



Mao Tse-tung

**THE TASKS OF
THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY
IN THE PERIOD OF
RESISTANCE TO JAPAN**

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**THE TASKS OF
THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY IN THE
PERIOD OF RESISTANCE TO JAPAN***

May 3, 1937

**THE PRESENT STAGE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINA'S
EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS**

1. As the contradiction between China and Japan has become the principal one and China's internal contradictions have dropped into a secondary and subordinate place, changes have occurred in China's international relations and internal class relations, giving rise to a new stage of development in the current situation.

2. China has long been in the grip of two acute and basic contradictions, the contradiction between China and imperialism and the contradiction between feudalism and the masses of the people. In 1927 the bourgeoisie, represented by the Kuomintang, betrayed the revolution and sold China's national interests to imperialism, thus creating a situation in which the state power of the workers and peasants stood in sharp antagonism to that of the Kuomintang, and, of necessity, the task of the national and democratic revolution devolved upon the Chinese Communist Party alone.

3. Since the Incident of September 18, 1931 and especially since the Northern China Incident of 1935,^[1] the following changes have taken place in these contradictions:

(1) The contradiction between China and imperialism in general has given way to the particularly salient and sharp contradiction between China and Japanese imperialism. Japanese imperialism is carrying out a policy of total conquest of China. Consequently, the contradictions between China and certain other imperialist powers

* Comrade Mao Tse-tung delivered this report at the National Conference of the Communist Party of China, held in Yen-an in May 1937.

have been relegated to a secondary position, while the rift between these powers and Japan has been widened. Consequently also, the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people are faced with the task of linking China's anti-Japanese national united front with the world peace front. This means that China should not only unite with the Soviet Union, which has been the consistently good friend of the Chinese people, but as

far as possible should work for joint opposition to Japanese imperialism with those imperialist countries which, at the present time, are willing to maintain peace and are against new wars of aggression. The aim of our united front must be resistance to Japan, and not simultaneous opposition to all the imperialist powers.

(2) The contradiction between China and Japan has changed internal class relations within China and has confronted the bourgeoisie and even the warlords with the question of survival, so that they and their political parties have been undergoing a gradual change in their political attitude. This has placed the task of establishing an anti-Japanese national united front before the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people. Our united front should include the bourgeoisie and all who agree to the defence of the motherland; it should represent national solidarity against the foreign foe. This task not only must, but can, be fulfilled.

(3) The contradiction between China and Japan has changed matters for the masses throughout the country (the proletariat, the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie) and for the Communist Party, and it has changed the Party's policy. More and more people have risen to fight for national salvation. The policy proclaimed by the Communist Party after the September 18th Incident was to conclude agreements with those sections of the Kuomintang which were willing to co-operate with us for resistance, subject to three conditions (stop attacking the revolutionary base areas, guarantee the freedoms and rights of the people, arm the people), and it has developed into a policy of establishing an anti-Japanese united front of the whole nation. This is the reason for the following steps taken by our Party: in 1935, the August declaration^[2] and the December resolution;^[3] in 1936 the abandonment of the "anti-Chiang Kai-shek" slogan in May,^[4] the letter to the Kuomintang in August,^[5] the resolution on the democratic republic in September,^[6] and the insistence on a peaceful settlement of the Sian Incident in December; and in 1937, the February telegram to the Third Plenary Session of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang.^[7]

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(4) Because of the contradiction between China and Japan, a change has also occurred in the Chinese warlord regimes and the civil wars among them, which are the product of the imperialist policy of spheres of influence and of China's semi-colonial economic conditions. Japanese imperialism fosters such separate regimes and civil wars for the purpose of facilitating exclusive Japanese domination of China. Certain other imperialist powers are temporarily in favour of unity and peace in China in their own interests. The Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people on their part are exerting their utmost efforts against civil wars and splits and for peace and unity.

(5) In terms of relative political importance the development of the national contradiction between China and Japan has demoted the domestic contradictions between classes and between political groupings to a secondary and subordinate place. But they still exist and have by no means diminished or disappeared. The same is true of the contradictions between China and the imperialist powers other than Japan. Therefore, the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people are faced with the following task -- to make the appropriate adjustments with regard to those internal and external contradictions which can and must be adjusted at present so as to fit in with the general task of unity against Japan. This is the reason for the Chinese Communist Party's policies of peace and

unity, democracy, bettering the life of the people and negotiations with foreign countries that are opposed to Japan.

4. The first stage of the new period in the Chinese revolution began on December 9, 1935 and ended when the Kuomintang's Central Executive Committee held its Third Plenary Session in February 1937. The major events in this stage were the movements for national salvation among the students and cultural and press circles; the Red Army's entry into the Northwest; the Communist Party's work of propaganda and organization for its anti-Japanese national united front policy; the anti-Japanese strikes in Shanghai and Tsingtao;^[8] the relative stiffening of British policy towards Japan;^[9] the Kwangtung-Kwangsi Incident;^[10] the resistance in Suiyuan and the movement in its support;^[11] Nanking's somewhat firmer attitude in the Sino-Japanese negotiations;^[12] the Sian Incident; and finally, the Third Plenary Session of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang in Nanking.^[13] These events all centred on the basic contradiction, which is the antagonism between China and Japan; they all centred directly on the historical need for an anti-Japanese national united front.

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The basic task of the revolution at this stage was to struggle for internal peace and stop the internal armed conflicts, so that there could be unity against Japan. During this stage the Communist Party issued its call, "Stop the civil war and unite against Japan", a call which in the main has been put into effect, and thereby created the primary prerequisite for the actual establishment of an anti-Japanese national united front.

