PEOPLE'S COMMUNES IN CHINA

RESOLUTION OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PEOPLE'S COMMUNES IN THE RURAL AREAS

(August 29, 1958)

1. The people's communes are the logical result of the march of events. Large, comprehensive people's communes have made their appearance, and in several places they are already widespread. They have developed very rapidly in some areas. It is highly probable that there will soon be an upsurge in setting up people's communes throughout the country and the development is irresistible. The basis for the development of the people's communes is mainly the all-round, continuous leap forward in China's agricultural production and the everrising political consciousness of the 500 million peasants. An unprecedented advance has been made in agricultural capital construction since the advocates of the capitalist road were fundamentally defeated economically, politically and ideologically. This has created a new basis for practically eliminating flood and drought, and for ensuring the comparatively stable advance of agricultural production. Agriculture has leaped forward since Right conservatism has been overcome and the old technical norms in agriculture have been broken down. The output of agricultural products has doubled or increased several-fold, in some cases more than ten times or scores of times. This has further stimulated emancipation of thought among the people. Large-scale agricultural capital construction and the application of more advanced agricultural technique are making their demands or, labour power. The growth of rural industry also demands the transfer of some manpower from agriculture. The demand for mechanization and electrification has become increasingly urgent in China's rural areas. Capital construction in agriculture and the struggle for bumper harvests involve large-scale co-operation which cuts across the boundaries between co-operatives, townships and counties. The people have taken to organizing themselves along military lines, working with militancy, and leading a collective life, and this has raised the political consciousness of the 500 million peasants still further. Community dining rooms, kindergartens, nurseries, sewing groups, barber shops, public baths. happy homes for the aged, agricultural middle schools, "red and expert" schools, are leading the peasants towards a happier collective life and further fostering ideas of collectivism among the peasant masses. What all these things illustrate is that the agricultural cooperative with scores of families or several hundred families can no longer meet the needs of the changing situation. In the present circumstances, the establishment of people's communes with all-round management of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, side-occupations and fishery, where industry (the worker), agriculture (the peasant), exchange (the trader), culture and education (the student) and military affairs (the militiaman) merge into one, is the fundamental policy to guide the peasants to accelerate socialist construction, complete

the building of socialism ahead of time and carry out the gradual transition to communism.

2. Concerning the organization and size of the communes. Generally speaking, it is at present better to establish one commune to a township with the commune comprising about two thousand peasant households. Where a township embraces a vast area and is sparsely populated, more than one commune may be established, each with less than two thousand households. In some places, several townships may merge and form a single commune comprising about six or seven thousand households, according to topographical conditions and the needs for the development of production. As to the establishment of communes of more than 10,000 or even more than 20,000 households, we need not oppose them, but for the present we should not take the initiative to encourage them.

As the people's communes grow there may be a tendency to form federations with the county as a unit. Plans should be drawn up right now on a county basis to ensure the rational distribution of people's communes.

The size of the communes and the all-round development of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, subsidiary production and fishery as well as of industry (the worker), agriculture (the peasant), exchange (the trader), culture and education (the student) and military affairs (the militiaman), demand an appropriate division of labour within the administrative organs of the communes; a number of departments, each responsible for a particular kind of work, should be set up, following the principle of compactness and efficiency in organization and of cadres taking direct part in production. The township governments and the communes should become one, with

the township committee of the Party becoming the Party committee of the commune and the township people's council becoming the administrative committee of the commune.

3. Concerning the methods and steps to be adopted to merge small co-operatives into bigger ones and transform them into people's communes. The merger of small co-operatives into bigger ones and their transformation into people's communes is now a common mass demand. The poor and the lower-middle peasants firmly support it: most upper-middle peasants also favour it. We must rely on the poor and the lower-middle peasants and fully encourage the masses to air their views and argue it out, unite the majority of the upper-middle peasants who favour it, overcome vacillation among the remainder, and expose and foil rumour-mongering and sabotage by landlord and rich-peasant elements, so that the mass of the peasants merge the smaller co-operatives into bigger ones and transform them into communes through ideological emancipation and on a voluntary basis, without any compulsion. As to the steps to be taken, it is of course better to complete the merger into bigger co-ops and their transformation into communes at once; but where this is not feasible, it can be done in two stages, with no compulsory or rash steps. In all counties, experiments should first be made in some selected areas and the experience gained should then be popularized gradually.

