



# MAO TSE-TUNG

PREFACE AND POSTSCRIPT  
TO *RURAL SURVEYS*

COMMUNIST PARTY  
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# MAO TSE-TUNG

## PREFACE AND POSTSCRIPT TO *RURAL SURVEYS*

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### *PUBLISHER'S NOTE*

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## PREFACE

March 17, 1941

The present rural policy of the Party is not one of Agrarian Revolution as during the ten years' civil war, but is a rural policy for the National United Front Against Japan. The whole Party should carry out the Central Committee's directives of July 7 and December 25, 1940,<sup>1</sup> and the directives of the forthcoming Seventh National Congress. The following material is being published to help comrades find a method for studying problems. Many of our comrades still have a crude and careless style of work, do not seek to understand things thoroughly and may even be completely ignorant of conditions at the lower levels, and yet they are responsible for directing work. This is an extremely dangerous state of affairs. Without a really concrete knowledge of the actual conditions of the classes in Chinese society there can be no really good leadership.

The only way to know conditions is to make social investigations, to investigate the conditions of each social class in real life. For those charged with directing work, the basic method for knowing conditions is to concentrate on a few cities and villages according to a plan, use the fundamental viewpoint of Marxism, *i.e.*, the method of class analysis, and make a number of thorough investigations. Only thus can we acquire even the most rudimentary knowledge of China's social problems.

To do this, first, direct your eyes downward, do not hold your head high and gaze at the sky. Unless a person is interested in turning his eyes downward and is determined to do so, he will never in his whole life really understand things in China.

Second, hold fact-finding meetings. Certainly, no all-round knowledge can be acquired merely by glancing this way and that and listening to hearsay. Of the data I obtained through fact-finding meetings, those on Hunan Province and on Ching kangshan have been lost. The materials published here consist mainly of the "Survey of Hsingkuo", the "Survey of Changkang Township" and the "Survey of Tsaihsi Township". Holding fact-finding meetings is the simplest, most practicable and most reliable method, from which I have derived much benefit; it is a better school than any university. Those attending such meetings should be really experienced cadres of middle and lower ranks, or ordinary people. In my investigations of five counties in Hunan Province and two counties in Ching kangshan, I approached responsible cadres of middle rank; in the Hsunwu investigation I approached cadres of the middle and lower ranks, a poor *bsiutsai*,<sup>2</sup> a bankrupt ex-president of the chamber of commerce and a petty official in charge of county revenue who had lost his job. All of these people gave me a great deal of information I had never even heard of. The man who for the first time gave me a complete picture of the rottenness of Chinese jails was a petty jailer I met during my investigation in Hengshan County, Hunan. In my investigations of Hsingkuo County and Changkang and Tsaihsi Townships, I approached comrades working at the township level and ordinary peasants. These cadres, the peasants, the *bsiutsai*, the jailer, the merchant and the revenue clerk

were all my esteemed teachers, and as their pupil I had to be respectful and diligent and comradely in my attitude; otherwise they would have paid no attention to me, and, though they knew, would not have spoken or, if they spoke, would not have told all they knew. A fact-finding meeting need not be large; from three to five or seven or eight people are enough. Ample time must be allowed and an outline for the investigation must be prepared; furthermore, one must personally ask questions, take notes and have discussions with those at the meeting. Therefore one certainly cannot make an investigation, or do it well, without zeal, a determination to direct one's eyes downward and a thirst for knowledge, and without shedding the ugly mantle of pretentiousness and becoming a willing pupil. It has to be understood that the masses are the real heroes, while we ourselves are often childish and ignorant, and without this understanding it is impossible to acquire even the most rudimentary knowledge.

I should like to repeat that the main purpose of publishing this reference material is to indicate a method for finding out the conditions prevailing at the lower levels; it is not to have comrades memorize the specific material and the conclusions drawn from it. Speaking generally, the infant bourgeoisie of China has not been able, and never will be able, to provide relatively comprehensive or even rudimentary material on social conditions, as the bourgeoisie in Europe, America and Japan has done; we have therefore no alternative but to collect it ourselves. Speaking specifically, people engaged in practical work must at all times keep abreast of changing conditions, and this is something for which no Communist Party in any country can depend on others. Therefore, everyone engaged in practical work

must investigate conditions at the lower levels. Such investigation is especially necessary for those who know theory but do not know the actual conditions, for otherwise they will not be able to link theory with practice. Although my assertion, "No investigation, no right to speak", has been ridiculed as "narrow empiricism", to this day I do not regret having made it; what is more, I still insist that without investigation there cannot possibly be any right to speak. There are many people who "the moment they alight from the official carriage" make a hullabaloo, spout opinions, criticize this and condemn that; but, in fact, ten out of ten of them will meet with failure. For such views or criticisms, which are not based on thorough investigation, are nothing but ignorant twaddle. Countless times our Party suffered at the hands of these "imperial envoys", who rushed here, there and everywhere. Stalin rightly says that "theory becomes purposeless if it is not connected with revolutionary practice". And he rightly adds that "practice gropes in the dark if its path is not illumined by revolutionary theory".<sup>3</sup> Nobody should be labelled a "narrow empiricist" except the "practical man" who gropes in the dark and lacks perspective and foresight.

Today I still feel keenly the necessity for thorough research into Chinese and world affairs; this is related to the scantiness of my own knowledge of Chinese and world affairs and does not imply that I know everything and that others are ignorant. It is my wish to go on being a pupil, learning from the masses, together with all other Party comrades.



