

**THIRTY YEARS OF
THE COMMUNIST PARTY
OF CHINA
BY HU CHIAO-MU**

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The Communist Party of China which was founded on July 1, 1921, is now thirty years old. Its thirty years' history is the history of how Marxism-Leninism has attained a great victory in a vast country possessing almost a quarter of the world's population, in a country which was semi-feudal and semi-colonial in character. It is the history of how the Chinese working class has led the broad masses of the peasants and other democratic forces in waging heroic struggles against the imperialists and their lackeys, in finally overthrowing their reactionary regime after undergoing a long period of difficulties and traversing a circuitous course, and in founding a people's democratic republic led by the working class and based on an alliance of the workers and peasants, thereby opening a broad road for the future transition to socialism.

The history of the thirty years' struggle of the Communist Party of China can be related in four parts:

- (1) the foundation of the Party and the First Revolutionary Civil War, 1921-1927,
- (2) the Second Revolutionary Civil War, 1927-1936,
- (3) the War of Resistance to Japanese Aggression, 1937-1945, and
- (4) the Third Revolutionary Civil War and the foundation of the People's Republic of China.

The following is a brief outline of the history of these thirty years.

1. THE FOUNDATION OF THE PARTY AND THE FIRST REVOLUTIONARY CIVIL WAR

The Communist Party of China is the product of the synthesis of the Chinese working-class movement with Marxism-Leninism. It is no accident that the Party was founded in 1921. This took place following World War I, the October Socialist Revolution in Russia, and the patriotic May Fourth Movement of the Chinese people which began on May 4, 1919, against the imperialist Treaty of Versailles and, in general, against imperialism and feudalism.

During World War I, China's feeble industries made relatively rapid strides, and correspondingly the Chinese working class increased numerically and the scale of its struggles developed. After the victory of the October Revolution in Russia, the influence of Marxism-Leninism permeated China's revolutionary intellectual circles. The May Fourth Movement helped to bring about the synthesis of the Chinese working-class movement with Marxism-Leninism and laid the basis for the foundation of the Party. A year after the May Fourth Movement, communist groups had been formed in such major cities as Shanghai, Peking, Hankow, Changsha, Canton, Tsinan, Hangchow and others.

The process of the growth of the Chinese working class coincided with the process of the reduction of China to a semi-colonial status resulting from imperialist aggression, and of the struggle of the Chinese people against the foreign aggressors and their lackeys—the Chinese feudal rulers.

In 1840, Britain's armed forces invaded China, began the Opium War, and compelled China to sign the first of the unequal treaties—the Treaty of Nanking. This was followed by the Anglo-French War against China of 1857, the Sino-French War of 1884, the Sino-Japanese War of 1894, the Eight-Power War against China of 1900, and the Japanese seizure of China's Shantung Peninsula in 1914. By means

of these wars and other methods the foreign aggressors grabbed China's territory, extorted "indemnities" from China, exacted the privileges of stationing troops on Chinese soil and opening banks, commercial houses and factories in China, controlled China's trading ports, communication lines and customs administration, and carved out "spheres of influence" by means of which they manipulated China's internal affairs and reduced China, politically and economically, to a semi-colonial status. Imperialist aggression threatened the very existence of the Chinese people and made China's economic development and political advance impossible. Thus, to fight against imperialism and to overthrow imperialist rule in China became a most fundamental task of the Chinese revolution.

The penetration of foreign capitalism had the effect of breaking down China's feudal economy and stimulating the development of Chinese capitalism. China's modern industries began to emerge in the sixties of the last century but these national industries made only a feeble development over several decades owing to their twofold oppression by imperialism and feudalism. In the last stage of feudalism, China's reactionary rulers subjected all sections of the labouring people to barbarous oppression. The landlord class owned the greater part of the agricultural land, took the bulk of the peasants' income and enjoyed various privileges over them in addition to their economic privileges. Usurers, merchants, compradors, feudal bureaucrats and landlords jointly plundered the peasants and handicraftsmen. Of the industries, part belonged to the imperialists, part to the Chinese bureaucrats, and the part belonging to the Chinese capitalists was subjected to pressure and to being squeezed out by the other two.

The feudal-bureaucratic government had long relied on imperialist support and assistance in suppressing the revolutionary movement of the Chinese people. After the defeat in the War of 1900, it completely surrendered to imperialism.

This situation continued without any basic change under the successive warlord governments of the so-called "Republic of China" established in 1912. The change that occurred after 1912 was that China's superficial unity became an open split. Backed by their respective imperialist masters, the warlords continuously fought among themselves. Both before and after 1912 the various factions among the feudal rulers refused to carry out any real social reforms. Thus to fight against feudalism and to overthrow its rule in China became another most fundamental task of the Chinese revolution.

