The Chinese Conquer China

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PFS

THE CHINESE CONQUER CHINA

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PREFACE

Huang Hua

It is a great honor for me to write a preface for the new, PFS (China Society for People's Friendship Studies) 50-book series under the general title of ***Light on China.*** All these books were written in English by journalistic and other eyewitnesses of the events described. I have read many of them over the seven decades since my student days at Yenching University. With some of the outstanding authors in this series I have ties of personal friendship, mutual regard, and warm memories dating from before the Chinese people's Liberation in 1949.

Looking back and forward, I am convinced that China is pursuing the right course in building a strong and prosperous country in a rapidly changing world with its complex and sometimes volatile developments.

The books in this series cover a span of some 150 years, from the mid 19th to the early 21st century. The numerous events in China, the sufferings and struggles of the Chinese people, their history and culture, and their dreams and aspirations were written by

foreign observers animated by the spirit of friendship, equality and cooperation. Owing to copyright matters and other difficulties, not all eligible books have as yet been included.

The founder of the first Chinese republic, Dr. Sun Yat-sen wrote in his Testament in 1925, "For forty years I have devoted myself to the cause of the people's revolution with but one end in view: the elevation of China to a position of freedom and equality among the nations. My experiences during those forty years have convinced me that to attain this goal we must bring about an awakening of our own people and ally ourselves in common struggle with those people of the world who regard us as equals."

Chairman Mao Zedong declared, at the triumphal founding of the People's Republic in 1949, "The Chinese people have stood up." Today, having passed its 53rd anniversary, we see the vast forward strides that have been taken, and note that many more remain to be made.

Many foreign observers have traced and reported the real historical movement of modern China, that is: from humiliation — through struggle — to victory. Seeking understanding and friendship with the Chinese people, their insight and perspective were in basic harmony with the real developments in China. But there have been others who viewed China and the Chinese people through glasses tinted by hostile prejudice or ignorance and have invariably made irrelevant observations that could not stand the test of time. This needs to be better understood by young people and students, at home and abroad. The PFS series ***Light on China*** can help them gain an overview of what went before, is happening now, and will

emerge in the future.

Young students in China can additionally benefit from these works by seeing how foreign journalists and authors use fluent English to record and present historical, philosophical, and socio-political issues and choices in China. For millions of students in China, English has become a compulsory second language. These texts will also have many-sided usefulness in conveying knowledge of our country to other peoples.

Students abroad, on their part, may be helped by the example of warm, direct accounts and impressions of China presented by their elders in the language that most readily reaches them.

Above all, this timely and needed series should help build bridges of friendship and mutual understanding. Good books long out of print will be brought back to strengthen the edifice.

My hearty thanks and congratulations go first to ex-Premier Zhu Rongji, who has been an effective supporter of this new, PFS series. They go to all engaged in this worthy project, the Foreign Languages Press, our China Society for People's Friendship Studies, and others who have given their efforts and cooperation.

Chairman Mao Zedong has written: "So many deeds cry out to be done, and always urgently. The world rolls on, time presses. Ten thousand years are too long. Seize the day, seize the hour."

The hour has come for making these books available to young people in China and abroad whose destiny is to build a better world together. Let this series add a small brick to that structure.

Beijing, Autumn 2003

THE WHITE PAPER — FOREWORD

One of history's great confessions has been published by the State Department: "The United States' Relations with China," commonly called the White Paper. Reading it together with my galleys, I envy the superb reporting available to diplomats. All the necessary knowledge about China was in their hands years ago.

They knew in 1943-44 that the Chinese Communists were "the most dynamic force in China," that "they exist because the people permit, support, and whole-heartedly fight with them," that "this is based upon . . . an economic, political and social revolution ... moderate and democratic," which "improved the conditions of the peasants." They knew that "the common people, for the first time, have something to fight for," and that "the people will continue to fight any government that . . . deprives them of these newly won gains." They knew that "there is little if any evidence of material assistance from Moscow," despite "close and conscious affinity in aims."

From scores of reports the State Department knew that Chiang's government was "no longer representative of the nation," that it was "demoralized and unpopular . . . reactionaries indistinguishable from war lords of the past," that it was not even a trustworthy ally against Japan, since the Yalta Agreement had to be concealed from Chungking lest "it become available to the Japanese almost immediately." They knew "Chiang's feudal government cannot long coexist alongside a modern, dynamic government in North China."

