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## The Basic Experience of Seizing the Cultural Hegemony of the CPC in the Liberation War

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### Abstract

The cultural hegemony is identified by the ideology of the ruling class, which is a theoretical model to get the political leadership through “mobile warfare” and “trench warfare”. In the Liberation War, according to the adjusted strategy, the Chinese Communist Party united with all those that can be united with to obtain people’s cultural and ideological identity. The CPC continued to strengthen its construction of the members and through theoretical study guiding the practice to increase the rallying power and combat capacity. It also through the combination of violent revolution and ideology identity, carried out the great practice of seizing the cultural hegemony, thus forming the base and valuable experience.

**Key words:** Cultural hegemony; The CPC; Liberation War; Basic experience.

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### INTRODUCTION

In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Russia established the first socialist country through the violent “mobile warfare”—the Russian Revolution on November 7, 1917. At the same time, all the violent revolutionary movements

had failed in European countries. Antonio Gramsci, the founder of the Communist Party of Italy, proposed the cultural hegemony theory according to his investigation on the social differences between western and eastern citizens. The cultural hegemony theory is a non-violently ideological and cultural control means, which is achieved through the active consent of the ruling class. This theory aimed to get people’s wide identity of consciousness by “organic intellectuals” (as opposed to traditional theory-oriented intellectuals, with both theoretical and practical experience); it mutually reinforced “mobile warfare” in violent revolution and “trench warfare” in ideology to achieve the legality of power. Throughout the history of modern China, the reason why the Communist Party of China could continue to grow and achieve the victory of the revolution and keep a long-term success in the situation where domestic and foreign conditions changed rapidly was that the CPC successfully seized the cultural hegemony and continued to consolidate it. In the Liberation War, the CPC carried out the great practice of seizing the cultural hegemony and formed the basic and valuable experience.

### 1. THE BASIC PREMISE: TO UNITE WITH ALL THOSE THAT CAN BE UNITED WITH, TO LEAD THE MASSES’ THOUGHT AND TO FORM THE MOST EXTENSIVE PEOPLE “IDENTITY”

To capture the cultural hegemony, the CPC must get the widespread recognition from the secondary classes. This recognition was not created by the seemingly and legally electoral processes in the political society, but more depended on people’s voluntary consent. In the Liberation War, the Communist Party of China through objective analysis of tasks in each stage of war, and reformation analysis of the different situations both in the liberated

areas and Kuomintang-ruled areas, carefully adjusted the work focuses and struggle tactics, which won people's widespread support. Meanwhile, the CPC strengthened the links with the Democratic Party and progressively persuaded and led the masses' thought.

### **1.1 Based on Peasants' Rights and Interests, Firmly Consolidating the Belief of Revolution and People's Power in the Liberated Areas**

The Communist Party of China had always attached great importance to the masses' voluntary and widespread consent to the cultural hegemony. "If the masses are unwilling and involuntary to agree with the cultural ideology, it will be merely a form and will not succeed." In the Liberation War, with the change of the principal contradiction in Chinese society, the Communist Party of China also adjusted its content and manners against the seizing cultural hegemony in the liberated areas.

On one hand, the land reform and developing production guaranteed farmers' sufficient materials, solving their most concerned and basic survival issue. During the civil war and under the new situation, only the Central Committee of the CPC formulated new land policy, the awareness of cadres and the CPC members can be unified, the centrists can be educated, the landlords can be cracked down, and the farmers revolution can be powerful supported and led. Therefore, in 1946, the Central Committee of the CPC at the May Fourth Directive explicitly pointed out that deepening the reduction of rent and interest rates policy in the Rectification period into confiscating land from the landlord class and then freely allocating it to the peasants. The policy that was premised on the basis of solving peasants' land problems, was adjusted timely and appropriately according to the actual situation in different places. And the CPC gradually led the local people to get land. Meanwhile, the revolutionary government was established to consolidate the worker-peasant alliance. These made the peasants deeply aware of the leadership philosophy and position of the CPC, thus they firmed the belief of following the CPC to seize the power. Through the peasants' personal experience and deeds, the leadership of the CPC in the liberated area was consolidated.

