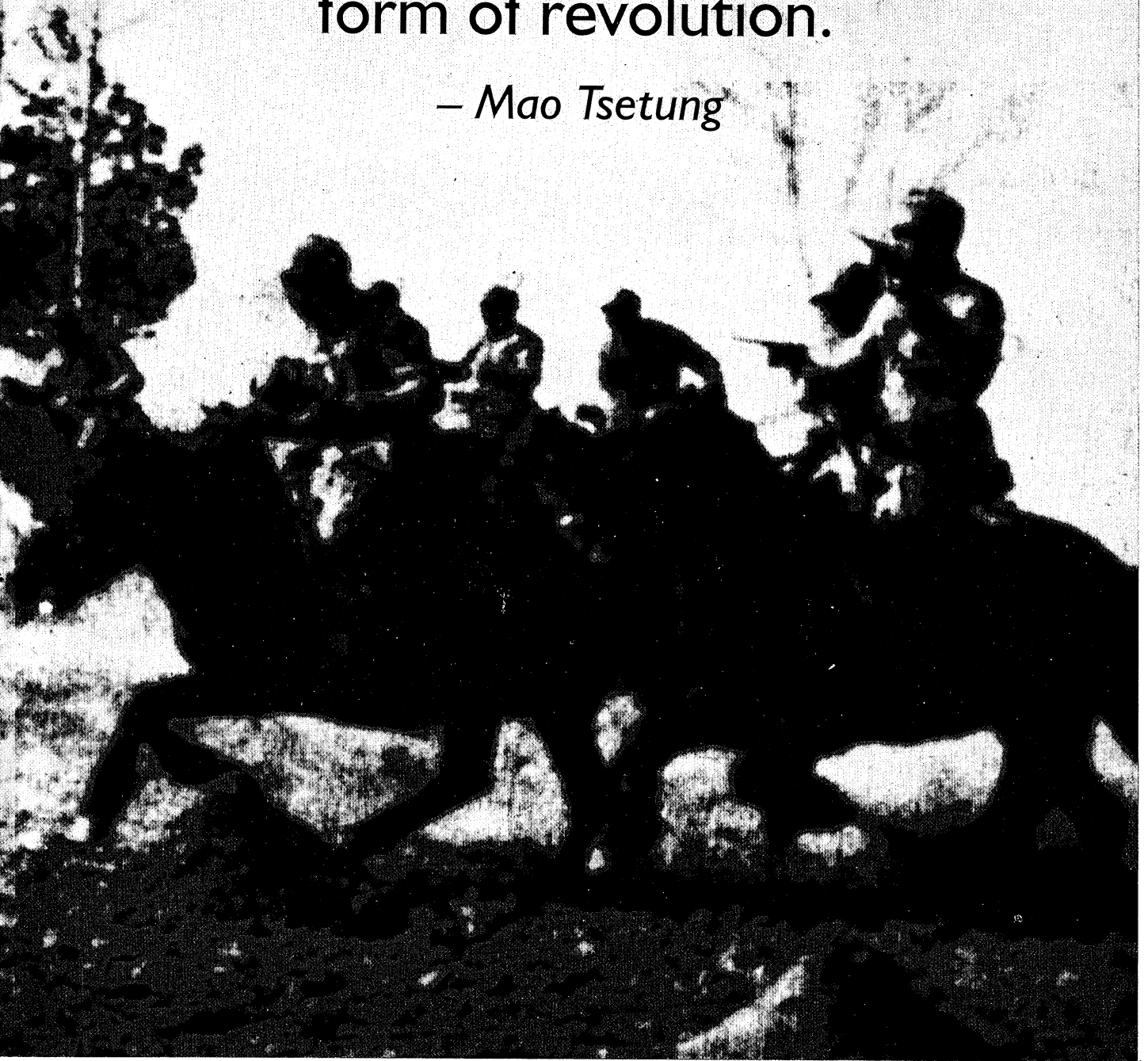


The seizure of power by
armed force, the settlement
of the issue by war, is the
central task and the highest
form of revolution.

– *Mao Tsetung*



Several hundred million peasants will rise like a mighty storm, like a hurricane,



To most observers, even many revolutionaries, Mao's prediction above seemed mad – it was widely believed that the misery of China's millions had robbed them of hope. Yet Mao used Marxism to dig beneath the surface to point out that wherever there is oppression, there is resistance. And one thing China definitely did not lack was oppression. – *AWTW*

I think back on the eleven years of factory inspection in Shanghai, and of all the crude exploitation seen. The long lines of weeping children, many only nine or ten, stirring the basins of silk cocoons in silk filatures, the dead-weary apprentices with beri-beri swollen legs in the dark sweat shops of back alleyways, the exploited contract labour working their twelve-hour shifts in cotton mills, and all the rest of the filthy oppression the system brought in its train. Then the end of the road for prostitutes thrown up by an utterly wicked society, whose life amongst the cheap brothels on Foochow Road averaged two years. The callous, bloated rich and the incredible poverty of the poor. – *Revi Alley, New Zealand writer and poet, for many years chief inspector of factories in Shanghai*