5. Owing to the presence of the pro-Japanese group inside the Kuomintang, it made no definite or thoroughgoing change in its policy at the Third Plenary Session of its Central Executive Committee and did not concretely solve any problem. However, owing to the pressure of the people and to developments in its own ranks, the Kuomintang had to begin to change its wrong policy of the previous ten years, that is, it had to turn away from the policy of civil war, dictatorship and non-resistance to Japan and to move in the direction of peace, democracy and resistance to Japan, and it had to begin accepting the policy of an anti-Japanese national united front; this initial change revealed itself at the Third Plenary Session of its Central Executive Committee. From now on the demand must be for a thorough change in Kuomintang policy. In order to attain this goal our Party and the people throughout the country must develop the movement for resistance to Japan and for democracy still more extensively, must go a step further in criticizing the Kuomintang, pushing it into action and keeping up the pressure, must unite with all those within the Kuomintang who stand for peace, democracy and resistance to Japan, and must help the hesitant waverers forward and throw out the pro-Japanese elements.

6. The present stage is the second one in the new period. Both the previous and present stages are stages of transition towards nation wide armed resistance to Japan. If in the previous stage the principal task was the fight for peace, then in the present stage the principal task is the fight for democracy. It must be understood that just as a genuine and solid anti-Japanese national united front cannot be established without internal peace, so it cannot be established without internal democracy. Hence at the present stage of development the fight for democracy is the central link in the revolutionary task. If we fail to see the importance of democracy clearly and slacken our fight for it, we shall be unable to establish a genuine and solid anti-Japanese national united front.

THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM

7. Japanese imperialism is now intensifying its preparations for the invasion of China south of the Great Wall. In concert with the intensified preparations of Hitler and Mussolini for predatory war in the West, Japan is exerting every ounce of energy in the East in order to prepare the ground, according to a definite plan, for the subjugation of China at a single stroke -- she is creating the military, political, economic and ideological conditions at home and the diplomatic conditions internationally, and fostering the pro-Japanese forces in China. Japan's propaganda about "Sino-Japanese collaboration" and a certain relaxation in her diplomatic measures stem precisely from the tactical needs of her policy of aggression on the eve of war. China is now approaching the critical moment of decision between survival and extinction and must rush preparations for resisting Japan and saving the nation. We are certainly not against preparation; what we are against is the doctrine of protracted preparation and the frivolous, dissipated and gluttonous life of civil and military officialdom which imperils the nation; such things actually help the enemy and must be quickly swept away.

8. Political, military, economic and educational preparations for national defence are all necessary for armed resistance to save the nation, and none of them should be delayed for a moment. But the key that will ensure victory for our armed resistance is the winning of political democracy and freedom. Armed resistance requires domestic peace and unity, but the peace already won cannot be consolidated and internal unity cannot be strengthened without democracy and freedom. Armed resistance requires the mobilization of the people, but there is no way of mobilizing them without democracy and freedom. Unless peace and unity are consolidated, unless the people are mobilized, our armed resistance will meet the same fate as Abyssinia's. Abyssinia was defeated mainly because her feudal regime could not achieve solid internal unity and rouse the initiative of her people. Without democracy, a genuine and solid national united front against Japan cannot be established in China and its goals cannot be attained.

9. China must at once start democratic changes in the-two following respects. First, in the matter of the political system, the reactionary Kuomintang dictatorship of one party and one class must be changed

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into a democratic government based on the co-operation of all parties and all classes. In this respect, a start should be made by changing the undemocratic procedures for electing and convening the national assembly, and by holding democratic elections to the assembly and ensuring freedom in the conduct of its meetings, after which it will be necessary to go on to framing and adopting a truly democratic constitution, convening a truly democratic parliament, and electing a genuinely democratic government that will carry out genuinely democratic policies. Only thus can internal peace be truly consolidated, internal armed hostilities ended and internal unity strengthened, enabling the whole nation to unite and resist the foreign foe. It is possible that Japanese

imperialism will attack us before the changes are completed. Therefore, in order to be able to resist and thoroughly crush the Japanese attack when it comes, we must quickly go ahead with the reforms and be prepared to accomplish them fully in the course of our armed resistance. The people of the whole country and the patriots of all parties should throw off their former indifference towards the question of a national assembly and a constitution, and should concentrate on the movement for a national assembly and a constitution, a movement that is important for national defence; they should subject the Kuomintang, the party in power, to severe criticism, and press and impel it to give up its one-party, one-class dictatorship and act according to the opinions of the people. In the next few months of this year, a broad democratic movement must be set going throughout the country, with the immediate objective of completely democratizing the national assembly and the constitution. The second matter concerns freedom of speech, assembly and association for the people. Without such freedom, it will be impossible to carry out the democratic reconstruction of the political system, mobilize the people for the war of resistance and victoriously defend the motherland and recover the lost territories. In the next few months the nation-wide democratic movement should strive for at least a minimal achievement of such freedoms, which must include the release of political prisoners, the removal of the ban on political parties, etc. Democratic reconstruction of the political system and freedom and rights for the people constitute an important part of the programme of the anti-Japanese national united front; at the same time they are prerequisites for the establishment of a genuine and solid anti-Japanese national united front.

