

*Chen Po-ta*

NOTES ON TEN YEARS  
OF CIVIL WAR

(1927-1936)

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I

**COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY REGIMES MAY  
CHANGE, BUT THE REVOLUTIONARY  
FLAME CANNOT BE EXTINGUISHED**

The Chinese revolution of 1924-27 shook the whole world. But it ended in a failure as a result of the betrayal by the Kuomintang clique headed by Chiang Kai-shek and Wang Ching-wei and the capitulationism of Chen Tu-hsiu.<sup>1</sup>

In December 1927, Comrade Stalin made an appraisal of the achievements of this revolution and predicted the inevitability of a new revolutionary upsurge as follows:

<sup>1</sup> During the last period of the First Revolutionary Civil War (1924-27), the Right opportunism represented in the Communist Party of China by Chen Tu-hsiu developed into a capitulationist line. While co-operating with the Kuomintang, the Right opportunists relinquished the Party's leadership among the peasant masses, among the urban petty bourgeoisie and the middle bourgeoisie and especially among the armed forces, thus causing the defeat of the revolution in the First Revolutionary Civil War. At an emergency conference of the Central Committee held in August 1927, Chen Tu-hsiu was removed from his post as general secretary of the Party. Later, he was expelled from the Party for taking a counter-revolutionary stand by joining the trotskyites.

Great popular revolutions never achieve victory in the first round of battles. They grow and gain strength in the flow and ebb of their tides. This has been the case everywhere, including Russia. So will it be in China.

The most important result of the Chinese revolution is the fact that it has awakened from their age-long slumber and has set in motion hundreds of millions of exploited and oppressed people, has utterly exposed the counter-revolutionary character of the militarist cliques, has torn the mask from the faces of the Kuomintang servitors of counter-revolution, has raised the prestige of the Communist Party among the masses of the common people, has raised the movement as a whole to a higher stage and has roused new hopes in the hearts of the millions of the oppressed classes in India, Indonesia, etc. Only the blind and the faint-hearted can doubt that the Chinese workers and peasants are moving towards a new revolutionary upswing.<sup>1</sup>

Comrade Stalin's scientific judgment and brilliant foresight have been completely borne out by history. Applying the theories of Marxism-Leninism and developing the teachings of Lenin and Stalin concerning the revolution in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, Comrade Mao Tse-tung has taught all members of the Party how to lead the Chinese revolution out of

<sup>1</sup> *Political Report of the Central Committee to the Fifteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.)*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, pp. 22-23.

the most difficult situations and onto a new path of advance.

During the last hundred years, repeated changes have occurred in the revolution and counter-revolution in China. In 1927 the revolution was betrayed by one Kuomintang leader after another. This was an upheaval on the biggest scale which precipitated an unprecedentedly confused and complicated situation in the realignment of class relations.

The Kuomintang leaders and their accomplices massacred revolutionary workers and peasants as well as revolutionary intellectuals; they replaced the old northern warlords' rule<sup>1</sup> with their own. But after all, what class (or classes) did they represent? Was there any difference between them and the northern warlords? If there was any difference, was it one in substance or in form? If it was in substance, was it complete or partial? Our Party had to answer these basic questions before it formulated its policies. Moreover, the correct answers to these questions would smash all the non-sensical arguments of the counter-revolutionaries (including the trotskyite Chen Tu-hsiu and his followers). Comrade Mao Tse-tung answered these questions at the Second Party Congress of the Hunan-Kiangsi Border Area in October 1928:

The present regime of the new Kuomintang

<sup>1</sup> The militarists who usurped power and represented the interests of the feudal-comprador class in China from the time Yuan Shih-kai's regime fell to the time the Kuomintang warlord rule was established.

warlords is still a regime of the comprador class in the cities and the landed gentry in the countryside, a regime which has in foreign affairs capitulated to imperialism and at home replaced old warlords with new ones, and has subjected the working class and peasantry to an economic exploitation and a political oppression even more ruthless than before. The bourgeois-democratic revolution which started from Kwangtung was only halfway through when the comprador class and the landed gentry usurped its leadership and immediately switched it on to the road of counter-revolution; throughout the country the workers, the peasantry, other sections of the common people, and even the bourgeoisie (here, Comrade Mao Tse-tung refers to the national bourgeoisie—*author*) have remained under the counter-revolutionary rule and obtained not the least particle of political or economic liberation.<sup>1</sup>

Comrade Mao Tse-tung described the Kuomintang regime as a regime of the new warlords. In other words, it was a counter-revolutionary military dictatorship. The rule of the northern warlords had also been a counter-revolutionary military dictatorship, but the Kuomintang regime was a new counter-revolutionary military dictatorship. It was new because it was headed by the new type of Kuomintang warlords and not by the old

<sup>1</sup> "Why Can China's Red Political Power Exist?", *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, p. 63.

type of northern warlords. What then were the differences between the new and old types of warlords?

Prior to the actual establishment of a counter-revolutionary military dictatorship, the new type of warlords had to a certain extent participated in the revolution and had at one time fought under the revolutionary banner against the old warlords. Consequently, they had some influence with the masses, which the warlords of the old type did not have. Although this influence began to vanish soon after they had become counter-revolutionaries, still, for a certain period in their counter-revolutionary activities they were able to use it to deceive the people in order to reinforce their regime of naked military terrorism.

The greatest difference between the new and old types of warlords lay, however, in the fact that the former had a centralized organization in the form of a political party as well as various subsidiary organizations to assist them in their counter-revolutionary activities. This political party had once been a revolutionary party and had also once been a revolutionary alliance of various classes. The new warlords, however, usurped the leadership of the party and carried out their counter-revolutionary activities in its name, thus turning it into a counter-revolutionary political party. The warlords of the old type did not have such a political party and therefore were rather at a disadvantage as compared with the new warlords.

The regime of the new warlords represented certain definite social classes. According to Comrade Mao Tse-tung, it was "still a regime of the comprador class

in the cities and the landed gentry in the countryside." By "still" is meant that basically the classes represented by the new type of warlords were the same as those represented by the old. But with the impact of the great revolution, the big compradors and big landlords could no longer maintain their old type of rule; they needed a new one. The counter-revolutionary *coup d'etat* of April 12, 1927<sup>1</sup> was their initial move to establish this new type of rule, with the imperialists actually issuing orders behind the scenes. Some representatives of the national bourgeoisie who opposed the people joined the counter-revolution and became the representatives of the comprador bourgeoisie, having by then become comprador bourgeoisie themselves.

The regime of the new warlords was a new counter-revolutionary military dictatorship of the big compradors and big landlords. It was formed with the Shanghai, or the "Kiangsu-Chekiang," gangster ring of comprador-financiers as its core. It was at that time that the Shanghai gangster leaders appeared on the political stage and became "important figures in the party and government" directing the nation's political and financial affairs. Compradors, gangsters, warlords and party roughs interchanged positions in finance and politics and combined to form an incongruous comprador-gangster administration. Such was the peculiar

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<sup>1</sup> April 12, 1927 was the day the Kuomintang reactionaries, headed by Chiang Kai-shek and instigated by the imperialists, staged a counter-revolutionary *coup d'etat*, followed by the massacring of a large number of Communists, revolutionary intellectuals and workers in Shanghai.

type of political regime which emerged in semi-colonial and semi-feudal China after the failure of the revolution in 1927.

For some time after the establishment of the new dictatorship, some of the new representatives of the big compradors and big landlords who had once represented the national bourgeoisie, were able to hoodwink the people. Moreover, favours were liberally bestowed upon a few persons who had well-known connections with the national bourgeoisie or its political representatives. For the sake of appearances, they were given dummy posts in the government. This was a reward given to the national bourgeoisie for its part in the counter-revolution. But it was not long before these puppets were kicked out.

Since the counter-revolutionary dictatorship emerged on the political stage as a result of the machinations of the imperialists, it was inevitable that it should capitulate to imperialism. The imperialists, for instance, bombarded Nanking<sup>1</sup> and in return they received an apology, kowtows and indemnity from Chiang Kai-shek's Nanking government. When the Japanese imperialists massacred the people of Tsinan,<sup>2</sup> they met

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<sup>1</sup> On March 24, 1927, when the Northern Expeditionary Army occupied Nanking, the U.S., British, Japanese, French and Italian imperialists directly intervened. The warships of these imperialist powers, anchored off Nanking, were ordered to bombard the city, with the result that more than two thousand Chinese soldiers and civilians were killed and wounded.

<sup>2</sup> In 1928, supported by Anglo-American imperialism, Chiang Kai-shek advanced with his armed forces into North China. To

with no resistance; on the contrary, Chiang Kai-shek's government issued a special decree ordering the protection of Japanese nationals in China. Making use of the new warlord regime, the imperialists not only returned to power and reinstated themselves in the positions they had enjoyed before the great revolution, but even began to plan new adventures. It was not long after that there occurred the September 18 Incident (1931)<sup>1</sup> which led to the occupation of the Northeast by the Japanese imperialists.

