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STUDY CHAIRMAN MAO'S DIALOGUE ON QUESTIONS OF
DEMOCRACY IN COLONIAL AND SEMI-COLONIAL COUNTRIES

- COMMUNIST CHINA -

by Chang Hsiang-shan

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STUDY CHAIRMAN MAO'S DIALOGUE ON QUESTIONS OF
DEMOCRACY IN COLONIAL AND SEMI-COLONIAL COUNTRIES

- COMMUNIST CHINA -

Following is a translation of an article by Chang Hsiang-shan in the Chinese-language periodical Chung-Kuo Ching-nien (Chinese Youth), Peiping No. 9, 1 May 1960, pp 9-12.

In the 15 years since World War II colonial and semi-colonial countries having a total population of some 1 400 millions have achieved independence. The more than 1,600 million people still under the yoke of imperialism have begun to wake up and struggle for independence. This fact of great significance completely proves what Chairman Mao said: that the era in which the imperialist beasts could determine the destiny of mankind and could overrun any oppressed country is gone and will never return.

But what are the nature of independence and the degree of independence for the countries which have already won their independence? To what direction will these countries develop? What is their relation to the socialist states? All these are problems of great importance in today's world. They are problems of common concern among the young comrades. In order to thoroughly understand these problems, it is necessary to study Chairman Mao's theories on China's new democratic revolution, particularly those dealing with the roles of the Chinese proletarian class and bourgeois class in the national democratic revolution and the relations between these two classes in that revolution. Since these theories were developed from the revolutionary experience in a typical colonial and semicolonial country -- China, and has been tested in the Chinese revolution, they are applicable to other colonial and semicolonial countries. A study of these theories will enable us to clearly recognize the fundamental problems of other colonial and semicolonial countries..

On the basis of the colonial and semicolonial nature of China and the characteristics of the world history after the Russian October Revolution, Chairman Mao points out that the first phase of the Chinese revolution is no longer the old democratic revolution but a revolution that must be led by the proletarian class against imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism. Such a revolution is invariably part of a new socialist revolution of the world.

Chairman Mao says that to gain supremacy by the proletarian class over the bourgeois class and to firmly establish the leadership to the proletarian class constitute the basic key in winning the new democratic revolution. Hence, within the nation the alliance between the proletarian class and the peasant class must be strengthened. Next, all forces that can be united must be united. Internationally, alliance must be made with the socialist countries and their people.

Chairman Mao points out that in the course of the Chinese democratic revolution, the relations between the proletarian class and the bourgeois class are full of complexity. This is one of the historic characteristics inherent in the course of a colonial and semicolonial country's revolution. Due to its dual nature -- that is, its oppression by imperialism on the one hand, restriction by the feudal system on the other the Chinese national bourgeois or middle class is, to a certain degree, against imperialism and feudalism. However, since it is weak economically and politically, it has a tendency to compromise with the enemy of the revolution. This class is not willing to, and cannot, overthrow imperialist and feudal forces. It cannot lead the revolution to victory. But the proletarian class should recognize the positive nature of the national bourgeois class and, under certain conditions, establish a united front with it.

The upper bourgeois class is on the other hand a target of revolution. However, a temporary alliance with it may be warranted in order to concentrate the revolutionary forces against one imperialist country. In this case, the bourgeoisie, dependent on imperialist countries other than the one we are against, may be brought into a temporary united front.

Chairman Mao also points out that the policy of uniting with the bourgeois class into a common front is a policy of alliance and struggle. It is a policy of alliance with respect to its seeking unity with the positive elements of the bourgeois class. But it is also a policy of struggle with respect to its purge of the compromising nature of the bourgeois class. The purpose of this policy is to assure the independence and freedom of action for the proletarian class. Only by winning the middle forces and isolating the reactionary ones can we strengthen ourselves, establish and retain the revolutionary leadership of the proletarian class and achieve a complete victory in the new democratic revolution.

