

PEOPLE'S POLITICAL COUNCIL

中 華 人 民 政 治 參 政 會

非常時期的國民參政會

國民參政會副秘書長 雷震

(附英譯文)

資源委員會通用機器有限公司籌備處



國際出版社印行



A541 212 0013 40498

售實册每
元〇〇二幣法

會政參民國

年五十三國民
版初月四

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『此類出版物將世
界大事提供於聯合
國人民之前，將使
聯合國間得有更大
之了解。』

—英駐滬總領
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『此項關於……文
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處極爲有用。』

—美國駐華大使館
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非常時期的國民參政會

雷震

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國民參政會的創立，係根據民國二十七年三月中國國民黨臨時全國代表大會決議：「在非常時期應設一國民參政會，其職權及組織方法，交中央執行委員會詳細討論，妥定法規」。又同次會議制定「抗戰建國綱領」，其第十二條規定，「組織國民參政機關，團結全國力量，集中全國之思慮及識見，以利國策之決定與實行。」同年四月中國國民黨中央執行委員會第四屆第五次全體會議遵照上述決議和規定，通過國民參政會組織條例及各省市應出參政員名額表，經奉總裁核定由國民政府於四月十二日明令公佈，組織條例公佈後，乃着手於參政員之推薦與遴選及其他各種籌備工作，七月六日國民參政會第一屆第一次大會乃開會於漢口。該會自成立以來現已七年有半。觀其組織的演進，和職權的擴大，國民參政會的民主色彩日漸濃厚。其詳細情形，在三十四年七月八日中央日報，曾有夏君道平專文介紹，本文僅將該會歷屆大會的時代背景及其重要貢獻，分述於后，以為廣大收復區關心戰時民意機構者告，國民參政會自二十七年成立以來，截至卅四年底止，已先後召開大會十一次（第一屆五次第二屆二次第三屆三次第四屆一次）在每次大會中，建議案和詢問案每達二三百件。這些建議案及詢問案，無不啓發政府的視聽而裨益於施政的興革。此地限於篇幅，不擬詳舉，惟須述及者，即在八年艱苦抗戰的過程中，國內環境時有變遷，國民參政會每次大會均能適應時代要求，作種種有利於抗戰建國的表示和努力，茲就其最關重要者列舉如下。第一屆第一次大會召開時，適值抗戰第一週年。當時徐州已陷，武漢吃緊，軍事形勢艱苦非常。雖最後勝利必屬於我，但勝利之到來，必須在持久戰與全面戰的決策下，渡過一段較悠久而更艱苦的行程，為遂行此項決策，勢非統一全國意志；集中全國力量，不足以濟時艱。而當時國

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民大會雖已在籌備中，然代表選舉格於情勢，勢難完全竣事。於是國民參政會乃依據上述各項決議和規定，誕生於此非常時期。參政會第一屆第一次大會一經召開，全國團結精神即爲之具體表現，而最關重要者，爲該次大會一致通過「擁護抗戰建國綱領」案。

至此，抗戰建國綱領不僅爲政府所遵循的主臬，亦爲全國人民不分黨派，不分職業，共同努力的目標。此後在八年艱苦的抗戰過程中，我國得以不屈不撓的精神，歷克艱險，卒獲勝利者，國民參政會之體認時代要求，擁護抗戰建國綱領，當爲其重要因素之一。

第二次大會於二十七年十月二十八日召開於重慶，當時廣州武漢已相繼陷落，抗戰形勢轉入更嚴重階段，而敵人正大放議和空氣以動搖我國人心，同時汪逆精衛，已萌異志，蔣委員長有鑒於此，乃於國民參政會第二次大會開會之日，發表持久抗戰宣言，以正視聽。此項宣言，經這次大會一致決議予以擁護，再度發揚全國一致的民族精神，此與上次大會之擁護抗戰建國綱領有同等意義。

