



# **SOCIALIST UPSURGE IN CHINA'S COUNTRYSIDE**

**Edited by the General Office, Central Committee,  
Communist Party of China**

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

*Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside*, edited by the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, consists of 176 articles, originally published in three volumes in Chinese. Comrade Mao Tsetung wrote the preface and the editor's notes. The present English translation is from an abridged Chinese edition published by the People's Publishing House, Peking, in January 1956.

On March 19, 1958 Comrade Mao Tsetung wrote an explanation for a selection of these editor's notes reprinted for the enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party then being held in Chengtu. The explanation was first made public in 1976 with the publication of the *Selected Works of Mao Tsetung*, Volume V, in the annotation to the article entitled "Editor's Notes from *Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside*". Comrade Mao's explanation reads in full:

These notes which appeared in the book entitled *Socialist Upsurge in China's Countryside* were written in September and December 1955. To this day some have not lost their significance. There is however one statement in the notes to the effect that 1955 was the year in which socialism won basic victory in the decisive battle with capitalism; it is not proper to put it that way. This is the way it should be put: 1955 was the year in which basic victory was won

as regards the aspect of ownership in the relations of production, while in the other aspects of the relations of production as well as in some aspects of the superstructure, namely, on the ideological and political fronts, either a basic victory was not won or, if won, the victory was not complete, and further efforts were required. We did not anticipate that such a great storm would burst upon the world in 1956, nor did we anticipate that a campaign to "oppose rash advance" would occur in the same year in our country, a campaign which dampened the enthusiasm of the masses. Both events gave a considerable stimulus to the Rightists in mounting their wild attacks. Hence a lesson can be drawn: neither socialist revolution nor socialist construction is plain sailing, and we should be prepared to cope with the many great difficulties that may crop up at home and abroad. Both internationally and domestically the general situation is favourable, we can be sure of this, but many serious difficulties are bound to occur and we must be prepared to tackle them.

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## PREFACE

This is a source book intended for people working in the countryside. A preface was written for it in September. Now, three months later, that preface is already out of date, and so a new one has to be prepared.

Here is the sequence of events. The book has been compiled twice, in September and again in December. In the first compilation 121 articles were included. Most of them reflected conditions in the first half of 1955 and a few those in the second half of 1954. Sample copies were distributed for comment to responsible comrades from provincial, municipal, autonomous region and prefectural Party committees who attended the Sixth Plenary Session (Enlarged) of the Seventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, October 4-11, 1955. These comrades found the book needed to be supplemented. After the meeting most of the provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions sent in additional material. Much of this reflected conditions in the second half of 1955. Thus the book had to be recompiled. From



the original 121 articles we deleted 30, keeping 91, and added 85 from the new material, bringing the total to 176 articles — some 900,000 words. Hence the present collection. The comrades responsible for the editing have gone over all the material, made some verbal changes, added notes on difficult terms and prepared a subject index. Furthermore, we have added comments on some of the articles, criticizing certain erroneous ideas or making certain suggestions. To keep our comments separate from those of the editors of the original publications, ours carry the designation "Editor's Note". Since some of our comments were written in September and others in December, there is naturally some variation in tone.

However, what is involved is not just the material. The point is that the situation in China underwent a fundamental change in the second half of 1955. Of China's 110 million peasant households more than 70 million (over 60 per cent) have up to now (late December 1955) joined semi-socialist agricultural producers' co-operatives in response to the call of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. In my report of July 31, 1955 on the co-operative transformation of agriculture, I put the number of peasant households in co-operatives at 16,900,000, but in the space of a few months that number has

been exceeded by well over 50 million. This is a tremendous event. This event makes it clear to us that we need only the calendar year 1956 in order basically to complete the semi-socialist co-operative transformation of agriculture. In another three or four years, that is, by 1959 or 1960, we can in the main complete the transformation of semi-socialist co-operatives into fully socialist ones. This event makes it clear to us that we must try to accomplish the socialist transformation of China's handicrafts and capitalist industry and commerce ahead of schedule in order to meet the needs of an expanding agriculture. And this event makes it clear to us that in scale and tempo China's industrialization and the development of its science, culture, education, health work, etc. can no longer proceed exactly in the way previously envisaged, but must be appropriately expanded and accelerated.