They knew in 1945 that Chiang intended to launch civil war and that "the Communists would inevitably win." So General George C. Marshall went to China "to assist the National Government to establish its authority over as wide areas as possible." He withdrew in 1947, warning Chiang that his "military campaign would fail . . . and eventually destroy the National Government."

Knowing all this, the powers that be in Washington made the American

people pay "more than 50 percent of the monetary expenditures of the Chinese Government" for four years. They sent Major General David Barr with a United States advisory group to inject American know-how into that doomed campaign. None of the battles Chiang lost — we have Secretary Acheson's word for it — "were lost for want of arms or ammunition." They were lost for lack of "the will to fight."

As one immortal example, "the Chinese Air Force...although it had over five thousand United States trained pilots, accomplished little.... There was an ingrained resentment in the Chinese Air Force against killing Communists who had no air support." No words of mine can equal that reporting by General Barr! Nor can any conclusions of mine be as convincing as the March 1949 dispatch from the American consul general in Tientsin: "Americans . . . who had the unhappy experience two months ago of witnessing the capture of Tientsin by Communist armies equipped almost entirely with American arms... handed over practically without fighting by the Nationalist armies in Manchuria... have expressed astonishment... that Congress considers another billion and a half loan."

In the end Ambassador John Leighton Stuart had to report: "Our China Aid Program is condemned, even by its direct beneficiaries, as a factor prolonging civil war.... We bear the onus for supporting and keeping in power an unpopular regime which does not have the interests of the country at heart .... We are blamed."

Why did Washington pursue a policy so suicidal? Why do they pursue it still? The White Paper gives but few indications, but these are significant.

There is the plaintive voice of President Truman on March 11, 1948: "We did not want any Communists in the government of China or anywhere else if we could help it." There is the bluff military statement of Lieutenant General Albert C. Wedemeyer — small wonder his 1947 report was suppressed till now—that Communist control of China would result "in denying us important air bases for use as staging areas for bombing attacks," whereas Washington wanted a China that would "not only provide important air and naval bases but also from the standpoint of... manpower, be an important

ally." These revelations will not increase America's popularity in a peace-hungry world.

Our diplomats had the knowledge and our war lords used it. Now the American people must have it, to use for their own interests. This book is for them, not in the talk of diplomats, but in stories, pictures, conversations, to tell them of the life of the Chinese people, the aims of their new leaders, the policies by which they won and by which they begin to rebuild their country. For the interests of the American people and the Chinese people are not alien to each other, but akin. They are friendship, peace, business, governments responsible to their citizens, and, based on these, a stable, expanding, prosperous life.

ANNA LOUISE STRONG

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MEMORIES COME CROWDING

At dusk the wind changed and the boatmen smiled. Now they could sail swiftly across the wide river. "Our Mao Tze-tung has borrowed the east wind for us. It is a sign."

Then the night of April 21, 1949, was split by flame as the artillery shells ripped over the waiting men into the enemy positions on the far shore. A signal flared. Thousands of small boats swept through the enemy's fire and over the shell-torn water, their white sails filled with the good east wind. Day broke on the Chinese People's Liberation Army pursuing Chiang Kai-shek's soldiers through villages south of the Yangtze. Old women were bringing boiled water, saying: "We have waited for you so long, but you are over the river at last."

That incredible crossing of the Yangtze River by a million men in small boats in a three-day battle on a three-hundred-mile front shook the ancient order of Asia. The shells that struck four British warships were a barely noticed incident to the Chinese; even London found no way to protest. The hundred years were past in which armed foreigners had right of way in China. The Chinese people were taking over their country.

River ports, cities, and fortresses fell like ripe plums in a peasant's basket. Nanking was taken on the fourth day. In Shanghai the city postmen went out to

show the way into the city; the conquerors came, marking the intersections with arrows. They refused gifts of food and even of boiled water, "not wishing to bother the people." They slept on the sidewalk around the Bank of China but did not enter. "There is money inside; it might make trouble if we went in." Here was the strongest army ever seen in China. It was humble to the humblest and proud to the proudest. They were peasants, disciplined and led by Chinese Communists.

Many Americans shuddered. "Is it Moscow's power that marches?" But the victors came with American guns! They exulted by radio: "The strength of the Chinese people is mightier than the most excellent American weapons; we have captured the weapons sent against us." They called themselves the Chinese People's Liberation Army. They were the first Chinese in a hundred years who won without foreign advisers.

