



Mao Tse-tung

**INTERVIEW WITH THREE CORRESPONDENTS
FROM THE CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY,
THE *SAO TANG PAO* AND THE *HSIN MIN PAO***

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**INTERVIEW WITH THREE CORRESPONDENTS
FROM THE CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY,
THE SAO TANG PAO AND THE HSIN MIN PAO** [\[1\]](#)

September 16, 1939

Correspondent: May we ask for your views on a few questions? We have read your statement of September 1 in today's *New China News* ; it covers some of our questions, but there are others on which we would like you to elaborate. Our written questions are divided into three groups and we would be glad if you would give us your views on each of them.

Mao Tse-tung: I shall deal with them according to your list.

You ask if the War of Resistance has reached the stage of stalemate. I think it has in a sense -- in the sense that there is a new international situation and that Japan is facing greater difficulties while China has stood firm against compromise. This does not rule out the possibility that the enemy may still launch fairly big offensive campaigns; for instance, he may attack Pakhoi, Changsha or even Sian. When we say that the enemy's large-scale strategic offensive and our strategic retreat have in a sense largely come to an end, we do not altogether exclude the possibility of further offensives and retreats. As for the specific task in the new stage, it is to prepare for the counter-offensive, and this concept covers everything. That is to say, during the stage of stalemate China must build up all the strength required for the future counter-offensive. To prepare for the counter-offensive does not mean launching it immediately, since it cannot be done unless the conditions are ripe. What we are talking about is the strategic, and not the tactical, counter-offensive. Tactical counter-offensives, such as our repulse of the enemy's "mopping-up" campaigns in southeastern Shansi, are not only possible but absolutely necessary. But the time has not yet arrived for an all-out strategic counter-offensive, and we are now

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at the stage of actively preparing for it. At this stage we shall still have to repulse a certain number of offensive campaigns the enemy may launch at the front.

To itemize the tasks of the new stage, in the enemy's rear we must keep up guerrilla warfare, smash his "mopping-up" campaigns and defeat his economic aggression; at the front we must strengthen our military defences and repulse any offensive campaign the enemy may launch; in the Great Rear Area the main thing is to work hard for political reforms. All these form the specific content of our preparations for the counter-offensive.

Internal political reform is very important because at present the enemy is mainly carrying on a political offensive, and so we must strengthen our political resistance in particular. In other words, the problem of democracy must be solved as soon as possible, for only in this way can we increase our capacity for political resistance and build up our military strength. China has to rely mainly on her own efforts in the War of Resistance. We have stood for regeneration through our own efforts, and this has become even more important in the new international situation. The essence of such regeneration is democracy.

Question: You have just said that democracy is essential to winning victory in the War of Resistance through our own efforts. How can such a system be brought into being in the present circumstances?

Answer: Dr. Sun Yat-sen originally envisaged the three stages of military rule, political tutelage and constitutional government.^[2] But in his "Statement on My Departure for the North"^[3] issued shortly before his death, he no longer spoke of three stages, but said instead that a national assembly must be convened immediately. This shows that Dr. Sun himself modified his views many years ago in the light of changing circumstances. In the grave situation prevailing today, with the War of Resistance going on, both the early convening of a national assembly and the introduction of democratic government are imperative for averting the calamity of national subjugation and for driving out the enemy. Opinions differ on this question. Some say that the common people are ignorant and democratic government cannot be introduced. They are wrong. The common people have made very rapid progress in the war and, given leadership and proper policy, democratic government can certainly be introduced. For instance, it

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has been put into practice in northern China. Most of the heads of districts, townships and the pao and chia there are chosen by popular vote. Even some county magistrates have been chosen in this way, and progressive elements and promising young people have been elected. The question should be thrown open to public discussion.

In the second group on your list, you raise the question of "restricting alien parties", that is, the question of the friction in various localities. Your concern over this matter is justified. There has been some improvement recently, but fundamentally the situation remains unchanged.

Question: Has the Communist Party made its position on this question clear to the Central Government?

Answer: We have protested.

Question: In what way?

Answer: Our Party representative, Comrade Chou En-lai, wrote a letter to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek as early as July. Then again on August 1, people from all walks of life in Yenan sent a telegram to the Generalissimo and the National Government, demanding the withdrawal of the "Measures for Restricting the Activities of Alien

Parties", which had been secretly circulated and which are at the very root of the "friction" in various places.

Question: Has there been any reply from the Central Government?

Answer: No. But it is said that there are also people in the Kuomintang who disapprove of these measures. As everybody knows, an army that participates in the common fight against Japan is a friendly army, not an "alien army", and similarly, a political party that participates in the common fight against Japan is a friendly party, not an "alien party". There are many parties and groups taking part in the War of Resistance and, while they vary in strength, they are fighting in the same cause; surely they must all unite and must in no circumstances "restrict" one another. Which party is an alien party? The party of the traitors headed by Wang Ching-wei, the running dog of Japan, because it has nothing in common politically with the anti-Japanese parties; that is the kind of party which should be restricted. Between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party there is common political ground, namely, resistance to Japanese aggression. Therefore, the problem is to concentrate all our strength on opposing and checking Japan and Wang Ching-wei, and not on opposing and checking the Communist Party. This is the only basis for formulating correct slogans.

