

A PROPOSAL CONCERNING THE GENERAL LINE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

The Letter of the Central Committee of the Communist party of China in
Reply to the Letter of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the
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The Chinese and Soviet Parties bear a heavier responsibility. p3

We also hope that this will be conducive to the understanding of our views
by the fraternal Parties and to a full exchange of ideas at an international
meeting of fraternal Parties. p4

The central issue here is whether or not to accept the revolutionary
principles of the Declaration and the Statement. In the last analysis, it is a
question of whether or not to accept the universal truth of Marxism-
Leninism, whether or not to recognize the universal significance of the road
of the October Revolution, whether or not to accept the fact that the people
still living under the imperialist and capitalist system, who comprise two-
thirds of the world's population, need to make revolution, and whether or not
to accept the fact that the people already on the socialist road, who comprise
one-third of the world's population, need to carry their revolution forward to
the end.

..... resolutely to defend the revolutionary principles of the 1957 Declaration
and the 1960 Statement. pp4-5

..... it is a line of boldly arousing the masses, expanding the revolutionary
forces, winning over the middle forces and isolating the reactionary forces.

This general line is one of resolute revolutionary struggle by the people of
all countries and of carrying the proletarian world revolution forward to the
end;

If the general line of the international communist movement is onesidedly
reduced to 'peaceful coexistence', 'peaceful competition' and 'peaceful

transition', this is to violate the revolutionary principles of the 1957 Declaration and the 1960 Statement, to discard the historical mission of proletarian world revolution, and to depart from the revolutionary teachings of Marxism-Leninism. p6

..... the starting point is the concrete class analysis the fundamental contradictions in the contemporary world. p6

Marxist-Leninists must not regard the contradictions in the world as consisting solely and simply of the contradiction between the socialist camp and the imperialist camp. p7

Nobody can obliterate any of these fundamental contradictions or subjectively substitute one for all the rest. p7

..... the view which blots out the class content of the contradiction between the socialist and the imperialist camps. p8

..... the view which recognizes only the contradiction between the socialist and the imperialist camps. p8

..... the view which maintains with regard to the capitalist world that the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie can be resolved without a proletarian revolution in each country and that the contradiction between the oppressed nations and imperialism can be resolved without revolution by the oppressed nations. p8

..... the view which denies that the development of the inherent contradictions in the contemporary capitalist world. p8

..... the view which maintains that the contradiction between the two world systems of socialism and capitalism will automatically disappear in the course of 'economic competition', that the other fundamental world contradictions will automatically do so with the disappearance of the contradiction between the two systems, and that a 'world without wars', a new world of 'all-round co-operation', will appear. pp8-9

The socialist camp is the outcome of the struggles of the international proletariat and working people. It belongs to the international proletariat and working people as well as to the people of the socialist countries. p9

Workers' Parties in the socialist camp should:

adhere to the Marxist-Leninist line and pursue correct Marxist-Leninist domestic and foreign policies;

consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat

promote the initiative and creativeness of the broad masses

strengthen the unity of the socialist camp on the basis of Marxism-Leninism ...

oppose the imperialist policies of aggression and war, and defend world peace;

oppose the anti-Communist, anti-popular and counter-revolutionary policies of the reactionaries of all countries; and

help the revolutionary struggles of the oppressed classes and nations of the world. pp9-10

They [the imperialists] invariably try to infiltrate and subvert the socialist countries and even entertain the extravagant hope of destroying the socialist camp. p10

..... because it firmly pursued the correct Marxist-Leninist line and policies, the touchstone of proletarian internationalism for every Communist Party was whether or not it resolutely defended the only socialist country. p10

..... the touchstone of proletarian internationalism for every Communist Party is..... whether or not it defends the Marxist-Leninist line and policies which the socialist countries ought to pursue.

If anybody does not pursue the correct Marxist-Leninist line and policies, he is betraying the interests of the entire international proletariat and the people of the world. p11

If anybody, following in the footsteps of others, defends the erroneous opportunist line and policies pursued by a certain socialist country instead of upholding the correct Marxist-Leninist line and policies which the socialist countries ought to pursue, defends the policy of split instead of upholding

the policy of unity, then he is departing from Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. p11

U.S. imperialism is pressing its policies of aggression and war all over the world, but the outcome is bound to be the opposite of that intended -- it will only be to hasten the awakening of the people in all countries and to hasten their revolutions. p12

The international proletariat must and can unite all the forces that can be united. p12

The realistic and correct course is to entrust the fate of the people and of mankind to the unity and struggle of the world proletariat and to the unity and struggle of the people in all countries.

