

**FROM THE PEOPLE'S DAILY: "HOW CHINA PROCEEDS WITH THE
TASK OF INDUSTRIALIZATION" (1953)**

By Ji Yun

Introduction

In the early 1950s, China's leaders made the decision to proceed with industrialization by following the example of the Soviet Union. The Soviet model called for, among other things, a socialist economy in which production and growth would be guided by five-year plans. China's first five-year plan went into effect in 1953. In the document below, Ji Yun, writing in the Party paper, the *People's Daily*, explains how China shall proceed to industrialize under the first five-year plan.

Document Excerpts with Questions (Longer selection follows this section)

From *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From 1600 Through the Twentieth Century*, compiled by Wm. Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano, 2nd ed., vol. 2 (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 455-456. © 2000 Columbia University Press. Reproduced with the permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.

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...

It was through the implementation of the policies of industrialization of the state and the collectivization of agriculture that the Soviet Union succeeded in building up, from an economic structure complicated with five component economies, a unified socialist economy; in turning a backward agricultural nation into a first-class industrial power of the world; in defeating German fascist aggression in World War II; and in constituting itself the strong bastion of world peace today.

...

The foundation of socialism is large industrial development. Lenin said, "There is only one real foundation for a socialist society, and it is large industry. If we do not possess factories of great size, if we do not possess a large industrial structure with the most advanced equipment, then we shall generally not be able to talk about socialism, much less in the case of an agricultural country."

...

... Numerous facts have proved that it is futile to attempt the enforcement of socialism on the foundations of small agriculture or small handicrafts. Industry must first be developed to provide possibilities of collectivization and mechanization of agriculture, for the socialist reform of agriculture.

At the same time, only with industrialization of the state may we guarantee our economic independence and nonreliance on imperialism.

Questions:

1. What areas of economic activity does the author put emphasis on?
2. What areas of economic activity does the author not emphasize or even not mention?
3. How does a socialist economy, as described by the author, differ from a capitalist economy (aside from the matter of ownership)?
4. What might be the disadvantages of a socialist economy as described by the author?
5. The author suggests that only by industrializing can China avoid becoming dependent on "imperialism" (i.e., the large capitalist economies). Does this argument make sense? Are there developing countries that have both not industrialized and maintained independence and nonreliance on the large capitalist countries of the world?

Longer Selection

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The five-year construction plan, to which we have long looked forward, has now commenced. Its basic object is the gradual realization of the industrialization of our state.

Industrialization has been the goal sought by the Chinese people during the past one hundred years. From the last days of the Manchu dynasty to the early years of the republic, some people had undertaken the establishment of a few factories in the country. But industry as a whole has never been developed in China. ... It was just as Stalin said: "Because China did not have its own heavy industry and its own war industry, it was being trampled upon by all the reckless and unruly elements. ..."

We are now in the midst of a period of important changes, in that period of transition, as described by Lenin, of changing "from the stallion of the peasant, the farm hand, and poverty, to the stallion of mechanized industry and electrification."

We must look upon this period of transition to the industrialization of the state as one equal in importance and significance to that period of transition of the revolution toward the fight for political power. ...

It was through the implementation of the policies of the industrialization of the state and the collectivization of agriculture that the Soviet Union succeeded in building up, from an economic structure complicated with five component economies, a unified socialist economy; in turning a backward agricultural nation into a first-class industrial power of the world; in defeating German fascist aggression in World War II; and in constituting itself the strong bastion of world peace today.

We are looking upon the Soviet Union as our example in the building of our country. Soviet experiences in the realization of industrialization are of great value to us. ...

The foundation of socialism is large industrial development. Lenin said, "There is only one real foundation for a socialist society, and it is large industry. If we do not possess factories of great size, if we do not possess a large industrial structure with the most advanced equipment, then we shall generally not be able to talk of socialism, much less in the case of an agricultural country."

Accordingly, in order to enable our state to progress victoriously toward socialism, we must construct large industries. ... Numerous facts have proved that it is futile to attempt the enforcement of socialism on the foundations of small agriculture or small handicrafts. Industry must first be developed to provide possibilities for the collectivization and mechanization of agriculture, for the socialist reform of agriculture.

At the same time, only with industrialization of the state may we guarantee our economic independence and nonreliance on imperialism.