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Wang Ching-wei has three slogans: "Oppose Chiang Kai-shek", "Oppose the Communist Party", and "Be friends with Japan". Wang Ching-wei is the common enemy of the Kuomintang, the Communist Party and the entire people. But the Communist Party is not the enemy of the Kuomintang, nor is the Kuomintang the enemy of the Communist Party; they should unite and help each other rather than oppose or "restrict" each other. The slogans on our side must be different from Wang Ching-wei's, they must be the opposite of his and never be confused with them. If he says, "Oppose Chiang Kai-shek", everyone should support Chiang Kai-shek; if he says, "Oppose the Communist Party", everyone should unite with the Communist Party; and if he says, "Be friends with Japan", everyone should resist Japan. We should support whatever the enemy opposes and oppose whatever the enemy supports. In articles nowadays people often quote the saying, "Do not sadden your friends and gladden your enemies." It comes from a letter which Chu Fou, a general under Liu Hsiu of the Eastern Han Dynasty, wrote to Peng Chung, the prefect of Yuyang. In context it reads, "Whatever you do, you must be sure that you do not sadden your friends and gladden your enemies." Chu Fou's words express a clear-cut political principle which we must never forget. In your list of questions you also ask about the Communist Party's attitude to what has come to be known as "friction". I tell you frankly that we are absolutely opposed to friction between the anti-Japanese parties, which cancels out their strength. But if anyone persists in using violence against us, tries to bully us and resorts to repression, the Communist Party will have to take a firm stand. Our attitude is: We will not attack unless we are attacked; if we are attacked, we will certainly counter-attack. But our stand is strictly one of self-defence; no Communist is permitted to go beyond the principle of self-defence.

Question: How about the friction in northern China?

Answer: Chang Yin-wu and Chin Chi-jung are the two expert friction-mongers there. Chang Yin-wu in Hopei and Chin Chi-jung in Shantung are simply violating all laws,

human or divine, and are scarcely distinguishable from the traitors. They seldom fight the enemy but often attack the Eighth Route Army. We have already sent Generalissimo Chiang a mass of indisputable evidence, such as Chang Yin-wu's orders to his subordinates to attack the Eighth Route Army.

Question: Is there any friction with the New Fourth Army?

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Answer: Yes, there is. The incident of the Pingkiang massacre has shocked the whole nation.

Question: Some people say that the united front is important but that the Border Region Government should be abolished for the sake of unification. What do you think of this?

Answer: Nonsense of all sorts is being talked everywhere, the so-called abolition of the Border Region being one example. The Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region is a democratic anti-Japanese base area and is politically the most progressive region in the whole country. What grounds are there for abolishing it? Moreover, Generalissimo Chiang long ago recognized the Border Region and the Executive Yuan of the National Government officially recognized it as long ago as the winter of the 26th year of the Republic (1937). China certainly needs to be unified, but it must be unified on the basis of resistance, unity and progress. If unification is sought on the opposite basis, the country will perish.

Question: Since there are different interpretations of unification, is there any possibility of a split between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party?

Answer: If we are merely talking of possibilities, we can envisage both the possibility of unity and the possibility of a split, depending on the attitudes of the Kuomintang and the Communist Party, and especially of the people throughout the country. As far as we Communists are concerned, we have long made it clear that our policy is co-operation, and that we not only hope for long-term co-operation but are working hard for it. It is said that at the Fifth Plenary Session of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek also declared that domestic problems should not be solved by force. Confronted with a formidable enemy and bearing in mind the lessons of the past, the Kuomintang and the Communist Party must each persist in long-term co-operation and avoid a split. But to avoid all possibility of a split, political guarantees for long-term co-operation must be found, namely, perseverance in the War of Resistance and the introduction of democratic government. With these, unity can be maintained and a split avoided; it depends on the common effort of the two parties and the whole nation and the effort must be made. "Persist in resistance and oppose capitulation", "Persist in unity and oppose a split" and "Persist in progress and oppose retrogression" -- these are the three great political slogans our Party

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put forward in its Manifesto of July 7 this year. In our opinion, this is the only way China can avoid subjugation and drive out the enemy. There is no other way.

NOTES

[1] The Central News Agency was the official Kuomintang news agency, the *Sao Tang Pao* was a paper run by military circles in the Kuomintang government, and the *Hsin Min Pao* was one of the mouthpieces of the national bourgeoisie. [p. 269]

[2] See Dr. Sun Yat-sen's *Programme of National Reconstruction*. For a long time, the Kuomintang reactionary clique headed by Chiang Kai-shek sought to justify their ruthless counter-revolutionary dictatorship by representing it as either the stage of "military rule" or that of "political tutelage" as envisaged by Dr. Sun. [p. 270]

[3] This statement was made by Dr. Sun Yat-sen on November 10, 1924, two days before he left Canton for Peking at the invitation of Feng Yu-hsiang. In this statement, which won the support of the whole nation, Dr. Sun reiterated his opposition to imperialism and the warlords and urged that a national assembly be called to settle the problems facing the country. Feng Yu-hsiang originally belonged to the Chihli warlord clique, but in the winter of 1924, when war broke out for the second time between them and the Fengtien warlord clique, he refused to fight and led his troops back to Peking, thus causing the downfall of Wu Pei-fu, the actual leader of the Chihli warlords. It was then that he sent the telegram inviting Dr. Sun to Peking. [p. 270]