Conversely, to make no distinction between enemies, friends and ourselves and to entrust the fate of the people and of mankind to collaboration with U.S. imperialism is to lead people astray. pp12-13

8. The various types of contradictions in the contemporary world are concentrated in the vast areas of Asia, Africa and Latin America; these are the most vulnerable areas under imperialist rule and the storm-centres of world revolution dealing direct blows at imperialism. p13

..... the whole cause of the international proletarian revolution hinges on the outcome of the revolutionary struggles of the people of these areas, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the world's population.

..... [it] is definitely not merely a matter of regional significance but one of overall importance for the whole cause of proletarian world revolution. p13

..... to maintain the rule of the 'superior nations' over the oppressed nations. It is only natural that this fraudulent 'theory' is rejected by the people in these areas. p14

It is impossible for the working class in the European and American capitalist countries to liberate itself unless it unites with the oppressed nations and unless those nations are liberated. p14

They [the revisionists] are in fact protecting the interests of monopoly capital, betraying those of the proletariat, and degenerating into social democrats. p15

The proletariat and its party must have confidence in the strength of the masses and, above all, must unite with the peasants and establish a solid worker-peasant alliance. p15

The proletarian party and the revolutionary people must learn to master all forms of struggle, including armed struggle. p16

When a united front is formed with the bourgeoisie, the policy of the proletarian party should be one of both unity and struggle. p16

..... the world outlook of the proletarian party is internationalism, and not nationalism. p17

In the imperialist and the capitalist countries, the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat are essential for the thorough resolution of the contradictions of capitalist society. p17

The proletarian parties in imperialist or capitalist countries must maintain their own ideological, political and organizational independence in leading revolutionary struggles. p18

..... educate the masses in a Marxist-Leninist revolutionary spirit, ceaselessly raise their political consciousness and undertake the historical task of the proletarian revolution. If they fail to do so, if they regard the immediate movement as everything, determine their conduct from case to case, adapt themselves to the events of the day and sacrifice the basic interests of the proletariat, that is out-and-out social democracy. p18

The vanguard of the proletariat will remain unconquerable in all circumstances only if it masters all forms of struggle -- peaceful and armed, open and secret, legal and illegal, parliamentary struggle and mass struggle, etc. p19

Communists would always prefer to bring about the transition to socialism by peaceful means. But can peaceful transition be made into a new world-wide strategic principle for the international communist movement?
Absolutely not.

Marxism-Leninism consistently holds that the fundamental question in all revolutions is that of state power. p20

As a matter of fact, there is no historical precedent for peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism. p20

The proletarian party must prepare itself for two eventualities -- while preparing for a peaceful development of the revolution, it must also fully prepare for a non-peaceful development. p21

..... history shows that there never was a revolution which was able to achieve victory without zigzags and sacrifices. p21

Even if the guiding line of the revolution is correct, it is impossible to have a sure guarantee against setbacks and sacrifices in the course of the revolution. So long as a correct line is adhered to, the revolution is bound to triumph in the end. pp21-22

..... 'even with the most peaceful course of events, the present [capitalist] system always and inevitably exacts countless sacrifices from the working class'. V. I. Lenin. 'Another Massacre', Collected Works, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1961, Vol. V, p. 25. P22

Even in ordinary times, when it is leading the masses in the day-to-day struggle, the proletarian party should ideologically, politically and organizationally prepare its own ranks and the masses for revolution and promote revolutionary struggles, so that it will not miss the opportunity to overthrow the reactionary regime and establish a new state power when the conditions for revolution are ripe. p22

The proletarian party must be flexible as well as highly principled, and on occasion it must make such compromises as are necessary in the interests of the revolution. But it must never abandon principled policies and the goal of revolution on the pretext of flexibility and of necessary compromises. p23

Communists and revolutionaries in all countries should ponder and seriously study these experiences of success and failure, so as to draw correct conclusions and useful lessons from them. p24

The only attitude for the socialist countries to adopt towards the revolutionary struggles of the oppressed peoples and nations is one of warm

sympathy and active support; they must not adopt a perfunctory attitude, or one of national selfishness or of great-power chauvinism. p24

No oppressed people or nation can win liberation except through its own staunch revolutionary struggle. p25

..... it would seem that imperialism will automatically collapse in the course of this peaceful competition and that the only thing the oppressed peoples and nations have to do is to wait quietly for the advent of this day

