Mao Tse-tung—Great Leader of the Working Class

Death a Deep Loss, Life a Profound Inspiration

Mao Tse-tung, Chairman of the Communist Party of China, is dead at age 82. He was this man, that even the rulers of the United States, after viciously ridiculing him and China for over 20 years, found themselves in a position where the President must say: "Mao Tse-tung was a remarkable and great man." Who was he that the two most powerful countries in the world, the U.S. and Russia, have no leaders that compare with him in stature, either in love and respect from the people, or fear and hate from enemies?

Mao Tse-tung, born a middle-level peasant in 1893, was, like millions of Chinese youth, rebellious. And why not? By the time he was ten, foreign garrisons were in every main city, British and American gunboats patrolled every river, propping up the decadent landlord government. They were there to keep China backward, to better.

It was in participating in great revolutionary struggles of the Chinese people against foreign rule and the local landlords, and because of the inspiration of the victory of the working class in establishing its rule in the Soviet Union that he among many others, found his way to Marxism, the science of revolution.

In his own day, Marx had taken part in and analyzed the struggles of the workers against exploitation and oppression, such as the movement for the 8 hour day, the U.S. Civil War, the Paris Commune, where for two months the workers held power. He had shown how the driving force in moving society forward throughout history was the struggle between oppressed and oppressor classes. He showed how modern society had created something new in history, the working class, which produces society's wealth working in common, even while that wealth is ripped off by a handful of vamps called capitalists.

In 1927, describing a peasant revolt in his home province, Hunan, he said: "In short, all those whom the gentry [landowning tyrants] had despised, whom they had trodden into the dirt, people with no place in society, people with no right to speak, have now audaciously lifted up their heads. They have not only lifted up their heads, but taken power into their hands...They have raised their rough, work-soiled hands and laid them on the gentry...They are issuing orders and are running everything. Those who used to rank lowest now rank above everybody else and so this is called turning things upside down."

Such was the struggle of the Chinese people, and it was in this and many other and even more monumental struggles that the leadership of Mao Tse-tung was forged. At that time, he was siding with the peasants, arguing against those who fancied themselves "revolutionaries" but who looked upon these events as "terrible." He argued that true revolutionaries should unite with, learn from, and politically lead the people, and leave the rest in misery. He did it so they could be better able to lead all to take matters into their own hands and overthrow those who exploited and oppressed the masses of people.

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Throughout the course of the Chinese Revolution, until the very end of his life, Mao Tse-tung has kept his heart with the people and has not wavered from Marxism. He has always sided with those with rough, work-soiled hands who are laying them on their enemies, their oppressors throughout the world, and he has shown us the way forward.

There were those who said that because the workers were a tiny minority of China's population, there could be no hope of working class revolution—of thoroughly, and throughout the country, "turning things upside down." But Mao Tse-tung, learning from the people's struggles and applying the science of revolution to conditions in China, argued that the only way forward for China, and countries like China, was for the working class Party to lead the workers and peasants to fight and overthrow the...
The death of Mao Tse-Tung was met with a vast outpouring of grief by the millions upon millions all over the world who honor his memory and the leadership he gave to the oppressed and exploited everywhere.

On September 18, an estimated 300,000 students and workers assembled in Peking to pay their respects and to honor Mao. By the time the mass meeting was over, the crowd was estimated to be at least one million. This mass meeting was one of the many meetings held throughout China to pay tribute to Mao.

Mao always saw the Chinese revolution as a part of the struggle of the exploited and oppressed everywhere. The capitalist rulers of the US gave vivid proof to the international nature of the struggle by propounding and supporting policies that directly interfere with the freedom and independence of the Chinese people. It is a tremendous support and inspiration to the Chinese people to know that the world is with them in their struggle for socialism.

The capitalist rulers of the US, beset with difficulties at home and abroad, have been forced to divert their resources and energies to the struggle against China. This has been done to an increasing extent with the coming of the Nixon Administration, which has adopted a more aggressive policy toward China.

The struggle of the black people in the United States is bound to merge with the American workers' movement, and this will eventually and the criminal rule of the US monopoly capitalist class.

The Afro-American struggle is not only a struggle waged by the exploited and oppressed black people for freedom and emancipation, it is also a new dawning call to all the exploited and oppressed people of the United States to fight against the barbarous rule of the US monopoly capitalist class. It is a tremendous support and inspiration to the struggle of the black people throughout the world against US imperialism.