In the circumstances described above, the fundamental demand of the Chinese people was the overthrow of the oppression of imperialism and feudalism and the realization of the country's independence and democratic freedom.

Correct leadership was needed to realize this vital demand. From the time of the Opium War to the eve of the May Fourth Movement, the Chinese people had waged many struggles against imperialism and feudalism. The most significant of these struggles were the Peasants' Revolutionary War of 1851-1864, which broke out ten years after the Opium War and gave birth to the "Taiping Heavenly Kingdom," and the bourgeois revolution of 1911 which took place ten years before the Communist Party of China was founded. However, all these struggles and revolutions had failed. The Chinese bourgeoisie, being itself weak, feared imperialism and feudalism as well as it did the workers and peasants. Far from being able to settle the question of fighting against imperialism and feudalism, it dared not even raise this question. The peasantry were extremely numerous and they possessed the determination to oppose imperialism and feudalism, but because of the limitations of their obsolete and backward methods of production, they did not see any prospects of success in the struggle and were therefore incapable of undertaking the task of leading the revolution to victory.

A new class was needed to assume the responsibility of leadership. Such a class should be capable of putting forward a correct and complete programme for the struggle, should be capable of uniting all forces that could be united, both at home and abroad, in carrying on a struggle to the end against the powerful enemy. The working class was such a class. Although the Chinese working class was small in number (about three million), it differed from the peasantry in that it represented the new productive forces; it differed from the bourgeoisie in that it was the victim of the threefold oppression of imperialism, feudalism and capitalism, and that it possessed a resolute will to fight.

The Chinese working class first played an active, political role in the May Fourth Movement of 1919. It was at this time that the influence of Marxism-Leninism began to penetrate into the ranks of the working class. The workers in Shanghai, Tangshan and Changhsintien called a political strike, for the first time in Chinese history, as their part in the nation-wide anti-imperialist struggle of the people, thus helping to bring the struggle to a speedy victory. The growth of the strength of the Chinese working class served as an impetus to the Left wing of China's intellectuals in the May Fourth Movement and helped them to make up their mind to carry on revolutionary work among the workers. In the realm of culture the May Fourth Movement raised the slogan of fighting for democracy and science, but the Left wing of this movement—revolutionary intellectuals who had acquired a rudimentary idea of communism under the influence of the October Revolution in Russia, disseminated at the same time the viewpoint that China must realize socialism and that it was essential to use Marxism-Leninism to guide the Chinese revolution. On the basis of this viewpoint they carried on propaganda and organizational work among the workers. In this way, the Chinese working-class movement and the Chinese revolutionary movement entered a new stage.

In his book *On New Democracy*, Comrade Mao Tse-tung considers the year 1919 as the turning point at which the Chinese democratic revolution was transformed from a democratic revolution of the old type into a democratic revolution of the new type. This was because from that date the democratic revolution in China had become a revolution led by the Chinese working class and constituted a part of the world proletarian socialist revolution. In this historic treatise, Comrade Mao Tse-tung particularly elaborated the Leninist-Stalinist theory that, following World War I and the October Revolution in Russia, the national liberation movement had become part of the world proletarian socialist revolution, and he also stressed that the revolutionary movement of 1919 in China was an event that "came into being at the call of the world revolution of that time, of the Russian Revolution, and of Lenin."

It must especially be remembered in this regard that as early as 1900, and particularly in 1912 and 1913, Lenin himself had already paid great attention to and written important articles on the Chinese question. During the period 1918-1920, the most critical years following the October Revolution, Lenin and Stalin on many occasions gave the most profound guidance concerning the national problem in the East. It was precisely this guidance which formed the principal starting point of Comrade Mao Tse-tung's *On New Democracy*. At the Second Congress of the Communist International held in July, 1920, Lenin made a special report and put forward a programme on the national and colonial question. These classic documents written by Lenin charted the fundamental revolutionary course for the oppressed nations and for the people of the colonial and semi-colonial countries, laid down the basic policy that the communists should adopt in the national-revolutionary movements, and in so doing immensely helped the Chinese revolution.

