

China Policy Study Group

BROADSHEET

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PARTY AND MASSES

Some friends of China have expressed doubts and anxieties about the campaign of criticism now unfolding in that country. To a large extent they have been influenced by Western reporters who, repeating their errors of the Cultural Revolution, see the current wave of wall posters simply as further evidence of factional strife in the higher ranks of the Party. Commentators steeped in the traditions of the bourgeois party system, with a vote every five years, cannot understand that the present campaign of criticism, debate and the calling to account of persons in authority illustrates the truly democratic nature of the Chinese political system. It is but a further stage of the discussion of fundamentals that has always characterised the Chinese Party and state.

The People's Republic has always avoided institutions which pay greater respect to the forms of democracy than to its reality. In developing an alternative the Chinese have given priority to the creation of an atmosphere of debate, discussion and criticism in which workers and peasants feel free to participate. Mao Tse-tung has demanded of the masses that they equip themselves with knowledge and experience enabling them to exercise increasing supervision over the Party. Slogans such as rebellion is justified, put daring above everything else, go against the tide, are being translated into action as the masses, stimulated by the Party, express their opinions through *dazibao*.

Participation by the masses is one of the two main aspects of democracy. The other concerns the correct relationship between the Party and the masses. The *People's Daily* editorial of July 1st, celebrating the 53rd anniversary of the Communist Party of China, quotes Mao's words: 'The Party must lead the masses to carry out all their correct ideas . . . and educate them to correct any wrong ideas they may entertain.' This accords with Lenin's conception of the Party as the vanguard. It does not dictate, but provides leadership to enable the masses to develop their Marxist-Leninist consciousness in the period of transition to communism. Today the Chinese Party is making determined efforts to ensure that the present campaign becomes 'deep-going, popularised and sustained'. The Party's welcome for supervision shows that theory and practice are united.

Tun Abdul Razak Thinks Again

China's New Relations with Malaysia

Tun Abdul Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia, visited China from 28 May to 2 June. On 31 May he signed a Joint Communique (signed by Premier Chou En-lai for the People's Republic of China) establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The success of Soviet policies in India may have raised Moscow's hopes that, with the U.S. unable to contain China by herself, Chiang, Suharto, Marcos, Lee and Razak would welcome U.S.-Soviet policing of the areas 'threatened' by China. None of the regimes they headed had renounced policies which implied that the Peking government had no legitimate authority and could therefore be overthrown. Moreover, the revolutionary Communists in the Philippines (who later formed the New People's Army) followed Marxism-Leninism-Mao Tse-tung Thought, as did the Malayan Communist Party (also actively engaged in armed revolutionary struggle), whose Voice of the Malayan Revolution, like the Voice of the People in Thailand, broadcasts from Chinese territory. In addition, the presence of large racial minorities of Chinese origin in Southeast Asia had been used in the past to create hostility towards the People's Republic, while in Malaysia the semi-feudal regime found it necessary to rouse Malay chauvinism in order to maintain its power. Such considerations should, one would think, have made Southeast Asian regimes very responsive to Soviet approaches, especially as Lee Kuan Yew seemed to be enthusiastically in search of a strongly anti-revolutionary boss. The Soviet Embassy in Kuala Lumpur, opened only in 1968, had quickly become a large and active one.

Yet the Joint Communique issued by the Chinese and Malaysian Prime Ministers went much further than a simple announcement of the decision to establish normal diplomatic relations. It said, for example:

The two governments consider all foreign aggression, interference, control and subversion to be impermissible. They hold that the social system of a country should be chosen and decided by its own people. They are opposed to any

attempt by any country or group of countries to establish hegemony or create spheres of influence in any part of the world.

Under Mao Tse-tung's leadership the Chinese have dealt with their smaller neighbours (fifteen to forty times smaller) strictly as equals, never attempting to bully them or interfere in their internal affairs. Since there were 'Chinese' minorities, and Communist Parties through which they could have acted (had they been that kind of 'power'), their conduct had to pass the test of rigorous scrutiny. For some time before his Peking visit Tun Abdul Razak had been moving away from his neighbours and their foreign masters, trying to end a policy which was giving his regime less and less room to manoeuvre and making Malaysia increasingly vulnerable to pressure by the imperialist powers. The Chinese responded by encouraging every move towards greater independence of the big powers, towards resistance to their unreasonable demands (as in the matter of the Straits of Malacca), and towards realistic acceptance of the fact of socialist revolution in China and of the defeat of imperialism and its puppets in Indochina.