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10. Our enemies -- the Japanese imperialists, the Chinese traitors, the pro-Japanese elements and the Trotskyites -- have been doing their utmost to wreck every move for peace and unity, democracy and freedom in China and for armed resistance to Japan. In the past, while we were fighting strenuously for peace and unity, they were doing all they could to foment civil war and splits. At present and in the near future, while we fight strenuously for democracy and freedom, they will no doubt resort to their wrecking again. Their general objective is to thwart us in our task of armed resistance in defence of the motherland and to accomplish their aggressive plan for subjugating China. From now on, in the struggle for democracy and freedom, we must not only exert ourselves in propaganda, agitation and criticism directed towards the Kuomintang die-hards and the backward sections of the people, but must also fully expose and firmly combat the intrigues of the Japanese imperialists and of the pro-Japanese elements and Trotskyites who serve as their running dogs in the invasion of China.

11. For the sake of internal peace, democracy and armed resistance and for the sake of establishing the anti-Japanese national united front, the Chinese Communist Party has made the following four pledges in its telegram to the Third Plenary Session of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang:

- (1) the Communist-led government in the Shensi-Kansu-Ningsia revolutionary base area will be renamed the Government of the Special Region of the Republic of China and the Red Army will be redesignated as part of the National Revolutionary Army, and they will come under the direction of the Central Government in Nanking and its Military Council respectively;
- (2) a thoroughly democratic system will be applied in the areas under the

Government of the Special Region;

(3) the policy of overthrowing the Kuomintang by armed force will be discontinued; and

(4) the confiscation of the land of the landlords will be discontinued.

These pledges are necessary as well as permissible. For only thus can we transform the state of antagonism between the two different regimes within the country and achieve unity for common action against the enemy, in line with the changes in the relative political importance of China's external and internal contradictions. These

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are principled and conditional concessions, made with the aim of obtaining in return what the whole nation needs -- peace, democracy and armed resistance. Moreover, the concessions have limits. The preservation of the Communist Party's leadership over the Special Region and in the Red Army, and the preservation of the Communist Party's independence and freedom of criticism in its relations with the Kuomintang -- these are the limits beyond which it is impermissible to go. Concessions mean concessions by both parties: the Kuomintang abandons the policy of civil war, dictatorship and non-resistance to the foreign foe, and the Communist Party abandons the policy of maintaining antagonism between the two regimes. We exchange the latter for the former and resume our co-operation with the Kuomintang to fight for national salvation. To describe this as capitulation by the Communist Party is nothing but Ah Q-ism^[14] or malicious slander.

12. Does the Communist Party agree with the Three People's Principles? Our answer is, Yes, we do.^[15] The Three People's Principles have undergone changes in the course of their history. The revolutionary Three People's Principles of Dr. Sun Yat-sen won the people's confidence and became the banner of the victorious revolution of 1924-27 because they were resolutely applied as a result of his co-operation with the Communist Party. In 1927, however, the Kuomintang turned on the Communist Party (the party purge^[16] and the anti-Communist war) and pursued an opposite policy, bringing the revolution down in defeat and endangering the nation; consequently the people lost confidence in the Three People's Principles. Now that there is an extremely grave national crisis and the Kuomintang can not continue to rule in the same old way, the people of the whole country and the patriots within the Kuomintang are urgently demanding co-operation between the two parties. Consequently, it is completely in keeping with the historical requirements of the Chinese revolution that the essence of the Three People's Principles should be revived and restored, and that the two parties should resume their co-operation, in accordance with the Principle of Nationalism, or the struggle for national independence and liberation, the Principle of Democracy, or the attainment of internal democracy and freedom, and the Principle of People's Livelihood, or the promotion of the people's welfare, and they should lead the people to put these principles resolutely into practice. This ought to be clearly grasped by every member of the Communist Party. Communists will never abandon their ideal of socialism and communism, which they will

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attain by going through the stage of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. The Chinese Communist Party has its own political and economic programme. Its maximum programme is socialism and communism, which is different from the Three People's Principles. Even its programme for the period of the democratic revolution is more

thorough-going than that of any other party in China. But the Communist Party's programme for the democratic revolution and the programme of the Three People's Principles as proclaimed by the Kuomintang's First National Congress are basically not in conflict. Therefore, far from rejecting the Three People's Principles, we are ready staunchly to put them into practice; moreover, we ask the Kuomintang to implement them together with us, and we call upon the whole nation to put them into effect. We hold that the Communist Party, the Kuomintang and the people of the whole country should unite and fight for these three great objectives of national independence, democracy and freedom, and the people's livelihood.

13. Was our past slogan of a workers' and peasants' democratic republic wrong? No, it was not. Since the bourgeoisie, and particularly the big bourgeoisie, withdrew from the revolution, became retainers of imperialism and the feudal forces and turned into enemies of the people, the only remaining motive forces of the revolution were the proletariat, the peasantry and the urban petty bourgeoisie, and the only remaining revolutionary party was the Communist Party, which, as such, inevitably had to shoulder the responsibility for organizing the revolution. The Communist Party alone continued to hold aloft the banner of revolution, preserved the revolutionary tradition, put forward the slogan of a workers' and peasants' democratic republic and fought hard for it for many years. This slogan was not in conflict with the task of bourgeois-democratic revolution but signified that we were resolutely carrying out this task. Not a single item of policy adopted in our actual struggle was out of keeping with this task. Our policy, including the confiscation of the land of the landlords and the enforcement of the eight-hour working day, never went beyond the bounds of capitalist private ownership; our policy was not to put socialism in practice then. What will be the composition of the new democratic republic? It will consist of the proletariat, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie, the bourgeoisie, and all those in the country who agree with the national and democratic revolution; it will be the alliance of these classes in the national and democratic revolution. The salient feature here is the inclusion

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of the bourgeoisie; the reason is that in the present circumstances there is a possibility that the bourgeoisie will once again co-operate with us and join in the resistance to Japan, and the party of the proletariat should therefore not repel but welcome them and revive its alliance with them for the common struggle, so as to help the Chinese revolution forward. In order to end the internal armed conflict, the Communist Party is willing to discontinue the policy of forcible confiscation of the land of the landlords and is prepared to solve the land problem by legislative and other appropriate means in the course of building the new democratic republic. The first question to be settled is whether China's land will be owned by the Japanese or by the Chinese. Since the solution of the land problem of the peasants is predicated on the defence of China, it is absolutely necessary for us to turn from the method of forcible confiscation to appropriate new methods.