On July 1, 1921, twelve delegates elected by the communist groups that had developed in various centres after

the May Fourth Movement held the First Party Congress in Shanghai, a centre of China's industries and working-class movement. These delegates included Mao Tse-tung, Tung Pi-wu, Chen Tan-chiu, Ho Shu-heng and others, representing fifty communists. The First Party Congress adopted the first Constitution of the Communist Party of China, elected the central organs of the Party and founded the Communist Party of China. From that time, there appeared in China an entirely new and united political party, a party of the working class, with communism as its aim and with Marxism-Leninism as its guide to action. A representative of the Communist International was present at this Congress.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung was the delegate of the Party organizations in Hunan Province where, prior to the May Fourth Movement, he had formed revolutionary organizations. In 1920 he had organized a group to study Marxism and in the same year formed the Socialist Youth League. After the First Party Congress, he returned to Hunan to take up the post of Party Secretary for that province. His work enabled Hunan to become one of the most advanced provinces in the working-class movement and peasant movement during the First Revolutionary Civil War.

The First Party Congress elected Chen Tu-hsiu to head the central organs of the Party. While he was well known as a democrat of the radical type before and during the May Fourth Movement and became a highly influential socialist propagandist and a sponsor of the Communist Party after Marxism was introduced to China, Chen Tu-hsiu was, however, not a good Marxist.

The Second Party Congress was held in Shanghai in July 1922. This Congress formulated a Party Manifesto in which it laid down the maximum programme and minimum programme of the Party, criticized the various bourgeois reformist ideologies which were current, and defined the immediate basic tasks of the Chinese people as follows:

. . . to eliminate civil strife, overthrow the warlords and establish internal peace; to overthrow the oppression of international imperialism and achieve the complete independence of the Chinese nation; to unify the whole of China into a genuine democratic republic.

Thereafter the conditions would be created for building socialism and communism. Thus, for the first time in Chinese history, the Party put before the Chinese people genuine revolutionary, democratic slogans.

The shortcomings of the Manifesto were that it did not point out that the democratic revolution must be led by the proletariat, that it did not set forth the demand of the workers and peasants for political power or the demand of the peasants for land, and that it only called upon the workers and peasants to take part in the democratic revolution and to fight for their own rights. Later these shortcomings were developed by the opportunist group of Chen Tu-hsiu into a seriously wrong political line in the Party's leadership of the revolutionary work in the period 1924-1927.

The Second Party Congress resolved that the Party join the Communist International.

In the two years following its foundation, the Party concentrated its efforts on leading the working-class movement. It established the legal Chinese Trade Union Secretariat to lead the working-class movement throughout the country. It convened the First All-China Labour Congress in May 1922 in Canton. As a result of the effective work of the Party, the tide of the workers' struggle rose all over the country from January 1922 to February 1923. More than 300,000 workers took part in over a hundred strikes in the major cities and industrial centres throughout the country. These strikes were all carried out under the leadership of Communist Party members and the majority of them were completely successful. Communist-led trade unions were formed by the workers after these victories. The swift development of the working-class movement and the workers'

organizations rapidly and clearly demonstrated the important role of the working class in China's political and economic life.

In February 1923, however, the reactionary ruling class dealt serious blows to this first upsurge of the Chinese working-class movement. Wu Pei-fu, the leading warlord who controlled the provinces of Hopei, Honan and Hupeh at the time, used force to suppress the inaugural meeting of the General Trade Union of the Peking-Hankow Railway Workers. When the workers on this and other lines went on strike in protest, Wu Pei-fu called out his troops and on February 7 they opened fire upon the railway workers at Hankow and Changhsintien. In this incident, known as the "February Seventh Massacre," some 40 workers were killed and several hundreds injured.

The heroic struggle of the Chinese railway workers showed the rapid development of the organized strength and revolutionary initiative of the working class, and greatly enhanced the political prestige of the working class and of the Communist Party of China among the whole Chinese people. At the same time, it proved that, without strong allies and without its own armed forces, the working class could not defeat the fully-armed reactionaries in circumstances where no democratic rights whatever existed. The new-born struggles of the workers ebbed temporarily as a result of the overwhelming pressure of the reactionary government. Facts taught the Party and the working class that, in order to achieve victory in the Chinese revolution, it was necessary to form an anti-imperialist and anti-feudal alliance with the peasants, who constitute 80 per cent of the country's population, with the scores of millions of urban petty bourgeoisie, and with those democratic elements of the bourgeoisie who stood for fighting against imperialism and feudalism, and to oppose armed counter-revolution by armed revolution.

The Party then took positive steps to unite with the Kuomintang led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, in the hope of bringing about

the alliance of the working class and other democratic forces through the Kuomintang. The League (Tungmenhui), predecessor of the Kuomintang, was the chief organizer of the Revolution of 1911 which overthrew the Manchu government. Politically, the League was a loose alliance of groups ranging from the radical elements of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie and the liberal elements of the bourgeoisie to the anti-Manchu elements of the landlord class.