Such a dictatorship — a new counter-revolutionary military dictatorship—was not, of course, “a victory for the bourgeoisie” as the trotskyite Chen Tu-hsiu clique claimed. It only served to protect the interests of foreign imperialism, and those of the compradors in the cities and the landed gentry (landlords) in the countryside. The freedom and democratic rights which the workers, peasants and urban petty bourgeoisie had struggled for and won during the revolutionary period of 1924-27 were destroyed, and they were gradually deprived of their hard-won economic gains. The national

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check the spreading of Anglo-American influence northward, Japanese imperialism dispatched an expeditionary force to occupy Tsinan, capital of Shantung Province, thereby cutting off the Tientsin-Pukow Railway. On May 3, the Japanese invaders massacred a large number of Chinese in Tsinan.

<sup>1</sup>On September 18, 1931, Shenyang (Mukden) was seized by the Japanese “Kwantung” army stationed in China's Northeast. On Chiang Kai-shek's order of “absolute non-resistance,” the Chinese Northeastern Army in Shenyang and elsewhere withdrew to the south of the Great Wall. This enabled Japanese troops rapidly to occupy the Northeastern provinces.

bourgeoisie failed to attain the political status and win the economic rights to which they were aspiring.

This process is best explained by citing concrete facts. Let us first see the condition of the working class after the failure of the revolution in 1927.

The preface to the *Chinese Labour Yearbook*, edited and compiled by the Peiping Institute of Social Research which was headed by liberal bourgeois scholars, had the following to say about the condition of the working class during the four years from 1928 to 1931:

These four years may be considered as a period in which Chinese labour fell completely under the domination and control of the Kuomintang. The dissolution on April 12, 1927, of the Shanghai Federation of Trade Unions marked the beginning of this period.

. . . Generally speaking, these four years of Kuomintang rule do not appear to have produced any positive effect on Chinese labour (the author meant that it had not helped the workers—*translator*). . . . The initiative of the workers has been trampled upon. Trade unions not recognized by the Kuomintang have been either dissolved or re-organized. Government-managed trade unions naturally have no vitality. . . . Those in leading positions have only selfish designs . . . they have thus become harmful parasites . . . cleavages within the Kuomintang not infrequently give rise to conflicts in the party-controlled trade unions. In short, it may be said that the labour movement in China in

these four years has fallen into a state of inactivity. . . . There is no denying that open trade union activities have been greatly restricted and interfered with.

Of course, the passages quoted above are couched in moderate terms. Nevertheless, they bring out the glaring difference in the position of the working class under the rule of the new Kuomintang warlords and prior to the Kuomintang's counter-revolutionary "purge."<sup>1</sup>

In his *Problem of the Chinese Trade Union Movement* written in 1930, Comrade Chu Chiu-pai<sup>2</sup> gave the following brief account of the workers' wages during and after the great revolution:

Since the dissolution of the Shanghai Federa-

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<sup>1</sup> In April 1927, the Kuomintang headed by Chiang Kai-shek betrayed the revolution and perpetrated massacres throughout the country of Communists and patriots within the Kuomintang who supported the revolutionary policy of Sun Yat-sen. The Kuomintang called this a "purge."

<sup>2</sup> Veteran member and leader of the Communist Party of China. From the autumn of 1927 to the summer of 1928, he served as secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. After 1931, he co-operated with Lu Hsun in carrying on a revolutionary cultural movement in Shanghai. In 1933, he went to the Red base area in Kiangsi and served as commissioner of people's education of the Workers' and Peasants' Democratic Central Government. When the Red Army started on its long march, he remained in Kiangsi to carry on his work. In March 1935, he was captured by a Chiang Kai-shek gang in the guerilla area in Fukien Province and died a martyr's death in Changting, Fukien, on June 18.

tion of Trade Unions (after the "April 12" *coup d'etat*), the wages of Shanghai workers have been cut, particularly in the textile industry. Less than 20 per cent of the working people of Wuhan (*e.g.*, bank staff members) continued to receive the same wages as during the so-called "Communist Period" while over 80 per cent received cuts. After the Canton uprising,<sup>1</sup> the capitalist owners of various enterprises in that city enforced a reduction of wages. For instance, the wages of workers in the oil industry were reduced three times in succession.<sup>2</sup>

Such were the impact on the working class of the rule of the new Kuomintang warlords. Let us now see the condition in which the peasants found themselves under the Kuomintang warlord regime.

I am not going to dwell upon the ruthlessness with which the new Kuomintang warlords attacked the peasant revolution. They consolidated their rule gradually in the course of an unprecedentedly brutal campaign against the workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals. I am only going to make a comparison of the conditions in the countryside under the rule of the new Kuomintang warlords with those under the

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<sup>1</sup> On December 11, 1927, the workers and revolutionary soldiers in Canton jointly staged an uprising and set up people's political power. They fought bitterly against the counter-revolutionary troops directly supported by imperialism, and failed only because the disparity in strength was too great.

<sup>2</sup> *The Bolshevik*, Vol. III, Nos. 2-3, p. 113.

rule of the old warlords. The land surtax gives a good example for comparison. The following figures for 1927 and 1928 are taken from *Report on Investigations into Land Surtax*:

|                                     |                   |                    |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Liyang County, Kiangsu Province:    | 1927              | 1928               |
| Tax . . . . .                       | 9.10 <i>guan</i>  | 9.10 <i>guan</i>   |
| Surtax . . . . .                    | 9.675 <i>guan</i> | 9.911 <i>guan</i>  |
| Ihsing County, Kiangsu Province:    |                   |                    |
| Tax . . . . .                       | 6.00 <i>guan</i>  | 6.00 <i>guan</i>   |
| Surtax . . . . .                    | 3.646 <i>guan</i> | 14.79 <i>guan</i>  |
| Nantung County, Kiangsu Province:   |                   |                    |
| Tax . . . . .                       | 3.85 <i>guan</i>  | 4.10 <i>guan</i>   |
| Surtax . . . . .                    | 5.896 <i>guan</i> | 11.103 <i>guan</i> |
| Chinhua County, Chekiang Province:  |                   |                    |
| Tax (first harvest) . . . . .       | 1.80 <i>guan</i>  | 1.80 <i>guan</i>   |
| Surtax (first harvest) . . . . .    | 1.124 <i>guan</i> | 1.454 <i>guan</i>  |
| Sungyang County, Chekiang Province: |                   |                    |
| Tax . . . . .                       | 5.10 <i>guan</i>  | 5.10 <i>guan</i>   |
| Surtax . . . . .                    | 4.092 <i>guan</i> | 4.194 <i>guan</i>  |

The 1927 and 1928 figures have been taken because these two years represent the dividing line between the rule of the old warlords and that of the new. The figures given above fully bear out the fact that the oppression by reactionary rule and the burden borne by the peasants both increased during the rule of the new warlords.

In short, the peasants suffered more than ever in the areas under Kuomintang rule. The figures given above relate to the first years of the new Kuomintang warlord regime. Thereafter, the figures rose year by year. For example, by 1933, surtax in Nantung County

was more than five times the amount of the regular tax. In the same year, in many counties of Kiangsu Province which were under the direct control of the new warlord, Chiang Kai-shek, surtax exceeded the regular tax by from ten to twenty-six times: in Kaoyu and Funing, the corresponding figure was 11 times; in Huaiyin, 12 times; in Lienshui, 14 times; in Jukao and Chungming, 16 times; and in Haimen, more than 26 times; in Hunan, it was from 10 to 30 times (for this, see *Problem of the Chinese Village* published by the Chunghua Book Company); in Szechuan, land tax was collected in advance up to and even beyond 1971.

Such ruthless extortion by the new Kuomintang warlords led to a reduction in the acreage of arable land and to an increase in the area of waste land. This is illustrated by the following figures:

#### Arable land:

| Year           | Mou           |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1914 . . . . . | 1,578,347,925 |
| 1915 . . . . . | 1,442,333,638 |
| 1916 . . . . . | 1,509,975,461 |
| 1917 . . . . . | 1,365,186,100 |
| 1918 . . . . . | 1,314,472,190 |
| 1928 . . . . . | 1,248,781,000 |

(The figures above are taken from the statistics of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, Peking, published in the "China Year Book").

(Figure taken from the 1928 statistics of the Directorate-General of the Budget, Accounts, and Statistics of the Kuomintang government).

Waste land:

| Year           | Mou         |
|----------------|-------------|
| 1914 . . . . . | 358,235,867 |
| 1915 . . . . . | 404,369,947 |
| 1916 . . . . . | 390,363,021 |
| 1917 . . . . . | 924,583,899 |
| 1918 . . . . . | 848,935,748 |
| 1922 . . . . . | 896,316,784 |

(The figures above are taken from the statistics of the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce, Peking).

|                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1930 . . . . . | 1,177,340,261 |
|----------------|---------------|

(From the statistics of the Ministry of the Interior, Nanking, 1930).