It was correct to put forward the slogan of a workers' and peasants' democratic republic in the past, and it is correct to drop it today.

14. To establish the national united front for joint resistance to the enemy, it is necessary properly to resolve certain internal contradictions, the principle here being that the solution should help strengthen and extend the anti-Japanese national united front and

not weaken or narrow it. During the stage of the democratic revolution, it is impossible to avoid contradictions and struggles between classes, parties and political groupings, but it is both possible and essential to put an end to such struggles as are detrimental to unity and to resisting Japan (the civil war, the antagonistic conflict between the political parties, provincial separatism, feudal political and economic oppression on the one hand, and the policy of insurrection and excessive economic demands harmful to the resistance on the other, etc.), and to continue such struggles as benefit unity and resistance to Japan (for freedom of criticism, for the independence of the political parties, for the improvement of the political and economic life of the people, etc.).

15. Within the over-all task of fighting for an anti-Japanese national united front and a unified democratic republic, the tasks of the Red Army and the anti-Japanese base area are:

(1) To suit the circumstances of war against Japan, the Red Army should immediately be reorganized into the National Rev-

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olutionary Army and become a model army in that war by raising the level of its military, political and cultural education.

(2) Our base area should become a component part of the state, apply its democratic system under the new conditions, reorganize its peace preservation corps, clear out traitors and saboteurs, and become a region that is a model of resistance and democracy.

(3) Essential economic construction should be conducted in this area and the livelihood of the people should be improved.

(4) Essential cultural work should be carried out.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO LEAD

16. It is a law confirmed by Chinese history that the Chinese bourgeoisie, which may participate in fighting imperialism and feudalism in certain historical circumstances, vacillates and turns traitor in others, because of its economic and political flabbiness. Thus it is history's verdict that China's bourgeois-democratic revolution against imperialism and feudalism is a task that can be completed, not under the leadership of the bourgeoisie, but only under that of the proletariat. What is more, it is possible to overcome the bourgeoisie's inherent vacillation and lack of thoroughness and to prevent the miscarriage of the revolution only by bringing the perseverance and thoroughness of the proletariat in the democratic revolution into full play. Is the proletariat to follow the bourgeoisie, or is the bourgeoisie to follow the proletariat? This question of responsibility for leadership in the Chinese revolution is the linchpin upon which the success or failure of the revolution depends. The experience of 1924-27 shows how the revolution forged ahead when the bourgeoisie followed the political leadership of the proletariat and met defeat when the proletariat became the political tail of the bourgeoisie through the fault of the Communist Party.^[17] This piece of history should not be allowed to repeat itself. In the

present circumstances, without the political leadership of the proletariat and its party it is impossible to establish an anti-Japanese national united front, to attain the objectives of peace, democracy and armed resistance and to defend the motherland, and impossible to set up a unified democratic republic. Today the bourgeoisie, represented by the Kuomintang, is still very passive

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and conservative, and the proof of this is its long hesitation about accepting the anti-Japanese national united front initiated by the Communist Party. This situation increases the responsibility of the proletariat and its party for giving political leadership. To function as the general staff in resisting Japan and saving the nation is a responsibility the Communist Party cannot relinquish, an obligation it cannot decline.

17. How does the proletariat give political leadership through its party to all the revolutionary classes in the country? First, by putting forward basic political slogans that accord with the course of historical development and by putting forward slogans of action for each stage of development and each major turn of events in order to translate these political slogans into reality. For instance, we have put forward the basic slogans for "an anti-Japanese national united front" and for "a unified democratic republic", but we have also put forward the slogans, "end the civil war", "fight for democracy" and "carry out armed resistance", as specific objectives for concerted action by the entire nation; without such specific objectives political leadership is out of the question. Second, the proletariat, and especially its vanguard the Communist Party, should set an example through its boundless enthusiasm and loyalty in achieving the specific objectives when the whole country goes into action for them. In the fight to fulfil all the tasks of the anti-Japanese national united front and the democratic republic, Communists should be the most far-sighted, the most self-sacrificing, the most resolute, and the least prejudiced in sizing up situations, and should rely on the majority of the masses and win their support. Third, the Communist Party should establish proper relations with its allies and develop and consolidate its alliance with them, while adhering to the principle of never relinquishing its defined political objectives. Fourth, it should expand the ranks of the Communist Party and maintain its ideological unity and strict discipline. It is by doing all these things that the Communist Party gives effect to its political leadership of the people throughout China. They constitute the foundation for guaranteeing our political leadership and for ensuring that the revolution will win complete victory and not be disrupted by the vacillations of our allies.

18. When internal peace is achieved and co-operation is established between the two parties, changes will have to be made in the forms of struggle, organization and work which we adopted when the line was one of maintaining a regime-antagonistic-to that of the Kuo-

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mintang. They will mainly be changes from military to peaceful forms and from illegal to legal forms. It will not be easy to make these changes and we shall have to learn afresh. The retraining of our cadres thus becomes a key link.