The bodies floating down the river. Leaning against the ship rail, I could see them bobbing up and down. I asked the bosun whose bodies they were, where they had come from. He shrugged. Not with indifference but with resignation and with great sadness. 'Who knows? All are different. Some just died but no money for burial. Some jumped into the river out of great sorrow. Some were thrown in by their enemies. There is famine up the river and many thousands die each day. There are bandits. There are soldiers who are no different from bandits. These days, many girls are sold into the Houses of Joy and some prefer the river. China is sick and that is why there are many bodies in the river. – *Dr. Joshua S. Horn: Away With All Pests*



a force so swift and violent that no power, however great, will be able to hold it back. They will smash all the trammels that bind them and rush forward along the road to liberation. They will sweep all the imperialists, warlords, corrupt officials, local tryants and evil gentry into their graves. — *Mao Tsetung*

The peasants, as we saw them, were dying. They were dying on the roads, in the mountains, by the railway stations, in their mud huts, in the fields. And as they died, the government continued to wring from them the last possible ounce of tax. The government in county after county was demanding of the peasant more actual poundage of grain than he had raised on his acres. No excuses were allowed; peasants who were eating elm bark and dried leaves had to haul their last sack of seed grain to the tax collector's office. Peasants who were so weak they could barely walk had to collect fodder for the army's horses, fodder that was more nourishing than the filth they were cramming into their own mouths. Peasants who could not pay were forced to the wall; they sold their cattle, their furniture, and even their land to raise money to buy grain to meet the tax quotas. One of the most macabre touches of all was the flurry of land speculation. Merchants from Sian and Chengchow, small government officials, army officers, and rich landlords who still had food were engaged in purchasing the peasants' ancestral acres at criminally low figures. Concentration and dispossession were proceeding hand in hand, in direct proportion to the intensity of hunger. The actual physical brutality and indignity with which the tax was collected was sickening, but the corruption that went hand in hand with its collection was worse. — *Theodore H. White & Annalee Jacoby: Thunder Out of China*



'Golden Lilies'. Footbinding was introduced in the 11th century and spread from the ranks of the wealthy to those of more modest means and even to much of the peasantry. Girls as young as three or four would have their feet bound tightly with bandages, folding all the toes except the big toe under the sole to make the foot slender and pointed. After a couple of years, the big one and heel were brought together, bending the arch, causing constant pain and hindering free movement. The sight of a woman teetering on her little points, moving her hips from side to side 'like a tender young willow in a breeze' to balance herself was believed to have an erotic effect on men. The ideal length was three inches. — *Jonathan D. Spence & Annping Chin: The Chinese Century*

For over a hundred years, the imperialists dominated China. The British even waged the Opium Wars in the 1840s to force the Chinese to continue the opium trade, which resulted in millions of Chinese becoming addicts and much of the country's wealth going into the coffers of Britain's merchants and bankers. A series of what were called "unequal treaties" were then imposed on China; parts of its territory were ceded to foreign powers (eg Hong Kong went to Britain), and national sovereignty was compromised. The US forced

China and the other imperialists to accept the "Open Door Policy", so-named because it handed them an open door to come in and exploit China on the same terms and conditions as the established European imperialists. This imperialist domination culminated in the occupation of China by the Japanese in World War 2 and the subsequent US effort to impose their puppet Chiang Kai-shek following the war.

— AWTW



In May 1919, a great movement, spearheaded by China's students, called the May 4th Movement, arose to oppose foreign, particularly Japanese, domination of China. — AWTW



The Japanese colonialists were arrogant and overbearing towards their imperialist rivals, but they treated the Chinese with viciousness. Curses, kicks and lashes were distributed liberally on the slightest provocation, or even on none at all, and it was easy to sense the smouldering hatred the brutality aroused. At that time, in that place, the Chinese were powerless to resist,

but elsewhere in China the Communist armies were regrouping, and a weapon was being forged which would smash the mighty Japanese military machine and humble the arrogant conquerors. — Dr. Joshua S. Horn



Beijing students of the May 4th Movement



A Poem

A host of dark, gaunt faces in the brambles,
 Yet who dare shake the earth with lamentation?
 I brood over our whole far-stretching land
 And in this silence hear the peal of thunder.
 — Lu Xun, 1934

Lu Xun (1881-1936)

Lu Xun dedicated his life to serving the people. He was a poet, a writer of stories, a woodcut artist, and a revolutionary leader in the arts. Living through more than half a century of struggle between revolution and counter-revolution, he said "writers in the present resistance are fighting for the present and the future; for if we lose the present we shall have no future". — *AWTW*

In the world today all culture, all literature and art belong to definite classes and are geared to definite political lines. There is in fact no such thing as art for art's sake, art that stands above classes, art that is detached from or independent of politics. Proletarian literature and art are part of the whole proletarian revolutionary cause; they are, as Lenin said, cogs and wheels in the whole revolutionary machine....

