

DISCUSSION

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THE CHINESE RURAL PEOPLE'S COMMUNES -
WHAT OUR ATTITUDE SHOULD BE

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What Our Attitude Should Be

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The rural people's commune movement was propelled by the Chinese Communist party (CCP) on an immense scale and at a ferocious tempo. Productive relations in agriculture were upset; personal lives of 500 million peasants thrown into turmoil. Not only were the masses in all of China affected, especially the peasantry, in whom it aroused fright, anxiety, illusory hopes and opposition; it became a world-wide issue. Landowners, capitalists and imperialists, especially the Americans and the gangster Chiang and Company, vehemently denounced the movement. Bureaucrats in the Soviet bloc outside of China, and Stalinists the world over, exhibited the reticence that goes with great uneasiness. On the other hand, among petty-bourgeois circles abroad, especially among intellectuals far from China, it appeared that an ideal world had been realized in the people's communes. They accepted them naively, and praised them lavishly.

Faced with something of such extraordinary and bewildering complexity, revolutionary Marxists; i.e., Trotskyists, require careful and detailed study to reach a correct objective estimate. We find ourselves compelled to utilize Marxist method and theory as a guide, and especially to recall the theory and strategy of Engels and Lenin in regard to the peasantry. To reach a correct position on the communes we must consider the experience and lessons of agricultural reconstruction in Russia for the forty years since the October Revolution and in the East European countries for the past ten years. In addition, in our analysis and synthesis, we must collect the most dependable facts available on the Chinese commune movement itself. If we confine our approach merely to an abstract principle, to a one-sided formula, or the propaganda of the CCP, or make a hasty appraisal and decision as to what our standpoint and attitude toward the communes should be, we inevitably risk being careless and arbitrary, and can even stumble into the road of compromise with Stalinism and a betrayal of Marxism. Divergences in opinion have appeared over the Chinese communes, as is evident in the documents which have so far been published (mainly those of the Chinese and American comrades). If these differences should deepen and develop to their logical conclusion, they can involve principles and lead to unfortunate consequences. It is my hope that through full and democratic discussion internationally we can clear up the differences and arrive at a common policy. I believe that the truth will emerge in a serious discussion and gain the approval of the majority.

Superiority of Large-Scale Farming And the Principle of Voluntary Peasant Participation

Among the arguments adduced in support of the people's communes, the most powerful is the "superiority of large-scale farming." This stems from the axiom in Marxist political economy that "large-scale production is superior to production by small units."

A systematic exponent of this idea is our Chinese Comrade Mah-ki. In his long article, "The People's Communes," he writes: "...characteristic of the people's communes are the 'large scale' and the 'collective ownership.' The so-called 'large scale' is obtained through the merger of many co-operatives.... 99% of the peasantry at present have joined the people's communes. There are 26,000,

each including an average of 5,000 peasant households, over 10,000 laborers and 60,000 mu. (Six mu equal one acre.) ... The agricultural economists tell us that in agriculture as well as in industry large-scale production is superior to production by small units...." ("The People's Communes," by Mah-ki, p. 4. The article has not been translated into English.)

That large-scale production is superior to production by small units in agriculture as well as in industry is a general principle of economics that is undoubtedly true. That is why all socialists adhering to Marxism maintain that individual peasant farming must give way to agricultural collectives. Only as the scattered, less-productive small-peasant economy is superseded by co-operative ownership can the peasant become integrated into highly productive socialist economy. But this "economic principle" is closely related to and inseparable from the "political principle" -- the "voluntary participation" of the peasants in large-scale units or collectives. If only the "economic principle" is taken, while the "political principle" is overlooked or abandoned, then instead of advantages, damage and even worse can occur to the work of socialist construction.

Obviously -- at least from the Marxist viewpoint -- the difference between the peasants and the workers is qualitative. The peasants represent a transitional formation left over from pre-capitalist society which has not been assimilated by the capitalist system (but which undergoes continuous differentiation under the influence of capitalism); a portion of them have declined gradually, becoming hired peasants or laborers -- the proletariat of rural areas; while a smaller portion have become big peasants or rich peasants -- rural capitalists. Engels pointed out in "The Peasant Question in France and Germany": "This small peasant, just like the small handicraftsman, is therefore a toiler who differs from the modern proletarian in that he still possesses his instruments of labor; hence a survival of a past mode of production." (Selected Works, Marx and Engels, Vol. II, 1951, Moscow Edition, p. 383.)

In the same article, Engels analyzed in detail the gradual decline of the small peasant under the pressure of capitalist large-scale production and concluded:

"The common possession of the means of production is thus set forth here as the sole principal goal to be striven for. Not only in industry, where the ground has already been prepared, but in general, hence also in agriculture." (Ibid., p. 387.)

Engels pointed out the superiority of large-scale production from the economic viewpoint, and the necessity for the common possession of the means of production in agriculture, the replacement of small individual peasant holdings by collective ownership, but at the same time he declared:

"...it is just as evident that when we are in possession of state power we shall not even think of forcibly expropriating the small peasants (regardless of whether with or without compensation), as we shall have to do in the case of the big landowners. Our task relative to the small peasants consists, in the first place, in effecting a transition of his private enterprise and private possession to co-operative ones, not forcibly but by dint of example and the proffer of social assistance for this purpose. And then of course we shall have ample means of showing to the small peasant prospective advantages that must be obvious to him even today." (Ibid., p. 393.)

"We of course are decidedly on the side of the small peasant; we shall do everything at all permissible to make his lot more bearable, to facilitate his transition to the co-operative should he decide to do so, and even to make it possible for him to remain on his small holding for a protracted length of time to think the matter over, should he still be unable to bring himself to this decision." (Ibid., p. 394.)

Engels thus combined dialectically the "economic principle" with the "willingness of the peasant"; that is, he combined the principle of large-scale production in agricultural collectives with the principle of voluntary participation by the peasant, in this way establishing a basic norm governing the attitude of the proletariat toward the peasantry, hence determining the strategic direction for agricultural reconstruction and the alliance between the workers and peasants. Since then all revolutionary Marxists have accepted this as their guiding principle in action. The Bolsheviks, after the seizure of power and the establishment of the Soviet government following the October Revolution, applied under Lenin's leadership the principle laid down by Engels. For example, Lenin said in his speech "At the First Congress of Agricultural Communes and Agricultural Artels":

"Of course, from all the activities of the Soviet government you know what tremendous significance we attach to the communes, artels, and all organizations generally that aim at transforming and gradually assisting the transformation of small, individual, peasant farming into social, co-operative or artel farming. You are aware that the Soviet government has long ago assigned a fund of one billion rubles to assist efforts of this kind. The 'Statutes of Socialist Agrarian Measures' particularly stress the significance of communes, artels and all enterprises for the common cultivation of the land, and the Soviet government is exerting every effort in order that this law shall not remain on paper only, and that it shall really produce the benefits it is intended to produce.

"The importance of enterprises of this kind is tremendous, because if the old, poverty-stricken peasant husbandry remained unchanged there could be no question of building up a stable socialist society." (Selected Works, V.I. Lenin, Vol. II, Part 2, 1952 Moscow Edition, p. 294.)

In the above paragraph, immediately after emphasizing the significance of the aim of transforming small, individual peasant farming into communes, artels and similar enterprises for common cultivation of the land, Lenin illustrated methods for carrying out this aim.

"Only if we succeed in proving to the peasants in practice the advantages of common, collective, co-operative, artel cultivation of the soil, only if we succeed in helping the peasant by means of co-operative or artel farming, will the working class, which holds the state power, be really able to convince the peasant of the correctness of its policy and to secure the real and durable following of the millions of peasants. It is therefore impossible to exaggerate the importance of every measure intended to encourage co-operative, artel forms of agriculture. We have millions of individual farms in our country, scattered and dispersed throughout remote rural districts. It would be absolutely absurd to attempt to reshape these farms in any rapid way, by issuing an order or bringing pressure to bear from without. We fully realize that we can influence the millions of small peasant farms only gradually and cautiously and by a successful practical example. For the peasants are far too practical and cling far too tenaciously to the old methods of agriculture to consent to any serious change merely on the basis of advice or the indications contained in books. That is impossible and it would be absurd. Only when it is proved in practice, by

experience comprehensible to the peasants, that the transition to the co-operative, artel form of agriculture is essential and possible, shall we be entitled to say that in this vast peasant country, Russia, an important step towards socialist agriculture has been taken." (Ibid., pp. 294-95. My emphasis.)

Lenin states very clearly in the above paragraph that to prove "the advantages of common, collective, co-operative, artel cultivation of the soil," it is absolutely forbidden to use compulsive measures; we can only convince the millions of small peasants by practical example, and only in this way bring them to the side of the working class. This policy is not limited to Russia, but holds also in the advanced capitalist countries. In his "Preliminary Draft of Theses on the Agrarian Question" for the Second Congress of the Communist International, Lenin wrote :

"In the majority of capitalist countries the proletarian state should not immediately abolish private property completely; at all events, it guarantees both the small and the middle peasantry not only the preservation of their plots of land, but also the enlargement of the latter by the addition of the total area they usually rented (abolition of rent)."

"The combination of measures of this kind with a ruthless struggle against the bourgeoisie fully guarantees the success of the policy of neutralization. The proletarian state must effect the passage to collective farming with extreme caution and only very gradually, by the force of example, without any coercion of the middle peasant." (Ibid., pp. 453-54. My emphasis.)

"The victory of Socialism over capitalism, and the consolidation of Socialism, may be regarded as ensured only when the proletarian state, having completely suppressed all resistance on the part of the exploiters and secured complete stability for itself and complete obedience, reorganized the whole of industry on large-scale collective lines and on a modern technical basis (founded on the electrification of every branch of economic activity). This alone will enable the towns to render such radical assistance, technical and social, to the backward and scattered rural populations as will create the material basis for enormously raising the productivity of agricultural and of farm labor in general, thereby stimulating the small tillers by the force of example and in their own interests to adopt large-scale, collective, mechanized agriculture." (Ibid., pp. 458-59. My emphasis.)

The "principle of voluntary peasant participation"; namely, the objection to coercive measures to force the peasants into collectives, Lenin stressed particularly, concretely and in detail in his "Report on Work in the Rural Districts" delivered at the Eighth Congress of the Russian Communist party in 1919:

"We must particularly stress the truth that here, by the very nature of the case, coercive methods can accomplish nothing. The economic task here is an entirely different one.... Here coercion would ruin the whole cause. What is required here is prolonged educational work. We have to give the peasant, who not only in our country but all over the world is a practical man and a realist, concrete examples to prove that the 'kommunia' is the best possible thing." (Ibid., p. 185-186. Emphasis in the original.)

"On this question we must say that we do encourage communes, but that they must be so organized as to gain the confidence of the peasants.... Nothing is more stupid than the very idea of applying coercion in economic relations with the

middle peasant." (Ibid., p. 186. Emphasis in original.)

"When it is stated that we must strive to gain the peasants' voluntary consent, it means that they must be persuaded, and persuaded by practical deeds. They will not allow themselves to be convinced by mere words, and they are perfectly right in that. It would be a bad thing if they allow themselves to be convinced merely by reading decrees and agitational leaflets. If it were possible to reshape economic life in this way, such reshaping would not be worth a brass farthing." (Ibid., p. 187. My emphasis.)

"We must live in peace with him. In a communist society the middle peasants will be on our side only when we alleviate and ameliorate their economic conditions. If tomorrow we could supply one hundred thousand first-class tractors, provide them with fuel, provide them with drivers -- you know very well that this at present is sheer fantasy -- the middle peasant would say: 'I am for the kom-munia' (i.e., for communism). But in order to do that we must first defeat the international bourgeoisie, we must compel them to give us these tractors, or so develop our productive forces as to be able to provide them ourselves. That is the only correct way to pose this question." (Ibid., p. 189.)

It was because of his resolute objection to forced collectivization, and insistence on model examples to persuade the peasants in agricultural reconstruction that Lenin considered collectivization or co-operation to be absolutely impossible of accomplishment hastily or even within a brief time. Consequently he said in his essay, "On Co-operation": "But it will take a whole historical epoch to get the whole population to take part in the work of the co-operatives. . . At best we can achieve this in one or two decades." (Ibid., p. 718.)

According to Lenin, if Russia, with all its backwardness, was to eventually arrive at socialism (including agricultural collectivization), one condition was absolutely essential, namely electrification. He gave the following explanation:

"If we construct scores of district electric power stations. . . if we transmit electric power from these to every village, if we obtain a sufficient number of electric motors and other machinery, we shall not need, or shall hardly need, transitional stages, intermediary links between patriarchalism and Socialism. But we know perfectly well that at least ten years will be required to complete only the first stage of this 'one' condition; a reduction of this period is conceivable only if the proletarian revolution is victorious in such countries as England, Germany or America." ("The Tax in Kind," Ibid., p. 550.)

