

China Policy Study Group

BROADSHEET

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A LESSON IN SOCIALIST POLITICS

Recent events in China are a reminder that there are opposing points of view from which people outside a socialist country will regard the firmness with which the working class deals with counter-revolution. From one viewpoint, it is 'terrible' that policies dear to the bourgeoisie should be closely examined by the masses of workers, peasants and students, severely criticised and then repudiated; from the other, the Chinese Communist Party's handling of the rightist attacks is a good thing, and in the interests of the overwhelming majority of the people, not only in China but in the whole world. What the working class discovers on investigation to be a sinister, bourgeois counter-attack on the Cultural Revolution and on the proletarian dictatorship is for the imperialists and revisionists a matter of celebration. And why not? Is it surprising that a gang of hooligans beating up and stabbing workers on militia duty in the Chinese capital should be hailed as the authentic representatives of China when we see whom imperialism and social imperialism count on to maintain stability and modernisation in South Korea, Brazil and India?

To Succeed, Reactionaries Must Deceive the People

The hardline bourgeois forces in China have become isolated, and unable to sell their programme for the restoration of capitalism openly, for fear of what the people will do to them. They have, as the ten years of the Cultural Revolution have shown so clearly, to find individuals in highly influential positions in the CPC and the government to represent their interests. Through them they could surreptitiously, by pressing for more efficiency, quicker and bigger results, reform or 'readjustment', all unrelated to proletarian politics, disrupt the course of socialist construction. But, as a review of the past sixteen months will show, the room for manoeuvres of this kind is increasingly being restricted. The revolutionaries who were in the leadership, and workers and peasants all over the country, had learnt a great deal about the complexity of class struggle and of bourgeois tactics from the exposure and defeat of the forces led by Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao. In the mass campaigns to consolidate the all-round dictatorship of the proletariat they had continued to learn (see BROADSHEET, June 1975). The subtle tactic (last summer) of mixing capitalist conceptions with socialist ones (in the 'three directives' and the General Programme), and the bold exploitation of seniority and administrative experience by a few revisionists cadres during Chou En-Lai's illness, took some time to expose. The thoroughgoing analyses of these tactics and measures by the masses made it clear, however, that subtle methods would be of no avail. It is of the nature of the class struggle waged by the bourgeoisie that when subtlety fails, it is ready to resort to the crudest and most savage methods. The death of Chou En-lai, who had been second only to Mao Tse-tung in leading China on the socialist road to advanced agricultural, industrial and scientific development, seemed to offer a double opportunity. Any claim to the right of 'succession', regardless of what the Chinese people had laid down as the correct procedures, would have been pre-tentious. So an organised attempt was made to use an authentic

popular demonstration of affection and regard for Chou in order to conspire to make trouble and usurp power.

We know that in Europe, in most of which it rules, the bourgeoisie does not dare openly to sell to the people policies which benefit the ruling minority. Capitalist interests have to be dressed up as the national interest, or, in the Soviet Union, as the interest of the 'state of the whole people'. The great fear is that socialist revolution will be recognised by the working class as the correct way for them to take. Hence the need for the imperialist bourgeoisie to manipulate public opinion in order to save itself from ultimate defeat. Socialist revolution, the expropriation of the capitalists and rule by the proletariat through its political party, have all to be made to appear unattractive, unworkable and ridiculous. The truth of what the working class has achieved in the course of its complex and continued struggle against the bourgeois in China would be too explosive if it got around to the working class in the imperialist countries. We therefore see the propagandists who pose as 'China-watchers' in Peking, Hong Kong and elsewhere, trying hard to cover up and distort the facts in order to convince people that even in socialist China working class rule and the ideas and policies associated with it are unpopular and contrary to 'human nature'.

