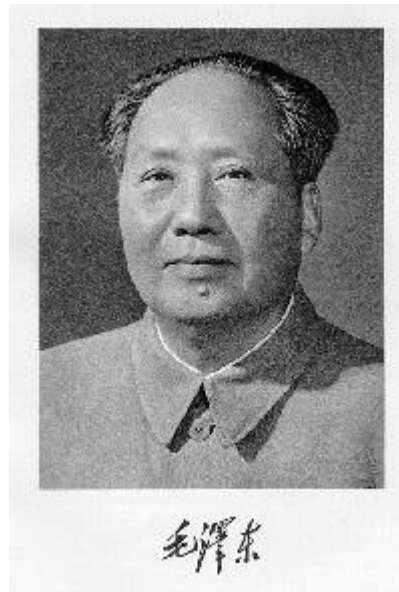


**SELECTED WRITINGS AND SPEECHES OF
CHAIRMAN MAO TSE-TUNG**



MAO TSE-TUNG REFERENCE ARCHIVE

**WHY IS IT THAT RED POLITICAL POWER CAN
EXIST IN CHINA?**

October 5, 1928

I. THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION

The present regime of the new warlords of the Kuomintang remains a regime of the comprador class in the cities and the landlord class in the countryside; it is a regime which has capitulated to imperialism in its foreign relations and which at home has replaced the old warlords with new ones, subjecting the working class and the peasantry to an even more ruthless economic exploitation and political oppression. The bourgeois-democratic revolution which started in Kwangtung Province had gone only halfway when the comprador and landlord classes usurped the leadership and immediately shifted it on to the road of counter-revolution; throughout the country the workers, the peasants, the other sections of the common people, and even the bourgeoisie, [1] have remained under counter-revolutionary rule and obtained not the slightest particle of political or economic emancipation.

Before their capture of Peking and Tientsin, the four cliques of the new Kuomintang warlords, Chiang Kai-shek, the Kwangsi warlords, Feng Yu-hsiang and Yen Hsi-shan, [2] formed a temporary alliance against Chang Tso-lin. [3] As soon as these cities were captured, this alliance broke up, giving way to bitter struggle among the four cliques, and now a war is brewing

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between the Chiang and the Kwangsi cliques. The contradictions and struggles among the cliques of warlords in China reflect the contradictions and struggles among the imperialist powers. Hence, as long as China is divided among the imperialist powers, the various cliques of warlords cannot under any circumstances come to terms, and whatever compromises they may reach will only be temporary. A temporary compromise today engenders a bigger war tomorrow.

China is in urgent need of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, and this revolution can be completed only under the leadership of the proletariat. Because the proletariat failed to exercise firm leadership in the revolution of 1926-27 which started from Kwangtung and spread towards the Yangtze River, leadership was seized by the comprador and landlord classes and the revolution was replaced by counterrevolution. The bourgeois-democratic revolution thus met with a temporary defeat. This defeat was a heavy blow to the Chinese proletariat and peasantry and also a blow to the Chinese bourgeoisie (but not to the comprador and landlord classes). Yet in the last few months, both in the north and in the south, there has been a growth of organized strikes by the workers in the cities and of insurrections by the peasants in the countryside under the leadership of the Communist Party. Hunger and cold are creating great unrest among the soldiers of the warlord armies. Meanwhile, urged on by the clique headed by Wang Ching-wei and Chen Kung-po, the bourgeoisie is promoting a reform movement of considerable proportions in the coastal areas and along the Yangtze River. This is a new development.

According to the directives of the Communist International and the Central Committee of our Party, the content of China's democratic revolution consists in overthrowing the rule of imperialism and its warlord tools in China so as to complete the national revolution, and in carrying out the agrarian revolution so as to eliminate the feudal exploitation of the peasants by the landlord class. Such a revolutionary movement has been growing day by day since the Tsinan Massacre in May 1928

II. REASONS FOR THE EMERGENCE AND SURVIVAL OF RED POLITICAL POWER IN CHINA

The long-term survival inside a country of one or more small areas under Red political power completely encircled by a White regime is a phenomenon that has never occurred anywhere else in the world. There are special reasons for this unusual phenomenon. It can exist and develop only under certain conditions.