In the colonial period Malayan guerrillas, under the leadership of the Malayan Communist Party, had challenged their British rulers but had been defeated in the liberation struggle. They were not totally defeated, however, and continued to be active. The M.C.P. is an independent Party which has maintained close relations with the Communist Party of China. In the course of a long analysis, dated 25 May, of Razak's abandonment of his anti-China policy it declared:

Internationally, the people's revolutionary struggle, which is developing vigorously in various countries, has won one important victory after another. After being tempered in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, socialist China has become stronger than ever before. Chairman Mao's proletarian revolutionary line and revolutionary line on foreign affairs have won great victories. China has also achieved brilliant

success in socialist revolution and construction. As an impregnable revolutionary bastion, China is now making an increasingly important contribution to world revolution. With its international prestige soaring to new heights, China also has a tremendous role to play in international affairs. Without China's participation, no international problem stands a chance of being solved. The desire to normalise relations with China has become an irresistible trend.

It welcomed a policy so much desired by the Malaysian people and called for intensified struggle to 'defend the interests of the people in our country and advance the revolutionary cause', making clear the Marxist-Leninist view of the Malaysian-Chinese rapprochement.

By his visit, and the decisions signed in Peking, the anti-communist Razak has affirmed that:

- (1) the Chinese can be trusted to deal with weak and small neighbours as equals, respecting their independence and territorial integrity;
- (2) in acknowledging the authority of the socialist government in China there is no danger of rousing pan-Chinese chauvinism;
- (3) the revolutionaries fighting to overthrow his regime are not doing so at Peking's behest or for Peking's benefit;
- (4) Malaysia has been wrong in its support of U.S. policy on the question of Taiwan;
- (5) it is right for Malaysians to resist attempts by the superpowers and other powers to impose or exercise hegemony not only in Malaysia but anywhere in the world outside their own territory.

ON THE ROAD TO COMMUNISM

CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATION IN CHINA—Changes in Management and the Division of Labor, by Charles Bettelheim. Monthly Review Press. Price: \$6.95, £3.00

The Cultural Revolution in China is of outstanding importance in the development of Marxism-Leninism, but its content is so rich and new that it can be studied for years, especially by those who have not experienced it directly, without uncovering all its truths.

This little book is a valuable aid to understanding the part played by the Cultural Revolution in changing production relations in China. 'A new road was opened up', says Bettelheim, 'in the struggle for socialism. There is no precedent for such an attempt to transform social relations. It constitutes a decisive and permanent achievement, as decisive and permanent as any scientific or social experiment which discovers new processes or new objective laws.'

The reasoning should be followed carefully, but it is not at all obscure and is illustrated by many examples gathered during the author's own visits to China, from Chinese publications, and from the reports of other visitors and foreign workers.

New paths

The central thesis of the book is that under the leadership of the Communist Party, and as a result of the implementation of the mass line, China is moving away from the patterns of industrial organisation and production relations that have been set by capitalism, towards a different form of organisation and new production relations, and that these changes are *in the direction of Communism*, along lines already sketched by Marx, Engels and Lenin. They are not empirical solutions formed for problems as they arise, but are part of a general, planned advance.

Lenin spoke of the transition between capitalism and communism as 'a period of struggle between dying capitalism and

The Chinese have been able to get together at governmental level with the Malaysians because both are the official representatives of peoples oppressed and threatened by imperialism. But they have pointedly not negotiated about the international duties and responsibilities which they have as Communist revolutionaries. The Voice of the Malayan Revolution continues to enjoy Chinese hospitality. The active revolutionary struggle, based on Mao Tse-tung Thought, which is going on, has not been interfered with, nor have its leaders been embarrassed or confused by anything in the Communiqué. Secondly, in making it clear that Malaysians of Chinese descent receive no greater consideration than those of Malay or Indian descent, the Chinese have underlined their wish to see Malaysians of all communities unite to transform the conditions of poverty and foreign domination.