Chairman Mao's theories on how to safeguard the leadership of the proletariat class in the course of the new democratic revolution in a colonial and semicolonial country, how to discern and deal with the different segments of the bourgeois class and how to pursue a policy of alliance and struggle with the bourgeois

class represent a new development and rediscovery of the Marxist-Leninist theory of revolution in colonial and semicolonial countries.

II

Using Chairman Mao's theory of new democratic revolution as a yardstick, we can distinguish the significant differences in the condition of the national democratic movements of the colonial and semicolonial countries of the post World War II period. These countries may be classified into three different types as described below.

There are some countries such as China in which the governing privileges of imperialists have been overthrown, the native feudalist classes abolished, and a complete victory of the new democratic revolution has been won, thus completing the change from a colonial and semicolonial status to the second stage of the revolution, that is, the building of a socialist state. The new situation is possible only because the revolution is conducted under the leadership of the proletariat class and guided by the general theory of new democratic revolution of Chairman Mao.

Some colonial countries have declared "independence" although they are still ruled by the upper bourgeois class. Their independence exists in name only. This is because the proletarian class of these countries failed to take over leadership in the national democratic movement, resulting in the fruit of revolution being stolen by the upper bourgeois class and the surrender of the national bourgeois class to the upper bourgeois class. Thus, the imperialist country originally ruling these countries and other imperialist countries are still in control of the political, military and economic interests of these countries by means of treaties. These countries are represented by the Philippines and Malaya which gain the status of "independence" in name only and are actually semicolonies. They are far from fulfilling the mission of a new democratic revolution. Only by continuing the new democratic revolution can the proletarian classes of these countries basically change the social outlook of their countries. We must recognize, however, that the imperialist countries are now ruling these countries indirectly rather than directly, indicating a step forward toward independence and the relatively weakening of the imperialist forces.

There are also many countries in which the revolutionary leadership has not fallen into the hands of the proletarian class despite the widespread national democratic movement during or after World War II. The failure is mainly due to the fact that the influence of the upper bourgeois class is far greater than that of the proletarian class. The weakening of imperialist forces after World War II, the existence of a socialist camp and

its assistance to the oppressed people in their struggle for independence and the continuous rise in the struggle for independence the world over have made the imperialists fear that once the proletarian class of these countries controls the leadership, their special privileges in these countries would be completely eliminated. Thus, they are forced to make compromise with the national bourgeois class of these countries and to hand them the governing power, that is, to give them the status of independence. We will further analyze the nature of such independence and examine whether the mission of the national democratic revolution has been fulfilled in these countries.

According to the analysis of Chairman Mao, the national bourgeois class of the colonial and semicolonial countries is unlike the upper bourgeois class of the same country in that the former also demands independence. After having gained compromise from the imperialists, it also demands strong independence. It follows that this class generally does not support a military alliance with imperialists and is willing to receive support from socialist countries. Members of this class adhere to a peaceful, neutralist policy which is unfavorable to imperialism but favorable to the cause of world peace. In order to develop the national economy, they adopt various measures to weaken imperialist controls and also to weaken the native feudal exploitation. When confronted with a great enemy, they would, to be certain degree, give the people limited bourgeois democracy and make alliance with the workers and peasants. It is for this reason that these countries are not similar to those semicolonial countries which are ruled by the upper bourgeois class and listen completely to imperialist countries. Being separated from the original colonial system, they may be considered politically independent and nationalist states. On the other hand, we note that regardless whether they are still in the course of a revolution or have gained independence, these countries have not sever and dare not sever their relations with imperialism. They always let the imperialists retain varying degrees of political interests, and almost without exception, allow the imperialists to retain their economic interests and welcome their investments. They are not in favor of communism and socialism as a social system. With respect to domestic policies, they dare not and cannot completely abolish native feudalism. In building their national economy, they put the economic burdens on the people and enable the enrichment of the monopolist bourgeois class. As the workers and peasants become awakened, they are opposed to the workers and peasants and the Communist Party. All this indicates nothing other than the reactionary and compromising nature of the national bourgeois class in a colonial and semicolonial country. It also fully proves the scientific conclusion of Chairman Mao contending that the national bourgeois class in a colonial and semicolonial

country cannot be depended upon for the complete overthrow of the imperialist and feudal forces in the new democratic revolution. Therefore, these countries by nature are different from those which have completed the new democratic revolution. Socialist construction does not apply to these countries. Similarly, these countries are different from the countries of bourgeois dictatorship such as Britain, the United States and Japan of the past because they have not wiped out and cannot wipe out the imperialist interests from their own lands.