民國二十七年底，敵相近衛發表誘和聲明，不久汪逆精衛祕密出走，發表豔電，當時爲敵人政治攻勢達於最高潮的時期，國民參政會第三次大會適於二十八年二月十六日召開，爲表示全民的決意，粉碎敵人陰謀起見，又通過「擁護蔣委員長上年十月二十六日駁斥近衛聲明的宣言」案，至此敵人的政治陰謀，已遭受最後有力的打擊，嗣後即無所謂和戰問題發生，而全國軍民亦只集中全力爭取最後勝利，至敵人投降而後已。在這次大會中，尙有一項重要決議，即組織川康建設期成會，此案通過後，期成會立即成立，其任務爲督促政府推進川康建設以增強抗建力量，經常工作爲設計，建議，視察與考核，該會除在川康各地分設六個辦事處，辦理經常工作以外，曾組織川康視察團分赴川康各地視察實況。期成會根據視察報告，擬具川康建設方案經參政會第一屆第四次大會通過，咨送政府分別實施，其內容計分：（一）行政組織（二）兵役（三）財政民主（四）治安（五）經濟建設（六）禁煙（七）教育（八

(夷務(九)邊疆司法九部份，爲此後川康建設之準則，亦即抗戰時期鞏固後方抗戰基礎之重要方案。第四次及第五次大會於二十八年九月九日及二十九年四月一日先後召開。這個時期國內外情勢已有很大變化。就國際方面說，歐戰已於二十八年九月發生，美國對於我國及歐洲反侵略國家之援助，日趨積極。國內方面，軍事形勢較爲穩定；但汪逆精衛之叛跡則已由言論進於行動，此時國人均深信歐亞兩個戰爭，將會形成侵略與反侵略二大陣線而演成一個戰爭。而此次戰爭決非短期內所可結束。因此國民參政會在此兩次大會中，除注意加強軍事力量，并聲討僞組織以外，特重視長期抗戰中政治和經濟的建設工作。上述川康建設方案，即於第四次大會決議通過，同時并決議組織憲政期成委員會，以便協助政府促成憲政之早日實施。該委員會成立後，即從事搜集關於憲法草案之各項資料，并徵詢各方意見彙合研究，在參政會第五次大會開會時，該委員會提出「中華民國憲法草案(五五憲草)修正案」。當經大會通過咨送政府。此案自爲我國憲政史上重要文獻之一。第二屆第一次大會於卅年三月一日召開。在此次大會中，國民參政會內部發生一件不幸事件，即共產黨籍參政員因「新四軍」事件，向參政會先後提出「善後辦法」及「臨時解決辦法」各十二條，并聲明在政府未採納此項條件以前，渠等礙難出席，而政府方面以「新四軍」事件屬於軍令軍紀問題，共黨參政員向參政會所提兩項條件，政府未便考慮。國民參政會對此事件爲表明立場起見，於閱悉有關文件并聽取各方報告以後，曾於大會中一致決議通過議案二項如下：

一……本會爲國民參政機關，於理於法，自不能對任何參政員接受任何出席條件，或要求政府接受其條件以爲本會造成不良之先例。

二……本會仍切盼共產黨參政員，深體本會團結全國抗戰之使命，并堅守共產黨民國二十六年九月擁護統一之宣言，出席本會，俾一切政治問題悉循正常途轍獲得完善之解決。

但是共產黨參政員終未出席這次大會，從一方面說，此事誠爲國民參政會本身之不幸，然從另一方面看，因有上述兩項決議，參政會不僅嚴正地維護了自身之立場，且已表現了全民的公意。

第二次大會于卅年十一月十七日召開，當時日本特使來滬正在華盛頓進行美日談判，此事爲我國當時特別注意的中心問題，亦世界各國所關懷的事件，國民參政會乃于此次大會通過「重申我國抗戰目的與決心收復東北四省」一案，以爲蔣委員長是年九一八宣言的後盾，此案之重要性特大，因爲在當時美日談判中，美國政府會考慮對日採取某種綏靖政策，嗣鑒于我國之堅決反對，乃放棄此種綏靖計劃，于本月廿六日對日提出強硬覆文，珍珠港事件，旋即因之爆發，太平洋戰爭乃起（參考卅四年十一月廿六日重慶大公報「美日戰前交涉經過」，該報特派員廿四日紐約電訊。）

民國卅一年十月廿二日國民參政會第三屆第一次大會召開的時候，中日之戰早已構成世界大戰之一部分，反侵略國家日益增多，力量日益增強，而我國國際聲望與地位，亦日益增高，英美已于本年雙十節宣佈放棄在華特權，平等新約之締結，正商洽中，但在另一方面，國內經濟問題，則日趨嚴重，參政會在此次大會中，鑒于當前情勢，會有二項重要決議：一爲組織訪英國赴英報聘（民國三十年秋英國國會組織議員訪華團來華訪問），一爲組織經濟動員策進會，訪英國于三十二年冬組成赴英，在訪英期間與英國朝野人士普遍接談，思想與感情交流，更進一步地增進了兩國間彼此的認識和了解，爲中英盟誼深植根基，經濟動員策進會于卅一年十一月成立，卅二年底又擴充業務改組爲經濟建設策進會，該兩會除繼續川康建設期成會未完業務外，對於政府經濟法令的推行，經濟動員的協助，經濟建設的設計，均有重大貢獻；同時對於人民經濟生活，經常予以調查研究，如遇工商各界有特殊困難問題須政府爲之解決者，該會即與雙方商談，求得適當而合理的解決。