First, it cannot occur in any imperialist country or in any colony under direct imperialist rule, but can only occur in China which is economically backward, and which is semi-colonial and under indirect imperialist rule. For this unusual phenomenon can occur only in conjunction with another unusual phenomenon, namely, war within the White regime. It is a feature of semicolonial China that, since the first year of the Republic [1912] the various cliques of old and new warlords have waged incessant wars against one another, supported by imperialism from abroad and by the comprador and landlord classes at home. Such a phenomenon is to be found in none of the imperialist countries nor for that matter in any colony under direct imperialist rule, but only in a country like China which is under indirect imperialist rule. Two things account for its occurrence, namely, a localized agricultural economy (not a unified capitalist economy) and the imperialist policy of marking off spheres of influence in order to divide and exploit. The

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prolonged splits and wars within the White regime provide a condition for the emergence and persistence of one or more small Red areas under the leadership of the Communist Party amidst the encirclement of the White regime. The independent regime carved out on the borders of Hunan and Kiangsi Provinces is one of many such small areas. In difficult or critical times some comrades often have doubts about the survival of Red political power and become pessimistic. The reason is that they have not found the correct explanation for its emergence and survival. If only we realize that splits and wars will never cease within the White regime in China, we shall have no doubts about the emergence, survival and daily growth of Red political power.

Second, the regions where China's Red political power has first emerged and is able to last for a long time have not been those unaffected by the democratic revolution, such as Szechuan, Kweichow, Yunnan and the northern provinces, but regions such as the provinces of Hunan, Kwangtung, Hupoh and Kiangsi, where the masses of workers, peasants and soldiers rose in great numbers in the course of the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1926 and 1927. In many parts of these provinces trade unions and peasant associations were formed on a wide scale, and many economic and political struggles were waged by the working class and the peasantry against the landlord class and the bourgeoisie. This is why the people held political power for three days in the city of Canton and why independent regimes of peasants emerged in Haifeng and Lufeng, in eastern and southern Hunan, in the Hunan-Kiangsi border area and in Huanggan, Hupeh Province. [8] As for the present Red Army, it is a split-off from the National Revolutionary Army which underwent democratic political training and came under the influence of the masses of workers and peasants. The elements that make up the Red Army cannot possibly come from armies like those of Yen Hsi-shan and Chang Tso-lin, which have not received any democratic political training or come under the influence of the workers and peasants.

Third, whether it is possible for the people's political power in small areas to last depends on whether the nation-wide revolutionary situation continues to develop. If it does, then the small Red areas will undoubtedly last for a long time, and will, moreover, inevitably become one of the many forces for winning nation-wide political power. If the nation-wide revolutionary situation does not continue to develop but stagnates for a fairly long time, then it will be impossible for the small Red areas to last long. Actually, the revolutionary situation in China is continuing to develop with the continuous splits and wars within the ranks of the comprador and landlord classes and of the international bourgeoisie. Therefore the small Red areas will undoubtedly last for a long time, and will also continue to expand and gradually approach the goal of seizing political power throughout the country.

Fourth, the existence of a regular Red Army of adequate strength is a necessary condition for the existence of Red political power. If we have local Red Guards [9] only but no regular Red Army, then we cannot cope with the regular White forces, but only with the landlords' levies. Therefore, even when the masses of workers and peasants are active, it is definitely impossible to create an independent regime, let alone an independent regime which is durable and grows daily, unless we have regular forces of adequate strength. It follows that the idea of "establishing independent regimes of the workers and the peasants by armed force" is an important one which must be fully grasped by the Communist Party and by the masses of workers and peasants in areas under the independent regime.

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Fifth another important condition in addition to the above is required for the prolonged existence and development of Red political power, namely, that the Communist Party organization should be strong and its policy correct.

III. THE INDEPENDENT REGIME IN THE HUNAN KIANGSI BORDER AREA AND THE AUGUST DEFEAT

Splits and wars among the warlords weaken the power of the White regime. Thus opportunities are provided for the rise of Red political power in small areas. But fighting among the warlords does not go on every day. Whenever the White regime in one or more provinces enjoys temporary stability, the ruling classes there inevitably combine and do their utmost to destroy Red political power. In areas where all the necessary conditions for its establishment and persistence are not fulfilled, Red political power is in danger of being overthrown by the enemy. This is the reason why many Red regimes emerging at favourable moments before last April in places like Canton, Haifeng and LuFeng, the Hunan-Kiangsi border area, southern Hunan, Liling and Huanggan were crushed one after another by the White regime. From April onward the independent regime in the Hunan-Kiangsi border area was confronted with a temporarily stable ruling power in the south, and Hunan and Kiangsi would usually dispatch eight, nine or more regiments--sometimes as many as eighteen--to "suppress" us. Yet with a force of less than four regiments we fought the enemy for four long months, daily enlarging the territory under our independent regime, deepening the agrarian revolution, extending the organizations of the people's political power, and expanding the Red Army and the Red Guards. This was possible because the policies of the Communist Party organizations (local and army) in the Hunan-Kiangsi border area were correct. The policies of the Border Area Special Committee and the Army Committee of the Party were then as follows:

Struggle resolutely against the enemy, set up political power in the middle section of the Lohsiao mountain range, and oppose flightism.