Our purpose is to ensure that literature and art fit well into the whole revolutionary machine as a component part, that they operate as powerful weapons for uniting and educating the people and for attacking and destroying the enemy, and that they help the people fight the enemy with one heart and one mind. — *Mao Tsetung*

By the 1920s, the Chinese revolutionaries, inspired by the October revolution, had summed up the need to form a revolutionary communist party and launch armed struggle against the reactionary regime. But for several years the views guiding revolutionary warfare were influenced by an incorrect analysis of the nature of China and the way war should be waged in an oppressed country. After suffering a series of defeats, the revolutionary armed forces were surrounded by the reactionary armies and seemed to be facing imminent doom. Mao, who had been forging a more correct analysis of Chinese society, played a key role in coming to the rescue of the fledgling Red forces, and helped them execute a daring escape "so as to fight another day". Yet their valiant escape had nothing of a passive retreat about it – it proved to be the turning point in the People's War, as, under Mao's leadership, the Party not only developed a correct line for conducting the war, but also managed to stun the reactionaries in China and worldwide by leading the Red forces to repeatedly evade the reactionary army, who were superior in manpower and arms. In so doing, they sowed the seeds of revolution all along the tortuous path the Red forces followed in their march across China. – *AW7W*

The main body of the First Front Army left the Central Soviet at the beginning of October 1934 for a journey that would take it 6,000 miles through twelve provinces, over eighteen mountain ranges and across twenty-four rivers... Although many had been killed on the way, others had been left behind and these had spread the word of Marxism, building on the favourable impressions that the Red Army had created.

By the time they reached Shaanxi only 8,000 men were left, one in twenty of those who had started the journey. The survivors had travelled a distance equivalent to that from London to Hong Kong in only 13 months. It is the longest sustained army march in history; they averaged one skirmish with the enemy per day, including 15 days of major battles, with 235 day marches and 18 night marches and only 150 days of halt. – *Dick Wilson: China's Revolutionary War*



Reply to Comrade Kuo Mo-Jo

– to the tune of Man Chiang Hung

On this tiny globe
A few flies dash themselves against
the wall,
Humming without cease,
Sometimes shrilling,
Sometimes moaning.
Ants on the locust tree assume a
great-nation swagger
And mayflies lightly plot to topple
the giant tree.
The west wind scatters leaves
over Changan,
And the arrows are flying,
twanging.

So many deeds cry out to be done,
And always urgently;
The world rolls on,
Time presses.
Ten thousand years are too long,
Seize the day, seize the hour!
The Four Seas are rising, clouds
and waters raging,
The Five Continents are rocking,
wind and thunder roaring.
Our force is irresistible.
Away with all pests!

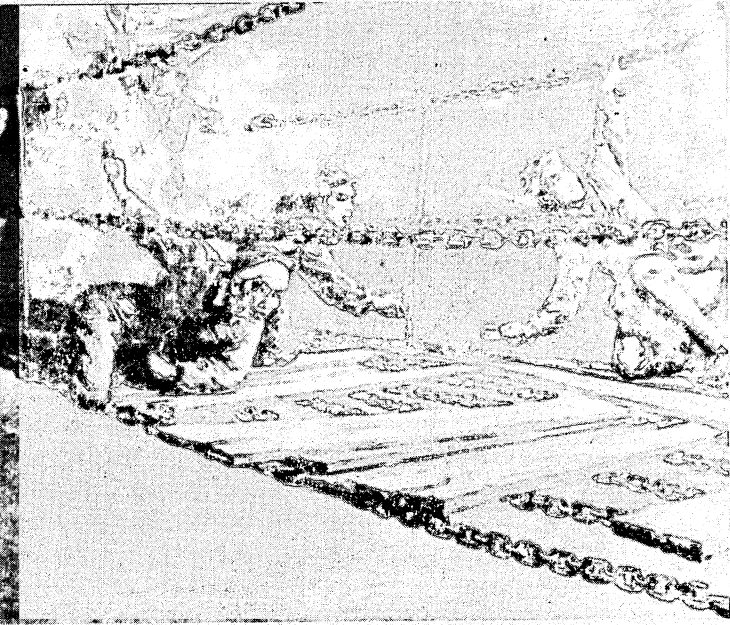
– Mao Tsetung

毛澤東



The crossing of the Tatu River was the most critical single incident of the Long March. Had the Red Army failed there, quite possibly it would have been exterminated. The historic precedent for such a fate already existed.

— Edgar Snow: *Red Star Over China*



North of the Tatu River the Reds climbed 16,000 feet over the Great Snowy Mountain, and in the rarefied air of its crest looked to the west and saw a sea of snow peaks – Tibet. It was already June, and in the lowlands very warm, but as they crossed the Ta Hsueh Shan many of those poorly clad, thin-blooded southerners unused to the high altitudes perished from exposure. Harder yet to ascend was the desolate Paotung Kang Mountain, up which they literally built their own road, felling long bamboos and laying them down for a track through a tortuous treacle of waist-deep mud. ‘On this peak,’ Mao Tsetung told me, ‘one army corps lost two thirds of its transport animals. Hundreds fell down and never got up.’

— Edgar Snow

Platoon Commander Ma Dajiu stepped out, grasped one of the chains, and began swinging, hand over hand, towards the north bank. The platoon political director followed, and after him the men. As they swung along, Red Army machine guns laid down a protecting screen of fire and the Engineering Corps began bringing up tree trunks and laying the bridge flooring.

The army watched breathlessly as the men swung along the bridge chains. Ma Dajiu was the first to be shot into the wild torrent below. Then another man and another. The others pushed along, but just before they reached the flooring at the north bridgehead they saw enemy soldiers dumping cans of kerosene on the planks and setting them on fire. Watching the sheet of flame spread, some men hesitated, but the platoon political leader at last sprang down on the flooring before the flames reached his feet, calling to the others to follow. They came and crouched on the planks releasing their hand grenades and unbuckling their swords.

