

China Policy Study Group

BROADSHEET

PROBLEMS OF NATIONAL LIBERATION AND SOCIALISM

Sponsors: Dr Joseph Needham FRS, Prof Cyril Offord FRS, Prof Joan Robinson, Prof George Thomson

VIETNAMESE - SOVIET THREAT TO S-E ASIA

RECENT reports of fighting on China's border with Vietnam and Laos must cause disquiet. No troops other than those of China and Vietnam have been involved, the Vietnamese treating Laos as though it were part of Vietnam. How is it possible that relations with China can have undergone such a transformation since the days of the Vietnam-US war?

It is because the Vietnamese government, the war once safely over, threw in its lot unreservedly with the USSR which, even in the gravest days of the war, when China was providing assistance on a huge scale, never hid its enmity for China and her independent road to socialism.

The Vietnamese government and Party after the death of the great Ho Chi Minh still played down the desire for an Indochina Federation, long cherished by some. Such a Federation, set up with the freely-given consent of all its members and based on equality and mutual benefit, could well have been a step forward, but not if formed by coercion and resulting in scarcely disguised Vietnamese overlordship. That is what the present government seeks and why it has occupied Laos and Kampuchea and set up a puppet regime in Phnom Penh.

ASEAN and the UN have taken a clear stand. They see the stark threat to other countries in the region and say that the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea must be ended. They have resisted all the diversionary proposals of the Soviet Union and its supporters.

Present Vietnamese actions coincide exactly with the wish of the Soviet Union to have a militarily strong, friendly and unscrupulous ally on China's southern border, thus posing the threat of a war on two fronts.

The Vietnamese constantly harass China, something the Soviet Union hardly dares do, compelling her to keep forces in readiness and impeding her modernisation.

There are no 'neutral' observers of the fighting, so we must choose between the versions of China and Vietnam. Simple commonsense shows that China has everything to gain from peace; her desire for conquest, of which the Vietnamese and Soviets constantly speak, does not exist; it is only Vietnam which has armed forces in Kampuchea and Laos and threatens Thailand's border. None of China's other neighbours feel threatened by her.

It is hard for the millions in the West who supported Vietnam in the war with the US to accept the reversal of her role. If they go on blinding themselves to it they will find themselves completely disorientated in the years to come. Vietnam is now a surrogate of the USSR, providing it with military bases and receiving from it war material far beyond the needs of a country engaged only in peaceful reconstruction. Half of Vietnam's revenue is spent for military purposes. Though nothing can stain the wartime heroism of the Vietnamese people, their government is now an imperialist one, oblivious to their needs. They are undergoing privation in order to support a war machine which suppresses patriots of other countries. Before long more and more of the Vietnamese people will discover this.

The best service friends of Vietnam can perform now is to oppose the anti-democratic Vietnamese government, support local organisations which help Kampuchea, and uphold and encourage the stand of the UN and ASEAN.

SOONG CHING-LING

1893 - 1981

Born into one of China's wealthy families and educated in the USA, Soong Ching-ling nevertheless soon broke with her parents and gave her whole life to the service of the Chinese people.

From 1915 she was the wife of Sun Yat Sen. With the founding of the People's Republic she held high official positions but always remained close to the masses. The love for her in China was shared by many abroad. Her memory will be cherished and we can all learn from her selflessness and integrity.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Vietnamese-Soviet threat to S.-E. Asia
Imperialists' mutual help.

How should the Chinese system work?
Away with static attitudes!

China's Modernisation
Visitor's notes.

Book Reviews
Town planning in China.

Revisionism
Towards a definition.

Poland
Further comments.

HOW SHOULD THE CHINESE SYSTEM WORK?

RE-THINKING about China should be welcomed wherever it appears, not least among those who have traditionally been counted as friends of People's China. But new thinking can become as sterile as old thinking if it dwells only on what China should *avoid* doing, instead of reaching out to clearer ideas of what she *should* do to escape from a situation of stalemate.

People on the right of politics, however well-disposed to China, still condemn her for diminishing and streamlining monetary incentives and stifling the independence of businesses by making them all part of a state-regulated system. Meanwhile those on the left are nervous of the reappearance of profit measurement, market enterprise, even financial accountability, and yearn for the stability of a paternalistic government keeping an eye on each unit and injecting extra stimulus when needed.

This is a mirage. Even if it were possible to devise and operate effective centralised control in a country of a thousand million people and 400,000 industrial establishments it would circumscribe enterprise and initiative so much that the whole system would soon become conservative, then obsolescent and finally stagnant.

One thing socialists are constantly losing the urge to do is think out concretely how to avoid, when the time comes, the three debilitating maladies of a state system—playing safe, continuing to invent new variations when what is needed is a new theme, and using the employee as a constructional unit instead of a creative one. Everyone can suggest ways of countering and offsetting these failings, but as the years go by and new generations take over with a less static attitude, policies which rely on moderating and compensating for the negative features of the economic process will be rejected as tinkering, or as trying vainly to prettify an inadequate structure.

It is not only—not even mainly—in trade that the Chinese have come to the conclusion you cannot have people sitting in offices far away controlling operations geared to a market. The buying in of materials, recruitment of labour, replacement or overhaul of machines, and above all modification of the product, must be by decision of the producer on the spot, not by consensus of a regional or area committee. The latter way leads to growing inefficiency and there comes a time when inefficiency ceases to be the secondary consideration it was in the '50s and '60s and becomes an impediment to any growth at all.

