



Mao Tse-tung
THE STRUGGLE IN THE CHINGKANG
MOUNTAINS

From the
Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung
Foreign Languages Press
Peking 1967

First Edition 1965
Second Printing 1967

Vol. I, pp. 63-72.

Prepared © for the Internet by David J. Romagnolo, djr@marx2mao.org (September 1999)

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Communist (Maoist) Party of Afghanistan (CMPA)

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THE STRUGGLE IN THE CHINGKANG MOUNTAINS[□]

November 25, 1928

THE INDEPENDENT REGIME IN THE HUNAN-KIANGSI BORDER AREA AND THE AUGUST DEFEAT

China is the only country in the world today where one or more small areas under Red political power have emerged in the midst of a White regime which encircles them. We find on analysis that one reason for this phenomenon lies in the incessant splits and wars within China's comprador and landlord classes. So long as these splits and wars continue, it is possible for an armed independent regime of workers and peasants to survive and grow. In addition, its survival and growth require the following conditions: (1) a sound mass base, (2) a sound Party organization, (3) a fairly strong Red Army, (4) terrain favourable to military operations, and (5) economic resources sufficient for sustenance.

An independent regime must vary its strategy against the encircling ruling classes, adopting one strategy when the ruling class regime is temporarily stable and another when it is split up. In a period when the ruling classes are split up, as during the wars between Li Tsung-jen and Tang Sheng-chih in Hunan and Hupeh Provinces^[1] and between Chang Fa-kuei and Li Chi-shen in Kwangtung Province,^[2] our strategy can be comparatively adventurous and the area carved out by military operations can be comparatively large. However, we must take care to lay a solid foundation in the central districts so that we shall have something secure to rely on when the White terror strikes. In a period when the regime of the ruling classes is

* This was a report submitted by Comrade Mao Tse-tung to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China.

comparatively stable, as it was in the southern provinces after April this year, our strategy must be one of gradual advance. In such a period, the worst thing in military affairs is to divide our forces for an adventurous advance, and the worst thing in local work (distributing land, establishing political power, expanding the Party and organizing local armed forces) is to scatter our personnel and neglect to lay a solid foundation in the central districts. The defeats which many small Red areas have suffered have been due either to the absence of the requisite objective conditions or to subjective mistakes in tactics. Mistakes in tactics have been made solely because of failure to distinguish clearly

between the two kinds of period, that in which the regime of the ruling classes is temporarily stable and that in which it is split up. In a period of temporary stability, some comrades advocated dividing our forces for an adventurous advance and even proposed leaving the defence of extensive areas to the Red Guards alone, as though oblivious of the fact that the enemy could attack not merely with the landlords' levies but even in concentrated operations with regular troops. In local work, they utterly neglected to lay a solid foundation in the central districts and attempted unrestricted expansion regardless of whether it was within our capacity. If anyone advocated a policy of gradual advance in military operations or a policy of concentrating our effort in local work on laying a solid foundation in the central districts so as to secure an invincible position, they dubbed him a "conservative". Their wrong ideas were the root cause of the defeats sustained last August by the Hunan-Kiangsi border area and by the Fourth Red Army in southern Hunan.

Our work in the Hunan-Kiangsi border area began in October last year. At the start, all our Party organizations in the counties were defunct. The local armed forces consisted only of the two units under Yuan Wen-tsai and Wang Tso in the vicinity of the Chingkang Mountains, each unit having sixty rifles in bad repair, while the peasant self-defence corps in the counties of Yunghsin, Lienhua, Chaling and Lingsien had been totally disarmed by the landlord class and the revolutionary ardour of the masses had been stifled. By February this year Ningkang, Yunghsin, Chaling and Suichuan had county Party committees, Lingsien had a special district Party committee, and in Lienhua a Party organization was beginning to function and establish connections with the Wanan County Committee. All the counties except Lingsien had a few local armed units.

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In Ningkang, Chaling, Suichuan and Yunghsin, and especially in the two latter counties, there were a good many guerrilla uprisings against the landlords which aroused the masses, and all were fairly successful. In that period the agrarian revolution had not yet been carried very far. The organs of political power were called governments of the workers, peasants and soldiers. Soldiers' committees³ were set up in the army. When units went on separate missions, action committees were set up to direct them. The leading body of the Party there was the Front Committee (with Mao Tse-tung as secretary), which had been appointed by the Hunan Provincial Committee during the Autumn Harvest Uprising. In early March, upon the request of the Southern Hunan Special Committee, the Front Committee was abolished and reorganized as the Divisional Party Committee (with Ho Ting-ying as secretary), which thus became a body in charge of Party organizations in the army only and without authority over the local Party organizations. Meanwhile, Mao Tse-tung's forces were dispatched to southern Hunan upon the request of the Special Committee there, and consequently the Hunan-Kiangsi border area was occupied by the enemy for more than a month. At the end of March came the defeat in southern Hunan, and in April the forces under Chu Teh and those under Mao Tse-tung, together with the peasant army of southern Hunan, withdrew to Ningkang and began to re-establish the independent regime in the border area.

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 dispatch at least eight or nine regiments of reactionary forces to "suppress" us and

sometimes as many as eighteen. 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 people's political power and expanding the Red Army and the Red Guards. This was possible because the policies of the Party organizations (local and army) in the border area were correct. The policies of the Border Area Special Committee (with Mao Tse-tung as secretary) and the Army Committee (with Chen Yi as secretary) 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.

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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.

Be on the defensive against Hunan with its comparatively strong ruling power, and take the offensive against Kiangsi with its comparatively weak ruling power.

Devote great efforts to the development of Yunghsin, set up an independent regime of the people there and prepare for a prolonged struggle.

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 the terrain of the border area which favoured 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 military victories and expand the people's independent regime in the four months from April to July. Although several times stronger than we, the enemy was unable to prevent the expansion of our regime, let alone to destroy it. 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 of temporary stability for the ruling classes, some comrades adopted a policy suited to a period of splits within the ruling classes and divided our forces for an adventurous advance on southern Hunan, thus causing defeat both in the border area and in southern Hunan. Tu Hsiu-ching, the representative of the Hunan Provincial Committee, and Yang Kai-ming, the secretary of the Border Area Special Committee who had been appointed by the Provincial Committee, failed to grasp the actual situation and, taking advantage of the fact that Mao Tse-tung, Wan Hsi-hsien and other strongly dissenting comrades were far away in Yunghsin, they disregarded the resolutions of the joint meeting of the Army Committee, the Special Committee and the Yunghsin County Committee of the Party, which disapproved of the views of the Hunan Provincial

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Committee. They just mechanically enforced the order of the Hunan Provincial Committee to march to southern Hunan and fell in with the desire of the Red Army's 29th Regiment (composed of peasants from Yichang) to evade struggle and return home, thus causing defeat both in the border area and in southern Hunan.

Originally, in mid-July, the Eighth Army from Hunan, under Wu Shang, had invaded Ningkung, penetrated to Yunghsin, sought battle with us in vain (our men tried to attack them from a side road but missed them) and then, being afraid of the masses who supported us, hurriedly retreated to Chaling via Lienhua. In the meantime, the major detachment of the Red Army, which was advancing from Ningkung to attack Lingsien and Chaling, changed its plans on reaching Lingsien and turned towards southern Hunan, while the enemy forces from Kiangsi, consisting of 5 regiments of the Third Army under Wang Chun and Chin Han-ting and 6 regiments of the Sixth Army under Hu Wen-tou, launched a joint assault on Yunghsin. At that point we had only 1 regiment in Yunghsin which, under the cover provided by the broad masses of the people, pinned down these 11 regiments within a radius of thirty *li* of Yunghsin county town for as long as twenty-five days by means of guerrilla attacks from every direction. In the end we lost Yunghsin because of the enemy's fierce assault, and also lost Lienhua and Ningkung shortly afterwards. At that moment internal dissensions suddenly flared up among the Kiangsi enemy forces; the Sixth Army under Hu Wen-tou withdrew in haste and presently engaged Wang Chun's Third Army at Changshu. The other 5 Kiangsi regiments then hastily withdrew to the county town of Yunghsin. Had our major detachment not moved to southern Hunan, it would have been entirely possible to rout this enemy force and extend the area of the independent regime to include Kian, Anfu and Pinghsiang and to link it up with Pingkiang and Liuyang. But as the major detachment was away and the one remaining regiment was much too exhausted, it was decided that some men should remain to defend the Chingkung Mountains in co-operation with the two units under Yuan Wen-tsai and Wang Tso, and that I should take the rest to Kueitung to meet the major detachment and to invite it back. By that time the major detachment was retreating from southern Hunan to Kueitung, and on August 23 we joined forces there.