They ran through the flames and threw their hand grenades in the midst of the enemy. More and more men followed, the flames lapping at their clothing. Behind them sounded the roar of their comrades, and, beneath the roar, the heavy THUD, THUD, THUD of the last tree trunks falling into place. The bridge became a mass of running men with rifles ready, tramping out the flames as they ran. The enemy retreated to their second line of defences. — *Agnes Smedley (quoted in China's Revolutionary War)*

'a poor man's army'

There were big 'surpluses' - more than the Reds could carry and these were distributed among the local poor. In Yunnan the Reds seized thousands of hams from rich packers there, and peasants came from miles around to receive their free portions. From Kiangsi they had carried Nanking notes, and silver dollars and bullion from their state bank, and in poor districts in their path they used this money to pay for their needs. Land deeds were destroyed, taxes abolished, and the poor peasantry armed.

Often the 'oppressed peasantry' sent groups to urge them to detour and 'liberate' their districts. They had little conception of the Red Army's political programme, of course; they only knew that it was 'a poor man's army', said Wu Liang-p'ing. That was enough. Mao Tsetung told me laughingly of one such delegation which arrived to welcome 'Su Wei-ai Hsien-sheng' - Mr Soviet! These rustics were no more ignorant, however, than the Fukien militarist Lu Hsing-pang, who once posted a notice throughout his fiefdom offering a reward for the 'capture, dead or alive, of Su Wei-ai'. Lu announced that this fellow had been doing a lot of damage everywhere, and must be exterminated. - *Edgar Snow*

Jen Peh-si began to tell us that we had just missed two hundred miners who came over from Pintingchow, the Japanese stronghold on the Chentai railway. When the rich men, and later the Chinese troops, fled before the Japanese armies, these miners remained, took rifles from the small local arsenal, and waged guerrilla warfare on the enemy. They mined and blew up the railway repeatedly. They were the first Volunteers along the railway and from the beginning they had contact with the Eighth Route Army men in North Shansi. They continued to fight under terrible difficulties, and they had come here without shoes, or with shoes worn down to shreds. They had eaten but once a day and sometimes not that, they had no winter overcoats and only their summer clothing of overall material. We had a few extra pairs of shoes which we gave them, and we gave them food and all we could. They came to ask if they should join the Eighth Route Army or should continue to operate as Volunteers. For the time being they will continue guerrilla fighting. They left this same night for guerrilla attacks along the railway at another point.

- *Agnes Smedley: China Fights Back*

18 September 1935: the 25, 26 & 27th armies meet in Yungping, in the north of Shensi






The tremendous energy behind the Communist drive was coordinated from Yen-an. A radio and courier network linked all Communist centers from Hainan in the south to the outskirts of Manchuria.

The radios were an amateur patchwork of broken Japanese sets, second-hand tubes, and makeshift materials. But the codes, which were excellent, baffled both the Kuomintang and the Japanese, and these communications bound together with iron cords of discipline the eighteen local governments in a coalition that seemed at times a shadow government and at times the most effective fighting instrument of the Chinese people.

Ninety per cent of the vast Communist-controlled area was marked on the map as Japanese-held. It is true that Japanese garrisons and lines of communication laced the entire fabric; it is true that in no single liberated region did the Communists hold more than a few hundred miles of land completely clear of the enemy; it is true that almost every government center

they established was a mobile command post ready to move or fight with the troops on a few hours' notice. But each of these governments was able to collect taxes, pass laws, fight the enemy, arm the peasants, and create a loyalty to its leadership that endured whatever savagery the Japanese marshaled against it.

Though their enemies denounced the Communists' beliefs and attributed to them every shameful excess they could imagine, no one could deny they had wrought a miracle in arms. In six years the Communists had thrown out from the barren hills a chain of bases that swept in an arc from Manchuria to the Yangtze Valley. Rarely in the history of modern war or politics has there been any political adventure to match this in imagination or epic grandeur. The job was done by men who worked with history as if it were a tool and with peasants as if they were raw material; they reached down into the darkness of each village and summoned from it with their will and their slogans such resources of power as neither the Kuomintang nor Japan



imagined could exist. The power came from the people — from the unleashing of the internal tensions that had so long paralyzed the countryside, from the intelligence of masses of men, from the dauntless, enduring courage of the peasant.

If you take a peasant who has been swindled, beaten, and kicked about for all his waking days and whose father has transmitted to him an emotion of bitterness reaching back for generations — if you take such a peasant, treat him like a man, ask his opinion, let him vote for a local government, let him organize his own police and gendarmes, decide on his own taxes, and vote himself a reduction in rent and interest—if you do all that, the peasant becomes a man who has something to fight for, and he will fight to preserve it against any enemy, Japanese or Chinese. If in addition you present the peasant with an army and a government that help him harvest, teach him to read and write, and fight off the Japanese who raped his wife and tortured his mother, he develops a loyalty to the army and the government and to the party that controls them.