Most industrial models calling themselves socialist have been highly centralised, probably over-centralised even according to their own lights. This comes from the concept of an overall plan, but it is not impossible to make flexible plans, even plans with quite large sector-to-sector tolerances. The Chinese evolved a technique from the '50s onwards which enabled them to revise not only a five-year plan but an annual plan when it was already in operation. This is taxing for officials at all levels and it is not to be wondered at that they resist fluid development plans and variable targets.

The question now to be asked is whether those who reject flexibility, and the key expression of it—greater autonomy for localities and individual enterprises—may not have to give up the idea of achieving socialism. It is likely that new generations will refuse to accept cut-and-dried plans for much longer. The youth of China as of every other country wants to see a lot more give-and-take and is not impressed by the explanation that there was plenty of this through official channels before the plan was adopted. However diligent the preliminary two-way feed of information it can never take full ac-

count of the impulse to go one better, or of unforeseen setbacks (to which China, through a planned economy, is certainly no less subject than Western Europe). Centralised planning risks blinding eyes to local opportunity.

There is much to suggest that the degree of autonomy enjoyed by producing and servicing units throughout the country will come to be seen within China as the main test of the amount of effective freedom of expression people are allowed. Numerous activities which in Western countries are limited only by the law are regulated in China by the Plan. The crucial question is how much detail the state goes into in laying things down and how much is left to the parties concerned (mostly public bodies of one sort or another) to fix up among themselves.

Take the type of case most in question at the moment, that of an operating unit in productive industry, or in communications or transport. The people on the spot want to modify the product or service in certain ways to meet the demand they are convinced exists, or maybe want to rationalise some of their arrangements for obtaining supplies, even equipment, in the light of what they have heard about availabilities in a neighbouring town or province.

Must the central authority be responsible for the supply of all equipment, raw materials and energy supplies consumed? Must it allocate labour? Must it purchase and market all the factory's products? Must it fix the price without regard to market preferences?

Questions that always were relevant have acquired extra point as a result of experiments carried out during the last few years. By no means all of these have been in centres or provinces with a long industrial history. Nor are they mainly in the seaboard provinces. A review in *Social Sciences in China*, No. 3 (Social Sciences Publishing House, Beijing) drew attention particularly to experience in Sichuan, Anhui and Zhejiang Provinces, all of which have had some of these 'enterprises under experiment' since 1979. They are enterprises which have been reorganised on the basis of an economic responsibility system like that outlined by Yuan Baohua (Head of the State Economic Commission) at the opening of the National Conference on Industry and Transport two months ago. The principles mentioned by him were (1) retention of a proportion of profits for expanding production and upgrading equipment, as well as for workers' welfare and bonus payments (2) a maximum loss limit beyond which enterprises have to forfeit their state subsidy (nearly a quarter of all state-owned industrial enterprises made losses last year). Broadly speaking, the first principle applies to large and medium-scale enterprises. Smaller units must take on responsibility for their own profits and losses and pay a tax to the state instead of a proportion of profits.

Another principle implicit in these arrangements is that state allocation and purchase is supplemented and to some degree replaced by contracts between producers or between producers and market outlets.

Officially there are now over 6,000 enterprises 'under experiment' to one degree or another. This means that about 16 per cent of the state-owned enterprises in China have partly freed themselves from the old mould and taken on management functions that go beyond negotiating assignments, supplies and sales with the state. Although still a minority they apparently account for about 60 per cent, by value, of the total output of state-owned enterprises and as much as 70 per cent of the total profits paid over. Yuan Baohua cited an indicative statis-

tic from Heilongjiang Province in North China where the system was put into force last year in the enterprises run by prefectural and county governments. Nearly 60 million Yuan went into state coffers from the profits of these enterprises in 1980, whereas in 1979 they had sustained losses totalling just under 46 million Yuan.

The implication is that once they have a degree of autonomy in management, enterprises will get themselves out of the red. Responsibility acts as a spur. There is nothing particularly surprising about that. It remains to be seen, however, whether they can go on to consolidate this position adapting products to market changes.

The review of the earlier experiments summarised their achievement to date in fairly measured terms:

The experiments in giving the enterprises more autonomy have enabled them to decide on the production of some of their goods, enter into contracts for the procurement of some means of production, market some of their products, retain part of their profit and use it as they see fit.

The idea of individual enterprises retaining some of their profits and using them as they see fit has been particularly worrying to those on the alert for signs of a return to capitalist practices. No doubt there are sound precedents for this concern, but it begins to look paradoxical when the possible uses of profit in a state enterprise are examined. Out of profits must come the funds for updating plant and for the technical improvements necessary to keep its products in the market. Beyond that, however, is the more serious question of how to finance a replacement of first-generation by second-generation machinery when this has become the only alternative to gradually bowing out of business. Should the state step in once again with the necessary investment funds, perhaps in foreign currency? The critics who deplore retention of profits within an enterprise, where they *must* be used for developing the enterprise itself, are the same ones who lament government decisions to cut back on capital construction in industries with high technology content because priority calls on the budget for the time being are for agriculture, light industry, housing and power. Retained profits could be the beginning of a solution to this problem, or to the equally familiar one of the need to enlarge the scale of production when others are found to be operating more economically by spreading overheads over a larger output.