(The figures cited above were taken from the article "Trends in the Reduction of Arable Lands in China" published in "The Eastern Miscellany," Vol. 30, No. 18).

These data show the rapid decline of agricultural production in China under the new Kuomintang warlord rule.

Now let us see how the urban petty bourgeoisie fared under this rule. Leaving aside the petty-bourgeois intellectuals and students who were subjected to unprecedented ideological repression, we shall deal with only the conditions of the handicraftsmen and small merchants.

Under the old warlord regime, there were brokerage, pawnshop and butchery taxes all of which were similar in character to a business tax. Aside from these, no business tax was imposed, though in isolated instances provincial authorities temporarily imposed such a tax. Under the rule of the Kuomintang warlords, however, a business tax was imposed on the pre-

text that *likin*<sup>1</sup> had been abolished. The brokerage, pawnshop and butchery taxes were combined into one, but the Kuomintang warlords extorted much more than the old warlords. I have taken a few examples from *The History of Finance of the Chinese Republic, Supplementary Volume* published by the Commercial Press on the estimated receipts of some provinces from brokerage, pawnshop and butchery taxes in 1925 and from the business tax in 1931 (figures for 1927 and 1928 are not available, hence no comparison can be made for these two years):

| Province | Receipts     |                | Increase in Percentage |
|----------|--------------|----------------|------------------------|
|          | 1925         | 1931           |                        |
| Kiangsu  | 887,800 Yuan | 4,900,000 Yuan | 452                    |
| Anhwei   | 364,800 Yuan | 1,635,000 Yuan | 348                    |
| Chekiang | 355,000 Yuan | 4,577,468 Yuan | 1,189                  |
| Hupei    | 373,027 Yuan | 3,046,000 Yuan | 717                    |

These figures show that in the short period of a few years, from the establishment of the new Kuomintang warlord rule to 1931, the urban petty bourgeoisie in conditions of a depression was compelled to shoulder a burden from three to more than eleven times heavier than that which they had borne under the old warlords, and that only in so far as the business tax alone was concerned. If we were to add miscellaneous taxes and levies, the burden would be still heavier. Take, for example, the estimated receipts in two provinces from miscellaneous taxes and levies:

1 A provincial tax at inland stations on articles in transit.

| Province | Receipts     |                | Increase in Percentage |
|----------|--------------|----------------|------------------------|
|          | 1925         | 1931           |                        |
| Kiangsi  | 109,388 Yuan | 583,500 Yuan   | 436                    |
| Hupei    | 654,641 Yuan | 1,033,200 Yuan | 58                     |

The burden of miscellaneous taxes and duties or the business tax did not fall, as a rule, directly on the businessmen but usually on the consumers. Yet it is very clear that such burdens greatly hampered the development of petty-bourgeois business enterprises and hastened them on the road to bankruptcy.

Finally, let us see the condition of the national bourgeoisie under the rule of the new warlords.

Take, for example, the textile industry. *The Shen Pao Yearbook for 1934* published the following data on the year-to-year development of the textile industry operated by national bourgeois capital and by foreign capital:

NUMBER OF SPINDLES (in thousands)

| Year | Chinese       | Japanese      | Total Number of Mills in China | Percentage of Chinese Mills |
|------|---------------|---------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
|      | Textile Mills | Textile Mills |                                |                             |
| 1925 | 2,049         | 1,332         | 3,570                          | 57.4                        |
| 1927 | 2,099         | 1,383         | 3,685                          | 56.9                        |
| 1928 | 2,182         | 1,515         | 3,850                          | 56.7                        |
| 1929 | 2,386         | 1,652         | 4,201                          | 56.8                        |
| 1930 | 2,499         | 1,821         | 4,498                          | 55.6                        |
| 1931 | 2,730         | 2,003         | 4,904                          | 55.7                        |
| 1932 | 2,910         | 2,096         | 5,189                          | 56.1                        |
| 1933 | 2,773         | —             | 5,200                          | 53.3                        |

| Year | NUMBER OF LOOMS       |                        |                                |                             |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
|      | Chinese Textile Mills | Japanese Textile Mills | Total Number of Mills in China | Percentage of Chinese Mills |
| 1925 | 13,371                | 7,205                  | 22,924                         | 58.3                        |
| 1927 | 13,459                | 13,981                 | 29,788                         | 45.2                        |
| 1928 | 16,787                | 10,896                 | 29,582                         | 56.7                        |
| 1930 | 15,955                | 11,467                 | 29,322                         | 54.4                        |
| 1931 | 20,599                | 19,306                 | 42,596                         | 48.4                        |
| 1932 | 21,559                | 18,289                 | 42,739                         | 50.4                        |
| 1933 | 19,081                | —                      | 39,564                         | 48.2                        |

The figures above show that since the establishment of the new Kuomintang warlord rule, the percentage of spindles and looms owned by the Chinese national bourgeoisie gradually declined. In other words, foreign capital in China gradually outstripped national bourgeois capital. In 1928-29, the Kuomintang government's so-called "tariff autonomy" actually accorded still greater advantages to foreign capitalists. As a reactionary historian, Chen Kung-lu, in his *A Modern History of China*, said that as a result of the establishment of tariff autonomy and increase of customs duties, foreigners set up more factories in the treaty ports because the treaties provided for the payment of equal taxes for the products of both Chinese and foreign factories.

Thus, powerful foreign capital, particularly Japanese capital, rapidly took control over and replaced Chinese national bourgeois capital. The China Cultural Reconstruction Association, a Kuomintang government organization, in its book *China in the Last Ten Years* had to admit that "during the seven or eight

years since the establishment of the National Government in Nanking in 1927, new Chinese enterprises with a capital investment exceeding one million yuan have become rare.”

The historical data cited above bear out Mao Tse-tung's statement that the regime of the new Kuomintang warlords was “a regime . . . which has subjected the working class and peasantry to an economic exploitation and a political oppression more ruthless than before.”<sup>1</sup>

Again, as Mao Tse-tung said: “. . . throughout the country the workers, the peasantry, other sections of the common people, and even the bourgeoisie (national bourgeoisie—*author*) have remained under the counter-revolutionary rule and obtained not the least particle of political or economic liberation.”<sup>2</sup>

Comrade Mao Tse-tung also said:

In the revolution of 1926-27 which started from Kwangtung and spread towards the Yangtse River, because the proletariat was not firm in assuming the leadership, the comprador class and the landed gentry seized hold of it and turned the revolution into a counter-revolution. The bourgeois-democratic revolution thus met with a temporary defeat. The defeat meant a serious blow to the Chinese proletariat and peasantry and also a

<sup>1</sup> “Why Can China's Red Political Power Exist?”, *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

blow to the Chinese bourgeoisie (not the comprador class and the landed gentry).<sup>1</sup>

Obviously, the assertion of the trotskyite Chen Tu-hsiu clique that establishment of the Kuomintang rule was “a victory for the bourgeoisie” was intended only to camouflage the real nature of the counter-revolutionary rule of the comprador class and landed gentry. The assertions of these base and despicable counter-revolutionary apologists were refuted by historical facts.

Consequently, as Comrade Mao Tse-tung wrote, “China is in urgent need of a bourgeois-democratic revolution, and this revolution can be completed only under the leadership of the proletariat.”<sup>2</sup>

And again,

The content of China's democratic revolution, according to the directives of the Third International and the Party Centre, includes overthrowing the rule in China of imperialism and its tools, the warlords, so as to complete the national revolution; and carrying out the agrarian revolution so as to eliminate the feudal exploitation of the peasants by the landed gentry.<sup>3</sup>

Only in this way can the socialist future of the Chinese revolution be envisaged. If we should refuse to recognize the necessity of the democratic

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

stage of the revolution and claim that the Chinese revolution has already reached the threshold of socialist revolution, then we would be entertaining an erroneous view extremely harmful to the Chinese revolution. The struggles we have waged confirm the correctness of the opinion of the International.<sup>1</sup>

Obviously, the trotskyite Chen Tu-hsiu clique which refused to recognize this bourgeois-democratic revolution merely wished to help imperialism and the comprador class and landed gentry prolong their counter-revolutionary rule. Their so-called "proletarian revolution" was only a pretext for opposing the revolutionary proletariat and the masses of the people under its leadership; it was only an anti-Communist trump card to be kept in Chiang Kai-shek's strongbox. On this question too, these counter-revolutionary apologists were unable to avoid refutation by the facts of history.

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The defeat of the Chinese revolution in 1927 forced a temporary recession in the tide of the Chinese revolution. In November 1928, Comrade Mao Tse-tung said in his report to the Central Committee: "Having fought in various places in the past year, we are keenly aware that the revolutionary upsurge in the country as a whole is subsiding."<sup>2</sup> A similar opinion was ex-

<sup>1</sup> The Decisions of the Sixth Party Congress of the Fourth Army of the Red Army.

