

# MAO TSE-TUNG

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## ON PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC DICTATORSHIP



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*Written in Commemoration of the 28th Anniversary  
of the Chinese Communist Party  
July 1, 1949*

FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS  
PEKING 1953

First Edition . . . December 1949  
Second Edition . . . June 1950  
Third Edition . . . September 1950  
Fourth Edition . . . June 1951  
Fifth Edition . . . July 1952  
Sixth Edition . . . December 1953

*Printed in the People's Republic of China*

**T**HIS day, the first of July, 1949, marks the fact that the Chinese Communist Party has already run a course of twenty-eight years. Like a human being, a political party has its childhood, youth, manhood and old age. The Chinese Communist Party is no longer a child or a lad in his teens but has reached manhood. When a man reaches old age, he will die; the same is true of a party, for when classes disappear, all instruments of class struggle—the party and the state machine—will become less and less useful or necessary and gradually wither away along with the fulfilment of their historical mission, and human society will move to a higher stage. We form the very opposite of the political parties of the bourgeoisie. They are afraid to speak of the elimination of classes, state power and parties. We, on the contrary, openly declare that we are striving hard precisely to create the conditions that will hasten the elimination of these things. The Communist Party and the state power of the people's dictatorship constitute such conditions. Anyone who does not recognize this truth is not a Communist. Perhaps it is not yet grasped by young comrades who have only recently joined the Party and have not studied Marxism-Leninism. They must

grasp it before they can form a correct world outlook. They must understand that all mankind has to go through the process of eliminating classes, state power and parties; it is only a matter of time and conditions. The Communists throughout the world are wiser than the bourgeoisie: they understand the laws governing the existence and development of things, they understand dialectics, and they can see further ahead. The bourgeoisie finds this truth unpalatable because it does not want to be overthrown. It is painful and intolerable for anyone to be overthrown, such as for the Kuomintang reactionaries we have just overthrown, and for Japanese imperialism we and other peoples jointly overthrew. But the problem with the working class, the working people and the Communists is not one of being overthrown, but one of working hard to create the conditions for classes, state power and political parties to wither away in the most natural manner and for mankind to enter the era of world communism. In order to clarify the problems which follow, we have mentioned here in passing the long-range perspective of human progress.

As we all know, our Party has run the course of twenty-eight years not peacefully but amidst difficulties, for we had to fight foreign and domestic enemies as well as enemies inside and outside the Party. We are indebted to Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin for giving us a weapon. The weapon is not a machine gun, but Marxism-Leninism.



In his book "*Left-Wing*" *Communism, An Infantile Disorder*, written in 1920, Lenin described the quest of the Russians for the revolutionary theory. It was only after several decades of hardships and tribulations that the Russians found Marxism. The state of affairs in China was in many respects identical with or similar to that in Russia before the October Revolution. There was feudal oppression in both countries. There was similar backwardness in economy and culture: both countries were backward but China was more so. In both countries alike the progressives boggled at no struggles, however bitter, in their pursuit of revolutionary truth for national regeneration.

After China's defeat in the Opium War of 1840, Chinese progressives went through infinite toil in search of truth from the Western countries. Hung Hsiu-chuan, Kang Yu-wei, Yen Fu and Sun Yat-sen represented the group of people who, before the birth of the Chinese Communist Party, looked to the West for truth. At that time the Chinese bent upon progress would read any book that contained the new teachings of the West. Students were sent to Japan, Great Britain, the United States of America, France and Germany in amazing numbers. The ancient system of imperial competitive examinations was abolished and modern schools sprang up like bamboo shoots after a spring rain; every effort was made to pursue Western studies. I also devoted myself to such studies in my youth. They in fact represent the

culture of Western bourgeois democracy, the so-called "new learning," including the social theories and natural sciences of that period in contradistinction to the Chinese feudal culture, the so-called "old learning." For quite a long time the pursuers of the new learning felt confident that this knowledge would mean the salvation of China and very few of them expressed any doubt about it as the adherents of the old learning did. The only way to save China was to modernize it, and the way to modernize it had to be learnt from abroad. Of the foreign countries at that time, only the Western capitalist countries were progressive, as they had successfully built up modern states of the bourgeoisie. The Japanese had learnt from the West to good effect and the Chinese also hoped to learn from the Japanese. The Chinese of that time saw Russia as a backward country and few wanted to learn from her. This was how the Chinese went to school to the foreign countries in the period from the 1840's to the beginning of the twentieth century.