The review of the enterprises under experiment in Sichuan and elsewhere since 1979 went into the detail of why a transfer of commercial management functions to the enterprise itself mean the ending of various kinds of anomalies and irrationalities. The point can be made by quoting four brief extracts:

The Sichuan Dujiang Woodworking Machinery Plant turns out a wide range of power saws, planers and milling machines which are of good quality and well appreciated at home and abroad. Last year the state drastically reduced the output targets for the plant. By the old way of doing things, the plant would have had to stay within the limits set by plans and leave idle much of its productive capacity. But since it was an enterprise under experiment and had been granted power to do things on its own, it tried a number of ways to expand production. It printed an attractive catalogue of its line of goods, mailed it to all parts of the country, and despatched four teams to canvass customer opinions in various provinces and municipalities. Customers came knocking at its door, and orders piled up. A big proportion of its 1979 output was taken up by goods it produced by its own decision through a full utilization of its capacity.

The Sichuan No. 1 Cotton Textile Mill used to do everything according to state plans. Some of its products were overstocked because of poor demand, while others were underproduced and sold out. After the mill began its experiment, it continued to produce according to state targets, but tried out new products on the basis of market surveys. By the conventional practice it should first design a product, then produce it

and finally set the price. But this time it reversed the procedure. After comparing the sales of polyester twill fabrics of different prices and quality, it discovered that those priced under 1.50 yuan per foot were the most popular. So it decided to manufacture a twill that would sell at 1.49 yuan, which sold exceedingly well because it was within the purchasing power of most customers and the price appealed to customer mentality. So the experiment has resulted in a significant change in the production process.

The Zhongnan Rubber Plant in Chongqing got an inadequate state supply of raw rubber in 1979 because of a cut in imported rubber. If the plant were to depend solely on state supplies, it would have been compelled to slash production. But the reform permitted it to send purchasing agents to Yunnan, Guangxi and other regions, where they signed contracts for the supply of some 30 per cent of the raw material needed for the year. The result was a doubling of its 1979 profits.

The Ningjiang Machine Tool Plant in Sichuan Province produced good and relatively cheap lathes. In 1979, however, it didn't have much work to do because the state had reduced its output targets. The management realised that while there had been a glut of machine tools in recent years, the small and medium-sized precision lathes produced by the plant were still in great demand, especially because of their quality and reasonable prices. The sluggish sales were due to the inefficient distribution of machine tools, not to the products themselves. To operate its equipment at full capacity and increase earnings, the plant published an advertisement in the June 25th edition of the *People's Daily*, announcing that 'direct orders from home and abroad will be accepted'. This brought in a flood of orders, resulting in contracts for more than 1,000 lathes with domestic and foreign customers. The success exerted pressure on four other enterprises producing similar types of lathes. With an ex-factory price of 9,500 yuan, the 7 mm high-precision automatic lathe from the Ningjiang plant was highly efficient and easy to operate. Similar manufacturers in Shanghai, Liaoning, Hangzhou and Xi'an had to mark down the prices of their goods to stay in the market.

The last of these examples opens up another aspect of the experiments, competition among enterprises. There is no side-stepping the conclusion that the 'economic responsibility system' in any form must lead to competition. Competition there will be, therefore, and competition there certainly *should* be if the consumer in China is to be given any choice in what he buys and uses. No doubt the market for many consumer brands would be mainly regional or provincial, and the competition would not often be countrywide. It could be none the less intense for that, and possibly heightened again by the opportunity of breaking into export markets.

Competition among producers to satisfy the market introduces distortions and greatly complicates the task of planners. Sharply rising demand may force small units to expand while others with higher designed capacity find themselves hamstrung by lack of orders. This price has to be paid for greater freedom and consumer choice.

MODERNISATION Visitors' Notes

MODERNISATION by the year 2000—that is the aim being followed by the new leadership since the end of 1978. The first two years after the death of Mao were characterised by ideological strife and the necessary clearing of the ground. The education of a whole generation both at school and at university had suffered and a number of positions in almost all factories, educational institutions, offices, planning units etc. were still held by persons ideologically closer to the Gang of Four than to Deng and his colleagues. (It is notoriously difficult for visitors to China to ascertain just how many Chinese did actively support the Gang.) Much reorganisation both of resources and of personnel was therefore necessary. In an article for the 1980 *Britannica Book of the Year* (Chicago 1980) Deng Xiaoping characterised this as 'a new revolu-

tion—a socialist revolution', whose aim it is 'to liberate and develop the productive forces of a country'. In Deng's provocative opinion any revolution which does not first guarantee the prosperity of the people by modernising production is mere talk. Observations in China confirm that the emphasis on production has meant a shifting of importance away from those traditional pillars of Chinese socialism: political education and 'laodong'. We visited communes, for example, where political education had either been reduced to a formal minimum or no longer existed at all.

The four reasons why Deng believes that the goal envisaged can in fact be reached are worth quoting:

First: China's vast area is rich in natural resources. Second: During the past thirty years we did some stupid things. Despite such mistakes, we were able to lay the groundwork for China's agricultural, industrial and technical development... We built up an independent and fairly broad-based economy. In any case we are justified in saying that a material base exists for the Four Modernisations...

Third: the Chinese people are not stupid. Our great problem is to determine how to bring their initiative genius into full play... Fourth: China has now adopted a policy of opening its doors to the world in a spirit of international co-operation. Of course we must rely primarily on our own resources and efforts, but modernisation would be impeded if we rejected international cooperation.