After the Revolution of 1911 was betrayed, most groups of this alliance surrendered to imperialism and the reactionaries. The group headed by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, however, persisted in carrying on the bourgeois-democratic struggle and continued to suffer reverses. Dr. Sun Yat-sen had relied on the warlords in Kwangtung to conduct activities against the reactionary government in Peking but he was driven out of Kwangtung Province by the warlord Chen Chiung-ming, thus adding to the disintegration within the Kuomintang.

The victory of the October Socialist Revolution in Russia, the just policy pursued by the Soviet Union towards China and other oppressed peoples in the East, the May Fourth Movement, and the rise of the Communist Party of China and of the Chinese working-class movement after the May Fourth Movement—all gradually aroused the attention of Dr. Sun Yat-sen and other members of the Kuomintang and inclined them towards a revolutionary policy of uniting with the Soviet Union and the Communist Party.

The Third Party Congress of the Communist Party of China held in June 1923 correctly evaluated Dr. Sun Yat-sen's democratic stand against imperialism and the feudal warlords as well as the possibility of transforming the Kuomintang into a revolutionary alliance of the workers, peasants, petty bourgeoisie and national bourgeoisie.

The Third Party Congress criticized the two major deviations within the Party. One was the deviation represented by the capitulationism of Chen Tu-hsiu which was expressed in the view that the bourgeois-democratic revolution should

be led by the bourgeoisie, that "all work should be turned over to the Kuomintang," and that "once the democratic revolution has succeeded, all that the proletariat will gain will be some liberty and rights." Never for a moment did the exponents of this deviation try to enable the proletariat and the Communist Party to lead the revolution, so that the proletariat might be the first to gain from the victory of the revolution, become the nucleus of effective political power and use this political power to ensure the eventual advance of the country towards socialism. They argued that in the first revolution the bourgeoisie should be allowed to establish a bourgeois republic in which the proletariat could secure only some "liberty and rights" and nothing else. Therefore they thought that in the bourgeois-democratic revolution the proletariat could only play a passive and supplementary role and not the role of a leader. They maintained that the proletariat could only wait until the bourgeois republic had been established and until the capitalist economy had developed to a further point before overthrowing the bourgeois republic and replacing it with the dictatorship of the proletariat. They considered that only then could socialism be realized. This was to be the second revolution. Thus their view was known as the "dual-revolution theory."

The second deviation was the "closed-door" policy as represented by Chang Kuo-tao. The exponents of this deviation argued that the Communist Party must not co-operate with the Kuomintang, that only the working class could carry through the revolution, and that the Kuomintang could not carry through the democratic revolution. Therefore, they opposed Communist Party members, workers or peasants joining the Kuomintang. The Congress criticized the erroneous views both of the Right and of the "Left," and decided to co-operate with the Kuomintang and to allow members of the Communist Party to join the Kuomintang so as to reorganize the Kuomintang into a democratic revolutionary alliance while at the same time preserving the organizational

and political independence of the Communist Party. Nevertheless, the Third Party Congress did not pay proper attention to the peasant question and the question of revolutionary armed forces.

Comrade Mao Tse-tung attended the Third Party Congress. He firmly upheld the correct views and opposed the erroneous views. At this Congress, he was elected to the Central Committee of the Party.

The united front policy of the Party greatly accelerated the tempo of the Chinese revolution. Thanks to the efforts of the Communist Party of China and to the important assistance given by the leading body of the Communist International and by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks), the Kuomintang held its first National Congress in Canton in January 1924, issued a Manifesto, laid down the programme of the democratic revolution, and adopted various measures for reorganizing and revolutionizing itself. This Congress, which was attended and jointly led by Communist Party members, was in reality the starting point of a revolutionary upsurge. The co-operation between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party impelled Dr. Sun Yat-sen, the Left wing of the Kuomintang and the whole nation forward in the struggle against imperialism and feudalism and against their agents in the Kuomintang—the Right-wing elements. On the proposal of the Communist Party of China, and with its leadership and support, a revolutionary government and a revolutionary military academy were established in Kwangtung Province, an expeditionary war was launched against the reactionary forces in Kwangtung, and a nationwide popular movement was initiated for the convocation of a National Assembly and for the abrogation of the unequal treaties. The working-class movement resumed its activities and the peasant movement was launched.

The Fourth Party Congress of the Communist Party of China, which was held in January 1925, made organizational preparations for a new wave of mass struggles. Dr. Sun