When the major detachment of the Red Army had arrived in Lingsien in mid-July, the officers and men of the 29th Regiment,

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who were wavering politically and wanted to return to their homes in southern Hunan, refused to obey orders, while the 28th Regiment was against going to southern Hunan and wanted to go to southern Kiangsi, but in any case did not want to return to Yunghsin. As Tu Hsiu-ching encouraged the 29th Regiment in their mistaken ideas and the Army Committee failed to dissuade them, the major detachment set out from Lingsien for Chenchow on July 17. In an engagement with the enemy forces under Fan Shih-sheng in Chenchow on July 24, it was initially successful but was later defeated and withdrew from the battle. Thereupon, acting on its own, the 29th Regiment hurried homeward to Yichang with the result that one section was annihilated at Lochang by Hu Feng-chang's bandits, another scattered in the Chenchow-Yichang area and has never been heard of since, and no more than a hundred men were mustered again that day. Fortunately, the 28th Regiment, which was the main force, had not suffered great losses and on August 18 it occupied Kueitung. On August 23 the regiment was joined by the troops from the Chingkung Mountains, to which it was decided that the combined forces should return by way of Chungyi and Shangyu. When we reached Chungyi, battalion commander Yuan Chung-chuan defected with an infantry company and an artillery company, and though the two companies were brought back, our regimental commander Wang Erh-cho lost his life in this action. When our men were returning but had not yet reached their destination, enemy units from Hunan and Kiangsi seized the opportunity to attack the Chingkung

Mountains on August 30. Using their points of vantage, the defending troops, numbering less than one battalion, fought back, routed the enemy and saved the base.

The causes of our August defeat were as follows: (1) some officers and men, who were wavering and homesick, lost their fighting capacity, while others, who were unwilling to go to southern Hunan, were lacking in enthusiasm; (2) our men were exhausted by long marches in the sweltering summer heat; (3) having ventured several hundred *li* away from Lingsien, our men lost contact with the border area and became isolated; (4) as the masses in southern Hunan had not yet been aroused, the expedition proved to be pure military adventurism; (5) we were uninformed about the enemy situation; and (6) the preparations were inadequate, and officers and men did not understand the purpose of the operation.

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THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE AREA UNDER THE INDEPENDENT REGIME

Since April this year the Red areas have been gradually extended. After the battle of Lungyuankou (on the borders of Yunghsin and Ningkang) on June 23, in which we defeated the Kiangsi enemy forces for the fourth time, the border area reached the peak of its development, embracing the three counties of Ningkang, Yunghsin and Lienhua, small sections of Kian and Anfu, the northern section of Suichuan, and the southeastern section of Lingsien. In the Red areas the greater part of the land had been distributed and the remainder was being distributed. Organs of political power were set up everywhere in the districts and townships. County governments were set up in Ningkang, Yunghsin, Lienhua and Suichuan, and a border area government was formed. Insurrectionary detachments of workers and peasants were organized in the villages, and Red Guards were formed at the district and county levels. In July the Kiangsi enemy forces launched attacks, and in August the Hunan and Kiangsi enemy forces jointly attacked the Ching kang Mountains. All the county towns and the plains in the border area were occupied by the enemy. The enemy's jackals -- the peace preservation corps and the landlords' levies -- ran amuck, and White terror raged throughout the towns and countryside. Most of the Party and government organizations collapsed. The rich peasants and the opportunists in the Party went over to the enemy in great numbers. It was not until the battle of the Ching kang Mountains was fought on August 30 that the Hunan enemy forces retreated to Lingsien; but the Kiangsi forces still held all the county towns and most of the villages. However, the enemy has never been able to capture the mountain areas, which include the western and northern districts of Ningkang; the Tienlung, Hsiaohsikiang and Wannien shan districts in the northern, western and southern sections of Yunghsin respectively; the Shanghsi district of Lienhua; the Ching kang shan district of Suichuan; and the Tsingshihkang and Tayuan districts of Lingsien. In July and August, in co-ordination with the Red Guards of the various counties, one regiment of the Red Army fought scores of battles, big and small, losing only thirty rifles, before it finally withdrew to the mountains.

As our men were marching back to the Ching kang Mountains via Chungyi and Shangyu, the enemy force from southern Kiangsi, the

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Independent 7th Division under Liu Shih-yi, pursued us as far as Suichuan. On September 13 we defeated Liu Shih-yi, captured several hundred rifles and took Suichuan. On September 26 we returned to the Ching kang Mountains. On October 1, at Ning kang, we engaged and defeated one of Hsiung Shih-hui's brigades commanded by Chou Hun-yuan, recovering the entire county of Ning kang. Meanwhile, 126 men of the Hunan enemy forces under Yen Chung-ju, which had been stationed in Kueitung, came over to us and were organized into a special task battalion with Pi Chan-yun as commander. On November 9 we routed one regiment of Chou's brigade at Lungyuankou and the county town of Ning kang. On the next day we advanced and occupied Yunghsin, but withdrew to Ning kang shortly afterwards. At present our area, extending from the southern slopes of the Ching kang Mountains in Suichuan County in the south to the border of Lienhua County in the north, embraces the whole of Ning kang and parts of Suichuan, Linghsien and Yunghsin, forming a narrow unbroken stretch running north to south. The Shanghsi district of Lienhua and the Tienlung and Wannien shan districts of Yunghsin, however, are not firmly linked with this unbroken stretch. The enemy is attempting to destroy our base area by military attacks and economic blockade, and we are now preparing to defeat his attacks.

MILITARY QUESTIONS

Since the struggle in the border area is exclusively military, both the Party and the masses have to be placed on a war footing. How to deal with the enemy, how to fight, has become the central problem in our daily life. An independent regime must be an armed one. Wherever such an area is located, it will be immediately occupied by the enemy if armed forces are lacking or inadequate, or if wrong tactics are used in dealing with the enemy. As the struggle is getting fiercer every day, our problems have become extremely complex and serious.

The Red Army in the border area is drawn from: (1) troops formerly under Yeh Ting and Ho Lung in Chaochow and Swatow;^[4] (2) the Guards Regiment of the former National Government at Wuchang;^[5] (3) peasants from Pingkiang and Liuyang;^[6] (4) peasants from southern Hunan^[7] and workers from Shuikoushan,^[8] (5) men captured from the forces under Hsu Keh-hsiang, Tang Sheng-chih, Pai Chung-hsi, Chu Pei-teh, Wu Shang and Hsiung Shih-hui; and

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(6) peasants from the counties in the border area. However, of the troops formerly commanded by Yeh Ting and Ho Lung, the Guards Regiment and the peasants from Pingkiang and Liuyang, only one-third is left after more than a year's fighting. Casualties have also been heavy among the peasants from southern Hunan. Thus although the first four categories remain the backbone of the Fourth Red Army to this day, they are now far outnumbered by the last two categories. Furthermore, in the latter the peasants are outnumbered by the captured soldiers; without replacement from this source, there would

be a serious manpower problem. Even so, the increase in men does not keep pace with the increase in rifles. Rifles are not easily lost, but men are wounded or killed, fall sick or desert and so are lost more easily. The Hunan Provincial Committee has promised to send us workers from Anyuan,^[9] and we earnestly hope it will do so.

As to class origin, the Red Army consists partly of workers and peasants and partly of *lumpen*-proletarians. Of course, it is inadvisable to have too many of the latter. But they are able to fight, and as fighting is going on every day with mounting casualties, it is already no easy matter to get replacements even from among them. In these circumstances the only solution is to intensify political training.