The working class, however, is under no compulsion to convince its class enemies that the objective, tasks and future of the socialist revolution are the correct ones. If we go over developments in China in 1975 in the light of the most recent struggle, we shall appreciate the clarity which was gained in the course of revolutionary practice and study during the ten

The 'General Programme' put forward by Teng Hsiao-ping was intended to set the Party's tasks for the next 25 years. It proposed taking as the key link Mao Tse-tung's 'three directives', which called for promoting stability and unity, developing the national economy, and studying the theory of proletarian dictatorship and combating and preventing revisionism. But taking these as the key link and putting each of them on the same level negated the Party's basic line and Chairman Mao's instruction to take class struggle as the key link and reduced the importance of combating revisionism. In fact it gave first priority to modernisation and technical advance. This whole subject is discussed in *Red Flag*, 1 April 1976.

years of the Cultural Revolution. At the First Session of the Fourth National People's Congress a new State Constitution was adopted. Drawn up after five years of discussion at grassroots level throughout the country, this was an instrument of the people's power, not, as in bourgeois states, the means by which a minority legitimised its domination of the majority. What kind of state the People's Republic was, which class exercised leadership over it, to whom the power belonged—these were not in dispute. What is written in a state constitution can be just words in a document, or an alibi for usurpers, as in the Soviet

Union. But if, as in China, the workers, poor peasants and revolutionary intellectuals vigorously exercise the power 'which belongs to the people' against leaders who try to usurp it, what happens is *not* a struggle for power between 'radicals' and 'moderates'! In view of the happy outcome of the revisionist challenge, there is something to learn about socialist politics in general both from the background to Hua Kuo-feng's appointment by the CPC Central Committee to be First Vice-Chairman of the Party and Premier of the State Council and from the resolute way in which the militia put down the disturbances.

Only Working Class Rule Furthers the People's Interests

In his Report on the Revision of the CPC Constitution in 1973, Wang Hung-wen made it clear that China's affairs were not going to be run in the way that imperialist, social-imperialist and neocolonial countries run theirs. When he spoke 'with special emphasis' of leaders accepting criticism and supervision from the masses he said: 'Ours is a socialist country under the dictatorship of the proletariat. The working class, the poor and lower-middle peasants and the masses of working people are the masters of our country. They have the right to exercise revolutionary supervision over cadres of all ranks of our Party and state organs. . . . After explaining that suppression of criticism is absolutely impermissible, he went on, 'we must have faith in the masses, rely on them, constantly use the weapons of arousing the masses to air their views freely, write big character posters and hold great debates and strive [*here begins a Mao quotation*] "to create a political situation in which there are both centralism and democracy, both discipline and freedom, both unity of will and personal ease of mind and liveliness, so as to facilitate our socialist revolution and socialist construction, make it easier to overcome difficulties, enable our country to build a modern industry and modern agriculture at a fairly rapid pace, consolidate our Party and state and make them better able to weather storm and stress". The more firmly the working class are the masters, the more quickly China advances.

The state Constitution laid down in Article 11 what was required of those in government and state leadership positions, and in Article 13 how CPC leadership over the state is exercised. China has a democracy of a kind which all countries, including Britain, will eventually demand. The continuous study by the workers, peasants and students of China of philosophy, political economy, history and state affairs, and the opinions and judgments which emerge or crystallise in the course of discussions

throughout the country, are concentrated and centralised into decisions made by the Central Committee of the Party and the Standing Committee of the NPC. They are also turned into the pithy 'instructions' and directives of the Party Chairman. Individuals do not make decisions and appointments on their own, much less do they choose their 'successors'. Chou En-lai would have been the last person to arrogate to himself the choice of his successor. At its first session, the NPC itself, on the proposal of the Central Committee of the CPC, appointed twelve Vice-Premiers, the majority of them people who had played a leading role in the anti-revisionist struggle, especially the Cultural Revolution. The mass campaign to study and practice better the dictatorship of the proletariat followed. It was assisted by two very important articles, by Yao Wen-yuan in March and Chang Chun-chiao in April, 1975—both including warning references to the manifestation of bourgeois tendencies among some Party members and leaders. The selection of Hua Kuo-feng to chair the 'Learn from Tachai' conference and then to be Acting Premier, and after a period of countrywide discussion of policies and personalities at issue, to be first Vice-Chairman of the Central Committee and Premier, occasioned a hullabaloo only among people who knew nothing about China or who believed the nonsense of the China-watchers. The will of the people will be decisive in filling the vacant places in the Political Bureau and its Standing Committee.

