



Mao Tse-tung

THE REACTIONARIES MUST BE PUNISHED

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THE REACTIONARIES MUST BE PUNISHED[□]

August 1, 1939

Today, the First of August, we are gathered here for a memorial meeting. Why are we holding this memorial meeting? Because the reactionaries have killed our revolutionary comrades, killed fighters against Japan. Who should be killed in these times? The Chinese traitors and the Japanese imperialists. China has been fighting Japanese imperialism for two years, but the outcome is not yet decided. The traitors are still very active, and very few of them have been killed. Yet our revolutionary comrades, all warriors against Japan, have been killed. Killed by whom? Killed by the troops. Why did the troops kill fighters against Japan? They were carrying out orders; certain people gave them the order to kill. Who gave them the order to kill? The reactionaries.[□] Comrades! Logically, who would want to kill fighters against Japan? First, the Japanese imperialists, and next, the Chinese collaborators and traitors such as Wang Ching-wei. But the scene of the killing was not Shanghai, Peiping, Tientsin or Nanking, or any other place occupied by the Japanese aggressors and Chinese collaborators; it took place in Pingkiang, in the rear of the War of Resistance, and among the victims were Comrades Tu Cheng-kun and Lo Tzu-ming, responsible comrades of the Pingkiang Liaison Office of the New Fourth Army. Obviously, the killing was perpetrated by a gang of Chinese reactionaries acting on the orders of the Japanese imperialists and Wang Ching-wei. Preparing to capitulate, these reactionaries obsequiously carried out the orders of the Japanese and Wang Ching-wei, and the first people they killed were the most resolute fighters against Japan. This is no trivial matter; we must raise our voices against it, we must denounce it!

* This speech was delivered by Comrade Mao Tse-tung at a memorial meeting held by the people of Yen-an for the martyrs of Pingkiang.

The whole nation is now resisting Japan and has forged a great union of the people for the purpose of resistance. But within this great union there are reactionaries and capitulators. What are they doing? They are killing fighters against Japan, holding back progress and working in collusion with the Japanese aggressors and Chinese collaborators to pave the way for capitulation.

Has anyone taken action on this serious case of the murder of anti-Japanese comrades? The murder was committed at 3 p.m. on June 12, today is August 1, but in all this time have we seen anyone step forward and take action? No. Who should have done so? Action should have been taken under the law of the land by the administrators of the law. If such a thing had happened in the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia Border Region, our high court would have acted long ago. But although nearly two months have elapsed since the

Pingkiang massacre, the law and its administrators have done nothing. What is the reason? The reason is, China is not unified.^[2]

China must be unified; there can be no victory without unification. But what does unification mean? It means that everybody should resist Japan, that all should unite and strive for progress and that there should be due rewards and punishments. Who ought to be rewarded? Those who resist Japan, those who uphold unity, those who are progressive. And who ought to be punished? The collaborators and reactionaries who undermine resistance, unity and progress. Is our country now unified? It is not. The Pingkiang massacre proves it. It shows that there is no unification where there should be. We have long demanded the unification of the whole country. First, unification on the basis of the War of Resistance. But now, instead of being rewarded, Tu Cheng-kun, Lo Tzu-ming and the other comrades who were resisting the Japanese have been brutally murdered, whereas scoundrels who oppose resistance, prepare to capitulate and commit murder go unpunished. That is not unification. We must oppose these scoundrels and capitulators, and arrest the murderers. Second, unification on the basis of unity. Those who stand for unity ought to be rewarded and those who undermine it ought to be punished. But now, Comrades Tu Cheng-kun, Lo Tzu-ming and the others who upheld unity have been punished, have been brutally murdered, whereas the scoundrels who undermine unity are allowed to go scot-free. That is not unification. Third, unification on the basis of progress. The whole country must go forward; the backward must try to keep

page 259

pace with the progressive, and the progressive must not be held back to the pace of the backward. The butchers at Pingkiang killed progressive people. Hundreds of Communists and patriots have been assassinated since the outbreak of the War of Resistance, the Pingkiang massacre being only the most recent example. It will be disastrous for China if this continues; all who resist Japan may be murdered. What do these murders mean? They mean that the Chinese reactionaries, acting under orders from the Japanese imperialists and Wang Ching-wei, are preparing to capitulate, and that is why they begin by killing fighters against Japan, by killing Communists and patriots. If this is not stopped, China will perish at the hands of these reactionaries. These murders, therefore, concern the whole country, they are of the gravest importance, and we must demand that the National Government punish these reactionaries with the utmost severity.