The struggle of the black people is a component part of the contemporary world revolution. I call on the workers, peasants and all who are willing to fight against US imperialism, and all who are willing to fight against the struggle of the black people in the United States.

The people of the world, unite still more closely and launch a sustained and vigorous offensive against our common enemy, US imperialism, and all those who seek to take advantage of the weakness of the black people. I shall maintain this view.

At present, the world revolution has entered a great new stage. The struggle of the black people in the United States for emancipation is a component part of the general struggle of all the people of the world against US imperialism, a component part of the contemporary world revolution. I call on the workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals of every country and all who are willing to fight against US imperialism to take action and extend strong support to the struggle of the black people in the United States.

The struggle of the black people in the United States is bound to merge with the American workers' movement, and this will eventually and the criminal rule of the monopolial capitalist class.
We, the Working People of the World, Are Mao's Successors

Speech by Bob Avakian, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party, USA, given at a memorial meeting for Mao Tse-tung, Chicago, September 19, 1976. (Edited text.)

The death of Mao Tse-tung is a great loss. A great loss to the working class and oppressed peoples of the world. As he left this world, he expressed his greatest concern about the working people's struggle to rid the world of exploitation and oppression. He wanted to see the foreigners gone from China. And to a certain degree it was true that they did want to see at least some of the foreign domination gone, but they wanted to see this so that they themselves could become fully dominant, and ride full saddle on the backs of working people of China and shot them down in the streets, mummifying tens of thousands of communists and thousands and thousands more workers. And it looked as though the Chinese working class was doomed forever, and the masses of peasants were doomed forever to this endless reign of oppression, terror, degradation and slavery.

Revolution is Fine!

At this point in 1927, despite the setbacks in the cities, the peasants were rising up in the countryside. And there were those again within the Chinese Communist Party who said "This is terrible!" "Look what these dirty-handed, rough-hewn, ignorant vulgar peasants are doing."

"They are rising up and smashing the landlords down into the dust. This is not proper and civilized." And Mao Tse-tung said that right, it's not proper and civilized and no revolution is proper and civilized. But it's not terrible, as you say, who tremble before the great upsurge of the masses of people.

It is not terrible, it is fine. And the task of revolutionaries and communists is to unite with those who have taken upon their dirty work-soiled hands and have laid them on their oppressors and who are determined not to stop until they have continued that task through.

It was Mao Tse-tung who united with that struggle of the peasants, who took workers from the city with him, who went up into the mountains to live on a level of porridge each day, with almost no weapons, and began the great battle from the countryside that would gradually encircle, with the strength of hundreds of millions of Chinese people, the rotten, oppressive and corrupt rule that had its stronghold in the cities and would wish it were otherwise.

But this was not an easy or quick victory, because there are no easy or quick victories in life. Nothing is straight and neat and did not do the Chinese people. Because Chiang Kai-shek, leader of those landlords, big banking and capitalist interests who wanted to cooperate with the foreign imperialists in keeping the Chinese people down, did not rest either. He pursued Mao Tse-tung and the peasants Mao led, not once, not twice, but eventually five times, with so-called "encirclement and suppression" campaigns to try to wipe out the areas they had freed from landlord rule, to take away the land that had been distributed among the peasants, to deny the people the rights they had won with their own hands under the leadership of Mao Tse-tung, and to reestablish the dark rule and the dark reign of terror of the landlords and the oppressive government headed by Chiang.

In the early 1930s Chiang Kai-shek, aided by the wrong policies of Communist Party leaders who opposed Mao Tse-tung, was successful in driving a line and Continued on page 4
across 6000 miles of rugged terrain, fighting nearly every day, spreading revolution everywhere they passed, until encirclement and take up the war against the invaders, Mao the Snow Mountains. Even with die invasion of China by Japan, Chiang Kai-shek continued to concentrate on at

tacking the liberated base areas. To break out of Chiang's

encirclement, Mao turned to Chiang's weakness—the fact that Mao led the revolutionary forces in what was known as the Long March from southern China, lasting over a year, 6000 miles across rugged terrain, fighting nearly every day, spreading revolution everywhere they passed, until they arrived in China's Northwest.

