THE CHINESE REVOLUTION AND THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

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[The Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party is a textbook which was written jointly by Comrade Mao Tse-tung and several other comrades in Yenan to the winter of 1939. The first chapter, "Chinese Society", was drafted by other comrades and revised by Comrade Mao Tse-tung. The second chapter, "The Chinese Revolution", was written by Comrade Mao Tse-tung himself. Another chapter, scheduled to deal with "Party Building", was left unfinished by the comrades working on it. The two published chapters, and especially Chapter II, have played a great educational role in the Chinese Communist Party and among the Chinese people. The views on New Democracy set out by Comrade Mao Tse-tung in Chapter II were considerably developed in his "On New Democracy", written in January 1940.]

(Selection)

CHAPTER II: THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

1. THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENTS IN THE LAST HUNDRED YEARS

The history of China's transformation into a semi-colony and colony by imperialism in collusion with Chinese feudalism is at the same time a history of struggle by the Chinese people against imperialism and its lackeys. The Opium War, the Movement of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, the Sino-French War, the Sino-Japanese War, the Reform Movement of 1898, the Yi Ho Tuan Movement, the Revolution of 1911, the May 4th Movement, the May 30th Movement, the Northern Expedition, the Agrarian Revolutionary War and the present War of Resistance Against Japan--all testify to the Chinese people's indomitable spirit in fighting imperialism and its lackeys.

Thanks to the Chinese people's unrelenting and heroic struggle during the last hundred years, imperialism has not been able to subjugate China, nor will it ever be able to do so.

The valiant Chinese people will certainly fight on, even though Japanese imperialism is now exerting its full strength in an all-out offensive and many landlord and big bourgeois elements, such as the overt and covert Wang Ching-weis, have already capitulated to the enemy or are preparing to do so. This heroic struggle will not cease until the Chinese people have driven Japanese imperialism out of China and achieved the complete liberation of the country. The national revolutionary struggle of the Chinese people has a history of fully one hundred years counting from the Opium War of 1840, or of thirty years counting from the Revolution of 1911. It has not yet run its full course, nor has it yet performed its tasks with any signal success; therefore the Chinese people, and above all the Communist Party, must shoulder the responsibility of resolutely fighting on
What are the targets of the revolution? What are its tasks? What are its motive forces? What is its character? And what are its perspectives? These are the questions we shall now deal with.

2. THE TARGETS OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTION

From our analysis in the third section of Chapter I, we know that present-day Chinese society is a colonial, semi-colonial and semi-feudal society. Only when we grasp the nature of Chinese society will we be able clearly to understand the targets, tasks, motive forces and character of the Chinese revolution and its perspectives and future transition. A clear understanding of the nature of Chinese society, that is, of Chinese conditions, is therefore the key to a clear understanding of all the problems of the revolution.

Since the nature of present-day Chinese society is colonial, semi-colonial and semi-feudal, what are the chief targets or enemies at this stage of the Chinese revolution?

They are imperialism and feudalism, the bourgeoisie of the imperialist countries and the landlord class of our country. For it is these two that are the chief oppressors, the chief obstacles to the progress of Chinese society at the present stage. The two collude with each other in oppressing the Chinese people, and imperialism is the foremost and most ferocious enemy of the Chinese people, because national oppression by imperialism is the more onerous. Since Japan's armed invasion of China, the principal enemy of the revolution has been Japanese imperialism together with all the Chinese traitors and reactionaries in league with it, whether they have capitulated openly or are preparing to do so.

The Chinese bourgeoisie, which is also a victim of imperialist oppression, once led or played a principal role in revolutionary struggles such as the Revolution of 1911, and has participated in revolutionary struggles such as the Northern Expedition and the present War of Resistance Against Japan. In the long period from 1927 to 1937, however, its upper stratum, namely, the section represented by the reactionary clique within the Kuomintang, collaborated with imperialism, formed a reactionary alliance with the landlord class, betrayed the friends who had helped it--the Communist Party, the proletariat, the peasantry and other sections of the petty bourgeoisie--betrayed the Chinese revolution and brought about its defeat. At that time therefore, the revolutionary people and the revolutionary political party (the Communist Party) could not but regard these bourgeois elements as one of the targets of the revolution. In the War of Resistance a section of the big landlord class and big bourgeoisie, represented by Wang Ching-wei, has turned traitor and deserted to the enemy. Consequently, the anti-Japanese people cannot but regard these big bourgeois elements who have betrayed our national interests as one of the targets of the revolution.