The majority of the Red Army soldiers come from the mercenary armies, but their character changes once they are in the Red Army. First of all, the Red Army has abolished the mercenary system, making the men feel they are fighting for themselves and for the people and not for somebody else. So far the Red Army has no system of regular pay, but issues grain, money for cooking oil, salt, firewood and vegetables, and a little pocket money. Land has been allotted to all Red Army officers and men who are natives of the border area, but it is rather difficult to allot land to those from other parts of the country.

After receiving political education, the Red Army soldiers have become class-conscious, learned the essentials of distributing land, setting up political power, arming the workers and peasants, etc., and they know they are fighting for themselves, for the working class and the peasantry. Hence they can endure the hardships of the bitter struggle without complaint. Each company, battalion or regiment has its soldiers' committee which represents the interests of the soldiers and carries on political and mass work.

Experience has proved that the system of Party representatives^[10] must not be abolished. The Party representative is particularly important at company level, since Party branches are organized on a

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company basis. He has to see that the soldiers' committee carries out political training, to guide the work of the mass movements, and to serve concurrently as the secretary of the Party branch. Facts have shown that the better the company Party representative, the sounder the company, and that the company commander can hardly play this important political role. As the casualties among the lower cadres are heavy, captured enemy soldiers often become platoon leaders or company commanders in a very short time; some of those captured in February or March are already battalion commanders. It might seem that since our army is called the Red Army it could do without Party representatives, but this is a gross error. At one time the 28th Regiment in southern Hunan abolished the system, only to restore it later. To rename the Party representatives "directors" would be to confuse them with the directors in the Kuomintang army who are detested by the captured soldiers. A change of name does not affect the nature of the system. Hence we have decided to make no change. Casualties among Party representatives are very heavy, and while we have started classes for training and replenishment, we hope that the Central Committee and the Hunan and Kiangsi

Provincial Committees will send us at least thirty comrades who are able to serve as Party representatives.

Ordinarily a soldier needs six months' or a year's training before he can fight, but our soldiers, recruited only yesterday, have to fight today with practically no training. Poor in military technique, they fight on courage alone. As long periods of rest and training are out of the question, the only thing to do is to try and avoid certain engagements if possible and thus gain time for training. We now have a corps of 150 people in training as lower-ranking officers, and we intend to make this course a permanent institution. We hope that the Central Committee and the two Provincial Committees will send us more officers from platoon leader and company commander upwards.

The Hunan Provincial Committee has asked us to attend to the material conditions of the soldiers and make them at least a little better than those of the average worker or peasant. Actually they are worse. In addition to grain, each man receives only five cents a day for cooking oil, salt, firewood and vegetables, and even this is hard to keep up. The monthly cost of these items alone amounts to more than ten thousand silver dollars, which is obtained exclusively through expropriation of the local tyrants.^[11] We now have cotton

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padding for winter clothing for the whole army of five thousand men but are still short of cloth. Cold as the weather is, many of our men are still wearing only two layers of thin clothing. Fortunately we are inured to hardships. What is more, all of us share the same hardships; from the commander of the army to the cook everyone lives on the daily food allowance of five cents, apart from grain. As for pocket money, everybody gets the same amount, whether it is twenty cents, or forty cents.^[12] Consequently the soldiers have no complaints against anyone.

After each engagement there are some wounded. Also many officers and men have fallen ill from malnutrition, exposure to cold or other causes. Our hospitals up in the mountains give both Chinese and Western treatment, but are short of doctors and medicines. At present they have over eight hundred patients. The Hunan Provincial Committee promised to obtain drugs for us, but so far we have received none. We still hope the Central Committee and the two Provincial Committees will send us a few doctors with Western training, and some iodine.

Apart from the role played by the Party, the reason why the Red Army has been able to carry on in spite of such poor material conditions and such frequent engagements is its practice of democracy. The officers do not beat the men; officers and men receive equal treatment; soldiers are free to hold meetings and to speak out; trivial formalities have been done away with; and the accounts are open for all to inspect. The soldiers handle the mess arrangements and, out of the daily five cents for cooking oil, salt, firewood and vegetables, they can even save a little for pocket money, amounting to roughly six or seven coppers per person per day, which is called "mess savings". All this gives great satisfaction to the soldiers. The newly captured soldiers in particular feel that our army and the Kuornintang army are worlds apart. They feel spiritually liberated, even though material conditions in the Red Army are not equal to those in the White army. The very soldiers who had no courage in the White army yesterday are very brave in the Red Army today; such is the effect of democracy. The Red Army is like a furnace in which all

captured soldiers are transmuted the moment they come over. In China the army needs democracy as much as the people do. Democracy in our army is an important weapon for undermining the feudal mercenary army.^[13]

The Party organization now has four levels, the company branch, the battalion committee, the regimental committee and the army com-

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mittee. In a company there is the branch, with a group in each squad. "The Party branch is organized on a company basis"; this is an important reason why the Red Army has been able to carry on such arduous fighting without falling apart. Two years ago, when we were in the Kuomintang army, our Party had no organizational roots among the soldiers, and even among Yeh Ting's troops^[14] there was only one Party branch to each regiment; that is why we could not stand up to any serious test. In the Red Army today the ratio of Party to non-Party people is approximately one to three, or an average of one Party member in every four men. Recently we decided to recruit more Party members among the combat soldiers, so as to attain a fifty-fifty ratio.^[15] At present the company branches are short of good Party secretaries, and we ask the Central Committee to send us a number of activists from among those who can no longer function where they are now. Almost all the cadres from southern Hunan are doing Party work in the army. But since some of them were scattered during the retreat in southern Hunan in August, we now have no people to spare.

The local armed forces consist of Red Guards and insurrectionary detachments of workers and peasants. Armed with spears and shotguns, these detachments are organized on a township basis, each township having one detachment whose strength varies with the population. Its job is to suppress counter-revolution, protect the township government and assist the Red Army and Red Guards in battle when the enemy appears. The insurrectionary detachments started in Yunghsin as an underground force, but they have come into the open since we captured the entire county. The organization has now been extended to other counties in the border area and the name remains unchanged. The arms of the Red Guards are mainly five-round rifles but also include some nine-round and single-round rifles. There are 140 rifles in Ningkang, 220 in Yunghsin, 43 in Lienhua, so in Chaling, go in Linghsien, 130 in Suichuan and 10 in Wanan, making a total of 683. Most of the rifles have been supplied by the Red Army, but a small number were captured from the enemy by the Red Guards themselves. Fighting constantly against the peace preservation corps and levies of the landlords, most of the Red Guards in the counties are steadily increasing their fighting capacity. Before the May 21st Incident,^[16] all the counties had peasant self-defence corps. There were 300 rifles in Yuhsien, 300 in Chaling, 60 in Linghsien, 50 in Suichuan, 80 in Yunghsin, 60 in Lienhua, 60 in Ningkang (Yuan Wen-tsai's

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men) and 60 in the Ching kang Mountains (Wang Tso's men), totalling 970. After the incident, apart from the rifles in the hands of Yuan's and Wang's men, which remained intact, only 6 rifles were left in Suichuan and 1 in Lienhua, all the rest having been seized by the landlords. The peasant self-defence corps were not able to hold on to their rifles as a result of the opportunist line. At present the Red Guards in the counties still have far too few rifles, fewer than those of the landlords; the Red Army should continue to help them

with arms. The Red Army should do everything, short of reducing its own fighting capacity, to help arm the people. We have laid it down that each battalion of the Red Army should consist of four companies, each with 75 rifles, and, counting the rifles of the special task company, machine-gun company, trench-mortar company, regimental headquarters and the three battalion headquarters, each regiment will have 1,075 rifles. Those captured in action should be used as far as possible for arming the local forces. The commanders of the Red Guards should be people who have been sent from the counties to the Red Army training corps and have finished their training. The Red Army should send fewer and fewer people from outside areas to command local forces. Chu Pei-teh is arming his peace preservation corps and levies, while the armed forces of the landlords in the border counties are of considerable size and fighting capacity. This makes it all the more urgent to enlarge our local Red forces.

