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Institute of Current World Affairs
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New York 18, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Rogers:

The group designated by the Chinese Communists to form a central government in the territory under their control is called the New Political Consultative Conference (PCC), a title borrowed from a meeting held almost four years ago. Preparations are now being made for this conference in secret, high-level discussions in Peiping, provisional capital of the Communist regime.

The first PCC was held in January, 1946. The conference was attended by Kuomintang, Democratic League, Communist, and Youth Party delegates and by men representing non-party elements. The job of these men was a tremendous one: to formulate a program of reform and compromise which would prevent civil war and make possible peaceful cooperation among the major parties in China. Both major parties in the internal struggle for power in China were represented, as were middle-of-road groups. The delegates drew up a comprehensive program for constitutional, agrarian, educational and industrial reform which was hailed at the time as an accomplishment of great significance for China. But the conference failed. By the Summer of 1946 intense fighting had once again broken out between the Kuomintang and the Communists, and the military struggle for power was on. For over three years fighting has continued without interruption, and in that time the internal distribution of power in China has been completely reversed. In 1946 the Kuomintang had a predominance of power; in 1949 the Communists have become the strongest military force in China and are winning the civil war.

On May 1 of last year Mao Tse-tung, Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party, issued a call for a New PCC. A number of small Chinese groups in political exile on the island of Hongkong immediately responded with a joint "count me in" telegram. Shortly thereafter, in the Fall, representatives of these groups began a clandestine migration northward to Manchuria, at that time the most accessible area under Communist control. Informal discussions began soon thereafter between these people and the Communists. Meetings were held in Harbin, later in Mukden, and finally in Shihchiachuang at the beginning of this year. On February 25 the most prominent of these "third party" and "non-party" leaders (all of whom are now generally labelled "democratic personages" in the Communist press)

arrived in Peiping, preceding the top Communist leaders by exactly a month. By the end of March the main actors promised roles in the New PCC were on stage. In April peace negotiations took place between the Communists and delegates sent by the National Government. When these broke down and the Communists' Revolutionary Military Committee gave a general order to all Communist armies to continue their advance on April 21, it became only a matter of time before the Communists would convene their PCC and set up a government of their own. Preparations for this move are now in progress.

The basis for the Communist-sponsored New PCC, which is expected to convene in Peiping in the near future, is different in one fundamental respect from the 1946 meeting which had the same name. The 1946 PCC was an attempt to achieve a peaceful solution of the differences between the two major political groups in China. The New PCC is a conference called by the group which is winning militarily to get the cooperation of all political groups sympathetic to its side, as well as persons who have deserted the losing side, to set up a new government which will continue efforts to resolve the basic struggle for power in China by military means.

Preparations for the New PCC have gone on behind closed doors. The literate public in Communist territory has read several official statements that a PCC would be held, but until June 20 of this year no one except the Communist leaders and the small group of political allies working with them knew who would take part in the PCC or what sort of meeting it would be.

On June 20 the Communist press broke the news that a Preparatory Committee for the PCC had already been formed and that it had completed an initial five-day session, which began on June 15, to make ready for the convoking of the PCC. The public had no earlier knowledge of this meeting and did not even know who had participated in it until it was all over.

The members of the PCC Preparatory Committee were chosen by the Communist Party or by groups and organizations which the Communists asked to participate. The membership might be roughly divided as follows into general groupings. 14 members are high-ranking Communist leaders representing the party and army. 30 are representatives of labor, farmers', youth, women's and student groups organized and led by the Communists. These groups are highly centralized in organization and the leaders in most cases are members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Many of their delegates are members of the Communist Party. 46 are representatives of political parties and groups which have recently returned to China from exile in Hongkong. (I described these groups in a previous letter to you but will repeat a few generalizations about them.) None of them are parties in the real sense of the word. Their membership in most cases is small, and

they are more in the tradition of Chinese political cliques than real parties. A very small number of their members have at one time been members, and may still be, of the Communist party, but they are a minority. By far the majority of them can be called Kuomintang dissidents; that is they are people who at one time belonged to the Kuomintang but broke away from it because of political differences, persecution or personal rivalries. Many of these people have undergone real persecution at the hands of the Kuomintang, and they have been united in their hatred of Chiang. All of them call themselves liberals and democrats, but the political programs of the groups have been vague and apparently of secondary importance. They have all gradually drifted to the Left, and during recent months they have echoed the statements made by Communist leaders. Although they have formed a number of separate organizations, they really fall into one, or at most two, groups, and their connections are intimate. The way in which the past histories of many of these men are intertwined would sound like the plot of a complicated historical novel if fully described. 31 members of the Preparatory Committee come from miscellaneous cultural, educational and industrial groups who have had a reputation for being liberal. Many of them have had close personal connections with the political groups which are now participating in the committee. 13 members are representatives of overseas Chinese and racial minorities who have been chosen by the Communists because of their willingness to cooperate. At least one prominent minority representative is a high-ranking Communist Party member.