Is agricultural co-operation, now proceeding at such a high tempo, going forward in a healthy way? It certainly is. The Party organizations everywhere are giving over-all leadership to the movement. The peasants are taking part in the movement wholeheartedly and in excellent order. Their enthusiasm for production is rising to unprecedented heights. For the first time the broadest masses know clearly

what the future has in store for them. When three five-year plans are completed, that is, by 1967, the production of grain and many other crops will probably double or treble the highest annual output before the founding of the People's Republic. In a relatively short time, say seven or eight years, illiteracy will be wiped out. Many of the diseases most harmful to the people, such as schistosomiasis, diseases formerly considered incurable, can now be treated. In short, the masses already see a great future lying before them.

The problem facing the whole Party and people is no longer that of criticizing Right conservative ideas about the speed of the socialist transformation of agriculture. That problem has been solved. Nor is it the problem of the speed of transforming the whole of capitalist industry and commerce trade by trade into joint state-private enterprises. That problem too has been solved. The speed of the socialist transformation of handicrafts should be discussed during the first half of 1956. And that problem can also be easily solved. The problem today concerns none of these, it lies elsewhere. It lies in agricultural production; industrial production (including state, joint state-private and co-operative industries); handicraft production; the scale and speed

of capital construction in industry, communications and transport; the co-ordination of commerce with other branches of the economy; the co-ordination of the work in science, culture, education and health with our various economic activities, etc. In all these fields there is an underestimation of the situation, a shortcoming which must be criticized and corrected if our work is to keep pace with the development of the situation as a whole. People must adapt their thinking to the changed conditions. Of course, no one should disregard reality and indulge in flights of fancy, or make plans of action unwarranted by the objective situation, or reach out for the impossible. However, the problem today is that Right conservative thinking is still causing trouble in many spheres and prevents our work from keeping pace with the development of the objective situation. The problem today is that what can be done by a measure of exertion is considered by many to be impossible. It is therefore entirely necessary to continue the criticism of Right conservative ideas, which do in fact exist.

This book is intended for comrades working in the countryside. Can city people read it too? They not only can but should. Here is something fresh. Just as new things are happening every day, every hour, in the building of socialism in the cities, so they

are in the countryside. What are the peasants doing? What is the connection between what the peasants are doing and what the working class, the intellectuals and all patriotic personages are doing? To gain such an understanding, it will be helpful to read about the rural areas.

To make it possible for more people to understand the current situation in the countryside, we are preparing an abridged edition, containing 44 of the 176 articles, or about 270,000 words, so that those unable to read the entire collection can have some idea of this subject.

*MAO TSETUNG*

December 27, 1955

## THE PARTY SECRETARY PITCHES IN AND ALL PARTY MEMBERS HELP RUN THE CO-OPS

(In the *Tangshan Peasants*, April 30, 1955)

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** *This is a very well written article which deserves to be recommended to the reader as the first piece in this book. As described at the beginning of the article, in many parts of the country there are still quite a few people who are "steering clear of the co-op" because they are ignorant about it and are afraid of being asked questions. "Resolute contraction", the wholesale dissolution of co-operatives by command, is likewise a manifestation of "steering clear of the co-op"; the only difference is that, instead of taking a passive attitude of evasion, these people take a very active attitude and "axe" (to use their own expression) a great many co-operatives with one fell blow. Axe in hand, they chop and thus avoid troublesome problems. They say that there are all sorts of difficulties in running co-operatives, and according to them the difficulties defy the imagination. However, there are countless examples throughout the country which give the lie to their arguments. One such example is the experience of Tsunhua County, Hopei Province. In 1952 no one there knew how to run a co-operative. Their solution was to learn how.*