Deepen the agrarian revolution in areas under the independent regime.

Promote the development of the local Party organization with the help of the army Party organization and promote the development of the local armed forces with the help of the regular army.

Concentrate the Red Army units in order to fight the enemy confronting them when the time is opportune, and oppose the division of forces so as to avoid being destroyed one by one.

Adopt the policy of advancing in a series of waves to expand the area under the independent regime, and oppose the policy of expansion by adventurist advance.

Thanks to these proper tactics, to a terrain favourable to our struggle, and to the inadequate co-ordination between the troops invading from Hunan and those invading from Kiangsi, we were able to win a number of victories in the four months from April to July. Although several times stronger than we, the enemy was unable to prevent the constant expansion of our regime, let alone to destroy it, and our regime tended to exert an ever-growing influence on Hunan and Kiangsi. The sole reason for the August defeat was that, failing to realize that the period was one

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of temporary stability for the ruling classes, some comrades adopted a strategy suited to a period of political splits within the ruling classes and divided our forces for an adventurous advance, thus causing defeat both in the border area and in southern Hunan. Comrade Tu Hsiu-ching, the representative of the Hunan Provincial Committee, failed to grasp the actual situation and disregarded the resolutions of the joint meeting of the Special Committee, the Army Committee and the Yunghsin County Committee of the Party; he just mechanically enforced the order of the Hunan Provincial Committee and echoed the views of the Red Army's 28th Regiment which wanted to evade struggle and return home, and his mistake was exceedingly grave. The situation arising from this defeat was salvaged as a result of the corrective measures taken by the Special Committee and the Army Committee of the Party after September.

IV. THE ROLE OF THE INDEPENDENT REGIME OF THE HUNAN-KIANGSI BORDER AREA IN HUNAN, HUPEH AND KIANGSI

The significance of the armed independent regime of workers and peasants in the Hunan-Kiangsi border area, with Ningkang as its centre, is definitely not confined to the few counties in the border area; this regime will play an immense role in the process of the seizure of political power in Hunan, Hupeh and Kiangsi through the insurrection of the workers and peasants in these three provinces. The following are tasks of great importance for the Party in the border area in connection with the insurrections unfolding in Hunan, Hupeh and Kiangsi: Extend the influence of the agrarian revolution and of the people's political power in the border area to the lower reaches of the rivers in Hunan and Kiangsi and as far as Hupeh; constantly expand the Red Army and enhance its quality through struggle so that it can fulfil its mission in the coming general insurrection of the three provinces; enlarge the local armed forces in the counties, that is, the Red Guards and the workers' and peasants' insurrection detachments, and enhance their quality so that they are able to fight the landlords' levies and small armed units now and safeguard the political power of the border area in the future; gradually reduce the extent to which local work is dependent on the assistance of the Red Army personnel, so that the border area will have its own personnel to take charge of the work and even provide personnel for the Red Army and the expanded territory of the independent regime.

V. ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

The shortage of necessities and cash has become a very big problem for the army and the people inside the White encirclement. Because of the tight enemy blockade, necessities such as salt, cloth and medicines have been very scarce and dear all through the past year in the independent border area, which has upset, sometimes to an acute degree, the lives of the masses of the workers, peasants and petty bourgeoisie, as well as of the soldiers of the Red Army. The Red Army has to fight the enemy and to provision itself at one and the same time. It even lacks funds to pay the daily food allowance of five cents per person, which is provided in addition to grain; the soldiers are undernourished, many are ill, and the wounded in the hospitals are worse off. Such difficulties are of course unavoidable before the nation-wide seizure of political power; yet there is a pressing need to overcome them to some extent, to make life somewhat easier, and especially to secure more adequate supplies for the Red Army. Unless the Party in the border area can kind proper ways to deal with economic problems, the independent regime will have great difficulties during the comparatively long period in which the enemy's rule will remain stable. An

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adequate solution of these economic problems undoubtedly merits the attention of every Party member.

VI. THE PROBLEM OF MILITARY BASES

The Party in the border area has another task, namely, the consolidation of the military bases at Five Wells and Chiulung. The Five Wells mountain area at the juncture of Yunghsin, Lingsien, Ningkang and Suichuan Counties, and the Chiulung mountain area at the juncture of Yunghsin, Ningkang, Chaling and Lienhua Counties, both of which have topographical advantages, are important military bases not only for the border area at present, but also for insurrections in Hunan, Hupeh and Kiangsi in the future, and this is particularly true of Five Wells, where we have the support of the people as well as a terrain that is especially difficult and strategically important. The way to consolidate these bases is, first, to construct adequate defences, second, to store sufficient grain and, third, to set up comparatively good Red Army hospitals. The Party in the border area must strive to perform these three tasks effectively.

