

China Policy Study Group

BROADSHEET

PROBLEMS OF NATIONAL LIBERATION AND SOCIALISM

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THREE ANNIVERSARIES

ON October 11th the Chinese people will celebrate the 70th anniversary of the setting up of the Republic of China. After centuries of rebellion against feudal, imperial and foreign oppression the Wuchang uprising finally smashed the power of the Emperor and proceeded without delay to the proclamation of the republic. A bourgeois-democratic revolution could not at that time put an end to feudalism and foreign interference but, under the leadership of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, it brought China into the modern world and led, after 38 more years of bitter struggle against counter-revolution and Japanese and other invasion, to the foundation, on 1st October 1949, of the People's Republic of China.

That event, of which we are now celebrating only the 32nd anniversary, radically altered the world balance of forces. Since then no invader has been able to gain a foothold on Chinese soil.

A few months earlier, in March 1949, Mao Zedong had told a meeting of the Party Central Committee that to win country-wide victory would be only the first small step towards realisation of the Party's ultimate aim. He never imagined that the transition to communism could be accomplished quickly; he always spoke of 'centuries'

or 'many generations'. 'After several decades', he said, 'the victory of the Chinese people's democratic revolution, viewed in retrospect, will seem like only a brief prologue to a long drama.'

It would be well if all friends of China, and those who look towards a better future for their own country, would fix this sort of time scale in mind; it would be an antidote for the discouragement to which we so easily succumb. Mistakes and set-backs should never be passed over without analysis and self-criticism, but in the course of all revolutions they are *inevitable*.

Already Mao himself, the main architect of China's socialism, has been gone from us for five years. He died on 9th September 1976. Little did we know then that within a mere five years the most pressing political and economic uncertainties which then surrounded him would have been cleared away and followed by a vigorous forward march towards becoming a modern, industrialised state so that, as Mao said in the concluding words of the speech quoted above, the Chinese people would eventually live a better life than that in the imperialist countries.' That on the road there would be new difficulties and new errors he would have taken for granted.

THE WORLD HAS CHANGED Problems since 1964

AT the outset of the era of imperialism Lenin drew attention to two outstandingly important questions: building a workers' movement free from opportunism, and the struggles for emancipation of the peoples of the colonial countries.

When BROADSHEET first appeared in January 1964, these two currents were at an important turning point. No doubt this was the objective reason for launching the paper, dealing with China, the country whose emancipation was the most momentous single event in the history of the oppressed nations' struggles, and which also played a tremendous role in fighting to regenerate the Communist movement.

A key question in world affairs at that time, and during the subsequent period, was the role of the state.

This was a time when victory in the shape of formal state sovereignty had been won in most colonial countries: whether as a result of armed struggle which had to some extent been negated by the colonialists, as in Kenya; whether in order to anticipate armed struggle as in 'Malaysia'; whether actually snatched by victorious armed struggle as in Algeria; or in a mixture of ways.

Everywhere the issue was whether *formal* sovereignty could be made *real*, whether the state could be made an instrument to defend the people's interests.

The old empires had been broken up, and the first superpower, the USA, was emerging as the main enemy.

In the international communist movement a historic polemic was just being completed—that conducted against modern revisionism by the Communist Party of China. The major document in this, 'A Proposal Concerning the General Line of the International Communist Movement', was published shortly before BROADSHEET's foundation.

The modern revisionists, headed by the CPSU, completely blurred the crucial distinction between real and formal independence. They prettified neo-colonialism, discouraged armed uprisings and assumed that the world imperialist system would gradually evolve in a progressive direction. Completely breaking with Marxism-Leninism, the modern revisionists 'forgot' that the state is an instrument of class rule—the monopoly bourgeoisie in the imperialist countries, the workers and peasants in socialist countries, the national and/or comprador bourgeoisie in the third world. Socialism means a change in the class holding state power, and this can only be attained by *revolutionary* means. The third world had to defend state sovereignty not in the old way, individually, but in a radical new way, collectively.