Thus what Deng wants is independent Chinese development in conjunction with foreign expertise, not the westernisation of China. This is, of course, not too different from Mao himself who propagated self-reliance and the utilisation of foreign progress by China. International cooperation—whether it takes the form of joint ventures or of importing steel rolling-mills as at Wuhan—does not for the Chinese constitute a withdrawal from the notion of self-reliance. Nor, as was frequently made clear to us in China, do the Chinese see the same dangers in the importation of western methods of business administration as do the more worried western guests.

Communism cannot be based on poverty. China never knew a fully developed capitalist order, so socialism must create the economic basis. Modernisation is absolutely necessary. 'Revolution' has been replaced by hard work on modernisation projects and that means on socialism. If the visitor looks beyond the advertising hoardings, he will see that while China is ready to learn from the West, this does not mean that she is moving away from independence or from the construction of a socialist society. On this point our own observation confirm those of Mohan: '... we were left in no doubt that China's path of modernisation would be scientific in approach and Chinese in content, but that neither China's socialism nor China's independence were negotiable' (*Broad-sheet*, August 1980).

China is open to experiment, including that of the market economy, although this should not be understood as implying the 'free market economy' in the usual sense. Overall economic guidelines have replaced plans worked out down to the last detail; management will be freer to make its own decisions and to apply what it learns from western industry. This will not be without its problems. It is arguable, however, that they will be restricted to the controlling bodies of government and industry. The great mass of the Chinese people appears to be well satisfied with the blossoming of Chinese society at home and the cultural and political opening to foreign influence and experience. The result of this is trust in the ability of the present leadership to build socialism in a manner which will at last allow each and every Chinese citizen to profit from it. The fate of the present leadership will therefore depend in large measure on how far it is able to fulfil the trust placed in it.

MANFRED F. ROMICH & GEOFFREY V. DAVIS
Aachen Technical University

BOOK REVIEW

RECONSTRUIRE LA CHINE. Trente ans d'urbanisme 1949-1979, by Leon Hua. Editions du Moniteur, Paris.

THIS inside account of town planning in China satisfies a long-felt need. Written by one who worked for 26 years in Beijing's Institute of Architectural Planning, it will interest not only professional planners but all who seek to appreciate the manifold problems facing the Chinese. Among them are: population increase, the limitation of city growth, the taming of rivers, modernisation and town development, dwelling standards, community services, atmospheric and other pollution and, perhaps most important, the contradiction between town and country.

One fact that dominates Chinese planning is shortage of land. In this enormous country cultivated land is less than 11 per cent of the total area. Population is concentrated mainly in the eastern part because the rest is almost uninhabitable. Extension of the cultivated area is possible, and is under way, but it is a slow and difficult task. Cultivation is especially intensive round the cities, which are ringed with what we should call market gardens, providing the town-dwellers with fresh fruit and vegetables.

Clearly any expansion of cities must result in the loss of exceptionally valuable land, the products of which have so far enabled food supplies to keep ahead, though only just ahead, of the population increase. It is therefore almost a universal rule in China that cities must not expand beyond their existing boundaries. Yet overcrowding is such that when rebuilding an old city district, replacing single-storey housing by blocks of three or four storeys and adding only the essential ancillary buildings, one can do no more than rehouse the former inhabitants, with nothing to spare.

The recently reconstructed Quingsong district of Beijing is illustrated as an example. Here the density approaches 1,000 persons per hectare. All the usual communal facilities have been provided but there is very little green open space and no area for sports. Moreover the development resulted in the loss of 21 hectares of cultivated ground. The need for some tall buildings, unloved though they may be, seems inescapable.

However, tall buildings can do no more than contribute to a solution. More important is the development and building-up of the small towns which surround large cities. Many cities make it a rule not to accept any new industrial or other establishment unless one of similar size can be transferred elsewhere. This is also a way in which cities can reduce their population, for of course when a factory moves most of the workers go too. The author explains it thus:

Before becoming saturated the large town will cede some of its factories to the small towns. These, in their turn, before reaching their size limit... will yield a certain number of their factories to the surrounding people's communes.

One sees here a movement from the top towards the bottom of the hierarchy of built-up areas. The end of the process is the incorporation of numerous factories and workshops into the people's communes and brigades. Taking into account the workshops and factories resulting from the initiative of the rural units, brigades or communes, one can see the emergence of a double process helping to speed up the industrialisation of the countryside.

Chinese planners believe that the presence of industry within cities is positively beneficial in that it shortens the distance between dwelling and place of work and avoids the separation of workers from the rest of the population. Of course such industry must be free from noxious smoke, smells, noise and harmful effluents, against all of which regulations are becoming increasingly stringent.

As a result of the policy of decentralising industry the

big industrial zones are tending to shrink to narrow strips, which is advantageous as regards the work-dwelling relationship. Above all, a real step is thus being taken towards ending the town-country contradiction which Marx and Engels first set as one of the aims of socialism. The achievement of this aim depends in the main on the whole-hearted cooperation of those who work in the countryside. The book puts it succinctly:

The modernization of the world's most populous country will largely be the work of those who were once the most wretched of the earth; the Chinese peasants.

In a review it is possible to give little indication of the appeal of this book. Lavishly illustrated with drawings and photographs, it deals not only with planning on a national scale but also with the planning of neighbourhood units and their relation to industry, the planning of dwellings, prefabrication and the influence of the Soviet experts and the Gang of Four.