Furthermore, we must note that the strong upper bourgeois class and the landlord class still exist in all these countries. The national bourgeois class is in alliance with the above-mentioned classes in numerous ways. These classes collaborate with the imperialists and employ various means such as political and military revolts or elections to overthrow the national bourgeois government. There is always the danger of a substitution by the dictatorship of the upper bourgeois class. Once the substitution comes into effect, the nature of government in these countries will basically change. Not only that, but the national bourgeois government is also constantly changing. As stated by Chairman Mao, owing to the compromising nature of the national bourgeois government, "it can be easily blackmailed and won over by the imperialists and landlord class." In other words, when the imperialists and upper bourgeois class step up their pressure or utilize bribery, when the people become awakened and when the bourgeois class feels the need to suppress the workers and peasants, the national bourgeois class might go along with the upper bourgeois class, causing a basic change in the nature of the ruling class of the state. Such possible change indicates that the national democratic movement of the newly independent nations may encounter new difficulties and hence may be set back to the status of a semicolonies temporarily. To any such a possibility is equal to failure to understand the compromising and reactionary nature of the national bourgeois class.

The revolutionary practices of the colonial and semicolonial countries illustrate that a substantial growth of the force of the workers and peasants and the practice of a united front policy by the proletarian class are essential to restrain the rightist trend of the national bourgeois class and prevent the imperialists and the upper bourgeois class from regaining control. In executing the policy of a united front, the proletariat class must preserve its independence and freedom of action. It should unite and support the segment of the bourgeois class that is still opposed to imperialism, but should conduct criticism and struggles against the reactionary and compromising segment. Hence, the problems of working for or against independence and democracy, and severe exploitation versus the demand for a higher standard of living become the basic issues in the class struggle within each

of these countries. This struggle is becoming more and more acute as time goes on. The composition of the social classes is constantly changing in the course of the struggle. It is only through a process by which the proletarian class gradually gains strength and takes over the leadership of revolution that the people of the country in question can hope to accomplish the new democratic revolution which cannot be accomplished by the national bourgeois class. Chairman Mao has stated this indestructible and universal truth as follows: "Without the leadership of the working class the revolution will fail. With the leadership of the working class the revolution can be won. In the age of imperialism no other classes in any country can lead the revolution to true victory".

III

It can be seen from the above analysis that the nature of the government and the state of independence of the countries which achieved independence in the post World War II period vary with the class which has assumed the leadership in the revolution. Nevertheless no matter what progress has been made in the new democratic revolution in these colonial and semicolonial countries and regardless which social class is in the leadership function, they all oppose imperialism and have gained victories in their struggles. All of them have dealt a heavy or small blow to imperialism. Their revolution contributes to the cause of world socialist revolution. Chairman Mao has told us that in the world socialist revolution that began after the October Revolution, "regardless of the different social classes, parties and individuals, and regardless of whether they realize the full meaning of the revolution in which they have taken part, so long as they are opposed to imperialism, their revolution has become a part of the proletarian world socialist revolution and they invariably become an allied army in the world socialist revolution." It is for this reason that the socialist states are always in support of the nationalist democratic movement of the oppressed people and nationalist countries. We are always in support of the various anti-imperialist struggles of the nationalist countries and enthusiastically give support to their peaceful and neutralist policies. We have proposed a 5-point agreement with them for peaceful coexistence and created friendly relations. We give them various forms of economic assistance under possible conditions.