A SINGLE SPARK CAN START A PRAIRIE FIRE

January 5, 1930

Some comrades in our Party still do not know how to appraise the current situation correctly and how to settle the attendant question of what action to take. Though they believe that a revolutionary high tide is inevitable, they do not believe it to be imminent. Therefore, they disapprove of the plan to take Kiangsi and only approve of roving guerrilla actions in the three areas on the borders of Fukien, Kwangtung and Kiangsi; at the same time, as they do not have a deep understanding of what it means to establish Red political power in the guerrilla areas, they do not have a deep understanding of the idea of accelerating the nation-wide revolutionary high tide through the consolidation and expansion of Red political power. They seem to think that, since the revolutionary high tide is still remote, it will be labour lost to attempt to establish political power by hard work. Instead, they want to extend our political influence through the easier method of roving guerrilla actions, and, once the masses throughout the country have been won over, or more or less won over, they want to launch a nation-wide armed insurrection which, with the participation of the Red Army, would become a great nationwide revolution. Their theory that we must first win over the masses on a country-wide scale and in all regions and then establish political power does not accord with the actual state of the Chinese revolution. This theory derives mainly from the failure to understand clearly that China is a semi-colonial country for which many imperialist powers are contending. If one clearly understands this, one will understand first why the unusual phenomenon of prolonged and tangled warfare within the ruling classes is only to be found in China, why this warfare is steadily growing fiercer and spreading,

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and why there has never been a unified regime. Secondly, one will understand the gravity of the peasant problem and hence why rural uprisings have developed on the present country-wide scale. Thirdly, one will understand the correctness of the slogan of workers' and peasants' democratic political power. Fourthly, one will understand another unusual phenomenon, which is also absent outside China, and which follows from the first (that in China alone there is prolonged and tangled warfare within the ruling classes), namely, the existence and development of the Red Army and the guerrilla forces, and together with them, the existence and development of small Red areas encircled by the White regime. Fifthly, one will understand that in semi-colonial China the establishment and expansion of the Red Army, the guerrilla forces and the Red areas is the highest form of peasant struggle under the leadership of the proletariat, the inevitable outcome of the growth of the semi-colonial peasant struggle, and undoubtedly the most important factor in accelerating the revolutionary high tide throughout the country. And sixthly, one will also understand that the policy which merely calls for roving guerrilla actions cannot accomplish the task of accelerating this nation-wide revolutionary high tide, while the kind of policy adopted by Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung and also by Fang Chih-min is undoubtedly correct--that is, the policy of establishing base areas; of systematically setting up political power; of deepening the agrarian revolution; of expanding the people's armed forces by a comprehensive process of building up first the township Red Guards, then the district Red Guards, then the county Red Guards, then the local Red Army troops, all the way up to the regular Red Army troops; of spreading political power by advancing in a series of waves; etc., etc. Only thus is it possible to build the confidence of the revolutionary masses throughout the country, as the Soviet Union has built it throughout the world. Only thus is it possible to create tremendous difficulties for the reactionary ruling classes, shake their foundations and hasten their internal disintegration. Only thus is it really possible to create a Red Army which will become the chief weapon for the great revolution of the future. In short, only thus is it possible to hasten the revolutionary high tide.

Comrades who suffer from revolutionary impetuosity overestimate the subjective forces of the revolution and underestimate the forces of the counter-revolution. Such an appraisal stems mainly from subjectivism. In the end, it undoubtedly leads to putschism. On the other hand, underestimating the subjective forces of the revolution and overestimating the forces of the counter-revolution would also constitute an improper appraisal and be certain to produce bad results of another kind. Therefore, in judging the political situation in China it is necessary to understand the following:

1. Although the subjective forces of the revolution in China are now weak, so also are all organizations (organs of political power, armed forces, political parties, etc.) of the reactionary ruling classes, resting as they do on the backward and fragile social and economic structure of China. This helps to explain why revolution cannot break out at once in the countries of Western Europe where, although the subjective forces of revolution are now perhaps somewhat stronger than in China, the forces of the reactionary ruling classes are many times stronger. In China the revolution will undoubtedly move towards a high tide more rapidly, for although the subjective forces of the revolution at present are weak, the forces of the counter-revolution are relatively weak too.

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2. The subjective forces of the revolution have indeed been greatly weakened since the defeat of the revolution in 1927. The remaining forces are very small and those comrades who judge by appearances alone naturally feel pessimistic. But if we judge by essentials, it is quite another story. Here we can apply the old Chinese saying, "A single spark can start a prairie fire." In other words, our forces, although small at present, will grow very rapidly. In the conditions prevailing in China, their growth is not only possible but indeed inevitable, as the May 30th Movement and the Great Revolution which followed have fully proved. When we look at a thing, we must examine its essence and treat its appearance merely as an usher at the threshold, and once we cross the threshold, we must grasp the essence of the thing; this is the only reliable and scientific method of analysis.