On the other hand, through the revolutionary education for peasants, they gradually strengthened the correct understanding of the CPC's revolutionary thoughts, firmly followed the leadership of the CPC and collectively completed the historical mission of building an independent, democratic and new China. During the Liberation War, the CPC continued to carry out the new democratic national, scientific, and popular education policy and insisted on the principles that education should serve the revolution and combine with productive labor. Besides, the theory should combine with practice. The CPC actively organized peasants to learn revolution theory and the CPC's principles and policies, which made them have a clearer understanding of the future and tasks of the Chinese

revolution and have a distinct judgment on individual effort and revolutionary development direction as well as actively eliminated the pernicious influence of anti-Communist propaganda from KMT government. What's more, the current political contents, military knowledge and training, etc. were added in the school education. And the CPC positively transformed the old style private school, and helped more peasants learn theoretical knowledge through running night school and adult school.

### **1.2 Starting With the Patriotic Democratic Movement and Uniting Democratic Party to Strengthen the Cultural Hegemony in the KMT-Ruled Areas**

As a second front of the CPC to successfully capture the cultural hegemony, the patriotic democratic movement actively cooperated with the people's liberation army in the frontal military struggles, which was the important thought weapon and guarantee of the CPC for leading the culture in the KMT-ruled areas. Due to the serious crackdown in the KMT-ruled areas, the CPC proposed the policy of "having well-selected cadres working underground for a long period, accumulating strength and biding our time", avoided the head-on confrontation, paid attention to shift the struggle to economic issues sometimes, and sped up the deep development of the patriotic movements. The CPC actively carried out propaganda work to win centrists and established the broad front in legal way. The CPC always firmly relied on the masses, avoided adventurist errors, continued to lead and develop people's patriotic democratic movement, and motivated the common patriotic emotions. Under the guidance of expanding the movements, the CPC publicized its guidelines and policies education in the weakest link in the enemy areas, and achieved the most extensive class's support and advocacy under the will of respect.

In addition, democratic parties and advanced intellectuals were the indispensable backbone force for the CPC taking the cultural hegemony during the Liberation War. The CPC cannot succeed in capturing the cultural hegemony without the broad support of people, which was inextricably linked with the support and identity of the democratic parties and advanced intellectuals. When massive patriotic movements broke out, the CPC got sympathy and support from patriotic teachers and advanced people at all levels. Meanwhile, Industry and Commerce Community was in response to strike and organize people from all levels to help and cooperate with the movements. With the deepening of Liberation War, the democratic parties and advanced intellectuals had more understanding on the leadership and direction of the Communist CPC of China and increasingly pinned their hopes on the victory of the people's revolution led by the CPC. In January, 1949, the Chinese Democratic League issued a statement that denounced Chiang Kai-Shek's "peace" conspiracy, and said that there was no "peace"

negotiation possibility. Subsequently, Li Jishen, the chairman of the Revolutionary Committee of the KMT, called Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, hoping to “uphold Sun Yat-sen’s unfulfilled wish to strive for the complete victory of the Chinese revolution”. On the directive of treating the democratic personages, the Central Committee of the CPC proposed that the CPC should explain all problems in its policies with “honest and sincere manner” to positively educate and engage them. The work of the CPC received support and cooperation from democratic parties and gradually got the support of the masses, holding the “right of speech” on the direction and path of the Chinese revolution.

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## **2. CORE STRENGTH: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THE CPC MEMBERS, INNOVATING THEORY, AND ALWAYS PLAYING THE CPC’S BACKBONE PERFORMANCE**

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Gramsci thought the first element of the political factors was the leader and the people being led. “All political arts and politics as a whole were based on this original fact, which was no one could evade in some conditions.” As the leader in the Liberation War, the CPC went deeply into the masses to understand their basic needs and determined the tasks, strategies and direction of seizing the leadership combing with the theory of Marxist and the practical experience. The CPC continued to develop its theories and practices, making sure its policies can meet people’s demands and its leadership in line with the historical and social development. Through learning theories and accumulating experience, the CPC continued to improve its science, creativity and development, which laid a solid foundation for its status as a ruling CPC.