But people have seen that in the relations between the individual nationalist countries and the socialist states there sometimes appeared dark clouds. In other words, an anti-Soviet tide has risen in some countries. Beginning 1959 there appeared

also an anti-Chinese tide. How do we account for this happening? The socialist states are not responsible for this situation. The class nature of our socialist states precludes us from taking an aggressive action against others. We always stand for the 5-point principles and maintain friendly relations against our common enemy. There are two basic factors which are responsible for the present situation. First the imperialists are taking advantage of the compromising and pendulous nature of the bourgeois class to divide unity and step up their pressure. The imperialists know well that if the governments of these countries are determined to oppose Communism, they cannot but depend on imperialism for protection. Second, the bourgeois rightists and other influential groups are using their opposition to Communism as a pretext to divert the attention of their own people from the current domestic issues which they cannot solve, forestall the possible influence on the attitude of their people from the great achievement of the socialist states, limit the growth of the progressive elements in their country, and obtain economic assistance from the imperialists. All the modern revisionists have been taking part in the anti-Communist campaign. Such campaign appears at first sight to be a powerful movement. But actually only a very small minority as described above is involved in the movement. We can say definitely that the workers and peasants of these countries and those who actually demand liberation from imperialism and colonialism show practically no interest in such anti-Chinese movement. Even the small minority of people who have taken part in the anti-Chinese movement will eventually change their views. As we all know, after the Chiang Kai-shek clique and the Chinese national bourgeois class had rebelled against the revolution in 1927, they stirred up an anti-Soviet movement without provocation in order to divert the attention of the Chinese people, weaken the influence of the Soviet Union on the Chinese, attack the Chinese Communist Party, and receive loans from the imperialist countries. They even provoked the so-called War of the Chinese Eastern Railway in 1929. Although the Soviet Army helped liberate Manchuria, the Kuomintang again launched an anti-Soviet movement in 1946. What was the result? The Soviet Union was not hurt a bit. And the Chinese people still love the Soviet Union. Although a small minority of the bourgeois class and petite bourgeois intellectuals were temporarily confused, they subsequently have become aware of the ugly face of the imperialists and the Kuomintang and have turned against them. This analysis is equally applicable to the anti-Chinese tide developed by the rightists and other influential groups in certain nationalist and imperialist countries. We have truth and righteousness on our side. Our struggle is one with reason, advantages and rhythm. Hence we

are in complete control of the initiative of action. We are still enthusiastically and with great ambition marching toward socialism and Communism. The anti-Chinese tide will not hurt us a bit. Furthermore, we recognize that the anti-socialist movement in the nationalist states is but a small counter-current in history. As mentioned previously, the broad masses of the peoples of the nationalist states are strong in their demand for independence against imperialism. They are also in support of the 5-point principles, willing to establish friendship with the socialist states and to obtain sincere assistance for their anti-imperialist struggles. As long as the national bourgeois class of these countries has a positive attitude toward national independence against imperialism, it cannot but modify its anti-socialist movement. Otherwise it will find itself in an unfavorable position. No problems between the nationalist state and the socialist country cannot be solved on the basis of the 5-point principles and through friendly negotiation. Thus, the anti-socialist movement provoked by the imperialists, the rightists and the revisionists in the nationalist countries is only a temporary counter-current and will not become a major force, although it may run high at one time and low in another. Being confronted with imperialism, particularly post-war American colonial imperialism, the friendship and cooperation among the peoples of the nationalist countries and the socialist states is firm and unbreakable. It will grow stronger as time goes on. This is the major trend of history which cannot be altered.

As mentioned before, the national democratic movements throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America during the 15 years since the end of World War II have been developing in various stages and achieving various results, depending on the nature of the leadership. But there is one thing in common: the old colonial system has ended. This proves fully what Chairman Mao said in his book entitled "On Coalition Government", that the world marches for progressive and not for reactionary goals and that the struggle for national independence will envelop a major area of the world with final victory belonging to the oppressed people. In the 1960's we can predict that this national democratic movement could possibly be subjected to more severe pressure and thus encounter certain setback, but will continue to develop to higher stages. The imperialist rules in Asia, Africa, and Latin America will ultimately be buried by the people of the world. After having gone through the various stages of revolutionary development and under the leadership of the proletarian class, the oppressed peoples will complete their mission in a new democratic revolution and finally, as "all roads lead to Rome", will attain socialism.