Who was this Mao Tze-tung who gave the order: "Advance to liberate the whole country....Defend the independence and integrity of Chinese territory and sovereignty," and who "borrowed the east wind" for his boatmen? He was the son of a Chinese peasant; he had never been abroad. After a university study of the ancient Chinese classics and modern Western learning he had accepted the analytic methods of Karl Marx. He was a master in applying this analysis to Chinese conditions and the problems of the Chinese people. Blockaded for more than twenty years in the heart of China's rural areas, he had planned and organized from a cave in the arid northwest for the victory of this day. He claimed to be carrying forward the revolution begun by Dr. Sun Yat-sen and fulfilling his "Three People's Principles" — People's Nationalism, People's Democracy, and People's Livelihood—which, said Mao, "tallied" with the immediate program of the Chinese Communists.

Was it really that same "national revolution" that Sun Yat-sen had fathered, that "Great Revolution" interrupted for more than twenty years by Chiang Kai-shek and Japan and America? It was clear that most Chinese thus saw it. Hundreds of millions of peasants said: "At last we have land." Millions of workers were getting a collective voice in the industries; they had been with this revolution from the first. Small businessmen were saying: "It can't be worse than the

brigandage of Chiang. The Communists permit free enterprise."

And where were the patriotic intellectuals, those scholars whose sanction has determined legitimacy of government in China for thousands of years? Many had long been slipping through the battle lines to join the new regime. College students flocked to the marching banners and learned how to organize cities. They particularly saw this as the "national revolution" to free China from foreign control. Higher-up intellectuals in the Democratic League broadcast from Peiping: "The liberation of all Asia begins."

The peoples of Asia were watching, from India and Japan to Indonesia. For all Asia was suffering the birth pangs of the "people's revolution." And the first-born of the new Asia was here.

I, watching across a continent and an ocean from a home in Connecticut, aching so to be in China, was saying: "This is not only China's Great Revolution. It is the century of the common man marching down through Asia arousing the billion people in South and East Asia who are half the human race. They have been the backward half, the hungry, the unlettered. Now they are the ones who forge ahead. China makes a pattern; China is their newest, nearest model. China is also a new power in the Pacific, strong enough to stabilize world peace. This may mean a shift of forces stopping a third world war."

Memories came crowding of the changes I had seen in China in more than twenty years.

First of all there was that famous strike in Hong Kong when a hundred thousand Chinese workers left the city, flinging picket lines along the coast to keep trade from the British port. Hong Kong was losing a million dollars a day and begging London for help. The American consul said to me: "You know those ghost towns in the West when a gold rush passes by? I wonder if that can happen to the greatest port in the East."

There was no government in the modern sense in China in those days, in 1925. War lords ruled counties and provinces, selling China piecemeal for foreign support. Peiping was a diplomats' capital for the convenience of foreign powers. Fanny Borodin said to me in Peiping: "Come to Canton. That's modern China! I'll get you a permit." Thus I learned that her husband, Michael M.

Borodin, was "high adviser" to Dr. Sun Yat-sen's new "national government," invited by Dr. Sun from Russia when no other foreign power would deal with him at all.

The British steamer anchored off Shameen, outside Canton. A Chinese motorboat put off from shore, flying a new flag—the white sun on a blue sky—that was soon to take all China. Fanny Borodin sat in the stern and was, visibly relieved when I stepped in quickly. "I was afraid you might bring someone else. The strikers would only give permit for one. It's the first permit for weeks to meet a British boat. They want you to see their new national government in Canton."

That was the Kuomintang with the Communists as members — an uneasy alliance. Silk-clad officials feared the rude strength of these workers, whose strike they used against their British rival, Hong Kong. Strikers scowled at silken officials yet claimed their hospitality against the "imperialists." There was friction in the very air of Canton. There was also power. In the strict harshness of those strikers, in a mass meeting of two thousand women workers, I felt for the first time the power of the Chinese people to take over their land.

I saw that power broken on the Yangtze after two years. Always that mighty water way, patrolled by foreign gunboats, cut China in half by a barrier that only a people greatly unified could pass. Chiang seized control in Nanking by agreement with Shanghai capitalists and foreign powers. Two thirds of his Central Committee was still inland, ruling from "Red Hankow." There Borodin quipped, introducing me to a leading Chinese:

"Miss Strong is unlucky in her revolutions. She came too late for the one in Russia and now she is very much too soon for China."