This trend had been foreshadowed by the formation

of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1962 and the foundation of the first regional organisation to be set up by the third world itself, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. And the major task of state power was protecting *economic* interests. Suddenly in the international community it was realised that the large majority of states belonged to the third world. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in 1964 was the first international conference really to express their demands, and on that occasion the third world pressure group, the Group of 77, was founded. There have been further advances along this line. Grouping about 110 states in the Non-Aligned Movement and now 120 in the Group of 77, the third world overwhelmingly predominates numerically in an international community numbering about 150. Not just in special conferences, but in the General Assembly of the United Nations, they can and do put forward their claim for a New International Economic Order. But the big powers still largely control effective decision-making, hence the demand for the democratisation of international relations, which represents the practical extension into the sphere of international relations of the demand for state sovereignty. Further developing the fundamental strategy of safeguarding independence *collectively*, the third world countries have advanced the methods of *collective self-reliance* and *economic co-operation among developing countries*.

Yet everything remains stacked against the third world and seems to make it impossible to change things *fundamentally*. The problem is neo-colonialism and its acutest political expression, the imposition of hegemony.

Tactics of superpowers

Hegemony denies the substance of state independence and offers instead a hollow shell. It has long been practised by the USA, first in Latin America, its privileged sphere, and then elsewhere throughout the world.

US imperialism put forward a theory of so-called interdependence, according to which state sovereignty would become weaker owing to the increasing web of communications and economic and other transactions. In practice this then means the imposition of US interests.

If the rise of US imperialism as an enemy was the predominant feature in 1964, today the era is marked by the rise of Soviet social-imperialism. As the imperialist system becomes more and more decadent, new features keep emerging. Soviet social-imperialism has its own characteristics.

The USA uses state power to crush opposition to the free operation of monopoly capital, whereas in the USSR capitalism is part of the state machine itself. No doubt this is one of the factors which enable it to exploit the nationalised sector of other economies, as in India.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan represents a decisive change for two reasons: its intention is to impose Soviet hegemony outside the area which has been accepted by the other imperialist powers as part of the Soviet sphere of influence; and it uses direct military intervention to install a *completely* subservient regime.

Excuses for intervention

There is an important tactical difference here. The USA has traditionally depended upon puppet regimes to represent its imperialist interests in certain key areas, and has been ready to step in with armed support for them, as in Guatemala, Vietnam, etc. Today, the Soviet Union is *increasingly* following the same path. Does the USA realise that intervention in support of puppet regimes divorced from the people will in fact assist the Soviet strategy of infiltrating liberation movements?

But under Reagan there is a wholesale policy of using hegemonism to crush third world aspirations for independence. The policy of using the world food shortage as a weapon in foreign policy, which Reagan announced, was entirely directed against the third world, and he restored US cooperation in this field with the USSR, which

had been broken by Carter at the time of the invasion of Afghanistan. So the USSR is accepted as a powerful state and US policy is to concentrate against the weak. This enables Israel and South Africa to act wildly and gives Soviet social-imperialism a fresh 'excuse' to intervene. Angola shows how the *objectively* pro-Soviet policies of the South African racists help Soviet hegemonism.

Southern Africa is the showroom for these issues. There are areas where the people do not yet enjoy state sovereignty: Azania, Namibia. There are places where there have been attempts to create phoney sovereignty for the benefit of the imperialists, as in the racist 'bantustans' and the Rhodesia of the ill-fated 'internal settlement'. And among all this Zimbabwe is a shining beacon to show how the immediate enemy, western-imperialist-backed racists, can be defeated without letting the more dangerous rising superpower creep in in their place.

The use of state power

Where there is no effective state power the people are helpless against aggressors. The sad case of Lebanon shows this only too clearly. One of the outstanding lessons of the modern period is that a state power which is to be useful to the people must be capable of safeguarding the interests of minority nationalities. Only socialism can solve this problem fully. In China, particularly after the fall of the gang of four, the rights of minorities are very well guaranteed. Try as it may, Soviet social-imperialism has been unable to stir up trouble in Xinjiang, Tibet or other strategically important areas.

In a country like Britain, the growth of *state* racism clearly shows how in a decadent imperialist power—even though a country of the second world which is capable of some just initiatives in world politics—the state system remains thoroughly imperialist and the task of the revolutionaries is to *smash* it.

In some third world countries too minorities are systematically suppressed as in Vietnam. But in a less severe form the problem is general.

