

REPORT ON THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

September 15, 1954

Fellow Deputies,

The framing and adoption of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China is an event of enormous historic significance in the political life of our country. The most important task of the First Session of the First National People's Congress is to frame and adopt the Constitution of China.

The Draft Constitution now submitted to the congress has been worked out after much serious preparation.

The Committee for Drafting the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, headed by Comrade Mao Zedong, was formed by the Central People's Government Council on January 13, 1953. In March 1954 this committee accepted the first draft of the Constitution submitted by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. Serious discussions of this draft, participated in by more than eight thousand people, representing the various democratic parties, people's organizations and people of all sections of society, were then organized in Beijing and all other major cities in the country. For more than two months these people actually took part in the drafting of the Constitution. The Draft Constitution, a revision of the first draft, was made public by the Central People's Government Council on June 14, 1954 for people all over the country to discuss. These dis-

Delivered at the First Session of the First National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, the report was first published in the *People's Daily* on September 16, 1954 and included in *Documents of the First Session of the First National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China* published by the People's Publishing House in June 1955. The third of the four parts of the report, which deals with the views expressed on the Draft Constitution during nationwide discussion, is not included in the present book.

cussions also lasted for more than two months and more than 150 million people took part. The people expressed their warm support for the Draft Constitution and at the same time suggested many amendments and revisions. In light of these suggestions, the Committee for Drafting the Constitution of the People's Republic of China made further revisions of the original draft, which were later discussed and adopted at the 34th meeting of the Central People's Government Council on September 9, 1954; hence the present Draft Constitution now submitted to the congress.

I am now going to report to the congress on the Draft Constitution of the People's Republic of China on behalf of the Committee for Drafting the Constitution.

THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IS AN EPITOME OF HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE

In drawing up the Constitution, we have worked on a basis of facts. But what are these facts? That we Chinese people have won complete victory in our long-drawn-out revolutionary struggles against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism; that our people's democratic state, led by the working class and based on an alliance of workers and peasants, has been solidly established; that the socialist sector in China's economy has now assumed a position of vigorous leadership; and that our country has embarked on a systematic socialist transformation and is in gradual transition towards a socialist society.

From these facts it naturally follows that our Constitution must be a people's democratic constitution. It is a socialist constitution, not a bourgeois one.

The Draft Constitution we have submitted is the epitome of the historical experience of more than a hundred years of heroic struggles waged by the Chinese people; it also epitomizes historical experience on the question of constitutions and the constitutional movement in modern China.

The Chinese people lived many years under the dark rule of imperialism and feudalism. Over a hundred years ago foreign capitalists began to invade China, exposing the utter incapacity of China's feudal rulers at that time to defend the country. The more serious aggres-

sion and oppression from outside grew, the more despotic the domestic regime became. From then on, China, great nation though it was, practically lost its status as an independent state in its foreign relations, and the broad masses of Chinese people were subjected to untold suffering. Yet it was at this point that the Chinese people began to wage a valiant revolutionary struggle against foreign capitalism and domestic feudalism. To save China and reshape its destiny, many Chinese progressives began their quest for truth. They diligently studied bourgeois politics and culture of the West, thinking these Western bourgeois ways could save China. Then they attempted to model China's state and social systems on the pattern of the Western capitalist countries.

One of these attempts was the Reform Movement that followed China's defeat by Japan in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95. It was conducted by a group of reformists headed by Kang Youwei, who wanted China to have a constitution that would allow capitalism to develop without fundamentally changing its feudal system.⁴⁶ Their principles won the approval and support of many people at the time. Though they were reformists, their Reform Movement, judged by the standards of those days, was progressive and thus incurred the enmity of reactionaries. In 1898 their activities were repressed by the reactionaries headed by Empress Dowager Ci Xi.⁴⁷

China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 aroused a broad mass movement. Simultaneously with the Reform Movement of the Kang Youwei group other revolutionary groups emerged, including one headed by Sun Yat-sen. After the failure of the Kang Youwei group they formed the *Tong Meng Hui* (the Chinese Revolutionary League) in 1905.⁴⁸ Unlike the reformists, these people cherished the idea of establishing a bourgeois democratic republic and waged a revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the rule of the Qing Court. To that extent they were a great stride ahead of the reformists.

The Qing Court was hard put to hold out in face of the rapid expansion of the revolutionary forces. In an attempt, however, to maintain their rule, deceive the people and head off revolution, the rulers of the Qing Court announced a "preparatory period for constitutionalism" about fifty years ago and in 1908 promulgated the "outline constitution". The "outline constitution" was chiefly designed to maintain feudal autocratic rule, while ostensibly acceding to some of the people's demands. The people, however, put no trust in these promises, nor did they believe that this sort of "constitutionalism" could

improve the conditions of their country. In fact, they rejected this fraudulent “constitutionalism”. The revolutionaries led by Sun Yat-sen were firmly against it, whereas the reformists headed by Kang Youwei came out in its support. As a consequence, the latter were opposed by the revolutionary groups and rejected by the people.

The revolutionary group headed by Sun Yat-sen insisted on the realization, through revolution, of the democratic constitutionalism they hoped for, that is, democratic constitutionalism of a bourgeois character. Under the historical conditions of the time they were correct in pursuing that line, which represented the demand of the people. Under their leadership the Revolution of 1911,²³ which was of great historic significance, broke out.

This revolution, which broke out on October 10, 1911, overthrew the rule of the Qing Dynasty, put an end to China’s feudal monarchy, which had lasted for over two thousand years, established the Republic of China and the provisional revolutionary government in Nanjing headed by Sun Yat-sen, and introduced a Provisional Constitution in the nature of one for a bourgeois republic that had progressive significance.⁴⁹ This revolution imbued the people with the idea of a democratic republic, making the people recognize that any word or deed that ran counter to this idea was utterly impermissible. The revolutionaries in those days, however, had their shortcomings. They did not have a thoroughly anti-imperialist and anti-feudal programme, nor did they mobilize and organize on a broad basis popular forces on which they could rely. So, they could not win a complete victory over imperialism and feudalism. In the end the revolution failed, and the reactionaries, led by Yuan Shikai, seized power.⁵⁰ From then on China was successively controlled by different cliques of the northern warlords.⁵¹ The Provisional Constitution was torn to shreds. The “Republic of China” became merely an empty name. The revolutionaries, led by Sun Yat-sen, carried on their struggle against the northern warlord government, but without success.

Under the rule of the northern warlords the situation in China went from bad to worse. All the principal imperialist countries in the world scrambled for pickings in China. Civil wars between warlord cliques backed by their respective imperialist masters continued for years. Utter confusion prevailed. One warlord after another seized the reins of power in Beijing. In order to maintain warlord rule, the nominal president, Cao Kun,⁵² the last of the northern warlords, proclaimed in 1923 a sham “constitution”, which the people

promptly rejected. Regarding it as a fake, both the Kuomintang, led by Sun Yat-sen, and the Chinese Communist Party were against it. The government of Cao Kun collapsed only one year after the proclamation of this fake constitution.

In the years before and after the Revolution of 1911 those who were determined to save the country could seek a way out for China only along capitalist lines. It was only after the First World War and the October Socialist Revolution in Russia that the Chinese people came to see the steady decline of Western capitalism and the rising of socialism with its bright radiance. On May 4, 1919, a great revolutionary movement against imperialism and feudalism broke out in China. The working-class movement in China began to surge. Progressives among the Chinese people became firmly convinced that socialism, rather than capitalism, would solve China's problems. This well-founded belief held by the progressives was soon accepted by the masses. In 1921 the Communist Party of China — the Marxist-Leninist party of the Chinese working class — was founded. After that a new situation was created for revolution in China, and the Chinese revolution became a people's democratic revolution led by the working class, that is, a new-democratic revolution, forming part of the world socialist revolution and receiving the support of the socialist Soviet Union.