The principle for the Red Army is concentration, and that for the Red Guards dispersion. At the present time when the reactionary regime is temporarily stable, the enemy can mass huge forces to attack the Red Army, and dispersion would not be to the Red Army's advantage. In our experience, the dispersion of forces has almost always led to defeat, while the concentration of forces to fight a numerically inferior, equal or slightly superior enemy force has often led to victory. The Central Committee has instructed us to develop guerrilla warfare in much too large an area, extending several thousand *li* in both length and breadth; this is probably due to an overestimation of our strength. For the Red Guards dispersion is an advantage, and they are now using this method in their operations in all the counties.

The most effective method in propaganda directed at the enemy forces is to release captured soldiers and give the wounded medical treatment. Whenever soldiers, platoon leaders, or company or battalion commanders of the enemy forces are captured, we immediately conduct propaganda among them; they are divided into those wishing

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to stay and those wishing to leave, and the latter are given travelling expenses and set free. This immediately knocks the bottom out of the enemy's slander that "the Communist bandits kill everyone on sight". Writing about this measure, the *Ten-Day Review*, the journal of Yang Chih-sheng's 9th Division, exclaimed: "How vicious!" The Red Army soldiers show great concern for the prisoners and arrange warm farewells for them, and at every "Farewell Party for Our New Brothers" the prisoners respond with speeches of heart-felt gratitude. Medical treatment for the enemy wounded also has a great effect. Clever people on the enemy side like Li Wen-pin have recently imitated us by stopping the killing of prisoners and by giving medical attention to the wounded. Nevertheless, our men rejoin us at the very next engagement, bringing their arms with them, and this has happened twice already. In addition, we do as much written propaganda as possible, for instance, painting slogans. Wherever we go, we cover the walls with them. But we are short of people who can draw and hope the Central Committee and the two Provincial Committees will send us a few.

As for the military bases, the first base, the Ching kang Mountains, is at the juncture of four counties, Ning kang, Linghsien, Suichuan and Yunghsin. The distance between Maoping on the northern slope in Ning kang County and Huangao on the southern slope in Suichuan is 90 *li*. The distance between Nashan on the eastern slope in Yunghsin

County and Shuikou on the western slope in Linghsien is 80 *li*. The circumference measures 550 *li*, stretching from Nashan to Lungyuankou (both in Yunghsin County), Hsincheng, Maoping, Talung (all in Ningkang County), Shihtu, Shuikou, Hsiatsun (all in Linghsien County), Yingpanhsu, Taichiapu, Tafen, Tuitzechien, Huangao, Wutoukiang and Che-ao (all in Suichuan County) and back to Nashan. In the mountains there are paddy-fields and villages at Big Well, Small Well, Upper Well, Middle Well, Lower Well, Tzeping, Hsiachuang, Hsingchow, Tsaoping, Painihu and Lofu. All these places used to be infested by bandits and deserters but have now been turned into our base area. Its population is under two thousand, and the yield of unhusked rice is less than ten thousand piculs, and so the entire grain for the army has to be supplied from Ningkang, Yunghsin and Suichuan Counties. All the strategic passes in the mountains are fortified. Our hospitals, bedding and clothing workshops, ordnance department and regimental rear offices are all here. At the present moment grain is being transported to the mountains from Ningkang.

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Provided we have adequate supplies, the enemy can never break in. The second base, the Chiulung Mountains, is at the juncture of the four counties of Ningkang, Yunghsin, Lienhua and Chaling. It is less important than the Chingkung Mountains, but serves as the rearmost base for the local armed forces of the four counties, and it too has been fortified. It is essential for an independent Red regime encircled by the White regime to make use of the strategic advantages offered by mountains.

LAND QUESTIONS

The land situation in the border areas. Roughly speaking, more than 60 per cent of the land belonged to the landlords and less than 40 per cent to the peasants. In the Kiangsi sector, landownership was most concentrated in Suichuan County, where about 80 per cent of the land belonged to the landlords. Yunghsin came next with about 70 per cent. In Wanan, Ningkang and Lienhua there were more owner-peasants, but the landlords still owned the bulk of the land, *i.e.*, about 60 per cent of the total, while the peasants owned only 40 per cent. In the Hunan sector, about 70 per cent of the land in both Chaling and Linghsien Counties belonged to the landlords.

The question of the intermediate class. Given this land situation, it is possible to win the support of the majority for the confiscation and redistribution of all the land.^[17] The rural population is roughly divided into three classes, the class of big and middle landlords, the intermediate class of small landlords and rich peasants, and the class of middle and poor peasants. The interests of the rich peasants are often interwoven with those of the small landlords. The land of the rich peasants forms only a small percentage of the total, yet if the land of the small landlords is counted in, the amount is considerable. Probably this is more or less the case throughout the country. The land policy which has been adopted in the border areas is complete confiscation and thorough distribution; consequently, in the Red area the big and middle landlord class and the intermediate class are both being attacked. Such is the policy, but in its actual execution we have met with a great deal of obstruction from the intermediate class. In the early days of the revolution the intermediate class ostensibly capitulated to the poor peasant class,

but in reality they exploited their traditional social position and clan authority to intimidate the poor peasants for the purpose of delaying the distribution of land.

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When no further delay was possible, they concealed their actual holdings, or retained the good land and gave up the poor land. In this period the poor peasants, having long been trampled down and feeling that the victory of the revolution was uncertain, frequently yielded to the intermediate class and dared not take vigorous action. It is taken against the intermediate class in the villages only when the revolution is on the upsurge, for instance, when political power has been seized in one or more counties, the reactionary army has suffered several defeats and the prowess of the Red Army has been repeatedly demonstrated. The most serious instances of delay in land distribution and concealment of landholdings occurred in the southern section of Yunghsin County, where the intermediate class was the largest. The actual land distribution in this area was carried out only after the Red Army won its great victory at Lungyuankou on June 23 and the district government punished several people for delaying distribution. But as the feudal family system prevails in every county, and as all the families in a village or group of villages belong to a single clan, it will be quite a long time before people become conscious of their class and clan sentiment is overcome in the villages.

The defection of the intermediate class under the White terror. Having been under attack during the revolutionary upsurge, the intermediate class deserted to the enemy as soon as the White terror struck. In Yunghsin and Ningkang it was precisely the small landlords and rich peasants who led the reactionary troops in setting fire to the houses of revolutionary peasants. On the instructions of the reactionaries, they burned down houses and made arrests, and quite brazenly too. When the Red Army returned to the area of Ningkang, Hsincheng, Kucheng and Lungshih, several thousand peasants fled with the reactionaries to Yunghsin, because they were duped by the reactionary propaganda that the Communists would kill them. It was only after we had conducted propaganda to the effect that "peasants who have defected will not be killed" and "peasants who have defected are welcome to come back to reap their crops" that some of them slowly came back.

When the revolution is at a low ebb in the country as a whole, the most difficult problem in our areas is to keep a firm hold on the intermediate class. The main reason for betrayal by this class is that it has received too heavy a blow from the revolution. But when there is a revolutionary upsurge in the country as a whole, the poor peasant class has something to rely on and becomes bolder, while the inter-

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mediate class has something to fear and dare not get out of hand. When the war between Li Tsung-jen and Tang Sheng-chih spread to Hunan, the small landlords in Chaling tried to placate the peasants, and some even sent them pork as a New Year gift (though by then the Red Army had already withdrawn from Chaling to Suichuan). But after the war ended, no one ever heard of such things again. Now that there is a nation-wide tide of counter-revolution, the intermediate class in the White areas, having suffered heavy blows, has attached itself almost wholly to the big landlord class, and the poor peasant class has become isolated. This is indeed a very serious problem.^[18]

The pressure of daily life as a cause of the defection of the intermediate class. The Red and the White areas are now facing each other like two countries at war. Owing to the tight enemy blockade and to our mishandling of the petty bourgeoisie, trade between the two areas has almost entirely ceased; necessities such as salt, cloth and medicines are scarce and costly, and agricultural products such as timber, tea and oil cannot be sent out, so that the peasants' cash income is cut off and the people as a whole are affected. Poor peasants are more able to bear such hardships, but the intermediate class will go over to the big landlord class when it can bear them no longer. Unless the splits and wars within the landlord class and among the warlords in China continue, and unless a nation-wide revolutionary situation develops, the small independent Red regimes will come under great economic pressure and it is doubtful whether they will be able to last. For not only is such economic strain intolerable to the intermediate class, but some day it will prove too much even for the workers, poor peasants and Red Army men. In the counties of Yunghsin and Ningkang there was at one time no salt for cooking, and supplies of cloth and medicines, not to mention other things, were entirely cut off. Now salt can be had again but is very expensive. Cloth and medicines are still unobtainable. Timber, tea and oil, which are all produced abundantly in Ningkang, western Yunghsin and northern Suichuan (all within our areas at present), cannot be sent out.^[19]