The merger of smaller co-operatives into bigger ones and their transformation into communes must be carried out in close co-ordination with current production to ensure that it not only has no adverse effect on current production, but becomes a tremendous force stimulating an even greater leap forward in production. Therefore, in the early period of the merger, the method of "changing the upper structure while keeping the lower structure unchanged" may be adopted. The original, smaller co-operatives may at first jointly elect an administrative committee for the merged co-ops to unify planning and the arrangement of work, and transform themselves into farming zones or production brigades. The original organization of production and system of administration may, for the time being, remain unchanged and continue as before; and then later, step by step, merge, readjust and settle whatever needs merging or readjusting and whatever specific questions demand solution during the merger, so as to make sure there is no adverse effect on production.

The size of the communes, the speed of carrying out the merger of small co-operatives into bigger ones and their transformation into communes, and the methods and steps to be taken in this connection will be decided in accordance with the local conditions by the various provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central authorities. But no matter when the merger takes place, whether before or after autumn, in the coming winter or next spring, the small co-operatives which are prepared to merge should be brought together from now on to discuss and jointly work out unified plans for post-autumn capital construction in agriculture and to make unified arrangements of all kinds for preparatory work for an even bigger harvest next year.

4. Concerning some questions of the economic policy involved in the merger of co-operatives. In the course of the merger, education should be strengthened to prevent the growth of departmentalism among a few co-

operatives, which might otherwise share out too much or all of their income and leave little or no common funds before the merger. On the other hand, it must be understood that with various agricultural co-operatives established on different foundations, the amount of their public property, their indebtedness inside and outside the co-operatives and so on will not be completely equal when they merge into bigger co-operatives. In the course of the merger, the cadres and the masses should be educated in the spirit of communism so as to recognize these differences and not resort to minute squaring of accounts, insisting on equal shares and bothering with trifles.

When a people's commune is established, it is not necessary to deal with the questions of reserved private plots of land, scattered fruit trees, share funds and so on in a great hurry; nor is it necessary to adopt clear-cut stipulations on these questions. Generally speaking, reserved private plots of land may perhaps be turned over to collective management in the course of the merger of co-operatives; scattered fruit trees, for the time being, may remain privately owned and be dealt with some time later. Share funds etc. can be handled after a year or two, since the funds will automatically become publicly owned with the development of production, the increase of income and the advance in the people's consciousness.

5. Concerning the name, ownership and system of distribution of the communes.

All the big merged co-operatives will be called people's communes. There is no need to change them into state-owned farms, for it is not proper for farms to embrace industry, agriculture, exchange, culture and education and military affairs at the same time.

After the establishment of people's communes, there is no need immediately to transform collective ownership into ownership by the people as a whole. It is better at present to maintain collective ownership to avoid unnecessary complications arising in the course of the transformation of ownership. In fact, collective ownership in people's communes already contains some elements of ownership by the people as a whole. These elements will grow constantly in the course of the continuous development of people's communes and will gradually replace collective ownership. The transition from collective ownership to ownership by the people as a whole is a process, the completion of which may take less time - three or four years - in some places, and longer - five or six years or even longer - elsewhere. Even with the completion of this transition, people's communes, like state-owned industry, are still socialist in character, where the principle of "from each according to his ability and to each according to his work" prevails. After a number of years, as the social product increases greatly, the communist consciousness and morality of the entire people are raised to a much higher degree, and universal education is instituted and developed, the differences between workers and peasants, town and country and mental and manual labour legacies of the old society that have inevitably been carried over into the socialist period-and the remnants of unequal bourgeois rights which are the reflection of these differences, will gradually vanish, and the function of the state will be limited to protecting the country from external aggression but it will play no role internally. At that time Chinese society will enter the era of communism where the principle of "from each according to his ability and to each according to his needs" will be practised.

After the establishment of people's communes it is not necessary to hurry the change from the original system of distribution, in order to avoid any unfavourable effect on production. The system of distribution should be determined according to specific conditions. Where conditions permit, the shift to a wage system may be made. But where conditions are not yet ripe, the original system of payment according to workdays may be temporarily retained (such as the system of fixed targets for output, workdays and costs, with a part of the extra output as reward; or the system of calculating workdays on the basis of output). This can be changed when conditions permit.

Although ownership in the people's communes is still collective ownership and the system of distribution, either the wage system or payment according to workdays, is "to each according to his work" and not "to each according to his needs," the people's communes are the best form of organization for the attainment of socialism and gradual transition to communism. They will develop into the basic social units in communist society.