The author tells us that the Gang disbanded groups engaged in research into planning and destroyed much of the valuable data they had accumulated. They also enforced a drastic lowering of building standards—of construction, accommodation and equipment. Yet at the same time they were capable of reckless extravagance. As an example the large covered sports stadiums of Beijing and Shanghai are compared. Beijing's Capital Stadium,

completed in 1968, is

well-conceived from the functional point of view, aesthetically well-mannered and relatively cheap. Not a square metre of marble or stone facing was used...

The 'ultras' always went from one extreme to the other. They urged miserliness in one place but encouraged the greatest prodigality elsewhere, sophistry being their normal way of reasoning. The Shanghai Sports Palace, completed much later (in 1975), similar in character and scale to that of Beijing, with a much smaller and considerably inferior track, cost more than twice as much.

China is still undeveloped and it may be thought that its planning difficulties spring from its backwardness. To some extent this is true but it is also true that our 'advanced' society has not solved these problems; rather has it decided, in practice, that they are insoluble. It is instructive that the methods Chinese planners are adopting point along paths open only to a society going towards socialism.

To the Third World China's planners should be able to provide concrete examples; to the Second World they give rather convincing proof of the advantages of public ownership of industry and land. As a planner Mr. Hoa is well aware of the advantages of a non-exploitative society, though he thumps no tubs, allowing the facts to speak for themselves.

It is to be hoped that an English translation of this book will appear quickly.

REVISIONISM: Towards a Definition

THE term 'revisionism' has a long history of use and abuse in the Communist movement. It was first employed by his critics against Bernstein at the turn of the century and has most recently been wielded by Soviet spokesmen against sections of the ruling Communist party during the current turmoil in Poland. In the intervening 80 years or more between these two episodes, the term has been repeatedly used in a wide variety of situations and in wide variety of—at times contradictory—ways. This note does not aim to put forward a theory of 'revisionism' but only to provide a brief account of some of the usages of the term, by reflecting on the circumstances in which these occurred. It is intended to encourage further comment.

'Revisionism' has almost always been defined by its critics, rarely by its exponents, since those carrying out the revisions which are seen by others as a 'negation' or 'abandonment' of Marxism (or of 'Marxism-Leninism') will not admit that that is what they are doing. For those who reject Marxism outright can hardly be labelled 'revisionists'. A 'revisionist' considers himself to be a Marxist, only his critics find his particular interpretation of Marxism to be an abandonment or betrayal of it. Thus only through a criticism of the critics themselves, as well as of the circumstances of the original criticism, can we expect to arrive at some limited clarification of this rather tricky problem.

Chinese criticism

Until fairly recently Chinese Communists were in the forefront of the critics of 'revisionism', and it was in the Chinese publications that this criticism was most fully, or at any rate most forcefully, expounded. Now, of course, the present Party leadership in China appears to have embargoed the term while it is, itself, denounced by many former foreign friends as 'revisionist'. There can be little argument that if the past Chinese criticisms of Yugoslavia and the USSR on account of their alleged revisionism were correct, then China today, which displays

many of the same features in its domestic policies, must be admitted to be suffering from the same condition.

We may therefore follow up this problem through an examination of Chinese Communist materials on the subject of revisionism, specifically on the basis of volume V of Mao Zedong's *Selected Works* (published in 1977); *In Refutation of Modern Revisionism* (enlarged edition, 1963), a collection of materials on Yugoslavia originally published in 1958; and the key documents of the Chinese polemics against the CPSU, particularly those produced during 1963-64 and brought together in a single volume, *The Polemic on the General Line of the International Communist Movement* (1965). We may also look through the 1957 Moscow Declaration issued by all the ruling Communist parties at their gathering on the occasion of the 40th anniversary celebrations of the October Revolution, and the Moscow Statement issued three years later following a meeting of 81 Communist parties (the texts of these two documents will be found in G. F. Hudson et al, *The Sino-Soviet Dispute*, 1961).

While this note limits itself to Chinese anti-revisionist literature (in which the Soviet Union was always cast as the arch-revisionist), it should be remembered that Soviet officials and ideologues have on numerous occasions attacked 'revisionist' tendencies and elements in other countries (though never in their own), particularly in their Eastern European empire—Yugoslavia in 1948, Poland and Hungary in 1956-57, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Poland once again in 1981. But the charge has also been levelled against 'Eurocommunists' in west Europe; and for a period Mao and the Chinese Communists were denounced by Moscow as 'revisionist dogmatists'. The Chinese alone, as well as attacking others for their 'revisionism', spoke of it as a serious danger in their own ranks, with the struggles against revisionism in China and internationally being considered as interlinked. The problem of defining 'revisionism', as also the characterisation of the phenomena to which it refers, needs to be tackled on a comparative basis.

First some remarks on the circumstances and methods of the Chinese criticism of revisionism. Much of this criticism was of necessity carried out in the midst of political struggles both within the Chinese party and the international Communist movement. This could not have been avoided, nor the fact that these struggles could not be separated from the problem of factionalism: struggles over matters of principle and 'line' were inevitably bound up with struggles for power between contending personalities and factions, both within China and internationally. Furthermore, struggles within particular Communist parties were inextricably bound up with struggles within the international arena. Right from the start, in fact, international issues and considerations played a preponderant part in the way in which the criticism was developed. Thus the definitions and analyses of 'revisionism' that were offered were all along shaped and coloured by the exigencies of political-cum-factional struggles, both nationally and internationally. The circumstances in which the criticism of revisionism was conducted had a crucial bearing on the manner in which it was unfolded. The circumstances in their turn helped shape the particular structure of the Chinese Communist critique of revisionism.