At that time Sun Yat-sen, great revolutionary that he was, came to understand from the experience he had gained in long years of struggle that in order to save China, "we must arouse the masses of the people and unite in a common struggle with those nations of the world that treat us as equals."⁵³ Finally he boldly adopted the three great policies of alliance with Russia, co-operation with the Communist Party and assistance to the peasants and workers. He reorganized the Kuomintang and formed an alliance with the Chinese Communist Party to fight against imperialism and feudalism. Thus, a new phase of revolutionary struggle began.

In 1927, when the revolutionary Northern Expedition carried out jointly by the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party was advancing towards victory, the Kuomintang, dominated by Chiang Kai-shek, renounced Sun Yat-sen's policies and betrayed the revolution. After that the responsibility for leading the Chinese revolution fell completely on the shoulders of the Chinese working class and its party, the Communist Party of China. Subsequently, the Chinese revolution manifested a depth, thoroughness and mass scale absolute-

ly unparalleled in all previous revolutionary movements. During the Agrarian Revolutionary War, the War of Resistance Against Japan, and the People's War of Liberation the Chinese people gradually created strong revolutionary armed forces of their own, built vast revolutionary base areas, where they established people's democratic governments based on a united front, carried through various social reforms and enriched their experience in revolution. Revolutionary struggles over the years have shown that the path from new democracy to socialism, as pointed out by the Chinese Communist Party, is the only path leading to China's salvation. This path has earned profound faith of the people throughout the country. After the conclusion of World War II the Chinese people finally defeated the Chiang Kai-shek reactionary clique, which was supported by U.S imperialism, and, in 1949, achieved the great victory in the people's revolution.

The Kuomintang government headed by Chiang Kai-shek was the last of the reactionary governments that had successively ruled China in the past. That government had never even wanted a constitution, but when it was at its last gasp, it attempted to save itself with the help of a bogus constitution. This constitution, concocted by the Kuomintang government in 1946, was resolutely opposed by the Chinese Communist Party, the democratic parties of China and the Chinese people as a whole.⁵⁴ Like other reactionary governments in the past Chiang Kai-shek's regime finally collapsed, less than three years after his bogus constitution was announced. Meanwhile, the Chinese Youth Party,⁵⁵ the Chinese Democratic Socialist Party⁵⁶ and other counter-revolutionary parties that had supported this bogus constitution were discarded by the people. This must still be fresh in the memories of all deputies present here.

For the last hundred years or so the bitter struggle between the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary forces in China has never ceased. On the question of state system this bitter struggle has been reflected in the demand of three different types of forces for three different types of constitutions.

First, the bogus constitutions concocted by the Qing Dynasty, the northern warlords and Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang. These reactionary rulers of the feudal and comprador classes were opposed even to bourgeois democracy and never really wanted a constitution at all. And it was only when their reactionary regimes were tottering under the impact of revolutionary forces and their doom was in sight that

they hastily concocted fraudulent constitutions in the hope of prolonging their moribund reactionary rule behind the decorative facade of a bourgeois constitution. Naturally, they failed.

Second, the type of constitution yearned for by the Chinese national bourgeoisie for many years in the past, that is, the constitution of a bourgeois-democratic republic. The Provisional Constitution that came out of the Revolution of 1911 and that was immediately scrapped by Yuan Shikai was the only one of this kind in Chinese history.

Although many nations in the world did establish bourgeois republics after abolishing feudalism, a bourgeois republic in semi-colonial and semi-feudal China was mere illusion. Since the Chinese bourgeoisie was incapable of leading the people to defeat the combined forces of foreign imperialists and domestic reactionaries, it could not turn China into a bourgeois republic and consequently could not produce a bourgeois constitution in China.

Third, the constitution of a people's republic led by the working class and based on an alliance of workers and peasants, that is, the constitution we are about to enact.

Comrade Mao Zedong pointed out long ago that after victory in the people's revolution led by the working class, the republic to be established would not be a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, but a people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on an alliance of workers and peasants. This people's republic, led by the working class, would lead China to socialism, not to capitalism.

The truth is this: the bogus constitutions drawn up by reactionary ruling cliques of the feudal and comprador classes without exception failed to hoodwink the people and were rejected by them, and those who had a hand in these bogus constitutions and those who actively supported them were cast aside by the people. As a matter of fact, successive reactionary regimes collapsed soon after producing their bogus constitutions, and their so-called constitutions became mere scraps of paper. Moreover, over scores of years quite a few people in China tried hard to bring into being a bourgeois constitutional government, but nothing was accomplished. Any genuine constitution for China can be only a people's democratic and socialist constitution. Only such a constitution conforms to the interests of the vast majority of the people and enjoys their support.

That is why we say that the Draft Constitution we now present is the epitome of the historical experience of the Chinese people's

revolutionary struggle over more than a century as well as the epitome of the historical experience of Chinese constitutionalism in modern times.

Also, of course, our Draft Constitution is the epitome of the new historical experience gained since the founding of the People's Republic of China.

In 1949 the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference adopted a Common Programme that has served as a provisional constitution.¹² This Common Programme summed up the experience of the revolution in the past, especially the experience gained in the people's revolutionary base areas. It proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China and defined the fundamental policies the People's Republic of China would carry out in different fields of endeavour. The Common Programme has persistently been carried out by the Central People's Government and the local people's governments at all levels.

Although the People's Republic of China has been in existence only five years, it has undergone vast changes.

First, China is no longer a colony or dependency under the domination of foreign imperialism. It has become a truly independent state. At the opening session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in September 1949 Comrade Mao Zedong solemnly declared, "The Chinese people, comprising one quarter of humanity, have now stood up." For more than a hundred years the Chinese people made untold sacrifices to free themselves from domination by foreign imperialism. Their aspirations have come true. The great nationwide movement to resist U.S. aggression and aid Korea conducted since 1950 has further strengthened the position of our country as an independent state. It has assumed its place as a great power in the international arena. Together with the Soviet Union and the people's democracies, China has become a strong bulwark of world peace.

Second, the age-old grip of feudalism on China is now ended. The system of feudal exploitation, which was once the cause of China's stagnation, backwardness and humiliation, has been completely uprooted in most parts of our country by a nationwide mass movement.

Third, China has put an end to the long period of chaos. It has achieved internal peace and an unprecedented unification of the entire mainland. The various nationalities in China, no longer discriminated

against and mistrustful of each other as in the past, are closely united in the common struggle against imperialists and public enemies in their midst, as well as on the basis of equality, friendship and mutual assistance among them.

Fourth, China has to a great extent ended the people's lack of political power, attaining a high degree of democracy. The people have organized themselves through great mass movements, such as the agrarian reform⁹ and other social reforms, the suppression of counter-revolutionaries,⁵⁷ and resistance to U.S. aggression and aid to Korea. An enormous number of people who used to be indifferent to affairs of state are now taking an active part in political activities of the country. People throughout the country have keenly realized that the people's congresses are the best form of political organization for administering their own country.

Fifth, thanks to the fervent enthusiasm and initiative shown by the people in their work since liberation and thanks to aid from our great ally, the Soviet Union, our country has, in a very short time, rehabilitated the national economy, which had been ruined by the imperialists and Kuomintang reactionaries, and embarked upon socialist construction and socialist transformation. Socialist economy has in practice proved beyond all doubt its vast superiority to capitalist economy. It is daily growing and consolidating its leading position in China's economy. The practical steps and concrete measures towards socialism taken by our state have won the support of the masses. Since 1953 we have been carrying out, in line with our objective of building socialism, the First Five-Year Plan to develop the national economy and have already achieved successes.