The criterion for land distribution. The township is taken as the unit for land distribution. In hillier regions with less farm land, for instance, in the Hsiaokiang district of Yunghsin, three or four townships were sometimes taken as the unit, but such cases were extremely rare. All the inhabitants, men and women, old and young, received equal shares. A change has now been made in accordance with the Central

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Committee's plan whereby labour-power is taken as the criterion, so that a person with labour-power is allotted twice as much land as one without.^[20]

The question of concessions to the owner-peasants. This has not yet been discussed in detail. Among the owner-peasants, the rich peasants have requested that productive capacity should be taken as the criterion, that is, that those with more manpower and capital (such as farm implements) should be allotted more land. They feel that neither equal distribution nor distribution according to labour power is to their advantage. They have indicated that they are willing to put in more effort, which, coupled with the use of their capital, would enable them to raise bigger crops. They will not like it if they are allotted the same amount of land as everybody else and their special efforts and extra capital are ignored (left unused). Land distribution here is still being carried out in the way laid down by the Central Committee. But this question deserves further discussion, and a report will be submitted when conclusions are reached.

The land tax. In Ningkang the tax rate is 20 per cent of the crop, or 5 per cent more than the rate fixed by the Central Committee; it is inadvisable to make any change now as collection is already under way, but the rate will be reduced next year. Then there are the sections of Suichuan, Linghsien and Yunghsin under our regime which are all hilly areas, and where the peasants are so poverty-stricken that any taxation is inadvisable. We have to rely on expropriating the local tyrants in the White areas to cover the expenses of the government and the Red Guards. As for the provisioning of the Red Army, rice is obtained for the time being from the land tax in Ningkang, while cash is obtained solely

from expropriation of the local tyrants. During our guerrilla operations in Suichuan in October, we collected more than ten thousand yuan, which will last us some time, and we shall see what can be done when it is spent.

QUESTIONS OF POLITICAL POWER

People's political power has been established everywhere at county, district and township levels, but more in name than in reality. In many places there is no council of workers, peasants and soldiers. The executive committees of the township, district or even county governments were invariably elected at some kind of mass meeting. But mass meetings called on the spur of the moment can neither

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discuss questions nor help in training the masses politically, and, what is more, they are only too apt to be manipulated by intellectuals or careerists. Some places do have a council, but it is regarded merely as a temporary body for electing the executive committee; once the election is over, authority is monopolized by the committee and the council is never heard of again. Not that there are no councils of workers, peasants and soldiers worthy of the name, but they are very few. The reason is the lack of propaganda and education concerning this new political system. The evil feudal practice of arbitrary dictation is so deeply rooted in the minds of the people and even of the ordinary Party members that it cannot be swept away at once; when anything crops up, they choose the easy way and have no liking for the bothersome democratic system. Democratic centralism can be widely and effectively practised in mass organizations only when its efficacy is demonstrated in revolutionary struggle and the masses understand that it is the best means of mobilizing their forces and is of the utmost help in their struggle. We are drafting a detailed organic law for the councils at all levels (based on the outline drawn up by the Central Committee) in order gradually to correct previous mistakes. In the Red Army, conferences of soldiers' representatives are now being established on a permanent basis and at all levels so as to correct the mistake of having only soldiers' committees and not conferences.

At present, what the masses of the people generally understand by the "government of workers, peasants and soldiers" is the executive committee, because they are still unaware of the powers of the council, and think that the executive committee alone is the real power. An executive committee without a council behind it often acts without regard for the views of the masses, and there are instances everywhere of hesitation and compromise on the confiscation and redistribution of land, of squandering or embezzling funds, and of recoiling before the White forces or fighting only half-heartedly. In addition, the committee seldom meets in full session, all business being decided and handled by its standing committee. In the district and township governments even the standing committee rarely meets, and business is decided and handled separately by the four individuals who work in the office, namely, the chairman, secretary, treasurer and commander of the Red Guards (or insurrectionary detachment). Thus democratic centralism has not become a regular practice even in the work of the government.

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In the early days the small landlords and rich peasants scrambled to get on to government committees, especially at the township level. Wearing red ribbons and feigning enthusiasm, they wormed their way into the government committees by trickery and seized control of everything, relegating the poor-peasant members to a minor role. They can be cleared out only when they are unmasked in the course of struggle and the poor peasants assert themselves. Though not widespread, such a state of affairs exists in quite a number of places.

The Party enjoys immense prestige and authority among the masses, the government much less. The reason is that for the sake of convenience the Party handles many things directly and brushes aside the government bodies. There are many such instances. In some places there are no leading Party members' groups in the government organizations, while in others they exist but are not functioning properly. From now on the Party must carry out its task of giving leadership to the government; with the exception of propaganda, the Party's policies and the measures it recommends must be carried out through the government organizations. The Kuomintang's wrong practice of directly imposing orders on the government must be avoided.

QUESTIONS OF PARTY ORGANIZATION

The struggle against opportunism. It may be said that around the time of the May 21st Incident the Party organizations in the border area counties were controlled by opportunists. When the counter-revolution set in, there was very little resolute struggle. In October last year, when the Red Army (the First Regiment of the First Division of the First Army of the Workers' and Peasants' Revolutionary Army) arrived in the border area counties, only a few Party member who had gone into hiding were left and the Party organizations had been entirely destroyed by the enemy. The period from last November to April was one of rebuilding the Party, and the period since May has been one of great expansion. But in the last twelve months manifestations of opportunism continued to be widespread. On the approach of the enemy, some members, lacking the will to fight, hid in remote hills, which they called "lying in ambush". Other members, though very active, resorted to blind insurrection. These were both expression of petty-bourgeois ideology. After a long period of tempering through struggle and of inner-Party education, such things have become less frequent. In the past year, the same petty-bourgeois ideology also

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existed in the Red Army. On the approach of the enemy, either reckless battle or precipitate flight would be proposed. Often both ideas emanated from the same individual in the course of the discussions on what military action to take. This opportunist ideology has been gradually corrected through prolonged inner-Party struggle and through lessons learned from actual events, for instance, from the losses incurred in reckless battle and the reverses suffered during precipitate flight.

Localism. The economy in the border area is agricultural, with some places still in the age of the hand-pestle (in the hilly regions the wooden pestle is still in general use for husking rice, while in the plains there are many stone pestles). The unit of social organization everywhere is the clan, consisting of people having the same family name.

In the Party organizations in the villages, it often happens that a branch meeting virtually becomes a clan meeting, since branches consist of members bearing the same family name and living close together. In these circumstances it is very hard indeed to build a "militant Bolshevik Party". Such members do not quite understand when they are told that the Communists draw no sharp line of demarcation between one nation and another or between one province and another, or that a sharp line should not be drawn between different counties, districts and townships. Localism exists to a serious extent in the relations between counties and even between districts and townships within the same county. In eliminating localism, reasoning can at best produce only limited results, and it takes White oppression, which is by no means localized, to do much more. For instance, it is only when counter-revolutionary "joint suppression" campaigns by the two provinces make the people share a common lot in struggle that their localism is gradually broken down. Localism is declining as a result of many such lessons.