Imperialist aggressions shattered the illusions of the Chinese about learning from the West. Wasn't it strange that the teachers should always be encroaching upon the pupil? The Chinese learnt a good deal from the West, but they could not put what they learnt into effect and could never realize their ideals. Their repeated struggles, including such a nation-wide movement as the Revolution of 1911, all ended in failure. Day by day, conditions in the country deteriorated until finally life became impossible. Doubts

arose, increased and grew. The First World War shook the whole globe. The Russians carried out the October Revolution and created the first socialist state in the world. Under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin the revolutionary energy of the great Russian proletariat and working people, hitherto latent and invisible to outsiders, suddenly erupted like a volcano; and then the Chinese people and all mankind began to see the Russians in a new light. Then and only then did the Chinese enter an entirely new era, both in thought and in life. They found Marxism-Leninism, a universal truth applicable everywhere, and China began to assume a different aspect.

It was the Russians that introduced the Chinese to Marxism. Before the October Revolution, the Chinese were not only ignorant of Lenin and Stalin but did not even know of Marx or Engels. The salvoes of the October Revolution awoke us to Marxism-Leninism. The October Revolution helped the progressives in China and throughout the world to adopt the proletarian world outlook as an instrument for studying a nation's destiny and reconsidering their own problems. The conclusion was: "Follow the path of the Russians." In 1919, the May Fourth Movement took place in China. In 1921, the Chinese Communist Party was founded. The October Revolution and the birth of the Chinese Communist Party found Sun Yat-sen in the depth of despair. He welcomed the October Revolution, welcomed Russian aid to the Chinese, and welcomed the co-operation of the Chinese Com-



munist Party. Then Sun Yat-sen died and Chiang Kai-shek rose to power. In the long period of twenty-two years, Chiang Kai-shek dragged China into hopeless straits. In this period the anti-fascist Second World War, with the Soviet Union as its main force, brought about the downfall of three big imperialist powers and the weakening of two others; and in the world only one big imperialist power, the United States, remains unscathed. But, faced with a grave domestic crisis, the United States has cherished the desire to enslave the whole world and thus helped Chiang Kai-shek to slaughter several millions of Chinese by supplying him with arms. Under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese people, after expelling Japanese imperialism, have been carrying on the war of liberation for three years and have attained basic victory.

This was how Western bourgeois civilization, bourgeois democracy and the bourgeois pattern of republic all went bankrupt in the eyes of the Chinese people. Bourgeois democracy gives way to the people's democracy under the leadership of the working class and the bourgeois republic gives way to the people's republic. This makes possible the transition through a people's republic to socialism and communism, to the disappearance of classes and the realization of world communism. Kang Yu-wei wrote the *Book of World Communism*, but he did not and could not find the way to world communism. The bourgeois republic has existed in foreign lands but cannot exist

in China, because China was a country under imperialist oppression. For China, the only way to world communism is through a people's republic led by the working class.

All other things were tried and all failed. Among those people who had a fancy for any of them, some have fallen down, some have awakened to their error, and some are in the process of a change of heart. Events have developed so swiftly that many feel the abruptness of the change and the necessity of learning everything anew. This state of mind is understandable and we welcome such good intentions to learn anew.

Having learnt Marxism-Leninism after the October Revolution, the vanguard of the Chinese proletariat founded the Chinese Communist Party. Thereupon it entered into political struggles and had travelled along a tortuous path for twenty-eight years before it attained basic victory. From our twenty-eight years' experience we have drawn the same conclusion that Sun Yat-sen, in his Testament, said he had drawn from his "experiences during . . . forty years," that is, to achieve victory "we must arouse the masses of the people and unite in a common fight with those nations of the world who treat us on the basis of equality." Sun Yat-sen had a world outlook different from ours and he started from a different class standpoint in studying and tackling problems; yet, on the question of how in the 1920's to struggle against imperialism he reached a conclusion basically the same as ours.