All this shows that our country has taken big strides ahead during the last five years and that once state power is in the hands of the people, who are organized and given leadership, it creates an invincible force that will free them from a life of misery, enable our country to forge ahead and improve the material and cultural life of the people. It also explains why our country and government enjoy the support and confidence of all the people as well as the sympathy and support of peace-loving people throughout the world.

Modern Chinese history shows that our people have long debated a fundamental question: Which is China's way out, capitalism or socialism? The tremendous changes that have taken place in our country over the last five years have provided an illuminating answer. Life in this period has fully proved that the only correct path for our

country is to pass from the present society, with its complex economic structure, to a society with a unitary, socialist economic structure; that means transition from the present new-democratic society to a socialist society.

Is there any other way for China, in light of the conditions prevailing today?

The U.S. imperialists and the traitorous Chiang Kai-shek clique tell us that China should return to its old colonial and feudal rule. They say that our people are “living a dark life” and that they must come back to “liberate” us, overthrow the People’s Republic of China and resurrect their reactionary rule. That is to say, our people must again be placed under the sanguinary rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism. As we all know, the people of China, liberated after more than a hundred years of struggle, will never allow their country to revert to this old tragic path, but U.S. imperialists, the traitorous Chiang Kai-shek clique and the enemy agents and counter-revolutionaries on the mainland insist that China return to the old path. The U.S. imperialists are still occupying Taiwan, and the traitorous Chiang Kai-shek clique is still holding out in Taiwan, riding roughshod over the people there and all the time plotting its return to the mainland. So, we are still facing the real danger of a reactionary comeback; it would be a mistake for anyone to overlook this danger. People throughout China, therefore, must always be on their guard, make great efforts to strengthen their national defence, and wage a resolute struggle to liberate Taiwan and wipe out the traitorous Chiang Kai-shek clique once and for all.

Is it still possible for China to take the capitalist road and develop capitalism, so that it may become a capitalist state? Some backward people may perhaps entertain such an illusion, but it is a most mistaken and dangerous illusion. Comrade Mao Zedong has said, “There are bourgeois republics in foreign lands, but China cannot have a bourgeois republic.”⁵⁸ Today, the Chinese people, led by the working class, will not allow capitalism to swamp this country; still less will they permit the people’s democratic dictatorship, led by the working class, to be turned into a bourgeois dictatorship. World capitalism is already on the decline and the most developed capitalist countries have all now reached a dead end, while the socialist Soviet Union and the people’s democracies have become prosperous and strong. Our people, led by the working class, are building socialism; the face of our country is changing; the people’s material and cultural life is improv-

ing. This being the internal and international situation, will the Chinese people give up their bright, prosperous future of socialism to take the capitalist path, which leads to suffering and privation? Of course they will not. Therefore, those who have such illusions should immediately reject them. Those who do not wish to stop dreaming and who stick to their illusions will possibly be guided by the imperialists onto the dangerous path. This is because since they insist on China's taking the capitalist road, they are bound to link up with the imperialist countries, which will never allow China to become an independent capitalist country, and will merely turn China into a colony under imperialist, feudal and comprador rule. That was the path taken by the traitor Chiang Kai-shek.

Is there any other course for China? Some people may come up with the idea of maintaining the status quo: taking neither a capitalist nor a socialist road, but something containing both socialist and capitalist elements, which means continuing the conditions under which we now live. We all know that China is in a transition period in the course of building a socialist society. This period in our country is called the new-democratic period, a period during which our economy is characterized by having both socialist and capitalist sectors. Some people hope this situation will be maintained permanently and think it would be best not to make any changes at all. They say that the Common Programme is quite sufficient; why should we have a constitution? In recent years we have often heard talk about "consolidation of the new-democratic order". This kind of talk reflects the idea of maintaining the status quo. But is there any real possibility of doing this? It is impossible for the two conflicting relations of production, socialist and capitalist, to develop side by side in a country without interfering with each other. China will change into either a socialist state or a capitalist state; to keep China from changing means to halt the movement of a thing — this is absolutely impossible. As I have already said, the road along which China could change into a capitalist state is barred. So, the only bright, broad road open to China is the road to socialism. And this road it must take, because this is dictated by the inexorable law governing China's historical development.

It can, therefore, be seen that China's advance along the socialist road is fixed hard and fast. There is no other road for China to take.

Since its founding the People's Republic of China has been traversing along the road to socialism. The Preamble to the Draft Constitution states: "From the founding of the People's Republic of China to the attainment of a socialist society is a period of transition. During the transition the fundamental task of the state is, step by step, to bring about the socialist industrialization of the country and, step by step, to accomplish the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts and capitalist industry and commerce." Since 1953 China has been in a period of planned economic development with socialism as its goal. It is, therefore, essential for us now to take another step forward on the basis of the Common Programme, to adopt a constitution like the one now submitted to you, in order to set down in legal form the fundamental task of our country in the transition period.

To bring about the socialist industrialization and transformation of our country is an extremely arduous and complicated task. To carry out such a task, we need to mobilize the forces of all the people, develop the initiative and enthusiasm of the masses and, under a correct and highly centralized leadership, overcome all kinds of difficulties. Therefore, we need, on the one hand, to further promote the people's democracy and extend its scope and, on the other hand, to attain a highly unified leadership of the state. For this purpose we must adopt a constitution much more comprehensive than the Common Programme, a constitution such as the one now being submitted to you.

During discussion the people heartily acclaimed the Draft Constitution because it correctly summed up the historical experience of our country. This Draft Constitution is the product of the people's will and represents their interests. It is also a product of the enormous changes that have occurred in China.

The people also acclaimed the Draft Constitution because it correctly drew upon the experience of other countries. While drafting the Constitution, the Committee for Drafting the Constitution referred to all constitutions, past and present, of the Soviet Union as well as to the constitutions of the people's democracies. It is obvious that the experience of the advanced socialist states, headed by the Soviet Union, has been of great help to us. So, our Draft Constitution embodies the experience of our own country and that of other countries. It is not only the product of the people's revolutionary

movement in China, but also a product of the international socialist movement.

Such is the historic significance of our Constitution.

SOME EXPLANATIONS ABOUT THE BASIC CONTENT OF THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION

Now I should like to give some explanations of the basic content of the Draft Constitution under four headings.

1. THE CHARACTER OF OUR STATE

Article 1 of the Draft Constitution stipulates, "The People's Republic of China is a people's democratic state led by the working class and based on an alliance of workers and peasants." The Preamble and many other articles of the Draft Constitution clearly indicate that a broad people's democratic united front still exists under our country's system of people's democracy.

The proposition that only by relying on the leadership of the working class would the Chinese people be able to win liberation from the oppression of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism has long since been proved. But after the people won victory, a new question arose, namely, would the working class continue to be as capable and confident in leading national construction as it had been in the past? Some people may have adopted a wait-and-see attitude on this question in the beginning, but the past five years have fully proved what unusual talent the working class possesses in leading the country. To secure the fruits of victory already won by the Chinese people, it is necessary to further consolidate and strengthen the working-class leadership of the state. Without such leadership success in socialist construction and transformation would be unthinkable.

Continued consolidation and strengthening of the worker-peasant alliance is the basic guarantee of successful leadership by the working class. This was as true in China's revolutionary wars of the past as it is in its national construction today. The worker-peasant alliance of our country, tempered in the revolutionary wars against imperialism and feudalism, has been further strengthened, not weakened, since

the founding of the People's Republic of China. In the course of gradual transition to a socialist society the peasants are bound to change and have, in fact, begun to do so. The change takes the form of a gradual transformation of individual peasants leading a precarious life into socialist co-operative peasants. Only when the working class leads the peasantry along this path of co-operation can the peasants' living conditions improve steadily and the worker-peasant alliance become closer and firmer.