In the Labour Party in Britain, the trade unions sponsor many candidates for Parliament, and some of them become ministers or prime ministers. The Members of Parliament sponsored by the workers do not represent the class interests of the workers. They serve the bourgeoisie, of course, and are part of the dictatorship exercised, sometimes more harshly, sometimes more deceptively, over the working class. This does not happen when the working class are the masters of the state, as they are under socialism. A leading cadre may be a good administrator in the bourgeois sense, and have most seniority; but no one is so clever that the people are not capable of taking his or her measure, judging whether he or she will loyally serve the people, and be a suitable Prime Minister. The Chinese people are determined that China should not go the way of the Soviet Union. Because of working class leadership, everything was brought out into the open, and it was as clear as daylight that the political attack of the bourgeoisie—waging its own class struggle—had to be defeated. This is one of the many lessons which we can learn from this opening encounter in the new Cultural Revolution.

TEN YEARS OF THE GREAT PROLETARIAN CULTURAL REVOLUTION

It is still necessary to defend the Cultural Revolution against detraction and misunderstanding. We mark its 10th anniversary by outlining some of its achievements. Next month we shall sketch its effects on education.

The Cultural Revolution is often said to have taken place between 1966 and 1969. It was one of the many rectification movements which had taken place since the early days of the protracted revolutionary war, but differed from the earlier ones in being the widest and deepest in scope. In fact this revolution has never stopped and will not stop for a very long time to come. Essentially it is a struggle between the revolutionary and the revisionist lines, and between the new socialist road and the old capitalist road. The struggle is necessary because of the existence of classes, class contradiction and class struggle. According to the basic line formulated by Mao Tse-tung, socialist society covers a long historical period; he says that at times these struggles will become acute. The Cultural Revolution

marked one such acute phase and there will be many more in the future. If the people understand the basic line, they will wage victorious battles. If the people are not aware of the dangers, the class enemy will in any case carry out counter-revolutionary class struggle and a capitalist restoration could occur.

To assess the Cultural Revolution, one may compare the present character of the institutions and people in various fields of China's national life with that of 10 years ago. There are numerous marked advances and many 'new things' in, for example, industry, agriculture, the armed forces, state administration at different levels, foreign policy and family life, education, science and technology. While new ways of doing things have been found, the tendency to carry on in the old way still exists; the new is still locked in fierce conflict with the old. The new Constitution (1975) of the People's Republic states that China is a socialist state of the dictatorship of the proletariat (article 1). The function of such a proletarian state is to

nurture and protect the new social forms and restrict the tendency to relapse into capitalist ways. Hence many of the institutions and forms of activity which emerged during the Cultural Revolution are included in the Constitution.

The following new things merit special mention:—
Cadres doing collective productive labour

Mao Tse-tung started this practice in the late 20's, in the first revolutionary base on Chingkangshan, to overcome bureaucracy and prevent the revisionism and dogmatism which existed inside the Party's Central Committee and which objectively favoured the counter-revolutionary attacks of Chiang Kai-shek. After victory in 1949, the bourgeoisie switched to new 'peaceful' tactics (sugar-coated bullets) and a new capitalist danger appeared within the ranks of the Party. Bourgeois thinking and habits were insidious in misleading weaker revolutionaries.

During the Socialist Education Movement in 1964, Mao Tse-tung stated

It is necessary to maintain the system of cadre participation in collective productive labour . . . By doing so, they maintain extensive, constant and close ties with the working people. This is a major measure of fundamental importance for a socialist system, it helps to overcome bureaucracy, to prevent revisionism and dogmatism.

During the Cultural Revolution, countless cadres—excepting only the aged and physically weak—were sent in turn by their units to the countryside or factory floor to do productive work alongside the peasants and workers, following the 1966 May 7th announcement by Chairman Mao on the principle of education and *re-education*. Soon, 'May 7th' Cadre Schools spread, grew and flourished. In the process—lasting various lengths of time—of productive labour and being re-educated by the working people, the cadres gain ideological understanding, production ability and good health.

Now in all organs, departments and institutions, cadres regularly spend a certain time working at the basic level (see Article 11 of the Constitution). For instance, commanders in the armed forces go down to the Company level to act as Company

NOTES ON REVISIONISM IN W. EUROPE (concluded)

The first part of this article, in our April issue, considered the 'revisionist international' and the efforts, in the West European part of it, to present socialism as something which will offend no-one. Moscow's theory of peaceful transition, however, now that Moscow is on the offensive, is being adapted to find a place for some violent notions as well.

What is remarkable is that all these outpourings make very much indeed of the experience of Chile. Strange! Wasn't it precisely the poison of peaceful evolution as spread by the Soviet leadership over the past 20 years which benumbed the Chilean people in the face of reaction?