I have patiently quoted examples of Lenin's repeated emphasis on the correct principle in agricultural collectivization -- the need for the voluntary consent of the peasants. I have done this not only because the bureaucrats in the Stalinist parties have violated this principle, but also because quite a few Trotskyists, deluded by the current Chinese rural people's communes, have also forgotten or neglected it.

In the period following the death of Lenin, Stalin, compromising with the rich peasants, abandoned, or, at least, delayed agricultural collectivization. The growth of the rich peasants was facilitated, leading to a serious food famine. Beginning in 1929, under the threat of the mounting influence of the rich peasants, Stalin jumped from one extreme to the other, forcing all peasants by decree to join collectives despite their resistance. He even mobilized the Red Army and the GPU to suppress the opposition of the rich peasants and the great majority of

the middle peasants. The tragic results of the forced collectivization are well known to us; they testify that violation of the will of the peasants leads to dire consequences.

Forced collectivization in Eastern Europe after World War II provided fresh evidence that such measures create dissatisfaction among the peasants, and lead to stagnation and even retrogression in agricultural production. Chronic food shortages forced Tito and Gomulka to readjust and even dissolve some collectives in order to allay the crisis.

In the struggle between Trotsky and Stalin, agricultural collectivization became an important issue. Trotsky fully accepted the principle established by Engels and Lenin of respecting the will of the peasants in agricultural collectivization. When Stalin made his compromise with the rich peasants and delayed collectivization in 1926, the Left Opposition led by Trotsky called for a policy of collectivization. Later when Stalin introduced forced collectivization in the face of peasant resistance, Trotsky relentlessly attacked it as adventurism that would lead to disaster. Finally in the Transitional Program of the Fourth International Trotsky summarized as the guiding strategy for the alliance of workers and peasants, Engels' and Lenin's principles for the nationalization of land and collectivization and drew the tragic lesson of its malpractice in Russia under Stalin.

"The program for the nationalization of the land and collectivization of agriculture should be so drawn that from its very basis it should exclude the possibility of expropriation of small farmers and their compulsory collectivization. The farmer will remain owner of his plot of land as long as he himself believes it possible or necessary. In order to rehabilitate the program of socialism in the eyes of the farmer, it is necessary to expose mercilessly the Stalinist methods of collectivization, which are dictated not by the interests of the farmers or workers but by the interests of the bureaucracy."

Now let us turn to the Chinese communes. Were they formed with the voluntary consent of the peasants, or as the CCP propaganda puts it, with the enthusiastic support of the peasant masses? Mah-ki, who supports the communes, made the following judgment:

"The commune movement as a whole was largely compulsory in character. . . . Though the CCP agrees in words with the principle of voluntary consent by the peasants, it has not complied with it in deeds. The people's communes started as an experiment in April, 1958, but the documents concerning them were first published in August, 1958. Then in a period of not more than two months 99% of the rural population was organized into the communes. In such a short period, the superiority of the communes could not be proved by an increase in production and by an improvement in the standard of living of the people. Also there was insufficient time for discussion among the masses on how to form the communes. . . . All was decided simply by decree in this hastily organized movement." ("The People's Communes," by Mah-ki, pp. 17-18.)

In fact, the CCP inherited the traditional Stalinist practice and policy in agricultural production. For a relatively long time after taking power, the CCP, compromising with the landlords and rich peasants, suppressed its program of nationalization of the land and its intention of collectivizing agriculture. Even the urgent task of confiscating the land of the rich peasants and distributing it to the poor peasants was postponed. Later, during the Korean War, after encountering the resistance of the landlords, rich peasants and bourgeoisie, the CCP was

forced to solve the problem of distributing the land to the poor peasants, but still hesitated to project a policy of agricultural collectivization. In 1955, jumping from one extreme to the other as Stalin did in 1929, the CCP suddenly announced agricultural collectivization. In less than a year all Chinese peasants had joined the co-operatives. This forced collectivization inevitably aroused the resentment of the peasants, causing general unrest, chaotic conditions and even riots in the rural areas during 1957. Some co-operatives were dissolved by the peasants themselves. To meet this awkward situation, the CCP repressed the dissatisfaction and resistance of the peasants under guise of an "anti-rightist" campaign. In an attempt to turn the peasants' attention away from resistance, it forced them, under the slogan of a "great leap forward," to work doubly hard to increase production. The move into people's communes carried the "great leap forward" to its culmination.

The utter violation of Engels' and Lenin's principles on the agrarian question and agricultural reconstruction, and hence the violation of the strategy of the alliance of workers and peasants, is amply proved by the extreme inconsistency with which the CCP dealt with the agrarian question -- the abrupt shift from right to left in agricultural reconstruction, as indicated above. We are justified in saying, therefore, that the co-operative movement in 1955 and the general establishment of people's communes in September 1958 were "dictated not by the interests of the farmers or workers but by the interests of the bureaucracy."

Comrade Mah-ki acknowledges the validity of the principle of voluntary peasant participation in agricultural collectivization. He says:

"The commune, no doubt, is vastly superior, but since it signifies a great change in productive relations and social life, an experimental stage and concrete examples are necessary to obtain the full understanding and hearty support of the masses. Otherwise, the imprudent forced communization will encounter mass resistance. Moreover, the lack of tested planning and experiment loads the new system with defects which bring much unnecessary suffering and great inconvenience to the masses, increasing their misgivings and opposition. That is why all Marxists insist on the principle of voluntary consent by the peasants in agrarian collectivization." (The People's Communes, by Mah-ki, p. 17.)

If Comrade Mah-ki had actually insisted "on the principle of voluntary consent by the peasants in agrarian socialization" and if the "imprudent forced communization" mentioned by him above is a fact, then his support in general of the CCP's handling of the communes is not only self-contradictory, but signifies abandonment of his insistence on the principle of voluntary consent by the peasants

Why does Comrade Mah-ki take such a contradictory position on such an important issue, an issue which is so basic to the alliance of the workers and peasants and which affects the daily life of 500 million peasants? It is obvious that by insisting one-sidedly on the "superiority of large-scale agrarian production" and by falling victim to a delusion in which he sees the commune as "vastly superior," he overlooks the ominous result of the "imprudent forced communization." Consequently, he fails to understand the decisive role played by the "principle of voluntary consent" in "agricultural collectivization" about which Lenin warned us: "We must particularly stress the truth that here, by the very nature of the case, coercive methods can accomplish nothing." "Here coercion would ruin the whole cause" and "Nothing is more stupid than the very idea of applying coercion in economic relations with the middle peasants." Comrade Mah-ki forgets or neglects, in addition, the painful lesson of Stalin's forced collectivization and the fresh experience of forced collectivization in Eastern Europe during the past ten years.

If Comrade Mah-ki will make a careful study of Lenin's writings and the experience of the forced collectivizations in Russia and in Eastern Europe, I believe he will come to the following conclusion:

That "large-scale agrarian production is superior to production by small units"; "the commune is vastly superior"; but in view of the "lack of an experimental stage and concrete examples" to "obtain the full understanding and hearty support of the masses," "imprudent forced communization" is adventurism. That "coercive methods can accomplish nothing"; "coercion would ruin the whole cause"; therefore, communes of this type "are dictated not by the interests of the peasants or workers but by the interests of the bureaucracy."

Let us leave aside for the moment the principle of voluntary peasant participation. We remain with "the superiority of large-scale agrarian production." But this is not something all powerful. As Comrade Mah-ki observes: "The superiority of large-scale production has its limitation; namely, increasing a farm's size hinges on the agrarian technical level, to over-do it has disadvantages." ("The People's Communes.") This is especially true where agrarian technique is at such a low level as in China -- not only are modern machinery and draft animals lacking, but the greater part of farming is done by primitive means, depending virtually on human labor alone. On the other hand, the communes were set up on a grandiose scale -- averaging 60,000 mu with 5,000 households, quite a few ranging from a hundred thousand to several hundred thousand mu with 15,000 to more than 30,000 households. (Shen Ioh Association Dispatches; October 1958, People's Daily.) The readily apparent contradiction between such extraordinarily large-scale farms and the low technique can only be overcome by agrarian mechanization and electrification. These absolutely cannot be achieved in a short period of time.

Though Lenin held in high esteem the superiority of large-scale agrarian production and insisted on practicing collectivization, he emphasized at the same time the principle of voluntary peasant participation, pointing out in particular that collectivization must be carried out gradually in combination with mechanization and electrification. He said, as we noted, that it "will take a whole historical epoch to get the whole population to take part in the work of the co-operatives.... At best we can achieve this in one or two decades."

Disregarding for the time being the item of "unnecessary suffering and great inconvenience to the peasants" -- which increases their "misgivings and opposition" -- from the viewpoint purely of production, the commune is unprofitable. A real increase in agrarian productivity depends on the general application of modern technique (tractors, chemical fertilizers, electrification, etc.) If an increase rests solely on lengthened hours and increased intensity, dependent in turn on the rigid or militarized organization of labor, the increase in production at best can be only temporary; it cannot make up for the backwardness of the agrarian technique. Consequently it remains open to question whether the communes have increased productivity and, if they have, by how much. (I will return to this point later.)

Another argument raised in support of the communes is: large-scale communes facilitate huge irrigation projects and public works such as opening up new acreage to irrigation, dredging rivers, erecting flood controls, etc. Comrade Mah-ki declares: "The commune movement developed large-scale irrigation projects which are greatly needed." This is the same as saying that in order to undertake large-scale irrigation projects and other public works, large-scale communes must be set up. Such a statement is not only absurd in theory, it is unrealistic in practice.

Let us follow Comrade Mah-ki more closely in his remarks about accomplishments in irrigation: "Less than 20% of the farm land in China was irrigated in 1952; now it has increased to 55%, 30% of which was accomplished at the high tide of the advanced co-operative movement in two periods: from the winter of 1955 to the following spring and from the winter of 1957 to the following spring." ("The People's Communes.") This indicates that 30% of the new land brought under irrigation can be credited to the advanced co-operatives before the establishment of the communes. They can be credited with only 5%.

Liu Shao Chi, now Chairman of the Chinese government, said in his "Report to the Second Session of the Eighth National Congress" in May 1958: "The most outstanding leap forward in agriculture is the opening up of new acreage to irrigation by the cooperatives. Enlarged and new irrigation areas have been increased by 350,000,000 mu which is 80,000,000 mu more than the increase in the eight years immediately after the liberation." What Comrade Mah-ki and Chairman Liu Shao Chi say comes to the same thing; namely, without large-scale communes large-scale irrigation was achieved within the original framework of co-operatives. This discredits the theory that only large-scale communes can handle large-scale irrigation projects.

Actually, the construction of really large-scale irrigation projects: such as big reservoirs, high dams, river dredging, especially controls on the Yellow, Yangtze, and Pearl rivers cannot be carried out on a commune, or even provincial scale, but only the level of the state power. This stands to reason. Immense human power, a large quantity of machine equipment and high industrial technique are required to build large-scale reservoirs, floodgates (such as the Yellow River Floodgate now under construction), and to dredge rivers. In the past, the controlling of the Hwai River and some large-scale floodgates and reservoirs (such as the "Tunglin Dam" near Peking, etc.) required the support of the state power.

In a word, it is completely in violation of the basic principles of Engels and Lenin on the agrarian question and agricultural collectivization to separate the superiority of large-scale farming from voluntary consent by the peasants and to use the former as an argument to support the communes. It is absurd to claim that the construction of large-scale irrigation and public works depends upon the construction of communes.

The "Great Productive Increase in Farming"
and "From Enslavement for Women to Equality"

Besides the "superiority of large-scale farming," the two suppositions most convincing to those who support and glorify the "advantages" of the people's communes are the "great productive increase in farming" and "from enslavement for women to equality." For instance, Comrade Liang in his commentary on the "Draft Resolution on the Chinese Communes" submitted by the Secretariat of the Socialist Workers Party, held that "the progressive character of the communes as superior forms of socio-economic organization, [is] proven by the great productive increases already achieved and the smashing of out-worn social and family relationships." Liang's suppositions are also contained in "The Communes in China" (Draft Resolution Proposed by NC Members in Los Angeles); they constitute the chief reasons advanced for supporting the communes. The "great productive increases in farming" of the communes is described in the Draft Resolution of the Los Angeles comrades as follows:

"The economic advantages deriving from the communes have already been proven.

The 1958 cotton crop and the early rice crop were double that of 1957. The wheat crop was up 60 per cent. Work teams opened up 69 million acres to new irrigation.... These and derivative accomplishments are due to the advantages of the new productive form of the commune..." (See SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 20, No. 8, p. 40.)