19. Many comrades have been asking questions about the nature of the democratic republic and its future. Our answer is: as to its class nature, the republic will be an

alliance of all revolutionary classes, and as to its future, it may move towards socialism. Our democratic republic is to be established in the course of national armed resistance under the leadership of the proletariat and in the new international environment (with socialism victorious in the Soviet Union and the approach of a new period of world revolution). Therefore, though it will still be a bourgeois-democratic state socially and economically, yet it will be different from the general run of bourgeois republics because, in concrete political terms, it will have to be a state based on the alliance of the working class, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie. Thus, as to the future of the democratic republic, though it may move in a capitalist direction, the possibility also exists that it will turn towards socialism, and the party of the Chinese proletariat should struggle hard for the latter prospect.

20. The fight against closed-doorism and adventurism and also against tailism is essential to the accomplishment of the Party's tasks. In the mass movements our Party has a traditional tendency towards rank closed-doorism, haughty sectarianism, and adventurism; this ugly tendency hinders the Party in establishing an anti-Japanese national united front and winning over the majority of the masses. It is absolutely necessary to wipe out this tendency in each and every field of work. What we ask is: rely on the majority and take the whole situation into account. There must be no revival of the Chen Tu-hsiu type of tailism, which is a reflection of bourgeois reformism in the ranks of the proletariat. To debase the class stand of the Party, to obscure its distinctive features, to sacrifice the interests of the workers and peasants to suit the needs of bourgeois reformism, is sure to lead the revolution to defeat. What we ask is: carry out firm revolutionary policies and strive for complete victory in the bourgeois-democratic revolution. To overcome the undesirable tendencies we have described, it is absolutely necessary to raise the Marxist-Leninist theoretical level of the whole Party, for Marxism-Leninism alone is the compass which can guide the Chinese revolution to victory.

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[1] The Northern China Incident took place in 1935 when the Japanese carried on aggression against northern China and the Kuomintang government headed by Chiang Kai-shek betrayed our sovereignty and humiliated our nation. In May of that year, the Japanese demanded that the Kuomintang government grant them administrative authority over northern China, and in June Ho Ying-chin, the Kuomintang government's representative there, submitted and signed an agreement with Yoshijiro Umezu, commander of the invading forces in northern China, which became known as the "Ho-Umezu Agreement". By its terms China forfeited much of her sovereignty in the provinces of Hopei and Chahar. In October at the instigation of the Japanese invaders, some Chinese traitors staged a revolt in Hsiangho, Hopei Province, and seized the county town. In November, a number of Chinese traitors were put up by the Japanese invaders to start a self-styled movement of autonomy in the five provinces of northern China, and a puppet "Anti-Communist Autonomous Administration" was established in eastern Hopei. To meet the Japanese demand for "special administration for northern China", the Kuomintang government appointed Sung Cheh-yuan and others to form a "Political Council for Hopei and Chahar". [p. 263]

[2] This declaration was issued by the Chinese Communist Party on August 1, 1935. Its main points are contained in the following extracts:

"At this moment when our country and our people are threatened with imminent destruction, the Communist Party once again appeals to all fellow countrymen: whatever the past or present differences of political opinion and of interests among the political parties, whatever the differences of view and of interests among our

countrymen in their various walks of life, whatever the past or present hostilities between the various armies, we should all truly awaken to the realization that 'brothers quarrelling at home, join forces against attacks from without' and, first and foremost, we should stop the civil war so as to concentrate the nation's resources (manpower, material and financial resources, and the armed forces) on the fight for the sacred cause of resisting Japan and saving the nation. Once again the Communist Party solemnly declares: if the Kuomintang troops cease their attacks on the Red Army and if any units carry out resistance to Japan, then the Red Army, regardless of any old feuds or present conflicts or differences on domestic issues, will not only immediately cease its hostile actions against these units, but willingly work closely with them to save the nation."

"The Communist Party is willing to initiate a national defence government of this kind; for the joint formation of such a national defence government it is ready to hold immediate talks with all those willing to join the cause of resisting Japan and saving the nation -- all political parties, all organizations (trade unions, peasant associations, student unions, chambers of commerce educational associations, journalists' societies, associations of teachers and other staff of schools, fellow-townsmen's associations, the Chih Kung Tang, the Association for National Armed Self-Defence, the Anti-Japanese Association the Association for National Salvation, etc.), all prominent public figures, scholars and statesmen and all local military and administrative bodies. The national defence government emerging out of these negotiations should be a provisional organ of leadership for saving the nation from subjugation and ensuring its

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survival. It should endeavour to convene a delegate body truly representative of all our countrymen (with delegates democratically elected by all the various circles of workers, peasants, soldiers, government personnel, businessmen and students, by all parties and all organizations willing to resist Japan and save the nation, and by all overseas Chinese and all the nationalities within China's boundaries) to discuss all problems relating to armed resistance and national salvation in more specific terms. The Communist Party will do its very best to help convene such an assembly of representatives of the people and to carry out all its decisions."

"An anti-Japanese united army should be formed of all troops willing to fight Japan. A single general headquarters of this army should be set up under the leadership of the national defence government. The question of whether this headquarters should be composed of representatives elected by the officers and men of the various anti-Japanese army units or be formed in some other way should be decided by the representatives of all circles and by the will of the people. The Red Army will unreservedly be the first to join this united army and fulfil its duty in resisting Japan and saving the nation. To enable the national defence government and the anti-Japanese united army effectively to discharge their immense responsibilities for national defence and for resisting Japan, the Communist Party hereby appeals to the whole nation: those who have money give money, those who have guns give guns, those who have grain give grain, those who have labour power give labour power, and those who have special skill contribute special skill, so that all our fellow countrymen will be mobilized and all weapons, old or modern, will be used to arm the people in millions upon millions."