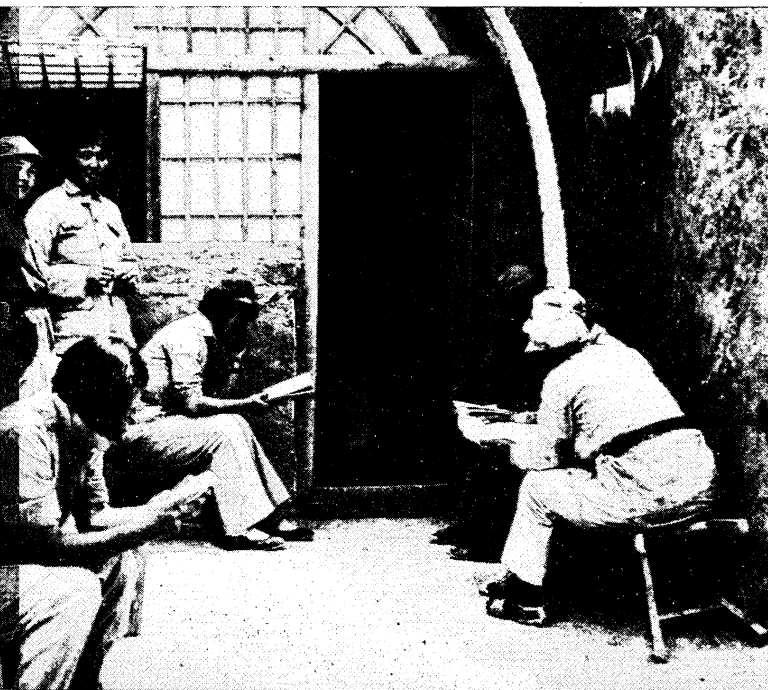
— *White & Jacoby*

Mao Tsetung emphasised that the central task of revolution is the seizure of political power by revolutionary violence. Mao Tsetung's theory of People's War is universally applicable in all countries, although this must be applied to the concrete conditions in each country and, in particular, take into account the revolutionary paths in the two general types of countries – imperialist countries and oppressed countries – that exist in the world today.

Mao solved the problem of how to make revolution in a country dominated by imperialism. The basic path he charted for the revolution in China represents an inestimable contribution to the theory and practice of revolution and is the guide for achieving liberation in the countries oppressed by imperialism. This means protracted People's War, surrounding the cities from the countryside, with armed struggle as the main form of struggle and the army led by the Party as the main form of organisation of the masses,



Yenan



mobilising the peasantry, principally the poor peasants, carrying out the agrarian revolution, building a united front under the leadership of the Communist Party to carry out the new democratic revolution against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat capitalism and establishing the joint dictatorship of the revolutionary classes led by the proletariat as the necessary prelude to the socialist revolution which must immediately follow the victory of the first stage of the revolution.

– RIM, Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Maoism!

Without a people's
army the people
have nothing.

- Mao Tsetung



Women veterans of the Long March



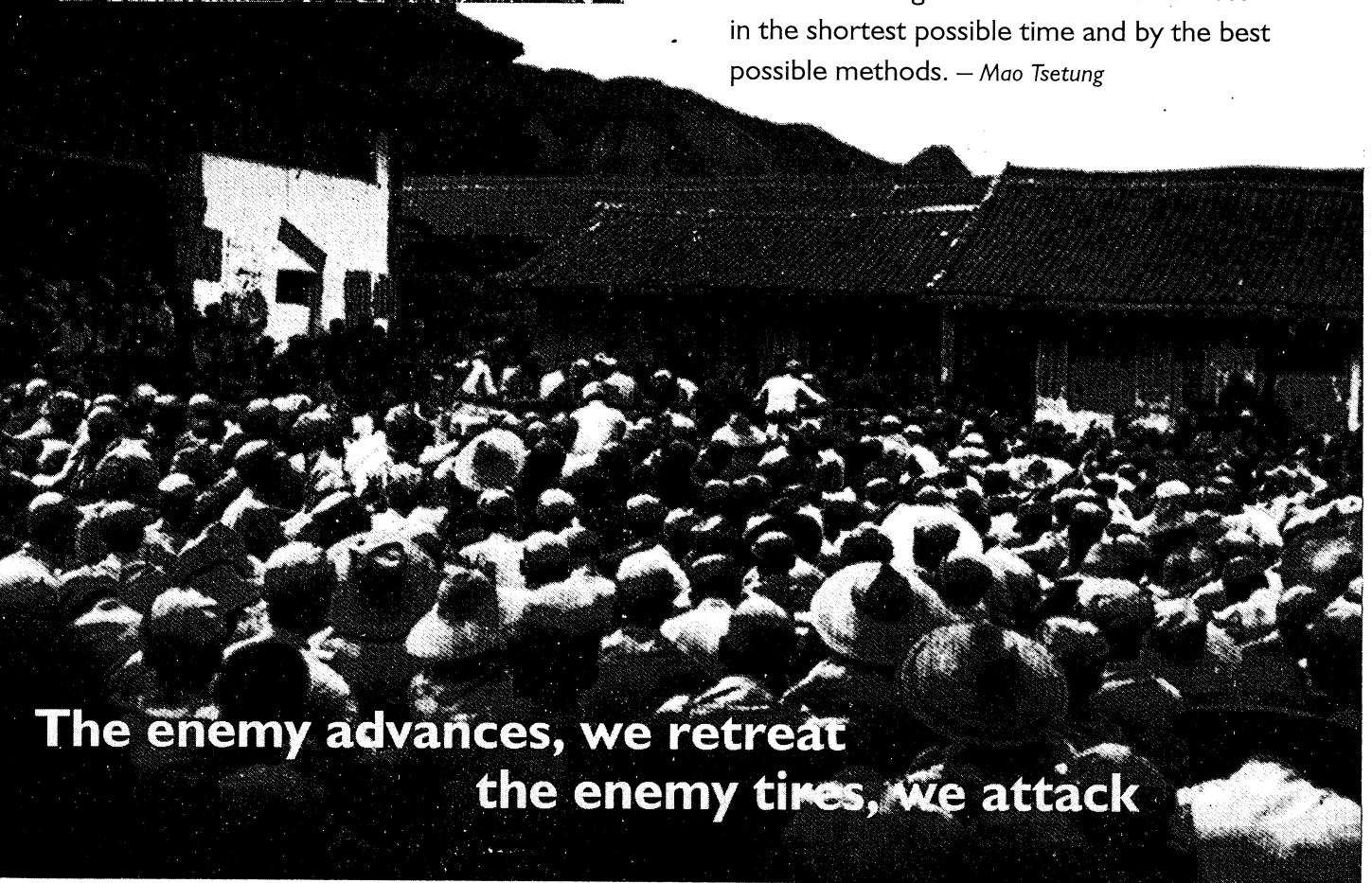
Agrarian revolution at the heart of people's war