It is evident, then, that the enemies of the Chinese revolution are very powerful. They include not only powerful imperialists and powerful feudal forces, but also, at times, the bourgeois reactionaries who collaborate with the imperialist and feudal forces to oppose the people. Therefore, it is wrong to underestimate the strength of the enemies of the revolutionary Chinese people.

In the face of such enemies, the Chinese revolution cannot be other than protracted and ruthless. With such powerful enemies, the revolutionary forces cannot be built up and tempered into a
power capable of crushing them except over a long period of time. With enemies who so ruthlessly suppress the Chinese revolution, the revolutionary forces cannot hold their own positions, let alone capture those of the enemy, unless they steel themselves and display their tenacity to the full. It is therefore wrong to think that the forces of the Chinese revolution can be built up in the twinkling of an eye, or that China's revolutionary struggle can triumph overnight.

In the face of such enemies, the principal means or form of the Chinese revolution must be armed struggle, not peaceful struggle. For our enemies have made peaceful activity impossible for the Chinese people and have deprived them of all political freedom and democratic rights. Stalin says, "In China the armed revolution is fighting the armed counter-revolutionary. That is one of the specific features and one of the advantages of the Chinese revolution."[22] This formulation is perfectly correct. Therefore, it is wrong to belittle armed struggle, revolutionary war, guerrilla war and army work.

In the face of such enemies, there arises the question of revolutionary base areas. Since China's key cities have long been occupied by the powerful imperialists and their reactionary Chinese allies, it is imperative for the revolutionary ranks to turn the backward villages into advanced, consolidated base areas, into great military, political, economic and cultural bastions of the revolution from which to fight their vicious enemies who are using the cities for attacks on the rural districts, and in this way gradually to achieve the complete victory of the revolution through protracted fighting; it is imperative for them to do so if they do not wish to compromise with imperialism and its lackeys but are determined to fight on, and if they intend to build up and temper their forces, and avoid decisive battles with a powerful enemy while their own strength is inadequate. Such being the case, victory in the Chinese revolution can be won first in the rural areas and this is possible because China's economic development is uneven (her economy not being a unified capitalist economy), because her territory is extensive (which gives the revolutionary forces room to manoeuvre), because the counter-revolutionary camp is disunited and full of contradictions, and because the struggle of the peasants who are the main force in the revolution is led by the Communist Party, the party of the proletariat; but on the other hand, these very circumstances make the revolution uneven and render the task of winning complete victory protracted and arduous. Clearly then the protracted revolutionary struggle in the revolutionary base areas consists mainly in peasant guerrilla warfare led by the Chinese Communist Party. Therefore, it is wrong to ignore the necessity of using rural districts as revolutionary base areas, to neglect painstaking work among the peasants, and to neglect guerrilla warfare.

However, stressing armed struggle does not mean abandoning other forms of struggle; on the contrary, armed struggle cannot succeed unless co-ordinated with other forms of struggle. And stressing the work in the rural base areas does not mean abandoning our work in the cities and in the other vast rural areas which are still under the enemy's rule; on the contrary, without the work in the cities and in these other rural areas, our own rural base areas would be isolated and the revolution would suffer defeat. Moreover, the final objective of the revolution is the capture of the cities, the enemy's main bases, and this objective cannot be achieved without adequate work in the cities.
It is thus clear that the revolution cannot triumph either in the rural areas or in the cities without the destruction of the enemy's army, its chief weapon against the people. Therefore, besides annihilating the enemy's troops in battle, there is the important task of disintegrating them.

It is also clear that the Communist Party must not be impetuous and adventurist in its propaganda and organizational work in the urban and rural areas which have been occupied by the enemy and dominated by the forces of reaction and darkness for a long time but that it must have well-selected cadres working underground, must accumulate strength and bide its time there. In leading the people in struggle against the enemy, the Party must adopt the tactics of advancing step by step slowly and surely, keeping to the principle of waging struggles on just grounds, to our advantage, and with restraint, and making use of such open forms of activity as are permitted by law, decree and social custom; empty clamour and reckless action can never lead to success.