Among the working people of our country are a large number of urban and rural workers engaged in individual handicrafts or non-agricultural labour. They rely for their living entirely or essentially on their own labour. The working class must do its best to unite with these working people as it does with the peasantry in the common task of building socialism. To unite with them is part of the task of the worker-peasant alliance.

The fact that our state is led by the working class and based on the worker-peasant alliance shows the fundamental character of our state. It shows that China is a people's democracy. People's democracies are entirely different in character from capitalist countries. In capitalist countries, however much they prate about "democracy", it is, after all, the bourgeoisie who rule, although they constitute only a tiny fraction of the population. Here, in our country, the true masters of the state are the overwhelming majority of the people.

The intellectuals of our country played a very important part in revolutionary movements of the past, and they will play a still more important role in building socialism. Coming from different social classes, intellectuals cannot by themselves form an independent social class. They can, however, when they align themselves with the working people, become intellectuals of the working people or, when they align themselves with the bourgeoisie, bourgeois intellectuals. A handful of them, aligning themselves with the overthrown feudal and comprador classes, have become reactionary intellectuals. Our state must pay attention to rallying all intellectuals except the handful of reactionary intellectuals who hold fast to their reactionary position and carry on activities against the People's Republic of China. It should help them to remould their ideology and encourage them to devote their ability to the building of socialism. Comrade Mao Zedong long ago said, "Provided they serve the people creditably, all intellectuals should be esteemed and regarded as valuable national and social assets."⁵⁹

The Preamble to the Draft Constitution points out: "This people's democratic united front will continue to play its part in mobilizing and rallying the whole people in common struggle to fulfill the fundamental task of the state during the transition and to oppose enemies within and without." This signifies the important role to be played in the transition period by the people's democratic united front led by the working class and composed of the various democratic classes, democratic parties, and people's organizations. This united front means an alliance based on, and broader than, the worker-peasant alliance, an alliance between the working people and all non-working people with whom co-operation is possible. It is a mistake for some people to hold that since we are building socialism, it is no longer possible and necessary for such an alliance to continue.

In the transition period our country still has its national bourgeoisie. It is recognized that in any society where exploiting and exploited classes exist the class struggle persists. But owing to special historical circumstances in our country — that it was formerly a nation oppressed by foreign imperialism — there was not only a conflict between the Chinese working class and the national bourgeoisie; there was also an alliance between them that still exists today. The national bourgeoisie, under the leadership of the working class, joined the national and democratic revolution in the past. In the last five years, led by the state, it also took part in patriotic movements and in economic rehabilitation. Through the serious struggles against the "three evils"⁶⁰ and the "five evils",⁶¹ many capitalists have raised the level of their political understanding and demonstrated their willingness to accept socialist transformation. This makes it possible for the state to adopt the policy of step-by-step socialist transformation of capitalist industry and commerce, and we are now carrying out the transformation. In the transition period the national bourgeoisie still plays an important role in the national economy. It can make a definite contribution to the state in such areas as expanding production, improving management of enterprises and production techniques, and training skilled workers and technicians, as well as by accepting socialist transformation. In the transition period the national bourgeoisie has a definite status politically.

In our society there are patriots of other classes, especially among the minority nationalities, and the state should also make special efforts to unite with them.

This shows that the present united front of our country still has a broad basis.

The Chinese Communist Party has long pointed out that the great revolutionary unity of the people of the entire country under the leadership of the working class is essential not only to the Chinese people's democratic revolution but also to the realization of socialism, for imperialism still confronts us. At the same time, in our country there are actually only two roads for the people to choose: either to be enslaved again by imperialism or to bring about socialism. Only by advancing towards socialism can China achieve independence, install democracy and attain prosperity and strength. In such a situation it is possible for all patriots who are unwilling to accept colonial slavery to unite under the leadership of the working class and take the socialist road. Under conditions of continually strengthened leadership of the working class and alliance of workers and peasants, the broader the unity of the people within the bounds of possibility, the greater the benefit to the cause of socialism. Therefore, our Constitution should be one that guarantees great unity of the people throughout the country for the building of a socialist society.

2. STEPS TO BE TAKEN IN THE TRANSITION TO A SOCIALIST SOCIETY

Article 4 of the Draft Constitution stipulates: "The People's Republic of China, by relying on the organs of state and the social forces, and by means of socialist industrialization and socialist transformation, ensures the gradual abolition of systems of exploitation and the building of a socialist society."

To ensure implementation of the principle laid down in Article 4, many provisions are made in other articles under the heading of General Principles. These provisions define both the general objective of building a socialist society and the concrete steps to be taken to build such a society.

In China's transition period many different economic sectors still exist. Ownership of the means of production at present falls mainly into the following categories: state ownership, that is, ownership by all the people; co-operative ownership, that is, collective ownership by the working masses; ownership by individual labourers; and capitalist ownership. The task of the state is to strengthen and extend the first two categories, that is, the socialist sector of the economy, and to

gradually transform the latter two categories, that is, the non-socialist sector of the economy. Therefore, the state “ensures priority for the development of the state sector of the economy” and pays special attention to the gradual building of heavy industry, the main economic foundation of socialism. It “encourages, guides and helps the development of the co-operative sector of the economy” and encourages and guides the transformation of capitalist industry and commerce “into various forms of state-capitalist economy, gradually replacing capitalist ownership with ownership by all the people.”

These provisions in the Draft Constitution are of course not based on imagination but on changes in social and economic relations that have actually taken place since the founding of the People's Republic of China and on the experience of the masses. All are therefore practicable. With regard to these provisions, I should like to discuss the following questions:

The first is the question of forms of transition. As we know, the socialist transformation of agriculture, handicrafts and capitalist industry and commerce is a very arduous task. We cannot hope to accomplish this transformation overnight. We have to proceed step by step in light of the experience and political consciousness of the masses and in accordance with what is possible under actual conditions. Our experience has proved that socialist transformation of either agriculture and handicrafts or capitalist industry and commerce may have transitional forms and that it is a prime necessity to adopt flexible and varied transitional forms.

The chief transitional form for the socialist transformation of agriculture and handicrafts is the co-operative, based on partial collective ownership by the working masses, such as the agricultural producers' co-operatives that have begun to emerge in our countryside in the past few years, whereby land is invested as shares by the members and management is unified.⁶² Under China's historical circumstances the gradual, widespread employment of this transitional form, i.e., a semi-socialist co-operative economy, can lead individual labourers smoothly to collective ownership by the working masses.

The transitional form for the socialist transformation of capitalist industry and commerce is state capitalism. Under China's historical circumstances we can carry out the gradual socialist transformation of capitalist industry and commerce through various forms of state capitalism. State capitalism in a state led by the working class is entirely different in nature from state capitalism under bourgeois rule.

As Lenin said, "State capitalism is capitalism which we shall be able to restrain, and the limits of which we shall be able to fix."⁶³ In a state-capitalist economy capitalist ownership has not yet been abolished and capitalists can still make profits, but they can no longer make as much profit as they wish. Through the transitional form of state capitalism favourable conditions can be created for the eventual replacement of capitalist ownership with ownership by all the people.

That these transitional forms are specified in the Draft Constitution is of immense significance to the socialist transformation of our country.

Next, I shall speak on the question of building a socialist society in a peaceful way. During the nationwide discussion of the Draft Constitution not a few people asked, "Why does the Preamble to the Draft Constitution state that our country's system of a people's democracy will ensure that China peacefully abolish exploitation and build a socialist society?"