*Divide our forces to arouse the masses,
concentrate our forces to deal with the enemy.*

The enemy advances, we retreat; the enemy
camps, we harrass; the enemy tires, we
attack; the enemy retreats, we pursue.

To extend stable base areas, employ the
policy of advancing in waves; when pursued
by a powerful enemy, employ the policy of
circling around.

Arouse the largest numbers of the masses
in the shortest possible time and by the best
possible methods. — Mao Tsetung



**The enemy advances, we retreat
the enemy tires, we attack**

You might hear these people catechizing themselves aloud:

‘What is this?’

‘This is the Red Flag.’

‘What is this?’

‘This is a poor man.’

‘What is the Red Flag?’

‘The Red Flag is the flag of the Red Army.’

‘What is the Red Army?’

‘The Red Army is the army of the poor men!’

And so on, right up to the point where, if he knew the whole five or six hundred characters before anyone else, the youth could collect the red tassel or pencil or whatever was promised. When farmers and farmers' sons and daughters finished the book they could not only read for the first time in their lives, but they knew who had taught them, and why. They had grasped the basic fighting ideas of Chinese communism.

And anyway, I should think it was a lot more amusing than teaching people to read via the this-is-a-cat, this-is-a-mouse and the what-is-the-cat-doing, the-cat-is-eating-the-mouse method. Why teach realists in allegories?

— *Edgar Snow*



The Red Army's Eight Points for Attention:

- ★ Put back the doors which are taken down for bed boards.
- ★ Put back the straw used for bedding.
- ★ Speak politely.
- ★ Pay fairly for what is consumed.
- ★ Return everything borrowed.
- ★ Pay for everything damaged.
- ★ Don't bathe within sight of women.
- ★ Don't search the pockets of captives.

In the women of China the Communists possessed, almost ready made, one of the greatest masses of disinherited human beings the world has ever seen. And because they found the key to the heart of these women, they also found one of the keys to victory over Chiang Kai-shek.

—Jack Belden: China Shakes the World



The base areas of the People's War seethed with revolutionary ferment, as new social relations arose on the basis of the guns of the Red army. Women's fury was unleashed, shattering the shackles that marked their subordination to men, such as footbinding, female infanticide, prostitution. Here is a story of how wife-beating was handled. — AWTW

Among those who were beaten was Poor peasant Man-ts'ang's wife. When she came home from a Women's Association meeting her husband beat her. She went the very next day to the secretary of the Women's Association; the secretary called a meeting of the women of the whole village. Man-ts'ang said that he beat his wife because she went to meetings and 'the only reason women go to meetings is to gain a free hand for flirtation and seduction.' 'Beat her, and slander us all, will you? Maybe this will teach you.' 'Stop, I'll never beat her again,' gasped the panic-stricken husband who was on the verge of fainting under their blows.

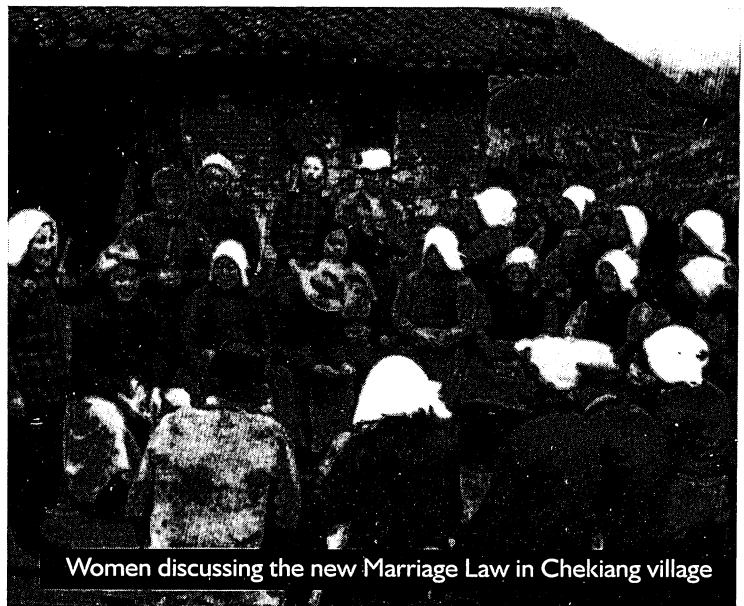
They stopped, let him up, and sent him home with a warning: Let him so much as lay a finger on his wife again and he would receive more of the same 'cure'.