<sup>2</sup> "The Struggle in the Chingjang Mountains," *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, p. 99.

pressed at the Sixth Party Congress: "The first upsurge of the workers' and peasants' movement is over. Generally speaking, in the present situation there is no popular revolutionary upsurge." Such an estimate was correct and necessary. If no estimate had been made of such a situation or if an estimate had been made incorrectly, grave errors would have been committed such as had in fact been committed by certain blind adventurists.

Let us now study the labour movement. In *The Strikes and Lockouts in Shanghai in the Last Fifteen Years*, an official publication in Shanghai in 1933, conditions after the Kuomintang counter-revolutionary "purge" are described as follows:

. . . The two general strikes which climaxed the upsurge of the labour movement were followed by months of comparative quiet. Between May and August 1927, there were only four or five disputes each month. . . .

Labour-capital conflict again became sharp towards the end of 1927. . . . Disputes, however, were much less intense than in the preceding year. In 1927, there were 117 disputes. . . . In 1928, there were 118 strikes and lockouts (more than in 1927, because after the Kuomintang's counter-revolutionary "April 12" *coup d'etat*, the labour movement was subjected to extremely savage suppression—*translator*). In 1929, the number of disputes decreased to 108 and in 1930, it dropped to

87. Despite this annual downward trend, the decrease in the number of disputes was not so great.

The above facts show, on the one hand, that the tide of the labour movement was receding and, on the other, that it was impossible for the compradors and landed gentry to suppress the labour movement for any length of time. At this juncture, however, the revived labour movement remained on the defensive. For instance, an official publication in Shanghai in 1934 entitled *Five Years of Labour-Capital Disputes in Shanghai* stated that:

1. The number of disputes in which labour gained complete victory had been decreasing year by year. In 1928, it was 41.35% of the total number of disputes; in 1929, 20.12%; in 1930, 18.58%; in 1931, 19.45%; in 1932, 17.00%.

2. The number of disputes in which labour suffered defeat had been gradually increasing. In 1928, it was only 10.55% of the total number of disputes; in 1929, it was 11.24%; in 1930, 14.16%; in 1931, 17.59%; but in 1932, it decreased to 10.67%.

Official reports of the counter-revolutionary regime called this "a change in the relative influence of capital and labour." From our point of view, it was a change from the offensive to the defensive in the struggle of the working class. The transition period was relatively protracted. History has shown that in the controversy

on this question between Comrade Liu Shao-chi and the Li Li-san line<sup>1</sup> and the third "Left" opportunist line,<sup>2</sup> Comrade Liu Shao-chi was right and the Li Li-

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<sup>1</sup>This refers to the "Left" opportunist line as represented by Li Li-san, principal leader in the Chinese Communist Party Centre after June 1930. The Li Li-san line was characterized by the fact that it denied the need of building up mass strength in the revolution and refused to recognize the unevenness in the development of the Chinese revolution; it opposed Comrade Mao Tse-tung's idea of exerting the main effort over a long period to the creation of rural revolutionary base areas leading to the encirclement of cities by the forces of the countryside and to the achievement of final nation-wide victory of the revolution. On the contrary, it called for the seizure of key cities through countrywide uprisings.

<sup>2</sup>After the failure of the revolution in 1927, there occurred in the Party Centre's leadership three "Left" opportunist deviations. The first "Left" opportunist deviation lasted from the winter of 1927 to the spring of 1928. The deviationists incorrectly concluded that the revolution was still on the upswing and refused to admit its defeat; they opposed retreat and wanted to continue the offensive, thus causing the revolutionary force left after the failure of 1927 to suffer further losses. The second "Left" opportunist deviation was the Li Li-san line. The third "Left" opportunist deviation lasted from January 1931 to January 1935. At that time certain leading comrades in the Party Centre who lacked practical experience in the revolutionary struggles advocated, in a new situation, a new political programme which, in fact, served to restore and develop the Li Li-san line and other "Left" ideologies and "Left" deviationist policies directly opposing Comrade Mao Tse-tung's correct line. The disastrous result of this third "Left" opportunist deviation was the loss of about ninety per cent of the strength of the Communist Party of China, of the Chinese Red Army and of the Red bases, and the subjection of tens of millions of people in the revolutionary bases to persecution by the Kuomintang. This seriously retarded the progress of the Chinese revolution. Through years of practical experience, however, most of the comrades who had committed "Left" deviationist errors, realized and rectified their mistakes.

san line and the third "Left" opportunist line were wrong.

As to the struggle in the rural areas, the Sixth Party Congress had this to say: "Breaking out here and dying out there, peasant guerilla warfare is developing despite the fact that it is still in a loosely organized and scattered state." Comrade Mao Tse-tung's report to the Central Committee of the Party contained a similar statement. I shall not dwell upon it here.

But despite the malicious assertion of the trotskyite Chen Tu-hsiu clique that "the revolution is dead," the low tide of the revolution did not mean its end. The status of the different classes under the Kuomintang rule after the defeat of the revolution as described above not only proved that the new Kuomintang warlords' rule was a rule of the comprador class and landed gentry (landlords), not only proved that the Chinese revolution was still bourgeois-democratic in character, but also proved that the foundations of this counter-revolutionary rule were extremely weak and unstable. True, the comprador class and the landed gentry had, with the support of imperialism and thanks to the ruthless schemes and savage massacres perpetrated by Chiang Kai-shek's clique, inflicted a temporary defeat on the revolution, but, as was correctly stated at the Sixth Party Congress, "None of the contradictions which have given rise to the revolution has yet been resolved." Therefore, the basis for the development of the revolution was still deep and solid. In a letter to a comrade, Comrade Mao Tse-tung made a profound analysis of this problem:

1. Although the subjective forces of the revolution in China at present are still weak, yet so are all the organs (government, armed forces, parties, etc.) of the reactionary ruling classes with their foothold on the backward and fragile social and economic structure of China. This explains why revolution cannot break out at present in the countries of Western Europe where, although the subjective forces of the revolution are perhaps stronger than those in China, the forces of the reactionary ruling classes are many times stronger than those in our country. Although the subjective forces of the revolution in China at present are weak, yet because the forces of the counter-revolution are correspondingly weak, the revolution will certainly move towards an upsurge more quickly in China than in Western Europe.

2. Since the defeat of the revolution in 1927, the subjective forces of revolution have indeed been greatly weakened. The force that remains is to all appearances very small and this naturally makes some comrades (who judge by appearances) feel pessimistic. But it is a quite different thing if we look into the essence of the matter. Here the old Chinese proverb, "A single spark can start a prairie fire," is applicable. In other words, although the force is only a small one at present, it will rapidly develop. In China, as things stand, its development is not merely a possibility but a necessity; this was fully proved in the May 30 Movement and the Great Revolutionary Movement which followed.

When we study an event, we must examine its essence and treat its appearance merely as a guide to the threshold of the essence; and once we cross the threshold, we must grasp the essence—this alone is the reliable and scientific method of analysis.<sup>1</sup>

Comrade Mao Tse-tung, on the one hand, criticized the revolutionary impetuosity of some comrades because they unduly overestimated the subjective forces of the revolution and underestimated those of the counter-revolution. Comrade Mao Tse-tung pointed out that such an appraisal largely stemmed from subjectivism; in the end it would undoubtedly lead to the erroneous path of adventurism. On the other hand, Comrade Mao Tse-tung disagreed with those who underestimated the subjective forces of the revolution and overestimated the strength of the counter-revolution. He pointed out that this would also be an incorrect appraisal—an erroneous appraisal which would inevitably produce bad results in another way.

On the question “whether the revolutionary upsurge will arise soon in China,” Comrade Mao Tse-tung was of the opinion that an understanding of this question could be obtained “only after studying carefully whether the contradictions leading to the revolutionary upsurge are really developing” and that only then could an answer be given.

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<sup>1</sup> “A Single Spark Can Start A Prairie Fire,” *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, p. 118.

What did Comrade Mao Tse-tung think of the development of these various contradictions? He wrote:

Since contradictions are developing internationally between the imperialist countries, between the imperialist countries and their colonies, and between imperialism and the proletariat in these countries, the imperialists feel all the more urgently the need to contend for China. As the imperialists' contention for China intensifies, both the contradiction between the imperialist powers and the whole Chinese nation and the contradiction among the imperialists themselves develop simultaneously in China, a daily expanding and intensifying strife thus ensues between the various cliques of the reactionary rulers in China and the contradictions between them develop daily. From these contradictions between the various cliques of the reactionary rulers—the strife between the warlords—ensues an increase of taxation; thus the development of the contradiction between the broad masses of taxpayers and the reactionary rulers is accelerated with every passing day.

From the contradiction between imperialism and China's native industry ensues the failure on the latter's part to obtain concessions from the former; this intensifies the contradiction between China's bourgeoisie and China's working class, with the Chinese capitalists trying to find a way out through the desperate exploitation of the workers and with the Chinese workers putting up resistance.

