

Excerpts from "BUILD SOCIALISM WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS"  
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Since the defeat of the Gang of Four and the convocation of the Third Plenary Session of the Party's Eleventh Central Committee, we have formulated correct ideological, political and organizational lines and a series of principles and policies. What is the ideological line? To adhere to Marxism and to integrate it with Chinese realities -- in other words, to seek truth from facts, as advocated by Comrade Mao Zedong, and to uphold his basic ideas. It is crucial for us to adhere to Marxism and socialism....

What is socialism and what is Marxism? We were not quite clear about this in the past. Marxism attaches utmost importance to developing the productive forces. We have said that socialism is the primary stage of communism and that at the advanced stage the principle of from each according to his ability and to each according to his needs will be applied. This calls for highly developed productive forces and an overwhelming abundance of material wealth. Therefore, the fundamental task for the socialist stage is to develop the productive forces. The superiority of the socialist system is demonstrated, in the final analysis, by faster and greater development of those forces than under the capitalist system. As they develop, the people's material and cultural life will constantly improve. One of our shortcomings after the founding of the People's Republic was that we didn't pay enough attention to developing the productive forces. Socialism means eliminating poverty. Pauperism is not socialism, still less communism.

Given that China is still backward, what road can we take to develop the productive forces and raise the people's standard of living? This brings us back to the question of whether to continue on the socialist road or to stop and turn onto the capitalist road. Capitalism can only enrich less than 10 per cent of the Chinese population; it can never enrich the remaining more than 90 per cent. But if we adhere to socialism and apply the principle of distribution to each according to his work, there will not be excessive disparities in wealth. Consequently, no polarization will occur as our productive forces become developed over the next 20 to 30 years.

Our political line is to focus on the modernization program and on continued development of the productive forces. Nothing short of a world war could tear us away from this line. And even if a world war broke out, we would engage in reconstruction after the war. The minimum target of our modernization program is to achieve a comparatively comfortable standard of living by the end of the century....