



MAO TSE-TUNG

THE CHINESE REVOLUTION
AND THE
CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The present translation of Mao Tse-tung's *Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party* is a revision of the original version based on the same Chinese text given in the second edition of the *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Volume II, published by the People's Publishing House, Peking, in August 1952.

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This is part of a textbook written jointly by Comrade Mao Tse-tung and several other comrades in Yen-an in December 1939. Comrade Mao revised the draft of the first chapter, "Chinese Society," and wrote the second chapter, "The Chinese Revolution." A third chapter on "Party Building" was left unfinished by the comrade drafting it. The present two chapters, especially Chapter II, have been an invaluable contribution to the education of the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people. In his *On New Democracy*, written in January 1940, Comrade Mao developed more fully the views set out in Chapter II.

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CHAPTER I

CHINESE SOCIETY

1. THE CHINESE NATION

China is one of the largest countries in the world, with a territory almost as large as the whole of Europe. In this vast territory there are large areas of fertile land which provide us with food and clothing, large and small mountain ranges traversing the length and breadth of the country which provide us with extensive forests and rich mineral deposits, many rivers and lakes which provide us with facilities for water transport and irrigation, and a long coast-line which facilitates communication with other nations beyond the seas. From very ancient times our forefathers have laboured, lived and multiplied on this vast expanse of land.

The present boundaries of China are as follows: It borders on the U.S.S.R. in the north-east, the north-west and part of the west; on the People's Republic of Mongolia in the north; on Afghanistan, India, Bhutan and Nepal in the south-west and part of the west; on Burma and Indo-China in the south; and it borders on Korea and is near Japan and the Philippines on the east. From the point of view of foreign relations, the geographical

situation of China affords both advantages and disadvantages to the Chinese people's revolution. It is to her advantage that China is contiguous to the Soviet Union, relatively remote from the major European and American imperialist countries, and has as her neighbours many countries which are colonies or semi-colonies. The disadvantage is that Japanese imperialism, making use of its geographical proximity, is constantly threatening the existence of the various nationalities in China and endangering the Chinese people's revolution.

China's population now totals 450 million, almost a quarter of the world population. Over nine-tenths of them are the Hans. There are scores of national minorities including the Mongols, the Huis, the Tibetans, the Uighurs, the Miaos, the Yis, the Chuangs, the Chungchias and the Koreans, all of whom have long histories, though they are at different stages of cultural development. China is a country with a very large population composed of many different nationalities.

Like many other peoples in their development, the Chinese (I am here referring mainly to the Hans) first lived in classless primitive communes for tens of thousands of years. It is approximately 4,000 years since the collapse of the primitive communes and the transition to class society, which was first slave society and then feudal society. In the history of Chinese civilization there have been highly-developed agriculture and handicraft which have always been famous; there have been many great thinkers, scientists, inventors, statesmen, military experts, men of letters and artists, and there is a vast treasury of classical art and literature. The compass was

invented in China in very early times.¹ The art of paper-making was discovered 1,800 years ago.² Block-printing was invented 1,300 years ago, and movable types 800 years ago.³ Gunpowder was used in China earlier than in Europe.⁴ China, with a recorded history of almost 4,000 years, is therefore one of the oldest civilized countries in the world.

The Chinese have always been famous throughout the world for their powers of endurance and industriousness, and also as a freedom-loving people with a rich revolutionary tradition. The history of the Hans, for instance, shows that the Chinese people never submitted to the tyranny of reaction and always succeeded in overthrowing or changing it by revolutionary means. In the thousands of years of Han history, there have been hundreds of peasant insurrections, great or small, against the reactionary rule imposed by the landlords and nobility. Most dynastic changes came about in consequence of

¹ The magnetic power of the loadstone was mentioned as early as the third century B.C. by Lu Pu-wei in his *Almanac*, and at the beginning of the first century A.D., Wang Ch'ung observed in his *Lun Heng* that the loadstone points to the south. Judging by travelogues written at the beginning of the twelfth century, the compass was already in general use by Chinese navigators at that time.

² Ts'ai Lun was the first to make paper from bark, hemp, rags and worn-out fishing nets, and in A.D. 105 presented his invention to the reigning emperor.

³ Invented by Pi Sheng during the 4th decade of the eleventh century.