The question of the native inhabitants and the settlers. There is another peculiar feature in the border counties, namely, the rift between the native inhabitants and the settlers. A very wide rift has long existed between the native inhabitants and the settlers whose forefathers came from the north several hundred years ago; their traditional feuds are deep-seated and they sometimes erupt in violent clashes. The settlers, numbering several millions, live in a zone extending from the Fukien-Kwangtung border all the way along the Hunan-Kiangsi border to southern Hupeh. These settlers, who live in the hilly regions, have been oppressed by the native inhabitants

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in the plains and have never had any political rights. They welcomed the national revolution of the past two years, thinking that the day had come for them to raise their heads. But unfortunately the revolution failed and they continue to be oppressed by the native inhabitants. Within our own area the problem of the native inhabitants and the settlers exists in Ningkang, Suichuan, Lingsien and Chaling, and is most serious in Ningkang. Under the leadership of the Communist Party, the revolutionaries among the native inhabitants of Ningkang, together with the settlers, overthrew the political power of the native landlords and gained control of the whole county in 1926-27. In June last year the Kiangsi government under Chu Pei-teh turned against the revolution; in September the landlords acted as guides for Chu's troops in the "suppression" campaign against Ningkang and once again stirred up the conflict between the native inhabitants and the settlers. In theory, this rift between the native inhabitants and the settlers ought not to extend into the exploited classes of workers and peasants, much less into the Communist Party. But it does, and it persists by force of long tradition. Here is an example. After the August defeat in the border area, when the native landlords returned to Ningkang, bringing with them the reactionary troops and spreading the rumour that the settlers were going to massacre the native inhabitants, most of the native peasants defected, put on white ribbons and guided the White troops in burning down houses and searching the hills. And when the Red Army routed the White troops in October and November, the native peasants fled with the reactionaries, and their property in turn was seized by the settler-peasants. This situation, reflected in the Party, often leads to senseless conflicts. Our solution is, on the one hand, to announce that "peasant who have defected will not be killed" and "peasants who have defected will also be given land when they return", in order to help them shake off the influence of the landlords and return home without misgivings; on the other hand, it is to get our county government to order

the restoration by settler-peasants of any property they have seized, and to post notices that the native peasants will be protected. Inside the Party, education must be intensified to ensure unity between these two sections of the membership.

The defection of the careerists. During the revolutionary upsurge (in June), many careerists took advantage of the Party's open recruitment of members and sneaked into the Party, with the result that the membership in the border area rapidly rose to more than ten

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thousand. Since the leaders of the branches and district committees were mostly new members, good inner-Party education was out of the question. As soon as the White terror struck, the careerists defected and acted as guides for the counter-revolutionaries in rounding up our comrades, and the Party organizations in the White areas mostly collapsed. After September the Party carried out a drastic house cleaning and set strict class qualifications for membership. All the Party organizations in Yunghsin and Ningkang Counties were dissolved and a re-registration was undertaken. Though greatly reduced in numbers, the membership has gained in fighting capacity. All Party organizations used to be in the open, but since September underground organizations have been built up to prepare the Party for carrying on its activities when the reactionaries come. At the same time, we have been making every effort to penetrate into the White areas and operate inside the enemy camp. But in the nearby towns the foundations have not yet been laid for Party organization. The reasons are that, first, the enemy is stronger in the towns and, second, our army hurt the interests of the bourgeoisie too much during its occupation of the towns, so that it is difficult for Party members to keep a foothold there. We are now correcting these mistakes and doing our best to build Party organizations in the towns, but so far without much success.

The leading bodies of the Party. The branch executive has been renamed the branch committee. Above the branch there is the district committee, and above that the county committee. Where there are special circumstances, a special district committee is formed between the district and the county levels, as for instance the Peihsiang Special District Committee and the Southeastern Special District Committee in Yunghsin County. In the border area there are altogether five county committees, in Ningkang, Yunghsin, Lienhua, Suichuan and Linghsien. There used to be a county committee in Chaling, but as the work there did not take root, most of the organizations formed last winter and this spring have been crushed by the Whites; consequently, for the last six months we have been able to work only in the hilly regions near Ningkang and Yunghsin, and so the Chaling County Committee has been changed into a special district committee. Comrades were sent to Yuhsien and Anjen Counties, which can be reached only via Chaling, but they have returned without accomplishing anything. The Wanan County Committee was cut off from us by the Whites for more than six months after its joint meeting with us in Suichuan in January, and it was not until September, when the

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Red Army reached Wanan in a guerrilla operation, that we resumed contact. From Wanan eighty revolutionary peasants returned with our men to the Chingkung Mountains and were organized as the Wanan Red Guards. There is no Party organization in Anfu. The County Committee of Kian, which borders on Yunghsin, has got in touch with us only twice and has given us no help, which is very strange. In the Shatien area of Kueitung

County land distribution was carried out on two occasions, in March and in August, and Party organizations have been built up and placed under the Southern Hunan Special Committee with its centre at Shihertung in Lunghsi. Above the county committees there is the Special Committee of the Hunan-Kiangsi Border Area. On May 20 the first Party congress of the border area was held at Maoping in Ningkang County, and it elected twenty-three people as members of the First Special Committee, with Mao Tse-tung as secretary. In July the Hunan Provincial Committee sent over Yang Kai-ming and he became acting secretary. In September Yang fell ill and Tan Chen-lin took his place. In August, when the major detachment of the Red Army had gone to southern Hunan and the White forces were pressing hard on the border area, we held an emergency meeting at Yunghsin. In October after the Red Army's return to Ningkang, the second Party congress of the border area was held at Maoping. In its three-day session beginning on October 14, it adopted a number of resolutions, including "The Political Problems and the Tasks of the Border Area Party Organization", and elected the following nineteen people as members of the Second Special Committee, Tan Chen-lin, Chu Teh, Chen Yi, Lung Chao-ching, Chu Chang-chieh, Liu Tien-chien, Yuan Pan-chu, Tan Szu-tung, Tan Ping, Li Chueh-fei, Sung Yi-yueh, Yuan Wen-tsai, Wang Tso-nung, Chen Cheng-jen, Mao Tse-tung, Wan Hsi-hsien, Wang Tso, Yang Kai-ming and Ho Ting-ying. A standing committee of five was formed, with Tan Chen-lin (a worker) as secretary and Chen Cheng-jen (an intellectual) as deputy secretary. The Sixth Party Congress of the Red Army was held on November 14 and it elected an Army Committee of twenty-three members, five of them forming a standing committee with Chu Teh as secretary. Both the Border Area Special Committee and the Army Committee are subordinate to the Front Committee. The Front Committee was reorganized on November 6, with the following five members designated by the Central Committee: Mao Tse-tung, Chu Teh, the secretary of the local Party headquarters (Tan Chen-lin), a worker comrade (Sung

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Chiao-sheng) and a peasant comrade (Mao Ko-wen), with Mao Tse-tung as secretary. For the time being, this committee has set up a secretariat, a propaganda section, an organization section, a labour movement commission and a military affairs commission. The Front Committee is in charge of the local Party organizations. It is necessary to retain the Special Committee because sometimes the Front Committee has to move about with the troops. In our opinion the question of proletarian ideological leadership is very important. The Party organizations in the border area counties, which are composed almost exclusively of peasants, will go astray without the ideological leadership of the proletariat. Besides paying close attention to the labour movement in the county towns and other big towns, we should increase the workers' representation in the government bodies. The proportion of workers and poor peasants should also be increased in the leading organs of the Party at all levels.

THE QUESTION OF THE CHARACTER OF THE REVOLUTION

We fully agree with the Communist International's resolution on China. There is no doubt that China is still at the stage of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The programme for a thorough democratic revolution in China comprises, externally, the overthrow of imperialism so as to achieve complete national liberation, and, internally,

the elimination of the power and influence of the comprador class in the cities, the completion of the agrarian revolution in order to abolish feudal relations in the villages, and the overthrow of the government of the warlords. We must go through such a democratic revolution before we can lay a real foundation for the transition to socialism. In the past year we have fought in many places and are keenly aware that the revolutionary tide is on the ebb in the country as a whole. While Red political power has been established in a few small areas, in the country as a whole the people lack the ordinary democratic rights, the workers, the peasants and even the bourgeois democrats do not have freedom of speech or assembly, and the worst crime is to join the Communist Party. Wherever the Red Army goes, the masses are cold and aloof, and only after our propaganda do they slowly move into action. Whatever enemy units we face, there are hardly any cases of mutiny or desertion to our side and we have to fight it out. This holds even for the enemy's Sixth Army which recruited the greatest number of "rebels" after the May 21st Incident. We have an

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acute sense of our isolation which we keep hoping will end. Only by launching a political and economic struggle for democracy, which will also involve the urban petty bourgeoisie, can we turn the revolution into a seething tide that will surge through the country.