Mao on opportunism

In this respect even Mao himself cannot be said to have been above blame, as can be seen from the way that he addressed himself to the question of 'Right opportunism' in 1957. In the previous year the world Communist movement had experienced much excitement and disorientation, starting with the 20th Congress of the CPSU and culminating in the Soviet military suppression of the Hungarian uprising, while in China itself the launching of the Hundred Flowers campaign in the spring, followed by Mao's major speech on the 'ten major relationships' outlining China's road to socialism in April and the 8th Congress of the CCP in September, had brought to the forefront important questions concerning the future direction of the Chinese revolution.

At a meeting of provincial level party secretaries held in January 1957 Mao noted that a 'Right opportunist wind' and an 'anti-socialist tide' had appeared in the latter half of 1956 which had to be defeated, though he evidently did not consider it to be so serious a problem as deserve radical treatment. The anti-Rightist campaign unleashed in the country at large was linked to a rectification campaign against the Right opportunists in the party. 'Revisionism, or Right opportunism, is a bourgeois trend of thought that is even more dangerous than dogmatism', Mao remarked in February. From then on, he never wavered in his conviction that in a socialist country revisionism was—and was bound to be—the chief danger. The following month he noted that 'both dogmatism and revisionism' ran 'counter to Marxism' but that 'in present circumstances, revisionism is more pernicious than dogmatism'. That was so because, he stated in May, the revisionists' ideas were 'a reflection of bourgeois ideology inside the Party' whereas the dogmatists merely represented 'a proletarian school of thought tainted with petty-bourgeois fanaticism'.

Given all this, one might have expected Mao to provide a fairly precise and systematic definition and analysis of revisionism. In fact, as his warnings on the danger of revisionism were multiplied, his views on what the term meant became increasingly more diffuse. In February he charged that the revisionists 'oppose or distort materialism and dialectics, oppose or try to weaken the people's democratic dictatorship and the leading role of the Communist Party and oppose or try to weaken socialist transformation and socialist construction'. 'It is revisionism to negate the basic principles of Marxism and to negate its universal truth. Revisionism is one

form of bourgeois ideology. The revisionists deny the differences between socialism and capitalism, between the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie' (March).

In May, Mao remarked that the revisionists in the party posed 'the bigger danger because their ideas are a reflection of bourgeois ideology inside the Party, and because they yearn for bourgeois liberalism, negate everything and are tied in a hundred and one ways to bourgeois intellectuals outside the Party... When dogmatism turns into its opposite, it becomes either Marxism or revisionism'. He continued:

There are a great many new members in our Party... who are intellectuals and it is true that a number of them are rather seriously afflicted with revisionist ideas. They deny the Party spirit and class nature of the press, they confound the differences in principle between proletarian journalism and bourgeois journalism, and they confuse journalism reflecting the collective economy of socialist countries with journalism reflecting the economy of capitalist countries, which is marked by anarchy and rivalry among monopoly groups. They admire bourgeois liberalism and are against the leadership of the Party. They favour democracy and reject centralism. They are opposed to what is essential to the realisation of a planned economy, that is, leadership, planning and control in the cultural and educational fields (journalism included) which are indispensable and at the same time not unduly centralised. These people and right-wing intellectuals outside the Party act in concert and form a congenial lot, hitting it off like sworn brothers.

This was the most detailed or concrete definition of revisionism that was ever put forward by Mao. It may have hinted at real difficulties facing the party leadership in moving forward along the socialist road, but revisionism thus defined was far too general and all-inclusive not to be used as a sledgehammer in intra-party struggles. The result was that by July 1957 not only had the distinction between revisionists in the party and Rightists at large been completely lost, but now it was presented as 'an antagonistic, irreconcilable, life-and-death contradiction' between the people and the 'bourgeois Rightists'. The distinction between antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions had been well enough drawn by Mao in February, each with its own appropriate methods of resolution. But in the absence of a clear-cut definition of revisionism it was not too difficult for non-antagonistic contradictions to be turned into opposites. Thus were the revisionists, Rightists, capitalist-roaders and counter-revolutionaries all rolled into one.

After the Cultural Revolution

In the 1950s revisionism could still be represented as a manifestation of bourgeois ideological contamination caused by the remnants of the old ruling classes. After the Cultural Revolution matters were further confused by presenting revisionism as the ideological poison produced by the 'new bourgeois elements' viewed as the rudiments of a new ruling class right inside the Communist party itself, whom only methods of 'all-round dictatorship' could bring to heel. The very conditions that called for a proper definition of revisionism also impeded its being found or worked out.

A sort of impetuosity or 'fanaticism', similar to that which characterised the criticism of revisionism within the Chinese party, also marked the Chinese Communist pronouncements on the subject of 'modern revisionism' as embodied by the Soviet Union (and before that Yugoslavia). Once again, Mao himself was not above blame, in allowing himself to be carried away by the exigencies of the Sino-Soviet dispute into making judgements in respect of the Soviet Union for which little evidence and well-reasoned theoretical justification were offered in terms of the practice of socialist construction.