The Draft Resolution also emphasized: "This economic yardstick is for historical materialists the basic measure of progress." (Ibid., p. 40.) Right, "This economic yardstick is for historical materialists the basic measure of progress"! Unfortunately these productive increases in farming and derivative accomplishments have no, or little, connection with the communes.

The communes began to spread in the early part of September 1958, (after the "Resolution on Establishment of People's Communes in the Rural Areas" was announced by the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the CCP, August 29, 1958). Wheat was harvested in the middle of June, the early rice crop between July and August, while cotton, raised in the summer, was ripe for harvest by the time the communes were established. These, therefore, harvested a crop raised by the cooperatives. It is surprising that the author of "The Communes of China" could commit such a blunder as to credit the communes with achievements of the co-operatives. Evidently he is uninformed on the harvest time for early rice, wheat and cotton. This alone is sufficient to demonstrate the author's carelessness.

As to "work teams" opening up "69 million acres to new irrigation," this likewise does not correspond to the facts. On this, as we see from the report of Comrade Mah-ki, out of the 35% increase in new areas opened to irrigation since the CCP took power, 30% was accomplished before the establishment of the communes. To credit the communes before they were organized for opening up new areas to irrigation astonishes us.

We must understand that the great increase in farm production in 1958 was neither an achievement of the communes nor a "miracle" ascribable to the co-operatives (due to lack of agricultural machinery, electricity, chemical fertilizers, insecticides, etc., a "miracle" is not possible), but is the direct result of the increase in hours and the increase in intensity of labor ruthlessly forced on the peasants by the CCP in the "bitter battle" against nature.

Since the winter of 1957, particularly after the general line in agriculture was announced at the second session of the Eighth Party Congress in early May 1958, the peasants, under the slogan of the "Great Leap Forward," have worked day and night -- 12 hours, 15 hours, even 18 hours; practicing deep plowing, building and repairing dams and canals, collecting fertilizer, opening up areas to new irrigation, etc. Farm production increased tremendously under the extraordinary intensity of labor. Even Comrade Mah-ki, who supports the communes, admitted: "A big part of the increase in farm production is due to the extreme intensity of labor (men, women, aged and children engaging in the 'bitter battle' day and night)." ("The People's Communes," by Mah-ki, p. 15.) This is not a normal development in agriculture, since the length of the work day and the intensity of labor cannot be kept up over a long period, while such primitive methods of obtaining fertilizer and opening up new areas to irrigation are limited.*

*Fertilizer collected by peasants consists mostly of dirt dug from sewers and ponds or the earth from the walls of old dismantled houses, etc. Such sources,

like the scrap iron collected for blast furnaces, cannot be tapped for long. The new areas opened up for irrigation are mostly front yards or back yards, or fallow land along river and forest edges -- areas again which are limited.

Even with land reform and collectivization, the heightening of farm production will proceed at a slow tempo if there is no general application of machinery, electric power, chemical fertilizers, insecticides and if the voluntary participation of the peasantry is lacking. This has been proved by Chinese experience itself. In his report on "Government Work" at the Second National People's Congress April 18, 1959, Chou En Lai admits: "Due to the fulfillment and over-fulfillment of the First Five Year Plan, the total cost of industry and agriculture was 68% greater than in 1952; the total cost of industry being 140% and that of agriculture 25%." Let us, for the time being, admit that Chou's report coincides with fact. (In reality, CCP official reports always exaggerate. The great food shortage this year disproves the reported doubling of farm products last year.) Thus the average yearly rate of increase in industry in the five years of the first plan can be put at 28%; agriculture at 5%. It is beyond reasonable dispute that the development of agriculture occurred at a slow tempo during the five years before 1958, which is to be taken as relatively normal. The tremendous increase reported this year is abnormal, (the total cost of agriculture alone in 1958 was 64% greater than in 1952 -- same report of Chou). It is the result of the extraordinary increase in intensity of the peasants' labor.

The rate of increase in 1958 absolutely cannot be maintained by simply depending on what peasant labor can accomplish under the whip. The phrenetic increase in labor time and intensity to increase the rate of production will inevitably engender its opposite. All the facts that have become evident since the establishment of the communes have tended to prove this. After their entry into the communes, the peasants were forced to continue working "energetically," intensity of labor was increased even more, the great majority of women were put to work at the same intensity as men; this exceedingly harsh drive, neglecting the well-being of the masses, soon met with bitter resistance and resentment from the peasants. Hence the CCP was compelled to prescribe last December in a "Resolution On Some Questions Concerning the People's Communes" a minimum of "eight hours' sleep and four hours for meals and recreation daily"; that is, the working day should not exceed 12 hours. (In fact, it still exceeds 12 hours.)

A 12-hour day cannot be kept up indefinitely, for, due to the lack of machinery and draft animals, almost all farm work means physical labor. The peasants dig the earth with simple hoes, stoop to transplant young rice plants and sow seeds, carry fertilizer and grain on their shoulders with a pole, use hand power for irrigation through a water-lifting apparatus, etc. All this requires endurance beyond that of horses and oxen, if the 12-hour day is continued for long.* Thus the growing peasant dissatisfaction eventually reaches open opposition. First, general sabotage, which damages crops, decreases production and lowers the rate of expansion. The CCP has been compelled to acknowledge many instances of this. For example, Tao Chu, the First Secretary of the Kwangtung Provincial

* The Los Angeles draft resolution on "The Communes in China" states: "As with all forced marches, hardships are inevitable." How should this sentence be interpreted by the Chinese peasants? Even if they agreed that the American Trotskyists are not defenders of the CCP, they would surely blame them for utter lack of understanding of how they are overworked and for indifference to their unbearable suffering in a "bitter battle" indescribably damaging to their health.

Committee of the Communist Party, said in his report on the "Investigation of the Hu-Men Commune": "There is sabotage, waste and lack of enthusiasm among the masses." (People's Daily, Feb. 25, 1959.) The "lack of enthusiasm among the masses" means passive sabotage due to overwork. This exists not only in the Hu-Men commune; it is a general phenomenon in the great majority of communes. Consequently, for the past half year the People's Daily continually speaks of absenteeism and inefficiency among some members of the communes, and calls for enforcement of the "production responsibility system" (the so-called "fixed quota system") and the "incentive penalty system."

The so-called "production responsibility system" gives each unit a fixed production target; the "incentive penalty system" penalizes absenteeism and lack of enthusiasm. (Tao Chu recommends docking two days' pay for each day's absence.) But this increasingly severe forced labor with its penalty system, not only cannot raise production, it will further arouse passive resistance among the masses. Even during the autumn harvest a year ago, when the communes were first established, mass sabotage had already shown what serious effect it could have. Vice Premier Ten Tzu-hui admitted at the Second National People's Congress in 1959: "Last year we reaped less in spite of a fine crop." This means that at the autumn harvest great waste and loss occurred due to sabotage among the peasantry. This occurred again in the summer harvest this year according to reports in recent issues of the People's Daily.

Precisely because of this passive resistance of the peasantry, the CCP had to admit further: "In order to get high yield we need tractors, large amounts of chemical fertilizers, modern agricultural machinery and effective insecticides. At present our country does not have these prerequisites; consequently, farm production is very unsteady; we can have a bumper harvest one year and a poor harvest in another. . . . This year some communes have scored an increase in unit-area yield, but total sowing areas were much less than last year. Thus, there was actually no increase and in some cases even decreases were reported." (People's Daily, June 11, 1959.)

After reaching the conclusion that the "great productive increases in farming" were not the "accomplishment" of the communes, as I sought to point out, and then reading the acknowledgment by the CCP that "farm production is very unsteady" due to the lack of modern farming "prerequisites," and that "this year. . . there was actually no increase and in some cases even decreases were reported," I wonder what the author of "The Communes in China" thinks.

This "form of socio-economic organization," put into practice on such a large scale, had not been subjected to test. Instead of crediting it for an increase in production accomplished before it came into existence, we should have retained cool heads, analyzed carefully its productive possibilities and contradictions so as to arrive at a conclusion or judgment subject to the test of events and criticism. Only by a serious attitude of this kind in dealing with an important issue can we lay claim to being "historical materialists." Otherwise, the so-called "economic yardstick" becomes a mere caricature.

We also find in "The Communes in China": "The advance by the way of such collectives is. . . from enslavement for women to equality. . ." (Op. cit., p. 39.) This statement is further explained: (A) "The communes have plowed up and pulverized the crust of outworn social and family relations. . ." (Ibid., p. 39.) and (B) ". . . they have accelerated the liberation of women from domestic slavery, opened up new avenues of cultural development, and are narrowing the age-

old cultural gulf between city and country." (Ibid., p. 40.) (A) apparently refers to the equality of women with men through liberation from the bonds of the feudal or patriarchal family; while (B) refers to the liberation of women from "domestic slavery" and their stepping into "new avenues of cultural development."

What (A) and (B) refer to is surely epoch-making. But the question remains: Have the communes actually led to this kind of "liberation" for women? First, let us investigate the facts. As everyone knows, Chinese women, before the third Chinese revolution, had been recognized in law to have equal status with men; such as the right of inheritance, equal rights in education, participation in social and political spheres and freedom in marriage. Of course, this legal equality was far from being realized in reality, especially in the rural areas. But it is undeniable that the Chinese women had won a preliminary stage in their liberation from patriarchal relations. Because of this relative freedom a great many women participated in revolutionary activities. After taking power, the CCP proclaimed further measures establishing legal equality for women such as equal pay for equal work, complete freedom in marriage and divorce, etc. And by participating in all kinds of social movements such as land reform, agricultural co-operatives, etc., the Chinese women, especially those in the rural areas, have, no doubt, broken with the traditional patriarchy and obtained equality with men. This is certainly an important contribution, made by the CCP after it took power, toward the liberation of women. It was noted in "The Third Chinese Revolution and Its Aftermath" (Discussion Draft, 1955): The Revolution "destroyed the Asian relations in the family and swept away other feudalistic rubbish." (p. 1.) All this was accomplished a few years before the establishment of the communes and has no connection with them. The author of "The Communes in China," crediting the communes for bringing women "from enslavement . . . to equality," again gets his facts chronologically out of order as he did in doubling farm production (crediting the communes with an early rice crop, wheat crop, etc. which were actually due to the co-operatives).

Doubtlessly, only liberation from "domestic slavery" will make it possible for women to win genuine, thorough-going liberation. But the general establishment of community kitchens and nurseries as prerequisites for the complete liberation of women, which every communist stands for, is conceivable only under highly developed material and cultural conditions. At present, neither the Chinese rural areas nor the advanced Western countries have achieved these.

Under such unfavorable material and cultural conditions, the CCP's reckless and forcible replacement of family life with collective life, unavoidably brings innumerable inconveniences and suffering to the masses. Comrade Mah-ki, a supporter of the communes, especially their community kitchens and nurseries, has to say this when confronted with undeniable facts: "Just as in the commune movement as a whole, this great leap (meaning the community kitchen established to liberate women -- Peng) was made with too much ferocity and compulsion, hence the cadres were overboard in many things. For instance, by sudden order everybody had to eat in the mess halls; all stoves in private homes were dismantled or centralized, and no food rations were issued to individuals. Yet the meals in the mess halls are insufficient and bad in quality. There is rice but no hot water, no special care for the aged, children and sick ones. Though called community kitchens, actually there is no mess hall; people eat in the open or take meals home on rainy and windy days...worst of all is the fact that the cadres have their own small mess halls!" ("The People's Communes," by Mah-ki, p. 10.)

In the above paragraph, Comrade Mah-ki gives just a bare sketch of the communal kitchens without analyzing their many serious shortcomings and contradictions. Yet it is enough to prove that they are unbearable. I am sure that except for a few, who never had enough to eat, the great majority of the peasantry harbor

resentment against the communal kitchens. They at least find them inconvenient.

The situation in the nurseries is not much better. Too many children are crowded into small rooms without any nursery equipment and placed in charge of illiterate or disabled old women. Under these conditions, how can the children be well cared for? That is why mothers are "physically in the field, while their minds are back home." (The mothers worry about their children all the time.)

What is the actual situation of the women liberated from "domestic slavery" and precipitated into social production? Comrade Mah-ki, who supports this kind of "liberation of women," gives us the following description and explanation:

"... 'equality' with men has been demanded of women in physical output since communization; they work on farms, dams, highways, mines and factories -- day and night in the 'bitter battle,' even during menstruation, pregnancy and after giving birth... the customs and prejudices of thousands of years cannot be broken at one stroke; the masses see things differently. This plus these shortcomings in the process of practicing the new system explain why the suspicion and resentment of the masses are growing to such a large extent. After the Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the CCP, these shortcomings became the target for investigation in the check-up of the communes. But these shortcomings can only be solved thoroughly when genuine proletarian democracy is fully realized in the communes and in the country as a whole." ("The People's Commune," by Mah-ki, p. 10.)