From the dumping of commodities by imperialism, the inroads of Chinese merchant capital, and the increase of taxation by the government, ensues the sharpening of the contradiction between the landlords and the peasants; the exploitation through rent and usury becomes heavier and the peasants nurse a greater hatred for the landlords. Because of the pressure of foreign goods, the exhaustion of the purchasing power of the broad masses of the workers and peasants, and the increase of taxation by the government, dealers in domestic products and independent producers are forced daily further on the road to bankruptcy. Because the reactionary government endlessly expands its troops without sufficient provisions and funds to support them, wars multiply every day and the masses of soldiers constantly find themselves in straitened circumstances. Because of the increase of taxation by the government, the mounting burden of rent and interest demanded by the landlords, and the daily extension of the horrors of war, famine and banditry have spread all over the country and the broad masses of the peasantry and the city poor are brought to such a pass that they can hardly survive. Because funds are lacking for keeping schools open, many students are worried about the interruption of their education; because China is backward in her production, many graduates are deprived of the hope of obtaining employment.

Once we understand all these contradictions, we shall see how desperately precarious is the situa-

tion and how chaotic the state in which China finds herself. We shall see also how inevitably the revolutionary upsurge against the imperialists, the warlords, and the landlords will arise, and very speedily at that.<sup>1</sup>

Writing in January 1930, Comrade Mao Tse-tung analysed and foretold the main trends of the ten-year civil war period which started after the failure of the revolution in 1927. In these writings he described various contradictions which existed in semi-colonial and semi-feudal China: the contradictions between imperialism and the Chinese nation and among the imperialists themselves in their rivalry in China; the contradictions among the counter-revolutionary ruling cliques; the contradictions between the rulers and the broad masses of the ruled (the taxpayers, including the workers, peasants, urban petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie); the contradiction between the landlords and the peasantry; the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the working class; the contradiction between the warlords and their troops; and the contradiction between the counter-revolutionary regime and the intellectuals and students. Comrade Mao Tse-tung, of course, did not deal with all these contradictions in the same manner, nor did he isolate one from another. He had perceived their interrelations and interactions; he had perceived that the contradiction between imperialism and the Chinese nation (a characteristic of semi-colonial

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 120-121.

China) would precipitate or influence the development of other contradictions.

In a China ruled by the compradors and landed gentry, there is decidedly no way to reduce the sharpness of the various contradictions described above, and certainly no possibility of solving any of them. Consequently, the rivalry among the ruling cliques themselves will intensify day by day, and the revolutionary flame can never be extinguished.

In October 1928, after Chiang Kai-shek and his gang had captured Peking and were celebrating the "unification" of China, Comrade Mao Tse-tung pointed out that much bigger wars between the warlords were imminent:

Before their capture of Peking and Tientsin, the four cliques of the new Kuomintang warlords—Chiang Kai-shek, the Kwangsi warlords, Feng Yu-hsiang, and Yen Hsi-shan—formed a temporary alliance against Chang Tso-lin. After their capture of Peking and Tientsin, this alliance immediately broke up and changed into a bitter struggle, and a war is even brewing between the Chiang and the Kwangsi cliques. The contradictions and struggles among the various cliques of warlords in China reflect the contradictions and struggles among the various imperialist powers. Therefore, as long as China is divided up among the imperialist powers, the various cliques of warlords cannot under any circumstances come to a compromise and whatever compromises there might be would only be tem-

porary. Within the temporary compromise of today an even bigger war is brewing for tomorrow.<sup>1</sup>

In the spring of 1929, a few months after Comrade Mao Tse-tung had uttered these prophetic words, war broke out between Chiang Kai-shek and the Kwangsi warlords,<sup>2</sup> thus starting a series of wars among the warlords, longer and on a much larger scale than at any time since the rule of the northern warlords.

No matter how much the trotskyite Chen Tu-hsiu clique had helped the comprador class and the landed gentry, no matter how they shouted themselves hoarse, lauded the Nanking government's "unification" of China, acclaimed the civil wars and the counter-revolutionary wars of the new warlords as "wars of unification," and venomously cursed the revolutionary policy and the revolutionary movements of the Chinese Communist Party, history has fully exposed the ignominy of their counter-revolutionary activities. History has proved that under the rule of the new Kuomintang warlords (the new counter-revolutionary military dictatorship), unification of China is impossible. The Kuomintang counter-revolutionary rule cannot possibly give the people any real political rights. Therefore, the people's revolutionary struggle cannot possibly stop. The slogan of the trotskyite Chen Tu-hsiu clique calling for the convening of "the National Assembly" was a counter-revolutionary

<sup>1</sup> "Why Can China's Red Political Power Exist?", *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, pp. 63-64.

<sup>2</sup> The war between Chiang Kai-shek and the Kwangsi warlords, Li Tsung-jen and Pai Chung-hsi, in March-April 1929.

slogan, pure and simple. The valiant Chinese people have adopted the revolutionary policy of the Chinese Communist Party, the revolutionary policy of Comrade Mao Tse-tung. And, the formulation of this policy is entirely the result of an accurate Marxist-Leninist appraisal of the concrete conditions of Chinese society.

## II

### TWO KINDS OF POLITICAL POWER EMERGE FROM THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF CHINESE SOCIETY AND STAND OPPOSED TO EACH OTHER FOR A LONG TIME. AGRARIAN REVOLUTION, ARMED FORCES, REVOLUTIONARY BASE AREAS

According to Comrade Mao Tse-tung's analysis of the concrete conditions of Chinese society, China, from an economic viewpoint, is "an economically backward, semi-colonial country . . . which is under indirect imperialist rule" and it is characterized by a "localized agricultural economy (instead of unified capitalist economy)"; from a political viewpoint, as a result of this kind of economy and "the imperialist policy of division and exploitation by marking off spheres of influence," ". . . since the first year of the Republic, the various

cliques of old and new warlords, supported by imperialism from abroad and by the comprador class and the landed gentry at home, have waged incessant wars against one another." Comrade Mao Tse-tung calls this peculiar political condition "a characteristic of semi-colonial China. . . . Such a phenomenon is found neither in any of the imperialist countries of the world, nor in any colony under direct imperialist rule, but only in a country like China which is under indirect imperialist rule."<sup>1</sup> In this analysis, Comrade Mao Tse-tung explains, on the one hand, the nature of the revolution, likening the revolutionary forces of the worker-peasant alliance to "a single spark which can start a prairie fire," and, on the other hand, the nature of the counter-revolution and the inability for the comprador-feudal class to consolidate their rule.

First, let us discuss the basis for the development of the revolutionary forces in China.

Modern China's economic development has created two modern classes: the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Since the May Fourth Movement,<sup>2</sup> the Chinese proletariat

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<sup>1</sup> All the quotations in this paragraph are taken from "Why Can China's Red Political Power Exist?", *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> The patriotic movement which, starting with a demonstration by the students of Peking on May 4, 1919, as a protest against Japanese imperialist aggression against China, the imperialist-dominated Paris Peace Conference and the traitorous crimes of the warlord regime in China, subsequently developed into a mass movement in which the students, workers and businessmen throughout the country went on strike. It speeded up the development of the New Culture Movement which chiefly aimed at opposition to the old ethics and promotion of the new,

has become an extremely powerful force in the political struggle. It is politically powerful, and extremely powerful for that matter, because it is highly centralized. In China, modern industries are few, and this shows that China's economy is very backward. These few modern industries, however, show a high degree of concentration. On the one hand, they are concentrated in a few big cities, and, on the other, their production, to a large extent, is controlled by big enterprises. For instance, prior to the War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression, between one-half and two-thirds of China's modern industries were concentrated in Shanghai. According to a rough estimate based on the 1934 figures (there are no detailed statistics available; and industries regarding which there are absolutely no data are not included), in Shanghai alone, the number of workers in Chinese and foreign-owned factories employing 500 or more workers constituted 57 per cent of the total number of industrial workers in the country. The concentration therefore is considerable.

In *The Foundations of Leninism*, Stalin wrote, regarding the unprecedented concentration of Russian industry on the eve of the revolution, that

It is known, for instance, that in Russia 54 per cent of all the workers were employed in enterprises

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opposition to the old literature and promotion of the new. Influenced by the Great October Socialist Revolution, the New Culture Movement was impregnated with socialist tendencies. Both in ideology and in matters of cadres, the May Fourth Movement prepared the way for the founding of the Communist Party of China in 1921.

employing over 500 workers each, whereas in so highly developed a country as the United States of America no more than 33 per cent of all the workers were employed in such enterprises. It need hardly be proved that this circumstance alone, in view of the existence of a revolutionary party like the Party of the Bolsheviks, transformed the working class of Russia into an immense force in the political life of the country.<sup>1</sup>

These words of Comrade Stalin can also be applied to us. With such a concentration of modern industrial workers, with such a party as the Communist Party of China which is armed with Marxism-Leninism and in the era of world proletarian revolution, in the conditions where the powerful socialist Soviet Union has taken a prominent place in world affairs and has become a friendly neighbour of China, the Chinese proletariat has grown into the most powerful force in the political life of the country.