In our country, except for a very few areas, the system of feudal exploitation has been eliminated completely in the course of the revolutionary war and land reform, but in order to build a socialist society, it is also necessary to eliminate the system of capitalist exploitation. This is a step further in social change. In a capitalist country, in order to carry through this social change, the working class and the rest of the labouring people must proceed by way of revolution to overthrow the state system of bourgeois dictatorship. Political and economic conditions in our country, however, are entirely different from those of capitalist countries. China has set up a state system of a people's democracy led by the working class. It already possesses an ever-growing socialist state-owned economy, which has become the leading force in the entire national economy. Capitalist economy is no longer dominant here. Consequently, our socialist revolution differs from that in capitalist countries. We can proceed with gradual socialist transformation by means of existing state apparatus and social forces. Moreover, as I mentioned earlier, we have in our country an alliance of the working class and the national bourgeoisie. For this reason, to eliminate the system of capitalist exploitation in China we do not have to adopt the methods used in carrying out land reform in 1950-52, when we launched a broad mass movement over a short period of time and eliminated the feudal land system at one stroke. The socialist transformation of capitalist industry and commerce will be realized gradually over a relatively long period of

time through various forms of state capitalism. We shall give capitalists the time necessary to accept the transformation gradually, under the leadership of the state and the working class. Of course, struggles are bound to occur. There are struggles now, and there will be struggles in the future. Even at present some capitalists are engaged in unlawful pursuits and some others oppose socialist transformation. For this reason, the Draft Constitution provides, "The state forbids capitalists to engage in unlawful activities that injure the public interest, disrupt the social-economic order, or undermine the economic plan of the state." The idea that there is no longer class struggle in our country is completely wrong. Punishment will have to be meted out to capitalists who engage in unlawful pursuits or disruptive activities. It is inconceivable that there should be no complicated struggle as we pass from the restriction of capitalist exploitation to its elimination, but our aim can be achieved by peaceful struggle, through the control exercised by administrative organs of state, the leadership given by the state sector of the economy, and supervision by the worker masses. The capitalist, provided he realizes the march of events, provided he is willing to accept socialist reform, and provided he does not act against the law or wreck the property of the people, can enjoy the concern of the state and will receive proper arrangements for his life and work in the future; nor will he be deprived of political rights. There is a great difference between this and our policy towards the class of feudal landlords. The leadership of the working class in the state, the solid alliance of workers and peasants, the leading position of a socialist economy in the national economy as a whole, the united front within the country, together with a favourable international situation, are the necessary conditions for China to abolish exploitation and build a socialist society in a peaceful way.

As for socialist transformation in areas inhabited by minority nationalities, we must pay full attention to the special characteristics in the development of the nationalities concerned. I shall deal with this question later.

Now, the question of the rich peasant. During the nationwide discussion of the Draft Constitution many people asked, "The Draft Constitution states, 'the policy of the state towards the rich-peasant economy is to restrict and gradually eliminate it.' How should we understand this?"

We all know that the rich-peasant economy is capitalist economy in the countryside; the rich peasants are the last remaining exploiting class there. In China the rich-peasant economy has never been well developed; land rented out by the rich peasants was redistributed under land reform. Since this reform the rich-peasant economy has been greatly restricted as a result of the development of producers' co-operatives, supply and marketing co-operatives and credit co-operatives, as well as by the policy of state monopoly of purchase and marketing of grain and other principal farm products.⁶⁴ Though a small number of new-type rich peasants have emerged in the countryside, the rich-peasant economy has, in general, not grown but declined. The average land holding of the rich peasant at present is only twice as big as that of the ordinary peasant. Most of the rich peasants who formerly hired labour now no longer do so, or do so very seldom. The ones who practise usury are decreasing in number; and the ones who engage in trade are subject to rigid restrictions. In our country it is therefore possible to gradually eliminate capitalism in the countryside through the building of co-operatives and restraining of the development of the rich-peasant economy. Struggle is of course unavoidable. Disruptive activities by the rich peasants cannot be overlooked. In many areas rich peasants are known to have opposed unified purchase and marketing by the state and to have undermined the mutual-aid and co-operative movement. Rich peasants guilty of disruptive activities must be punished. However, in view of the general political and economic situation of our country, it will not be necessary to start a special movement, as in land reform, to eliminate the rich peasants. In future, rich peasants who have already given up exploitation may be allowed to join co-operatives on certain conditions and continue to reform themselves, provided the agricultural producers' co-operatives have been consolidated and agreement has been obtained from the peasants.

During the nationwide discussion of the Draft Constitution quite a few people asked, "The Draft Constitution provides that the state protects the right of capitalists to own means of production and other capital according to law, but it also provides that the state will carry out the socialist transformation of capitalist industry and commerce and gradually replace capitalist ownership with ownership by all the people. Is this not a contradiction?"

Whatever contradiction there may be simply reflects the fact that contradictions exist in real life. During the transition period in our

country we have not only socialism but also capitalism. The contradiction between these two different kinds of ownership is a contradiction that exists objectively. At the present stage capitalist industry and commerce are, on the one hand, beneficial to the national economy and people's wellbeing and, on the other, harmful to them. Herein lies the contradiction — in the very existence of capitalist industry and commerce. To resolve the contradiction between socialism and capitalism, our policy is to permit the existence of capitalist ownership, utilize capitalist industry and commerce where they are beneficial to the national economy and people's wellbeing and restrict them where they are harmful to them. Transitional forms will be employed to create conditions for the gradual replacement of capitalist ownership with ownership by all the people. The concrete steps for transition to a socialist society laid down in the Draft Constitution are aimed at correctly resolving this contradiction.

We think the policy and methods we have adopted to build socialism are correct for the specific conditions of our country. Proof of this can be found in the negative examples, namely, our enemies' clamour and comments in the foreign bourgeois press.

The imperialists and the traitorous Chiang Kai-shek clique in Taiwan very much dislike seeing us build socialism in China. They slander us every day. And no wonder! It is all because we have done the right thing.

Some bourgeois newspapers in other countries have discovered to their disappointment that the road our country is taking, as laid down in our Draft Constitution, is "the road that the Soviet Union has traversed." True, the road we are taking is exactly the road traversed by the Soviet Union. About this we have not the slightest doubt. The Soviet road is the road all humanity will eventually take, in accordance with the laws governing historical development. To by-pass this road is impossible. We have always believed that Marxism-Leninism is universal truth.

In order to undermine our cause of building socialism, our cunning enemies hired certain people who, like Trotskyites and Chenites (Chen Duxiu), pretend to be Left but attack our concrete steps and measures for carrying out the socialist transformation of our country. They allege that we have "not made a thorough job of it," that we are "too compromising" and that we have "departed from Marxism". With such nonsense they try to confuse the people. They suggest that we sever our alliance with the national bourgeoisie and imme-

diately deprive them of all they possess. They also complain that our agricultural policy is going “too slowly”. They want us to break our alliance with the peasants. Aren’t such ideas sheer nonsense? If we did what they want, it would please only the imperialists and the traitor Chiang Kai-shek.

The Chinese people have not only set themselves the goal of building socialism but mapped out practicable steps to achieve it. This inevitably causes great displeasure to their enemies, but is it not all too plain that what the enemies dislike most is precisely the best thing for the Chinese people?