Up to February this year we applied our policy towards the petty bourgeoisie fairly well. In March the representative of the Southern Hunan Special Committee arrived in Ningkang and criticized us for having leaned to the Right, for having done too little burning and killing, and for having failed to carry out the so-called policy of "turning the petty bourgeois into proletarians and then forcing them into the revolution", whereupon the leadership of the Front Committee was reorganized and the policy was changed. In April, after the whole of our army arrived in the border area, there was still not much burning and killing, but the expropriation of the middle merchants in the towns and the collection of compulsory contributions from the small landlords and rich peasants in the countryside were rigorously enforced. The slogan of "All factories to the workers", put forward by the Southern Hunan Special Committee, was also given wide publicity. This ultra-Left policy of attacking the petty bourgeoisie drove most of them to the side of the landlords, with the result that they put on white ribbons and opposed us. With the gradual change of this policy, the situation has been steadily improving. Good results have been achieved in Suichuan in particular, for the merchants in the county town and other market towns no longer fight shy of us, and quite a few speak well of the Red Army. The fair in Tsaolin (held every three days at noon) attracts some twenty thousand people, an attendance which breaks all previous records. This is proof that our policy is now correct. The landlords imposed very heavy taxes and levies on the people; the Pacification Guards^[21] of Suichuan levied five toll charges along the seventy-*li* road from Huangao to Tsaolin, no farm produce being exempt. We crushed the Pacification Guards and abolished these tolls, thus winning the support of all the peasants as well as of the small and middle merchants.

The Central Committee wants us to issue a political programme which takes into account the interests of the petty bourgeoisie, and we for our part propose that the Central Committee work out, for general guidance, a programme for the whole democratic

revolution which takes into account the workers' interests, the agrarian revolution and national liberation.

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A special characteristic of the revolution in China, a country with a predominantly agricultural economy, is the use of military action to develop insurrection. We recommend that the Central Committee should devote great effort to military work.

THE QUESTION OF THE LOCATION OF OUR INDEPENDENT REGIME

The area stretching from northern Kwangtung along the Hunan-Kiangsi border into southern Hupeh lies entirely within the Lohsiao mountain range. We have traversed the whole range, and a comparison of its different sections shows that the middle section, with Ningkang as its centre, is the most suitable for our armed independent regime. The northern section has terrain which is less suitable for our taking either the offensive or the defensive, and it is too close to the enemy's big political centres. Besides, stationing large forces in the area of Liuyang, Liling, Pinghsiang and Tungku would involve a considerable risk, unless we plan a quick seizure of Changsha or Wuhan. The southern section has better terrain than the northern, but our mass base there is not as good as in the middle section, nor can we exert as great a political influence on Hunan and Kiangsi from it as we can from the middle section, from which any move can affect the lower river valleys of the two provinces. The middle section has the following advantages: (1) a mass base, which we have been cultivating for more than a year; (2) a fairly good basis for the Party organizations; (3) local armed forces which have been built up for more than a year and are well experienced in struggle -- a rare achievement -- and which, coupled with the Fourth Red Army, will prove indestructible in the face of any enemy force; (4) an excellent military base, the Chingkang Mountains, and bases for our local armed forces in all the counties; and (5) the influence it can exert on the two provinces and on the lower valleys of their rivers, an influence endowing it with much more political importance than that possessed by southern Hunan or southern Kiangsi, the influence of either of which can reach out only to its own province, or only to the upper river valley and the hinterland of its own province. The disadvantage of the middle section is that, since it has long been under the independent regime and is confronted by the enemy's large "encirclement and suppression" forces, its economic problems, especially the shortage of cash, are extremely difficult.

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As for a plan of action here, the Hunan Provincial Committee advocated three different plans within a few weeks in June and July. First Yuan Teh-sheng came and approved our plan to establish political power in the middle section of the Lohsiao mountain range. Then Tu Hsiu-ching and Yang Kai-ming came and urged that the Red Army should move towards southern Hunan without the least hesitation and leave a force of only two hundred rifles behind to defend the border area together with the Red Guards- this, they said, was the "absolutely correct" policy. The third time, barely ten days later, Yuan Teh-sheng came again with a letter which, besides rebuking us at great length, urged that the Red Army should set out for eastern Hunan; this was again described as the "absolutely

correct" policy, to be carried out "without the least hesitation". These rigid directives put us in a real dilemma, because failure to comply would be tantamount to disobedience, while compliance would mean certain defeat. When the second message came, the Army Committee, the Border Area Special Committee and the Yunghsin County Committee of the Party met in a joint session and decided against carrying out the Provincial Committee's instructions, as it was considered dangerous to move towards southern Hunan. But a few days later, Tu Hsiu-ching and Yang Kai-ming, persisting in the Provincial Party Committee's plan and taking advantage of the 29th Regiment's homesickness, dragged the Red Army off to attack the county town of Chenchou, thus bringing defeat both to the border area and to the Red Army. The Red Army lost about half its men, and countless houses were burned down and innumerable people massacred in the border area, county after county fell to the enemy and some of them have not been recovered to this day. As for moving to eastern Hunan, it was certainly inadvisable for the main forces of the Red Army to do so unless there was a split among the ruling landlords of Hunan, Hupeh and Kiangsi Provinces. If we had not advanced on southern Hunan in July, we would not only have averted the August defeat in the border area, but we could also have exploited the fighting between the Kuomintang's Sixth Army and Wang Chun's Kuomintang forces in Changshu, Kiangsi Province, to crush the enemy forces in Yunghsin, overrun Kian and Anfu, and make it possible for our advanced guard to reach Pinghsiang and establish contact with the Fifth Red Army in the northern section of the Lohsiao mountain range. Even if all that had happened, the proper place for our general headquarters should have still been Ningkang, and only guerrilla forces

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should have been dispatched to eastern Hunan. Since fighting had not broken out among the landlords and since formidable enemy forces were still in Pinghsiang, Chaling and Yuhsien on the Hunan border, we would have been giving the enemy his chance if we had moved our main forces northward. The Central Committee asked us to consider an advance on eastern or on southern Hunan, but either course was very dangerous; although the proposed expedition to eastern Hunan has not been carried out, the expedition to southern Hunan has proved a failure. This painful experience is always worth remembering.

We are not yet in a period when the regime of the landlord class has split up, and the "suppression" forces of the enemy deployed round the border area still number more than ten regiments. But if we can continue to find ways of getting cash (food and clothing no longer being a big problem), then, with the foundation for our work established in the border area, we shall be able to cope with these enemy forces, and even with larger ones. As far as the border area is concerned, it would at once suffer devastation, just as it did in August, if the Red Army moved away. Although not all our Red Guards would be wiped out, the Party and our mass base would receive a crippling blow, and while there are places in the mountains where we might retain a foothold, in the plains we would all have to go underground as in August and September. If the Red Army does not move away, then, building on the foundations we already have, we shall be able gradually to expand to surrounding areas and our prospects will be very bright. If we want to enlarge the Red Army, the only way is to engage the enemy in a prolonged struggle in the vicinity of the Ching kang Mountains where we have a good mass base, namely, in the counties of Ningkang, Yunghsin, Linghsien and Suichuan, utilizing in this struggle the divergence of interests between the enemy forces of Hunan and Kiangsi Provinces, their need to defend

themselves on all sides and their consequent inability to concentrate their forces. We can gradually enlarge the Red Army by the use of correct tactics, fighting no battle unless we can win it and capture arms and men. With the preparatory work that had already been done among the masses in the border area between April and July, the Red Army could undoubtedly have been enlarged in August had its major detachment not made its expedition to southern Hunan. Despite that mistake, the Red Army has returned to the border area where the terrain is favourable and the people are

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friendly, and the prospects are not bad even now. Only through the determination to fight and stamina in fighting in places such as the border area can the Red Army add to its arms and train up good men. The Red Flag has been kept flying in the border area for a whole year. It has incurred the bitter hatred of the landlord class of Hunan, Hupeh and Kiangsi and indeed of that of the whole country, but it is steadily raising the hopes of the workers, peasants and soldiers in the surrounding provinces. Consider the soldiers. Because the warlords are making the "bandit-suppression" campaign against the border area their major task and are issuing such statements as "a year has been spent and a million dollars used up in the effort to suppress the bandits" (Lu Ti-ping), or the Red Army "has 20,000 men with 5,000 rifles" (Wang Chun), the attention of their soldiers and disheartened junior officers is gradually turned towards us, and more and more of them will break away from the enemy to join our ranks, thus providing the Red Army with another source of recruitment. Besides, the fact that the Red Flag has never been lowered in the border area shows at once the strength of the Communist Party and the bankruptcy of the ruling classes, and this is of nation-wide political significance. Therefore, we hold, as we have always held, that it is absolutely necessary and correct to build up and expand Red political power in the middle section of the Lohsiao mountain range.