In Africa the OAU adopted the principle of respecting frontiers inherited from colonialism. This was essential to prevent a process of revision of state boundaries which would have been a windfall for interventionist outside powers. Even within these terms the struggles of the peoples of Western Sahara and Eritrea must clearly be supported because they are former colonies which were taken over by other states in defiance of the principle of self-determination. Self-determination must include the right to found a separate state—this crucial point has been well demonstrated by the case of Palestine. But the principle of respecting colonial boundaries obviously contains contradictions. Certainly, in the longer term there will be some realignment, while at the same time there will be struggles to assert the rights of several nationalities *within* a single state.

The important thing in this is to keep out the big powers. The OAU has produced what seems an excellent and realistic formula for the western Sahara. Armed conflicts between countries are much to be regretted because they are practically certain to give a green light to superpower intervention. The Iraq-Iran war partly reflects such a spillover in an area of complex national makeup.

But it also reflects a kind of nationalism among third world countries which is not the good kind of nationalism—which hammers imperialism—but is a negative kind which tries to throw its weight around regionally. There are several candidates for this role in the Middle East alone!

Present and future demands

So major combats in the coming period will centre around further attempts by the superpowers (Soviet social-imperialism being clearly the more dynamic) to impose their hegemony, to limit and stultify the sovereignty of other states, to take advantage of the dissensions within and between them. On the other side are the campaigns against this, in defence of independence.

Although not so well coordinated strategically as the actions of the superpowers, they are nevertheless actions of the masses and so have very profound resources.

A key issue, then, remains that of state power. Only revolution can resolve the question of who is to hold it, but in the course of their struggles the revolutionary classes can even now raise demands for state power to be used in a more positive way in the international sphere.

The goal of revolutionaries is the dictatorship of the proletariat, a state power representing the interests of the working people, as a transition to the abolition of the state itself. In China, the dictatorship of the proletariat is affirmed as one of the fundamental principles the CPC will always stand by. But there will be many differences in the *form* taken by this state power, influenced by the way it came into being. In China the initial form was that of the People's Democratic Dictatorship. This formula has now been confirmed, replacing the excessive emphasis on dictatorship during the cultural revolution.

There will be many concrete problems raised in the coming period, of how the revolutionary forces are to grow while carrying out the struggle against the existing state to bring about the revolutionary changeover of state power. For example, in the imperialist countries of the second world the existing state power is overwhelmingly reactionary, through and through, yet the independence of the state power must undoubtedly be defended against Soviet social-imperialist aggression.

These are very complex tasks which can only be solved by the Marxist-Leninists of each country, of course learning from each other internationally. What are the prospects for such forces? Some two years after BROADSHEET started, the cultural revolution broke out. For a while the spectre of 'Maoism' haunted the bourgeoisie. Some say they are no longer trembling so much now.

But the forces of revolution are nevertheless maturing. The cultural revolution had the effect of encouraging a new generation of revolutionaries outside China to integrate with and learn from the working people. This was very positive and provided a *base* on which to build. What was negative was the undervaluing of the need to apply Marxism-Leninism scientifically to concrete conditions; only by very deeply studying reality, from the viewpoint of changing conditions, can revisionism be overcome and a path forward charted.

This is beginning to be done. In countries like Bangladesh or Norway important progress has been made. In crucial areas of struggle today, like Iran and Afghanistan, Marxist-Leninists are waging tremendous struggles in defence of the people's interests, in the face of ruthless repression. We salute them. The cause to which BROADSHEET has perhaps made a modest contribution will surely continue to advance, taking as its base the principles of the struggle against revisionism and solidarity with the peoples of the third world.

SOUTH VERSUS NORTH for a new economic order

THE global dimension of economic, social and political problems has made the growing demand for a new world economic order more widespread and urgent. Calls over the years, largely from the most hard-hit third world countries, are being taken more seriously even by leaders of the richer countries which are primarily concerned with their own problems. The proliferation of resolutions and proposals by international organisations and conferences both inside and outside the United Nations have so far produced comparatively few results, however.