⁴ According to tradition, invented in the ninth century. By the eleventh century the Chinese were already using gunpowder in war.

peasant uprisings. China's various nationalities have always resisted and rebelled against foreign yoke and struggled to shake it off. They accept a union of all nationalities on the basis of equality and oppose the oppression of one nationality by another. In thousands of years of history many national heroes and revolutionary leaders have emerged in China. So the Chinese are also a nation with a glorious revolutionary tradition and a splendid historical heritage.

2. ANCIENT FEUDAL SOCIETY

Although China is a great nation with a vast territory, an immense population, a long history, a rich revolutionary tradition and a splendid historical heritage, she has remained sluggish in her economic, political and cultural development since her transition from slave society to feudalism. The feudal system, beginning with the Chou and Ch'in dynasties, has lasted about 3,000 years.

In China's feudal era the principal characteristics of the economic and political system were:

1. A self-sufficing natural economy occupied the dominant position. The peasants produced both agricultural products and most of the handicraft articles they needed. What the landlords and nobility exacted from the peasants as land rent was used mainly for consumption and not for exchange. Although exchange was developing at that time, it did not play a decisive role in the economy as a whole.

2. A feudal ruling class composed of the landlords, the nobility and the emperor owned most of the land, while

the peasants had very little or none at all. The peasants tilled the land for the landlords, the nobility and the royal family with their own farm implements and turned over to them for consumption 40, 50, 60, 70, or even 80 per cent or more of the crops. Such peasants were actually serfs.

3. Not only did the landlords, the nobility and the royal family themselves live on rent extorted from the peasants, but the state set up by the landlord class also exacted tribute and taxes from the peasants and imposed forced labour to support a horde of government officials and an army used mainly for the oppression of the peasants.

4. The function of the state set up by the landlord class was the safeguarding of a feudal system of exploitation. In the period before the Ch'in dynasty there were a number of feudal states in each of which a prince held absolute sway; after the unification of China by the First Emperor of the Ch'in dynasty, there emerged a type of feudal state in which absolute power over the whole country was held by one prince, although the independent local feudal regimes survived to some extent. In this feudal state the emperor reigned supreme, appointed officials in all the localities to take charge of the armed forces, the law courts, the treasury and the state granaries and relied on the landed gentry as the mainstay of his regime.

Under this feudal system of economic exploitation and political oppression the Chinese peasants throughout the ages lived like slaves in dire poverty and suffering. Under the yoke of feudalism they had no freedom of person. They had no political rights whatever: the landlords could at will beat, insult and even kill them. The extreme

poverty and backwardness of the peasants as a result of the landlords' ruthless exploitation and oppression is the basic reason why China's economy and social life has remained stagnant for thousands of years.

In feudal society, the main contradiction is between the peasantry and the landlord class. In this society, the peasants and the handicraftsmen are the two principal classes which create wealth and culture.

This ruthless economic exploitation and political oppression forced the peasants to rise repeatedly in revolt against the rule of the landlord class. From Ch'en Sheng, Wu Kuang, Hsiang Yu and Liu Pang¹ of the Ch'in dynasty down to the T'ai'ping Heavenly Kingdom² in the Ching dynasty, including the Hsinshihs, the P'inglins, the Red

¹Leaders of the first great peasant uprising in Chinese history. In 209 B.C. Ch'en Sheng and Wu Kuang, who were among nine hundred conscripts on their way to take up garrison duty at a frontier post, organized in Chi County (now the county of Su in Anhwei Province) a revolt against the tyranny of the Ch'in dynasty. Hsiang Yu and Liu Pang, founder of the Han dynasty, were the most prominent among those who rose in response to this armed rebellion. Hsiang's army annihilated the main forces of Ch'in, and Liu's troops took Ch'in's capital.

²The revolutionary war waged by the Chinese peasants under the leadership of Hung Hsiu-ch'uan, Yang Hsiu-ch'ing and others in the middle of the nineteenth century against the feudal rule and national oppression of the Manchus. The T'ai'ping Heavenly Kingdom was established in 1851 after a successful uprising staged in Chintien Village, Kweiping, Kwangsi; the revolutionary forces then marched through Hunan, Hupeh, Kiangsi and Anhwei and in 1853 took Nanking, which became the capital of the kingdom. Though the T'ai'ping forces reached as far north as the vicinity of Tientsin, they did not establish consolidated bases in areas under their occupation and after the establishment of the headquarters of the government in Nanking, their leading group com-

Eyebrows, the Bronze Horses,¹ and the Yellow Turbans² of the Han dynasty, Li Mi and Tou Chien-teh³ of the Sui dynasty, Wang Hsien-chih and Huang Ch'ao⁴ of the T'ang dynasty, Sung Chiang and Fang La⁵ of the Sung dynasty, Chu Yuan-chang⁶ of the Yuan dynasty, Li Tzu-ch'eng⁷

mitted many political and military blunders. Finally the kingdom fell in 1864 under the combined attacks of the Manchus and the British, French and American armed forces.