Nevertheless, the above is only one of the many aspects of modern China's economic life; a place like Shanghai in which industries are so concentrated is, after all, an exception. Foreign capital in Shanghai occupies a dominant position (there it constitutes two-thirds of the total capital of all the enterprises). It is precisely this that is a characteristic of semi-colonial economy.

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<sup>1</sup>J. Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1953, p. 62.

China furthermore is still an agricultural country. Generally speaking, just before and after the revolution of 1924-27, the development of modern industries in China was far slower than in Russia before the Russian Revolution of 1905. As the *History of the C.P.S.U.(B.)* says:

By the end of that decade (the nineties) the number of workers employed in the large mills and factories, in the mining industry and on the railways amounted in the 50 European provinces of Russia alone to 2,207,000, and in the whole of Russia to 2,792,000 persons.<sup>1</sup>

According to statistics for 1933 and 1934, the number of workers in big factories and mines and on the railways in China, excluding the Three Northeastern Provinces, totalled only about 940,000 (*China Economic Yearbook* for 1935 gave the following figures: factory workers—658,178; mine workers—200,743; railway workers—81,448). Compared with the number of workers in European Russia in the 1890's, the ratio is 3:7. China is lagging far behind.

Comparing the total industrial and agricultural population, China is also behind the Russia of the pre-1905 years. Taking the data in Lenin's great work *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* as a basis for calculation, we see that the rural population of Russia at

that time constituted 77.2 per cent; the industrial and commercial population, 17.3 per cent; the population not productively employed, 5.5 per cent.<sup>1</sup> In our country, according to Comrade Mao Tse-tung's analysis of the composition of the population in the 10th district of Hsingkuo County, Kiangsi Province, the figures are as follows: landlords, 1 per cent (about 2 or 3 per cent if the landlords living in other districts or in the county town are included); rich peasants, 5 per cent; middle peasants, 20 per cent; poor peasants, 60 per cent; farm labourers, 1 per cent; handicraftsmen, 7 per cent; small merchants, 3 per cent; and unemployed, 2 per cent. In other words, the rural population constitutes 86 per cent; the industrial and commercial population, 10 per cent; the population not productively employed, 4 per cent. Although these statistics are only for one locality, they are of a highly representative character. There are as yet no complete data for the whole country. According to the estimates of the Kuomintang Ministry of Industry for 1932 (*China Economic Yearbook*, Supplementary Volume) the rural population constituted 79 per cent; according to the estimates of *China Yearbook*, English edition for 1934, it was 80 per cent; the figure, according to the *Summarized Statistics of the Republic of China* for 1935, was 87 per cent. Taking the data available in various provinces in order to make a rough estimate, we see that the percentage of the rural population differs from place to place, being 75 per cent at the low-

<sup>1</sup> *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), Short Course*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1951, p. 18.

<sup>1</sup> See Lenin, *Selected Works*, Lawrence and Wishart, London, Vol. I, p. 312.

est and 98.5 per cent at the highest, and averaging 88 per cent. These figures show that the percentage of the rural population in China is higher than that in Russia before 1905.

From the viewpoint of the development of capitalist agricultural economy, we can also say that in this respect too China lags behind the Russia of the pre-1905 years. In *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Lenin, discussing the statistics on the rural economy of the 49 provinces in European Russia, wrote:

If one-fifth of the households owns half the number of the horses, we may draw the unmistakable conclusion that it has in its hands not less (and probably more) than half of all the agricultural production of the peasantry.

For our country, we have no complete data to hand. But, according to the data available regarding cultivated land and the number of draught animals used by peasant households in several districts, we can roughly say that the production of the landlords and rich peasants does not exceed one-fifth of the total rural production.

Summarizing the various economic conditions described above, we see the following contradiction: on one hand, the development of modern industries in China is accompanied by the formation of a powerful centralized proletariat (this proletariat includes workers in the factories run by foreign capital and is more powerful than the Chinese bourgeoisie); on the other hand, China is

not a country in which capitalism is predominant, but is still an economically backward, feudal or semi-feudal agricultural country with the peasants constituting 80-90 per cent of the entire population. This is a great contradiction, but it is nevertheless a fact. The Chinese "Narodniks" refuse to recognize the fact that China has a powerful proletariat and consequently they refuse to recognize the leadership of the proletariat, and have thus become simply pitiful Philistines. Since the Chinese trotskyites who talk nonsensically about China already being a country in which capitalism is predominant, refuse to recognize the fact that the feudal or semi-feudal system in China is the chief form of oppression, they refuse to recognize the peasant revolution, and have thus become contemptible counter-revolutionary underlings.

Following the teachings of Lenin and Stalin, Comrade Mao Tse-tung and his comrades-in-arms understood the real contradictions in the Chinese society, discovered the laws of development of the Chinese revolution and thereby formulated a truly revolutionary policy for our Party and engaged in truly revolutionary activities.

There is no doubt that with the Chinese proletariat existing as a powerful centralized class, the Communist Party of China—vanguard of this class and chief medium through which the proletariat collectively expresses itself—armed with Marxism-Leninism and steel-ed in long political struggles, is fully able to lead the Chinese revolution, and that without the leadership of

this most revolutionary class and its political party, the Chinese revolution cannot advance one step.

There is no doubt that since China is primarily an agricultural country, the Chinese proletariat and its political party cannot succeed in the revolution if it does not keep contact and unite with the peasant masses, if it does not organize a solid alliance of the workers and peasants. At the same time, as the peasant masses are politically and organizationally weak, they cannot liberate themselves until they clearly see their political objective and organize themselves under the leadership of the proletariat and its political party.

There is no doubt that since China's economy is still backward, with agricultural production constituting about 90 per cent and industrial production about 10 per cent of the total value of production of the whole country, China's rural economy continues to maintain a relatively great degree of independence in relation to the cities. Moreover, as the organized leadership of the proletariat and its political party can, to a certain extent, overcome the difficulties created for the revolution by the unorganized small producers, the revolution in the rural areas can exist independently for a long time.

China's economy has been developing unevenly. In this vast country, modern industries have made big strides in the areas where the principal cities are dominated by the economic, political and military power of imperialism while in a large number of other places,

there exist only a few or no modern industries at all.<sup>1</sup> In many remote regions imperialism influences and dominates the economy only indirectly, while in other remote regions its economic influence is, perhaps, even non-existent. This is why it is possible for the Chinese revolution, led by the proletariat, to achieve victory first in areas where the enemy's strength is comparatively weak, *i.e.*, in the rural areas. But because the enemy is relatively strong and we are relatively weak, the revolution cannot succeed quickly and will no doubt be a drawn-out affair.

Next, let us discuss the inevitable and endless crises within the Chinese ruling classes. Here we shall relate some historical facts about the struggles among the various warlord cliques since the first year of the Republic.

Yuan Shih-kai, the first of the northern warlords, had, with the support of imperialism, usurped the fruits of the 1911 Revolution. Outwardly, he had "unified"

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<sup>1</sup> According to government reports for the 1920-30 period, of the 1,252 factories, two-thirds, or 827 factories, were located in four cities. There were 645 factories in Shanghai, 110 in Wusih, 38 in Hankow and 34 in Dairen. The remaining one-third were located in other parts of China. . . . The provinces in which most of the modern industries were located were Kiangsu, Liaoning, Hopei, Kwangtung, Shantung and Hupeh. The area of these six provinces constitutes only 10 per cent of the total area of the country while its population makes up only 36 per cent of the whole. In these provinces were concentrated 55 per cent of all the mining enterprises, 93 per cent of the textile mills, 92 per cent of the silk filatures, 86 per cent of the vegetable oil mills and 88 per cent of the electric power stations. (*The Chinese Economy*, a reactionary periodical published in Nanking before the War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression, Vol. I, No. 7.)

the comprador-feudal ruling class, but as a matter of fact there still existed in the South the Kuomintang which opposed him and the warlords who were connected with the Kuomintang. On the surface there was unity, but due to the divide-and-rule policy of imperialism, disunity actually prevailed and there were open and concealed struggles between Yuan Shih-kai and his subordinates and among the various cliques of Yuan's subordinates. After Yuan's death, the rivalries among the northern warlords who represented the interests of different imperialist powers again came into the open. There was rivalry between the Anhwei clique (headed by Tuan Chi-juí and Hsu Shu-cheng) and the Chihli clique (headed by Tsao Kun and Wu Pei-fu), between the Anhwei clique and the Fengtien clique (headed by Chang Tso-lin), and afterwards between the Chihli clique and the Fengtien clique; there was also intense rivalry between factions within the Anhwei, Chihli and Fengtien cliques themselves. . . . In the South, too, due either to direct or indirect machinations by imperialism, there mushroomed many cliques and factions which fought against one another; in the provinces, small cliques and factions within big ones were also struggling against one another. In short, the main rivalry between the South and the North was punctuated by numerous minor rivalries, and the cliques rose and fell in quick succession. Sometimes, the Northern forces would desert to the South (as, for example, the Navy going over to the South), sometimes the Southern forces would desert to the North (as, for example, Chen Chiung-ming's revolt against Sun Yat-sen and his sup-

port of Wu Pei-fu). After the defeat of the revolution in 1927, *i.e.*, after the new Kuomintang warlords had replaced the old Northern warlords, these transformations became more and more fantastic. One day they would be on intimate terms calling one another "comrade" and "most loyal comrade," and the next they would become enemies, and even "the worst of enemies." Or today they would be "the worst of enemies," and tomorrow "comrades" again. Today, they pledged themselves to the cause of "peace," tomorrow they would start a big war. Today, they would be in opposition to each other; tomorrow they would swear allegiance.