第二次大會召開于卅二年九月十八日，其時義大利已經投降，抗戰形勢，向最後勝利更接近一步，

爲迎接勝利的到來，充實反攻力量 and 積極進行建國工作，爲當前要圖，關於後者，此次大會亦有兩項重要決議：（一）即上段所述擴充經濟動員策進會業務，改組爲經濟建設策進會，其任務和貢獻，已略述如上，（二）組織憲政協進會，該會於卅二年十一月成立以來，除經常從事于憲草之研討與宣傳，促成各級民意機關之設置與充實，以及對於國民參政會職權之擴充屢提建議以外，卅三年七月一日政府所公佈之「改善出版品審查辦法及禁載標準」，和同月十八日所公佈之「保障人民身體自由辦法」，均爲該會所直接促成。

第三次大會於卅三年九月五日召開，當時世界戰局有很大的進展，太平洋盟國海軍已開始大規模的攻勢，塞班島和關島均已克復；歐洲方面已開闢第二戰場，法國正陷入東西夾攻之苦境。惟我國戰場，豫湘失利，此不僅相形減色，且爲實際之嚴重局面。同時因近年來經濟環境和人事關係，國民道德與國家官常，大有江河日下之勢，亦爲關心國事者所深憂，所以在這次大會中對於這兩個問題，提案特多，而質詢亦最熱烈。大會閉幕後，政府方面的若干重要措施。如改善官兵生活，改良稅制，調整人事和機構，整飭官常，嚴懲貪污等，固爲政府勵精圖治之夙願所表現，要亦此次大會的建議和質詢有以促成。

第四屆第一次大會召開的時候（卅四七月七日）德國又繼義大利而崩潰，盟國正移兵東向，傾注全力進攻日本，抗戰形勢，至此確已到了最後階段。湘衡大局誠如蔣主席在下次大會致詞中所云：「敵人所加於我們的危險，到今天已成過去，今後危險乃我們的本身不覺悟，不努力，不能共同一致以求進步」。故在此次大會中，儘管共黨參政員未出席，而大會對於和平統一的努力，於討論國民大會問題時已充分表現。先是，本年三月間蔣主席在憲政協進會大會中宣佈本年十一月十三日召開國民大會結束訓政，還政於民。五月間中國國民黨六全大會亦有是項決議。至於與召集國民大會有關的各項問題，則交由參政會這次大會商討。參政會對此問題，曾決議四項，當時重慶各大報紙曾予披露。在第四屆「國民大

會召集呈請政府從速採取可能作各種措施」下，分爲四點。就中第一點則爲：「繼續採取可能之政治步驟及協商精神，求取全國之統一團結。本會同人并盼中共代表方面亦深體統一團結之重要，使政府今後所採之政治步驟，復得其預期之效果」。此項決議之前半截，本爲政府之一貫精神；後半截爲全國人民之期望，茲再經參政會表達出來，應爲中共所重視。所不幸者，自敵國投降以來，和平統一以前，竟蒙上一層暗影。儘管如此，政府仍繼續採取政治步驟以求統一，與中共的商談，迄未中止；且本文脫稿時，政治協商會議，正在政府積極籌備中。

以上已將國民參政會組織的演進，職權的擴大和歷次大會的重要貢獻，略加敘述。此地筆者尙欲附贅數言者，即：國民參政會，就其組織的原始意義言，爲我國戰時的最高民意機關。這句話的漸義有二：第一，這個民意機關是屬於戰時的，因而在戰時軍事第一勝利第一的大前提下，國民參政會自當以「集思廣益，團結全國力量」爲基本任務，第二，這個組織只是個民意機關，不是憲政時期行使民權的機構，因而在法律上講，政府并不對之負政治責任。然而就其成立以來組織的演進，職權的逐漸擴大，以及實際運用的效果這三方面來看，今日的參政會已不只是一戰時的最高民意機關，而且是憲政的橋樑——民權或民主政治的開端。現在國民大會，已經政府于卅四年十一月十二日明令公布，定于卅五年五月五日召開，因此，非常時期的國民參政會至多尙可召開大會一次。在過去十一次大會中，參政會已適應了時代要求，完成時代使命，在未來的最後一次大會中，吾人尤深盼望對於我國今後建國工作，有更大的貢獻。林故主席在參政會第一屆第二次大會致詞中曾說過：「欲竟有終之美，宜完一簣之功」，筆者以此語爲國民參政會祝。