The Chou-Razak agreement leaves Lee Kuan Yew and a dwindling number of Thai and Filipino reactionaries alone manning the very ragged U.S.-designed circle of 'containment'. And it makes Brezhnev's Asian collective security scheme look more shop-soiled than ever before. For it is clear that only by willingness to coexist peacefully, on the basis of the Five Principles, with China, North Vietnam, the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, North Korea and the legitimate government of Cambodia, and to join them in making a stand against hegemony and foreign domination, can the hitherto neo-colonialist regimes of much-invaded Asia be secured against intervention by those outside forces which prepare for, threaten and practise subversion and aggression.

nascent communism . . . between capitalism which has been defeated but not destroyed and communism which has been born but is still very feeble.' During this period production relations are still 'imperfect', as the Chinese say. Only Marxist leadership can ensure that the remnants of the old relations do not develop and once again become dominant, that the division between mental and manual work, between specialists and workers, between town and country does not grow once more.

Capitalist laws superseded

Bettelheim points out that under capitalism there is a constant tendency to centralisation and an increase in the size of enterprises. But under socialism small units can be more efficient than big ones, and when a district or organisation relies on itself for development it is making use of the collective initiative of the masses and taking a step which is socialist in character.

The policy of rural industrialisation and decentralisation is effective only because it rests on social relations and productive forces which enable it to become rooted in reality. This is the opposite of the 'voluntarism' and 'subjectivism' of which the Chinese leaders are so readily accused. These charges are utterly false. What is striking, on the contrary, is the extraordinary realism of a policy which excludes neither imagination nor bold initiatives.

After a very useful account of the processes of industrial planning, Bettelheim says:

The producing enterprises thus subordinate their particular interests to the overall interests of the country. This is the driving force of a new kind of economic progress—production is no longer dominated by the pursuit of exchange value, growth, monetary returns and profit, but by the pursuit of use value. This presupposes radical transformations in social relations, in the economic base as well as in the superstructure.

Contrary to certain views which claim Marxism as their authority but reject its basic ideas, such transformations

are not spontaneous. They are not mechanistically determined by the development of the productive forces. Consequently—and this point is essential for an understanding of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution and its significance—it should be considered that the transformation of the economic base which can be currently observed in China must of necessity result from a struggle which has been waged, and continues to be waged, by the workers themselves to transform the social division of labor, eliminate hierarchical relations within the production units, take management into their own hands, and master technology. This is a political and ideological struggle. It is not a mere revolt. It has a revolutionary character. Its success requires a unity of conception and action, and a correct estimate of the nature of viable transformations and their interdependence. This is why such a struggle demands the leadership of a revolutionary party.

Right and 'left'

Because the struggle during the Cultural Revolution was led by the Chinese Communist Party it was possible to mobilise the masses effectively and an advance was made towards communism. Naturally this advance was not a final victory, nor was it unopposed. Set against it were opponents of two types: the conservatives, following what may be called the Liu Shao-chi line, and the ultra-left. The latter seemed the more dangerous, especially in the later stages, and caused the most confusion in the ranks of the people. Some conservatives were relatively easy to identify, and their timidity when boldness was needed, their desire to postpone fundamental change, made no wide appeal. But it was much more difficult to expose the ultra-leftists, whose 'radical' policies and uncompromising words seemed to many to be what the situation demanded.

In his 'Postscript' Professor Bettelheim deals with this subject particularly well. He points out that the policies and slogans of the ultra-left divided the masses rather than uniting them and that to put forward goals which were then unattainable in fact hindered the attainment of goals which were within reach.

The ultra-left wanted to implement only the first two-thirds of 'struggle-criticism-transformation'. They entirely set aside the instruction in the 16-Point Statement of 8 August 1966, that debates should be conducted by reasoning, not by coercion or force, and that the rights of minorities should be respected. They substituted attacks on individuals for attacks on wrong policies. They preferred the recital of quotations to the study of Marxism.

On the People's Communes they tried to abolish the principle of payment according to work done and to force the abandonment of private plots, both measures which went beyond the desires of the masses at that time. Bettelheim suggests that their efforts to establish 'political attitude' as a criterion for wages was a kind of material incentive to take a political position, which would have encouraged the mouthing of Marxist phrases and the emergence of a new elite.

The ultra-left line at one time had a very wide influence and, as this book shows, could be found even in the pages of *Red Flag* and *Peking Review*. An article in the latter, for instance, proclaimed the 'absolute authority' of the thought of Chairman Mao, a non-Marxist idea and one which directly contradicted Mao's own injunction that Communists 'must always go into the whys and wherefores of anything . . . on no account should they follow blindly and encourage slavishness.'