3. Similarly, in appraising the counter-revolutionary forces, we must never look merely at their appearance, but should examine their essence. In the initial period of our independent regime in the Hunan-Kiangsi border area, some comrades genuinely believed the incorrect appraisal made by the Hunan Provincial Committee and regarded the class enemy as not worth a rap; the two descriptive terms, "terribly shaky" and "extremely panicky", which are standing jokes to this day, were used by the Hunan Provincial Committee at the time (from May to June 1928) in appraising the Hunan ruler Lu Ti-ping. Such an appraisal necessarily led to putschism in the political sphere. But during the four months from November of that year to February 1929 (before the war between Chiang Kai-shek and the Kwangsi warlords), when the enemy's third "joint suppression expedition" was approaching the Chingkung Mountains, some comrades asked the question, "How long can we keep the Red Flag flying?" As a matter of fact, the struggle in China between Britain, the United States and Japan had by then become quite open, and a state of tangled warfare between Chiang Kai-shek, the Kwangsi clique and Feng Yu-hsiang was taking shape; hence it was actually the time when the counter-revolutionary tide had begun to ebb and the revolutionary tide to rise again. Yet pessimistic ideas were to be found not only in the Red Army and local Party organizations, even the Central Committee was misled by appearances and adopted a pessimistic tone. Its February letter is evidence of the pessimistic analysis made in the Party at that time.

4. The objective situation today is still such that comrades who see only the superficial appearance and not the essence of what is before them are liable to be misled. In particular, when our comrades working in the Red Army are defeated in battle or encircled or pursued by strong enemy forces, they often unwittingly generalize and exaggerate their momentary, specific and limited situation, as though the situation in China and the world as a whole gave no cause for optimism and the prospects of victory for the revolution were remote. The reason they seize on the appearance and brush aside the essence in their observation of things is that they have not made a scientific analysis of the essence of the overall situation. The question whether there will soon be a revolutionary high tide in China can be decided only by making a detailed examination to ascertain whether the contradictions leading to a revolutionary high tide are really developing. Since contradictions are developing in the world between the imperialist countries, between the imperialist countries and their colonies, and between the imperialists and the proletariat in their own countries, there is an intensified need for the imperialists to contend for the domination of China. While the imperialist contention over China becomes more intense, both the contradiction between imperialism and the whole Chinese nation and the contradictions among the imperialists

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themselves develop simultaneously on Chinese soil, thereby creating the tangled warfare which is expanding and intensifying daily and giving rise to the continuous development of the contradictions among the different cliques of China's reactionary rulers. In the wake of the contradictions among the reactionary ruling cliques--the tangled warfare among the warlords--comes heavier taxation, which steadily sharpens the contradiction between the broad masses of taxpayers and the reactionary rulers. In the wake of the contradiction between imperialism and China's national industry comes the failure of the Chinese industrialists to obtain concessions from the imperialists, which sharpens the contradiction between the Chinese bourgeoisie and the Chinese working class, with the Chinese capitalists trying to find a way out by frantically exploiting the workers and with the workers resisting. In the wake of imperialist commercial aggression, Chinese merchant-capitalist extortions, heavier government taxation, etc., comes the deepening of the contradiction between the landlord class and the peasantry, that is, exploitation through rent and usury is aggravated and the hatred of the peasants for the landlords grows. Because of the pressure of foreign goods, the exhaustion of the purchasing power of the worker and peasant masses, and the increase in government taxation, more and more dealers in Chinese-made goods and independent producers are being driven into bankruptcy. Because the reactionary government, though short of provisions and funds, endlessly expands its armies and thus constantly extends the warfare, the masses of soldiers are in a constant state of privation. Because of the growth in government taxation, the rise in rent and interest demanded by the landlords and the daily spread of the disasters of war, there are famine and banditry everywhere and the peasant masses and the urban poor can hardly keep alive. Because the schools have no money, many students fear that their education may be interrupted; because production is backward, many graduates have no hope of employment. Once we understand all these contradictions, we shall see in what a desperate situation, in what a chaotic state, China finds herself. We shall also see that the high tide of revolution against the imperialists, the warlords and the landlords is inevitable, and will come very soon. All China is littered with dry faggots which will soon be aflame. The saying, "A single spark can start a prairie fire", is an apt description of how the current situation will develop. We need only look at the strikes by the workers, the uprisings by the peasants, the mutinies of soldiers and the strikes of students which are developing in many places to see that it cannot be long before a "spark" kindles "a prairie fire".