..... certain persons have concocted the strange tale that China and some other socialist countries want 'to unleash wars' and to spread socialism by 'wars between states' the purpose of those who repeat these slanders is to hide the fact that they are opposed to revolutions by the oppressed peoples and nations of the world and opposed to others supporting such revolutions.

p25

..... people forget the fundamental question of the class character of the war. p26

..... war is the continuation of politics by other means, and every war is inseparable from the political system and the political struggles which give rise to it. p26

Lumping just wars and unjust wars together and opposing all of them indiscriminately is a bourgeois pacifist and not a Marxist-Leninist approach. p26

Although Marxist-Leninists have pointed out, on the basis of the history of the two world wars, that world wars inevitably lead to revolution, no Marxist-Leninist ever has held or ever will hold that revolution must be made through world war. p26-27

..... 'our object is to achieve the socialist system of society, which, by abolishing the division of mankind into classes, by abolishing all exploitation of man by man, and of one nation by other nations, will inevitably abolish all possibility of war'. V. I. Lenin, 'War and Revolution', Collected Works, Russ. ed., State Publishing House for Political Literature, Moscow, 1949, Vol. XXIV, p. 362. P27

..... certain persons now actually hold that it is possible to bring about 'a world without weapons, without armed forces and without wars' through 'general and complete disarmament' while the system of imperialism and of the exploitation of man by man still exists. This is sheer illusion. p27

Only after the proletariat has disarmed the bourgeoisie will it be able, without betraying its world-historical mission, to throw all armaments on the scrap heap; and the proletariat will undoubtedly do this, but only when this condition has been fulfilled, certainly not before. V. I. Lenin, 'The War Program of the Proletarian Revolution', Selected Works, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1952, Vol. I, Part 2, p. 574. p27

If one regards general and complete disarmament as the fundamental road to world peace, then this is deliberately to deceive the people of the world and help the imperialists in their policies of aggression and war.

In order to overcome the present ideological confusion in the international working-class movement on the question of war and peace, we consider that Lenin's thesis, which has been discarded by the modern revisionists, must be restored in the interest of combating the imperialist policies of aggression and war and defending world peace. p28

..... world peace can be won only by the struggles of the people in all countries and not by begging the imperialists for it. p28

Any policy to the contrary definitely will not lead to world peace but will only encourage the ambitions of the imperialists and increase the danger of world war. p29

..... socialist countries rely upon the righteous strength of the people and on their own correct policies and have no need whatever to gamble with nuclear weapons in the world arena. p30

Marxist-Leninists attach importance to the role of technological change, but it is wrong to belittle the role of man and exaggerate the role of technology. p30

It cannot, therefore, be said that with the emergence of nuclear weapons the possibility and the necessity of social and national revolutions have disappeared, or the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism, and especially the theories of proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat and

of war and peace, have become outmoded and changed into stale 'dogmas'.
p30

They treat 'peaceful coexistence' as if it were an all-inclusive, mystical book from heaven and attribute to it every success the people of the world achieve by struggle. p31

Peaceful coexistence cannot replace the revolutionary struggles of the people. The transition from capitalism to socialism in any country can only be brought about through the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat in that country. p32

..... necessary compromises between the socialist countries and the imperialist countries do not require the oppressed peoples and nations to follow suit and compromise with imperialism and its lackeys. p32

..... it is wrong to make peaceful coexistence the general line of the foreign policy of the socialist countries. p32

..... to support and assist the revolutionary struggles of all the oppressed peoples and nations. p33

After the October Revolution, Lenin pointed out a number of times that:

- a. The overthrown exploiters always try in a thousand and one ways to recover the 'paradise' they have been deprived of.
- b. New elements of capitalism are constantly and spontaneously generated in the petty-bourgeois atmosphere.
- c. Political degenerates and new bourgeois elements may emerge in the ranks of the working class and among government functionaries as a result of bourgeois influence and the pervasive, corrupting atmosphere of the petty bourgeoisie.
- d. The external conditions for the continuance of class struggle within a socialist country are encirclement by international capitalism, the imperialists' threat of armed intervention and their subversive activities to accomplish peaceful disintegration. p33

For decades or even longer periods after socialist industrialization and agricultural collectivization, it will be impossible to say that any socialist country will be free from those elements which Lenin repeatedly denounced, such as bourgeois hangers-on, parasites, speculators, swindlers, idlers, hooligans and embezzlers of state funds; or to say that a socialist country will no longer need to perform or be able to relinquish the task laid down by Lenin of conquering 'this contagion, this plague, this ulcer that socialism has inherited from capitalism'.