6. At the present stage our task is to build socialism. The primary purpose of establishing people's communes is to accelerate the speed of socialist construction and the purpose of building socialism is to prepare actively for the transition to communism. It seems that the attainment of communism in China is no longer a remote future event. We should actively use the form of the people's communes to explore the practical road of transition to communism.

GREET THE UPSURGE IN FORMING PEOPLE'S COMMUNES

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Following the great victories in agricultural production this summer and autumn, peasants over wide areas are becoming further organized: small co-operatives are being amalgamated into large ones, the agricultural producers' co-operatives are being transformed into people's communes where the township1 and the commune become one entity and industry (the worker), agriculture (the peasant), exchange (the trader), culture and education (the student) and military affairs (the militiaman) merge into one. The establishment of people's communes is shaping up as a new, irresistible tide of mass movement on a nation-wide scale. In not a few places peasants of entire counties have organized themselves in people's communes in a very short period of time. In places where communes have not yet been set up, the broad mass of peasant activists are making preparations. They will strive to found communes through mass airing of views and debates around the time of the autumn harvest. The existing people's communes have shown even greater superiority over the farm co-operatives, in spurring the initiative of the masses in

¹ The basic administrative unit in the countryside,

production, raising the rate of utilization of labour power and labour productivity, enlarging productive capital construction, accelerating the cultural and technical revolutions and in promoting public welfare.

The fact that the broad masses enthusiastically welcome the establishment of people's communes shows that this is the logical trend of development of the present situation. The main foundations of the development of people's communes are the all-round and continuous leap forward of China's agricultural production and the constantly growing political consciousness of the 500 million The Chinese peasants, having defeated capitalism economically, politically and ideologically and having overcome Right conservatism in agricultural production, have carried out agricultural capital construction on an unprecedented scale, adopted advanced technical measures in farming and thereby are doubling farm yields or increasing them by several, a dozen or scores of times. At the same time, small and medium industrial enterprises are being rapidly developed in the countryside (including county seats and towns) so as to develop agricultural production further, to develop industry over wide areas of the countryside, to promote the integration of industry and agriculture and to raise the standard of living of the rural population.

These changes in the countryside enable the peasants to see that the original organizational form of the agricultural producers' co-operative, which is relatively small in scale and has relatively few fields of operation, can no longer meet the requirements of the development of the productive forces. In fact, peasants in many places have already had to break down the demarcation lines between small co-operatives, between small townships and some-

times even between counties, in the course of constructing irrigation works, levelling and improving land, afforesting, struggling against natural calamities, mechanizing agriculture, building hydro-electric power plants and improving communications and living conditions in the countryside on a large scale. Besides, for the farm co-operatives to operate agriculture alone has become entirely backward. The farm co-operative not only has to become a unit for joint management of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, side-occupations and fishery at one and the same time, but it also has to become a unified organizational unit where industry, agriculture, trade, education and culture, and military affairs merge into one. Thus, the merger of the township people's council1 and the farm cooperative facilitates unified leadership and the rapid expansion of the social productive forces, while the separation of the township and the co-operative has become entirely unnecessary. To make full use of labour power, to enable women to play their full part in field work and to ensure that there is no waste of the labour time of men and women, the farm co-operatives must be not only organizers of production but also organizers of the way of life; not only do they have to collectivize labour further, but also to organize the collective way of life. On the basis of this urgent need, public canteens, nurseries, kindergartens, sewing teams, etc. are being formed in large numbers. All this demands that the agricultural producers' co-operatives take an additional step forward — to transform themselves into people's communes.

¹Local government.

This transformation involves not only the enlargement of organization and the scope of management but also important changes in the relations of production. people's communes in many places - for instance, the Weihsing (Sputnik) Commune in Suiping County, Honan Province, that is described in another article in this issue of Honggi - have wiped out certain last vestiges of private ownership of the means of production (owing to the ever-growing need to work collectively and the extension of public canteen service to all the members, it becomes both impossible and unnecessary for them to keep small personal plots of land and breed their own pigs). And they have gone beyond the pattern of collective ownership in certain respects. Moreover, from such developments as the supply system of grain within the commune, people can easily see the budding sprouts of communism.