The gist of the above was already contained in the letter from the Front Committee to the Central Committee on April 5, 1929, which reads in part:

The Central Committee's letter [dated February 9, 1929] makes too pessimistic an appraisal of the objective situation and our subjective forces. The Kuomintang's three "suppression" campaigns against the Chingkang Mountains was the high water mark reached by the counter-revolutionary tide. But there it stopped, and since then the counter-revolutionary tide has gradually receded while the revolutionary tide has gradually risen. Although our Party's fighting capacity and organizational strength have been weakened to the extent described by the Central Committee, they will be rapidly restored, and the passivity among comrades in the Party will quickly disappear as the counter-revolutionary tide gradually ebbs. The masses will certainly come over to us. The Kuomintang's policy of massacre only serves to "drive the fish into deep waters", as the saying goes, and reformism no longer has any mass appeal. It is certain that the masses will soon shed their illusions about the Kuomintang. In the emerging situation, no other

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party will be able to compete with the Communist Party in winning over the masses. The political line and the organizational line laid down by the Party's Sixth National Congress are correct, i.e., the revolution at the present stage is democratic and not socialist, and the present task of the Party [here the words "in the big cities" should have been added] is to win over the masses and not to stage immediate insurrections. Nevertheless the revolution will develop swiftly, and we should take a positive attitude in our propaganda and preparations for armed insurrections. In the present chaotic situation we can lead the masses only by positive slogans and a positive attitude. Only by taking such an attitude can the Party recover its fighting capacity.... Proletarian leadership is the sole key to victory in the revolution. Building a proletarian foundation for the Party and setting up Party branches in industrial enterprises in key districts are important organizational tasks for the Party at present; but at the same time the major prerequisites for helping the struggle in the cities and hastening the rise of the revolutionary tide are specifically the development of the struggle in the countryside, the establishment of Red political power in small areas, and the creation and expansion of the Red Army. Therefore, it would be wrong to abandon the struggle in the cities, but in our opinion it would also be wrong for any of our Party members to fear the growth of peasant strength lest it should outstrip the workers' strength and harm the revolution. For in the revolution in semi-colonial China, the peasant struggle must always fail if it does not have the leadership of the workers, but the revolution is never harmed if the peasant struggle outstrips the forces of the workers.

The letter also contained the following reply on the question of the Red Army's operational tactics:

To preserve the Red Army and arouse the masses, the Central Committee asks us to divide our forces into very small units and disperse them over the countryside and to withdraw Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung from the army, so concealing the major targets. This is an unrealistic view. In the winter of 1927-28, we did plan to disperse our forces over the countryside, with each company or battalion operating on its own and adopting guerrilla tactics in order to arouse the masses while trying not to present a target for the enemy; we have tried this out many times, but have failed every time. The reasons are: (1) most of the soldiers in the main force of the Red Army come from other areas and have a background different from that of the local Red Guards; (2) division into small units results in weak leadership and inability to cope with adverse circumstances, which easily leads to defeat; (3) the units are liable to be crushed by the enemy one by one; (4) the more adverse the circumstances, the greater the need for concentrating our forces and for the leaders to be resolute in struggle, because only thus can we have internal unity against the enemy. Only in favourable circumstances is it advisable to divide our forces for guerrilla operations, and it is only then that the leaders need not stay with the ranks all the time, as they must in adverse circumstances.

The weakness of this passage is that the reasons adduced against the division of forces were of a negative character, which was far from adequate. The positive reason for concentrating our forces is that only concentration will enable us to wipe out comparatively large enemy units and occupy towns. Only after we have wiped out comparatively large enemy units and occupied towns can we arouse the masses on a broad scale and set up political power extending over a number of adjoining counties. Only thus can we make a widespread impact (what we call "extending our political influence"), and contribute effectively to speeding the day of the revolutionary high tide.

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For instance, both the regime we set up in the Hunan-Kiangsi border area the year before last and the one we set up in western Fukien last year were the product of this policy of concentrating our troops. This is a general principle. But are there not times when our forces should be divided up? Yes, there are. The letter from the Front Committee to the Central Committee says of guerrilla tactics for the Red Army, including the division of forces within a short radius:

The tactics we have derived from the struggle of the past three years are indeed different from any other tactics, ancient or modern, Chinese or foreign. With our tactics, the masses can be aroused for struggle on an ever-broadening scale, and no enemy, however powerful, can cope with us. Ours are guerrilla tactics. They consist mainly of the following points:

"Divide our forces to arouse the masses, concentrate our forces to deal with the enemy."

"The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy camps, we harass; the enemy tires, we attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue."

"To extend stable base areas, employ the policy of advancing in waves; when pursued by a powerful enemy, employ the policy of circling around."

"Arouse the largest numbers of the masses in the shortest possible time and by the best possible methods."