*Their slogan was: "The Party secretary pitches in and all Party members help run the co-ops." The result was: "from knowing nothing to knowing a lot", "from a few knowing how to many knowing how", "from district cadres running the co-ops to the masses running them". In the three years from 1952 to 1954, the eleven townships of the Tenth District, Tsunhua County, Hopei Province, basically completed semi-socialist co-operative transformation, with 85 per cent of the 4,343 peasant households drawn into co-operatives. Compared with 1952, production in agriculture, forestry and animal husbandry in this district showed the following increases in 1954: grain 76 per cent, timber trees 56.4 per cent, fruit trees 62.87 per cent and sheep 463.1 per cent.*

Now we have every reason to raise this question: *If this could be done here, why can't it be done elsewhere? If you say it can't, what are your reasons? I can see only one reason — unwillingness to take the trouble, or, to put it more bluntly, Right opportunism. Hence "steering clear of the co-op", hence the Party secretary not pitching in and all Party members not helping to run the co-operatives, and hence from knowing nothing to still knowing nothing, from a few knowing how to still only a few knowing how, from district cadres running the co-operatives to still only district cadres running them. Or else, axe in hand, chopping down any troublesome co-operative in sight. If that reason prevails, then nothing can be accomplished. We have put forward such slogans as "active leadership and steady advance" and "comprehensive planning and more effective leadership", and we agree with the perfectly correct slogan raised by the comrades of Tsunhua County, "The Party secretary*

*pitches in and all Party members help run the co-ops." Hasn't there been "active leadership and steady advance" in Tsunhua County? Hasn't there been "comprehensive planning and more effective leadership"? Of course there has. Is this dangerous? Is this "rash advance"? Such danger as exists lies in "steering clear of the co-op", and this has been overcome by the Tsunhua County comrades. The danger also lies in "axing" co-operatives wholesale on the pretext of opposing "rash advance", but this did not happen in Tsunhua County. If, as is alleged, "the development of the co-operatives has gone beyond the level of political consciousness of the masses and the ability of the cadres to lead", how can one explain what happened in Tsunhua County? There the masses actually pressed for co-operation, there the cadres did change from knowing nothing to knowing a lot. Everybody has eyes, does anyone see any danger in Tsunhua County? In the three years in which they completed co-operative transformation step by step, grain increased by 76 per cent, timber trees by 56.4 per cent, fruit trees by 62.87 per cent and sheep by 463.1 per cent. Can this be considered any kind of danger? Can this be called "rash advance"? Can this be regarded as "having gone beyond the level of political consciousness of the masses and the ability of the cadres to lead"?*

*In the Tsunhua County co-operative movement there is the Wang Kuo-fan Co-operative, once known as a "paupers' co-op" because its twenty-three poor-peasant households owned only "three legs" of a donkey. Relying on their own efforts, its members "made the mountains yield" a substantial amount of the means of production in three years, a feat which moved not a few*



*visitors to tears. This, in my view, is the image of our entire nation. Why can't 600 million "paupers" create a prosperous and strong socialist country in several decades by their own efforts? Society's wealth is created by workers, peasants and working intellectuals. Provided they take their destiny into their own hands, provided they have a Marxist-Leninist line and energetically tackle problems instead of evading them, they can overcome any difficulty on earth.*

*Finally, we wish to thank the author of this article which carries no byline. Brimming with enthusiasm and writing in a lively style, he gives a detailed description of the process of the co-operative transformation of agriculture in one district. This will be no small contribution to co-operative transformation in the whole country. We hope every province, prefecture and county can produce one or more such articles.*

The Tenth District of Tsunhua County, Hopei Province, is divided into 11 townships which contain 42 administrative villages with 4,343 households. Agricultural producers' co-ops were first set up in the district in 1952, as an experiment. Today, the district has 72 co-ops, some purely agricultural, others combining agriculture, forestry and animal husbandry. Eighty-five per cent of all the peasant households in the district are co-op members. The co-operative movement here is essentially sound. A situation has been achieved in which, whenever a co-operative is established, it is put on a firm footing.

As co-operation spread, all kinds of productive activities in the district developed rapidly. Agricultural output in 1954 was 76 per cent higher than in 1952; there were 56.4 per cent