I flung back, nettled: "I'm young enough to stick around and see this one through." I did not know that this was his last desperate month as "high adviser" and that he would soon be fleeing north. Nor did I dream how long this Chinese revolution would take and that I should fail to reach it when it came.

For how fast that "people's power" rose then in Hunan! How quick to organize was that Chinese peasantry! How sharply and accurately they cut to the heart of the need: "people's food" for rice control; "people's tribunals" to

try big scoundrels; "people's schools" for the poor. No one who saw that "people's power" in South China, even in its shattered remnants as I did, ever forgot it. Mao Tze-tung saw it at its height and built his future policies on it. But few people then had heard of Mao. Twenty-two years later, sorting old files in Moscow, I picked out carbons of old letters, hoping to take them through to China, to show that long ago in 1927 my judgment of that peasants' rising in Hunan had agreed with that of Mao Tze-tung. I only wrote about it; he saw and planned and built.

What power was also in the upturned faces of the All-China Federation of Labor, representing four million organized workers in fourteen provinces, meeting in the heat of a Hankow summer, when the sweat poured down your body where you sat. They had crossed battle lines to come to organize their country against the "imperialists" of the world. Yu, the transport agitator from Shanghai, and Ma, the veteran printer from Canton, and that old miner from Hunan who still reckoned time in terms of dynasties. Slim textile workers in their teens jested, like college girls evading a teacher, about the torture and death they must evade on their journey home.

Those workers poured into the foreign concessions along the Yangtze — the islands of foreign rule in the heart of China — and took them back by the Chinese people's unarmed might. Upper-class officials in Hankow were terrified; they wanted to give the concessions back. Power was not in them. They were frightened by the strength of the people's support. So Hankow fell.

For twenty years the power of the Chinese people was split and its greatest part was underground. Always I knew that someday it would arise to stay. After Hunan's peasant rising I felt that this would be new power, a new theme in the symphony of nations—the genius of an old, wise, understanding people born anew.

I never cared to see Chiang's rule in Nanking. It was a bitter caricature of that great and honest people's might. But after ten years I went in 1938 to China when Japan's invasion forced a partial Chinese unity. Chiang's German-trained army had been broken at Shanghai and Nanking; he had made

Hankow his emergency capital. His big Chinese capitalists were in Hong Kong saving their personal fortunes. His foreign patrons, America, Britain, and France, were selling scrap iron to Japan and blockading China from the south. Only a thin line of aid came from Russia across great deserts. Chiang was forced back upon the Chinese people.

That was Chiang's moment. All patriots rallied around him. He rode a bicycle unguarded through Hankow. A woman of his family told me: "He only wanted power. Now he wants also popularity. He is happy when his picture is cheered in the movies." That was Chiang's chance to unify China and go down in history as her savior. He remained a war lord married to Big Business and cherishing personal hates. His moment passed.

I went north to the war zone by Marshal Yen Hsi-shan's special train to visit the already famous Eighth Route Army of the Communist general, Chu Teh, which was operating widely behind the Japanese lines. The private train was war-zone type, grim. Dining-car windows were broken, with zero weather outside. I put water in my soap dish on the dining-car table to see what would happen. It was ice in forty minutes. We used charcoal braziers in the sleeping compartments till one man fainted from the fumes. You couldn't walk in the aisles at night for the jumble of arms, legs, and bodies of Yen's sleeping guards.

Since Yen was commander of the Second War Zone, the Communist troops of Chu Teh were technically under him. Yen said they were obedient. "*All* the troops in my war zone are." You could believe it if you liked. Actually Yen was an aged feudal lord with no military sense. If he ever gave any clear orders, which I doubt, he couldn't get out in the hills to check. He adored conversations on the philosophies of social change and was far more interested in playing with utopias than in the unpleasant drudgery of the Japanese war. I had many train talks with him. He bowed politely to Communism but dismissed it as infantile. His theory of the moment was social reform by abolishing money, but he was receptive to the single tax and to the "share the wealth" of Huey Long. His poise was classic, his speech unhurried; his gesturing hands, rhythmic as a dancer's, built and demolished states, measured out time and space, caressed towns and villages. Autocrat of Shansi, though chased from his capital,