

## CHAPTER XI

### THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CAPITALIST CLASS

#### 我所見到資產階級的之另一面

I was originally a proletarian, but by the time I left Shanghai for Hong Kong I had attained a reasonable degree of success in my business. I was a man of some means, and I was thus considered a capitalist.

In the 22 years I spent in building up the Wei Ming Flashlight and Battery Factory in Shanghai, I naturally met a number of people who qualified as members of the capitalist class. But I have always had a deep understanding and sympathy for the poor people. I find them straightforward, simple, and likeable.

My experience showed that if one explained matters clearly to a worker and treated him with fairness and sincerity, he would respond with loyalty and trust surpassing the closeness of one's own brother.

On the other hand, I have always loathed those so-called capitalists who came by their money from inheritance or amassed their fortunes through devious means. These idle rich, having never worked to earn their living, know only how to indulge themselves. To me these are a despicable lot. I have often felt that the inequality between the rich and the poor has created serious injustices.

But I also know from long experience that not all so-called capitalists made their fortunes by being idle, by a total refusal to take part in any type of productive endeavour or by a complete dislike of work of any sort.

I know many people who, having become wealthy either through inheritance or by their own enterprise, are still

devoted to an almost unvarying schedule of hard work. They do this not only in their own interest but they are also always mindful of the welfare of the poor people. I feel that these people contribute greatly to society as a whole. There are others who, while they may outwardly appear to own their own businesses are, in fact, indebted to their friends and relatives for the loans they used to start their enterprises. Under this type of oppressive financial burden, they may indeed be poorer in spirit than the poorest man. Laden with debts, they are forced to work harder and suffer more than the members of the so-called working class who are their employees.

I feel that businessmen who have started lives with such an overburdening handicap deserve respect and I believe that their work and their enterprise are an asset to society. I think one should not pay them less tribute than they actually deserve merely because they have been classified as "capitalists."

On the other hand, there were many so-called capitalists in Shanghai in the days before the Chinese Communists, who, having been perverted by the compradore system of the foreign firm in the Settlement and Concession areas, or contaminated by the evil influence of the corrupt officials, lived for profit alone. They knew no principles, had no particular outlook either as a person or toward the world, and their only ambition was money.

It was not at all strange, therefore, that when the Chinese Communists swept the mainland, this group of Shanghai people were deluded by the mirage which the Communists produced. The hallucination inevitably led them to nightmare and total disaster from which there was no return. This was indeed tragic.