NOTES

[1] This war took place in October 1927. [p. 73]

[2] This war took place in November and December 1927. [p. 73]

[3] The system of the soldiers' representative conferences and soldiers' committees in the Red Army was later abolished. In 1947, the People's Liberation Army inaugurated a system of armymen's conferences and soldiers' committees, both under the leadership of cadres. [p. 75]

[4] These troops, originally under the command of Comrades Yeh Ting and Ho Lung, staged the Nanchang Uprising of August 1, 1927. They were defeated in their advance on Chaochow and Swatow, Kwangtung Province, and some units, led by Comrades Chu Teh, Lin Piao and Chen Yi, withdrew to southern Hunan via Kiangsi to carry on guerrilla operations. They joined Comrade Mao Tse-tung's forces in the Chinggang Mountains in April 1928. [p. 80]

[5] In the revolutionary days of 1927 most of the cadres in the Guards Regiment of the National Government at Wuchang were members of the Communist Party. At

the end of July 1927, after Wang Ching-wei and his associates had betrayed the revolution, the regiment left Wuchang to join in the uprising at Nanchang. Learning *en route* that the revolutionary forces had already gone south from Nanchang, the regiment made a detour to Hsiushui in western Kiangsi to join the peasant armed forces of Pingkiang and Liuyang. [p. 80]

^[6] In the spring of 1927 peasant armed forces of considerable strength were formed in the area of Pingkiang and Liuyang, Hunan Province. On May 21, Hsu Keh-hsiang staged a counter-revolutionary coup in Changsha and massacred the revolutionary masses. The peasant armed forces then marched on Changsha on May 31 to hit back at the counter-revolutionaries, but were stopped by the opportunist Chen Tu-hsiu and turned back. Thereupon a section was reorganized into an independent regiment to engage in guerrilla warfare. After the Nanchang Uprising on August 1, these armed peasants joined forces with the former Guards Regiment of the Wuchang National Government at Hsiushui and Tungku in Kiangsi Province and at Pingkiang and Liuyang in Hunan Province, and staged the Autumn Harvest Uprising in co-ordination with the armed coal miners of Pinghsiang, Kiangsi. In October Comrade Mao Tse-tung led these forces to the Chingyang Mountains. [p. 80]

^[7] In early 1928, while Comrade Chu Teh was directing revolutionary guerrilla warfare in southern Hunan, peasant armies were organized in the counties of Yichang, Chenchow, Leiyang, Yunghsing and Tzehsing, where the peasant movement had already taken firm root. Comrade Chu Teh subsequently led them to the Chingyang Mountains to join the forces under Comrade Mao Tse-tung. [p. 80]

^[8] Shuikoushan in Changning, Hunan Province, is well known for its lead mines. In 1922 the miners there led by the Communist Party formed a trade union and for years conducted struggles against the counter-revolution. Many of the miners joined the Red Army after the Autumn Harvest Uprising of 1927. [p. 80]

^[9] The Anyuan Coal Mines in Pinghsiang County, Kiangsi Province, employing twelve thousand workers, were owned by the Han-Yeh-Ping Iron and Steel Company. From 1921 onwards Party organizations and a miners' union were set up there by the organizers sent by the Hunan Provincial Committee of the Communist Party. [p. 81]

^[10] In 1929 the Party representatives in the Red Army were renamed political commissars. In 1931 the company political commissars were renamed political instructors. [p. 81]

^[11] Expropriation of the local tyrants was only a temporary measure to defray part of the army's expenses. The expansion of the base areas and the growth of the army made it possible and necessary to defray army expenses through taxation. [p. 82]

^[12] This practice of equal cash payment, necessary at the time, remained in force over many years in the Red Army. Later on, however, officers and men received payments which differed slightly according to rank. [p. 83]

^[13] Here Comrade Mao Tse-tung lays special stress on the need for a definite measure of democracy in the revolutionary army, since, in the early period of the Red Army, without the stress on democracy it would not have been possible to arouse the revolutionary enthusiasm of the new peasant recruits and the captured White troops who had joined our ranks, nor would it have been possible to eliminate the warlord ways of the reactionary armies which had infected our cadres. Of course, democracy in the army must not transcend the limits of military discipline, which it must serve to strengthen and not weaken. Therefore, while a necessary measure of democracy should be promoted, the demand for ultra-democracy, which amounts to indiscipline, must be combated. Such indiscipline became a matter of serious concern at one point in the early days of the Red Army. For Comrade Mao Tse-tung's

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struggle against ultra-democracy in the army, see "[On Correcting Mistaken Ideas in the Party](#)", pp. 105-16 of this volume. [p. 83]

^[14] Comrade Yeh Ting commanded an independent regiment during the Northern Expedition in 1926. With Communists as its nucleus the regiment became famous as a crack force. It was expanded into the 24th Division after the capture of Wuchang by the revolutionary army and then into the Eleventh Army after the Nanchang Uprising. [p. 84]

^[15] Subsequent experience in the Red Army showed that a ratio of one Party member to two non-Party men was adequate. This proportion was generally maintained in the Red Army and later in the People's Liberation Army. [p. 84]

^[16] Instigated by Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Ching-wei, the counter-revolutionary Kuomintang army commanders in Hunan, including Hsu Keh-hsiang and Ho Chien ordered a raid on the provincial headquarters of the trade unions, the peasant associations and other revolutionary organizations in Changsha on May 21, 1927. Communists and revolutionary workers and peasants were arrested and killed en masse. This signaled the open collaboration of the two counter-revolutionary Kuomintang cliques, the Wuhan clique headed by Wang Ching-wei and the Nanking clique headed by Chiang Kai-shek. [p. 84]

^[17] Confiscation and redistribution of all the land was a provision in the Land Law promulgated in the Hunan-Kiangsi border area in 1928. Comrade Mao Tse-tung later pointed out that the confiscation of all land, instead of only the land of the landlords, was a mistake stemming from inexperience in agrarian struggles. In the Land Law of Hsingkuo County, Kiangsi, adopted in April 1929, the provision "confiscate all the land" was changed into "confiscate the public land and the land of the landlord class". [p. 87]

^[18] In view of the importance of winning over the intermediate class in the countryside, Comrade Mao Tse-tung soon corrected the erroneous policy of dealing too sharply with it. Apart from the present article, Comrade Mao Tse-tung's views on policy towards this class were also set forth in proposals to the Sixth Party Congress of the Red Army (November 1928), including "The Prohibition of Reckless Burning and Killing" and "Protection of the Interests of the Middle and Small Merchants"; in the January 1929 proclamation of the Fourth Red Army, which declared "merchants in the towns who have gradually built up some property are to be left alone so long as they obey the authorities"; in the Land Law of Hsingkuo County adopted in April 1929 (see Note 17), etc. [p. 89]

^[19] With the spread of the revolutionary war, the extension of the revolutionary base areas and the adoption of the policy of protecting industry and commerce by the revolutionary government, it became possible to change this situation, and a change did in fact occur later. What was crucial was resolutely to protect the industry and commerce of the national bourgeoisie and oppose ultra-Left policies. [p. 89]

^[20] Labour-power is not an appropriate criterion for land distribution. In the Red areas land was in fact redistributed equally on a per capita basis. [p. 90]

^[21] The Pacification Guards were a kind of local counter-revolutionary armed force. [p. 98]