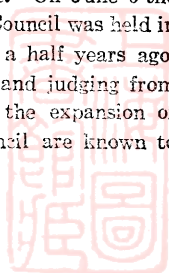
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THE PEOPLE'S POLITICAL COUNCIL

By Lei Chen

Deputy Secretary-General of the People's Political Council

The People's Political Council was first established in accordance with the decision passed by the Emergency National Congress of the Kuomintang in March 1938: "During the extraordinary period there shall be set up a People's Political Council, the functions and organization of which shall be discussed and fixed by the Central Executive Committee." The 12th Article of the "Plans for National Reconstruction through War of Resistance", stipulated by the same Congress, also reads, "There shall be organized a people's political organ for the consolidation of the national force of China and concentration of ideas and opinions of the whole nation with a view to facilitating the adoption and implementation of the national policy." According to the above-mentioned decision and stipulation reached at the Congress, the organic regulations of the People's Political Council together with the number of the representatives from the different provinces and cities in China were finally passed by the fifth session of the 5th Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang in April of the same year. Subsequently they were endorsed by Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek in his capacity as the Party Leader (*Tsungtsai*) and published by the National Government on April 12. The work following the issuance of the regulations of the Council was the recommendation and selection of the representatives of the Council and other preparatory programs. On June 6 the first plenary session of the 1st People's Political Council was held in Hankow. Ever since the inauguration seven and a half years ago, the Council has been uninterruptedly functioning; and judging from the present improvement of its organization and the expansion of its functions, the democratic elements of the Council are known to be growing with the lapse of time.



Since the full details of the Council have been dwelt upon at length by Mr. Hsia Tao-ping in his article in the *Central Daily News* issued on July 8, 1945, this thesis will deal with the past backgrounds of the sessions of the Council along with their important contributions for the information of those in the wide areas recovered who are interested in the wartime popular political organ in China.

Since its inauguration in 1938 up to the end of 1945 the Council had held 11 sessions (five sessions in the first Council, two sessions in the second Council, three sessions in the third Council and one session in the fourth Council) during each of which over 200 proposals and queries were presented. These proposals and questionings enlightened the Government and contributed not a little to the improvement of the work of the Government. Owing to the limited space given to this review, I am not going to enumerate all the contributions made by the Council. What I want to point out here is that in the course of the eight years of the war of resistance each session of the Council did its best to meet the demand of the changing environments, both internal and external, thus benefiting the war of resistance in China. The most important ones are given as follows.

The first session of the first Council was summoned at the first anniversary of the Sino-Japanese Hostilities. At that time, with the fall of Hsuehchow and the danger threatening Hankow, the military situation of China was critical. Although it was the belief of the whole people that final victory would belong to us, all realized that the unification of the will and the concentration of the national force were necessary to bring about the victorious objective of the nation. The People's Political Council, however, was inaugurated in those extraordinary days. The full spirit of unification nevertheless was expressed with the convocation of the first session of the Council. Above all, the resolution to give full support to the "Plans for National Reconstruction through the War of Resistance" was unanimously carried out by this meeting.

By that time the "Plans for National Reconstruction through the War of Resistance" had become not only the guiding principle of

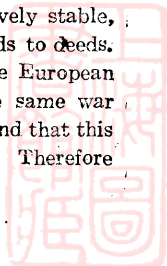
the Central Government but the final aim of the efforts of all the people of China, regardless of distinctions of creed and profession. That the People's Political Council has been able to adapt itself to the need of the age in supporting the "Plans for National Reconstruction through the War of Resistance" is considered one of the vital factors which contributed to the realization of the final victory of the eight-year resistance war of our country.