The ultra-left, in the end, were seen to be putting forward just another aspect of the bourgeois line, which has not yet been finally and completely defeated. The ultra-left attracted a lot of attention, but the right is the main, abiding danger. However, the Chinese people, thanks to the experience of the Cultural Revolution and their intensive study of Marxism, are now better able to detect and controvert it. For this the leadership of the Communist Party is responsible.

WHO IS IMPERIALIST?

Moscow accuses China ('Pernicious Policy of the Maoists', *New Times* No. 18/19, May 1974) of viewing imperialism 'not as a definite socio-economic system, not as the highest stage of capitalism, but as a political and military force without reference to its class content'.

It is easy to dispute the charge on points of detail. Quite evidently the Chinese have not lost sight of the connection between monopoly capitalism and imperialism, least of all when they compare it with the concentrated control of industrial power and political and military power in the Soviet Union. Nowhere is Lenin read more widely—or more intensively—than in China. But the Russians have raised a point that needs to be considered: are we now in a phase in which resistance to the most predatory imperialisms turns some lesser imperialisms into potential allies, even though their class character may not be any less reactionary, or their persecution of the revolutionary forces any less brutal, than that of U.S. imperialism? There is no doubt that China's support for the independent state of Pakistan was based on its resistance to pressure from the super-imperialisms. May it not be that the most important influence exerted internationally at this moment by Japan, Britain and the countries of Western Europe is the assertion of some degree of independence of the superpowers?

Having made its attack, the Russian article does not pursue the line of thought any further. It loses sight of the distinction between big imperialisms and little imperialisms. China, it says, is advocating compromise between revolutionary countries and imperialist states generally, including the U.S. This is evidently felt to be safer ground. Moscow cannot see the matter from any standpoint but that of a rival superpower, contesting every inch with the U.S. camp and resisting any policy which deters a country from moving into the Soviet camp and strengthening it relatively to the U.S. Thus if China discourages countries from joining either camp and advises them to keep as much independence as possible, and engage in mutual aid despite differences of social system, she is indulging in 'anti-Sovietism'.

MOSCOW SEES ONLY TWO CAMPS

For Moscow this is the whole road to perdition. The nerve-centre of the superpower is super-sensitive to any implied challenge to the treasured status of 'leader of the socialist camp'. 'Anti-Sovietism', it declares, 'is merely the concentrated expression of anti-socialism'. Whoever is against countries linking up with the Soviet camp must be against socialism. Moreover, to keep countries out of the Soviet camp means to make them compromise with the U.S.A. Everything possible must be brought under Moscow's wing.

This argument, repeated in much Soviet writing, is interesting in that it shows very clearly that the Soviet Union sees itself primarily as a superpower, reasons like a superpower and fully accepts the requirements of a dual superpower system. It also demonstrates that the logical conclusion of superpower politics is that everything else becomes subordinated to the struggle for wider hegemony. Many people think that the Soviet Union is winning the competition for sheer military might, others that America will once again pull ahead. The only certainty is that no-one else is in the contest.

It is therefore unreal for a superpower to charge other countries with imperialistic aims, particularly in an area where the only possible danger of military hegemony comes from the superpower itself or its proteges. The disparity between the offensive force of a superpower and that of other countries or

groups is now so great that nobody aware of the situation would believe that a country other than the superpowers could follow a policy of territorial domination without the connivance of one or other of them. The Soviet Union thus gains nothing by trying to spread fears of a threat of Chinese hegemony. Even if China abandoned socialist principles and peaceful coexistence and dreamed instead of establishing hegemony by *force majeure* it would be impossible for her to embark on such a course except as the accomplice of a superpower. 'If one day China should change her colour and turn into a superpower', said the Chinese statement to the Special Session of the U.N. Assembly last April, 'the people of the world should identify her as social-imperialism, expose it, oppose it and work together with the Chinese people to overthrow it'.