Of course, when the people's communes are established, it is not immediately necessary to transform collective ownership into ownership by the whole people and it is even less appropriate to strain to advance from socialism, i.e. the primary phase of communism, to its higher phase. The transition from collective ownership to ownership by the whole people is a process which may be fairly quick in one place and slower in another. After a period following the transition to ownership by the whole people, the productive forces of society will be expanded even more greatly; the products of society will become extremely abundant; the communist ideology, consciousness and moral character of the entire people will be raised immensely; and education will be universal and raised to a higher level. At the same time, differences between workers and peasants, between town and country as well as between mental and manual work—the remnants of old society that cannot but be retained during the socialist period—will gradually disappear; the remnants of unequal bourgeois rights which reflect these differences will also gradually disappear. Then the function of the state will only be to deal with aggression from external enemies; it will no longer be useful internally. By that time our country will enter a new era, from the socialist era based on the principle of "from each according to his ability and to each according to his work" to the communist era based on the principle of "from each according to his ability and to each according to his needs."

The present people's commune offers our country a good form of organization to accelerate socialist construction and the transition to communism. It will not only be the primary unit of our society at the present stage but will grow and become the primary unit of the future communist society.

The fact that the broad mass of working people, without any hesitation, accept this form of organization, the people's commune, and change some outdated relations of production, is due not only to the development of the productive forces of our society at a flying speed, but also because the Chinese people have grasped the guiding ideology of the Communist Party's Central Committee and Comrade Mao Tse-tung on uninterrupted revolution. The working people want no pause in the course of the revolution and they see that the more rapidly the revolution advances, the more benefits they will derive. In the course of their advance the working people have put forward these slogans which are full of revolutionary spirit: Get organized along military lines, do things the

way battle duties are carried out and live collective lives. "Get organized along military lines" of course does not mean that they are really organized into military barracks. nor does it mean that they give themselves the titles of generals, colonels and lieutenants. It simply means that the swift expansion of agriculture demands that they should greatly strengthen their organization, act more quickly and with greater discipline and efficiency, so that, like factory workers and armymen, they can be deployed with greater freedom and on a large scale. That is why they have come to the conclusion that they should organize along military lines. The peasant leaders who have put forward these slogans do not know perhaps that Marx and Engels in the Communist Manifesto had long since advanced a programme for the "establishment of industrial armies, especially for agriculture." But they and the broad mass of the peasants who have gone through the long years of the armed struggles of the people's revolution know perfectly well that military lines are nothing to be feared. On the contrary, it is only natural to them that the whole population should be citizen soldiers ready to cope with the imperialist aggressors and their lackeys. Although the organization of agricultural labour along military lines at present is for waging battles against nature and not human enemies, it is nonetheless not difficult to transform one kind of struggle into another.

While no external enemies attack us, the people's communes, in which the workers, peasants, traders, students and militiamen are merged into one, aim to storm the fortresses of nature and to march to the happy future of industrialization, urbanization and communism in the countryside. If and when external enemies dare to attack us, then the entire armed population will be

mobilized to wipe out the enemies resolutely, thoroughly and completely.

Would this breed commandism? In our opinion, for the people's communes to be organized along military lines and to arm the entire population is a completely different matter from commandism. Without the people's communes, without the organization along military lines and without citizen soldiers, commandism can occur all the same. On the contrary, with the people's communes, with organization along military lines and with citizen soldiers, commandism can be avoided and the highest degree of democracy can be realized. Actually, as the productivity of labour is being constantly raised, as the mechanization and electrification of farm work is more and more developed, as there is a constantly increasing amount of social products and the people's cultural level is further raised, labour time will be gradually shortened, the intensity of labour will be gradually reduced and in this way the possibilities of overcoming commandism become greater and greater.

To organize along military lines, to do things the way battle duties are carried out and to live collective lives certainly does not mean that the intensity of labour should be infinitely stretched. As the Central Committee of the Party has pointed out, we should do our work rhythmically and combine hard battle with necessary rest and regrouping. Besides, discipline and centralization in work must be built on the voluntary and democratic basis of the masses.

The very establishment and development of the people's communes must go through the process of thorough mental ferment among the masses. Only through a full airing of views and debates, only when the people in a locality are willing to go in for it entirely out of their own accord, should the agricultural producers' co-operatives be transformed into people's communes. In the present conditions when the upsurge of our country's agricultural production is welling up so, when the revolutionary consciousness of our peasants is so mature and the cadres of our Party have become so closely knit with the masses in the course of leading the rectification campaign and production, we believe that the people's communes, with their inherent advantages, are sure to grow rapidly throughout the country.