### **2.1 Extensively Absorbing the Outstanding People, Strengthening the CPC Member’s Own Construction**

The CPC’s understanding and development of Communist CPC Members and constructive innovation in all aspects on the CPC were the core of the victory of Chinese revolution. During the Liberation War, the CPC had grown into the CPC with a higher development of Marxist theory, with a strong cadre troops that were capable to lead the Chinese revolutionary struggle, and with ripe and rich experience in the revolutionary struggles. The CPC always gave top priority to its ideological construction, armed the CPC with Marxist theory, and combined with the practice, so it can maintain its vanguard role in ideology and culture. The CPC adequately proceeded spiritual mobilization on the triumph of the revolution, namely setting the common belief and unifying the interest. The firm revolution ideal and conviction as well

as the shared aspirations and demands of China’s future were also the important guarantee for the CPC’s unity and continuous development and expansion during the War of Liberation. Meanwhile, the CPC constantly strengthened its construction in fields of politics, organization and discipline, perfected the democratic centralism within the CPC, expanded the inner-CPC democratic life and strengthened its centralized and unified leadership. It gradually formed and positively promoted the fine styles of work, such as integrating theory with practice, maintaining close ties with the masses and making criticism and self-criticism.

Through active exploration of the social practice, the Communist CPC of China continued to improve its “right” and “left” mistakes in the early days. When recruiting new members, the CPC not only depended on their personal circumstances for in-depth education to firm their revolutionary ideal and faith, but also had development foresight on the enlisted members from different origins. For example, in 1948, after the “Three-check Movement” for rectifying the army and the CPC, a directive was stated that “we must not only against the non-serious attitude on ignoring the differences of the classes, such as paying less attention on promoting the cadres from workers, farmhands and the poor peasants, but also against the blind components theory, such as the thoughts of the workers and peasants were all good while the landlords and rich peasants were all bad, and ignored their actual performances of thoughts and actions.” This input fresh blood for the leadership team of the Communist CPC of China, making the CPC continue to get the consent of the majority of masses and become such a CPC that with cultural hegemony capacity and with political management experience. It also laid the talents foundation for the development of the CPC of keeping pace with the times.

### **2.2 Deepening Practice, Raising Awareness and Deploying Correct Leading Policy and Action Guidance**

During the War of Liberation, the CPC made the right deployment on the basis of the prevailing circumstances in the liberated areas and KMT-ruled areas, improved recognition and carried out theoretical construction in practice, and guided people to capture the cultural hegemony. The CPC respectively held meeting and writing reports, and analyzed the international and domestic situations to make the right leading policy and theoretical guidance for the CPC’s economy, politics, military and basic strategies and tasks, etc. For different periods, the CPC adopted different strategies and tactics, striving to spend minimum time, reducing the losses and casualties to the lowest in order to end the war as soon as possible.

In the rectification of the CPC’s problems, Mao Zedong clearly pointed out that, the CPC needed timely,

lively, practical and valuable reports and directives. If the report or directive needed to be waited for a long time, it would be out of date and its effect would be reduced or lost. A close link should be established from the central to the local authorities and to the branches to timely communicate with each other, exchange experience and grasp the latest news and to correct the mistakes in the shortest time. For example, in the internal error prone issues, the CPC needed to not only avoid overestimating of the enemy's strength, but also pay attention to the enemy in the practical struggles. During the land reform movement, it was needed to object to the "right" ideas of carelessly motivating the masses and deploying struggles and to prevent the "left" ideas in the areas where had been already motivated the masses and deployed struggles. When the revolution was to be won, the CPC shifted its focus to the city, and proposed the "Two Musts" thought and work style, which warned people to keep the revolutionary spirit of working hard and prevent the erosion of the sugar coated bullet.

### **3. IMPORTANT GUARANTEE: DIRECTLY COUNTERING THROUGH VIOLENT REVOLUTION, GRADUALLY INFILTRATING WITH IDEOLOGY AND CULTURE, AND FIRMLY GRASPING THE STRUGGLE FORM THAT COMBINE WITH THE SOFT AND HARD**

The CPC successfully got the political leadership not only solely depended on the cultural consent, support and advocacy of the masses, but also depended on violent struggles and armed seizure of the state power. The two approaches were combined with each other simultaneously. The CPC destroyed the reactionary rule of the KMT through violent revolution and broke through perimeter defenses in politics. Meanwhile, through conducting propaganda, education and public opinions, etc., the CPC occupied the ideological front, making its leadership, status and leadership means deep into people's hearts and getting support from the broad masses. The two aspects were complementary and indispensable to each other, and they were united in the seizing of the cultural hegemony, which manifested the revolutionary beliefs that CPC kept pace with the times and depended on the masses with each other.