In Volume V of his *Selected Works* (and also in some

of the other material brought together by Stuart Schram in his *Mao-Tse-tung Unrehearsed*) are contained many items, mostly written or spoken in the wake of Khrushchev's ferocious attack on Stalin at the 20th Congress of the CPSU, where Mao offers many studied and measured judgements on Stalin and on the whole Soviet experience of socialist construction. He does so judiciously yet critically, saying that China has much to learn from the Soviet Union, as well as 'negative lessons' to avoid. Once however the breach between Peking and Moscow was complete and apparently irreparable, all the old caution and precision went flying out of the window. The exigencies of the international 'class struggle' favoured a wholly one-sided reappraisal of the Soviet system completely unlike the much more discriminating evaluations of only a year or two before. In particular, it was to entail a transmogrification of Khrushchev which bordered on the absurd. In January 1962 Mao told the party:

Although the Party and the state leadership of the Soviet Union have now been usurped by the revisionists, I advise our comrades to believe firmly that the broad masses, the numerous Party members and cadres of the Soviet Union are good; that they want revolution, and that the rule of the revisionists won't last long.

Yet in May 1964 Mao is making the following statement:

The Soviet Union today is under the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, a dictatorship of the big bourgeoisie, a dictatorship of the German fascist type, a dictatorship of the Hitler type.

The lurid language of the latter passage surely reflected not a sudden and dramatic change in the character of the Soviet Union, but the exigencies of international 'factionalism'.

Soviet errors

That things were seriously wrong with the Soviet Union was not in doubt, nor that its foreign policy was opportunistic and self-serving. Yet both in domestic and foreign policy Khrushchev was only building upon the foundation bequeathed him by Stalin. The 'evidence' that was cited in the 1964 'ninth comment' on the subject of Khrushchev's 'phoney communism'—the petty corruption and bribery, special shops and other privileges for party cadres, and the rest—was hardly new; these practices were long known to be the rule under Stalin. Once the Chinese leadership found itself at ideological and political 'war' with Soviet Russia under Khrushchev, though it was still the same old Russia as Stalin's, the Chinese could square that particular circle only by having recourse to the wholly theatrical device of a 'revisionist usurpation of power' in the Soviet Union around the time of the 20th Congress and, later still, of an 'all-round capitalist restoration' leading on to 'social-imperialism'. 'Modern revisionism' and 'social-imperialism' were indeed real enough problems, but once again the definitions and analyses which were provided by the Chinese were largely improvised in the heat of sectarian and polemical struggle. The casting of Khrushchev as the arch-villain, and later the attacks on 'China's Khrushchev', provided colour and excitement but little illumination on the subject of the nature of revisionism.

The manner in which differences concerning the analysis of the international situation were decisive in the definition of revisionism had been shown earlier by Chinese attacks on Yugoslavia. In an article that Chen Boda wrote in 1958 on 'Yugoslav Revisionism—Product of the Policy of Imperialism', for the very first number of the theoretical journal *Hongqi*, he gave a list of 12 'main points' which were said to prove the 'revisionism' of the Yugoslav Communist party. Most of these concerned issues of foreign policy and the 'proof' rested simply on the assertion that the positions adopted by Yugoslavia were on a number of questions different from or opposed to those of the 1957 Moscow Declaration.

This exercise in dubious logic was underpinned with an even more far-fetched application of the 'labour aristocracy' thesis (in itself one of the more problematical bits of Leninism), with international/US imperialists cast in the part of 'buying over' 'bourgeois nationalist elements and unstable elements in the socialist countries'. Chen had little to say about the internal social system of Yugoslavia but was obliged to insist that 'there is nothing strange in certain forms of public ownership being tolerated in a given society which is governed by an exploiting class'. Fair enough; but if public ownership was not all that important, then one was left to define revisionism primarily in terms of foreign policy. Which is precisely what Kang Sheng did in a follow-up article on 'Yugoslav Revisionism Is Just What U.S. Imperialism Needs', and which was to provide the template for the subsequent Chinese polemics against Soviet 'modern revisionism'. In recent years, of course, the Chinese leadership has carried out a major realignment of its state and party relations with Yugoslavia without there having been any marked change in the social system of that country—which still leaves the question of what sort of 'socialism' Yugoslavia has been building exactly where it has always been: waiting to be answered.

Three dimensions of criticism

The Chinese criticisms of revisionism can thus be studied along three dimensions—those of foreign policy, party doctrine and social system. In general the first set of criticisms pertaining to questions of foreign policy were of primary importance, with the second type mainly providing an umbrella of ideological justification, while the third sort either barely figured or were merely added as an after-thought. The last category of questions was to receive greater attention during the Cultural Revolution, but in the political climate which then prevailed theoretical creativity was not at a premium.

Typically, it was differences over matters of foreign policy which in the first instance led to the charge of revisionism being voiced against another party. Next, there were differences over questions of party political doctrine, in terms of formal adherence to Marxism-Leninism and Bolshevik-type party organisation. But formal differences in party doctrine could tell one little about the actual political conditions in particular countries, whether for the party rank-and-file, the proletariat or the people. Differences in the degree of adherence to the orthodox Leninist doctrine were in no demonstrable way correlated to any significant differences in the extent of democracy for the ordinary people or for party members, as between, say, Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union and China. For the most part, therefore, foreign policy remained the 'proof'—and to a lesser extent party doctrine the touchstone—of revisionism.

Later on, during the Cultural Revolution, when the battle-ground of the struggle against revisionism was switched to China itself, the lapses of world-view and party doctrine were joined on, in a haphazard fashion, to disputes concerning the socialist system and the building of socialism, though here again the echoes of international divisions continued to be heard in the tendency to use the label of revisionism to describe any and every institution or innovation just because it was of revisionist 'origin'. An ever-growing army of particular policies and measures were eventually brought under the umbrella of revisionism, which itself as a result became both hardened in the process and all-embracing in scope.