Here we can draw a conclusion from Comrade Mah-ki's description and explanation: "Before genuine proletarian democracy is fully realized in the communes and in the country as a whole," the sufferings (Comrade Mah-ki called them "shortcomings") of women liberated from the family to participate in productive labor cannot be "thoroughly solved." The problem here is reduced to how to "realize genuine proletarian democracy" in "the communes and in the country as a whole."

Comrade Mah-ki has also provided us with sufficient material to answer the questions I posed before: (A) "the meals in the mess halls are insufficient and bad in quality..." which proves that they are worse than those at home; the same goes for the nurseries. (B) Since communization, "'equality' with men has been demanded of women in physical output day-and-night, in the 'bitter battle'..." which is harder and more harmful to their bodies and minds than "domestic slavery." This is the logical conclusion to forcibly replacing family life with collective life. The main aim of this CCP policy is not the thoroughgoing liberation of women but the mobilization of maximum labor power in pushing the great leap forward in agriculture. Hence the brilliant idea of pushing all the women in the rural areas out of their home responsibilities and into the greatly needed labor force, there to work them with the same intensity as men. From "domestic slavery," the women are simply thrown into "social slavery."

I should like to repeat: for an entire people, especially a rural population to eat in community kitchens, all the children to be placed in nurseries, all the women to be liberated from "domestic slavery" and fully included in social production, is conceivable only under highly developed socialism, after the full victory of the world proletarian social revolution.

And even after the full victory of the world proletarian social revolution, in the advanced countries with highly developed material resources and culture,

the whole people should not be forced to join community kitchens at once, nor the children forced into nurseries at one stroke. This is stupid and absurd. First, let us establish model community kitchens and nurseries so that the people can see for themselves that this is preferable to home-cooked meals and keeping the children at home. Gradually they will join voluntarily. By then socialist collective life will be closely linked in reality with its name.

We should understand that the disappearance of the family system, a heritage of thousands of years, and the full participation of women, freed from "domestic slavery," in social production on a basis of equality with men marks not only the complete liberation of women, but also mankind's entrance into the ideal society of genuine freedom, equality and happiness. Even after the complete victory of the world socialist revolution, it can be gradually realized only over a relatively long period. Since the "family" was gradually formed during the dissolution of primitive communist society, it can die but gradually with the development of the future communist society.

Under primitive material and cultural conditions such as exist in China's rural areas and under an objective situation in which the world socialist revolution is still far from victory, with no planning and within a few months, the CCP with unprecedented rudeness and arbitrariness forced the whole peasant mass to suddenly abandon their family life for the "socialist collective life." Besides discrediting the perspective of communes and socialist collective life, the result was inevitably to give today's communes a bad name among the masses and to sow distrust and hatred against the urban proletariat (which has not been communized), thereby dealing a heavy blow to the alliance of workers and peasants.

It can safely be predicted that the community kitchen and nursery cannot be maintained for a long period. Under compulsion of necessity, in the not too distant future, they will be reorganized or the great majority of them will be disbanded. The return from "collective life" to "family life" means the complete bankruptcy of the communes. If, disregarding the unwillingness and opposition of the peasants, the CCP seeks to maintain this collective life represented by the communal kitchen and nursery in order to prove the absolute correctness of the commune policy of the CCP and Chairman Mao, then the communal kitchen and nursery, together with the unbearable forced labor, will become centers of a highly explosive situation within the communes, which can touch off a disaster.

Is "Voluntary Peasant Cooperation" Evident in the Communes?
Are they "Administered by Elected Councils,
Not by Bureaucratic Edict"?

Comrade Liang, in criticizing the "Draft Resolution on the Chinese Communes," which had been submitted by the Secretariat, wrote:

"On page 7 of the draft, Par. 4, our support of the communes is made to depend, not on their essentially progressive character, but on 'the readiness of the peasants to accept them.' How and by whom is this 'readiness' to be determined? It might be recalled that we supported, with great consistency, the collectivization of farming in the Soviet Union despite peasant resistance. What we opposed was the rude and violent forcing of the peasantry by the Stalin regime. In the case of China's communes, there is no evidence so far of mass coercion by the Peking government, but considerable evidence of voluntary peasant cooperation...."

"The fact that the Communes are administered by elected councils, not by bureaucratic edict, is an important fact demanding a place in the resolution." (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 20, No. 8, p. 36. Emphasis in the original.)

The idea expressed here by Comrade Liang was fully supported by National Committee members in Los Angeles in their proposed Draft Resolution, "The Communes in China" (see page 40 of the SWP Discussion Bulletin) and was supported and defended with special vigor by Comrade Swabeck. (See page 5 of his article, "The Third Chinese Revolution and Its Communes." In SWP Discussion Bulletin Vol. 20, No. 13.) Since this is one of the main arguments they offer in advocating support and sanction of the communes, discussion of it is in order.

First, I should like to point out that Comrade Liang does not cite evidence, he simply makes the statement that "considerable evidence" exists of "voluntary peasant cooperation" in the communes and asserts it as a "fact" that "the communes are administered by elected councils, not by bureaucratic edict." If he has "considerable evidence" and "fact," he should share it with his readers. Otherwise they may feel inclined to challenge his unsupported assertions.

"A great amount of coercion was used in forming the communes...the masses had no chance to consider all the practical problems. These were decided simply by the CCP cadres and passed on as orders to the peasants." Mah-ki wrote this in his article, "The People's Communes." Living close to the mainland of China, following all the CCP official Chinese newspapers and documents and reading the reports of foreign visitors to the mainland, he is also in frequent touch with Chinese coming from the mainland. Among the supporters of the communes, Comrade Mah-ki's account can be taken as at least more trustworthy than that of such comrades as Liang and Swabeck, who are far away from China, who are unable to read official publications in the original Chinese and who depend heavily on reports of certain foreign visitors to China. Let us now consider the communes in the light of theory and facts leaving aside Comrade Mah-ki's account for the time being.

(A) Ninety-nine percent of the rural population are in the communes (500,000,000). Is it conceivable that within the short space of three months (September to December, 1958) such tremendous numbers of the rural population would of their own volition and not under compulsion join the communes and start living collectively; that is, all the women leave the family circle, work with the men in teams and eat in the community kitchen, by these acts alone bringing to an end the system of private property?

I cited at some length above the attitude of Lenin on the peasant question. He emphasized that the peasant is conservative and realistic: "They will not allow themselves to be convinced by mere words." "We have to give the peasant, who not only in our country but all over the world is a practical man and a realist, concrete examples to prove that the 'kommunia' is the best possible thing." Consequently "it will take a whole historical epoch to get the whole population to take part in the work of the co-operatives..., at best we can achieve this in one or two decades." Instead of showing the masses "concrete examples to prove that the commune is the best possible thing," the CCP set tasks for accomplishment in a few months which require a historical period or at best one or two decades. They organized 99% of the peasants into communes without "mass coercion." If this is what actually happened, then not only is Lenin's whole theory on the peasant question and his fundamental policy in regard to agricultural collectivization completely overthrown; the lessons to be drawn from the experience in collectivizing agriculture in Russia (forty years) and

the East European countries (ten years) become meaningless! The only conclusion we can draw is that the Chinese peasants are completely different from those in the rest of the world; they are not "realists," but "born communists" or are "especially inclined to collectivization." As soon as the call for collectivization and communization was announced, they unhesitatingly, or as CCP propaganda puts it, "enthusiastically" joined up!!! I should like Comrade Liang, Comrade Swabeck, and the others to consider the implications of such a "conclusion":

(B) Are the Chinese peasants "born communists" or "especially inclined to collectivization"? Let us check some facts that have appeared in official CCP publications:

The People's Daily of September 24, 1958, revealed that in setting up communes in the environs of Hangchow: "The poor and middle peasants thought that since a rational distribution of products is difficult, peasant enthusiasm in production is not likely to be encouraged; while the upper middle peasants vacillated, worried that the communes, on such a large scale and with such an enormous membership could not work out."

The reports of Li Jun-hwa, first secretary of the Ho-pu County Committee of the Communist party in Kwantung province and Ho Wen-li, a section head of the Ho-pu County co-operative, reported in the South Daily, Canton, in October 1958: "Capitalist ideology and behavior is still dominant among the upper middle peasants. This includes some party members and some lower cadres who come from the upper middle peasants. They loathe and oppose the communes. A minority of them lack enthusiasm in production. They eat and drink heavily, hide their property and reserve of food, dig green vegetables from their private plots of land and slaughter their domestic animals and poultry."

Political Study, No. 10, 1958, published in Peking, pointed out: "In the movement of the people's communes, quite a few peasants still intend to go back to capitalism; they do not welcome, but oppose the communes whose aim is to eliminate the remnants of the private property system. (The reference is to taking over the peasants' private plots of land, private orchards, domestic animals and poultry, homes and private bank deposits. -- Peng.) Even some party cadres, due to their particularist ideology, oppose this elimination of the remnants of the private property system. Hence they become an obstacle to setting up and consolidating the people's communes."

Ta Kung Pao, a newspaper published in Peking, revealed December 8, 1958: "A general loss of grain, cotton, tobacco and hemp occurs on the way to the storehouses. No one kept an eye on more than ten parcels of cotton left on the highway for four or five days."

A report published by the Yang Cheng Evening Post in Canton, December 20, 1958, informed us: "Peasants in the Kwantung province have rushed into the city recently to avoid communization. This was considered by the city authorities as not only increasing difficulties in city management and security, but also as affecting the consolidation of the communes and the peasants' enthusiasm in production."

Red Flag, No. 12, 1958, a theoretical journal published in Peking, reported: "Since the people's communes were set up in such great haste and on such a large scale, and with the complete elimination of private property, the ideological preparation of the cadres could not keep pace with it. The

ideological struggle between two tendencies (for or against the communes -- Peng) among the masses has found receptive soil among some cadres; they doubt that 'communism will raise labor enthusiasm' and are returning to the ideology of localism and individualism. Some of them have even led the masses in hiding property to keep it from being included in the communes."

Such bits of information were disclosed either accidentally or purposefully by the officials. The actual reaction of the peasants toward the communes has certainly not been reported in detail or systematically, and what we have been given is most certainly distorted. Yet it is sufficient to show that the Chinese peasants are neither "born communists," nor "especially inclined to collectivization." Like peasants elsewhere in the world, the Chinese peasants are "realists," imbued with "capitalist ideology and behavior," and afraid of "the elimination of the remnants of the private property system." Consequently, they did not welcome but opposed the communes. Their general way of opposing the communes is through "sabotage": i.e., "lack of enthusiasm in production," "damaging farm products," "slaughtering domestic animals and poultry," "cutting down fruit trees," "fleeing to the cities," etc. Moreover, these ideas and acts have also "found receptive soil among some cadres."

The "lack of enthusiasm in production" will, of course, reduce the rate of agricultural production. "Damaging farm products" is reflected in last year's "lower harvest in spite of a fine crop" (admitted by Teng Tzi-hui, Vice Premier). The "slaughtering of domestic animals and poultry" has caused a shortage of non-staple foods in the whole country and a scarcity of meat in the cities. In spite of the daily exhortations of the People's Daily to the peasants to raise plenty of livestock, pigs, etc., the shortage of non-staple foods and meat is getting worse and worse.

Here we come to a very important question: How did it happen that the CCP, despite the opposition of the peasants (at least a part of them), could successfully organize 500 million people in the communes within a few months and yet claim that no "rude and violent" methods were used as in Stalin's time? In reaching an answer, the following considerations should be borne in mind:

(A) In the co-operatives, the distribution of products was based mainly on the workday; some poor peasants with large families, few of them able to work, could barely maintain the lowest standard of living and often went hungry. They raised both hands at the beginning in favor of the communes when they were told about "free meals" in the community kitchen.

(B) The CCP strove through its cadres among the peasants to propagandize the "advantages" of the communes. For example, "The People's Communes are the best form for the transition from collective ownership to ownership by the people as a whole. It contains the first shoots of communism. . . such as the communal kitchens, nurseries and sewing facilities to emancipate women from the household; a wage system, namely, basic wages plus awards paid directly to the members. Members get food and clothing allowances, housing and child-birth care, education and medical treatment, weddings and funerals." ("The Advantages of the Communes," Red Flag, No. 8, 1958.) Offered such beautiful pictures, quite a few peasants, especially the young ones, found it easy to accept the communes and even gave them naive and enthusiastic support.

(C) Beginning in the autumn of 1957, the CCP waged an extensive anti-rightist "socialist construction campaign" in the rural areas. Under the "anti-rightist" slogan, the CCP attacked not only the rich peasants, but also the

middle peasants who were dissatisfied with the CCP's policy of collectivization. The hardest blows fell above all on left elements who dared to criticize the CCP's policy openly. (They were sent to border regions or labor concentration camps for reform.) Having just experienced such a severe "anti-rightist" campaign, the peasant masses naturally feared to publicly defy the CCP's order to set up the communes.