In a socialist country, it takes a very long historical period gradually to settle the question of who will win -- socialism or capitalism. The struggle between the road of socialism and the road of capitalism runs through this whole historical period. p34

The 1957 Declaration rightly states that 'the conquest of power by the working class is only the beginning of the revolution, not its conclusion'.

To deny the existence of class struggle in the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the necessity of thoroughly completing the socialist revolution on the economic, political and ideological fronts is wrong, does not correspond to objective reality and violates Marxism-Leninism. p34

..... the entire period before the advent of the higher stage of communist society is the period of transition from capitalism to communism, the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In this transition period, the dictatorship of the proletariat, that is to say, the proletarian state, goes through the dialectical process of establishment, consolidation, strengthening and withering away. p34

Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. Selected Works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, Eng. ed., FLPH Moscow, 1955, Vol. II, pp. 32-33.
p35

..... the state in this period can only be the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat. V. I. Lenin, Selected Works, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1952, Vol. II, Part 1, p. 289. p35

As stated above, the fundamental thesis of Marx and Lenin is that the dictatorship of the proletariat will inevitably continue for the entire historical

period of the transition from capitalism to communism, that is, for the entire period up to the abolition of all class differences and the entry into a classless society, the higher stage of communist society.

What will happen if it is announced, halfway through, that the dictatorship of the proletariat is no longer necessary?

..... this would lead to extremely grave consequences and make any transition to communism out of the question. pp35 – 36

Can there be a ‘state of the whole people’? Is it possible to replace the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat by a ‘state of the whole people’? p36

As soon as society becomes classless, there will no longer be a state. p36

No, there are classes and class struggles in all socialist countries without exception.

Since remnants of the old exploiting classes who are trying to stage a comeback still exist there, since new capitalist elements are constantly being generated there, and since there are still parasites, speculators, idlers, hooligans, embezzlers of state funds, etc., how can it be said that classes or class struggles no longer exist? How can it be said that the dictatorship of the proletariat is no longer necessary?

Marxism-Leninism tells us that in addition to the suppression of the hostile classes, the historical tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the course of building socialism necessarily include the correct handling of relations between the working class and peasantry, the consolidation of their political and economic alliance and the creation of conditions for the gradual elimination of the class difference between worker and peasant.

When we look at the economic base of any socialist society, we find that the difference between ownership by the whole people and collective ownership exists in all socialist countries without exception, and that there is individual ownership too. Ownership by the whole people and collective ownership are two kinds of ownership and two kinds of relations of production in socialist society. The workers in enterprises owned by the whole people and the peasants on farms owned collectively belong to two different categories of labourers in socialist society. Therefore, the class difference between worker and peasant exists in all socialist countries without exception. This

difference will not disappear until the transition to the higher stage of communism is achieved. In their present level of economic development all socialist countries are still far, far removed from the higher stage of communism in which 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs' is put into practice. Therefore, it will take a long, long time to eliminate the class difference between worker and peasant. And until this difference is eliminated, it is impossible to say that society is classless or that there is no longer any need for the dictatorship of the proletariat. In calling a socialist state the 'state of the whole people' is one trying to replace the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state by the bourgeois theory of the state? Is one trying to replace the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat by a state of a different character? pp36-37

The degeneration of the social system in Yugoslavia is a grave lesson. p38

..... the dictatorship of the proletariat has to struggle against the enemies of the proletariat and of the people, remould the peasants and other small producers, constantly consolidate the proletarian ranks, build socialism and effect the transition to communism; none of these things can be done without the leadership of the party of the proletariat. p38

All political parties have a class character. Party spirit is the concentrated expression of class character.

The party of the proletariat is the only party able to represent the interests of the whole people. It can do so precisely because it represents the interests of the proletariat, whose ideas and will it concentrates. It can lead the whole people because the proletariat can finally emancipate itself only with the emancipation of all mankind, because the very nature of the proletariat enables its party to approach problems in terms of its present and future interests, because the party is boundlessly loyal to the people and has the spirit of self-sacrifice; hence its democratic centralism and iron discipline. Without such a party, it is impossible to maintain the dictatorship of the proletariat and to represent the interests of the whole people. pp38-39

Does this not disarm the proletariat and all the working people, organizationally and ideologically, and is it not tantamount to helping restore capitalism? p39

To raise the question of 'combating the cult of the individual' is actually to counterpose the leaders to the masses, undermine the party's unified

leadership which is based on democratic centralism, dissipate its fighting strength and disintegrate its ranks. p39-40

..... they are enormously exaggerating the role of certain individuals, shifting all errors onto others and claiming all credit for themselves. p40

..... certain persons are crudely interfering in the internal affairs of other fraternal Parties and fraternal countries and forcing other fraternal Parties to change their leadership in order to impose their own wrong line on these Parties. p40

Every socialist country must rely mainly on itself for its construction.