#### **3.1 Based on the Strategic Despised to the Enemy and Tactical Importance to the Enemy, and United the Masses to Form a Solid Struggle Front**

On the eve of the Liberation War, the KMT "has 4.2 million troops, has areas with the population of 300

million, controls the China's major cities and main streets, receives the full assistance of the Japanese invading army of 1 million people, and gets lots of military and financial aids from America that has atomic bombs all to itself." Facing such strong reactionary forces of the KMT, the CPC correctly evaluated the situation and adopted the right tactics, namely, strategic defiance to the enemy and tactical importance to the enemy. It accelerated the pace of the CPC of taking political power legally and firmed the belief that CPC can strive for the broad masses' rights and interests.

The Communist CPC of China first made "develop northward and defense southward" strategy, mobilized the masses, developed military and created a revolutionary base in the northeast of China. After that, with the primary objective of annihilating the main force of KMT, the CPC comprehensively concentrated its superior force to annihilate the enemy. The war zone was led into KMT-ruled area. The main army of the CPC hit the perimeter and gradually regained the lost territory. After Liu Bocheng and Deng Xiaoping's army advanced the Dabie Mountain, they deepened into the enemy's rear lines, fundamentally shaking the reactionary rule of the KMT. Among the three campaigns of Liaoning-Shenyang, Huai Sea and Beiping-Tianjin, the CPC combined the violent struggles with the political peace trying, comprehensively and profoundly manifesting and developing the strategies and tactics in people's wars.

#### **3.2 Through Expanding Publicity and Creating Public Opinions, Forming People's Consent of Thinking and Strong Cultural Front**

The CPC actively by means of newspapers, magazines, radio stations, news agencies and other media continuously strengthened its leadership in the field of ideology and armed people's minds with scientific theory to get their consent of thinking and strengthen their belief in the victory of the revolution. On January 9, 1946, an editorial in the *Liberation Daily* deeply analyzed the reasons why the CPC mobilized the masses and its importance under the circumstances of the China at that time. In January 1947, the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of the CPC revealed and slaughtered the scheme of KMT's peace in words and civil war in deeds. The CPC deeply analyzed strategic intention, troops and the feelings of subordinates, etc. of the KMT and made the conclusion that "the KMT would definitively fail while the CPC would win". Meanwhile, there were proper reports on the main tasks of the CPC; the CPC made efforts to expand the sphere of influence and got support and participation of the masses. On August 1, 1947, at the recalling of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberated areas, the Xinhua News Agency pointed out that, "as long as the revolutionary forces truly relied on the masses, the revolutionary force can not be defeated or scared by the enemies."

In addition, the CPC encouraged the artistic works that “use the languages of the masses of workers and peasants or the forms they love”, and paid attention to educate the readers by means of novels, emotions, and introducing the common sense, etc. For example, Ding Ling’s *The Sun Shines on the Sanggan River*, Zhou Libo’s *The Storm*, Li Ji’s long narrative poem *Story of Wang Gui and Li Xiangxiang*, etc., some works’ were exquisite and poetic; others revealed the distinctive and crisscrossed relations between rural and urban classes and the complicate class struggles, etc.. The CPC paid attention to the use of Red songs, movies, plays and other works of literature and art to propagate the anti-imperialism, anti-feudalism and anti-bureaucratic ideas. The Red songs in that period not only praised the CPC and the people’s army, expressed the profound sentiments of the people and the army as well as the comrade-in-arms friendship; but also reflected the aspiration of people to demand peace and the indictment of the suffers caused by KMT. For example, *The Disciplined Song* eulogized the army’s disciplined and excellent spiritual outlook; *The Mess of KMT* revealed the lewdness of the KMT reactionaries, and criticized the ugly act of “peace in words and split in deeds”. Peasants and women gradually liberated from the closed thought and began to positively know the new things with new ideas. The spreading and propaganda of these series of art and literature works raised the peasants, youth, women and other groups’ recognition and consent to the cultural and political leadership of the CPC.

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## CONCLUSION

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The masses’ identity and support were the important prerequisites for the CPC to capture the cultural hegemony and achieve the success of the Liberation War. The CPC strengthened its theoretic construction and deployed creative practice and continuously improved the awareness of its members and consolidated its leadership which was the strong core for uniting people and striving for the victory. The use of positively violent revolution counters and combine the struggle style of culture and thought infiltration was the important basis for the CPC to successfully seize the cultural hegemony. It also laid the necessary material and spiritual foundation for the establishment of a new democratic country.

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