It seems to me, therefore, that to recover revisionism as a useful political concept we need to peel off, one by one, the many layers of meaning and innuendo that it came to acquire in the politically over-charged atmosphere of the Cultural Revolution. 'Left' criticism of re-

visionism was itself an ideological manifestation and the concepts and 'theories' spawned by it cannot be used for dealing with the current political situation in China without first being criticised and 'de-mystified'.

Any serious discussion of where China is going at present and what is the future of socialism there requires us to go back to the beginning, to the very basics of the experience of socialist construction both in China and elsewhere. How does the building of socialism stand in relation to capitalism at home and imperialism abroad? How far can the liberalisation of economics and culture

be allowed to go? What are the prospects for democratisation both in the party and for the people at large? In its pursuit of the four modernisations, how much risk is China running of being 'integrated' into the capitalist world economy? Is there, indeed, a crisis of socialism in China? All these are real enough questions, and matters of very considerable importance both for the Chinese and us. They cannot be answered simply by recalling yesterday's anti-revisionist formulae and dogmas. Freeing ourselves from their grip is surely the first essential step along the path to, eventually, the right answers.

JITENDRA MOHAN

MORE ON POLAND

Comment Past and Present

From a speech made by Marx in London (1861) at an international meeting.

The workers' party of Europe takes the most decisive interest in the emancipation of Poland and the original programme of the International Working Men's Association expresses the reunification of Poland as a working class political aim. What are the reasons for this special interest of the workers' party in the fate of Poland?

First of all, of course, sympathy for a subjugated people which with its incessant and heroic struggle against its oppressors, has proven its historic right to national autonomy and self-determination. It is not in the least a contradiction that the *international workers'* party strives for the creation of the Polish nation. On the contrary; only after Poland has won its independence again, only after it is able to govern itself again as a free people, only then can its inner development begin again and can it cooperate as an independent force in the social transformation of Europe. As long as the independent life of a nation is suppressed by a foreign conqueror it inevitably directs all its strength, all its efforts and all its energy against the external enemy; during this time, therefore, its inner life remains paralysed; it is incapable of working for social emancipation. Ireland, and Russia under Mongol rule, provide striking proof of this.

The main reason for the sympathy felt by the working class for Poland is, however, this: Poland is not only the only Slav race which has fought and is fighting as a *cosmopolitan soldier of the revolution*. Poland spilt its blood in the American War of Independence; its legions fought under the banner of the first French republic; with its revolution of 1830 it prevented the invasion of France, which had been decided upon by the partitioners of Poland; in 1846 in Cracow it was the first to plant the banner of revolution in Europe, in 1848 it had a glorious share in the revolutionary struggles in Hungary, Germany and Italy; finally, in 1871 it provided the Paris Commune with the best generals and the most heroic soldiers.

* * *

Polish people spurn Soviet 'socialism'

A subscriber writes:

The careful analysis contained in this article is very good and within the small space the details are useful and conclusive.

Not sufficient emphasis is given to the fact that Solidarity need never have arisen had the Polish Communist Party taken advantage of the tremendous status they acquired by participation in

the Red Army's liberation of Poland. Instead and despite Beirut's mysterious death (not mentioned in the article) and Gomulka's initial independent attitude to the CPSU, the Polish Party was riddled from the first by corruption and self-seeking by the leadership and members even to very low ranks as I saw when I visited in 1949. The root of the trouble was that the Red Army had brought the revolution and power had grown out of the barrel of their guns.

Further criticism should be made of the fact that there is nothing in the article allowing for the role of the Roman Catholic Church. It was not an accident that the Pope chosen in this era was from an Eastern European country. Nor was it an accident that he was a Pole, as Poland was the softest option in the Eastern Bloc from the point of view of opening it up to the kind of subversion possible through Solidarity. Latching on to the miseries of the people and exploiting the corruption of the Party members (many of whom had regressed to going to confession and Mass), they have taken the lead and guidance of Solidarity so that it has become the key to the struggle of the masses in their fight against Soviet domination (and for good reason the Poles hate the Russians and have done for centuries), and for the people's rights against the revisionist Party leadership. The militancy of the Polish workers is to be encouraged and is but a first step to taking control again of their own destiny. But without a revolutionary party there can be no revolutionary solution and Solidarity is not even the nucleus of a revolutionary party. One should be optimistic and have faith in the masses that out of this struggle leaders and policies will come that will give a truly revolutionary lead and this could be the example for the other countries of the Soviet bloc and indeed for the Soviet Union and its prisonhouse empire.

Signs are that the masses in Poland are already, owing. The Torun Conference of ordinary members of the Communist Party of Poland, meeting in defiance of the revisionist and Soviet-subservient leadership, has already struck a blow and augers well for the continued revolutionary path of the Polish masses.

J.S.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES

SURFACE MAIL	SEALED	OPEN
U.K.	£2.50	
U.S., Canada, Europe, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Aus., N.Z.	£3.30 (\$8.60)	£2.50 (\$6.00)
All other countries	£2.50	£2.00
AIR MAIL		
U.S., Canada, Hong Kong	£5.00 (\$11.50)	£3.25 (\$8.00)
China, Japan, Aus., N.Z.:	£5.75	£3.75
All other countries	£3.50	£2.50

UK. ISSN 0067-2052

No air mail rates to Europe