Therefore, we can well understand that as long as the semi-colonial and semi-feudal economic and political systems in China remain unchanged, hostilities among the warlords cannot possibly end. Since, after their betrayal of the revolution, the Kuomintang leaders and their stooges were not able to change one particle of China's semi-colonial and semi-feudal system and became mere tools of imperialism more servile than their predecessors and consequently dragged the nation into a new crisis, they could not avoid armed conflicts among the warlords, which, as Comrade Mao Tse-tung had foreseen, turned out most bitterly contested. Since the contradictions within the ruling classes have become more intense—even though they had defeated the revolution temporarily, their interests remained in conflict—it is difficult and even impossible for them to form a united front, which is thoroughly counter-revolutionary in character and able to last for any length of time. There is, therefore, no doubt that by relying on the

leadership of the proletariat, the people can take full advantage of the split between the counter-revolutionary cliques caused by their struggles against one another to enable the revolutionary power to exist and grow.

Thus economics influences politics and counter-revolution brews revolution.

After the failure of the revolution in 1927, the concrete economic and political conditions in China as described above created a situation concerning which Comrade Mao Tse-tung wrote:

While Red political power has been established in a few small areas, the people of the country as a whole still do not possess basic democratic rights; the workers and the peasants and even the bourgeois democrats have no rights of speech and assembly, and joining the Communist Party constitutes the greatest crime.<sup>1</sup>

For a long time after the failure of the revolution in 1927, this was one of the basic features of Chinese politics. Comrade Mao Tse-tung clearly and correctly pointed out this feature and at the same time concluded that the Red political power could exist for a long time and develop despite its encirclement by the White political power.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung wrote in his *Strategic Problems of China's Revolutionary War*:

<sup>1</sup> "The Struggle in the Ching kang Mountains," *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, p. 99.

We pointed this out (at the First Party Congress of the Hunan-Kiangsi Border Area) when, in late 1927 and early 1928 soon after guerilla warfare was started in China, some comrades in the Hunan-Kiangsi border area—the Ching kang Mountains—raised the question: "How long can the red flag be kept flying?" For this was a most fundamental question; without answering the question whether China's revolutionary base areas and the Chinese Red Army could exist and develop, we could not advance a single step.<sup>1</sup>

We have no copy to hand of the decisions of the First Party Congress of the Hunan-Kiangsi Border Area, but we have a copy of the decisions of the Second Party Congress of that area. "The fundamental question" which was settled by the decisions was whether or not the Red political power could long exist. Lenin said, "The fundamental question of every revolution is the question of power."<sup>2</sup> Comrade Mao Tse-tung settled this fundamental question according to this principle adapted to the conditions prevailing in China at that time.

There are three aspects of the question of the ability of the Red political power to exist for a long time though encircled by the White political power (which reflects the fact that the revolution is a long-term affair): 1. the agrarian revolution; 2. the armed forces of the people;

<sup>1</sup> "Strategic Problems of China's Revolutionary War," *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, pp. 193-194.

<sup>2</sup> See Stalin, *Problems of Leninism*, Moscow, 1953, p. 47.

3. the building up of revolutionary base areas. The basic social content of the revolution is the agrarian revolution. The leader of the revolution is the proletariat and its political party.

In our semi-colonial and semi-feudal country, the vast majority of the rural population, which constitutes 80-90 per cent of the entire population of the country, either do not till their own land or till a piece of land insufficient for their subsistence and furthermore are subjected to savage economic plunder and political oppression. In his *Investigations in Hsingkuo County, Kiangsi Province* Comrade Mao Tse-tung gave us the following figures on land-ownership:

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| Landlords (1% of the population)  | own 40% of the land |
| Ancestral halls (actually jointly owned by landlords and rich peasants) | own 10% of the land |
| Rich peasants (5% of the population)                                    | own 30% of the land |
| Middle peasants (20% of population)                                     | own 15% of the land |
| Poor peasants (60% of population)                                       | own 5% of the land  |

In other words, the real exploiting classes (landlords and rich peasants) constituting 6 per cent of the population own 80 per cent of the land; the middle peasants constituting 20 per cent own 15 per cent of the land; the poor peasants constituting 60 per cent of the population own only 5 per cent of the land. Although conditions in different localities in the country vary somewhat, they are basically the same: the great majority of people own no land or only a little and poor land at that, while a small minority own large tracts of good land. This is a big contradiction. Comrade Mao Tse-tung's data explained exactly what Comrade Stalin had pointed out:

"The vestiges of feudalism are the basic form of oppression in the provinces of China."<sup>1</sup> This is one of the two crux of the problem of semi-colonial and semi-feudal China (the other being imperialist oppression), and it is the economic basis of the other knot. In other words, imperialism is able to oppress China because China is still a semi-feudal agricultural country. Obviously, if the Chinese proletariat does not lead the peasants to rise and eradicate this contradiction the Chinese nation will not be able really to stand up, eliminate the old system of savage exploitation and oppression and transform the country from a backward into a progressive one.

During the revolution of 1927, Comrade Mao Tse-tung's *Report of An Investigation into the Peasant Movement in Hunan* gave a thorough explanation of this point. In 1927, when the revolution took a downward trend and after its defeat, Comrade Mao Tse-tung continued to lead our Party in its uncompromising and unflinching struggle against the counter-revolution; he advanced resolutely and unwaveringly in this direction, i.e., he raised the great banner of the peasant revolution—the agrarian revolution—under which the broad masses of peasants came to rally round us.

Nevertheless, without armed forces no agrarian revolution can be carried out effectively. During the revolution of 1924-27, the opportunist Chen Tu-hsiu's surrender of the armed forces resulted, in many places, in the disastrous failure of the peasant revolution. This

<sup>1</sup> Stalin, *The Chinese Revolution and the Tasks of the Communist International*.

was a bitter lesson. Moreover, if the armed forces are not integrated with the agrarian revolution and if the agrarian revolution is not made the aim of an armed struggle, then even with armed force, one can achieve nothing. The Nanchang Uprising<sup>1</sup> had a great historical significance. But, as some of the troops participating in the uprising did not integrate their efforts with the forces of the agrarian revolution, it unfortunately ended in a failure. This was another bitter lesson.

Even if, however, the armed forces and the agrarian revolution were integrated but revolutionary base areas were not built up, the agrarian revolution could not be maintained and consolidated. Unless revolutionary base areas are established, the armed forces are compelled to become mobile, they find it difficult to unite solidly with the local population, and consequently are exposed to risk of defeat by a sudden enemy attack. This was another of the lessons drawn from the failure of the Nanchang Uprising. Comrade Mao Tse-tung, therefore, emphasized that:

We must take care to lay a solid foundation in the central districts so that we shall have something to rely upon and nothing to fear when the White terror comes.

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<sup>1</sup>The armed uprising staged by the Communist Party of China on August 1, 1927 in Nanchang, capital of Kiangsi Province. This uprising represented a new chapter in the Chinese revolution as it gave birth to the armed forces of the Chinese people. More than thirty thousand armed troops led by Chou En-lai, Chu Teh, Ho Lung and Yeh Ting took part in it.