(D) A great part of the 12 million members of the Young Communist League were stationed in the rural areas when the communes were established. These organizations hold full power over the rural economic, financial, political, military and social affairs. It was clear to every peasant from the beginning that if he openly opposed setting up the communes, he would face very harsh reprisals.

Under such beguilement and intimidation, the peasants unwillingly accepted the party's order to form the communes. They could only resort to anonymous acts of sabotage such as "lack of enthusiasm in production," "slaughtering domestic animals and poultry," "cutting down fruit trees," "damaging farm products" or "fleeing to the cities," etc. Comrade Mah-ki had the following to say about this

"The CCP's policy on the people's communes, though compulsory, was carried out, as in so many other dealings with the peasants, mainly through an organizational drive instead of by force. Through pseudo discussion, the CCP manages to stampede the masses into accepting its policy. The masses lack not only an independent organization, but also a political staff to clarify and systematize their dissatisfaction with the CCP. Consequently, their enthusiasm for socialism has often been manufactured and their opposition to the CCP's policy remains uncrystallized." ("The People's Communes.")

The explanation that "the CCP's policy on the people's communes although compulsory, was carried out. . . mainly through an organizational drive instead of by force" is factually correct. But to make the policy compulsory and carry it out by means of an "organizational drive" though different from the "rude and violent" methods used by Stalin, is still "coercion." As Lenin said: "It would be absolutely absurd to attempt to reshape those farms (Today it is the communes in China. -- Peng.) in any rapid way, by issuing an order or bringing pressure to bear from without."

Moreover, one must understand that the reason why the CCP has not adopted Stalin's "rude and violent" methods in setting up agricultural producer's co-operatives and the people's communes is that it learned some lessons from the tragedy of collectivization in the Soviet Union and has sought to avoid the same gross mistakes in China. Similarly the coercive collectivization in the postwar East European countries was also accomplished mainly "through an organizational drive instead of by force." Can we, therefore, permit ourselves to conclude: "There is no evidence so far of mass coercion by the governments of the East European countries"?

From the above facts and accompanying theoretical analysis, it is beyond reasonable dispute that the establishment of the people's communes by the CCP leadership did not occur through voluntary acceptance by the peasantry but by mass coercion. In the light of this, how could a Trotskyist, inheriting Engels' and Lenin's traditional principle that collectivization is conditional on voluntary acceptance by the peasantry, support and glorify the CCP's policy of coercive communization?

The "Draft Resolution on the Chinese Communes" submitted by the Secretariat stated: "Our support of the 'rural people's communes' must, therefore, be governed by the readiness of the peasants to accept them." This is completely correct. For it is based not only on Engels and Lenin's traditional standpoint of voluntary collectivization, but also follows faithfully the position on agricultural collectivization in our Transitional Program.

But Comrade Liang is clearly in conflict with this program. This is sufficient to show that on the problem of the Chinese people's communes he has departed from Trotskyism. He even openly declared: "We supported, with great consistency, the collectivization of farming in the Soviet Union despite peasant resistance." I must ask, whom does this "we" include? We Trotskyists? No, absolutely not! The Left Oppositionists (the Trotskyists) stood unanimously with Trotsky in severely criticizing and resolutely opposing Stalin's policy of collectivization which coerced the peasants into collectives "despite their resistance." Trotsky expressed this viewpoint not only in many articles at the time, but also in the Transitional Program as follows: "In order to rehabilitate the program of socialism in the eyes of the farmer, it is necessary to expose mercilessly the Stalinist methods of collectivization, which are dictated not by the interests of the farmers or workers but by the interests of the bureaucracy." Consequently, I can assert that at that time (1929-32) those "who supported, with great consistency, the collectivization in the Soviet Union despite peasant resistance" were not we Trotskyists, but the Stalinists in every country.

Comrade Liang bases his support of the communes on their "essentially progressive character." According to him, whether peasant resistance exists or not has nothing to do with the "essentially progressive character" of the communes. In other words, in order to support the "essentially progressive character" of the communes, he disregards opposition by the peasants to the communes. This is a revision of Engels' and Lenin's principles on agricultural collectivization. For they maintained the "essentially progressive character" of collectivization in agriculture, yet insisted that it be a voluntary matter among the peasants when the proletariat proceed to collectivization after taking power. If Comrade Liang denies the validity of Engels' and Lenin's principle of letting the peasants decide when to join, he should state this openly. (Stalin publicly declared, when he forced the peasants into the collectives in 1929, that Engels' principle of leaving it up to the peasants was "too cautious" and did not fit the situation in the Soviet Union.)

Moreover, if Comrade Liang continues to insist on this stand, he should further propose the revision of the points on the nationalization of land and collectivization of agriculture in our Transitional Program, for there it is unambiguously stated: "The program for the nationalization of the land and collectivization of agriculture should be so drawn that from its very basis it should exclude the possibility of expropriation of small farmers and their compulsory collectivization." (My emphasis.) If Comrade Liang is faithful to the logic of his own thinking words ". . . should exclude. . ." in the program should be revised to read ". . . should NOT exclude. . ."

How Do the "Councils" Administer the Communes?

Comrade Liang says: "The fact that the Communes are administrated by elected councils, not by bureaucratic edict..." In other words the administration and the internal life of the communes are entirely democratic. But what is "the fact"? How are the "councils" elected? These questions are related to

basic problem of a democratic system, and Comrade Liang is obviously not interested in this aspect. As soon as he heard about "elected councils," he concluded that a democratic system had been realized in the communes and that "bureaucratic edict" was no more.

Was this what really happened? Let us determine the facts. When the communes were organized all over the country, in the previous organizations "the upper structure was changed while the lower structure remained unchanged." The "commune committee" was formed by combining local "people's committees" and "co-operative committees." This was the so-called "merger of township government and commune into one." The "Resolution on the Establishment of People's Communes in the Rural Areas" (August 29, 1958) states: "The township governments and the communes should become one, with the township committee of the Party becoming the Party Committee of the commune and township people's council becoming the administrative committee of the commune." In carrying out the resolution and setting up the communes, this becomes: "The township chief is at the same time the commune chief, the township party secretary is the commune party secretary, the township people's congress is the commune congress, and the township people's council is the administrative committee of the commune." No election was held at the time. After the communes were set up generally, elections were held in some communes and commune councils were elected by the peasants to administer the economic, financial, political, military, police, educational and other affairs of the communes.

The election of these "councils" was conducted in the same way as that of the "people's congress." As a rule, the township party secretary or the commune party secretary (some township party secretaries became commune party secretaries after the communes were set up) proposed a list of candidates, always nominating party leaders or cadres. The peasants, having gone through the procedure of voting for the township people's congress in the past, were quite familiar with this kind of election. They knew very well that their only right was to approve, not oppose, the list of candidates. When the election was held, they cast their votes or raised their hands in favor of the "candidates list." This was how the so-called "commune councils" were elected. Consequently "the merger of township government and commune into one" actually was "the merger of party and commune into one." For the commune chief is, in most communes, the first secretary of the commune party committee and the members of the commune council are members of the commune party committee. It is well known that all the economic, financial, political, military, police and educational affairs are controlled by the party, especially the first secretary of the party. There is a common saying in the communes: "Party secretary commands all," meaning that all the important affairs of the commune are handled and decided by the "party secretary." Hence the commune party secretary is the dictator of the commune just as Mao Tse-tung is the dictator of the central government. (Although Mao has nominally quit the chairmanship of the central government, he is, in fact, still the dictator.) So it can be said that every commune is a replica in miniature of the central government.

Let us ask Comrade Liang: Are these "councils," created by such elections, fully in accord with democracy? Can such "elected councils," in conducting the administration of the communes, represent the interests and wishes of the masses, rather than the interests of bureaucracy? Or as Comrade Swabeck puts it: "It looks more like a reasonable form of democracy" ("The Third Chinese Revolution and Its Communes," p. 5.)

If Comrades Liang and Swabeck really believe what they assert, then not only the communes comprising 500 million peasants, but also every level of government in China, is a reasonable form of democracy, since every level of the people's congress is "elected by the People" the same way as in the communes. So what we have is not the dictatorship of the bureaucracy but proletarian or socialist democracy in China. This not only completely reverses our assessment of the nature of the CCP and its regime, but also repudiates the resolution "The Third Chinese Revolution and Its Aftermath" (which was approved by Comrades Liang and Swabeck) passed by the SWP in 1955, since this resolution asserts that the CCP is a Stalinist party and its governmental regime a bureaucratic dictatorship necessitating political revolution.

Furthermore, to extend the logic implied in the thinking of these two comrades, proletarian or socialist democracy has also been achieved in the Soviet Union as well as in the East European countries, since the "Soviets" in the Soviet Union and the "people's councils" in the East European countries also claim to be "elected by the people" or to be approved in accordance "with universal electoral rights." From this you can see how a false judgment or concept, followed to its logical end, finally brings us to an amazing conclusion. A Chinese proverb says: "Hair's difference; thousand-mile gap."

Trotsky told us: "The bureaucracy replaced the Soviets as class organs with the fiction of universal electoral rights -- in the style of Hitler-Goebbels." (The Transitional Program.) If Comrades Liang and Swabeck have not yet forgotten the meaning of Trotsky's words, they should seek to understand what the "elected councils" of the present communes are. Actually the commune "councils" are copies of the former township "people's councils" or "people's committees." The Chinese "people's councils" are patterned after those in the East European countries. And the "people's councils" in the East European countries are a variation of Stalin's "soviets." Whoever does not understand this will become totally confused trying to understand the problem of the Chinese regime and will fall into irreparable errors.

Certain definite conditions are required to realize socialist democracy. First of all, the worker and peasant masses must enjoy complete freedom of speech, press, assembly, association and belief; the secret ballot must exist at every level during elections; finally, and most important of all, the legality of every worker's party that accepts socialism must be guaranteed. But in China today, as well as in the East European countries, these conditions are absent. The communes, consequently, cannot be isolated and administered democratically just by themselves. Their "councils," both in form and content, are not different from the former township "people's councils," and as a result are run only by "bureaucratic edict." Such things as arbitrarily increasing the hours of labor (from 12 to 15, even to 18 hours a day), compelling women to do the same amount of intensified work as men; forcing the peasants to dismantle their stoves and leave home to eat in the communal kitchen, etc., are enough to prove the ruthlessness of the bureaucracy.

Are the Communes a "Superior Type of Socio-Economic Organization," or
Are They an Effective Instrument in the Hands of the CCP for Exploit-
ing and Controlling the Peasants?

I quoted above Comrade Liang's words: ". . . the progressive character of the Communes as superior forms of socio-economic organization, proven by the great productive increase already achieved. . . ." The phrase "superior forms of socio-economic organization" in Comrade Liang's statement was adopted in "The Communes in China" (Draft Resolution Proposed by NC Members in Los Angeles) with the following explanation:

"The communes are. . . a superior type of socio-economic organization, surpassing any yet installed in a predominantly peasant country. The large-scale utilization of co-operative labor and the resulting production of agricultural surpluses can serve to speed up the accumulation of capital imperatively needed for China's industrialization. In this way the communes can make an indispensable contribution to the building of the economic basis for socialism." (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 20, No. 8, p. 40.)

That "the communes are a superior type of socio-economic organization" is a sociological evaluation. According to Marxist sociology, whether a "socio-economic organization" is "a superior type" depends on the harmony of its inner structure; i.e., no contradiction between the productive forces and the relations of production, and coordination among the various branches of production.

The present people's communes are described as "a basic social organization for the all-round development of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, side occupations and fishery, as well as for the all-round combination of economic, political, cultural and military affairs where industry, agriculture, trade, education and military affairs merge into one." (Red Flag, August 1958). Thus the communes, pictured as self-contained and self-supported social units, are represented as utopias; yet they are rife with contradictions. It is absolutely impossible to achieve rational division of labor and cooperation among the various branches of production, together with the specialization necessary in each of the branches of production, inside the communes despite their large size (the average is about five thousand households, and the largest about thirty thousand). This is due to the fact that they engage simultaneously in numerous branches of production such as agriculture, forestry, side occupations, animal husbandry, fishery and industry. This kind of set-up in production must inevitably lead to chaos, backwardness and primitiveness. First, it weakens the commune by dissipating its forces into so many branches of production. Thus the diversion from concentration in agricultural production. Everybody knows that the communes were ordered to set up various kinds of industry, even a steel industry (for example, the blast furnaces), thus not only introducing confusion into the state industrial plan but placing demands on the communes far beyond their own capacity. For only if they were fully equipped with modern machinery could the commune industries compete with other industries and maintain their own existence. Lacking this prerequisite, the communes can only set up a few handicraft workshops (most of them were transferred from the co-operatives). This testifies that the commune industries are backward, out-moded and incompatible with modern industry. Consequently, judged by its mode of production, the commune is not "a superior type of socio-economic organization," but a backward or conservative "type."