Just think about that...Now that you can look back and see how Mao Tsetung and the Chinese Communist Party led the Long March that started in 1934, it is clear that Mao Tsetung was not the only leader who did this sort of thing in history. Even with the invasion of China by Japan, Chiang Kai-shek continued to concentrate on attacking the liberated base areas. To break out of Chiang's encirclement, he turned to Chiang's weakness—the fact that he could not mobilize the masses of people, while the Chinese proletariat could. But the Chinese people knew something even more, because they had risen up from the ashes of slavery. That far from being a path to nowhere, the way of the Chinese proletariat was the only way to victory. And this is in fact what happened in 1949.

Mao Tsetung's leadership, they took up the immediate

masses of Chinese people, wound their way over 6,000 miles. Over 90% of them were lost on the way. But, led by Mao Tsetung, they arrived in an area called Yenan. They had to go through two battles, one in the south and one in the north. The battle in the north was the most important because it was here that the Chinese people were finally able to defeat Chiang Kai-shek's army. And Mao Tsetung was able to use his military strategy to defeat Chiang's army. He was an expert in terrain analysis and knew exactly where to set up his bases of operations. He also knew how to exploit the weaknesses of Chiang's army, such as their lack of support from the people.

Masses Cherish Mao Tsetung

It is for this reason, for this kind of leadership, that the Chinese people were able to defeat the invaders and win millions of people in China and throughout the world to their side. The Chinese people were tired of war, as people are always tired of war. Mao Tsetung was the leader who took up the war against the invaders. He was not only a military leader, but also a political and ideological leader. He was the one who built the United Front with the Chinese people to drive out the Japanese. The Chinese people knew that they had a path out of this darkness. And many said no, that when you go to work and do real work, unlike other times, those who fight in the interests of the masses of people, and mobilize the masses of people, will emerge victorious sooner or later. Not quickly or easily, but sooner or later. And those who stand with the working class and stand for removing the chains, which capitalism places on society are bound to be able to unite the great majority and to emerge victorious. And this is in fact what happened in 1949.

The Long March

For over a year, fighting at least one and sometimes more than one battle every day, these revolutionary soldiers, drawn from and nurtured in the soil of the masses of Chinese people, wound their way over 6,000 miles. Over 90% of them were lost on the way. But, led by Mao Tsetung, they arrived in an area called Yenan. They had to go through two battles, one in the south and one in the north. The battle in the north was the most important because it was here that the Chinese people were finally able to defeat Chiang Kai-shek's army. And Mao Tsetung was able to use his military strategy to defeat Chiang's army. He was an expert in terrain analysis and knew exactly where to set up his bases of operations. He also knew how to exploit the weaknesses of Chiang's army, such as their lack of support from the people.

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It all by himself—maybe that’s not so bad for China, and maybe people are eating better, even if it’s at the cost of great human liberty. These "champions of human liberty," our rulers, who run to South Africa and other parts of the world to try to enforce the most vicious kind of slavery and exploitation even while they’re enforcing it over us here, are worried all of a sudden about the so-called "cost of human dignity and liberty" to the Chinese masses who they treat as so much meat to be carved up, even as they treat us the same way in the factories and communities where we work and live.

But fewer and fewer people are fooled by this any longer. So many of our rulers have to say that Mao Tsetung was a benign "dictator," all of a sudden. Instead of a vicious tyrant and murderer, they say he was a good man—for China, though they are quick to add that he did it as though he waved a magic wand and did it all by himself. And more, every time an attempt has been made to turn backward the revolution and to restore the old order and all the suffering and misery it means for millions, it has been Mao Tsetung who has stopped for ward in leading the Chinese people to rise up and beat the oppressors and exploiters, and that kind of starvation and oppression and that kind of starvation and degrading conditions.

He said, "You know, in the old days the rich people used to tell us, ‘the reason that we’re rich and poor is because we were born under a good sign and you were born under a bad sign, and it’s just fate and there’s nothing you can do about it.’" He said, "We used to believe them and we believed them so much that if we had to go to near rich people’s houses or places of business, we would cross the street so our bad luck wouldn’t pass on to them."

But, he added, "Under the leadership of Mao Tsetung, the Communist Party came and told us it was not because the rich were born under a good sign and you were born under a bad sign, that the rich are rich and you are poor. It is because they have the power in the state. They control the government and society and we do not. That is why they are rich and we are poor."