¹In A.D. 8, Wang Mang, a powerful minister at the court of the Han, overthrew the reigning dynasty, ascended the throne and introduced certain reforms. As a result of a serious famine starving masses in Hsinshih (now in Kingshan County in Hupeh) and P'inglin (north-east of the present Sui County, Hupeh) rose in rebellion. The Bronze Horses and the Red Eyebrows were peasant forces which rose during the reign of Wang Mang in the present central Hopei and central Shantung respectively; the Red Eyebrows, the largest of all the peasant forces, were so named because all the soldiers painted their eyebrows red.

²A peasant force which rose in A.D. 184. So named because the soldiers wore yellow turbans.

³Leaders of big peasant forces which rose against the Sui dynasty in Honan and Hopei respectively at the opening of the seventh century.

⁴Wang Hsien-chih staged an uprising in Shantung in A.D. 874. In the following year Huang Ch'ao organized a rebellion in response. Huang Ch'ao's ten-year campaign is one of the best-known peasant wars in Chinese history.

⁵Well-known leaders of the peasant uprisings during the years A.D. 119-25; Sung Chiang was active along the borders between Shantung, Hopei, Honan and Kiangsu, while Fang La was active in Chekiang and Anhwei.

⁶Chu Yuan-chang joined the peasants led by Kuo Tzu-hsing against the Mongol dynasty and became their commander upon Kuo's death. He succeeded in driving out the Mongols and founded the Ming dynasty.

⁷Leader of a peasant revolt which overthrew the Ming

of the Ming dynasty, there were hundreds of uprisings, great and small, all of which were peasant rebellions, or rather, peasant revolutionary wars. The gigantic scale of some of these peasant uprisings and peasant wars in Chinese history is without parallel in the world. It is these class struggles, the peasant uprisings and peasant wars, that were the real motivating force of historical development in China's feudal society. Each major peasant uprising or war dealt a blow to the then existing feudal regime and to some extent furthered the development of the social productive forces. However, since no new productive forces, new relations of production, new class forces, nor an advanced political party existed in those days, the peasants lacked the correct leadership such as is given by the proletariat and the Communist Party today, and every one of their revolutions failed, the peasants were utilized during or after each revolution by the landlords and the nobility as a tool to bring about a dynastic change. Thus, although there was some social progress after each great peasant revolutionary struggle, the feudal economic relations and feudal political system remained basically unchanged.

It was only in the last hundred years that other and different changes took place.

dynasty in 1644. He failed in the end because he neglected to establish relatively consolidated base areas. The Manchus defeated him and conquered China.

3. PRESENT-DAY COLONIAL, SEMI-COLONIAL AND SEMI-FEUDAL SOCIETY

As explained above, Chinese society remained feudal for 3,000 years. But is it still completely feudal today? No, China has changed. Since the Opium War of 1840¹ China has changed gradually into a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. Since the Incident of September 18, 1931 when the Japanese imperialists started their armed invasion of China, Chinese society has changed still further into a colonial, semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. We shall now explain the course of this change.

As mentioned in Section 2, Chinese feudal society lasted for about 3,000 years. It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that great changes took place inside China as a result of the penetration of foreign capitalism.

As the development of commodity economy in China's feudal society carried within itself the seeds of capitalism,

¹Ever since the end of the 18th century, Britain exported large quantities of opium into China. In the middle of the 19th century, the Chinese people realized the pernicious effect of the drug traffic upon their national life and its inroads upon their silver reserve and vigorously protested. Under the pretext of safeguarding her trade, Britain launched armed aggression against China in 1840. The Chinese troops led by Lin Tse-hsu put up resistance, and the people in Canton spontaneously organized the "Quell-the-British Corps." In 1842, however, the corrupt Manchu regime signed the Treaty of Nanking with the British, paying indemnities, ceding Hongkong, opening the seaports of Shanghai, Fuchow, Amoy, Ningpo and Canton to British trade and agreeing to fix jointly with Britain the duties on imported British goods.