Twenty-four years have elapsed since Sun Yat-sen's death and, under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, the Chinese revolution has made tremendous strides forward in both theory and practice and has fundamentally changed China's physiognomy. The following two points constitute the principal and fundamental experiences that the Chinese people have obtained up to present: (1) internally, to arouse the masses of the people—this means uniting the working class, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie into a national united front under the leadership of the working class, and from this proceeding to build up a state of the people's democratic dictatorship, a state under the leadership of the working class and based on the alliance of workers and peasants; and (2) externally, to unite in a common fight with the people of all countries as well as with those nations of the world who treat us on the basis of equality—this means allying ourselves with the Soviet Union, with every New Democracy, and with the proletariat and the broad masses of people in all other countries to form an international united front.

“You are leaning on one side.” Exactly. The forty years' experience of Sun Yat-sen and the twenty-eight years' experience of the Chinese Communist Party have taught us to lean on one side, and we are firmly convinced that in order to achieve victory and consolidate it we must lean on one side. According to these experiences, all the Chinese people, without

exception, must lean either on the side of imperialism or on that of socialism. Sitting on the fence will not do; nor is there a third road. We oppose Chiang Kai-shek's reactionary clique which leans on the side of imperialism and we also oppose illusions about a third road. Not only in China but throughout the world, all the people, without exception, must lean either on imperialism or on socialism. Neutrality is merely a camouflage; a third road does not exist.

"You are too provocative." We are talking about how to deal with domestic and foreign reactionaries, *i.e.*, the imperialists and their jackals, and not about dealing with any other people. With regard to the reactionaries, the question of being provocative or not does not arise; provocation or no provocation, they will remain the same, because they are reactionaries. Only by drawing a sharp line between reactionaries and revolutionaries, by exposing the intrigues and plots of the reactionaries and arousing the vigilance and attention of the revolutionaries, and by raising our own morale while deflating the enemy's prestige, can we isolate the reactionaries, defeat them or oust them. We must not show the slightest fear before a wild beast, and must learn from the example of Wu Sung on the Chingyang Ridge.<sup>1</sup> As Wu Sung saw it, the tiger on the Chingyang Ridge would fall on a man and

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<sup>1</sup> Wu Sung, one of the 108 "heroes" in the historical novel *Water Margin*, rose to fame by killing with bare hands a tiger on the Chingyang Ridge.

eat him up, provocation or no provocation. There are only two alternatives: either to kill the tiger or to be eaten by it.

"We want to do business." All right; business must be done anyway. We oppose only the domestic and foreign reactionaries who hamper our business transactions and not anyone else. We should all realize that it is none other than the imperialists and their jackals, Chiang Kai-shek's reactionary clique, who are hindering us from doing business as well as establishing diplomatic relations with foreign countries. When, by uniting all domestic and international forces, we have beaten the reactionaries inside and outside the country, we can do business and we shall find it possible to establish diplomatic relations with all foreign countries on the basis of equality, mutual benefit, and mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty.

"We can win victory even without international assistance." This is an erroneous idea. In an era when imperialism still exists, it is impossible for a genuine people's revolution in any country to win victory without various forms of help from the international revolutionary forces. Even should victory be won, it could not be consolidated. This was true of the victory of the October Revolution and its consolidation, as Stalin long ago told us. This was also the case in the establishment of the New Democracies after three imperialist countries were overthrown in the Second World War. This is also true of the pres-



ent and the future of the people's China. Just think, if the Soviet Union did not exist, if there had been no victory over fascism in the Second World War, if Japanese imperialism had not been defeated, if the various New Democracies had not arisen, if the oppressed nations of the East had not risen to fight and if there were no struggle between the masses of the people and the reactionary rulers inside the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and other capitalist countries—if there were no combination of all these things, the international reactionary forces bearing down upon us would certainly be immeasurably greater than they are now. Could we have won victory under such circumstances? Obviously not. And even should victory be won, it could not be consolidated. The Chinese people have already had more than enough experience in such matters. The experience was reflected long ago in Sun Yat-sen's death-bed injunction on the necessity of uniting with the international revolutionary forces.