The second session of the Council took place in Chungking on October 28, 1938. The situation of the resistance war at that time entered upon a still more critical stage with the occupation of Canton and Hankow by the enemy in succession, and the enemy was then airing possibilities of peace negotiations with China in order to upset the determined will of our compatriots. In the meantime, seeing then the late Puppet Wang Ching-wei was already beginning to waver from the course, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek issued the manifesto of a prolonged resistance on the opening day of the second session of the Council with a view to setting right public opinion. Again the resolution to support this manifesto was unanimously passed at the meeting—a second effort made by the Council to uphold the uniformed national spirit in China during the war. This resolution had the same meaning as that passed at the previous session to give full support to the "Plans for National Reconstruction through the War of Resistance."

At the end of 1938, Prince Konoye, the enemy Premier, issued a statement to lure China into peace with Japan, very soon after which Puppet Wang Ching-wei made his furtive elopement and meanwhile despatched a responsive telegram to Japan. At this juncture the political offensive staged by Japan reached its climax. And the third session of the People's Political Council was held on February 16, 1939. With an eye to showing the determined will of the whole people and to smashing the conspiracy of the enemy, this meeting again passed the resolution to support Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's manifesto issued on October 26 of the previous year to refute Konoye's statement. Therefore the enemy's political intrigue got the last fatal blow after which, there was no longer the problem of peace and war and the thought

in the mind of the whole civilian and military population of China was to concentrate all efforts to struggle for eventual victory until the enemy's surrender. Another important resolution passed at this session was the establishment of the "Szechuen-Sikang Construction Committee" which was officially inaugurated right after the passage of this resolution and functions of which was to urge the Government to develop the construction work in Szechuen and Sikang in order to strengthen the power of resistance and construction. The routine work of the Committee was the making of projects and recommendations, inspection and rectification. In addition to the six regional offices at the different points of the two provinces to perform the ordinary functions, the Committee sent inspection corps to study the actual conditions in the various districts of the two provinces. The Committee, taking the reports made after these inspections as a basis worked out a construction program of the two provinces which was subsequently passed by the fourth session of the first Council and sent up to the Government for execution. The program consisted of nine items, namely, 1. administrative organization, 2. military service, 3. economic and financial democracy, 4. security and peace, 5. economic construction, 6. prohibition of opium, 7. education, 8. aboriginal affairs, and 9. frontier judiciary. They were looked upon as the guidance for the construction of the two provinces and as an important scheme to consolidate the foundations of the resistance war in the rear of the country.

The fourth and the fifth sessions were held on September 9, 1939 and April 1, 1940 respectively. By that time both the internal and the external situations had undergone great changes. Internationally the European war broke out in September 1939 and help given by the U.S. to China and other European anti-aggression countries was becoming more and more positive. Internally, though the military situation was comparatively stable, Puppet Wang Ching-wei's treason was going from words to deeds. However, it was the firm belief of our people then that the European war and the Asiatic war would develop into one and the same war between the anti-aggressive and the aggressive countries, and that this war could not be brought to an end within a short period. Therefore

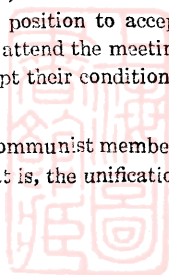


during these two sessions special emphasis was laid on the political and economic constructive work in the prolonged war of resistance; besides, attention was also paid to the strengthening of the military force and the attacking of the puppet organization. The above mentioned plans for the construction of Szechuen and Sikang were resolved at the fourth session. Meanwhile a resolution was also passed to set up a Committee for the Establishment of Constitutional Government, whose function was to help the Government hasten the enforcement of constitutionalism. Soon after its inauguration, the Association devoted itself at once to the collection of materials and references relating to the drafting of the constitution, and at the same time it also asked for opinions from all sources. At the fifth session of the Council the amendments for the draft of the Constitution of the Chinese Republic worked out by the Committee after a study of the findings were passed and presented to the Central Government. This constitutes one of the important documents in our constitutional history.

Then came the first session of the second Council on March 1, 1941. This session was confronted with an unfortunate affair. It happened that the Communist members of the Council following the "New Fourth Army Incident" presented in succession 12 articles of rehabilitation measures and another 12 articles of provisional measures. They threatened a walk-out in case of the Government's rejection of their points. But the Government, seeing that the "New Fourth Army Incident" was a military affair, was unable to take these points into consideration. To make clear its position, the People's Political Council, after taking note of various documents and listening to various reports, unanimously passed two resolutions as follows:—

1. Being a people's political organ, as far as law and reason is concerned, this Council is not in a position to accept conditions under which members are willing to attend the meeting or ask the Government on their behalf to accept their conditions, thus creating a bad precedent in the Council.