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[3] The December resolution was the "Resolution on the Present Political Situation and the Tasks of the Party", adopted at the meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party at Wayaopao, northern Shensi, on December 25, 1935. It made a comprehensive analysis of the current internal and international situation and the changes in class relations in China, and formulated the Party's policy. The resolution runs in part as follows:

The present situation shows that the attempts of Japanese imperialism to annex China have shocked the whole country and the whole world. Changes have taken place or are taking place in the relations between all classes, strata, political parties and armed forces in China's political life. There is a realignment of forces in both the national revolutionary front and the national counter-revolutionary front. Therefore, the Party's tactical line is to arouse, unite and organize the revolutionary forces throughout the country and among all the nationalities to oppose the chief enemy confronting them, namely, Japanese imperialism and the arch-traitor Chiang Kai-shek. All people, all parties, all armed forces and all classes, in so far as they are opposed to Japanese imperialism and the traitor Chiang Kai-shek, should unite and wage the sacred national revolutionary war, drive the Japanese imperialists out of China, overthrow the rule of their running dogs in China, achieve the complete liberation of the Chinese nation and safeguard China's independence and territorial integrity. Only by establishing the broadest anti-Japanese national united front (embracing the lower and upper strata) can we defeat Japanese imperialism and its running dog, Chiang Kai-shek. Of course, different individuals, different organizations, different social classes and strata and the various armed forces join the anti-Japanese national revolution from different motives and with different class standpoints. Some do so in order to hold on to their

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positions, some to gain leadership in the movement so that it will not go beyond the limits they allow, and some genuinely to work for the complete liberation of the Chinese nation. Precisely because their motives and their standpoints differ, some will vacillate or turn traitor at the very start of the struggle, some will become

indifferent or withdraw from the fight midway, and some will determinedly fight to the end. Nevertheless, our task is to unite not only all possible basic forces but also all potential allies likely to resist Japan, and enable the people throughout the country who have labour power to give labour power, those who have money to give money, those who have guns to give guns, and those who have knowledge to contribute knowledge, leaving no patriotic Chinese outside the anti-Japanese front. Such is the general line of the Party's tactics for the broadest possible national united front. Only by pursuing this line can we mobilize the forces of the whole people to deal with the common enemy, Japanese imperialism and the traitor Chiang Kai-shek. The Chinese working class and peasantry remain the basic motive forces of the Chinese revolution. The broad masses of the petty bourgeoisie and the revolutionary intellectuals are their most reliable allies in the national revolution. A solid alliance of the workers, the peasants and the petty bourgeoisie is the basic force for defeating Japanese imperialism and the traitors and collaborators. When a section of the national bourgeoisie and the warlords gives moral support, maintains benevolent neutrality or directly participates in the struggle against Japan and the traitors and collaborators, this will serve to expand the anti-Japanese front, however much it may disapprove of the agrarian revolution and Red political power. For the total strength of the counter-revolution will thus be reduced and the total strength of the revolution increased. To this end, the Party should adopt appropriate ways and means to win these forces over to the anti-Japanese front. Moreover, unity is by no means prevalent even in the camp of the landlord and comprador classes. Since the contention for China among many imperialist powers has generated contending groups of traitors in their service with contradictions and conflicts among them, the Party should employ a variety of methods to ensure that for the time being some of these counter-revolutionary forces do not actively oppose the anti-Japanese front. The same tactics should be applied in dealing with the imperialist powers other than Japan. In arousing, uniting and organizing the forces of the people throughout the country to fight the common enemy, the Party should resolutely and unswervingly combat all tendencies towards vacillation, compromise, capitulation and betrayal within the anti-Japanese united front. Those who disrupt the Chinese people's anti-Japanese movement are traitors or collaborators whom we should all join in hitting hard. The Communist Party should win the leadership of the anti-Japanese front by being resolute and right in its words and deeds against the Japanese imperialists and the traitors and collaborators. Only under the Communist Party's leadership can the anti-Japanese movement be completely victorious. With regard to the masses in the anti-Japanese war, it is necessary to satisfy their demands in matters affecting their basic interests (the demand of the peasants for land and the demand of the workers, the soldiers the urban poor and the intellectuals for better living). Only by satisfying their demands will we be able to mobilize still broader sections of the masses to join the anti-Japanese ranks, keep up the anti-Japanese movement, and lead the movement to complete victory. And only thus can the Party win leadership in the anti-Japanese war.

See "[On Tactics Against Japanese Imperialism](#)", pp. 153-78 of this volume. [p. 264]

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^[4] The Red Army sent an open telegram on May 5, 1936 demanding that the Nanking government end the civil war, conduct peace negotiations with the Communists for unity against Japan. The text reads as follows:

To the Military Council of the Nanking National Government; to all land, sea and air forces; to all parties, all political groups; all public bodies, all newspapers; and to all fellow-countrymen refusing to be slaves to a foreign nation:

After crossing the Yellow River on its eastward expedition, the Anti-Japanese Vanguard of the Chinese People's Red Army, organized by the Revolutionary Military Commission of the Chinese Red Army, was everywhere victorious and won support from all over the country. But when it occupied the Tatung-Puchow Railway and was energetically preparing to drive eastward into Hopei to engage the Japanese imperialists directly, Chiang Kai-shek sent more than ten divisions into Shansi and co-operated with Yen Hsi-shan in barring its advance against the Japanese. He also ordered the troops under Chang Hsueh-liang and Yang Hu-cheng, as well as the troops in northern Shensi, to march on the Shensi-Kansu Red area to harass our anti-Japanese rear. In order to be able to reach and fight the Japanese, the people's Anti-Japanese Vanguard should have concentrated its entire strength and wiped out Chiang's troops blocking the way. But after much deliberation, the Revolutionary Military Commission of the Red Army decided that a battle to the finish between the two sides in the present national crisis would only damage China's strength for national defence and delight the Japanese imperialists, whichever side emerged victorious. Furthermore, there are quite a number of patriotic officers and men in Chiang Kai-shek's and Yen Hsi-shan's armies who are willing to end the civil war and unite to resist Japan, and it is really against their consciences to obey Chiang's and Yen's orders and block the Red Army on its way to fight the Japanese. Therefore, in spite of its numerous victories in Shansi, the Revolutionary Military Commission of the Red Army has withdrawn the people's Anti-Japanese Vanguard to the west of the Yellow River in order to preserve China's strength for national defence and thereby help to bring nearer the war of

resistance against Japan, resolutely carry out our repeated declarations to the nation on ending the civil war and uniting to resist Japan, and hasten the final awakening of Chiang Kai-shek and the patriotic officers and men in his army. With this demonstration of our good faith to the Nanking government, to all the country's land, sea and air forces and to the whole nation, we are ready to arrange a cease-fire with all the armed units attacking the anti-Japanese Red Army within one month and to enter into peace negotiations with them in order to end the civil war and resist Japan. The Revolutionary Military Commission of the Red Army hereby solemnly advises the gentlemen of the Nanking government at this critical juncture, when our country and people are threatened with imminent destruction, to make a determined effort to atone for past misdeeds and end the civil war in the whole country, to join forces against attacks from without in the spirit of brothers quarrelling at home, and first of all end the civil war in Shensi, Kansu and Shansi, whereupon both sides should appoint delegates to discuss specific measures for resisting Japan and saving the nation. This will be a blessing to the nation and the country as well as for your own good. However, if you obstinately refuse to listen to reason and prefer to be traitors and collaborators, your rule will surely collapse in the end and you will be spurned and overthrown by the whole nation. The old saying runs, "A thousand pointing fingers accuse, and a man dies even without

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a sickness." Or as another saying goes, "The butcher who lays down his knife at once becomes a Buddha." These are words for you gentlemen to digest and ponder. And the Revolutionary Military Commission of the Red Army calls upon all organizations, all parties and all people in the country, who refuse to be slaves to a foreign nation, to support our proposal for a cease-fire and peace negotiations, and for unity against Japan, to organize committees for hastening the cessation of the civil war and to send representatives to the front to stop the firing on both sides and to supervise the full implementation of this proposal.

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[5] See "[A Statement on Chiang Kai-shek's Statement](#)", [Note 7](#), pp. 259-61 of this volume. [p. 264]

[6] The slogan of "A people's republic" was first put forward in the "Resolution on the Present Political Situation and the Tasks of the Party", adopted at the meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party held in December 1935, and in the report by Comrade Mao Tse-tung "On Tactics Against Japanese Imperialism". Later circumstances made it necessary for the Party to adopt the policy of forcing Chiang Kai-shek to resist Japan, and, as the slogan would have been unacceptable to the Chiang Kai-shek clique, it was changed into "A democratic republic" in the Party's letter of August 1936 to the Kuomintang. The slogan of a democratic republic was subsequently explained in more concrete terms in the "Resolution on the New Situation in the Movement to Resist Japan and Save the Nation, and on the Democratic Republic", which the Central Committee of the Party adopted in September of the same year. Though different in form, the two slogans are in essence the same. The following two extracts concerning the democratic republic are from the September 1936 resolution of the Party's Central Committee:

"The Central Committee holds that in the present situation it is necessary to put forward the slogan of 'establish a democratic republic', because this is the best way to unite all the anti-Japanese forces to safeguard China's territorial integrity and avert the calamity of the destruction of China and of the subjugation of her people, and also because this is the most fitting slogan for the formation of a united front based on the democratic demands of the broad masses of the people. By 'a democratic republic' we mean a democracy which is geographically more extensive than that of the workers' and peasants' democratic dictatorship in one part of China and a political system which is far more progressive than the one-party dictatorship of the Kuomintang in the main parts of China; it will therefore offer a better guarantee of the wide development of armed resistance to Japan and the achievement of complete victory. Moreover, the democratic republic will not only enable the broadest sections of the Chinese people to take part in the country's political life and enhance their political consciousness and organized strength, but also give the Chinese proletariat and its leader, the Communist Party, scope for activity in the struggle for the future victory of socialism. Therefore, the Chinese Communist Party proclaims its active support of the movement for a democratic republic. It also declares that when the democratic republic is established through the length and breadth of China and a parliament elected by universal suffrage is convened, the Red areas will at once become an organic part of the republic, the people of the Red areas will elect their representatives to the parliament, and the same democratic system will be put into practice in the Red areas."

"The Central Committee stresses that we shall impel the Kuomintang government in Nanking to resist Japan and we shall create the prerequisites for the

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democratic republic only by extending the Chinese people's movement of armed resistance and national salvation, by broadening the anti-Japanese national united front of all political parties, people of all walks of life and all armies, by strengthening the Chinese Communist Party's role of political leadership in the national united front, by greatly consolidating the Red political power and the Red Army, and by waging a determined struggle

against all words and deeds which betray our sovereignty and humiliate our nation or weaken the forces of the national united front. It is impossible for the democratic republic to become a reality without bitter and sustained struggles, without the mobilization of the entire Chinese nation, and without a high tide of revolution. In the course of the struggle for the democratic republic, the Chinese Communist Party should insist that the democratic republic should begin by carrying out the Ten-Point Programme for Resisting Japan and Saving the Nation proposed by our Party and go on until it finally fulfils the basic tasks of the Chinese bourgeois-democratic revolution."