There are only seven members of the Preparatory Committee who are listed as delegates of the Communist Party. (Communist army representatives are listed separately, even though they all are high-ranking party members.) This is misleading to say the least. The first thing to observe about the men and women not listed as Communists is that they all are people who have accepted the program of the Communist Party in China and have publicly pledged to follow its leadership. There are really no conflicting political programs or principles represented, therefore; everyone agrees on basic principles. Naturally there are some differences of opinion. Industrialists, for example, may have views which differ considerably from the farmers' representatives, or even the Communists themselves, on how the general program of the Communists should be carried out, but all of these people have publicly accepted the Communists' program in principle.

Non-Communist members far outnumber Communist members on the Preparatory Committee of the New PCC, and in a theoretical sense they could outvote the Communists. In actual fact, however, they can all be expected to follow Communist suggestions. The non-Communists make no claims to leadership; they are willing followers. Not only is there no inclination to express disagreement on important questions,

but the political future of the non-Communists depends on their willingness to cooperate, because none of the non-Communist groups possess real power. This does not mean that these people will not express ideas or make a minor contribution, however, but it will be within the limitations of the general framework determined by the Communists. Some of the routine preparatory work for the PCC has been placed on the shoulders of the non-Communist members of the Preparatory Committee, and these people are now holding many discussions and meetings.

Apart from providing window-dressing for the Communists' "coalition," the main role which the minor parties have played since preparatory work for the PCC began has been that of sounding out for the Communists the attitudes of key groups, such as industrialists and intellectuals, and attempting to get their cooperation under the new regime. One party, for example, recently held a series of small conferences with Chinese industrialists in Communist territory and passed on their "suggestions" to the Communists -- who can carry them out or ignore them as they please. Even this role has been behind the scenes, however, and all the meetings held in connection with the PCC to-date have been secret. The subservience of the non-Communists to the Communists has been indicated, furthermore, by the fact that in the past six months not a single public statement of independent policy or criticism -- even friendly criticism on details of Communist policy -- has been issued by any minor party. The "coalition" now preparing to establish the Communists' central government is purely a formal one, therefore. It is a coalition of people who agree, rather than of people who disagree, in their political viewpoints.

The general public has been excluded completely from the preparations for a new government. Only persons unfamiliar with the political situation in China would expect direct participation by the public-at-large, but there has been no attempt even to keep the average citizen informed of developments. As a matter of fact, the preparatory work for the New PCC has been surrounded by a greater degree of secrecy than comparable political developments in Kuomintang China.

The membership of the New PCC was announced by the Preparatory Committee at the close of its initial sessions in June. The total number of delegates will be 510, and they will represent 14 parties, 9 regions, 6 army units, and 16 organizations of workers, farmers, industrialists, scientific and cultural workers, youth, women, racial minorities, religious circles, and overseas Chinese. The assignment of delegates is as follows: Communist Party 16, Revolutionary Committee of the Kuomintang 16, Democratic League 16, Democratic National Reconstruction Association 12, Chinese democratic non-partisans 10, Chinese Democratic Promotion Society 8, Peasants' and Workers' Democratic Party 10, National Salvation Society 10,

San Min Chu I Comrades Association 10, Kuomintang Democratic Promotion Society 8, Chih Kung Tang 6, Chiu San Society 5, Taiwan People's Democratic Self-Governing League 5, New Democratic Youth Corps 10, Northwest Liberated Area 15, North China Liberated Area 15, East China Liberated Area 15, Northeast Liberated Area 15, Central China Liberated Area 15, South China Liberated Area 8, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region 6, Special Municipalities of Peiping and Tientsin 6, democratic elements from areas to be liberated 7, Headquarters of the People's Liberation Army 12, First Field Army 10, Second Field Army 10, Third Field Army 10, Fourth Field Army 10, South China People's Liberation Army 8, All-China Federation of Labor 16, Liberated Areas farmers' organizations 16, All-China Democratic Women's Federation 15, All-China Democratic Youth Federation 12, All-China Students' Federation 9, industrial and commercial circles throughout China 15, Shanghai People's Organizations 9, All-China Association of Literary and Art Workers 15, the preparatory Committee of the All-China Conference on Science 15, educational circles throughout China 15, social science workers throughout China 15, the Preparatory Committee of the All-China Association of Journalists, 12, professional people 10, racial minorities 10, overseas Chinese 15, religious circles 7. Of the total membership, therefore, 142 will be from political parties and groups, 102 from geographical regions, 60 from the army, and 206 from occupational groups and organizations of various sorts,

In the vernacular of American politics the New PCC, when it meets, will undoubtedly be a "rubber-stamp" conference, and the major decisions will probably have been made by top Communist leaders, in consultation with their non-Communist allies, before the plenary sessions of the PCC begin. The importance of the conference will be primarily symbolic. Not only will it mark the formal coming of age of the Communist regime; it will also symbolize the fact that the Communists do have the approval of some non-Communist groups and feel the need of publicly exhibiting their support.

Sincerely yours,

A. Doak Barnett

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