3. OUR POLITICAL SYSTEM OF PEOPLE’S DEMOCRACY AND THE PEOPLE’S RIGHTS AND DUTIES

Article 2 of the Draft Constitution says: “All power in the People’s Republic of China belongs to the people. The organs through which the people exercise power are the National People’s Congress and the local people’s congresses.” This provision and those contained in other articles specify that the political system of our country is that of people’s congresses. In light of the experience of political construction gained over long years in our people’s revolutionary base areas and the experience of the Soviet Union and other people’s democracies, our Common Programme five years ago decided on this kind of political system for our country. Now, summing up the experience of our state organs and of all levels and circles of the people’s conferences²⁴ in the past five years, the Draft Constitution spells out more distinctly the political system of our country, which is bound up with the fundamental nature of our state. It is the political system that the Chinese people are adopting to ensure their country’s advance along the road of socialism.

The system of people’s congresses is the proper political system for our country, because it helps the people exercise their own power and participate regularly in running the state, thereby bringing into full play their initiative and creativeness. Clearly, if the political system does not enable the masses to use their abilities in running the state, it will be impossible to mobilize and organize them effectively for the building of socialism.

Our people’s congresses at all levels are based on universal suffrage. The Draft Constitution states that citizens who have reached

the age of eighteen have the right to vote and stand for election whatever their nationality, race, sex, occupation, social origin, religious belief, education, property status, or length of residence. Owing to various prevailing circumstances, in our country's elections it is still necessary, in accordance with the law, to deprive feudal landlords and bureaucrat-capitalists for a given period of their right to vote and stand for election; to specify that the number of deputies relative to population differs in proportion between town and country; to adopt a multi-level electoral system; and to use the show-of-hands method in most grass-roots level elections. Our electoral system will gradually be improved, and when conditions are ripe, our country will adopt the system of completely universal, equal, direct and secret ballot. The present electoral system, however, is appropriate to present conditions in our country and the most convenient to the people. It takes into special consideration the minority nationalities and various democratic classes by providing for appropriate quotas of deputies to represent them. People's congresses at all levels formed by such elections are fully representative of the people's will and are thus people's representative organizations of a highly democratic character.

According to the provisions of the Draft Constitution, the exercise of supreme state power is completely unified in the National People's Congress, while all the administrative organs of state, from the State Council to the local people's councils, are elected and supervised by the organs of government authority, that is, the National People's Congress and the local people's congresses, and may be removed by them. The administrative organs of state, therefore, can under no circumstances act independently of the people's congresses or against their will. The functions and powers of the head of state in our country are jointly exercised by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and the Chairman of the People's Republic of China, elected by the National People's Congress. This conforms to the actual situation of our country and is based on our experience in building up the supreme organ of state authority since the founding of the People's Republic of China. Ours is a collective head of state. Neither the Standing Committee nor the Chairman of the People's Republic of China has powers exceeding those of the National People's Congress.

No important affairs of state are to be decided by any single person or small number of persons. Since the people's congresses are instituted as the basic political system of our country, all important

questions must be submitted to them for discussion and decision. Important questions affecting the nation as a whole must be discussed and decided upon by the National People's Congress, or by its Standing Committee when the National People's Congress is not in session, while important questions of a local character must be discussed and decided upon by the local people's congresses. Thus the people's congresses of our country are organs of state authority, capable of making decisions on important questions and supervising their implementation.

Paragraph 2 of Article 2 of the Draft Constitution declares: "The National People's Congress, the local people's congresses and other organs of state practise democratic centralism." Our system of democratic centralism is explained by the unified and concentrated exercise of state authority by the people's congresses. A reactionary publication issued in Hong Kong asserted that our "system of people's congresses is a system of concentration of power by the central authority." These reactionaries seem to think they have found something to attack us with. However, we Marxist-Leninists have long declared that we stand for centralism. The question is, what kind of centralism — the despotic centralism of a handful of big feudal lords and capitalists or the democratic centralism of the people led by the working class? These two systems of centralism are diametrically different. In the Draft Constitution we have combined a high degree of centralism with a high degree of democracy. Our political system has a high degree of centralism, but it is based on a high degree of democracy.

People subjected to oppression cannot fully concentrate their will and strength. Precisely for this reason the Chinese people in the past were ridiculed as being like "loose sand". The revolution concentrated the people's will and strength, and having liberated themselves and set up their own state, the people naturally concentrated all their will and strength on building up their state apparatus, making it a powerful weapon. The stronger the people's state apparatus, the more powerfully it can defend the people's interests, protect their democratic rights and ensure the building of socialism.

When Comrade Mao Zedong discussed the political system of our country in his work *On Coalition Government*, he stated clearly: "It is at once democratic and centralized, that is, centralized on the basis of democracy and democratic under centralized guidance." That is our principle.

Now a number of people mistakenly assume democracy and centralism to be two absolutely opposite things that cannot be combined. They think that where there is democracy there cannot be centralism, and where there is centralism there cannot be democracy. When they see the political unanimity of the people as is manifested in our organs of state and find a highly unified leadership throughout the country, they try to show that "there is no democracy" here. The trouble with them is that they simply do not understand what people's democracy means and consequently have no idea what centralism on the basis of people's democracy means.

The common interests of the people and their unity of will are the starting point of the work of the people's congresses and all other organs of state. Therefore, it is possible in all these organs to arrive at political unanimity based on democracy. Political unanimity does not mean a lessening or elimination of criticism and self-criticism. On the contrary, criticism and self-criticism are most important expressions of our democratic life. In the work of all organs of state in our country there are bound to be shortcomings and mistakes. Therefore, full scope must be given to criticism and self-criticism at the sessions of the National People's Congress, at the sessions of the local people's congresses, at meetings of all organs of state and in their daily activities. We must use the weapons of criticism and self-criticism to advance the work of the organs of state, constantly correcting shortcomings and mistakes and fighting bureaucratism, which spells departure from the masses, so that the organs of state can maintain regular and close contact with the masses and correctly reflect their will. If there are not full criticism and self-criticism, political unanimity of the people can be neither achieved nor maintained. Suppression of criticism in the organs of state is against the law.

From a bourgeois viewpoint it is impossible to understand our country's political system. Many foreign bourgeois papers have commented on the political system provided for in our Draft Constitution. Some people have shown surprise at the broad powers of our people's congresses, saying, "One cannot but feel surprised, in particular, at the formidable functions and powers of the National People's Congress." Others argue among themselves as to whether the role of the Chairman of the People's Republic of China is comparable to that of a French or an American president. These commentators invariably try to judge our system by the political systems of the bourgeois countries or make all sorts of statements based on their warped

imaginations. The pity is that they miss the greatest and fundamental point — they fail to see the tremendous change that has occurred in Chinese history, that is, the Chinese people, led by the working class, have become the masters of their own country.

Still other foreign bourgeois commentators attack our system of centralism and the collective spirit of our people, alleging that “there is no individual freedom” in China and that we “ignore personal interests”. I, therefore, wish to say a few words on the question of whether a high degree of centralism and collective spirit of the people impair the personal interests and freedom of the masses.

Many articles in the Draft Constitution provide for citizens’ freedoms and rights. The Draft Constitution stipulates that citizens enjoy freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession and of demonstration and that the state guarantees the citizens’ enjoyment of these freedoms by providing the necessary material facilities. The Draft Constitution declares: “Freedom of the person of citizens of the People’s Republic of China is inviolable. No citizen may be arrested except by decision of a people’s court or with the sanction of a people’s procuratorate.” “The homes of citizens . . . are inviolable, and privacy of correspondence is protected by law. Citizens . . . enjoy freedom of residence and freedom to change their residence.” The Draft Constitution also stipulates that citizens have the right to work and to education and that the working people have the right to rest and leisure and to material assistance in old age and in cases of illness or disability. Furthermore, it provides that the state shall gradually extend the material conditions, which are still inadequate, to guarantee the citizens’ enjoyment of these rights. The Draft Constitution also provides that citizens enjoy freedom of religious belief. Our state being in a position to concern itself with the freedoms and rights of every citizen is, of course, determined by our state and social systems. The people of no capitalist country enjoy, or can enjoy, as broad a measure of personal freedom as do our people.