Comrades must also realize that Japanese imperialism has recently intensified its disruptive activities, that international imperialism has become more active in helping Japan,^[3] and that the traitors in China, both the overt and the covert Wang Ching-weis, are more active than ever in sabotaging the War of Resistance, wrecking unity and turning the clock back. They want to surrender the greater part of our country, cause an internal split and engineer a civil war. At the present time certain secret measures known as "Measures for Restricting the Activities of Alien Parties"^[4] are being extensively enforced. They are reactionary to the core, helpful to Japanese imperialism and detrimental to resistance, unity and progress. Which are the "alien parties"? The Japanese imperialists, Wang Ching-wei and the traitors. How can the Communist Party and all the other anti-Japanese political parties, which are united in resistance to Japan, be called "alien parties"? Yet the capitulators, reactionaries and die-hards are deliberately creating friction and disunity within the anti-Japanese ranks. Is this kind of activity right or wrong? It is absolutely wrong! (*Unanimous applause.*) When it comes to restriction, what

sort of people should be restricted? The Japanese imperialists, Wang Ching-wei, the reactionaries and capitulators. (*Unanimous applause.*) Why restrict the Communist Party, which is the most resolute in resisting Japan, the most revolutionary and the most progressive? It is absolutely wrong. We the people of Yen-an voice our firm opposition and strong protest. (*Unanimous applause.*) We must oppose the "Measures for Restricting the Activities of Alien Parties", for such

page 260

measures are at the very root of all kinds of criminal actions that wreck unity. We are holding this mass meeting today for the sake of continued resistance, unity and progress. To this end, the "Measures for Restricting the Activities of Alien Parties" must be abolished, the capitulators and reactionaries must be punished, and all revolutionary comrades, all the comrades and people resisting Japan must be protected. (*Warm applause and slogan shouting.*)

NOTES

[1] These reactionaries were Chiang Kai-shek and his henchmen. On June 12, 1939, acting on a secret order from Chiang Kai-shek, the Kuomintang's 27th Group Army dispatched troops to surround the New Fourth Army Liaison Office at Pingkiang, Hunan Province, and in cold blood murdered Comrade Tu Cheng-kun, staff officer of the New Fourth Army, Comrade Lo Tzu-ming, major and adjutant of the Eighth Route Army, and four other comrades. This massacre aroused indignation not only among the people in the anti-Japanese democratic base areas but also among honest people in the Kuomintang areas. [p. 257]

[2] Comrade Mao Tse-tung defined unification in order to counter the Kuomintang reactionaries' use of "unification" as a pretext for their schemes to liquidate the Communist-led anti-Japanese armed forces and base areas. After the renewed Kuomintang-Communist co-operation for joint resistance to Japan, the slogan of "unification" became the Kuomintang's chief weapon in attacking the Communist Party, which it accused of always seeking to be different and of obstructing unification and damaging the cause of resistance. This reactionary clamour increased after January 1939, when the Fifth Plenary Session of the Kuomintang's Fifth Central Executive Committee adopted the "Measures for Restricting the Activities of Alien Parties" on the proposal of Chiang Kai-shek. Comrade Mao Tse-tung wrested the slogan of "unification" from the Kuomintang reactionaries and turned it into a revolutionary slogan for opposing the Kuomintang's divisive activities against the people and the nation. [p. 258]

[3] After the fall of Wuhan in October 1938, Japan's main policy became one of employing political means to lure the Kuomintang into capitulation. International imperialism, including the British and U.S. imperialists, also repeatedly suggested to Chiang Kai-shek that he should negotiate peace, and Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister, indicated that Britain would take part in the so-called "reconstruction of the Far East". The Japanese aggressors and the international imperialists stepped up their conspiracies in 1939. In April of that year, Clark-Kerr, the British ambassador to China, acted as an intermediary between Chiang Kai-shek and the Japanese aggressors in arranging a peace parley. In July an agreement was reached between Britain and Japan under which the British government was prepared to recognize the "actual situation" Japan had brought about in China. [p. 259]

[4] The "Measures for Restricting the Activities of Alien Parties" were secretly issued by the central authorities of the Kuomintang in 1939. They imposed severe

page 261

restrictions on communist and all other progressive ideas, speech and action, with the aim of disrupting all the anti-Japanese organizations of the people. They also stipulated that in places where, in the opinion of the Kuomintang, "the Communists were most active", the "law of collective responsibility and collective punishment" was to be enforced and an "information network", or counter-revolutionary secret service, was to be generally established within the *pao-chia* organizations. *Pao* and *chia* were then the basic administrative units of the Kuomintang's fascist regime. Ten households formed a *chia* and ten *chia* a *pao*. [p. 259]