“We need assistance from the British and U.S. governments.” At present, this is a naive way of thinking. Would the present rulers of Britain and the United States, who are imperialists, give aid to a people's state? Yet, why is business done between these countries and ourselves? And why eventually would these countries, as it can be assumed, grant us loans on terms of mutual benefit? The reason is that their capitalists want to make money and their bankers want to earn interest in order to avert their own

crisis; they certainly do not mean to help the Chinese people. The Communist Parties and the progressive parties and groups in Britain and the United States are at this moment campaigning for the establishment of trade and even diplomatic relations with us. This is well-intentioned, this is aid, and this has nothing in common with the actions of the bourgeoisie in these countries. During his lifetime Sun Yat-sen appealed for countless times to the capitalist countries for help, but all in vain; he met with cruel rebuffs. Only once did Sun Yat-sen receive foreign aid, which came from the Soviet Union. Let the readers refer to Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Testament; there he earnestly enjoins people not to look for help from the imperialist countries but to "unite . . . with those nations of the world who treat us on the basis of equality." Dr. Sun had the experience; he had been taken in and given a raw deal. We should remember his words and not allow ourselves to be taken in again. Internationally we belong to the side of the anti-imperialist front headed by the Soviet Union, and so we can only turn to this side for genuine and friendly help, not to the side of the imperialist front.

"You are dictatorial." Right you are, my dear sirs! That is indeed what we are. All the experiences the Chinese people have accumulated in the course of several decades tell us to put into effect a people's democratic dictatorship, that is, to deprive the reactionaries of the right to voice their opinions and give that right to the people alone.

Who are the people? At the present stage in China, they are the working class, the peasantry, the petty bourgeoisie and the national bourgeoisie; under the leadership of the working class and the Communist Party, all these classes unite to build up their own state and elect their own government to enforce their dictatorship over the jackals of imperialism—the landlord class and bureaucratic bourgeoisie, as well as their representative: the Kuomintang reactionary clique and its accomplices; and to suppress them, compel them to abide by the laws and orders and proscribe them if they are refractory in speech or action. If they prove refractory, they will be instantly proscribed and punished. Democracy is realized within the ranks of the people, who enjoy the freedoms of speech, assembly, association, etc. The right to vote is given only to the people, not to the reactionaries. The combination of these two aspects, democracy for the people and dictatorship over the reactionaries, means the people's democratic dictatorship.

Why must things be done in this way? Everyone understands the point clearly. If things were not done in this way, the revolution would fail, the people would suffer, and the state would perish.

“Don't you want to eliminate state power?” Yes, we do, but not now; we cannot yet afford to do that. Why? Because imperialism still exists, and within our country reactionaries and classes still exist. Our present task is to strengthen the people's state machine—principally the people's army, the people's

police and the people's courts—so that national defence can be consolidated and the people's interests protected. Given these conditions, China, under the leadership of the working class and the Communist Party, can develop steadily from an agricultural into an industrial country and from a New-Democratic into a socialist and communist society, in order to eliminate classes and achieve world communism. The state machine, including the army, the police and the courts, is the instrument with which one class oppresses another. It is an instrument of oppression against all hostile classes; it means violence and is certainly not anything “benevolent.” “You are merciless.” Quite so. We definitely do not adopt a benevolent policy towards the reactionary activities of the reactionaries and the reactionary classes. Our benevolent policy applies only to the people, not to the reactionary activities of the reactionaries and reactionary classes that are outside the ranks of the people.

The people's state protects the people. Only in such a state can the people educate and remould themselves by democratic methods on a national and all-round scale, so that they can shake off the influences of domestic and foreign reactionaries (which is still very strong and will remain for a long time to come, and which cannot be speedily eradicated), get rid of the bad habits and ideas acquired from the old society, avoid being misled by the reactionaries, continue to advance and make progress towards a socialist and communist society.