From that day onwards Man-ts'ang never dared beat his wife and from that day onwards his wife became known to the whole village by her maiden name Ch'eng Ai-lien.

—William Hinton: Fanshen

In this Ningkang district were thousands of women agricultural labourers with unbound feet. For their labor the landlords had paid them rice and four or five silver dollars a year. But some were slaves, bought for work on the land or in the rich homes.

When the Agricultural Laborers' Union was formed, these women agricultural laborers entered, dominating it, and when the Red Guards were organized, some of these women stepped forward, saying: 'Our feet are big — look! They have never been bound! We can walk and work like men! We are strong as the men! Give us guns!' — Agnes Smedley: Portraits of Chinese Women in Revolution



Women discussing the new Marriage Law in Chekiang village

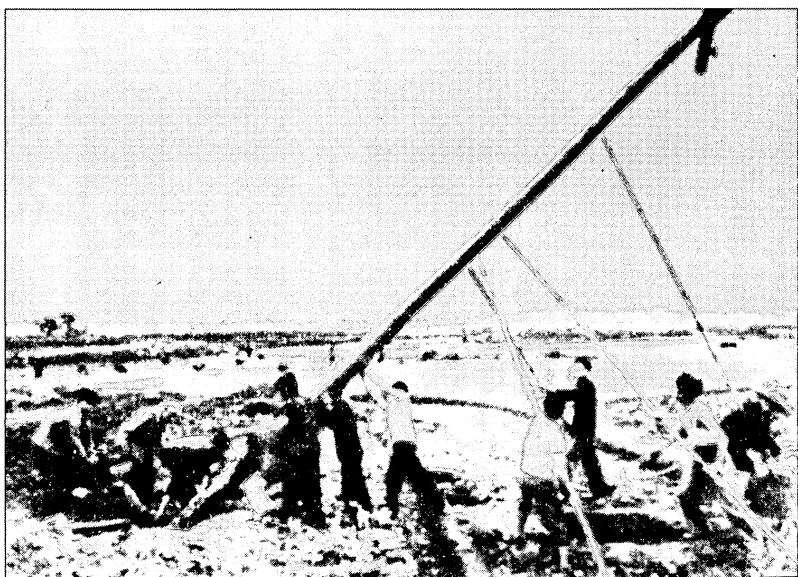


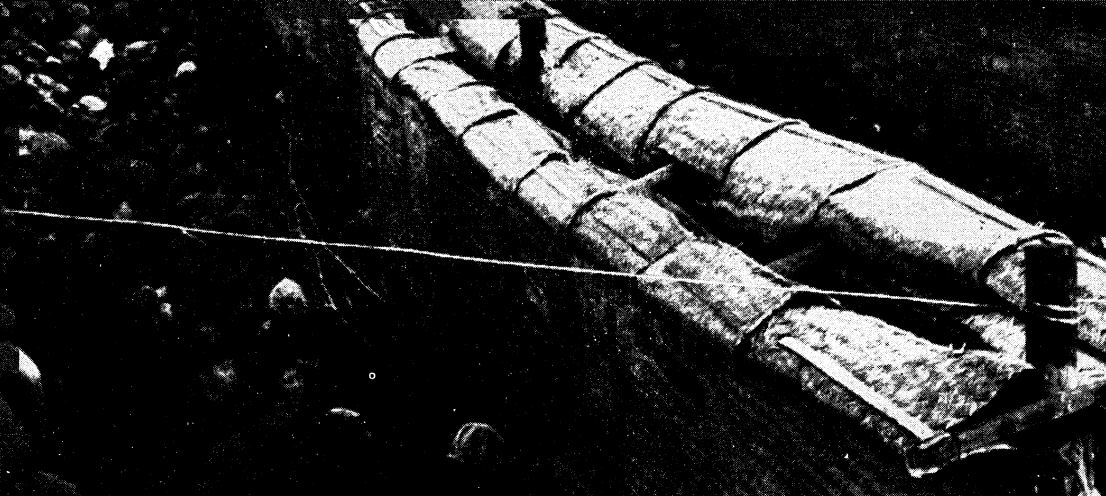
"The Chinese people have stood up!"



To win country-wide victory is only the first step in a long march of ten thousand // The Chinese revolution is great, but the road after the revolution will be longer, the work greater and more arduous." Greeting victory with these words, Mao prepared the proletariat and people of China to undertake the unprecedented task of transforming an oppressed country into a beacon of socialism and a base for the world revolution. What the Party and the revolutionary army had done and learned during the long years of the People's War now served them well: a skeletal structure of the new power had been formed that could be filled out and given flesh on a country-wide scale. They completed the New Democratic revolution, including the most massive redistribution of land in human history. Women made giant strides towards equality, as age-old sexist practices like footbinding and prostitution were eradicated. The Chinese people began to build a self-reliant socialist economy, free from the strangling, distorting embrace of the world imperialist market.