... thus placing ourselves in an invincible position.<sup>1</sup>

Such revolutionary base areas, however, cannot be established without solid foundation. The prerequisites for their establishment, as Comrade Mao Tse-tung has pointed out, are:

- (1) a sound mass basis, (2) a first-rate Party organization, (3) a Red Army of adequate strength, (4) a terrain favourable to military operations, and (5) economic strength sufficient for self-support.<sup>2</sup>

According to Comrade Mao Tse-tung, the general concept of the three aspects of the building of the Red political power—the peasant agrarian revolution under the leadership of the proletariat, the armed forces, the establishment of revolutionary bases—is a concept of the “armed independent regime of the workers and peasants.” This general concept is of necessity opposed to adventurism, liquidationism, the outlook of roving insurgents,<sup>3</sup> and provincialism. We can see that in the course of actual struggles Comrade Mao Tse-tung’s

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<sup>1</sup>“The Struggle in the Ching-kang Mountains,” *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, pp. 71, 72.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>3</sup>This refers to vagabond elements in the army who reject any political line, have no idea of military organization and are impatient in carrying out hard persistent struggles together with the masses. For detailed description, see “On the Rectification of Incorrect Ideas in the Party,” *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, p. 114.

thought had advanced another step in development since the time he wrote his *Report of An Investigation into the Peasant Movement in Hunan*.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung summarized the concept of building the Red political power as follows:

. . . China is a semi-colony contended for by many imperialist powers. If one clearly understands this, then first, one can understand why in China alone in the world there is such an unusual thing as a prolonged strife within the ruling classes, why the fight intensifies and expands day by day, and why no unified political power has ever come into being. Secondly, one can understand how important the peasant problem is, and consequently why rural uprisings have developed on such a nation-wide scale as at present. Thirdly, one can understand the correctness of the slogan about a workers' and peasants' democratic political power. Fourthly, one can understand another unusual thing which corresponds to and arises out of the unusual thing that in China alone in the world there is a prolonged strife within the ruling classes, and that is the existence and development of the Red Army and guerilla troops, and, together with them, the existence and development of small Red areas that have grown amid the encirclement of the White political power (no such unusual thing is found anywhere except in China). Fifthly, one can also understand that the formation and development of the Red Army, the guerilla units, and the

Red areas are the highest form of the peasant struggle under the leadership of the proletariat in semi-colonial China, the inevitable outcome of the growth of the peasant struggle in a semi-colony, and are undoubtedly the most important factors in accelerating the revolutionary upsurge throughout the country. And sixthly, one can also understand that the policy of purely mobile guerilla-like activities cannot accomplish the task of accelerating the nation-wide revolutionary upsurge, while the kind of policies adopted by Chu Teh and Mao Tse-tung and by Fang Chih-min are undoubtedly correct—policies such as establishing base areas; building up political power according to plan; deepening the agrarian revolution; and expanding the people's armed forces by developing in due order first the township Red guards, then the district Red guards, then the county Red guards, then the local Red Army, and then a regular Red Army; and expanding political power by advancing in a series of waves, etc., etc. Only thus can we win the confidence of the revolutionary masses throughout the country, just as the Soviet Union has done throughout the world. Only thus can we create tremendous difficulties for the reactionary ruling classes, shake their very foundations, and precipitate their internal disintegration. And only thus can we really create a Red Army that will be our chief weapon in the coming great revolution. In short,

only thus can we accelerate the revolutionary upsurge.<sup>1</sup>

Comrade Mao Tse-tung, therefore, derived his conception of the building up of the Red political power from an analysis of the concrete conditions in China. This conception calls for the development, under the leadership of the proletariat, of the revolution in the rural areas, the waging of a protracted struggle, the accumulation of strength, the encirclement of the cities, the gradual expansion of the revolutionary bases and, finally, the achievement of victory throughout the country.

This concept of building up the Red political power includes the concept of carrying out a revolutionary armed struggle. This armed struggle is the peasant revolution under the leadership of the proletariat and its political party, waged from revolutionary base areas. Comrade Stalin said,

In China, armed revolution is fighting against armed counter-revolution. This is one of the peculiarities and one of the advantages of the Chinese revolution.<sup>2</sup>

It is Comrade Mao Tse-tung who has concretely and practically developed this idea of Comrade Stalin. In

<sup>1</sup> "A Single Spark Can Start A Prairie Fire," *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, pp. 116-117.

<sup>2</sup> Stalin, *On the Perspectives of the Revolution in China*.

his *The Struggle in the Ching Kang Mountains*, he pointed out:

In the revolution in China, a country dominated by agricultural economy, the development of armed insurrections is a special feature.<sup>1</sup>

At the Sixth Plenary Session of the Central Committee elected by the Sixth Party Congress, Comrade Mao Tse-tung said:

The characteristic of China is that she is not an independent democratic state but a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country, internally under feudal oppression for want of democracy and externally under imperialist oppression for want of national independence. Thus people have no legislative body to make use of, nor the legal right to organize the workers to strike. Basically the task of the Communist Party here is not to go through a long period of legal struggles before launching an insurrection or war, nor to seize the big cities first and then occupy the countryside, but to take the other way round.<sup>2</sup>

These words sum up once again the basic line of the revolution during the ten-year period of the civil war.

Since a protracted armed struggle is a peculiarity

<sup>1</sup> "The Struggle in the Ching Kang Mountains," *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, p. 100.

<sup>2</sup> Mao Tse-tung, *Problems of War and Strategy*.

and an advantage of the Chinese revolution, we must have not only a correct political line but also a correct military line before we can lead this revolution forward. Our Party is integrating a firm Marxist political line with a firm Marxist military line as advocated by Comrade Mao Tse-tung. Without a firm Marxist political line, no firm Marxist military line can be established; and without a firm Marxist military line, no firm Marxist political line can be carried out. The history of our Party shows that those who err politically also err militarily; and those who err militarily can trace their errors to political ones, and this will again lead to political errors.

In 1927 Comrade Stalin pointed out to us:

Revolutionary movement must not be looked upon as a movement rising on upward trend all the time. This is a bookish and unrealistic concept of revolution. Revolution always advances on a zigzag line. In some places it launches offensives and destroys the old system, while in some other places it suffers partial setbacks and has to retreat.<sup>1</sup>

The truth about the revolution advancing on a zigzag line as expounded by Comrade Stalin has fully solved the basic question of the political line and of the military line, both of which our Party has had to solve during the ten-year period of the civil war. And it is

<sup>1</sup> Stalin, *Talk with Students of the Sun Yat-sen University*.

on these very basic questions that our "Left" opportunists have consistently erred. The revolution they dream of is a revolution which will develop evenly throughout the country and which will achieve nation-wide victory at one stroke. It is because of this that they oppose Comrade Mao Tse-tung's views regarding the necessity of patiently carrying out the difficult task of waging a protracted struggle in the rural areas.

As a matter of fact, historical realities have completely upset all opinions which opposed Comrade Mao Tse-tung's views on the establishment of a workers' and peasants' armed independent regime in the rural areas where the counter-revolutionary strength is comparatively weak, on waging a protracted struggle and on achieving one victory after another so as to precipitate a revolutionary upsurge throughout the country. Comrade Chou En-lai has correctly said, "All those who in the past have opposed or doubted Comrade Mao Tse-tung's leadership or views have now been proved entirely wrong."<sup>1</sup> This is a brief but a clear summary of all the past controversies over the line followed by our Party.

Let us now consider the ten-year period of the civil war. The Li Li-san line maintained that there could never be an independent regime; that the idea of encircling the cities by the rural areas was completely wrong, and that it was undoubtedly utterly mistaken to think of seizing one or several provinces in order to precipitate a revolutionary upsurge throughout the country.

<sup>1</sup> Speech at a reception in Yen-an, August 2, 1943.

But all these opinions have been shattered by realities. The third "Left" opportunist line disregarded all the actual concrete conditions of the time. They laid stress on the capture of a few central cities in order to win a victory for the revolution first in one or several provinces, opposed fighting small local wars, and ridiculed Comrade Mao Tse-tung's tactics as "conservatism." But these views, too, were shattered by realities. Li Lisan's line of a general insurrection throughout the country—of waging a nation-wide decisive battle irrespective of the strength and weakness of the opposing forces—could be likened only to Don Quixote's fight against the windmill. The third "Left" opportunist line, likewise, believed that the time was ripe for "a life-and-death struggle between the revolution and counter-revolution" and that the mistake of taking "a rest after a victory should not be repeated." They ridiculed Comrade Mao Tse-tung's strategy of drawing the enemy deep into our area so as to annihilate them as "a line of retreat." They subsequently advocated a decisive fight between the two ways in China, maintaining that "the solution of this question would come about after a very short historical period." These views, though subjectively aiming at a quick revolutionary victory, meant objectively, *i.e.*, when regarded critically on the basis of historical realities, no more than the replacement of one Don Quixote by another, perhaps even more quixotic than the first. There is a saying, "A new-born calf does not recognize a tiger." This means that it is doomed.

## III

**A FLEXIBLE POLICY IS CORRECT; A RIGID  
POLICY IS WRONG**

Comrade Mao Tse-tung has written:

If only we realize that splits and wars are incessant within the White regime in China, we shall have no doubt about the emergence, existence, and daily growth of the Red political power.<sup>1</sup>

He added:

Splits and wars among the warlords weaken the power of the White regime. Thus the Red political power is given an opportunity to emerge in small areas.<sup>2</sup>

This brings up a question of policy.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung attributed the existence and development of the Red political power, aside from "special reasons" (the economic and political basis of the Chinese society) and other conditions, to "another important condition . . . namely, that the Communist Party is strongly organized and commits no mistakes in policy."<sup>3</sup>

1 "Why Can China's Red Political Power Exist?", *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Eng. ed., Vol. I, p. 65.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 67.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 67.