



Chairman Mao on the rostrum in Tien An Men Square delivering the "May 20th Statement" in 1970.

'I PLACE MY HOPES ON THE PEOPLE OF THE U.S.'

Article from the Sept. 20 issue of *The Call*
on Chairman Mao's
teachings about the American people

Chairman Mao was a great internationalist who took his stand alongside the working and oppressed people of the world in their struggle against imperialism and reaction. He paid especially close attention to the struggles of the working-class and minority people here in the U.S., giving them encouragement and support.

On several occasions, Mao Tsetung wrote articles and gave speeches and interviews which spoke directly to the American people as well as the rest of the world. Even though he had never been to the U.S., Mao studied the facts of class struggle here keenly.

When World War II ended and the U.S. emerged as the world's most powerful imperialist country, Chairman Mao called on the American people to stand up and resist. In his famous "Interview with the American Correspondent Anna Louise Strong" (1946), he pointed to the danger of a new imperialist war and its consequences for the American people:

"To start a war, the U.S. reactionaries must first attack the American people. They are already attacking the American people—oppressing the workers and democratic circles in the United States politically and economically and preparing to impose fascism there. The people of the United States should stand up and resist the attacks of the U.S. reactionaries. I believe they will."

In the same interview, Mao took note of the development of the atomic bomb by the U.S. and the imperialists' attempts to subdue both the people of the world and the domestic class struggle with it. He told Anna Louise Strong:

"The atom bomb is a paper tiger which the U.S. reactionaries use to scare people. It looks terrible, but in fact it isn't. Of course, the atom bomb is a weapon of mass slaughter, but the outcome of a war is decided by the people, not by one or two new types of weapon."

In the period of the 1940s, the U.S. was frantically trying to save the fascist Chiang Kai-shek regime in China. Yet Mao Tsetung made a careful distinction between the American people and the handful of U.S. imperialists. In several articles Mao brilliantly analyzed the failure of U.S. imperialism to dominate China. But he always pointed out that what the American politicians demagogically said they were doing "in the interests of the American people" or because of "public opinion" was in fact only a reflection of interests and opinions of imperialism. Speaking of then-Secretary of State Dean Acheson, Mao said, "... his is the 'public opinion' of Wall Street, not the public opinion of the American people." ("Farewell, Leighton Stuart!," 1949).

Mao Tsetung also observed at that time that the "ties of friendship" which the imperialists talked of between the U.S. and China, were only "those between the reactionaries of two countries" ("Why is it Necessary to Discuss the White Paper?," 1949). He called for genuine bonds of friendship to be built between the peoples of the two countries, noting that the masses of people in the U.S. would rejoice in China's liberation.

Mao Tsetung also took interest in the development of the communist movement in the U.S., and sent a message of great significance to William Z. Foster, chairman of the CPUSA, in 1945. In the message, Mao greeted the re-establishment of the CPUSA and the defeat of Earl Browder's revisionist line which had led him to disband the party for two years earlier and call for "co-operation" between the working class and the bourgeoisie in the U.S.

TELEGRAM TO FOSTER

In the 1945 telegram to Foster, Mao wrote: "We are glad to learn that the special convention of the Communist Political Association of the United States has resolved to repudiate Browder's revisionist, that is, capitulationist line, has re-established Marxist leadership and revived the Communist Party of the United States. . . Browder's whole revisionist-capitulationist line (which is fully expressed in his book *Teheran*) in essence reflects the influence of reactionary U.S. capitalist groups on the U.S. workers' movement. . . Beyond all doubt the victory of the U.S. working class and its vanguard, the Communist Party of the United States, over Browder's revisionist-capitulationist line will contribute signally to the great cause in which the Chinese and American peoples are engaged. . ."

To Mao Tsetung, the storms of struggle which broke out among Afro-Americans during the '60s signaled a new upsurge in the struggle of the whole U.S. working class. In 1963 and again in 1968, Mao made major statements on the Afro-American question and called for worldwide solidarity with their struggle.

Having studied the history of the Afro-American people, Mao Tsetung concluded in his 1963 statement, "The evil system of colonialism and imperialism arose and thrived with the enslavement of Negroes and the trade in Negroes, and it will surely come to its end with the complete emancipation of black people."

In 1968, following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Chairman Mao issued his famous "Statement in Support of the Afro-American Struggle Against Violent Repression." In that statement he pointed out the brutal character of the imperialist system which saw fit to murder King, although King himself was an exponent of non-violence. He called the Black struggle a "component part of the contemporary world revolution" and referred to it as a "clarion call to all the exploited and oppressed people of the United States to fight against the barbarous rule of the monopoly capitalist class."

FUNDAMENTAL UNITY

The statement further took note of the fundamental unity between the white working people and the Black masses, showing that the national question is in essence a class question. "The struggle of the black people in the United States is bound to merge with the American workers' movement, and this will eventually end the criminal rule of the U.S. monopoly capitalist class," said Mao.

Chairman Mao's deep concern and profound insights into the Afro-American struggle was but one reflection of the importance he attached to the revolutionary struggle in the United States. In a 1970 interview with the American journalist Edgar Snow, Mao said that he placed his hopes on the American people.

That same year, Chairman Mao delivered his famous May 20th Statement, in which he called on the people of the world to unite in the fight against imperialism following the U.S. invasion of Cambodia. Speaking from the rostrum of Tien An Men Square in Peking, Mao Tsetung took note of the people's struggle that was developing inside the U.S. while the imperialists were carrying out their aggression:

"While massacring the people in other countries, U.S. imperialism is slaughtering the white and black people in its own country. Nixon's fascist atrocities have kindled the raging flames of the revolutionary mass movement in the United States. The Chinese people firmly support the revolutionary struggle of the American people. I am convinced that the American people who are fighting valiantly will ultimately win victory. . ."

The words of the "May 20th Statement" were heard by revolutionaries in the U.S. and around the world who responded by redoubling their efforts to build Marxist-Leninist parties, fight revisionism and give leadership to the workers' struggles. In the U.S., the "May 20th Statement" provided a fiery inspiration to the work of the forming of the October League and other Marxist-Leninist groups. Chairman Mao's words on May 20 remain a great guide to us today.