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[7] This telegram was dispatched on February 10, 1937. The full text reads as follows:

To the Third Plenary Session of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang
Gentlemen:

It is a matter of national rejoicing that the Sian Incident has been settled peacefully. From now on it will be possible for the policy of internal peace and for unity and solidarity against foreign aggression to be carried out; this is a blessing to the nation and the country. At this moment when the Japanese invaders are running amuck and the survival of the Chinese nation hangs by a thread, our Party eagerly hopes that, in accordance with this policy, the Third Plenary Session of the Central Executive Committee of your party will decide on the following as the national policy:

- (1) end all civil wars and concentrate the country's strength in a united effort to meet the foreign aggression;
- (2) guarantee freedom of speech, assembly and association, and release all political prisoners;
- (3) call a conference of representatives of all political parties, people of all walks of life and all armies, and concentrate the nation's talents in a common endeavour to save the country;
- (4) speedily complete all preparations for resisting Japan; and
- (5) improve the livelihood of the people.

If the Third Plenary Session of your Central Executive Committee can succeed in resolutely and firmly deciding on this as the national policy, our Party will pledge the following as an expression of our good faith in solidarity against foreign aggression:

- (1) the policy of armed insurrection to overthrow the National Government will be discontinued throughout the country;
- (2) the Workers' and Peasants' Democratic Government will be renamed the Government of the Special Region of the Republic of China and the Red Army will be redesignated as part of the National Revolutionary Army, and they will come under the direction of the Central Government in Nanking and its Military Council respectively;
- (3) a thoroughly democratic system based on universal suffrage will be put into effect in the areas under the Government of the Special Region; and

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- (4) the policy of confiscating the land of the landlords will be discontinued and the common programme of the anti-Japanese national united front resolutely carried out.

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[8] In November and December 1936, big strikes broke out among 45,000 workers in twenty-six Japanese and Chinese-owned textile mills in Shanghai. In December all the workers of the Japanese-owned textile mills in Tsingtao struck in sympathy. The Shanghai workers won their strike, their wages were increased five per cent retrospectively from November, and the employers undertook not to sack workers arbitrarily or assault or abuse them. But the strike in Tsingtao was suppressed by Japanese marines. [p. 265]

[9] Britain and the United States began to change their attitude towards Japan and exerted some influence on the Chiang Kai-shek government in its policy towards Japan after Japanese imperialism occupied Shanhaikuan and penetrated into northern China in 1933, and especially after the conclusion of the "Ho-Umezu Agreement" (see [Note 1](#), p. 276) in 1935, which directly jeopardized their imperialist interests in northern and central China. During the Sian Incident of 1936, Britain suggested rejection of Japanese demands prejudicial to British interests in China and even intimated that, provided the Chiang Kai-shek government maintained its rule over the Chinese people, it would not be a bad thing for it to "form some sort of alliance with the Communist Party" so as to deal a blow to the Japanese policy of aggression. [p. 265]

^[10] In June 1936, Li Tsung-jen and Pai Chung-hsi, warlords of Kwangsi, and Chen Chi-tang, warlord of Kwangtung, jointly declared their opposition to Chiang Kai-shek under the pretext of "resisting Japan and saving the nation". In August their opposition melted away before Chiang Kai-shek's tactics of bribery and divide and rule. [p. 265]

^[11] The Japanese forces and puppet troops began to invade Suiyuan in August 1936. In November, the Chinese troops there fought back and the people throughout the country started a movement in support of their fight. [p. 265]

^[12] After the "Ho-Umezu Agreement" of 1935, the Nanking Kuomintang government took a firmer attitude towards Japan under the pressure of the people's rising anti-Japanese sentiment and under the impact of the stiffer policy the British and U.S. imperialists were adopting towards Japan. The Kuomintang government used stalling tactics in the negotiations with Japan from September to December 6, which ended without result. [p. 265]

^[13] This was the meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang on February 15, 1937 after the peaceful settlement of the Sian Incident. [p. 265]

^[14] Ah Q is the leading character in *The True Story of Ah Q*, the famous novel by the great Chinese writer Lu Hsun. Ah Q typifies all those who compensate themselves for their failures and setbacks in real life by regarding them as moral or spiritual victories. [p. 270]

^[15] In the stage of China's bourgeois-democratic revolution, the Communists agreed with the basic points of Sun Yat-sen's programme and co-operated with him, which did not mean that they agreed with the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois world outlook or ideological system of which he was the exponent. As the vanguard of the Chinese proletariat, the Chinese Communists had an entirely different world outlook or ideological system and theoretical approach to the national and other problems, from those of Sun Yat-sen. [p. 270]

^[16] Reorganized by Sun Yat-sen in 1924, the Kuomintang became a revolutionary alliance of several classes, which members of the Communist Party joined

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in their individual capacity. After its betrayal of the revolution in 1927, the Kuomintang carried out what it called a "party purge" throughout the country, butchering the Communists and many of its own left-wingers who genuinely supported Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Three Great Policies. From then on the Kuomintang became the counter-revolutionary political party of the big landlords and big bourgeoisie. [p. 270]

^[17] This refers to the situation created by the opportunist leadership of the Central Committee of the Party in the first half of 1927. [p. 273]