## POSTSCRIPT

*April 19, 1941*

The experience of the period of the ten years' civil war is the best and most pertinent for the present period, the War of Resistance Against Japan. This refers to the aspect of how to link ourselves with the masses and mobilize them against the enemy, but not to the aspect of the tactical line. The Party's present tactical line is different in principle from that of the past. Formerly, the Party's tactical line was to oppose the landlords and the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie; now, it is to unite with all those landlords and members of the bourgeoisie who are not against resisting Japan. Even in the latter stage of the ten years' civil war, it was incorrect not to have adopted differing policies towards the reactionary government and political party which were launching armed attacks on us on the one hand, and towards all the social strata of a capitalist character under our own rule on the other; it was also incorrect not to have adopted differing policies towards the different groups within the reactionary government and political party. At that time, a policy of "all struggle" was pursued towards every section of society other than the peasantry and the lower strata of the urban petty bourgeoisie, and this policy was undoubtedly wrong. In agrarian policy, it was also wrong to repudiate the correct policy adopted in the early and middle periods of the ten years' civil war,<sup>4</sup> whereby the landlords were given

the same allotment of land as the peasants so that they could engage in farming and would not become displaced or go up into the mountains as bandits and disrupt public order. The Party's policy is now of necessity a different one; it is not "all struggle and no alliance", neither is it "all alliance and no struggle" (like the Chen Tu-hsiuism of 1927<sup>5</sup>). Instead, it is a policy of uniting with all social strata opposed to Japanese imperialism, of forming a united front with and yet of waging struggles against them, struggles that differ in form according to the different degrees in which their vacillating or reactionary side manifests itself in capitulation to the enemy and opposition to the Communist Party and the people. The present policy is a dual policy which synthesizes "alliance" and "struggle". In labour policy, it is the dual policy of suitably improving the workers' livelihood and of not hampering the proper development of the capitalist economy. In agrarian policy, it is the dual policy of requiring the landlords to reduce rent and interest and of stipulating that the peasants should pay this reduced rent and interest. In the sphere of political rights, it is the dual policy of allowing all the anti-Japanese landlords and capitalists the same rights of person and the same political and property rights as the workers and peasants and yet of guarding against possible counter-revolutionary activity on their part. State-owned and co-operative economy should be developed, but the main economic sector in the rural base areas today consists not of state but of private enterprises, and the sector of non-monopoly capitalism in our economy should be given the opportunity to develop and be used against Japanese imperialism and the semi-feudal system. This is the most revolutionary policy for China today, and to oppose or impede its execution is undoubtedly a mistake.

To preserve the communist purity of Party members scrupulously and resolutely, and to protect the useful part of the capitalist sector of the social economy and enable it to develop appropriately, are both indispensable tasks for us in the period of resisting Japan and building a democratic republic. In this period it is possible that some Communists may be corrupted by the bourgeoisie and that capitalist ideas may emerge among members of the Party, and we must fight against these decadent ideas; however, we should not mistakenly carry over the struggle against capitalist ideas within the Party to the field of social economy and oppose the capitalist sector of the economy. We must draw a clear line of demarcation between the two. The Communist Party of China is working in a complicated environment, and every Party member, and especially every cadre, must temper himself to become a fighter who understands Marxist tactics. A one-sided and over-simplified approach to problems can never lead the revolution to victory.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Central Committee's directive of July 7, 1940 is the "Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on the Present Situation and the Party's Policy". The Central Committee's directive of December 25, 1940 is included in the *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Vol. II, as the article "On Policy".

<sup>2</sup> A *bsiutsai* was a holder of the lowest degree in the imperial examinations.

<sup>3</sup> J. V. Stalin, "The Foundations of Leninism", *Problems of Leninism*, Eng. ed., FLPH, Moscow, 1954, p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> The first period of the ten years' civil war lasted from late 1927 to late 1928 and is generally known as the Chingkangshan period; the

middle period ran from early 1929 to the autumn of 1931, that is, from the establishment of the Central Red Base Area to the victorious conclusion of the campaign against the third "encirclement and suppression"; and the third period from late 1931 to late 1934, that is, from the victorious conclusion of that campaign to the enlarged meeting of the Political Bureau at Tsunyi in Kweichow Province called by the Central Committee of the Party. The Tsunyi Meeting of January 1935 put an end to the domination of the "Left" opportunist line in the Party, which had lasted from 1931 to 1934, and steered the Party back to the correct line.

<sup>5</sup> Chen Tu-hsiu was a radical democrat around the time of the May 4th Movement. Later, under the influence of the October Socialist Revolution he became one of the founders of the Chinese Communist Party. For six years after the founding of the Party, he held the leading position in the Central Committee. His thinking had long been strongly Rightist. In the latter part of the 1924-27 revolution, it developed into a line of capitulationism. The capitulationists represented by Chen Tu-hsiu "voluntarily gave up the Party's leadership of the peasant masses, urban petty bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie, and in particular gave up the Party's leadership of the armed forces, thus causing the defeat of the revolution" ("The Present Situation and Our Tasks", *Selected Works of Mao Tse-tung*, Eng. ed., FLP, Peking, 1961, Vol. IV, p. 171). After the defeat of 1927 Chen Tu-hsiu and a handful of other capitulationists lost faith in the future of the revolution and became liquidationists. They took a reactionary Trotskyite stand and formed a small anti-Party group together with the Trotskyites. Consequently Chen Tu-hsiu was expelled from the Party in November 1929. He died in 1942.



毛泽东  
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