Around the world there are tremendous variations in the levels of development, but basically the differentiations are between the 'North' and the 'South'. The former are the rich or relatively rich industrialised countries; the latter are those which, as a result of imperialist influence, have little or no industry and backward agriculture. Within the southern category there are also wide variations—the poorest, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa and parts of Asia; the middle income states, as in Latin America; the oil rich; and advancing China, still poor but actively modernizing.

The North, with over 90 per cent of the world's manufacturing industry, has one-fourth of its population and three-fourths of its income. The North dominates the world's economic scene through ownership of capital, more advanced technology and resources for scientific research, industrial and trading experience, multinational corporations and domination over international organisations, including banking and trade.

Moreover, colonial attitudes and behaviour of developed countries have, through economic and political pressures or military intervention, seriously retarded or even prevented the underdeveloped countries from overcoming their backwardness. The North has consistently backed reactionary regimes, a current example being Reagan's support for the military-style government of El Salvador against its justifiably rebellious people. The industrialised have exploited the underdeveloped by importing cheap labour and by exporting work to gain even greater superprofits. US companies proliferate in Latin America, where the Dominican Republic is a

classic example of interference by a rich country. Once self-sufficient in food, it now has to import rice, corn, milk products and cooking oil, mostly from the US. From a fairly diversified agriculture it has now become a one-crop country, growing sugar cane on land owned and controlled by a US company. Half the 2.5 million peasants are landless; unemployment is the fate of 33 per cent of the workforce.

Some growing problems

At a time when recession is world-wide, estimated as the worst since World War II, the poorer countries suffer the most. Despite aid to some of them from the oil-exporting countries, the energy crisis with rising oil costs has aggravated the income decline in the poorest. It is certainly true that the sub-Saharan nations are the most severely hit. The 1980 'Report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues—North-South', under the chairmanship of Willy Brandt, pinpoints the basic problem in its subtitle, 'A Programme for Survival':

Many hundreds of millions of people in the poorer countries are preoccupied solely with survival and elementary needs... In the North, ordinary men and women face genuine economic problems—uncertainty, inflation, the fear if not the reality of unemployment. But they rarely face anything resembling the total deprivation found in the South.

The 1980 World Development Report of the World Bank put the numbers of desperately destitute in the poorest countries at about 800 million, many suffering from malnutrition, even starvation, disease, incomes far below the poverty line. The 1981 Report stated:

The outlook for many countries has darkened during the past twelve months. The economic situation is most serious in three dozen of the poorest countries with a combined population of more than 1,000 million, or more than a quarter of the world population. Without more help... some countries will actually see incomes per head decline. A further 100 million people will be plunged into absolute poverty, a condition already experienced by nearly a fifth of the world.

The developing countries have had to borrow enormous amounts from world banking organisations. Loan repayments and interest have increased their debts and

private banks are reluctant to loan more. World financial bodies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have increasing demands on them and the industrialised countries have been giving less aid.

Mutual interests and contradictions

The North relies on the South for many commodities, not least cooking oil, vital minerals, tea, coffee, cocoa, fruits, rubber. These and other supplies feed their people and industries. The main source of income for the developing countries is trade, largely with the North. While most of their exports are raw materials and food, some of the more advanced do export textiles, shoes, electronics. Both sides have been affected by frequent fluctuations in prices, in currency exchange and interest rates on loans, rise and fall of market demand, but it is the South which has suffered infinitely more, largely through increased prices of oil and industrial products.

A relatively small, but typical, example of mutual problems can be cited in the textile trade, vital for the third world. In 1973 the 'Multifibre Arrangement' between rich and poor countries envisaged that imports by the former would grow by 6 per cent per year. In fact textile imports from fifty of the poorest countries have declined. The British Government said this was necessary to protect jobs in a period of recession.

Similar contradictions between developed and developing countries can be seen in the field of trade in general. The processing of raw materials where produced increases their export value, thus helping the developing countries. This limited advance has been impeded because importing countries charge higher customs tariffs on processed goods. The well-off consistently attempt to strengthen their superior economic positions on the basis of short-term calculations. Impeding the export potential of the poorer countries limits their ability to purchase industrial goods from the industrialised. Nevertheless, the Brandt Report points out:

North and South have more interests in common on a medium and long-term basis than many have so far been able to recognise... There are growing mutual interests... A quickened pace of development in the South also serves the people of the North. The mutuality of interests can be spelled out clearly in the areas of energy, commodities and trade, food and agriculture, monetary solutions and inflation control, financing of projects and programmes, technological innovations, ground and space communications.