2. We earnestly hope that the Communist members will understand the mission of this organ, that is, the unification



of the whole nation for the war of resistance. We hope that they will fulfill the unification manifesto which the Communist Party issued in September 1937, and attend this Council so that all political problems will be solved through the proper channel.

But the Communist members did not attend this session. While this was an unfortunate affair, the People's Political Council, with the two resolutions mentioned above, not only strictly upheld its position but also expressed the idea of the whole people.

The second plenary session took place on November 17, 1941. The Japanese Special envoy Kurusu was then holding the American-Japanese negotiations in Washington, which was the focus of the attention of China and the great concern of the countries of the world. Hence a resolution was passed at this meeting to reiterate the object of the war of resistance and the firm determination to recover the four Northeastern Provinces (Manchuria) in support of Generalissimo Chiang's statement issued on September 1 the same year. This resolution is of special importance because it caused the U.S. Government to abandon a certain appeasement policy which had been taken into consideration by the U.S. Government in the course of the negotiations with Japan. Subsequently America sent Japan a stern reply on the 26th of the same month, and the Pearl Harbor Incident heralded the Pacific War.

When the first session of the third Council was held, the Sino-Japanese Hostilities had already developed into a part of the Second World War with the increased number of the anti-aggressive countries and the increase of their strength. Our international prestige as well as our world status were daily growing. American and Britain announced the abandonment of their special privileges in China in that year, and the signing of new treaties of equality was under discussion. But on the other hand the home economic problems were becoming more and more critical. Seeing this, the Council adopted two decisions; the first was the organization of a good-will mission to Great Britain (in the autumn of 1941 members of the British

Parliament had formed a good-will mission to China), and the second was the formation of a Committee for the Promotion of Economic Mobilization to assist the Government in its economic control policy. The good-will mission visited England in the winter of the 1943 and mutual recognition and understanding of these two countries were achieved by its wide contact with the British people during its stay in England. The Economic Mobilization, Promotion Committee was officially inaugurated in November, 1942. and at the end of 1943, with the expansion of its functions it was reorganized into the Committee for the Promotion of Economic Reconstruction. These two Committees, besides continuing the work left by the "Szechuen-Sikang Construction Committee," contributed a great deal to the enforcement of the Government's economic decisions, the economic mobilization, and to the planning of economic reconstruction. At the same time it conducted a frequent study and investigation into the daily life and economic conditions of an industrial or business body needing the Government's aid to solve some difficult problems, this Committee would negotiate on behalf of the former with the latter for an appropriate and reasonable outcome.

The second session of the third Council was held on September 18, 1943. At that time, with the surrender of Italy, the war of resistance was one step nearer final victory. It was considered then that the preparation for the counter-offensive and the campaign for national reconstruction were quite urgent in order to usher in the eventual victory. With regard to the campaign for national reconstruction, two important resolutions were carried at this meeting. The first was the reorganization and expansion of the Committee for the Promotion of Economic Mobilization into the Committee for the Promotion of Economic Reconstruction, whose functions have been dealt with in this article. The second was the organization of the Committee for the establishment of Constitutional Government. Since its inauguration in November 1943, aside from engaging in the study of and publicity to the draft of the Constitution, in giving aid to the establishment of various organs for the expression of the public will, and in making proposals for the expansion of the

functions of the People's Political Council, the Committee directly contributed to the birth of two Government orders. The first, issued on July 1, 1943, was the order to improve the regulations governing publications and the standard of censorship. The second, issued on the 18th of the same month, was the measures for the protection of the freedom of person.

The third session was held on September 5, 1944. The world war then advanced greatly in favor of our Allies with the recovery of Saipan Island and Guam, and the establishment of the second front in Europe, which threw France into the predicament of being attacked from both the east and the west. But the situation was reverse on our fronts with setbacks suffered in Honan and Huan provinces, which besides placing us in an unfavorable light especially in view of the successes achieved by our Allies, constituted in themselves a grave crisis. Meanwhile as a result of deteriorating economic conditions and imperfect choice of official personnel, public morale and the discipline of official personnel were going from bad to worse, which was regarded with deep concern by those who had at heart the future of the country. Consequently, motions and queries on these two questions were most numerous and exciting in this session. After the adjournment of the session, the government took measures to better the living conditions of soldiers, to improve upon the system of taxation, to adjust official personnel and organs, to strengthen discipline, to punish avariciousness on the part of officials, etc., which, though an expression of the government's desire to do its utmost to introduce better rule, were nevertheless promoted by the motions and queries in this session.