Some foreign commentators find it strange that while we safeguard the people’s democratic freedoms and rights, we also suppress all counter-revolutionary activities and punish traitors and counter-revolutionaries. Of course, anyone who expects our Constitution to ensure freedom for the activities of traitors and counter-revolutionaries is bound to be disappointed. As for the foreign imperialists and their hangers-on, who would like to enslave us, our Constitution and laws will never give them the slightest loophole. Is it not precisely because

we have deprived the traitors and counter-revolutionaries of their freedom that the people have genuine freedom?

Other foreign commentators find it strange that while we safeguard freedom of religious belief for our citizens, we punish imperialist elements and traitors who engage in counter-revolutionary activities under the cloak of religion. Of course, anyone who expects us to protect the freedom of imperialist elements and traitors who carry out subversive activities against the Chinese people's democratic power is likewise bound to be disappointed. As provided in the Draft Constitution, our state will, as it has in the past, effectively safeguard freedom of religious belief for its citizens, but safeguarding freedom of religious belief is quite a different matter from safeguarding freedom of counter-revolutionary activities; these two just cannot be confused. Nor, similarly, will our Constitution and laws ever provide the slightest facility for people who engage in counter-revolutionary activities under the cloak of religion. There is nothing difficult to understand in this reasoning.

Under the capitalist system the state safeguards the interests and freedom of only the tiny exploiting-class minority and takes away those of the overwhelming majority of the people. Here in our country things are just the opposite. We permit no one to impair the interests and freedom of the majority, the public interests of the country and society, for the sake of the interests and freedom of any individual or individuals. For this reason, Article 14 of the Draft Constitution declares: "The state forbids any person to use his private property to the detriment of the public interests." In our country the so-called freedom to impair the public interests is, of course, restricted or prohibited, but our state does fully concern itself with and care for the interests of the individual. The public interests of our country and society cannot be separated from the interests of the individual. Socialism and collectivism cannot stand aloof from the individual's interests. Our state gives every protection to the public interests of the country and society. These public interests are the very foundation on which the individual interests of the people can be satisfied.

Ours is a state capable of inspiring the people to take an active part in the public activities of the country and society. It enables the masses to take a collective viewpoint and voluntarily fulfill their obligations to society and the country in their public activities. This is proof that our system of people's democracy corresponds to the interests of the people. Can the people possibly lose their personal

interests and individual freedom because they have a collective spirit and fulfill their obligations to society and the country? Of course not. Under the system of people's democracy and socialism the people can see for themselves that personal interests are inseparable from the public interests of the country and society and that they are identical. Under the system of people's democracy and socialism the people enjoy full democratic rights and have at the same time full obligations. Since it is the people who fully exercise state power, they fulfill their obligations as the masters of the state.

In our country the people's rights and duties are in complete harmony. No one has duties without enjoying rights, and no one enjoys rights without duties. The Draft Constitution provides that all citizens abide by the Constitution and the law, uphold discipline at work, keep public order and respect social ethics. It also provides that citizens have the duty to respect and protect public property, to pay taxes and perform military service according to law. The Draft Constitution also provides: "It is the sacred duty of every citizen of the People's Republic of China to defend the homeland." All the duties laid down in the Draft Constitution must be performed by every citizen without exception. These provisions will further heighten the people's solemn sense of duty towards their great motherland. Since ours is a country of the people, and the interests of the country and the people are completely identical, naturally the people consider their duty to the country something they must carry out. No one who shirks these duties can avoid public censure.

The people of our country want to devote their strength to defending their motherland, to constantly strengthening the system of people's democracy and to participating in the great cause of building socialism, because the freedoms and rights of the people will become more secure and broader as their motherland becomes more prosperous and powerful, their system of people's democracy stronger, and their socialist cause further developed.

4. THE QUESTION OF NATIONAL REGIONAL AUTONOMY

The Preamble to the Draft Constitution and many of its articles define the relations of equality, friendship and mutual help among all nationalities within the country and guarantee the right of all minority nationalities to autonomy.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China the system that oppressed nationalities has been abolished. A new relationship has been established among the nationalities within the country — one of equality, friendship and mutual help. Political, economic and cultural undertakings have begun to develop in minority-nationality areas, and the life of the people there is steadily improving. Our country has already become a great family of free and equal nationalities. The Draft Constitution incorporates experience in this field and makes provisions going beyond those of the Common Programme on national regional autonomy and on the political, economic and cultural development of the minority nationalities.

Our country is a people's democratic state led by the working class, and it is therefore able to apply the spirit of complete democracy and national equality to solving the nationalities question and effecting genuine co-operation among the nationalities within the country. We firmly believe that only by enabling the minority nationalities to take an active part in the political activities of the entire country, granting them, in accordance with the principle of national regional autonomy, the right to be their own masters and to administer their internal affairs, can the barriers and discrimination among the nationalities, inherited from the past, be broken down and ties of mutual trust and unity be progressively strengthened.

The Draft Constitution clearly states that irrespective of nationality or race all citizens of our country enjoy equal rights. It also declares it illegal in our country to discriminate against or oppress any nationality. It affirms that all the nationalities have freedom to use and develop their spoken and written languages and to preserve or reform their own customs or ways. The Draft Constitution thus legalizes the principles of people's democracy and socialism that our country has already applied to the nationalities question and specifies the concrete measures to be taken in accordance with them.

The Draft Constitution reflects the identity of interests among all nationalities in our country. For more than a hundred years these nationalities, both the Han and its fraternal nationalities, suffered oppression from foreign imperialism. The imperialists resorted to all sorts of intrigues to disrupt the ties formed over the long course of history among the nationalities of our country. They tried to carry out a "divide and rule" policy of aggression. The establishment of the People's Republic of China freed all the nationalities of China from imperialist oppression, but the imperialists are still vainly schem-

ing in every possible way to split the nationalities, so as once again to enslave them. In view of these imperialist plots of aggression, all nationalities in our country must heighten their vigilance and give the imperialists no opportunity to carry out their schemes. The nationalities must strengthen and consolidate the unification of the motherland and unite closely in a common effort to build a great motherland. The Draft Constitution declares the People's Republic of China to be a single multi-national state and all national autonomous areas to be inalienable parts of the People's Republic of China. Obviously, a provision of this kind is essential and fully corresponds to the common interests of all nationalities in our country.

Through its various provisions the Draft Constitution ensures all minority nationalities the genuine right to exercise autonomy in areas where they live together. The organs of self-government of national autonomous areas not only exercise the general functions and powers of ordinary local organs of state, but also administer their own local finances according to the Constitution and within the limits of the authority prescribed by law; they organize their local public security forces in accordance with the military system of the state and draw up regulations governing the exercise of autonomy and other special regulations to suit the political, economic and cultural characteristics of the nationality or nationalities in a given area. The form of each organ of self-government in each national autonomous area may be determined in accordance with the wishes of the majority of the people of the nationality or nationalities enjoying regional autonomy in that area. In performing their duties, organs of self-government shall employ the spoken and written language or languages commonly used by the nationality or nationalities in the given area. In an area the size of a township where minority nationalities live together, although it is impossible and unnecessary to establish an organ of self-government to exercise all the aforementioned autonomous rights, a nationality township should be set up to meet the special needs of the nationality or nationalities living there.