The utopianism of the commune manifests itself in such fantasies as attempts to eliminate the difference between city and country, worker and peasant, mental and manual labor through the all-round development of industry and agriculture; attempts to supersede the system of pay according to work by a system of rationing through the communal kitchen plus other collective benefits.

Until the communes have been in existence for a relatively long period of time it is premature, if not careless arbitrariness, to assert that they are "a superior type of socio-economic organization."

If we consider the commune as "a superior type of agricultural co-operative" (the fact is that its actual foundation of production is agriculture), then due to its large scale and the huge labor force available, it is possible that it can increase agricultural production through the "large-scale utilization of co-operative

labor" and "can serve to speed up the accumulation of capital imperatively needed for China's industrialization," if the following conditions prevail:

(A) That the peasants join the commune voluntarily. Their living conditions should gradually be improved in order to raise their enthusiasm in their work and to increase production.

(B) That genuine democracy is observed in commune management. The administrative committee should be elected by secret ballot among the entire membership; officials should be subject to recall at any time; important planning in production and distribution should be based on the real interests of the peasant masses and discussed freely and thoroughly among all the membership and then decided by majority vote.

(C) That taxes and prices set for the purchase of agricultural products by the government are reasonably applied. Industrial products should be made available as rapidly as possible to the peasants at reasonable cost.

(D) That the government provides the technique and large amount of capital necessary to construct agricultural machinery plants, electric power stations, vehicle manufacturing plants (such as truck factories) and so on, to gradually equip the peasants with modern agricultural implements so as to lessen heavy physical labor and steadily increase productivity.

In the absence of the above conditions, the communes, dependent simply on sheer size and a huge labor force, will find it difficult to increase productivity. Moreover, the dissatisfaction aroused among the peasants decreases production. Poland's latest experience confirms this. Gomulka reported at the Eighth Plenum of the Central Committee of the United Workers party of Poland on October 20, 1956, that after six years collectivization, the value of agricultural products per hectare of land owned by individual farmers was 621.1 zlotys; while that of the co-operatives was 517.3 zlotys. In other words, the value of production on large-scale collective farms was 16.7% less per hectare than that of individual farms.

As I indicated above, the majority of peasants were coerced or inveigled into joining the communes in China. Living conditions for the majority of them have not improved but deteriorated. First of all, working hours and intensity of labor have been greatly increased; a great part of the women are put to work with the same intensity as men; food supplies in the communal kitchens are neither sufficient nor good in quality; small amounts of wages are continually in arrears; the health of the peasants is deteriorating and they are frequently sick, while medicines are in extremely short supply. All these conditions have greatly dampened the peasants' enthusiasm in production.

Since the administration of the communes is in complete violation of democracy, the peasants naturally become more passive -- everything is decided by "bureaucratic edict."

Government taxes on the communes are far above those placed on the agricultural co-operatives. The latter were taxed 15%, and, at most, 25% of their total income. No quota is fixed for the communes; it is said, "Let them decide for themselves." This actually means that the communes pay as high a tax as possible. Consequently the tax on the communes is often more than 30%. For example, the Red Star People's Commune of Sui County, Hunan Province, paid out 32% of its total income in taxes.

Prices paid for agricultural products are variable and not set by the government although it purchases almost everything not consumed in the communes themselves. Often prices are set by the local government agents or cadres. To please the upper bureaucrats, they always make prices very low. On the other hand industrial products supplied to the communes by the government are either insufficient or poor in quality and at prices always higher than those in the open market.

The commune bears the administrative, military, educational and production expenses (developing various branches of production for self-sufficiency and self-support): these, plus the accumulation fund, quite often amount to 50% of the total income. For example, in the Chain Nan People's Commune of Heilunkiang Province, the accumulation fund and expenses are 48% of total income; in other communes they even reach 60%. So, in general, only 20% remains of the total income (after deducting 30% for taxes, and 50% for the accumulation fund and administrative expenses). How can the communes maintain their members except on the lowest of standards?

Though the CCP has widely publicized great improvements in agricultural techniques, what has actually been done is little. The State Budget for 1959 provides ample evidence for this conclusion. Li Hsien-nien, the Finance Minister, reported at the Second National People's Congress that the agricultural investment for 1959 is one billion yuans; that is, 3% of the total budget. How effective can this small amount be in meeting the agricultural needs of such a vast country? According to the CCP, the improvement of agricultural techniques is the business of the peasants and they "must rely mainly on their own accumulations to expand their economy" (Peking Review, No. 17, 1959, p. 29). This is why the communes are continually urged by the official CCP newspapers to reconstruct and make their own agrarian tools, collect fertilizer, practice deep plowing, etc.

The policy toward the peasants in the period of agricultural co-operatives was basically to increase production by intensifying peasant labor to the utmost, to exploit the peasants' surplus labor by collecting taxes, to purchase agricultural products at low prices and raise the prices of industrial products. The aim of this policy was to meet the expenses of the huge bureaucratic apparatus and to "speed up the accumulation of capital imperatively needed for China's industrialization."

But the co-operatives were small and scattered, therefore difficult to control. So, Mao Tse-tung, on inspecting several experimental people's communes in Hunan Province, August 1958, declared immediately that "It is better to set up the communes, because it is easier to lead by merging industry, agriculture, exchange, culture and education and military affairs into one." Here the euphemistic "easier to lead" obviously means "easier" for the bureaucrats to arbitrarily exploit and control the peasant masses. Events since then have confirmed this.

The large labor force of the peasants has been concentrated and expanded; the former through the merger of the co-operatives and the latter through the liberation of women from "domestic slavery" via communal kitchens, etc. Thus, by practicing "large-scale utilization of co-operative labor," "production of agricultural surpluses" can be increased. Also, it is easier, through the communes, to apply higher taxes to the peasants, to lower what is paid for their products and to raise the price of industrial products which they must buy. Is this not enough to show that the communes have become the most convenient instrument for the CCP to exploit the surplus labor of the peasants?

Intensification and exploitation of the peasants' labor to the utmost will inevitably arouse the resentment and resistance of the peasants. Therefore, strict organization, constant supervision and tight control become absolute necessities. This is why the policies of "getting organized along military lines," "working as if fighting a battle" and "living the collective way" were invented. In order to carry out these policies thoroughly, the CCP put special emphasis on the organization of the militia as the communes began. On this point, Comrade Mah-ki, a supporter of the communes, has made the following rather deep analysis:

"The main purpose of widely developing the militia at the beginning of the commune movement was obviously to administer production and private life in the commune by means of military organization and discipline. The CCP's policy was not to gradually substitute the militia system for the non-productive regular army. Serving as the assistant to and reserve for the regular army, the militia is provided with the most backward weapons manufactured by local arsenals. Militiamen are divided into two groups: basic and ordinary. The Communist party maintains 'absolute guidance' of the militiamen and all the weapons are issued to the most 'reliable elements.' From past experience we know that those who criticize official policies are all classified as 'unreliable' elements and the left opposition as 'rightist elements.'

"Mao's words that 'the militia is a combination organization for labor, education and gymnastics,' became, in fact, the principle in organizing and directing the militia. The members of the commune are organized into units such as regiment, battalion, company, etc., for the purpose of military training and similar activities. In correspondence with the policies of 'getting organized along military lines,' 'working as if fighting a battle' and 'living the collective way,' the work of production and the private life of the peasants are supervised by the commanders of the military units to which they belong. This militia system has assumed virtual control of every aspect of the peasants' life and has eliminated completely any individual freedom by imposing the harshest military discipline. Its military significance becomes secondary." ("The People's Communes," by Mah-ki, p. 2. My emphasis.)

It is true that the CCP "having felt the general dissatisfaction among the masses" (the words of Comrade Mah-ki), announced last December at the Sixth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the party: "The leading bodies of the militia and production organizations should be separated," and "it is absolutely impermissible to impair one iota of the democratic life in the communes and in the militia organization on pretext of 'getting organized along military lines.'" But these official statements have not changed in essence "getting organized along military lines," "working as if fighting a battle," and "living the collective way." The peasants continue to be organized in production teams: big, medium and small (equal to the regiment, battalion and company, etc.) The chief of each team decides when and where the peasants gather and march to work. He directs, supervises and speeds up the peasants' work with a megaphone. Also he arbitrarily decides the working hours of the group and extends them whenever he thinks it necessary. After work, the peasants march back to the community kitchen for supper. Is this not a militarized labor organization?

Moreover, the peasant is deprived of the freedom to change his work assignment or to move from one section of the commune to another, or, even to another commune. For instance, he cannot refuse to transfer to a remote place even though it means being separated from his wife for a period of time; and he cannot get a job, food and living quarters elsewhere if he does not get a permit issued

by the head of the commune to which he belongs. Bound to the communes, the peasants bear resemblance to the serfs of the middle ages.

Still another item is worthy of attention; that is, the recruiting of labor forces to meet the needs of the city factories. This is in the hands of the communes, whose chiefs arrange such assignments. In the eyes of the peasants, to work in the city is considered very lucky. Those considered the most active are certainly in line for first choice for these assignments. Thus, freedom to work in the city is excluded.

These actual facts of life under the slogans of "getting organized along military lines, working as if fighting a battle, and living the collective way" have never been seen in any "type of socio-economic organization" in modern times except in labor concentration camps.

Consequently, we are able to say that despite their "progressive character," the present people's communes, due to the contradictions, chaos, coercion and deprivation of peasant freedom, can hardly be termed "a superior type of socio-economic organization," but only an effective instrument for the CCP to exploit and control the peasants. The communes cannot "make an indispensable contribution to the building of the economic basis for socialism"; instead they arouse the distrust and resentment of the peasants toward "socialism" and damage the cause of socialism. As Lenin said: "For the name 'agricultural commune' is a great one; it is associated with the conception of Communism. It will be a good thing if the communes in practice show that they are indeed seriously working for the improvement of peasant husbandry; that will undoubtedly increase the authority of the Communists and the Communist Party. But it has frequently happened that the communes have only succeeded in provoking a negative attitude among the peasantry, and the word 'commune' has even at times become a call to fight Communism;" ("Speech at the First Congress of Agricultural Communes and Agricultural Artels," in Selected Works, Vol. II, part 2, 1952 Moscow edition, p. 297.)

The general food shortage that began earlier this year, and the current liquidation as I write these lines, of communal kitchens in many communes, have been verified by various sources. The food shortage shows in a negative way that the CCP was unreliable when it announced the doubling of food production last year. Why has the shortage of food become so acute that the food quota of commune members has been reduced to two-thirds, or even one-half and city residents can hardly get enough food? Any other explanation is unlikely except that the bumper figures on the harvest last year were fake.

The communes were set up in accordance with two principles -- "large scale" and "collective ownership." The communal kitchen is a concrete illustration of "collective ownership." Now, many of them along with nurseries, at least those in Kwangtung province, have been disbanded. From social production women have been returned to "domestic slavery." On this, Teng Tzu-hui, the Vice Premier, has openly admitted "the failure of the community kitchens," and proclaimed that "in the future the socialization of households in the countryside should be on a voluntary basis." This shows that one of the fundamental principles upon which the communes were established is being abandoned. Thus, the communes have begun to expose their bankruptcy "in principle."

The general shortage of food and the forced abandonment of a number of communal kitchens are undoubtedly evidence of a serious crisis due to the CCP's use of coercion in setting up the communes. Various clues indicate that Mao and Co. are

now meeting to consider this crisis. Perhaps in the near future, the CCP will once again "adjust" its policy towards the communes as it did at the Sixth Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the party last year. That is to say, under pressure of growing discontent among the peasant masses all over the country, the CCP will again empirically make certain changes in the communes by way of appeasement. But to save face, they will never admit that their commune policy is fundamentally wrong; nor will they give up their basic policy of exploiting and controlling the peasants. Consequently the communes will be maintained, as will the recurring crises.

In the future, when the author of "The Communes in China" (Draft Resolution Proposed by NC members in Los Angeles) witnesses a certain change in the communes he probably will say that this is exactly what he predicted in his draft:

"Their organization and operation will very likely undergo further modifications, But such revisions, and even a retreat from their present status, would not vitiate the progressive character of the communes any more than the retreat from collectivization in Poland has negated the progressive character of collective farms over private proprietorship and individual production." (Op. cit., p. 40.)

This statement separates the "progressive character of the communes" from the principle of voluntary consent by the peasants and uses the former as the sole criterion in evaluating the communes. I pointed out the error in this in criticizing Comrade Liang's position above. Here I would like to discuss in particular the reference to the change in the policy of collectivization in Poland.