These tactics are just like casting a net; at any moment we should be able to cast it or draw it in. We cast it wide to win over the masses and draw it in to deal with the enemy. Such are the tactics we have used for the past three years.

Here, "to cast the net wide" means to divide our forces within a short radius. For example, when we first captured the county town of Yunghsin in the Hunan-Kiangsi border area, we divided the forces of the 29th and 31st Regiments within the boundaries of Yunghsin County. Again, when we captured Yunghsin for the third time, we once more divided our forces by dispatching the 28th Regiment to the border of Anfu County, the 29th to Lienhua, and the 31st to the border of Kian County. And, again, we divided our forces in the counties of southern Kiangsi last April and May, and in the counties of western Fukien last July. As to dividing our forces over a wide radius, it is possible only on the two conditions that circumstances are comparatively favourable and the leading bodies fairly strong. For the purpose of dividing up our forces is to put us in a better position for winning over the masses, for deepening the agrarian revolution and establishing political power, and for expanding the Red Army and the local armed units. It is better not to divide our forces when this purpose cannot be attained or the division of our forces would lead to defeat and to the weakening of the Red Army, as happened in August two years ago when our forces were divided on the Hunan-Kiangsi border for an attack on Chenchou. But there is no doubt that, given the two above-mentioned conditions, we should divide our forces, because division is then more advantageous than concentration. The Central Committee's February letter was not in the right spirit and had a bad effect on a number of Party comrades in the Fourth Army. At that time the Central Committee also issued a circular stating that war would not necessarily break out between Chiang Kai-shek and the Kwangsi warlords. Since then, however, the appraisals and directives of the Central Committee have in the main been correct. It has already issued another circular correcting the one containing the wrong appraisal. Although it

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has not made any correction of the letter to the Red Army, its subsequent directives have not been couched in the same pessimistic tone and its views on the Red Army's operations now coincide with ours. Yet the bad effect which this letter had on some comrades persists. Therefore, I feel that it is still necessary to give some explanation.

The plan to take Kiangsi Province within a year was also proposed last April by the Front Committee to the Central Committee, and a decision to that effect was later made at Yutu. The following reasons were given in the letter to the Central Committee:

The armies of Chiang Kai-shek and the Kwangsi warlords are **approaching each other in the vicinity of Kiukiang, and a big battle is imminent. The resumption of mass struggle, coupled with the spread of contradictions among the ruling reactionaries, makes it probable that there will soon be a high tide of revolution. As for how our work should be arranged under these circumstances, we feel that, so far as the southern provinces are concerned, the armed forces of the compradors and landlords in Kwangtung and Hunan Provinces are too strong, and that in Hunan, more over, we have lost almost all our mass following, inside as well as outside the Party, because of the Party's putschist mistakes. In the three provinces of Fukien, Kiangsi and Chekiang, however, the situation is different. First, militarily the enemy is weakest there. In Chekiang, there is only a small provincial force under Chiang Po-cheng.** In Fukien, although there are five groups of enemy troops totalling fourteen regiments in all, Kuo Fengming's troops have already been smashed; the troops under Chen Kuo-hui and Lu Hsing-pang are bandits of small fighting capacity; the two brigades of marines stationed along the coast have never seen action and their fighting capacity is undoubtedly not high; Chang Chen alone can put up some sort of a fight, but, according to an analysis made by the Fukien Provincial Committee, even he has only two relatively strong regiments. In addition, Fukien is now in a state of complete chaos, confusion and disunity. In Kiangsi, there are sixteen regiments under the two commands of Chu Pei-teh and Hsiung Shih-hui; they are stronger than the armed forces of either Fukien or Chekiang, but far inferior to those of Hunan. Secondly, fewer putschist mistakes have been made in these three provinces. We are not clear about the situation in Chekiang, but the Party's organizational and mass base is somewhat better in Kiangsi and Fukien than in Hunan. Take Kiangsi for example. In northern Kiangsi we still have some basis in Tehan, Hsiushui and Tungku; in western Kiangsi the Party and the Red Guards still have some strength in Ningkang, Yunghsin, Lienhua and Suichuan; in southern Kiangsi the prospects are still brighter, as the 2nd and 4th Regiments of the Red Army are steadily growing in strength in the counties of Kian, Yungfeng and Hsingkuo; and what is more, the Red Army under Fang Chih-min has by no means been wiped out. All this places us in a position to close in on Nanchang. We hereby recommend to the Central Committee that during the period of prolonged warfare among the Kuomintang warlords, we should contend with Chiang Kai-shek and the Kwangsi clique for Kiangsi Province and also for western Fukien and western Chekiang. In these three provinces we should enlarge the Red Army and create an independent regime of the masses, with a time limit of one year for accomplishing this plan.