But in the current stage of its evolution, social-imperialism is now preparing ground for the possible seizure of power by certain parties favourable to its line in the second and third worlds. Soviet propaganda has also spoken of the Chilean experience when approving whole-heartedly of certain reactionary, anti-popular, comprador-fascist dictatorships on the South Asian subcontinent. Finally, the official revisionist interpretation of Chile makes much of the so-called provocations of 'ultra-leftists' which allegedly contributed to Popular Unity's downfall. This is a preparation for the bloody suppression of revolutionaries by regimes favourable to Moscow.

Social Forces

During the Portuguese crisis last summer a document supposed to have been written by B. N. Ponomarev (member of

leaders or as ordinary soldiers—a far cry from the 50's when officers wore badges of rank and were beginning to copy the Soviet pattern and swagger about among the fighting men.

These reforms restrain bureaucracy and any tendency for the state and army to become a parasite on the body of society.

Revolutionary Committees in state organisations and institutions

This new form of administrative organisation originated during the Cultural Revolution when the revolutionary Red Guards spontaneously organised groups, committees and congresses for their immediate purposes. Their usefulness and their democratic nature were evident, even though, like any new discovery, they will for a long time be attacked as useless and irrational by those opposed to progress. They were foreshadowed in the ninth section of the 16-point Decision of the Central Committee of the Party, concerning the Cultural Revolution. Later this new form of administrative organ was included in the new Constitution.

The Committee consists of members elected by and representing the various sections of an enterprise or institution. For instance, in a factory they would come from the workers, the technical staff and the cadres. This is one form of the three-in-one combination. The main form, laid down in the Constitution, is the combination of old, middle-aged and young; it is applied not only in revolutionary committees but in all other organisations and institutions.

There is no more one-man management; the Committee carries out the day-to-day administration. Together with the system of cadres actually participating on the work-bench, it can solve problems on the spot. It leads to relations of comradeship in the work-place and in the process of production and is a step towards revolutionizing the relations of production and promoting growth in quantity and quality. It fulfils the injunction of which Chairman Mao emphatically and repeatedly reminds the nation, 'Rely on the working class to run enterprises'.

the Secretariat of the CPSU with responsibility for CPs not in power) achieved a certain notoriety. An authentic statement of Ponomarev's ideas can however be found in a signed article underlining the experience of Chile (*World Marxist Review*, June 1974).

While the putschist aspect of Soviet tactics is important, these tactics also have a more subtle side. The article's main emphasis is on internal social changes in second world countries which are influenced primarily by the competition of the Soviet bloc with US imperialism, and which work to the interests of the former. Thus 'the leadership of most European Socialist and Social Democratic parties want to extend contacts *with the socialist world* and in some countries we have the first steps towards united action with the Communists'. At the same time, co-existence 'undermines the *social basis* of the aggressive military and political organisations ranged against the socialist countries and the revolutionary and democratic forces . . . detente is not only a political, but *also a social factor*'. (Our emphasis.)

Thus, as a function of its collusion and contention with the US ('co-existence') the USSR will make use of that faction of the second-world bourgeoisie loyal to it (the revisionist leadership of the local CPs) to neutralise another bourgeois sector (the so-called democratic forces).

They perceive an opposition in the contemporary world between two socio-economic systems, the Soviet state-monopoly (social-imperialist) system and the liberal-capitalist system dominated by the US. They very much hope for a crisis of confidence in the liberal-capitalist system which would favour their hegemonistic aims.

This view has nothing in common with the analysis of Lenin,

who viewed imperialism of whatever brand as parasitic, decaying, moribund capitalism. The Soviet analysis, presented in a pseudo-Marxist form, pretends to accept or even support the downfall of traditional imperialism (whether of the British, French or United States variety) in the hope that people won't see through the Russians' own imperialist schemes. Thus every effort is made to deny that the *struggles of the peoples themselves* led to the collapse of the old colonial and neo-colonial empires, to deprive the people of the consciousness of their historic role. Everything is presented as a gift from the USSR, in contradiction to the words of the Internationale which point out correctly that the people don't need such saviours.