Gomulka in pointing out that the value of production per hectare in the collective farm was 16.7% lower than that on the individual farm stated that this lag was due to the policy of coercive collectivization. So after coming to power, he reorganized or disbanded certain immature collective farms and discontinued forced collectivization. But he did this not because forced collectivization had "negated the progressive character of collective farms over private proprietorship and individual production," but merely because he thought that the consent of the peasants together with mechanization in agriculture were prerequisites for the successful realization of collectivization and increased production in agriculture. This viewpoint was clearly evident in his report on "The Central Task of Polish Agriculture from 1959 to 1965" at the Second Central Committee of the United Workers Party of Poland, June 22, 1959.

In his report Gomulka emphasized the importance of planning and "the decisive significance of increasing the actual wages and income of the rural population" in the development of agriculture. Therefore, "the total investment in agriculture in 1959-65 is put at 13 billion zoltys, of which 9 billion zoltys is allocated to improving production, that is, in mechanization, improvement of soil and the construction of 1,200,000 buildings both for housing and production." He particularly emphasized the manufacture of 112,000 tractors between 1959 to 1965 to increase production and to promote collectivization in agriculture. His conclusion was: "The party insists on the program of socialist reconstruction in the countryside, and is fully aware that the completion of this program can only be realized under the condition of large-scale agricultural economy, i.e., the collectivization of production. The aim of this reconstruction is first of all, the enlargement of agricultural production. And the collective peasant economy can be established only through the consent of the peasants." (My emphasis.)

The proposals and conclusions emphasized by Gomulka in his report could not be taken as evidence that the "retreat" in agricultural policy in Poland had "negated the progressive character of collective farms over private proprietorship and individual production"; but they do underline the need to pay more attention to the actual interests and the voluntary consent of the peasants; that is, the need to abandon Stalin's coercive methods and return to, or at least approach more closely, Lenin's point of view in the nationalization of land and collectivization of agriculture. The author of the "The Communes in China" describes the Polish policy in agricultural collectivization as having not "negated the progressive character of collective farms. . ." But his approach misses the essence, and reveals that this author adopts the same incorrect viewpoint in approaching the change in Polish agrarian policy as he does in the problem of the Chinese communes. Here is a demonstration that an incorrect viewpoint in one set of events often becomes the basis for a similar approach to comparable phenomenon.

We Trotskyists should understand that despite holding to the Stalinist viewpoint on certain issues, Gomulka's latest policy in nationalization of land and agricultural collectivization is correct in principle. He is the first one to abandon Stalin's coercive methods and to turn toward Lenin's viewpoint. In this, he is much more correct than Mao Tse-tung.

The present Chinese people's communes have already exhibited all kinds of contradictions and are in serious crisis. In order to halt the extension of the crisis and a possibly disastrous outcome, the Polish experience should be accepted as a pattern and China should undertake a similar bold "retreat," that is, from ultra-adventurism back to Lenin's viewpoint. The communes, on the basis of the actual interests and voluntary participation of the peasants, should undergo complete change, following thorough investigation. I will return to the point more specifically in the final section of this article.

A Few More Words on Comrades Liang and Swabeck

In the foregoing I criticized the main data on which Comrades Liang and Swabeck based their support of the communes. Here I wish to deal with the attitude and basic tendency which they reveal in their study of the communes.

In stating his judgment on the communes in his commentary on "The Draft Resolution on Chinese Communes," Comrade Liang presents neither our basic theory nor historical examples. For instance he simply says: "The draft largely repeats the sins and errors of the Roberts' article," But what are the "sins and errors" of the Roberts' article, "The Chinese Communes"? Liang doesn't specify. With one stroke, through an unsupported assertion, he wipes away another comrade's opinion. To me, the general viewpoint of Roberts' article, especially its conclusion, is basically correct, and even the facts cited by him are tentatively correct and able to withstand criticism. At least they are more dependable than those cited by Comrade Liang.

Another special reason advanced by Comrade Liang for supporting the communes deserves comment: "The continuing drum-fire of hostile comment on the Communes by capitalist propagandists places us squarely before the need to take a clear-cut position on what, essentially, is a class-struggle issue: FOR or AGAINST the Communes?" (Emphasis in the original.) According to the formula of a "class-struggle issue" advanced here by Comrade Liang, we should be for something if the "capitalist propagandists" give it "hostile comment" and we should be against it if they favor it. This is ultra-mechanical formal logic having nothing in common with Marxist dialectics.

All of us remember the continued and vigorous attacks on Stalin's bureaucratic dictatorship by all the "capitalist propagandists." According to Comrade Liang's "logic," we should have supported the former. But Trotsky, instead of supporting it, subjected it to penetrating criticism. The difference was that the "capitalist propagandists" considered Stalin's bureaucratic dictatorship to be the product of Bolshevism and socialist property relations; Trotsky considered it to be the result of the betrayal of Bolshevism and hence a hindrance to the rational development of socialist relations.

A fresh example occurred when all the "capitalist propagandists" furiously attacked Russia for putting down the Hungarian Revolution with tanks. At the time we Trotskyists did not give up our relentless criticism of the Kremlin's role in this event. The difference was that the "capitalist propagandists" criticized it from the viewpoint of bourgeois nationalism as an "intervention of Russian imperialism"; while we criticized it as a betrayal by the Kremlin of the interests of the Hungarian working class and the world socialist revolution. And at that time the "Trotskyists" who "took a clear-cut position" were the Marcyites who later left our movement.

Today the reason for the continuous and vigorous attacks on the communes by the "capitalist propagandists" is that they see them eliminating the remnants of the holy private-property system and the holy family system connected with it. We see the forcible introduction of the communes within a short period by the CCP as adventurism and as against the peasants' will. We hold to this view because China today does not have the material and cultural prerequisites for eliminating the remnants of the private-property system and superseding family life with the collective life of socialism; and because, therefore, the CCP policy is very harmful to the alliance of workers and peasants and to socialism. Superficially our criticism sounds the same as that of the "capitalist propagandists," but the substance and class position represented by us is the exact opposite. As the French proverb puts it: "One tongue, two languages."

Comrade Swaback in his article, "The Third Chinese Revolution and Its Communes," quoted quite extensively from the reports of a few foreigners who had visited China (disregarding the truthfulness of these reports) to defend his position on the superiority of the communes. Unfortunately, the facts quoted by him either have no connection with the communes or have been proclaimed bankrupt by the CCP. For instance:

(A) "No less significant is the vast public progress made possible by the Communes. . . . As one concrete example that witnessed by the Montreal reporter can be mentioned: A huge dam and reservoir near Peking, completed in the phenomenally short time of 160 days by 400,000 'volunteers.'" ("The Third Chinese Revolution and Its Communes," In SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 20, No. 13, page 3.)

The "huge dam and reservoir"; i.e., the "Tung-lin Dam" near Peking was completed before the communes by the great mass of workers and suburban peasants of Peking mobilized by the Central government.

(B) "In addition to the demonstrated economic gains, cultural advance is symbolized by an increase of primary school pupils from 64.3 million in 1957 to 84 million in September 1958." (Ibid., p. 3.)

The fact cited here (admitting it to be true) was also achieved before the communes. They began in "September 1958."

(C) The "home-made" or "back-yard" blast furnaces, highly extolled by Comrade Swabeck as the "most celebrated": "small and medium industrial enterprises" initiated by the communes, ended in fact, unfortunately, in "a fiasco." They had been abandoned long before Swabeck's article was published, although the CCP did not formally discontinue them until July 1959. I wonder how Comrade Swabeck will explain this.

Comrade Swabeck devoted considerable discussion to the problem of the permanent revolution in China in the latter part of his article. I can only state that his interpretation of this problem is incorrect. (Unfortunately I don't have space here to go into it.) He had not one word to say about the CCP's foreign policy, "peaceful coexistence" (i.e., the "Five Principles" stipulated by Chou En-lai and Nehru of India). The sudden shift from right to left of Mao's internal policy originates from this extremely reactionary foreign policy which, inherited in toto from the Stalinist theory of "socialism in one country" (now Mao has developed it into his theory of "communism in one country"), contravenes the permanent revolution. Mao neither believes in nor understands the decisive role which the victory of the world socialist revolution, particularly the victory of the world socialist revolution, particularly the victory of the proletarian revolution in the advanced countries, would play in bringing the Chinese socialist revolution to victory. To maintain his own power, Mao started by compromising in all possible ways with the bourgeoisie and landlords in an attempt to build the "New Democracy" social system (i.e., non-socialist, non-capitalist) within a few decades. Later under pressure of imperialist intervention (especially American intervention in Korea) and the counter-offensive of the domestic bourgeoisie and landlords, he pragmatically jumped from ultra-right opportunism to ultra-left adventurism. Thus, he sought to exploit to the utmost the surplus labor of the workers and peasants in an attempt to facilitate industrial development and to build socialism in one country. And his reckless introduction of the communes within a short period is the culmination of adventurism in the application of the theory of "socialism in one country" or "communism in one country."

In addition, in the articles by Comrades Liang and Swabeck discussing the Chinese rural communes, which concern the lives of 500 million peasants, there is not one word about the principle developed by Engels, Lenin and Trotsky on the nationalization of land and voluntary peasant participation in agrarian collectivization. It is very significant, for it indicates how they have neglected the traditional Marxist position on the agrarian question and our position on the alliance of the workers and peasants set forth in our Transitional Program.

It is because of this complete disregard of the traditional Marxist position that their position on the communes is the same as that of the revisionist Pablo, or at least, very close to it.

Jean Paul Martin, who speaks with complete authority for Pablo, wrote an article, "Uninterrupted Revolution in China," which was published in "Quatrieme International" of November 1958. Besides acclaiming that "China is currently in a state of 'uninterrupted' revolution," and praising the stupendous development of its industry and agriculture, the main point of his article is the great significance to China of the communes in the rural areas. For example, he said:

"All this is not simply boasts, hypocrisy or infantilism; it is pride, the immensity of her stature confronting the world of the twentieth century. China feels in herself unlimited forces awakening. Her vision of the world, quite

different from that of any other power, is a mixture perhaps of infantilism, normal for a country still sleeping yesterday in the past, now entering with such impetuosity and such fury into the atomic age and real gigantism."

Besides such abstract eulogies as above, Martin declared: "The administrative committees of the communes are in reality 'popular town councils,' soviets." This political appraisal of the communes is almost identical with that of Comrades Liang and Swaback; namely, "the Communes are administered by elected councils, not by bureaucratic edict."

Having appraised the nature of the CCP and its regime in the light of Pablo's revisionism, it is not strange for Martin to have such an appraisal of the communes. It is the logical development of Pabloite revisionism. Comrades Liang and Swaback, who opposed Pablo's revisionism in the past, have arrived at almost the same political conclusion on the people's communes today as Pablo. This is worth some thought on their part.

Finally, I should point out in passing that the errors of Comrades Liang and Swaback on the issue of the people's communes go far beyond those of Comrade Mah-ki. Comrade Mah-ki does not paint up the communes, but gives them serious criticism in light of the facts; his error is that he places too much weight on the superiority of the communes' large-scale production and neglects the principle of voluntary peasant consent. This is not an error in principle, but a bias and is easy to correct. But the errors of Comrades Liang and Swaback intersect with principles, and if not recognized in time, can lead them into the swamp of revisionism.

Our Attitude Toward the Communes

(1) We have always held to and persistently maintained the necessity for nationalization of the land and agrarian collectivization, considering it to be the only possible form through which the scattered individual peasant economy can be brought to socialist relations. But at the same time we hold to the principle put down in our Transitional Program by Trotsky: "The program for the nationalization of the land and collectivization of agriculture should be so drawn that from its very basis it should exclude the possibility of expropriation of small farmers and their compulsory collectivization." That is to say, in the practice of agrarian collectivization, it is necessary to convince the peasants by concrete example, bringing them to believe that collectivization is in fact beneficial to them, hence calling forth their voluntary participation.

Therefore, we severely criticized Stalin's forced collectivization and, together with Trotsky, considered it to be "dictated not by the interests of the farmers or workers but by the interests of the bureaucracy."

(2) Taking the Chinese rural communes as a case of large-scale agrarian collectivization, and considering it in the light of the general principle of collectivization, we are for it; but, at the same time, in view of the fact that since the collectivization is on such a large-scale and combines the practice of collective life in all rural areas (substituting the communal kitchens and nursery for family life), we consider it an absolute necessity to use concrete examples to win the voluntary participation of the peasants.

The policy practiced by the CCP toward the communes at present has greater compulsory character than CCP policy toward the former agricultural co-operatives. Consequently it is adventuristic and is dictated not by the interests of the farmers or workers but by the interests of the bureaucracy.