Which way forward?

The 1981 annual report of the World Bank, 'World Development Report' gives the leaders of the major industrialised nations a strict warning of future dangers if swift measures are not taken to help the poorest nations. While self-centred protectionist policies might ease an immediate problem for specific industrialised countries, they will store up trouble in the long term.

Moreover, except at a time of disaster—invasion, as in Kampuchea, or natural disasters, when supplies and help are urgent—the aim must be to provide the type of aid which will assist the recipient country to build a self-reliant economic structure, in both industry and agriculture.

Although China's aid to other developing countries is not a part of the North-South dialogue, her example could provide a valuable guide. With her experience of extricating herself from the mire of extreme poverty, of throwing off imperialist domination and interference, China understands the needs of poor countries and respects their independence and dignity. She has extended many interest-free or low interest loans on a long-term basis. She has sent technicians and workers to help construct irrigation and other projects for agricultural development, to help build light industries suited to local needs, to construct roads and railways (see BROADSHEET, Oct. '67, 'China's Example of Socialist Aid'; and Nov. '75, 'Aid to End Aid').

Some leaders in both developed and developing countries have been trying to break the deadlock in the

North-South dialogue, which has lasted for over a year.

The recent Ottawa conference of seven industrialised countries, controlling four-fifths of the non-communist world's wealth, agreed that they were ready to negotiate seriously over a new deal for trade and aid. The 1981 World Bank Report refutes claims that increased trade is better than increased aid for third world countries; yet both Britain and the US have reduced their contributions to the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (main channels of aid), on the ground that they are seeking to increase trade exchanges. Acceptance of the concluding statement of the Ottawa Conference should have meant a sharp policy change for these two ultra-conservative governments, but it was quickly apparent that it meant nothing of the sort.

Following the Ottawa Conference, foreign ministers of both developed and developing countries have been meeting to prepare for the North-South Summit in Mexico on the 22 and 23 of this month (October). The former British prime minister, Edward Heath, indicated that he had few illusions when he asked what could be accomplished in two days.

Helping developing countries could have advantages for industrialised countries, but it is doubtful if their governments will be clear-sighted enough to see it. What one may hope for from the Mexico Conference is that it will open a window on the South for the rest of the world, begin to arouse public opinion, and provide an opportunity for the Southern countries to strengthen their unity and concert their plans to increase pressure on the superpowers and the second world. That is the way forward. In the last analysis, political and economic freedom will never be granted by imperialism; it will have to be won.

THE FUTURE OF BROADSHEET

We have had many concerned letters from readers since our announcement last month that we could not continue regular publication of BROADSHEET beyond the end of this year.

It had become a part of the normal reading material all these years (India); I do feel that you still have a job to do (London); I have always found BROADSHEET a sort of sheet anchor (Kent); An overview is needed, particularly since the Western press gives a false view of many aspects of China (Hong Kong); I have often disagreed with BROADSHEET but have almost always read it with interest and often profit (Yorks.); I do hope that somehow or other you can continue the good work (Beijing); The value of BROADSHEET's role is undeniable... no other journal serves this purpose to the ability and adequacy of BROADSHEET (Manchester); Perhaps, however, a pause or a recess is a healthy and natural phenomenon (New Zealand); It has a unique place in the material about China (London).

In view of the above we should like to continue this Group and to publish perhaps two numbers of the paper next year, with a somewhat larger content than the present. But there are still many difficulties to overcome. Several readers sent generous donations, for which we thank them warmly.

Thomson paperbacks

As part of the winding-up process we have passed on the remaining stock of the George Thomson paperbacks—*From Marx to Mao Tse-tung, Capitalism and After*, and *The Human Essence*—to our good friends The Guanghwa Company, 9 Newport Place, London, W.C.2. Books can be bought in their shop or ordered by post; trade enquiries too may be sent to them. Of course there are some other bookshops, in London and elsewhere, which still hold stocks.

We owe a big debt of gratitude, as do readers all over the world, to George Thomson for giving us the chance to publish these books.

THE CHINA POLICY STUDY GROUP