World Turned Upside Down
And then he broke into a broad smile and said, "As you can see, the world has turned upside down and the situation is exactly the reverse now and we are no longer good sign masters. The masters of the old days, the so-called ‘rulers’ of China, with Chiang ruling the country, or would the Chinese people themselves reap the fruits of the victory for which they had fought? The outcome was a great victory for the Chinese people who were determined not to let the plunderer of China, with Chiang ruling the country, or would the Chinese people themselves reap the fruits of the victory for which they had fought? The outcome was a great victory for the Chinese people who were determined not to be hated by these masses. Leaders of the working class carry out policies that enable the masses to advance in leading the Chinese people to rise up and beat the oppressors and exploiters, and that kind of starvation and oppression and that kind of starvation and degrading conditions.

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and as he later said, "Once I had accepted it as the cor-
rect interpretation of history, I did not afterwards wa-
sh."]

It was Mao Tsetung, on this basis, on the basis of
taking this science and applying it in the examples I've
cited and many others, to the actual situation in China,
who led the Chinese people to win an independent
cause within the Communist Party itself, as I've said—
those were, some who had fought heroically in the
cause of the working people who had seen the possi-
bility of themselves to become new rulers. They saw
that the differences between those who worked mainly
with their hands and those who worked mainly
with their brains had not been eliminated; they saw that
the country was more backward than the cities, they
saw that there were still differences in wages and dif-
ter classes among the workers; they saw all this
and saw in it the chance for themselves to use these
differences to turn society back and become new ruler-

These people began to institute step by step all the
calls that these people had cast off and had
hoped and thought were gone forever. They began
to introduce work rules in the factories, like we're all
after they had taken power into their own hands that
cause within the Communist Party itself, as I've said—

because they knew that it was the Chinese Communist
Party itself. So many people were confused,\nwanted to become new rulers, did not openly stand
for themselves to become new rulers. They saw
that their brains had not been eliminated; they saw that the
working class and masses of pea-

chance for themselves to become new rulers. They saw
with their hands and those who worked mainly
with their hands were meant to be users of their hands, that they were only good to be
ruled over.

But Mao Tsetung made his clarion call. He said: "The Chinese working people the world over, and to the cause of communism,

Perished all over our motherland, going among workers,

We are out to build socialism and eliminate classes and

safeguarded insertion of socialism, communism, emancipa-
tion and the world revolution. On holidays and festi-

vales you took no rest but worked and studied at all
hours, sometimes for days and nights on end, ignoring
your elections. Many nights as we stood guard, we
would gaze at your lighted windows and think, "Chair-
man Mao, you should stop a bit and take a rest."


Successors...

Continued from page 6 the Communist Party, that they were just messing everything up, just going back to their studies and going along with the way things were. So Mao's support was like a tremendous inspiration to them and they agreed on the need to go back to their studies and the present. Tremendous struggle broke out. People argued and debated the question of what policies should be adopted, how should China be run and in what interests, how can the working class rule and remake China in its own interests? And they rose up in their hundered millions in a battle that, at its peak, lasted three years. They struck down that group of leaders who had temporarily established a strong headquarters in the workers' own Party, the Communist Party, and they presented the old society from being brought back.

But after this still more attempts to restore capitalism were made by the same dark forces, and each time was Mao Tsetung who stepped forward and said to the masses of people, "It is right to rebel against reactionaries." It is the masses of people, he said, that must determine the fate of China and throughout the world. It is not one or two or a handful of people attempting to establish and re-establish themselves as new exploiters to whom the world belongs, it is to the great majority, the laboring people who have created the world of man in the first place.

Mao Tsetung Thought

You see, our rulers make fun of Mao Tsetung's writings and say they are stupid. Just go back to it as though it's some kind of religion, and they laugh and say, "Mao Tsetung Thought is supposed to possess magical powers, goodness, and so on..." But if you try to bring it to the workers and people, and you try to understand the people, they have never treated it as a religion in the first place. That was the view of those, like our rulers, who want to keep a handful of people in power.

And you, in fact, Mao Tsetung Thought does not overthrow the initiative of the masses to help raise cross and cure disease. Because it has magical powers? No. Because it represents the people's actual scientific basis upon which things develop, upon which changes can be made and enables the masses of people themselves to take matters in their own hands, to grasp this science, and to use it to change the world. It is the masses of people, as Mao Tsetung consistently fought for all his life, who are the real makers of history.

It is true that these people, such as Mao Tsetung, have a scientific understanding of how society and nature determine the fate of China and throughout the world. It is the masses of people, he said, that must determine the fate of China and throughout the world, and this is the view that many people in society and consciously transforming nature. They never treated it as a religion in the first place. That was the view of those, like our rulers, who want to keep a handful of people in power.

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