This proposal to contend for Kiangsi erred only in setting a time limit of one year. It was based not only on conditions within the province itself, but also on the prospect that a nation-wide high tide of revolution would soon arise. For unless we had been convinced that there would soon be a high tide of revolution, we could not possibly have concluded that we could take Kiangsi in a

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year. The only weakness in the proposal was that it set a time limit of one year, which it should not have done, and so gave a flavour of impetuosity to the word "soon" in the statement, "there will soon be a high tide of revolution". As to the subjective and objective conditions in Kiangsi, they well deserve our attention. Besides the subjective conditions described in the letter to the Central Committee, three objective conditions can now be clearly pointed out. First, the economy of Kiangsi is mainly feudal, the merchant-capitalist class is relatively weak, and the armed forces of the landlords are weaker than in any other southern province. Secondly, Kiangsi has no provincial troops of its own and has always been garrisoned by troops from other provinces. Sent there for the "suppression of Communists" or "suppression of bandits", these troops are unfamiliar with local conditions, their interests are much less directly involved than if they were local troops, and they usually lack enthusiasm. And thirdly, unlike Kwangtung which is close to Hongkong and under British control in almost every respect, Kiangsi is comparatively remote from imperialist influence. Once we have grasped these three points, we can understand why rural uprisings are more widespread and the Red Army and guerrilla units more numerous in Kiangsi than in any other province.

How then should we interpret the word "soon" in the statement, "there will soon be a high tide of revolution"? This is a common question among comrades. Marxists are not fortune-tellers. They should, and indeed can, only indicate the general direction of future developments and changes; they should not and cannot fix the day and the hour in a mechanistic way. But when I say that there will soon be a high tide of revolution in China, I am emphatically not speaking of something which in the words of some people "is possibly coming", something illusory, unattainable and devoid of significance for action. It is like a ship far out at sea whose mast-head can already be seen from the shore; it is like the morning sun in the east whose shimmering rays are visible from a high mountain top; it is like a child about to be born moving restlessly in its mother's womb.

THE LAST ROUND WITH THE JAPANESE INVADERS

August 9, 1945

The Chinese people heartily welcome the Soviet government's declaration of war on Japan on August 8. The Soviet Union's action will very much shorten the war against Japan. The war is already in its last stage and the time has come to inflict final defeat on the Japanese aggressors and all their running dogs. In these circumstances, all the anti-Japanese forces of the Chinese people should launch a nationwide counter-offensive in close and effective co-ordination with the operations of the Soviet Union and the other allied countries. The Eighth Route Army, the New Fourth Army and the other armed forces of the people should seize every opportunity to launch extensive attacks on all the invaders and their running dogs who refuse to surrender,

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annihilate their forces, capture their arms and matériel, vigorously expand the Liberated Areas and reduce the areas under enemy occupation. We must boldly form armed working teams which, by hundreds and by thousands, should penetrate deep into the rear of the enemy-occupied areas, organize the people to wreck the enemy's communication lines and fight in co-ordination with the regular armies. We must boldly arouse the people in the occupied areas in their tens of millions and immediately organize underground forces to prepare armed uprisings and to annihilate the enemy in co-ordination with the troops attacking from without. Meanwhile, the consolidation of the Liberated Areas must not be neglected. Among the 100 million people there, and among the people in all other areas as they are liberated, we should universally carry out the reduction of rent and interest this winter and next spring, increase production, build up the people's political power and armed forces, intensify militia work, strengthen army discipline, persistently develop the united front of all sections of the people and guard against waste of manpower and material resources. All this is designed to put more punch into our army's offensive against the enemy. The people of the whole country must be on their guard to avert the danger of civil war and make efforts to bring about the formation of a democratic coalition government. A new stage in China's war of national liberation has arrived, and the people of the whole country must strengthen their unity and struggle for final victory.

**TO THE COMMUNIST LABOUR UNIVERSITY
IN KIANGSI**

August 1, 1961

Comrades

I wholeheartedly support your venture. Your schools, including your primary and secondary schools, and universities which follow the principle of part-time work and part-time study, hard work and hard study, thus costing the government nothing to run them, and which are situated on the mountain tops and in the plains of the province, are good schools indeed. Most of the students are young people, but there may also be some middle-aged cadres. I hope in other provinces besides Kiangsi there will be schools of this type. Other provinces should send competent and knowledgeable comrades in responsible positions to Kiangsi to investigate your schools and to absorb your experience. At the beginning there must not be too many students. Their number can be increased later to 50,000 as now in Kiangsi. Moreover the party, government and people's organizations (e.g. trade unions, youth league and women's associations) should also run their own schools on the principle of part-time work and part-time study. But there should be a difference [between] the work and study of your schools [and theirs!]. Your work consists of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry and so on; your studies are [also]