SUPERPOWERS Vs. WEST EUROPE

To lump all imperialisms together, old and new, large and small, as if the role they were playing was identical, clarifies nothing. On the contrary, it obscures a great deal. Western Europe contains a number of older imperialisms, former enemies who today find common ground in resisting subjection by more powerful imperialisms. China has not underestimated the significance of this for changing the balance to the detriment of the superpowers. But an independent West European union cannot become a political unity while its members continue to rely on one of the two superpowers for a big part of the area's military capacity. That is why recent blows to the economy of Common Market countries and the prospect of a serious recession are a more serious deterrent than they would

SILENT CHINA: Selected Writings of Lu Xun. Edited and translated by Gladys Yang. Oxford University Press, Price 90p.

This is a selection of short stories, essays, prose poems, poems and reminiscences written between 1918 and 1936 by Lu Hsun, the greatest writer of modern China. Written in colloquial Chinese—in sharp contrast to most writings of the time—it is a reflection of the writer's revolutionary attitude towards literature and his determination to write for the masses who had little knowledge of the archaic, classical language of scholars and intellectuals.

Lu Hsun used his writing to condemn publicly the oppressive and retrogressive nature of Chinese society and culture. Literature was the tool with which he roused and enlightened while exposing abuses. Travelling extensively among the peasants, he became acutely aware of the destructive force of landlordism, capitalism and imperialism and through his writings urged the people to unite and struggle.

The essays, written towards the end of his life, are sharply critical of Chinese society. In the essay *Hung by the Heels* he sarcastically compares the habit of hanging fowl upside down with Westerners' disdainful attitude towards Chinese. He urges the people to organise and revolt, to choose whether to be slaves or masters. In *The Revolutionary Literature of the Chinese Protectorate and the Blood of Pioneers* he draws attention to the growth of revolutionary literature, which flourishes despite slander and persecution, extols the achievements of martyred comrades and spurns the 'flunkey-writers'.

Lu Hsun was incensed by the accepted oppression of women. In *My Views on Chastity and What Happens after Nora Leaves Home* he pleads for the emancipation of women, condemning a society which denies equal rights to the sexes.

This is a fine introduction to the writings of one who, working in the field of literature, hedged in by a sterile tradition, enlarged its scope to expose the whole rotten structure of Chinese society to criticism in biting, popular language and so played a major part in bringing it down.

be if there were no question of becoming independent of the U.S. and accepting the increased burdens entailed. The British reaction, in fact, has been to place renewed emphasis on the need for N.A.T.O. and for co-operation with the American superpower. The Chinese have left no doubt—certainly since Chou En-lai's meeting with the Italian Foreign Minister in January 1973—that when they speak of an independent Western Europe they mean, above all things, one that is militarily independent of both superpowers.

The Soviet Union cannot credibly maintain that it is not a superpower. What it says is that it could never be an imperialism, however much Africans and Asians may say they can't tell the difference, because the Soviet system isn't 'the highest stage of capitalism' but something else. The Third World is liable to dismiss this as, from their point of view, a distinction without a difference. For them imperialism is as imperialism does. The U.S.S.R. may insist it is not imperialist, that it is by definition the leader of the anti-imperialist camp, but it dare not face the truth that to smaller states one big-power camp is as bad as another. The analysis of world relations in Teng Hsiao-ping's speech at the United Nations may leave a number of questions unanswered but it is in line with present-day realities in a way that the Soviet analysis is not. The superpowers are the 'First World'—both of them. The middle powers are the 'Second World'—all of them, imperialist or not. The countries of the Second World are, many of them, trying to throw off superpower control and exploitation and on some issues could become allies of part of the Third World.

A NOTE ON CYPRUS

On 20 July the Security Council of the U.N. adopted unanimously a resolution on Cyprus which was remarkable for its embodiment of some of the principles China has been urging for years. It called on all states to respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Cyprus and when the Chinese representative expressed his country's support he had reservations only on the question of sending in a U.N. force. He called on all countries and peoples to be vigilant against the attempts of the superpowers to sow discord and profit from it.

U.S. involvement with the former Greek government is well known, as is the U.S. desire for a base on Cyprus, so it is no wonder that there were persistent rumours that Kissinger had given behind-the-scenes support to the Greek officers' coup. However, faced with strong popular feeling supporting the resolution of the Security Council, the U.S. had to back down. When the Cyprus peace talks opened in Geneva the questions raised about the presence of the U.S. as an observer testified clearly to the suspicion which is increasingly directed at any U.S. activity affecting other countries.

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