When the fourth session was called (July 7, 1945) Germany collapsed, preceded by Italy. Our Allies were then directing their forces eastward to concentrate upon the attack on Japan and this brought our war of resistance to its last stage. Looking at the situation it was, indeed, as Generalissimo Chiang said: "The dangers impose upon us by the enemy are now past. The danger confronting us from now on will be that we ourselves remain awakened to past mistakes, that we continue to be slothful and that we cannot

work shoulder to shoulder for progress." Therefore in spite of the absence of the Communist members at this session, the effort toward peaceful unification could be seen in the discussions therein of problems relating to the National Assembly. In March of the same year Generalissimo Chiang stated at the Committee for the Establishment of Constitutional Government that the National Assembly would be called on November 12 of the same year to conclude the period of political tutelage and to return the Government to the people. The same decision was also reached at the Sixth National congress of the Kuomintang in May. As to problems concerned with the convocation of the National Assembly, they were entrusted to the People's Political Council to be discussed at this session. Four resolutions regarding this problem were passed by it as disclosed by the press in Chungking. Under the fourth resolution—"prior to the convocation of the National Assembly the Government is requested to adopt as soon as possible the following steps," there were four points. The first point was "to attain national unity, it is necessary to continue to take all possible political measures in consultation. Members of this Council earnestly hope that the Communist Party will, by recognizing the importance of national unity, will leave all political measures made by the Government to bring about the desired results." The first half of this resolution was in line with the original intention of the Government, while the second half expressed the hopes of the people, which after being pointed out by the People's Political Council, should be given due regard by the Communist Party. What is unfortunate is that since the Japanese surrender the prospects of peaceful unification has been dimmed. Nevertheless the Government continues to adopt political steps to achieve unification, and peace talks with the Communist Party has as yet never been interrupted. When the present review is going to the press the Government is making preparations for the calling of the Political Consultative Conference.

I have already dwelt briefly in the above passages upon the evolution of the organization of the People's Political Council, the growth of its functions and power, and the important contribu-

tions made by each session of the Council. What I want to add here is that as far as the primary sense of its establishment is concerned, the People's Political Council was China's highest organ in wartime for the expression of people's opinion. There are two connotations: 1. That this organ of popular opinion pertained to wartime China, under the wartime premise of military affairs first and victory first, the Council assumed as its fundamental duty the work of collecting public opinion for public benefit and for the unification of the national strength. 2. Since the Council is not an organ for the execution of People's opinion during the transitional period, the Government is before law not held politically responsible for it. But judging from the evolution of its organization, the gradual expansion of its functions and power, and the effect of its application, the Council of today is not only the highest organ of popular opinion in wartime China, but also a stepping stone to a constitutional government—the origin of democracy. Now the date of the convocation of the National Assembly, as issued by the Government on November 12, 1945, will be on May 5, 1946. Therefore, by this time, having adapted itself to the need of the times in its previous 11 meetings, the Council may hold one more session to wind up its work of the extraordinary period. It is our great hope that the forthcoming last meeting of the Council will contribute still more to the national reconstruction problems of to-morrow. The late President Lin Sen said in the opening speech of the second session of the first Council: "To achieve complete success, we must give the final touch," With this remark of his let me conclude this review and let me wish the People's Political Council final success.



THE PEOPLE'S POLITICAL COUNCIL By *Lei Chen*,
Deputy Secretary-General to the People's Political
Council.

1 Edition, April 1946.

CNC \$ 300.00

Abroad U.S. \$ 0.30

EDITOR'S NOTE

Herein is a narrative of the evolution and organization of the People's Political Council which was set up in 1938 to serve as a Modus vivendi pending the creation of a proper organ of the people's representatives. It is authoritative because it is written by the Deputy Secretary-General of the Council Mr. Lei Chen who has been serving in this post

1943
in Cheking in 1897, Mr. Lei was graduated from [redacted] University, Japan, in 1926 with the degree [redacted]. He became a member of the Central Supervisory Committee of Kuomintang in 1935. During the recently held Political Consultative Conference he served as the Secretary-General for which post he is well qualified in the light of his experience in his capacity of the Deputy Secretary-Generalship of the Council



非常時期國民參政會

雷震著

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