In accordance with its own concrete conditions, every socialist country must rely first of all on the diligent labour and talents of its own people, utilize all its available resources fully and in a planned way, and bring all its potential into play in socialist construction. Only thus can it build socialism effectively and develop its economy speedily. p41

..... to observe the principle of mainly relying on oneself in construction is to apply proletarian internationalism concretely. p41

..... goes to the length of putting economic pressure on other fraternal countries -- then these are pure manifestations of national egoism. p41

....., in the name of 'international division of labour' or 'specialization'. p41

In relations among socialist countries it would be preposterous to follow the practice of gaining profit for oneself at the expense of others, a practice characteristic of relations among capitalist countries, or go so far as to take the 'economic integration' and the 'common market', which monopoly capitalist groups have instituted for the purpose of seizing markets and grabbing profits, as examples which socialist countries ought to follow in their economic co-operation and mutual assistance. p42

It is a fine quality of Communists that their deeds are consistent with their words to do so, not only in words but, much more important, in deeds. p42

If it is agreed that differences between fraternal Parties should be settled through inter-Party consultation, then other fraternal Parties should not be attacked publicly and by name at one's own congress or at other Party congresses, in speeches by Party leaders, resolutions, statements, etc.; and still less should the ideological differences among fraternal Parties be extended into the sphere of state relations. p43

How to treat the Marxist-Leninist fraternal Albanian Party of Labour is one question. How to treat the Yugoslav revisionist clique of traitors to Marxism-Leninism is quite another question. pp43-44

..... larger countries and Parties need to keep in mind Lenin's behest never to commit the error of great-power chauvinism. p45

Yugoslav revisionism typifies modern revisionism. p46

After betraying Marxism-Leninism, which they termed obsolete, the leaders of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia opposed their anti-Leninist revisionist programme to the Declaration of 1957. p46

Cloaked as 'Marxist-Leninists' and flaunting the banner of a 'socialist country', the Tito clique has been undermining the international communist movement and the revolutionary cause of the people of the world, serving as a special detachment of U.S. imperialism. p47

Firm Marxist-Leninists and genuine Marxist-Leninist Parties must put principles first. They must not barter away principles, approving one thing today and another tomorrow, advocating one thing today and another tomorrow. p47

..... it is necessary at all times to adhere to the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism. Failure to do so will lead to Right opportunist or revisionist errors. p48

On the pretext of 'creatively developing Marxism-Leninism', they cast aside the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism. p48

..... development and victory of a revolution depend on the existence of a revolutionary proletarian party. p48

There must be a revolutionary party built according to the revolutionary theory and revolutionary style of Marxism-Leninism.

There must be a revolutionary party able to integrate the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism with the concrete practice of the revolution in its own country.

There must be a revolutionary party able to link the leadership closely with the broad masses of the people.

There must be a revolutionary party that perseveres in the truth, corrects its errors and knows how to conduct criticism and self-criticism. p49

If it is not a party that can use its brains to think for itself and acquire an accurate knowledge of the trends of the different classes in its own country through serious investigation and study, and knows how to apply the universal truth of Marxism-Leninism and integrate it with the concrete practice of its own country, but instead is a party that parrots the words of others, copies foreign experience without analysis, runs hither and thither in response to the baton of certain persons abroad, and has become a hodgepodge of revisionism, dogmatism and everything but Marxists-Leninist principle. p49

In the common interest of the unity for struggle against the enemy, we have always advocated solving problems through inter-Party consultations and opposed bringing differences into the open before the enemy. p50

The attackers have raised a great hue and cry and, disregarding the facts, have fabricated many charges against us. We have published these articles and speeches attacking us in our own press. p50

Although you call our articles 'groundless' and our arguments wrong, you do not tell the Soviet people what our arguments actually are. p52

..... to order the 'ending of open polemics' whenever he wants to prevent the other side from replying. p52