(3) Forced entry into the communes -- all the peasant masses are forced into "getting organized along military lines," "working as if fighting a battle," "living the collective way" -- and the extraordinary increase in the intensity of labor has brought not only numerous dislocations, suffering and ill health to the peasants, but the intensification of contradictions, lower agricultural production (as the current shortage of food and daily necessities in the cities shows) and injury to the alliance of workers and peasants. If persisted in, it will end in chaos and even cause uprisings in the rural areas, setting back the future of socialism.

(4) In confronting this very serious situation, for the benefit of the majority of the peasant masses and the strengthening of the workers and peasants alliance, we advocate the following policy toward the present communes:

(A) We call for an immediate and full democratic discussion on the communes among the workers and peasants of China. This should be done in each commune. A secret ballot should be taken. Those communes approved by the members, or a majority of them, will, of course, be maintained. Those not approved should be dissolved into the pre-commune co-operatives. In addition, farm tools and land should be distributed to those peasants who want to join neither the communes nor the co-ops.

(B) The administrative committees of the remaining communes should be elected through secret ballot by the members with the provision that inefficient officials can be recalled at any time. Production, distribution and the important welfare planning of the communes should be decided beforehand by majority opinion through open discussion among all the members. The communal kitchen and nursery should be based on the principle of voluntary participation. All this should apply also to the co-operatives.

(C) The agricultural tax should be applied rationally to communes, co-operatives and individual peasant households -- a maximum of not more than 20% of their total income; prices of agricultural products purchased by the government should be determined reasonably (i.e., according to the general market price); the peasants should be supplied with industrial products at reasonable prices.

(5) This important measure, involving the lives of 500 million peasants and the alliance of the workers and peasants -- the people's communes -- has not been openly discussed by the worker and peasant masses nor by the membership of the CCP. With Mao's word -- "Communes are better" -- at the beginning of August 1958, every local section of the CCP acted at once as if it had received an imperial edict; ample proof that the CCP acts politically not only as a one-party dictatorship, but also as a Stalinist-type personal dictatorship. In order to end this personal dictatorship with its vicious results, China needs freedom of speech, press, assembly, association and belief among the workers and peasants. And to guarantee these freedoms and rights to the worker and peasant masses and to correct effectively the wrong policies which run counter to the interests of the peasants and workers, the existence and activities of working-class parties adhering to socialist principles should be made legitimate. Only through such means can the dictatorship of a party, or a group, or a person be avoided and socialist democracy realized.

(6) In order to carry out the measures indicated above, the fantasy propagated by the CCP that communism will be realized in the rural areas within a few years (or several decades) must be rejected. Instead it should be proclaimed

that the actual fulfillment of collectivization -- heightened farm production, guaranteed real improvements in the lives of the 500 million peasants and the industrialization of the country -- can only become a possibility with assistance from the proletariat in the advanced countries upon the victory of the world socialist revolution. Hence the theory of "socialism in one country" or "communism in one country" and the illusion of "peaceful coexistence" related to it, must be rejected entirely. The main aim of foreign policy should be to aid the world proletarian socialist revolution; first of all the Japanese and Indian proletarian revolutions. Just as Comrade Roberts said: "Successful working-class revolutions in Western Europe and the United States, leading to the elaboration of a world socialist economic plan, would enable China to take the great leap forward in the shortest possible time. . . . A socialist overturn in Japan alone would transform China's prospects overnight. The economies of the two countries would gear together naturally. Japan would be able to mass-produce power-driven pumps, plows, carts, trucks, lift forks and dredges for China's farms. . . while making equipment available for industrial development." ("The Chinese Communes, by Daniel Roberts." In SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 20, No. 8, page 9.) August 19, 1959

POSTSCRIPT

Three weeks after finishing the above article, I received the People's Daily of August 27, in which appeared the "Communique of the State Statistical Bureau of China on the Revision of 1958 Agricultural Figures" and the "Resolution on Developing the Campaign for Increasing Production and Practicing Economy" passed by the Eighth Central Committee of the CCP at its Eighth Plenary Session. I quote below some excerpts from these two documents and make brief criticism as a postscript to my article.

The "Communique of the State Statistical Bureau of China on the Revision of 1958 Agricultural Figures" states:

"China reaped a bumper harvest in 1958 unmatched before in its history. Owing to lack of experience in estimating the output of such an unprecedented bumper harvest, the agricultural statistical organs in most cases made over-assessments. At the same time, during the bumper autumn harvest, man-power was not very well arranged, and the harvesting, threshing and storage were somewhat inadequate. As a result there were some losses and the harvest did not conform to the estimated figures. After repeated check-ups and verifications in the first half of this year, it was found that some of the 1958 agricultural statistical figures previously released were higher than the actual amount gathered. The revised 1958 agricultural statistical figures are as follows: Total grain output 500,000,000,000 catties (250,000,000 tons). 35% more than in 1957; total cotton output, 42,000,000 tan (2, 100,000 tons), 28% more than in 1957. . . ." (Hsinhua News Agency, August 27, 1959, page 18.)

From the figures quoted in the above "communique," (the truthfulness of which is still in question) the following points are worth our attention:

(A) The statistics in industry and agriculture published by the CCP were not compiled after production to record the actual amount of increase, but were advance estimates, an "assessment" or prediction. Here, for the first time, the secret statistical methods of the CCP are revealed. Of course, this revelation was forced from them by the resentment and dissatisfaction of the masses aroused by the general food shortage when the so-called bumper harvest proved in fact

to be not so large. Hence, we can see what little reliance can be placed in the production figures put out by the CCP for industry and agriculture!

(B) How did it happen that after the establishment of the communes "the man power was not very well arranged and the harvesting, threshing and storage were somewhat inadequate"? Obviously, the great majority of peasants were forced to join the communes, that is why they vented their feelings by sabotaging and damaging the autumn harvest.

(C) The increase for grain was 35% over 1957, not double or 100% as had been claimed; the increase for cotton was 28% over 1957, not 60%. What a big difference between the actual figures now reported and those figures about "the great productive increases in farming" quoted by the author of "The Communes in China"! This especially deals a great blow to the arguments of Comrade Swabeck because he had emphasized: "In this manner China has revolutionized the feeding of its millions. Food grain production in 1958 reached the astounding total of 375 million tons, doubling the 1957 output of 185 million tons. With this the teeming, crowded population has advanced from the malnutrition and famines of yore to a living diet today. This is confirmed by Lord John Orr, world authority on food and population, who declared upon return from his recent visit, that China is solving its food problem." ("The Third Chinese Revolution and Its Communes," SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 20, No. 13, p. 3). According to the revised statistics published by the CCP, the doubling of the 1958 output, which was so highly praised by Comrade Swabeck, is declared false, and a question mark is placed on the "confirmation" by the highly recommended "Lord John Orr, world authority on food and population."

(D) In my article, I said that the CCP official reports on the increase in agricultural production were exaggerated and that the CCP's widely proclaimed doubling of the 1957 output was unreliable, as proved negatively by the general food shortage. My distrust of the official CCP reports stemmed from general distrust of the acts and words of Stalinist bureaucrats. The revised statistics now published by the CCP not only shows that our distrust of official CCP reports is completely justified, but proves that the discrepancies far exceeded what we had imagined, since the difference between the two reports on actual amount of grain gathered was 65%. What a hard lesson for those who only depend on the official reports to study and judge the development of Chinese agriculture, especially for Comrade Swabeck who blindly believes the official CCP reports!

Following are several points in the "Resolution on Developing the Campaign for Increasing Production and Practicing Economy" adopted by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party at its Eighth Plenary Session on August 16, 1959, which are worth taking up here.

(A) The resolution states: "During the check-up, the principles of management and business accounting at different levels, of 'to each according to his work' and more income for those who do more work have been implemented." (Peking Review, September 1, 1959, p. 7.) This signifies the elimination, "in principle," of the "rational system" originally prescribed for the communes of "to each partly according to his needs," and the abandonment, "in principle," of marching toward communism by gradually replacing the system of "to each according to his work." Here demonstrably the utopia of the CCP, under the merciless lesson of circumstances, has been returned to its starting point. It is also evident that the CCP, in order to fulfill the aims of the "Great Leap Forward," is attempting to put pressure on a part of the peasants (those with greatest

capacity for work) with the material incentive of "more income for those who do more work." This attempt will inevitably have two bad results: first a detrimental effect on the peasants' health; and second, a widening of the differentiation at the two poles; i.e., rich and poor peasants in the communes.

(B) "It has been decided that at the present stage a three-level type of ownership of the means of production should be instituted in the people's communes. Ownership at the production brigade level constitutes the basic one. Ownership at the commune level constitutes another part. . . . A small part of the ownership should also be vested in the production team." (Ibid., pp. 7-8.) To go by the decision that "ownership at the production brigade level constitutes the basic one" in this three-level type of ownership of the means of production, the commune has actually turned back to the former producer's co-operative, inasmuch as the production brigade is the same size as the former producers' co-operative, and was reorganized from the latter. On this, the CCP has officially admitted: "In the present people's communes. . . ownership is basically the same as that of the original production brigade in the high co-operative." (The People's Daily, August 29, 1959. My emphasis.) Thus, in production and distribution, especially "ownership," the commune actually has almost dissolved into the original producers' co-operative. It is time now for Comrades Mah-ki, Liang, etc. to re-examine their opinions on the communes. (The former praises highly the "superiority of large-scale production" of the commune and the latter paints it as a "superior type of socio-economic organization.")

(C) I pointed out that the community kitchens, because they were forced upon the peasants, absolutely could not be kept up -- "in the not too distant future, they will be reorganized or the great majority of them will be disbanded." Now the resolution states: "With regard to the community dining-rooms in the rural areas, the principle of making vigorous efforts to run them well and voluntary participation should be adhered to; grains should be distributed to each family on the basis of a fixed allocation for each individual; a food ticket system should be introduced in the community dining-rooms, with unconsumed food being returned to the person who saves it." (Peking Review, Sept. 1, 1959, p. 10.) This open admonition to adhere to "voluntary participation" in the dining-rooms is the same as admitting "in principle" that the former measures forcing the peasants to participate in the community kitchens were wrong and absurd. Also, it is the same as permitting women "in principle" to return home to do the cooking. Thus, the women are going back to "domestic slavery." This fact should prove sobering to Comrades Liang and the others who highly praised the way the communes freed women from "domestic slavery."

(D) "On the basis of verified statistics on agricultural production in 1958. . . . The Plenary Session recommends that the State Council, submit a proposal to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, for adjusting the 1959 plan. . . . the target for grain is about 10% over the verified 1958 output of 500,000,000,000 catties." (People's Daily, August 27.) The target for grain in 1959 was originally 1,000,000,000,000 catties. Now the readjusted targets are cut to almost half the original goal. This indicates how arbitrary the planning is in agricultural production under the CCP bureaucracy led by Mao Tse-tung, and to what depths they have reached in their ignorance, confusion, impudence and self-contradiction.

The readjusted target also testifies to the correctness of our judgment that due to the lack of modern mechanization and chemical fertilizers, etc., the heightening of farm production will still proceed "at a slow tempo." Here is a little victory for Marxist analysis and judgment.

(E) "The Eighth Plenary Session of the Eighth Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party calls on the whole party, the people of all nationalities in the country under the leadership of the Central Committee of the CCP . . . to overcome a brand of rightist ideas and sentiments." (People's Daily, Aug. 27.) But who holds "rightist ideas and sentiments"? Those who are "skeptical of the great leap forward and the people's communes. . . ." (Chou En-lai's report delivered on August 26 at the plenary meeting of the Standing Committee of the Second National People's Congress), and those who consider the big leap forward and the people's communes as "petty-bourgeois fanaticism." (The editorial that appeared in the People's Daily on August 27, 1959 under the title of "Oppose Right Deviation. . .")

The CCP's call for a fight to uphold "the superiority of the people's communes" against "right opportunists" and "rightist ideas and sentiments," as proclaimed in the editorial of the People's Daily, "Oppose Right Deviation," shows that criticism and opposition to the big leap forward and the people's commune movement among the broad masses of workers and peasants have become very effective and widespread. The opposition even attacks this movement as "petty bourgeois fanaticism." Chou En-lai has publicly admitted that "This kind of thinking and sentiment, has grown in the past two months." (See Chou's report.) This shows that the masses of workers and peasants, from practical experience in life, have already sensed the dire consequences of the adventurism in the policies forced upon them by the CCP.

To allay this resentment and criticism of the masses, the CCP on the one hand makes some concessions (as shown in the resolution); and, on the other hand, increases repression under guise of a fight against "right opportunists." But until "the petty-bourgeois fanaticism" evident in these adventurist policies is finally eliminated, the resentment and criticism of the masses will continue to develop. Consequently, we have reason to predict that the commune movement will prove unstable, crises will continue to break out. Only by carrying out the proposals indicated in "Our Attitude Toward the Communes" can this outcome be avoided.

September 15, 1959.