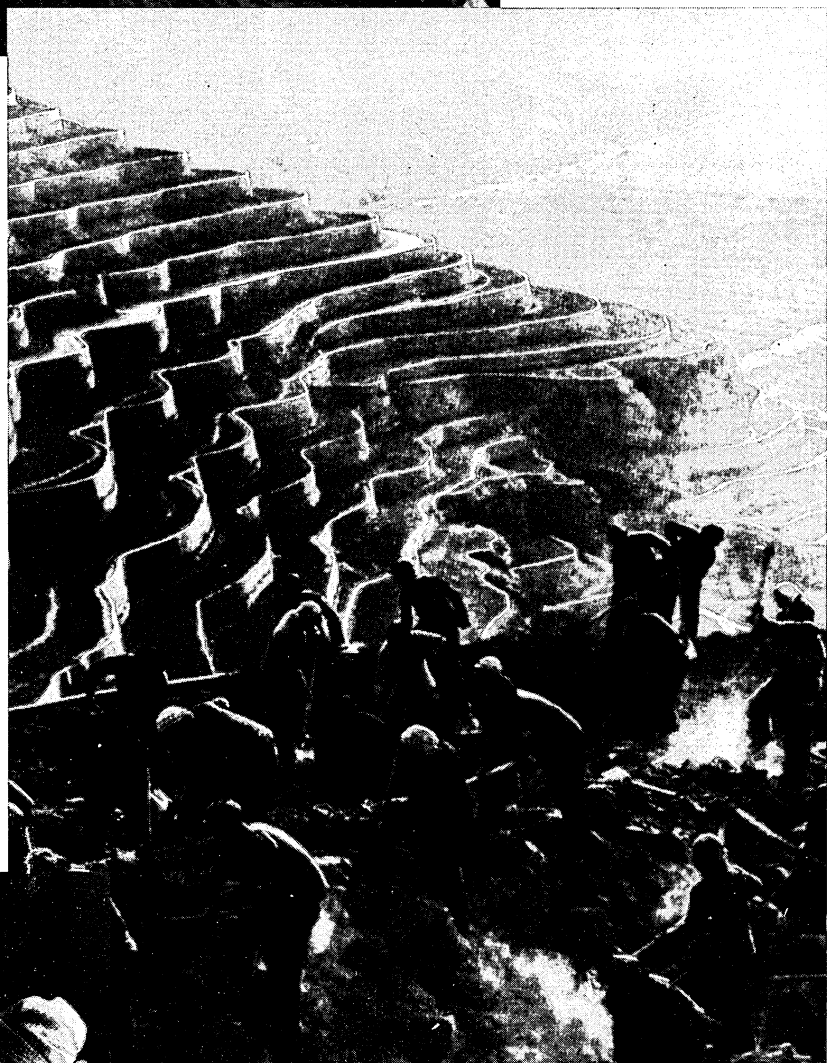
Yet with every new advance came new challenges, as, like in the Soviet Union before it, a new bourgeoisie arose in China that sought to turn the society back onto the capitalist road. Under Mao's leadership, revolutionary students and workers were mobilised to





launch the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, to rally the broad masses to overthrow these capitalist roaders and dig away at the soil that nourished them. Social inequalities and privileges were struck at in a way never before seen in any society, as millions strengthened their capacity to transform every sphere of life. A decade later, following Mao's death in 1976, the capitalist roaders, now led by Deng Xiao-ping, finally succeeded in defeating the revolutionaries, seizing power and restoring capitalism in China. This did not negate Maoism, however, but only proved Mao's thesis of the need for continuing the revolution, and the world-historic achievements of the Cultural Revolution spread Maoism, including the understanding of people's war and new democratic revolution, around the world.

—AWTW



THEY kicked you daily
Via radiophone, via cablegram,
Via gunboats in her harbor,
Via malacca canes.
THEY thought you were a tame lion.
A sleepy, easy, tame old lion!

Ha! Ha!

Haaa-aa-a! . . . Ha!

Laugh, little coolie boy on the docks of Shanghai, laugh!

You're no tame lion.

Laugh, red generals in the hills of Sian-kiang, laugh!

You're no tame lion.

Laugh, child slaves in the factories of the foreigners!

You're no tame lion.

Laugh — and roar, China! Time to spit fire!

Open your mouth, old dragon of the East.

To swallow up the gunboats in the Yangtse!

Swallow up the foreign planes in your sky!

Eat bullets, old maker of firecrackers —

And spit out freedom in the face of your enemies!

Break the chains of the East,

Little coolie boy!

Break the chains of the East,

Red generals!

Smash the iron gates of the Concessions!

Smash the pious doors of the missionary houses!

Smash the revolving doors of the Jim Crow Y.M.C.A.'s.

Crush the enemies of land and bread and freedom!

Stand up and roar, China!

You know what you want!

The only way to get it is

To take it!

Roar, China!

— Langston Hughes, Roar China

Roar China!

**THEY thought
you
were a tame lion**

Ha! Ha!

**Haaa-aa-a! . . .
Ha!**

Eat bullets

**And spit out
freedom**

**The only way
to get it is**

**To take it!
Roar, China!**

Books used

Many of the books we used provide an excellent, often eyewitness account of the stirring developments of revolutionary China.

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p. 35 *Problems of Strategy in China's Revolutionary War*

pp. 36-37 *Report on an Investigation of the Peasant Movement in Hunan*

p. 39 *Talks at the Yanan Forum on Literature and Art*

P. 47 *On Coalition Government and A Single Spark Can Start a Prairie Fire*