, become alienated from the masses and fall into isolation. Trial and sentence by the people's courts, a form of struggle provided in the Outline Land Law, must be carried out in earnest; it is a powerful weapon of the peasant masses for striking at the worst elements among the landlords and rich peasants; it also avoids the mistake of beating and killing without discrimination. At the proper time (after the land struggle has reached its height),

we should teach the masses to understand their own long-term interests — to regard those landlords and rich peasants who do not persist in wrecking the war effort or the land reform and who number tens of millions in the country as a whole (as many as 36 million out of a rural population of about 360 million) as a labour force for the country and to save and remould them. Our task is to abolish the feudal system, to wipe out the landlords as a class, not as individuals. In accordance with the Land Law we must give them means of production and means of livelihood, but not more than to the peasants.

12. We must criticize and struggle with certain cadres and Party members who have committed serious mistakes and certain bad elements among the masses of workers and peasants. In such criticism and struggle we should persuade the masses to adopt correct methods and forms and to refrain from rough actions. This is one side of the matter. The other side is that these cadres, Party members and bad elements should be made to pledge that they will not retaliate against the masses. It should be announced that the masses not only have the right to criticize them freely but also have the right to dismiss them from their posts when necessary or to propose their dismissal, or to propose their expulsion from the Party and even to hand the worst elements over to the people's courts for trial and punishment.

III. ON THE PROBLEM OF STATE POWER

1. The new-democratic state power is the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal state power of the masses of the people led by the working class. Here, the masses of the people include

the working class, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie who are oppressed and injured by imperialism and by the reactionary Kuomintang regime and the classes it represents, namely, the bureaucrat-capitalist class (the big bourgeoisie) and the landlord class. The main body of the masses consists of the workers, peasants (soldiers being chiefly peasants in uniform) and other working people. The masses of the people form their own state (the People's Republic of China) and establish a government (the Central Government of the People's Republic of China) to represent this state. The working class through its vanguard, the Communist Party of China, exercises the leadership in this state belonging to the masses of the people and in its government. The enemies this People's Republic and its government oppose are foreign imperialism and the Kuomintang reactionaries at home and the classes they represent — the bureaucrat-capitalist class and landlord class.

2. The organs of state power of the People's Republic of China are the people's congresses at different levels and the governments at different levels which these congresses elect.

3. In the rural areas in the present period, we can and should, in accordance with the demands of the peasants, convene village peasant meetings to elect the village governments, and convene district peasant congresses to elect the district governments. Since the governments at or above county or municipal level represent not only the peasants in the countryside but also the people of all strata and occupations in the towns, county seats, provincial capitals and big industrial and commercial cities, we should convene people's congresses at county, municipal, provincial or border region levels to elect the governments at corresponding levels. In the future after the revolution triumphs throughout the whole country,

the central government and the local governments at all levels should be elected by the people's congresses at corresponding levels.

IV. THE PROBLEM OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THOSE WHO LEAD AND THOSE WHO ARE LED IN THE REVOLUTIONARY UNITED FRONT

The leading class and the leading party must fulfil two conditions in order to exercise their leadership of the classes, strata, political parties and people's organizations which are being led:

- (a) Lead those who are led (allies) to wage resolute struggles against the common enemy and achieve victories;
- (b) Bring material benefits to those who are led or at least not damage their interests and at the same time give them political education.

Without both these conditions, or with only one, leadership cannot be realized. As an example, the Communist Party, in order to lead the middle peasants, must lead them to struggle resolutely together with us against the feudal classes and achieve victories (destroying the landlords' armed force and dividing up their land). If there is no resolute struggle or if there is struggle but no victory, the middle peasants will vacillate. Furthermore, we must allot part of the land and other property of the landlords to those middle peasants who are relatively poor and must not damage the interests of the well-to-do middle peasants. In the peasant associations and the village and district governments we must draw the activists

among the middle peasants into the work and must provide suitable quotas for them (for instance, one-third of the committee members). Do not make mistakes in determining the class status of middle peasants and be fair to them in regard to the land tax and civilian war service. At the same time, give the middle peasants political education. If we do not do all these things, we will lose the support of the middle peasants. In the cities, the same holds true for the working class and the Communist Party in exercising their leadership of the middle bourgeoisie, democratic parties and people's organizations oppressed and injured by the reactionary forces.

NOTES

¹ The new rich peasants were those who had developed from middle peasants or poor peasants in the revolutionary base areas. The old rich peasants were those who had already been rich peasants before the revolutionary base areas were established. The old rich peasants generally and to a great degree had the character of feudal and semi-feudal exploiters.

² Labour-exchange teams and work-exchange groups were organizations for mutual aid and co-operation in agriculture. "Labour-exchange" or "work-exchange" was a means by which the peasants adjusted labour-power among themselves and took such forms as the exchange of man-workdays for man-workdays, ox-workdays for ox-workdays and man-workdays for ox-workdays. Peasants who joined labour-exchange teams contributed their labour-power or animal-power to cultivate the land of each member-family in rotation or collectively. In settling accounts the workday was taken as the unit of exchange; those who contributed more man-workdays or animal-workdays were paid for the difference by those who contributed less.

³ This refers to the valuables buried by the landlords.



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