It must be pointed out that chauvinism and local nationalism are both wrong. Both ways of thinking are harmful to the unity of the nationalities of our country and to the practice of national regional autonomy. From the Preamble of the Draft Constitution it is clear that not only imperialism and public enemies among the nationalities but also chauvinism and local nationalism must be opposed if the unity of the nationalities is to be further strengthened.

The Han nationality makes up the overwhelming majority of the population of our country. For historical reasons the Han nationality is better developed in the political, economic and cultural fields than the others, but this by no means entitles it to any special privilege or to putting on airs towards its brother nationalities. On the contrary, it has a special obligation to help all of them in their development. Although all the minority nationalities have won their right to national equality, they cannot immediately overcome their original economic and cultural backwardness simply by their own strength and in their present circumstances. It is, therefore, very important for the Han nationality to help them. The Han people must give their sincere and devoted assistance in economic and cultural fields to their brother nationalities. In particular, the Han cadres sent to work in the minority-nationality areas must devote every thought to development of the local economy and culture and the raising of local people's living standards. They must wholeheartedly serve the minority nationalities, help consolidate their internal unity and patiently help increase the ability of the cadres of the nationalities in these areas, so that they themselves can assume leadership in all work in the areas. Influenced by the reactionary ruling class of the past, some people, even cadres, of the Han nationality still have vestiges of Han chauvinism in their thinking — showing no respect for the customs or ways of the minority nationalities and their spoken and written languages; refusing to acknowledge their freedom of religious belief and right to administer their internal affairs; even though working in their areas, showing no respect for cadres from among the minority nationalities, neglecting to consult them about work, disbelieving that, through practical work, they will be able to improve their ability to handle various matters; and so on. There is no doubt that these Han chauvinistic views and deeds will jeopardize the unity of the nationalities. This is impermissible under our state system. The people and cadres of the Han nationality must constantly try to overcome Han chauvinism. On the other hand, among the minority nationalities there is a kind of local nationalistic outlook. Like Han chauvinism, it is another relic of the past, harmful to unity among the nationalities and totally destructive of the interests of the nationality itself. Therefore it must also be overcome.

The building of a socialist society is the common objective of all nationalities within our country. Only socialism can guarantee to each and every nationality a high degree of economic and cultural

development. Our state has the duty to help all nationalities in China take this path to happiness.

Each nationality, however, has a different historical background. It certainly cannot be assumed that all the nationalities within the country can arrive at socialism at the same time and by the same means. The Preamble to the Draft Constitution says: "In the course of economic and cultural development the state will concern itself with the needs of the different nationalities and, in the matter of socialist transformation, pay full attention to the special characteristics in the development of each." This means that when and how the socialist transformation will be carried out will be determined in the light of the different stages of development of the nationalities concerned. In all these matters the people of the various nationalities and their leaders who are in close contact with them must be permitted to take the time to think matters over and make their decisions as they see fit.

Socialist transformation among certain minority nationalities will begin later and may take more time than in areas where Han people live. By the time socialist transformation is under way among these minority nationalities, the work of building socialism will probably have achieved great success in most parts of the country. By then conditions for socialist transformation among these nationalities will be more favourable, because the state will have greater material strength to help them. The people of the minority nationalities will also be willing to take this path once they have seen the benefits brought about by the successes of socialism in most parts of the country. Even if a small number of people worry lest socialist transformation jeopardize their personal interests, the state will adopt the necessary policy to assure their livelihood. Thus socialist transformation may take a longer, gentler, more gradual course in areas inhabited by minority nationalities. In areas where democratic reforms have not yet been completed, moderate measures can be taken, so that these areas advance gradually towards socialism. Everyone in our country and among the minority nationalities who supports the people's democratic system and rallies in the big family of the motherland has his own bright future and prospects in the socialist society. That is certain.

The above is an elaboration of the basic content of the Draft Constitution.

Conclusion

Fellow Deputies!

It has been demonstrated during the nationwide discussions that our Draft Constitution represents the interests of all nationalities in China and is based on facts. When the people were discussing the Draft Constitution, they expressed opinions such as the following: "The Draft Constitution has recorded what all the Chinese people have done under the guidance of the Chinese Communist Party and Chairman Mao Zedong; it has also set down what has been started and what should and can be done in the future." "How we should move on to socialism is clearly shown in the articles of the Draft Constitution." "The Draft Constitution means greater political, economic and cultural development for the minority nationalities." The masses think that the Constitution we have drafted is "a guarantee for a happy life" and that "every article of it is in the interest of the people". That is the conclusion the people have drawn from the Draft Constitution, and it is obviously a correct one.

Our Draft Constitution, after its adoption by the National People's Congress, will become our country's fundamental state law. This Constitution expresses the experience and long-cherished hopes of the people. It will, therefore, certainly play a tremendous, dynamic role in the life of our state and inspire the people in their struggle to defend and increase the fruits of victories, crush all enemies who should try to wreck our social and state system, promote the sound and stable development of our construction work and accelerate the building of our country.

Every person and every organ of state, without exception, must observe the Constitution. Deputies to the National People's Congress and the local people's congresses and all state functionaries are servants of the people. All organs of state are at the service of the people. They have, therefore, a special responsibility to observe the Constitution and ensure its observance.

The Chinese Communist Party is the core of the leadership of our country. The position the Party occupies can never entitle Party members to enjoy any privileges in the life of the state, but only to undertake heavier responsibilities. Communist Party members must be exemplary in observing the Constitution and all other laws. All of them should maintain close ties with the masses and unite with all

democratic parties and people outside the Party to implement the Constitution.

The promulgation of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China will bring elation and inspiration not only to the people throughout the country, but also to our friends in all other countries of the world. People's China has many friends in the world. The great Soviet Union and the people's democracies are our close friends. The peace-loving people of all lands are our friends, too. The support they have given to our cause is one of the prime factors for our victory. That is why they rejoiced at our victory. The victory in the Chinese revolution is of worldwide historic significance. The victory in socialist construction and socialist transformation in China will also be of worldwide historic significance. Our Constitution has already laid down China's fundamental policy in international affairs, which is to work for the noble cause of world peace and the progress of humanity. All the achievements that have been or will be made by our country contribute to the common cause of all peoples of the world, the cause of peace and progress. To fight for lasting world peace is indispensable if China is to carry out socialist construction.

The promulgation of our country's Constitution is a result of the great victory that crowned the long, common struggle waged by all nationalities in China, but this is not to say that once the Constitution is introduced, all its articles will automatically go into effect. No. The Constitution is, on the one hand, the epitome of our past struggle and, on the other, a fundamental law on which to proceed with our present struggle. It specifies what is legal or legally obligatory and what is illegal and prohibited as regards the most important aspects of the life of our state. After the promulgation of the Constitution things that contravene the provisions of the Constitution will not disappear of themselves, but the Constitution provides us a powerful weapon and enables us to wage an effective struggle to wipe them out. The Constitution decrees that China be transformed into a socialist society. This of course does not mean that a socialist society will come ready-made or that we can wait for it with folded arms. A long road still stretches before us, one that is inevitably beset with difficulties and full of twists and turns. Surely it will not be all easy-going. The significance of the Constitution is great, and greater still is the task it entrusts to us. Only by arduous struggle, hard work and persistent and conscientious study to overcome the various kinds of difficulties in our path shall we be able to reach our goal.

Therefore, we must not, even in the smallest degree, be conceited and complacent over such achievements as we have already scored. Conceit and complacency do nothing but harm to any individual, class, political party or nation. While extolling the enactment and promulgation of our Constitution, people of all nationalities in our country must strengthen their unity, be modest and conscientious, guard against arrogance and impatience and, taking the path mapped out by the Constitution and led by the Chinese Communist Party, make further efforts to ensure the fullest implementation of the Constitution and the building of our country into a great socialist land.