

**Document 13.1: Excerpts from The Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, September 1949**

*The Common Program was adopted by the First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's PCC on September 29, 1949 in Beijing. The document heralded the beginning of a new era in Chinese history. It served as a provisional constitution for the new People's Republic of China, and it articulated the Communist Party's vision for China's political, economic, and social future.*

**PREAMBLE**

The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, representing the will of the people of the whole country, proclaims the establishment of the People's Republic of China and is organizing the people's own central government. The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference unanimously agrees that New Democracy, or the People's Democracy, shall be the political foundation for the national construction of the People's Republic of China. It has also adopted the following Common Program, which should be jointly observed by all units participating in the Conference, by the people's government of all levels, and by the people of the whole country.

*Article 1.* The People's Republic of China is a New Democratic or a People's Democratic state. It carries out the people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class, based on the alliance of workers and peasants, and uniting all democratic classes and all nationalities in China. It opposes imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism and strives for independence, democracy, peace, unity, prosperity and strength of China.

*Article 2.* The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China must undertake to wage the people's war of liberation to the very end, to liberate all the territory of China, and to achieve the unification of China.

*Article 3.* The People's Republic of China must abolish all the prerogatives of imperialist countries in China. It must confiscate bureaucratic capital and put it into the possession of

the people's state. It must systematically transform the feudal and semi-feudal land ownership system into a system of peasant land ownership; it must protect the public property of the state and of the cooperatives and must protect the economic interests and private property of workers, peasants, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie. It must develop the people's economy of New Democracy and steadily transform the country from an agricultural into an industrial one.

*Article 4.* The people of the People's Republic of China shall have the right to elect and to be elected according to law.

*Article 5.* The people of the People's Republic of China shall have freedom of thought, speech, publication, assembly, association, correspondence, person, domicile, change of domicile, religious belief and the freedom of holding processions and demonstrations.

*Article 6.* The People's Republic of China shall abolish the feudal system which holds women in bondage. Women shall enjoy equal rights with men in political, economic, cultural, educational and social life. Freedom of marriage for men and women shall be put into effect.

*Article 7.* The People's Republic of China shall suppress all counter-revolutionary, activities, severely punish all Kuomintang counter-revolutionary war criminals and other leading incorrigible counter-revolutionary elements who collaborate with imperialism, commit treason against the fatherland and oppose the cause of people's democracy. Feudal landlords, bureaucratic capitalists and reactionary elements in general, after they have been disarmed and have had their special powers abolished, shall, in addition, be deprived of their political rights in accordance with law for a necessary period. But, at the same time, they shall be given some means of livelihood and shall be compelled to reform themselves through labor so as to become new men. If they continue their counter-revolutionary activities, they will be severely punished.

*Article 8.* It is the duty of every national of the People's Republic of China to defend the fatherland, to abide by the law, to observe labor discipline, to protect public property, to

perform public and military service, and to pay taxes.

*Article 9.* All nationalities in the People's Republic of China shall have equal rights and duties.

*Article 10.* The armed forces of the People's Republic of China, namely, the People's Liberation Army, the people's public security forces and the people's police belong to the people. It is the task of these armed forces to defend the independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty of China, and to defend the revolutionary gains and all legitimate rights and interests of the Chinese people. The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China shall endeavor to consolidate and strengthen the people's armed forces, so as to enable them to accomplish their tasks effectively.

*Article 11.* The People's Republic of China shall unite with all peace-loving and freedom-loving countries and peoples throughout the world, first of all, with the USSR, all Peoples' Democracies and all oppressed nations. It shall take its stand in the camp of international peace and democracy, to oppose imperialist aggression to defend lasting world peace....

*Article 29.* Co-operative economy is of a semi-Socialist nature and is an important component of the people's economy as a whole. The People's Government shall foster its development and accord it preferential treatment....

*Article 38.* Co-operatives: The broad masses of working people shall be encouraged and assisted to develop co-operatives according to the principle of willingness. Supply and marketing co-operatives, as well as consumers', credit, producers', and transport co-operatives shall be organized in towns and villages. Consumers' co-operatives shall first be organized in factories, institutions and schools....

*Article 41.* The culture and education of the People's Republic of China shall be New Democratic-national, scientific and popular. The main tasks of the People's Government in cultural and educational work shall be the raising of the cultural level of the people, the training of personnel for national construction work, the eradicating of feudal,

*compradore*<sup>1</sup> and fascist ideology and the developing of the ideology of service to the people....

*Article 49.* Freedom of reporting truthful news shall be safeguarded. The utilization of the press for slander, for undermining the interests of the state and the people and for provoking world war shall be prohibited. The people's radio and publication work shall be developed. Attention shall be paid to publishing popular books and journals beneficial to the people.

*Article 50.* All nationalities within the boundaries of the People's Republic of China are equal. They shall establish unity and mutual aid among themselves, and shall oppose imperialism and their own public enemies, so that the People's Republic of China will become a big fraternal and co-operative family composed of all its nationalities. Greater Nationalism and chauvinism shall be opposed. Acts involving discrimination, oppression and splitting of the unity of the various nationalities shall be prohibited.

*Article 54.* The principle of the foreign policy of the People's Republic of China is protection of the independence, freedom, integrity of territory and sovereignty of the country, upholding of lasting international peace and friendly co-operation between the peoples of all countries, and opposition to the imperialist policy of aggression and war....

Source: *The Important Documents of the First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference*. Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1949.

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<sup>1</sup> *Compradore* is the Portuguese word for a Chinese agent of a foreign business in China.