China would of herself have developed slowly into a capitalist society without the influence of foreign capitalism. The penetration of foreign capitalism speeded up this development. Foreign capitalism was instrumental in disintegrating China's social economy by destroying the foundation of her self-sufficing natural economy and wrecking her handicraft industries in both the cities and peasant homes, and also by hastening the development of commodity economy in town and country.

Thus apart from the collapse of the foundations of feudal economy, certain objective conditions emerged which made the development of capitalist production possible in China. For the destruction of the natural economy has created for capitalism a commodity market, while the impoverishment of large numbers of peasants and handicraftsmen has created for it a labour market.

In fact, as early as sixty years ago, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, under the stimulus of foreign capitalism and certain breaches in the feudal economic structure, some merchants, landlords and bureaucrats started investing in modern industries. About forty years ago at the turn of the century, China's national capitalism emerged in a rudimentary form. Then about twenty years ago during the first imperialist world war, China's own industry, chiefly textiles and flour milling, developed further because, preoccupied with the war, the European and American imperialist countries temporarily relaxed their oppression of China.

The emergence and development of national capitalism in China implied the emergence and development of the bourgeoisie and proletariat. Just as certain sections of the merchants, landlords and bureaucrats were prede-

cessors of the Chinese bourgeoisie, so certain sections of the peasants and handicraftsmen were the predecessors of the Chinese proletariat. The Chinese bourgeoisie and proletariat, as two distinct social classes, are new-born classes which never existed before in Chinese history. In embryo in feudal society, they have evolved into new social classes. They are interlinked but antagonistic classes, the twins born of China's old feudal society. Moreover, the Chinese proletariat has emerged and developed with the Chinese national bourgeoisie, and also with the enterprises directly operated in China by the imperialists. As a result, a very large section of the Chinese proletariat has a much longer existence and more experience than the Chinese bourgeoisie, and is thus a greater social force with a broader social basis.

The emergence and development of capitalism constitutes, however, only one aspect of the change that has taken place since imperialist penetration into China. Alongside with this there is also the aspect which hampers Chinese capitalism, namely, the attempt to check its development by foreign imperialism in league with China's feudal forces.

The imperialist powers certainly do not invade China with the purpose of transforming a feudal China into a capitalist China. Their aim is just the opposite—to transform China into their semi-colony or colony.

The imperialist powers have therefore used the following measures of military, political, economic and cultural oppression to turn China gradually into a semi-colony or colony.

1. The imperialist powers started many wars of aggression against China, for instance, the Opium War launched

by Britain in 1840, the War launched by the Anglo-French Allied Army in 1857,¹ the Sino-French War of 1884,² the Sino-Japanese War of 1894 and the War launched by the Eight-Power Allied Army in 1900.³ Having defeated

¹In December 1857, Britain and France, with the support of the United States and tsarist Russia, jointly waged a war of aggression on China. Devoting all its efforts to suppress the peasant revolution of the T'ai-p'ing Heavenly Kingdom, the Manchu regime made practically no resistance to the foreign aggressors. The Allied British and French forces successively captured and pillaged Canton, Tientsin and even the capital Peking, and finally forced the Manchu regime to sign the Treaty of Tientsin in 1858 and the Convention of Peking in 1860. The treaties made it possible for the imperialist forces to penetrate into the interior of China by providing that Tientsin, Newchwang, Tengchow, Taiwan, Tanshiu, Chaochow, Kiungchow, Nanking, Chenkiang, Kiukiang and Hankow be opened as trading ports and that foreigners be granted the special privilege of travelling and doing missionary work inland as well as the special privilege of inland navigation.

²In 1884 the French invaded Vietnam, Kwangsi, Fukien, Taiwan and Chekiang. The Chinese troops, led by Feng Tzu-ts'ai, Liu Yung-fu and others, put up stubborn resistance. In spite of the victories of the Chinese troops, the Manchu regime signed the Treaty of Tientsin with the French government, recognizing its occupation of Vietnam and allowing French influence to penetrate South China.

³The vast anti-imperialist mass movement of the peasants and handicraftsmen in North China in 1900. They formed secret societies based upon superstitious cults and led an armed struggle against imperialism. The joint forces of eight imperialist powers, Britain, the United States, Germany, France, Russia, Japan, Italy and Austria, occupied Peking and Tientsin and suppressed the movement. The Manchu government signed in 1901 a protocol with the eight imperialist powers, providing that China was to pay them 450 million taels (a tael being about 1.33 ounces) of silver