China's experience

'All previous historical movements were movements of minorities or in the interest of minorities. The proletarian movement is the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority in the interest of the immense majority' (Manifesto of the Communist Party). As Chou En-lai said at the CPC's Tenth Congress: 'To build a party for the interests of the vast majority or for the interests of the minority. This is the watershed between proletarian and bourgeois parties and the touchstone for distinguishing true communists from false'. In China, Lin Piao attempted to form a pseudo-communist party and capitulate to the USSR; he would have been a model of what Brezhnev refers to as 'internationalism'.

At the beginning of the Cultural Revolution Mao Tse-tung correctly analysed the policy of Lin Piao and his followers, remarking 'I guess their true intention is to make use of Chung Kuei to fight the ghosts'. (Chung Kuei is an image which Mao uses to refer to the might of the masses.) This also accurately describes the tactic of the Soviet leadership: everywhere they seek to capitalise on the peoples' just struggles against capitalism, fascism, colonialism and US imperialism to present themselves as almighty saviours and substitute their own savage rule for that of rival bourgeois and imperialist cliques.

So-called 'proletarian internationalism'

The protest heard in revisionist parties in some countries such as Britain, France and Belgium about the Soviet use of labour camps, 'mental hospitals', etc. to oppress the people (even though these things have been known about for a long time), has a special significance at the present time. It fits in with the general European revisionist trend of denouncing the dictatorship of the proletariat.

While a section of the European bourgeoisie is energetically denouncing social-imperialist military preparations by describing this deceptively as 'communist aggression', the local revisionists are also trying to discredit Marxism-Leninism by pretending that the dictatorship of the proletariat is equivalent to concentration camps.

Since these parties undoubtedly have a local class base (i.e. a tiny handful of the worker-aristocracy and a section of the bourgeoisie which favours the intensification of state-capitalism) this leads to certain contradictions between them and Moscow. On the other hand, the Soviet leadership is worried about a phenomenon which it describes as antisovietism. This 'antisovietism' is nothing but the growing tide of resistance to social-imperialist bullying and oppression, as well as a perceptual realisation by the West European bourgeoisie that the Helsinki conference was a hoax. Thus certain revisionist parties have repudiated what is fallaciously described as 'internationalism', identifying it with domination from Moscow. The Russians on the other hand want to emphasise a certain form of 'internationalism', as a basis for the European conference of 'communist' parties which they are anxious to promote.

After a preparatory meeting in East Berlin this January which wasn't too successful, *Pravda* (24 Jan, '76) argued that 'the struggle against antisovietism constitutes the internationalist, patriotic (!!) duty of communists'. The article cites Castro as a shining example of unstinted praise for Soviet activity all

over the world. This fully shows Russia's desire to insist on other CPs pursuing a role of apologists for social-imperialism.

Fundamental bankruptcy of revisionism

These internal contradictions show the basic weakness of the international revisionist movement which the Soviet leadership would like to organise. The USSR wants to do much more than it is capable of doing. We must undoubtedly take the danger seriously from a tactical point of view, and recognise that the *principal aspect* of these professions of 'independence' is the concealment of Moscow's plan of 'capturing the fortress from within'. But the result of Soviet policy will actually be the opposite of what they intend. The leaders of the revisionist parties have made a decisive step in the open betrayal of Leninism. This will certainly have the effect of educating the working class by negative example, helping the development of genuine Marxist-Leninist parties, and thus the mobilisation of the masses in revolutionary class and national struggles.

TO OUR READERS

Donations

During the first quarter of 1976 donations totalled £80, including several generous gifts as tributes to the memory of the late Premier Chou En-lai. We thank all those who provide this vital assistance to our work. Readers will be glad to know that in this period of 'great disorder under Heaven' our international circulation is broadening and we receive helpful and appreciative letters from many lands.

Thomson books

Capitalism and After has now been reprinted and is available at 80p post free. It provides a clear introduction to the principles of Marxist political economy and, in the last two chapters, shows how, in the Chinese people's communes, commodity production is brought under control in a socialist economy in preparation for the transition to communism. The sales of this work show that it indeed fills a need.

We feel, on the other hand, that *The Human Essence* (price 70p) is not yet well enough known. A very warm letter from West Germany says that though questions of revolutionary culture are not yet at the top of the agenda they will nevertheless have to be solved. George Thomson's method, the writer believes, is especially important for a correct understanding of the importance of theory: 'it is impossible to understand a revolutionary poem by Mao Tse-tung in its depth if one is not aware of the history of poetry'.

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